

HOTEL
INDUSTRY

2026
AWARDS

AWARDS FOR
EXCELLENCE

aha|sa 

AWARD CATEGORIES

Draught Beer Quality

- Country
- Metropolitan

Bar Presentation & Service

- Accommodation Division
- General Division: Country
- General Division: Metropolitan

Restaurant

- Accommodation Division
- General Division: Country
- General Division: Metropolitan

Outdoor or Non-Enclosed Facility

- Country
- Metropolitan

Bistro

- Country
- Inner Metropolitan
- Outer Metropolitan

Family Dining

Retail Liquor Venue

Sporting Entertainment Venue

Live Music Venue

Entertainment Venue

Meeting & Events Venue

- Specialist Division
- Accommodation Division
- General Division

Innovation, Sustainability & Energy Efficiency Practice

Tourism & Regional Promotion

Gaming Venue

- Country
- Metropolitan

TAB Licenced Venue

Marketing & Communication

- Accommodation Division
- General Division

Deluxe Pub Accommodation

Mid-Range Accommodation

Suite/Apartment Accommodation

Superior Accommodation

Deluxe Accommodation

Luxury Accommodation

Redeveloped Hotel

- Accommodation Division
- General Division: Country
- General Division: Metropolitan

Outstanding Community Service & Achievement

Outstanding Achievement In Training

Employee Excellence In Service

- Accommodation Division
- General Division

Chef of the Year

- Accommodation Division
- General Division

Hotel Industry Rising Star

- Accommodation Division
- General Division

CLICK THE CATEGORY
TO JUMP TO THE ENTRY
CRITERIA!

Draught Beer Quality

– General Division - Country

– General Division - Metropolitan

To nominate for this award, complete the nomination form and attach documented evidence of gas system calibration within the six months of nomination. The prerequisite to entering the award is that the venue must comply to AS5034 (installation and use of inert gases for beverage dispensing).

Judging Criteria:

Cellar/Keg room and beer system cleanliness and management

- Cool room cleanliness
- Keg coupler, cellar boy, beer lines and tap cleanliness and functionality
- Keg freshness /stock rotation/kegs stored correctly

Glass Management

- Glass cleanliness
- Glass washer cleanliness and use of correct chemicals

Beer Presentation

- Pouring technique
- In glass appearance
- True to type (taste, aroma, texture)
- In glass temperature

Bar Presentation & Service

– Accommodation Division

– General Division - Country

– General Division - Metropolitan

This category will recognise a bar or venue that offers a memorable visit to patrons with an emphasis on excellence in customer service.

While the bar area will be the area that is judged, the overall customer experience will also form part of the judging criteria.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Professionalism and outstanding customer service
- Staff neat, clean attired and well groomed
- Bar presentation to be of the highest standard
- Ambience – audio visual, lighting, music
- Efficiency of bar operators
- Evidence of Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA)
- Variety of beverages available
- Availability of a selection of food

- Range of promotional products and activities
- Décor and design characteristics
- Condition of furniture, fittings and electrical items
- Popularity of the establishment
- Comfortable and positive experience for customers

Restaurant

– Accommodation Division

– General Division - Country

– General Division - Metropolitan

This category will recognise a restaurant that is excelling in providing patrons with a high-quality dining experience. To be eligible for these categories, there must be a strong focus on customer service and table service is mandatory.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Professionalism and outstanding customer service
- Staff & Service - greeting, level of engagement, efficient service levels, professionalism
- Food - variety and presentation of menu, pricing, presentation and quality of food offerings, catering for dietary considerations
- Beverage - variety of offerings, pricing and quality, non-alcoholic beverages available
- Décor and design characteristics
- Condition of furniture, fittings & electrical items
- Comfortable and positive experience for customers
- Ambience – audio visual, lighting, music etc.
- Hygiene and cleanliness

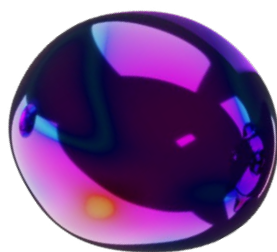
Outdoor or Non-Enclosed Facility

– Country

– Metropolitan

This category recognises excellence in venues which provide an outdoor or non-enclosed facility. Emphasis is placed on the total customer experience .

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:



- Venue - general décor, ambience, cleanliness
- Staff & Service - greeting, level of engagement, efficient service levels, professionalism
- Food - variety and presentation of menu, pricing, presentation, and quality of food offerings, catering for dietary considerations
- Beverage - variety of offerings, pricing and quality, non-alcoholic beverages available
- Evidence of Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA)
- Overall cleanliness of outdoor area
- Ambience – decor, lighting, audio visual and music, etc.
- Presentation and appearance of outdoor area
- Beverage - variety of offerings, pricing and quality, non-alcoholic beverages
- Offer of services to suit all ages
- Providing a safe and welcoming environment for families
- Offering a variety of innovative, healthy and quality dishes for children and youth

Bistro

– Country

– Inner Metropolitan

– Outer Metropolitan

This category recognises excellence in venues offering a quality dining experience through a general pub bistro offer. Meals may be delivered to the table by staff, collected by patrons using a buzzer or by other methods. Food may be ordered at point of sale and table service is also an option in this category.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Venue - general décor, ambience, cleanliness
- Staff & Service - greeting, level of engagement, efficient service levels, professionalism
- Food - variety and presentation of menu, pricing, presentation, and quality of food offerings, catering for dietary considerations
- Beverage - variety of offerings, pricing and quality, non-alcoholic beverages available
- Booking method & customer experience

Family Dining

The focus of this category is to ensure that your venue caters well for families with children by providing appropriate dining and entertainment facilities.

Judges will base their assessment on the following:

- Offer of a variety of activities and equipment suitable for children
- Venue - general décor, ambience, cleanliness
- Staff & Service - greeting, level of engagement, efficient service levels, professionalism
- Food - variety and presentation of menu, pricing, presentation, and quality of food offerings, including offerings for children and catering for dietary considerations

Retail Liquor Venue

This category recognises a venue offering a customer focused, well-stocked and well-designed retail liquor space. Innovation and excellence in customer service are held in high regard.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- General layout and stock presentation of venue
- Décor and design characteristics of venue
- Hygiene and cleanliness
- Effective signage
- Variety of stock including a range of local products
- Beverage tasting facilities
- Promotions and product specials
- Facilities and stock meet local needs
- Professionalism and outstanding customer service
- Staff neat, clean attired and well groomed
- Staff display excellent product knowledge
- Condition of furniture, fittings & electrical

Sporting Entertainment Venue

This category recognises excellence in venues which have an emphasis on sport as a primary form of entertainment.

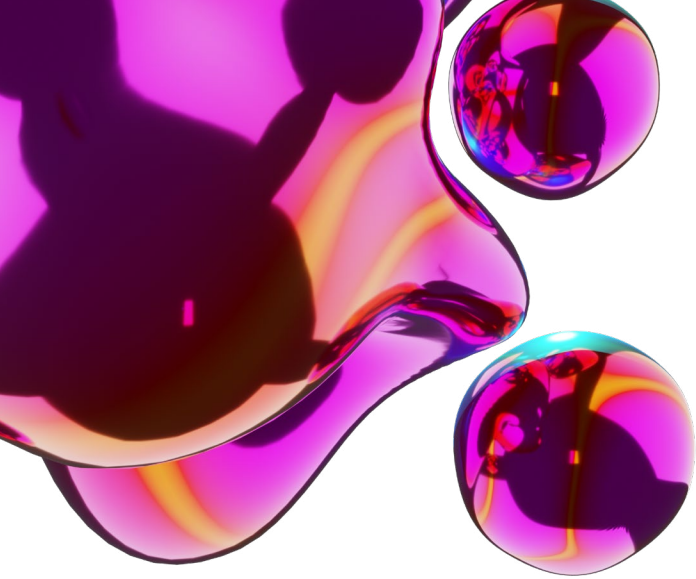
Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

General Criteria

- Venue - décor, cleanliness, and facilities
- Staff & Service - greeting/goodbye, presentation, efficient, RSA, knowledge of sporting events
- Food - selection, price, diversity
- Beverage - selection, price and diversity

Sporting Entertainment Venue Specifics

- Integration & range of sporting vision throughout the venue
- Adequate promotion of sporting facilities
- Sporting theme relative to target market
- Relationships with sporting clubs



- Range of in-house sporting promotions and competitions
- Displays of sporting memorabilia on-site

Live Music Venue

Entertainment must take the form of live bands and performances. To assist with judging venues should state on which night/s entertainment is provided and the name of the room/area to be judged.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

General Criteria

- Venue - décor, cleanliness, and facilities
- Staff & Service - greeting/goodbye, presentation, efficient, RSA, knowledge of entertainment events
- Food - selection, price, diversity
- Beverage - selection, price and diversity

Live Music Venue Specifics

- Quality of lighting, sound, stage, and dance floor facilities (as applicable)
- Provides live music entertainment on a regular basis throughout the year
- Variety and amount of live music entertainment on offer
- In-house promotions
- Website and other promotional platforms
- Ticket booking process and ease of use (if applicable)
- Social Media presence

Entertainment Venue

This category recognises excellence in a venue that offers patrons a mix of entertainment options. Entertainment may take the form of DJ, karaoke, comedy, open mic, etc. To assist with judging, venues should state on which night/s entertainment is provided, and the name of the room/area to be judged.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

General Criteria

- Venue - décor, cleanliness, and facilities
- Staff & Service - greeting/goodbye, presentation, efficient, RSA, knowledge of entertainment on offer
- Food - selection, price, diversity
- Beverage - selection, price and diversity

Entertainment Venue Specifics

- Quality of lighting, sound, stage, and dance floor facilities (as applicable)
- Provides entertainment on a regular basis throughout the year
- Variety and amount of entertainment on offer
- In-house promotions
- Effective website and other promotional platforms
- Social Media presence
- Ticket booking process and ease of use (if applicable)

Meeting & Events Venue

– Specialist Division

– Accommodation Division

– General Division

This category recognises venues that offer the services and facilities which provide for a seamless meeting or event for clients. There is a strong focus on staff, event facilities, service and food and beverage packages on offer.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- General appearance, design, and décor of the facility
- Effective promotion of facilities, including online presence
- Professionalism in marketing practices
- Variety of package options, including AV and table settings
- Diversity, value, and flexibility of package options
- Staff knowledge and overall service
- Professional communication by staff

Innovation, Sustainability & Energy Efficiency Practice

This category is open to all venues and recognises leadership through the practical application of innovative customer solutions for new and existing market needs resulting in a commercial, environmental benefit.

Judges will be assessing the following points in your written submission:

- Describe your innovation in sustainability practice and how it aligns with the strategy of your hotel
- Describe the key elements of the initiative, its goals, and objectives. Describe the planning, research and development process that was undertaken to support the initiative
- What methods were used to formulate these ideas and strategies
- Describe key performance indicators to monitor progress
- Outline waste management practices
- Incorporation of programs into everyday practice
- Economic viability to deliver savings to the hotel

Tourism & Regional Promotion

This category recognises a tourism and regional promotional initiative that is unique and adds value to the industry as well as the local community. The initiative will encourage visitation and provide visitors with an overall great, hospitable experience.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Detail of tourism initiative
- Collaboration with local tourism authority/body
- Promotion of the local area/community/region
- Range of hospitality services provided
- Promotion of venue through various forms of media (i.e. websites, social media platforms, etc)
- Overall quality of the tourism marketing strategy
- Proven ability to attract high visitation
- Evidence of guest feedback on the tourist services provided
- Evidence of interstate and national visitation numbers (where applicable)
- Evidence of commitment to excellence in customer service

Gaming Venue

– Country

– Metropolitan

This category recognises excellence in gaming rooms within a venue. It places significant emphasis on the overall quality of the customer experience, including food, beverages, and customer service within the gaming area of the hotel.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

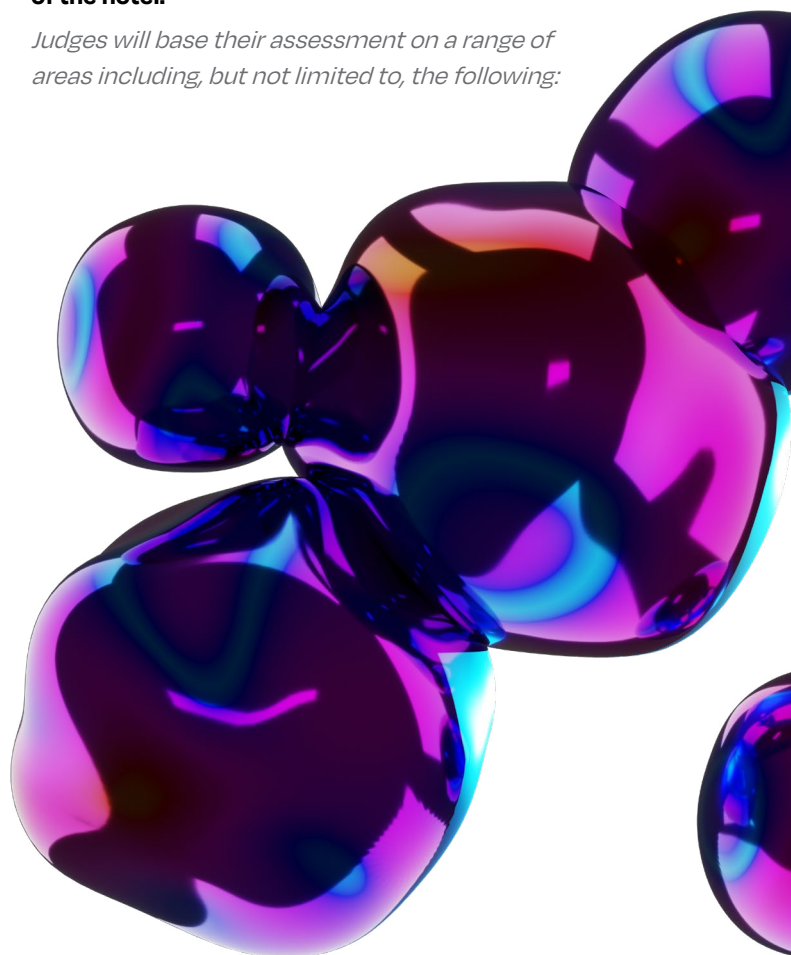
- Range and quality of electronic gaming machines including use of new technologies

- Professionalism and outstanding customer service
- Staff neat, in clean attire and well groomed
- Staff display excellent gaming knowledge and ability to assist gaming patrons
- In-house promotions and communication activities
- Signage including mandatory and optional signage
- Measure of popularity
- Evidence of responsible gaming service and engagement with Gaming Care
- Range and quality of food and beverages available in the gaming area
- Décor and design characteristics of gaming area
- Condition of furniture, fittings & electrical items equipment
- Popularity of the establishment
- Comfortable and positive experience for customers
- Ambience – audio visual, lighting, music
- Hygiene and cleanliness

TAB Licenced Venue

This category recognises excellence in service and facilities within a TAB setting in a venue. It places significant emphasis on the overall quality of the customer experience, including food, beverages, customer service specific to the TAB facilities area of the hotel.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:



- Professionalism and outstanding customer service
- Staff neat, in clean attire and well groomed
- Staff knowledge and ability to assist in TAB area
- Range and quality of food and beverages
- Décor and design characteristics
- Condition of furniture, fittings & electrical equipment
- Popularity of the establishment
- Comfortable and positive experience for customers
- Ambience – audio visual, lighting, music
- Hygiene and cleanliness
- Lounge/seating area available for TAB patrons
- Bar area near TAB area
- In-house promotions and communication activities
- Effective Signage

Marketing & Communication

– Accommodation Division

– General Division

This category recognises venue excellence regarding the approach taken to market their venue via several effective forms of marketing and communication. The judges are looking for innovation, relevance, and effectiveness in delivery.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Evidence of marketing strategy and plan
- Research and planning to achieve marketing strategy
- Marketing activity relevant to size of hotel operation
- Consistency of in-house marketing
- Effective use of social and digital media including websites
- Quality of promotion collateral
- Evidence of effectiveness of marketing activity

Deluxe Pub Accommodation

This category recognises hotels that have accommodation as a standalone offer or branded as part of the overall hotel as a deluxe experience. Private bathroom facilities, dining and bar facilities must be available to guests onsite. To be eligible for this category, the room must reflect a deluxe pub accommodation product. Nominees in this category will be invoiced by the AHA|SA for the cost for one night's accommodation including breakfast as part of the judging process. Further details provided at time of nomination.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

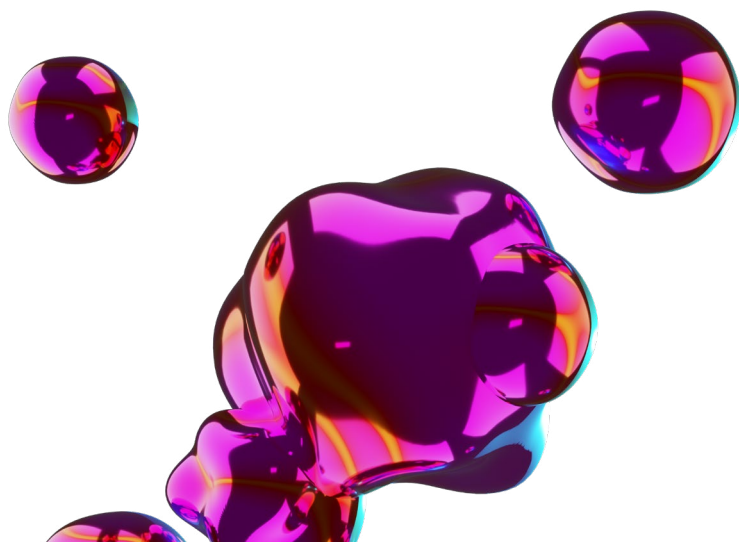
- Hotel facilities, ambience, and décor
- Ease of reservation and accuracy at time of check-in
- Customer service throughout the venue
- Guest room facilities
- Bathroom facilities
- Housekeeping and general cleanliness
- Food and beverage offerings at venue
- Evidence of environmental sustainability practices
- Booking methods and customer experience
- Overall customer experience

Mid-Range Accommodation

Entrants must have 3 to 3.5 star accommodation located within a licensed area. This category recognises hotels offering quality accommodation and service at the level specified. Nominees in this category will be invoiced by the AHA|SA for the cost for one night's accommodation including breakfast as part of judging process. Further details provided at time of nomination.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Hotel facilities, ambience, and décor
- Ease of reservation and accuracy at time of check-in
- Customer service throughout the venue
- Guest room facilities
- Bathroom facilities
- Housekeeping and general cleanliness
- Food and beverage offerings at venue
- Evidence of environmental sustainability practices
- Booking methods and customer experience
- Overall customer experience



Suite/Apartment Accommodation

This category recognises hotels offering excellence in suite or apartment style accommodation. This accommodation style must offer a kitchen or kitchenette. Nominees in this category will be invoiced by the AHA|SA for the cost for one night's accommodation including breakfast as part of the assessment. Details of this will be discussed with venue at the time of nomination.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Hotel facilities, ambience and décor
- Ease of reservation and accuracy at time of check-in
- Customer service throughout the venue
- Guest Room facilities
- Bathroom facilities
- Housekeeping and general cleanliness
- Food and Beverage offerings at venue
- Kitchen facilities
- Evidence of environmental sustainability practices
- Booking methods and customer experience
- Overall customer experience

Superior Accommodation

All entrants must have 4-to-4.5-star accommodation located within their licensed area. This category recognises hotels offering superior style accommodation. Finalists in this category will demonstrate a range of services and facilities which are deemed to be above average in quality. Nominees in this category will be invoiced by the AHA|SA for the cost for one night's accommodation including breakfast as part of judging process. Further details provided at time of nomination.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Hotel facilities, ambience and décor
- Ease of reservation and accuracy at time of check-in
- Customer service throughout the venue
- Guest room facilities
- Bathroom facilities
- Housekeeping and general cleanliness
- Food and Beverage offerings at venue
- Breakfast offerings

- Evidence of environmental sustainability practices
- Booking methods and customer experience
- Hotel bar facilities and service
- Overall customer experience

Deluxe Accommodation

All entrants must have 4.5–5 star accommodation and above located within licensed area.

This category recognises hotels offering deluxe style 4.5-5 star accommodation. Nominees in this category represent the very finest in service and facilities available in hotel accommodation, including but not limited to, a concierge. Special attention will be given to service and those little extras that make the guest experience a memorable one. Nominees in this category will be invoiced by the AHA|SA for the cost for one night's accommodation including breakfast as part of the assessment. Details of this will be discussed with the venue at the time of nomination.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Hotel facilities, ambience, and décor
- Ease of reservation and accuracy at time of check-in
- Customer service throughout the venue
- Guest room facilities
- Bathroom facilities
- Housekeeping and general cleanliness
- Food and Beverage offerings at venue
- Breakfast offerings
- Concierge services
- Evidence of environmental sustainability practices
- Booking methods and customer experience
- Overall customer experience

Luxury Accommodation

This category recognises hotels offering luxury style 5+ star accommodation. Nominees in this category represent the very finest in service and facilities available in hotel accommodation. Special attention will be given to service and luxury extras that make the guest experience a memorable one. Nominees in this category will be invoiced by the AHA|SA for the cost for one night's accommodation including breakfast as part of the assessment. Details of this will be discussed with the venue at the time of nomination.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Hotel facilities, ambience, and décor
- Ease of reservation and accuracy at time of check-in
- Customer service throughout the venue
- Guest Room facilities
- Bathroom facilities
- Housekeeping and general cleanliness
- Food and Beverage offerings at venue
- Offering of in-room dining and beverage experiences
- Concierge services
- Turn down services
- Luxury services and special experiences
- Evidence of environmental sustainability practices
- Booking methods and customer experience
- Overall customer experience

Redeveloped Hotel

– Accommodation Division

– General Division - Country

– General Division - Metropolitan

This category recognises innovation and effectiveness in a redeveloped general division hotel.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Innovation in refurbishment
- Quality of finish and attention to detail
- Refurbishment is appropriate to clientele
- Re-styling led to improved staff efficiency
- Financial growth from redevelopment
- Overall appearance
- Evidence of environmental sustainability practices

Outstanding Community Service & Achievement

This category is to recognise excellence by a venue in providing a wide range of support for their local community. PLEASE NOTE: Judging for this category will be based solely on the written submission.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

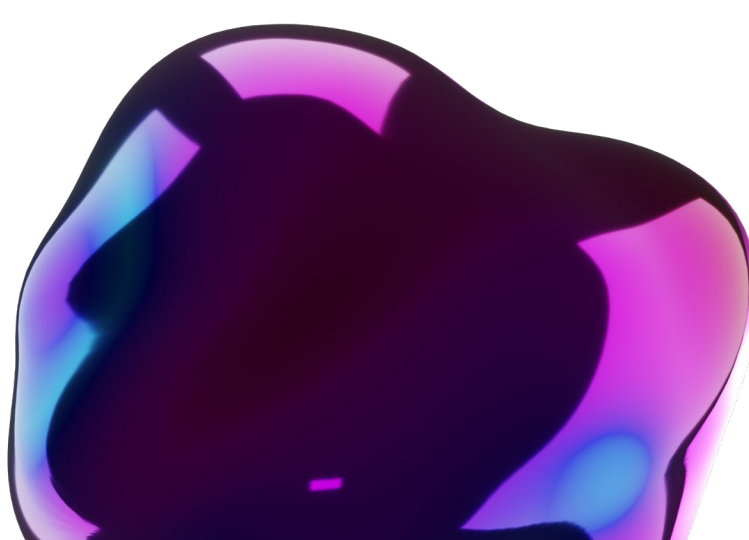
- Active sponsorship and support of community groups
- Promotion of hotel industry to community and groups
- Participation in the local community
- Demonstrate the high profile the hotel has achieved through community work; e.g. copy of correspondence with local newspapers, Members of Parliament, local councils, etc.
- Funds collected and reinvested in the local community

Outstanding Achievement In Training

This category recognises venues that have a demonstrated a commitment to improving customer services and experiences through employee training. PLEASE NOTE: Judging for this category will rely on the written submission.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Contribution to professionalism in the hotel industry
- Training initiatives meet industry needs
- Conducting internal and external training
- Engagement with training organisations or others where applicable
- Retention of staff because of initiatives
- Level of multi-skilled staff as direct result of training
- Assessment of training and skills



Employee Excellence In Service

- Accommodation Division
- General Division

This category recognises excellence in a hotel employee from any department within the hotel operation. The employee is considered to always offer outstanding service. Nominations must include a CV and a letter of recommendation from the nominees employer. Judging will include a recorded video interview with further details to be provided.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Demonstrated knowledge, expertise, interest, involvement and ambitions in the hotel industry
- Examples of hotel education, formal and informal learning

Chef of the Year

- Accommodation Division
- General Division

This category will recognise a Chef who is leading the way with kitchen management skills and food innovation. Nominations must include a CV and a letter of recommendation from the nominees employer. Judging will include a recorded video interview with further details to be provided.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Future aspirations within the industry
- Contributions to the community or industry
- Diversity in work history and experience
- Professional attitude
- Demonstrated knowledge, expertise, interest, involvement and ambitions in the hotel industry
- Examples of hotel education, formal and informal learning

Hotel Industry Rising Star

- Accommodation Division
- General Division

This category is to reward a hotel employee (aged 30 or under) who has displayed professional excellence within the industry. This individual award is judged on the development undertaken by the individual, commitment to the industry, ambition, and career aspirations. Nominations must include a CV and a letter of recommendation from the nominees employer. Judging will include a recorded video interview with further details to be provided.

Judges will base their assessment on a range of areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Future aspirations within the industry
- Contributions to the community or industry;
- Professional attitude
- Demonstrated knowledge, expertise, interest, involvement and ambitions in the hotel industry
- Examples of hotel education, formal and informal learning

Overall Hotel Of The Year

- Accommodation Division
- General Division - Country
- General Division - Metropolitan

This category recognises venues that deliver excellence across all areas of their operation.

Venues will have demonstrated innovation, professionalism and will have delivered the highest levels of excellence within customer service.

Venues will be delivering a good range of high-quality services and will set the benchmark in hotel and hospitality excellence.