



Community Bank  
Cannonvale - Proserpine



# Guide to Completing Your Small Business Hero Award Entry

Presented by:

Whitsunday Regional Council, Whitsundays Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Bowen Chamber of Commerce.

Principal Partner:

Bendigo Community Bank Cannonvale-Proserpine

Category Sponsor:

Bishopp Outdoor Advertising

## About the Awards

The Whitsunday Business Awards 2025 celebrates the outstanding achievements, leadership, innovation, and resilience of businesses and business leaders across the Whitsunday region.

With judging led by respected regional and external experts, and a sundowner Awards Ceremony from 5:30pm Friday 21 November 2025, this is the region's premier cross-sector business celebration.

In 2025, the following awards will be presented:

1. **Best of the Whitsundays: Business of the Year** for an outstanding business that sets the gold standard for excellence, innovation, and leadership in the region.
2. **Business Legends of the Whitsundays: Hall of Fame** celebrating businesses, or individuals, that have achieved long-term success and made an enduring impact.
3. **Business Leader of the Year** recognising an inspiring leader whose vision, dedication, and influence have driven exceptional business and regional success.
4. **Rising Star: Employee, Apprentice or Trainee** highlighting an exceptional individual who has demonstrated outstanding growth, dedication, and contribution.
5. **Small Business Hero**, recognising sole traders and small businesses that make a big impact through ambition, innovation, and resilience.
6. **Customer Service Champion**, celebrating businesses and individuals who consistently go above and beyond to create unforgettable customer experiences.
7. **Regional Game Changer**, recognising businesses that fuel economic growth, innovation, and community prosperity across the region.
8. **Trailblazing Young Entrepreneur**, celebrating rising stars (under 25) who are redefining success in start-ups, leadership, or industry innovation.
9. **Community Champion**, highlighting businesses making a real difference in the Whitsunday community through meaningful contributions and initiatives.
10. **Eco Excellence**, showcasing businesses that are leading the way in sustainability, environmental responsibility, and green innovation.



Community Bank  
Cannonvale - Proserpine



## About This Award

This award celebrates sole traders, micro, and small businesses in the Whitsunday region that achieve big results through ambition, innovation, and resilience. This award recognises their significant contribution to local business and community success.

## Who Can Enter

This category is open to:

- Sole traders, micro, and small businesses operating within the Whitsunday region.
- Businesses with fewer than 15 employees (headcount).
- Businesses that have been actively trading for a minimum of 12 months as of 1 July 2025.
- Entrants must demonstrate a commitment to business excellence, innovation, and resilience.
- Nominees must not be part of a national franchise or corporate group, unless locally owned and operated.

## Entry Format

Entries must be submitted via the **official online application form** available at:

<https://www.whitsundaycoastchamber.com.au/business-awards/>

We recommend preparing your responses in a Word document first, then copying them into the online form. Supporting documents can be uploaded as attachments.

## Key Dates

- Applications close 11:59pm Sunday 7 September 2025.  
Late applications will not be accepted.
- Nominations may be announced week commencing Monday 29 September 2025
- Whitsunday Business Awards event will be held from 5:30pm Friday 21 November 2025.

## Need help?

Please contact the Whitsunday Business Awards administration team with any questions via [admin@whitsundaycoastchamber.com.au](mailto:admin@whitsundaycoastchamber.com.au)

## What You'll Need to Complete

Below is an overview of the key questions included in the award entry form, along with guidance on what to consider when preparing your responses.

- Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) are mandatory.
- The points listed next to each question indicate its weighting in the judging process.
- Each response has a maximum word limit.

## Acknowledgement

As part of the entry process, applicants must confirm that they:

- Have read, understood, and agree to the terms and conditions of the Whitsunday Business Awards and their selected award category.\*
- Are willing and able to provide evidence, if requested, demonstrating ethical business practices and compliance with all relevant laws and regulations.\*
- Grant permission for their contact details to be shared with regional media for potential interviews and publicity opportunities.\*

## Business Information

- Your First and Last Name \*
- Business Name \*
- Australian Business Number (ABN) \*
- What year was the business established/started trading? \*
- What is your business's current total number of employees (headcount)?\*
- Email Address \*
- Phone \*
- Street Address/Business Location \*
- Suburb
- State
- Post code
- Business Website

## PART 1 - What do you do?

### 1.1 Describe your business (maximum 300 words, 10 points) \*

Provide a clear overview of your business, including:

- What your business does and the industry it operates in
- The core drivers of your success
- Key goals, strategies, and areas of focus
- Your primary customers or markets, and how you plan to grow
- Examples of how your business has evolved, adapted to change, or introduced innovation through new products, services, or processes

---

## PART 2 – Your Story

2.1 What inspired you to start your business, and how have you shown ambition and innovation along the way? (maximum 400 words, 20 points) \*

Share the story behind your business:

- Why you started – What motivated you to launch your business and what gap or opportunity you saw
- How you've grown – Key milestones, bold ideas, and innovative changes you've made, with a focus on the last 12 months (July 2024 – June 2025)
- What's next – How these actions have set the stage for future innovation, growth, or diversification

2.2 What challenges have you overcome, and what does resilience mean to you as a small business? (maximum 300 words, 10 points) \*

Tell a story of persistence:

- A defining challenge – A significant hurdle or setback you faced along your journey
- How you responded – The steps you took to adapt, pivot, or persist, particularly over the last year
- What it changed – How the experience strengthened your business and influenced future planning or decision-making

2.3 How is your business making a difference now, and what legacy do you hope to build? (maximum 300 words, 10 points) \*

Highlight your positive impact:

- Your 'why' – The purpose or values that drive your contribution to the Whitsundays
- Current impact – Ways your business has supported customers, community, or industry (testimonials or reviews encouraged)
- Your future focus – How you plan to continue delivering value and strengthen your contribution to the region

## PART 3 – How You Do Business & Your Impact

3.1 How do you operate, connect, and grow as a small business? (maximum 300 words, 10 points) \*

Summarise your business model and approach, including:

- What you offer and how you promote it
- Who your customers are and how you build loyalty
- How you lead, support your team, and foster a strong workplace culture
- Ways you use innovation, technology, or creative thinking to improve



Community Bank  
Cannonvale - Proserpine



3.2 What is the economic and social impact of your business in the Whitsundays? (maximum 300 words, 10 points) \*

Describe the value your business brings to the region, including:

- Business growth (e.g. sales, employment, local investment)
- Use of regional suppliers or partnerships
- Contributions to community, diversity, and inclusion
- Initiatives or support that create positive social outcomes

3.3 How do you prioritise environmental sustainability? (maximum 300 words, 10 points) \*

Explain your environmental responsibility, including:

- Sustainability goals or policies
- Actions taken to reduce waste, energy use, or emissions
- Use of sustainable design, circular economy practices, or continuous improvement initiatives

## PART 4 – Why You Stand Out

4.1 What sets your business apart? (maximum 300 words, 10 points) \*

Highlight what makes you unique and exceptional. Include:

- Milestones, awards, or recognition
- How you exceed expectations
- Testimonials or stories that showcase your impact
- Contributions to the region's business reputation

4.2 Why should you be recognised in this category? (maximum 300 words, 10 points) \*

Summarise what makes your business a Small Business Hero. Include:

- Why your achievements matter
- What this award would mean to your business and team

## Supporting Material

To support your application, you can upload **up to three (3) supporting files** (such as testimonials, photos of your team, premises, or community activities, business performance graphs or media coverage) and an optional video on why you should win.

Please upload a high-resolution image of your **business logo**. \*

## Top Ten Tips for a Strong Application

1. **Be clear and concise** – Communicate your message simply and directly. Focus on key achievements and impacts.
2. **Tailor your responses** – Align your answers with the specific criteria of the award category you're entering.
3. **Use evidence and examples** – Back up your claims with real results, data, or short case studies where relevant.
4. **Make the most of your word count** – Stay within the word limit, prioritising quality over quantity.
5. **Avoid jargon** – Use plain English that can be easily understood by judges from any industry background.
6. **Demonstrate impact** – Explain how your work makes a difference—to customers, staff, or the wider community.
7. **Attach relevant support materials** – Only include documentation that directly strengthens your entry.
8. **Have someone review it** – A second pair of eyes can help catch gaps, errors, or unclear messaging.
9. **Speak from the heart** – Let your passion, purpose, and pride in your work come through clearly.
10. **Answer each question thoroughly** – Ensure you've addressed all parts of the question before submitting.

## Eligibility, Terms & Conditions

### Eligibility

- Entrants must work in or operate a registered business within the Whitsunday Regional Council area.
- Businesses must have been operational for at least 12 months as of Monday 4 August 2025, unless entering a category that permits new or emerging businesses.
- Employees, apprentices or trainees must have been working in the business for at least 12 months as of Monday 4 August 2025.
- Entrants must demonstrate ethical business practices and compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Sole traders, not-for-profits, and social enterprises are eligible to apply where relevant to category criteria.



Community Bank  
Cannonvale - Proserpine



## Entry Requirements

- All entries must be submitted via the official online nomination form by the published closing time and date of **11:59pm Sunday 7 September 2025**. Entries submitted after this deadline will not be considered.
- Entrants can apply to a **maximum two award categories** but must submit a separate application for each.
- All responses must be truthful and accurate to the best of the entrant's knowledge.

## Judging

- Entries will be assessed by an independent panel of judges appointed by the award program partners.
- Entries that are incomplete, off-topic, or fail to sufficiently address the award criteria may be deemed ineligible and will not be forwarded to judges.
- Judges' decisions are final, and no correspondence will be entered into regarding outcomes.
- The Judging Panel reserves the right to withdraw any entry if the business or nominee is found to have brought the Awards or award program partners into disrepute.
- The Judging Panel reserves the right to move entries between categories if deemed more appropriate.

## Confidentiality

- All information submitted will be treated as confidential and used solely for the purpose of judging.
- Judges and award program administrators are bound by confidentiality agreements.

## Promotion and Media

- By entering, finalists and winners agree to have their business name, logo, and images used for promotional purposes related to the Awards.
- Event photography and videography may be used for marketing and reporting purposes by the award program partners.

## Costs

- There is no cost to enter the Awards. Finalists are responsible for their own attendance and any associated costs to attend the Awards Event.