

Great team? Celebrate your wins.

Everything you need to know about
the 2017 Telstra Business Awards



Get ready for your Telstra Business Awards experience

The Telstra Business Awards provide a platform to celebrate all your hard work and the opportunity to be recognised as one of Australia's best small or medium businesses or charities. By being nominated and completing the entry form, you will have the chance to take stock of your day-to-day operations and have them assessed by experts. Many of our past entrants have told us this was the most valuable part of their Awards experience.

This Information Pack includes everything you need to know about the Awards process. It's a good idea to print it out and keep it as a handy reference.

Please note, there is no entry form with this document.

You must complete your entry online. Entries open on 30 January 2017.

At the end of this pack you'll find a summary of the questions you will be asked. Use these to start compiling your answers so you're ready to complete the online entry form when entries open.

If you have any questions or comments, contact the Awards team on **1800 AWARDS**.

We look forward to helping you on your Awards journey.

“Taking part in the Awards keeps us focused on our business improvement, gives positive exposure with the consumer and association with a strong iconic Australian business like Telstra.”

Barossa Fine Foods,
2016 Telstra South Australian
Medium Business Award Winner

Key dates	2
Benefits of entering	3
Eligibility	4
How to enter	5
Award categories	7
Prizes	8
Judging process	9
Sample questions - business	10
Sample questions - charity	14

Dates to remember

Entries open on Monday 30 January 2017 and close at midnight AEDT on Thursday 16 March 2017. All entries must be submitted online.

Shortlisted entrants will be required to host a site visit with two of our Judges. This is your opportunity to impress the Judges in person and answer any queries they may have arising from your entry.

Site visits will take about 40 minutes and the Judges will want to meet and talk to key people in your business, including the owner(s)/founder(s).

“Receiving a ‘win’ in 2016 has been a huge boost to team morale, and a driver to keep pushing forward into the challenges and opportunities of the future.”

Rufus & Coco Pty Ltd
2016 Telstra New South Wales
Micro Business Award Winner

2017 Judging dates

Initial Assessment	27 March - 7 April
Panel 1 Judging	13 - 28 April
Site visits	20 May - 3 June (arranged short notice, early May)
Panel 2 Judging	6 - 29 June

2017 Finalist Workshop dates

The Finalist Workshops provide an opportunity for finalists to get to know each other, learn how to make the most of being part of the Awards program and what to expect on Awards night. Finalists also get some tips on making an effective speech and dealing with the media.

NT	Monday 3 July
WA	Thursday 6 July
SA	Monday 10 July
QLD	Thursday 13 July
NSW	Monday 17 July
ACT	Thursday 20 July
TAS	Monday 24 July
VIC	Thursday 27 July

2017 State/Territory Dinner dates

A Dinner will be held in each State and Territory, where the finalists will be recognised and the winners announced. These Dinners are joyous occasions to celebrate and say thank you to your team and the people who have contributed to your business success.

NT	Tuesday 4 July
WA	Friday 7 July
SA	Tuesday 11 July
QLD	Friday 14 July
NSW	Tuesday 18 July
ACT	Friday 21 July
TAS	Tuesday 25 July
VIC	Friday 28 July

National Event Series

The 2017 State/Territory winners will be flown to Sydney for two memorable days. They will be interviewed by National Judges, enjoy a cocktail party with previous years' Alumni, take part in the National Finalist Workshop and attend the National Gala Dinner.

Judging	Thursday 24 August
Cocktail Party	Thursday 24 August
Finalist Workshop	Friday 25 August
National Gala Dinner	Friday 25 August

Benefits of entering

Participating in the Telstra Business Awards process is rewarding for a business regardless of whether you go on to be a finalist or a winner.

Participating in the Awards provides:

- An opportunity to be recognised among Australia’s best charities and small and medium-sized businesses
- The chance to reinforce your credibility, and pursue new ventures
- A boost to staff morale
- The opportunity to enhance your profile, making you more attractive to prospective employees and new investors

Completing your entry is an opportunity to:

- Assess your current position and reconnect with your business vision
- Strategically review your operation and growth plans, and future-proof your business
- Benchmark your business against others and identify key areas for improvement
- Reflect on the journey of your organisation and celebrate its achievements
- Recognise all those who have contributed to the success of your business or charity

Free Business Health Check

A major benefit of entering the Awards is a free **Business Health Check**, which each entrant receives after completing their entry. It outlines areas of business health and identifies opportunities for improvement.

This robust document is created using information provided in the Awards entry form. With input from the NSW Business Chamber, it evaluates performance against independent business benchmarks including planning and performance, customer and financial management, HR, sales, marketing, product and service development and company culture.



“It’s a really good opportunity to look at what you’re doing, to look at it critically and I think you can only benefit from the experience. There’s a lot to be taken out of it.”

Peoplesense
2016 Telstra Western Australian
Business of the Year

Is my business eligible?

Nominated businesses and charities will be eligible to enter the Telstra Business Awards, providing all of the following criteria are met.

The nominated business has to:

- Reside in Australia
- Have a registered Australian Business Number and/or for charities, be ACNC registered and have a DGR status
- Have been operating in Australia for at least 12 months as at Thursday 16 March 2017
- Be more than 60% Australian-owned, with the owner(s)/founder(s) responsible for making the key management decisions
- If entering the Charity Award category: be registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and have endorsed Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status, with an annual income between \$250,000 and \$10,000,000; and
- If entering the New Business Award category have been operating in Australia between 12-36 months as at Thursday 16 March 2017.

The nominated business must not:

- Have more than 200 full time equivalent staff as at the close of entries date, Thursday 16 March 2017;
- Be a listed company, franchisee, franchisor, club, co-operative, or Telstra licensee;
- Be more than 50% owned by another business or be a government agency;
- Have employees who have judged the Awards program in 2015 or 2016 or be a commercial supplier to the 2017 Awards;
- Have won an Award in the same category in 2016. The nominated business can enter a different category in 2017;
- Have filed for bankruptcy in the prior 5 years or been subject to court proceedings in the prior 12 months from the close of entry date, including in the business owner or founder's personal capacity; and
- Have been purchased, and operating as an existing business prior to purchase.

Terms & conditions for the Telstra Business Awards can be viewed online at telstrabusinessawards.com/terms-conditions



Tow.com.au - 2016 Telstra Australian New Business Award Winner

How to enter

Entries must be completed online via our website at telstrabusinessawards.com from Monday 30 January 2017.

Entering the Awards starts with being nominated. Anyone can nominate a business or charity, including the owner/s or founder/s.

The next step is to prepare your entry and then complete the online entry form. To be eligible to win an Award, entries must be submitted online by midnight AEDT, Thursday 16 March 2017, with all questions answered in full.

Login details will be sent to all nominated businesses via email. If you have trouble logging in, call the Awards team on **1800 AWARDS**.

Entering the Telstra Business Awards is a rigorous process. Many past entrants, however, say it's of enormous value.

While answering the questions, you are also checking your business' vital signs. You'll find yourself thinking strategically about your organisation and its future.

This self-analysis might uncover ways to improve established systems or bring new confidence that you're on the right track.

The entry form encourages this sort of thinking because it is based on a strategic business plan and uses international benchmarking standards, current legislation and accepted industry best practice.

Important note

When completing your online entry please remember to click the **'SAVE'** button before navigating away from the page.

Each page will save when you click the **'NEXT STEP'** button at the bottom of the entry page but won't save if you leave the page mid progress without clicking **'SAVE'**.

Entry details

There are six sections to the entry form:

1. Your business
2. Sales and marketing
3. Your customers
4. Your team
5. Planning and performance
6. Financials

The entry comprises (approximately):

- 60 free text questions
- 35 free text numeric questions (i.e. financial numbers)
- 120 multiple-choice questions (the number of questions can change depending on the answers given)

Other useful points:

- Past entrants have found that preparing their answers can take 20 to 30 hours
- It's a good idea to tackle each section separately and get other people on your team helping early. The process will be more manageable if you delegate
- Another tip is to draft your responses in a word document and then cut and paste them into the online entry form
- You can complete the entry form in any order you like but all the questions must be answered for a valid entry

Helpful features on the entry form:

- You can save and return to your entry as many times as you like within the entry open period
- Sections that are not fully completed are marked so you can identify them easily
- A tick will appear when you've successfully completed a section
- A percentage figure in the top right-hand corner shows how much of the entry is complete
- There are added tips and hints along the way to make things easier

How to enter

Entries must be completed online via our website at telstrabusinessawards.com from Monday 30 January 2017.

All entrants will be required to provide financial information.

Entrants in the Micro Business Award, Small Business Award and Medium Business Award categories will need information for:

- The financial years 2013/2014, 2014/2015, 2015/2016
- 2016/2017 - please provide financial information based on full-year estimates

Entrants in the New Business Award category will need information for:

- 2016/2017 - please provide financial information based on full-year estimates

Entrants in the Charity Award category will need information for:

- The financial years, 2013/2014, 2014/2015, 2016/2017
- 2016/2017 - please provide financial information based on full-year estimates

We recommend your business accountant checks this information prior to submitting your online entry to ensure it is correct. All businesses that proceed to the next stage of judging will be asked to provide written verification that the financial information is accurate.

Please note: All financial information will be treated in the strictest confidence. It will only be used for the purposes of judging your entry and preparing the Business Health Check report. This information will not be disclosed to anyone outside of this process.

If you do not complete the financial information in full, your entry will be declared ineligible and therefore will not be accepted for judging.

All hard copies of entries are securely destroyed. The Awards team will securely store electronic records for a period of five years for auditing and research purposes only.

“Every charity and every business can benefit from a review by a fresh set of eyes, which is exactly what this process offers. The Telstra Business Awards have provided a challenging framework for a critical self-review and I’d recommend any eligible business to give it a go.”

Cystic Fibrosis Western Australia
2016 Western Australian
Charity Award Winner

Award categories

New Business Award	For businesses operating for one to three years with up to 200 employees
Micro Business Award	For businesses with five or less employees
Small Business Award	For businesses with more than five and up to 20 employees
Medium Business Award	For businesses with more than 20 and up to 200 employees
Charity Award	ACNC registered with DGR status, between one and 200 employees and an annual income of between \$250,000 and \$10,000,000

State/Territory Awards

All finalists are presented on stage with their certificates before the winners are announced.

National Awards

State/Territory winners are flown to the National event series where we celebrate the best of the best over two days, culminating in a glamorous Gala Dinner where the Telstra Australian Business of the Year is announced. The Telstra Australian Business of the Year is selected from the pool of State/Territory Business of the Year winners.

Need help? Contact the Awards team on **1800 AWARDS**.

“The recognition of charities in your prestigious business awards makes such a difference. When we interact with government, business and the community we can say loudly and proudly we measure up well because we were judged by you.”

Butterfly Foundation
2016 Telstra New South Wales
Charity Award Winner

Prizes

Winners of the Telstra Business Awards share in cash grants and business services, which are divided between the State/Territory and National winners..

Winners will also receive

- Two tickets to the Dinner in their State/Territory
- Two tickets to the National Gala Dinner in Sydney
- Two return economy airfares from their capital city
- Two nights twin-share accommodation for two people*
- A commemorative Telstra Business Awards certificate
- Permission to use the Telstra Business Awards logo on company stationery and advertising material
- Access to the Alumni network, where finalists and winners connect

*Transfers and incidentals not included



Snowdome Foundation – 2016 Telstra Australian Charity Award Winner

Judging process

The judging process for the Telstra Business Awards has been shaped over more than two decades to allow the Judges to thoroughly assess the many entries and identify finalists.

A business becoming a finalist is a great achievement. The judging process is rigorous and moving to that stage in the Awards must certainly have been earned.

Here is a step-by-step guide to the judging process:

Step 1

Initial entry assessment – the entry is read and the answer to each question is given a score. So it's important every question is fully answered and includes as much detail as possible within the word count. A vivid description will give the Judges a clear idea of the business and what it's done to achieve success. This entry form is the first place where a business has a chance to be noticed.

Step 2

Shortlist stage – the most outstanding businesses in each category (in each State/Territory), will be shortlisted. If you make it to this stage, we'll contact you to arrange a site visit. You will also need to present confirmation of your financial data from your accountant.

Step 3

Site visits which take about 40 minutes and will be run between 20 May and 3 June 2017. We want to meet and talk to key people in your business including the owner(s)/founder(s). Due to tight timelines the site visits will be organised at short notice (early May).

Step 4

Finalists will be notified by phone call about four weeks before the State/Territory Dinners.

Step 5

The finalists are announced and celebrated at State/Territory Dinners and all are presented with a certificate on stage. The winning business in each category is then announced and given the opportunity to make a short speech. Finally, the Business of the Year in that State/Territory is announced.

Step 6

All State/Territory winners become national finalists and travel to Sydney for an interview on Thursday 24 August 2017. State/Territory Judges will provide feedback from your site visits to the national judging panel, in preparation for your national interview.

Step 7

The national winners are announced and celebrated, along with the 2017 Telstra Australian Business of the Year at the National Gala Dinner on Friday 25 August 2017.

The Judges look for the following qualities of truly outstanding businesses:

- Financial acumen and an understanding of the key business drivers
- The ability to envision exciting possibilities and enlist others in a shared vision of the future
- Ingenuity and imagination that is world-class
- Innovative use of technology
- Ability to manage social impact in a changing socio-economic environment
- The ability to identify, manage and mitigate risks
- Embracing a culture of diversity and inclusion
- Resilience and the ability to recover from setbacks
- A passion for 'making a difference'

FAQs

Do you have a question about the Telstra Business Awards?

Visit telstrabusinessawards.com/resources/faqs

to find the most common questions or call the Awards team on **1800 AWARDS**.

Sample questions - business

As part of the online entry you'll be asked to answer 60 free text questions, which are a combination of 100 and 200-word answers.

Here is a sample of the short answer text questions. Use them to prepare your responses for when the online entry opens on 30 January 2017.

Your actual entry must be completed and submitted online.

Your Business

- What does your business do?
- What was the motivation for starting your business?
- What customer need or problem is your business solving?
- What is your unique value proposition?
- Tell us about the early days. What were your biggest challenges and how did you overcome them?
- Tell us about the moment in time or tipping point when you knew you'd made it and your business would be a success.

Achievements

- What have been your proudest milestone achievements and why? What did you learn along the way?
- How is your business successfully challenging the status quo in your industry and how has your success been recognised?
- How do you problem solve in your business? Provide an example to illustrate how you removed an obstacle to achieve success.
- What's the most valuable lesson you've learned?

Vision

- What strategies do you have in place to grow your business?
- How are you responding to anticipated shifts in demographics and cultural changes that are facing Australia?
- Given the current position of your business, is your focus on growth or profitability? Explain your reasoning and how it impacts your day-to-day operations.
- Why are you entering the Telstra Business Awards and what would winning mean to your business?

Sample questions - business

Sales & Marketing

- Please provide an overview of your sales and marketing plan, and explain why you have selected the specific marketing activities outlined in your plan.
- Describe the most successful marketing activity you have undertaken in the past 12 months, along with metrics on how you measured its success.
- Tell us about a marketing activity that was not successful. What did you learn and how have you applied your learnings since?
- Describe the process you use to include key stakeholders in the development and implementation of your marketing strategy.

Digital

- Describe the role digital channels play in your overall marketing strategy.
- How is your digital strategy helping deliver a brilliant customer experience?
Give an example to illustrate your response.

Public Relations

- Describe your approach to Public Relations. What research and monitoring tools do you use?
- What's unique about your products/services? How do you compare yourself to your competition?

Products & Services

- Please list: a) the key product/service lines of your business, b) the approximate percentage each contributes to your total revenue, and c) the approximate percentage of net profit from each product or service.
- Tell us what's unique about your products/services and how you benchmark yourself against competitors.

Your Customers

Segmentation

- How has technology impacted your customer experience strategy and ability to differentiate your business in the market?

Market Research

- What business intelligence activities do you undertake? Tell us about a recent initiative and how this informed your decision making.

Customer Service

- How do your customers talk about you? Provide examples of feedback you have received – positive and constructive.

Social Responsibility

- Considering social responsibility; in the last year what have you done to increase the perception of your business as being an ethical and honest organisation? (Talk about your corporate values and how they manifest in your day-to-day operations).

Sample questions - business

Your Team

Capability & Values

For businesses with a single owner/operator and no staff:

- Please detail your personal skills and capabilities as a business owner/operator.
- How do you challenge and motivate yourself at work? Give an example to support your answer.

For businesses with two or more staff:

- Please detail the personal skills and capabilities of the business owner(s)/operator(s)?
- What is it like to work for your business? How would your employees and colleagues describe the leadership style? Give an example to support your answer.

Human Resources

- Please provide examples of the process/practices you have in place to create an inclusive culture in your company, including gender equality, family and caring arrangements, flexible working, diversity and inclusion.
- How do you attract and retain the best talent? What's your Employee Value Proposition?

Internal Communication

- How do you communicate with your team and how do you measure the effectiveness of your communications?
- How do you engage and empower your team to deliver the vision for your company?

Culture

- How do you celebrate wins in your business?

Sample questions - business

Planning & Performance

- What plans do you have in place to ensure your business will still be relevant in five years' time?
- What opportunities are there to expand your business? How will you reach your expansion goals?
- Please elaborate on your approach to documenting your business processes.
- How do you identify and mitigate risks in your business?
- How has technology helped your business? (Consider things like mobilising your workforce, reaching new customers and protecting your customers' data and your business information).
- How do you see technology changing your business in the next two years?

Financials

- Preparation for the financial section of your online entry can be found in the **How To Enter** section (page 5) of this document.

Sample questions - charity

Your Organisation

- What does your charity do? Please provide us with a succinct profile of your organisation.
- What was the motivation for starting your organisation?
- What social benefit does your organisation aim to address? How does your organisation differ from others in the sector?
- Provide an example of where an individual/purpose you support/fund has benefited from your organisational values?

Achievements

- What is your organisation's biggest achievement? What was the social benefit delivered?
- How has the success of your organisation been recognised? And how is your organisation involved in supporting or improving the sector it operates in?
- What is your organisational approach to problem solving? Provide an example to illustrate how you tackled a challenge to ensure you could continue to achieve your organisations core objectives.

Vision

- Is your organisation reliant on external funding or does it generate enough income to be sustainable? What is more important to the organisation and why?
- Why are you entering the Telstra Business Awards and what would winning mean to your charity?

Sample questions - charity

Sales & Marketing

- Please provide an overview of your fundraising and marketing plan. Explain the thinking behind your choice of marketing activities.
- Do you include all stakeholders (including your customers, individuals you are assisting or with an interest in your purpose or cause, staff, board, directors or experts) in the development of your marketing activities?

Digital

- How is your digital strategy helping deliver a brilliant stakeholder experience, in particular the individuals you assist, the cause you are working for or your customers? Give an example to illustrate your response.

Public Relations

- When your industry in general (or your cause in particular) is in the news, do you use this as an opportunity to proactively communicate with your donors, sponsors, volunteers or partners?

Products & Services

- Please list: a) the key product/service lines of your organisation, b) the approximate percentage, each contributes to your total revenue, and c) the approximate percentage of net profit from each product or service

Sample questions - charity

Your Customers

Segmentation

- For the categories of customers (business revenue), donors (sponsorship and donations) and government (funding), how do you determine the level of resource allocation to ensure the relationship is proactively managed?

Market Research

- How do you use the results from your surveys to assist your organisation?
- How do you use data analytics in your organisation? Tell us about a recent initiative and how this informed your decision making?

Customer Service

- Do you have a customer experience strategy for each market of the different categories including customers (business revenue), donors (sponsorship and donations) and government (funding)? How does this differentiate you in each market?

Social Responsibility

- Please describe the impact of your organisation's core activities in the community.
- What is the biggest difference your organisation has made that you are most proud of?
- How do you maximise the funds that are directly applied to your core purpose?
- What social benefit do your external stakeholders receive when they engage with your organisation?

Sample questions - charity

Your Team

Capability & Values

- Please detail your CEO and the board members skills and capabilities?
- How do you as CEO challenge and motivate yourself at work?
Give an example to support your answer.
- Who are your board members? What are their core skills and experience and what do they contribute to your organisation?
- What is it like to work for your organisation? How would your employees and colleagues describe the leadership style? Give an example to support your answer.

Human Resources

- Please provide examples of the process/practices you have in place to create an inclusive culture in your organisation, including gender equality, family and caring arrangements, flexible working, diversity and inclusion.

Internal Communication

- How do you ensure your staff understand and deliver on the vision and values of the organisation everyday?

Culture

- How do you acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of the organisation with your staff?

Sample questions - charity

Planning & Performance

- In which areas of your organisation do you have metrics to measure performance? Does this include a social impact metric?
- What plans do you have in place to ensure your organisation will still be relevant in five years' time?
- What plans do you have to counter the threat from existing and emerging competitors? Does your organisation have plans to expand beyond your local market?
- How do you identify and mitigate risks in your organisation?
- Please provide additional details regarding your approach to documenting your organisational processes.
- How has technology helped your organisation?
- How do you see technology changing your organisation in the next two years

Financials

Preparation for the financial section of your online entry can be found in the How to Enter section (page 5) of this document.

We wish you every success

Entries must be completed online at
telstrabusinessawards.com

