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25. EXCELLENCE IN FOOD TOURISM

This category is open to food producers, providers, tour operators, cooking schools, food attractions, farm gate experiences, farmers markets, trails and other food tourism experiences in NSW, featuring NSW produce as the core component.

*Maximum word count: 10,000 words
Maximum images: 25*

1. Introduction (20 marks)

A. Please provide an overview of your tourism products, experiences and services including the nature and history of the business. How does your business demonstrate tourism excellence? 20 marks

Response Guidance

- This is where you set the story of your product/experience/service and give the judge insight into the product/experience/service on offer. Take the judge on a journey of your business product/service; describe the visitor experience, where/how it began, how you have developed the product over time.*
- Your response should demonstrate why your business should be considered as an award-winning tourism business by highlighting your points of difference/what makes you different/special. Specify amenities, products, services or facilities that enhance visitor satisfaction.*
- This is where the judges (and auditors) will gain an understanding of how you fit into the category, therefore it is important to clearly demonstrate your eligibility by aligning with the category criteria to ensure that there is no misunderstanding as to why you have entered this category.*
- Demonstrate your commitment to tourism excellence by explaining the values and philosophy of your business and how the business has been actively involved with and contributed to the tourism industry (locally, regionally and nationally) through both business and personal participation.*
- Tourism excellence can also be demonstrated by listing any awards you have won and accreditations you hold.*
- Use graphics to support and enhance your response provided. For example, a map of where you are located, images of the product/service and any specific facilities/amenities/services you have highlighted in your response, a collage of the accreditation programs you participate in and/or any award achievements.*

2. Business Development 20 marks

A. During the qualifying period, what have you implemented or improved in your business? 20 marks

Response Guidance

- This question seeks to understand how you have improved the product/experience/service within the qualifying period. To respond, consider what strategies, innovations and/or developments the business has introduced or updated. An enhancement could include, for example, a new experience/facility, updating point of sale processes to changing to ethically sourced supplies.*

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The response should demonstrate why the strategy/innovation/development was implemented and how this enhances the visitor experience. The judges will be looking for an understanding of what prompted the innovation/development/improvement e.g. was it a result of guest feedback, change in market demand, etc.

- An insightful response would include the research and planning that was undertaken as well as the outcome/s of the innovation/development/improvement and how they align with your business' main goals and strategies.*
- Use graphics to support and enhance your response provided. For example, an image of any new products or facilities, posters promoting changes that have been implemented.*

3. Marketing (15 marks)

A. Describe the marketing strategies used to differentiate your tourism business and attract your target markets during the qualifying period. Why were these strategies chosen and what was the result? 15 marks

Response Guidance

- This question is looking for a clear understanding of how you are marketing to your target market. You should begin by outlining who you have aimed your marketing towards and demonstrate a clear understanding of this market. Consider for example; who they are, where they are from, how old they are, how they purchase travel, what motivates and inspires them and how your product meets their expectations. Identify how the target market/s are right for your business.*
- You should then provide a clear overview of the innovative approaches you have taken to marketing and what you have done differently to attract your customers within the qualifying period. Consider for example; social media, digital or interactive advertising, apps, product packaging, tactical or paid advertising campaigns, relationship marketing.*
- Ensure you outline why these marketing strategies were selected by aligning with your target markets attributes as well as local, regional or state marketing plans.*
- Detail how these new/different/unique marketing activities have been successful. You should consider metrics to measure the outcomes and consider media coverage, social media engagement, increased web traffic, increased bookings etc.*
- Use graphics to support and enhance your response. For example, images of marketing placement (social media screen shots, website, advertisements).*

4. Customer Experience (20 marks)

A. How do you provide quality visitor experiences and demonstrate inclusive practices? 20 marks

Response Guidance

- This question requires you to outline the practices you have put in place to ensure the delivery of high quality customer service throughout the visitor experience journey.*
- Outline how you are committed to quality customer service throughout all areas of the business. This could include staff training, service principles and policies, staff reward systems etc.*

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- Consider all points of customer engagement e.g. email, phone, guest greetings/welcome and interaction during and after the experience.
- Once you have provided an overview of how customer service is delivered you should consider how your business monitors and assesses customer service to ensure continued quality delivery. For example; feedback forms, monitoring social media, blogs, mystery shoppers etc.
- Consider how you actively encourage feedback and how feedback is used to improve the visitor experience. It may be useful to provide a case study/example where you have implemented a change based on customer feedback and/or testimonials which further demonstrate outcomes of quality customer experiences.
- As a part of your delivery of quality visitor experiences you need to demonstrate how you consider visitors' special and specific needs and recognises the needs of a diverse community. This can include, but is not limited, to cultural, language, physical, intellectual, dietary and other specific needs e.g. groups, special interest, LGBTQ etc.
- Provide examples of how you catered for customers with specific needs, explain the outcome or successes. A case study would be beneficial here.
- Use graphics to support and enhance your response. For example, staff communications posters, flow charts of customer service processes, reception cards encouraging feedback.

5. Responsible Tourism (20 marks)

A. How have you considered and progressed your environmental, social, economic and ethical responsibilities during the qualifying period? 20 marks

Response Guidance

This question requires you to outline how you have considered and taken action on reducing or improving (whichever applied) your overall impact within the four areas.

You should break this question into the four parts. Consider using a table or headings to assist in your answer.

- **Environmental**
 - Consider the following:
 - How have you considered your environmental impact
 - What have you done to be environmentally responsible
 - Some examples of how you demonstrate environmental responsibility are:
 - Water conservation, waste management/reduction/recycling, fuel and energy reduction, carbon reduction/offset, reuse initiatives in place.
 - The inclusion of actual measurement data including the amounts saved/reduced in comparison to the previous year (or multiple years if you have good records) may enhance response.
- **Social**
 - Outline how you have considered the impact of your business on local people and business
 - Your response should consider non-monetary examples
 - Some examples of how you demonstrate social responsibility are;

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- *supporting local businesses, product packaging, charitable donations, sponsorship, engagement with community groups*
- *Employing locals and the impact their employment has had on the person, mentoring other businesses, speaking at schools*
- *Work experience opportunities that are offered*
- *Offering gifts for the school raffle that allowed the school to raise money for an item they wouldn't have otherwise been able to afford*

- *Economic*
 - *Detail how you support the local economy*
 - *Some examples of how you demonstrate economic responsibility are:*
 - *Local purchasing, % of employment of local people.*
 - *Operators who stock and sell a local artisan's products, or stock local produce in minibars/hampers/outlets and how the business has boomed because of it for the manufacturer/producer (or something similar)*
 - *Waiving conference room fees for local not-for-profit groups to give them somewhere to meet which allows the group to keep going*
 - *You should determine the percentage of total contribution. E.g. '75% of all our expenses were spent in X region.'*

- *Ethical*
 - *Outline how you have considered your ethical responsibilities*
 - *Some examples of how you demonstrate ethical responsibility are:*
 - *The engagement and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*
 - *Cultural or historical representation,*
 - *Animal welfare etc.*

Use graphics to support and enhance your response.

Submission Score /95

Online review /5