

JUDGING CRITERIA

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Industry Support Partner of the Year presented by Foghorn Brewery
Recognising an individual or business that supports Newcastle's tourism and hospitality services.

Criteria:

- **Contribution to the Industry (30%)** – Demonstrates significant support for tourism and hospitality businesses through partnerships, sponsorships, or initiatives.
- **Innovation & Problem Solving (25%)** – Introduces creative solutions that enhance industry growth or address sector challenges.
- **Collaboration & Community Engagement (25%)** – Works closely with local businesses, government, or industry bodies to foster growth and success.
- **Impact & Measurable Outcomes (20%)** – Evidence of tangible benefits for the local tourism and hospitality sector.

Inclusive Tourism & Hospitality Operator of the Year presented by Wilderluxe

Recognising operators who excel in inclusivity, ensuring every guest feels valued.

Criteria:

- **Accessibility & Inclusion Initiatives (35%)** – Implements effective measures to cater to diverse abilities, backgrounds, and needs.
- **Customer Experience (30%)** – Demonstrates a commitment to creating welcoming, inclusive experiences for all guests.
- **Community & Cultural Engagement (20%)** – Actively promotes diversity and inclusivity within the local community and workforce.
- **Measurable Impact (15%)** – Evidence of increased accessibility, satisfaction, or diversity within customer and staff demographics.

Best New Visitor Economy Business presented by Earp Distilling Co

For a business or individual that started within the last 12 months and made an outstanding contribution to the visitor economy.

Criteria:

- **Innovation & Unique Offerings (30%)** – Offers a new, unique, or enhanced experience that attracts visitors.
- **Economic Contribution (30%)** – Demonstrates measurable impact on Newcastle's visitor economy (e.g., revenue, employment, visitor numbers).
- **Sustainability & Community Engagement (20%)** – Implements responsible business practices and engages with local suppliers, workforce, or initiatives.
- **Growth & Future Potential (20%)** – Has a clear business strategy for ongoing success and development.

Best Tourism Experience presented by Newcastle Airport

Recognising the top visitor experience in Newcastle, whether it's an attraction, tour, or event.

Criteria:

- **Outstanding Visitor Experience (40%)** – Delivers a memorable, high-quality, and engaging experience that exceeds visitor expectations.
- **Impact on Tourism & Local Economy (25%)** – Attracts visitors, boosts Newcastle's tourism profile, and positively contributes to the local economy.
- **Innovation & Uniqueness (25%)** – Showcases originality, creativity, or a distinctive approach that sets it apart from other experiences.
- **Marketing & Community Engagement (10%)** – Effectively promotes the experience, engages with audiences, and strengthens Newcastle's tourism appeal.

Best Events and Festivals presented by Quest Apartments

Recognising a standout event or festival that has significantly contributed to the local tourism economy.

Criteria:

- **Visitor Experience & Engagement (40%)** – Delivers an outstanding, well-organised event that captivates attendees and receives high satisfaction.
- **Impact on Tourism & Economy (25%)** – Attracts visitors, boosts local businesses, and enhances Newcastle's reputation as a vibrant destination.
- **Creativity & Uniqueness (25%)** – Showcases innovative programming, cultural significance, or a distinctive theme that sets it apart.
- **Marketing & Community Engagement (10%)** – Effectively promotes the event, engages the local community, and maximises audience reach.

Culinary Excellence presented by PSP Hospitality Supplies

For the restaurant, café, or food experience that has elevated Newcastle's culinary reputation.

Criteria:

- **Exceptional Quality & Taste (40%)** – Delivers outstanding food quality, flavour, and presentation that showcase culinary expertise.
- **Impact on Newcastle's Food Scene (25%)** – Enhances the city's reputation as a top dining destination and contributes to the local food culture.
- **Innovation & Sustainability (25%)** – Demonstrates creativity in menu design while prioritising ethical sourcing using local suppliers and sustainable practices.
- **Marketing & Customer Engagement (10%)** – Effectively promotes and engages its culinary experience through strong branding, marketing, and visitor engagement and elevates Newcastle's food culture.

Outstanding Accommodation Provider presented by Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club

Awarding excellence in the hospitality industry including hotels, B&Bs, and short-term rentals.

Criteria:

- **Quality of Accommodation (30%)** – Provides outstanding service, comfort, and amenities and demonstrates high standards in cleanliness, amenities, and comfort.
- **Guest Experience & Satisfaction (30%)** – Evidenced by guest feedback, reviews, and ratings.

- **Sustainability & Adaptability (20%)** – Implements eco-friendly initiatives and/or adapts its services to suit guest needs.
- **Impact on Tourism & Local Economy (20%)** – Contributes to Newcastle's tourism growth by attracting visitors and supporting local businesses.

Emerging Hospitality & Tourism Leader presented by Newcastle Business School, University of Newcastle

An achievement for a young professional or new business making waves in the sector.

Criteria:

- **Leadership & Initiative (35%)** – Demonstrates strong leadership qualities and ability to drive change.
- **Industry Impact (30%)** – Clear evidence of positive contributions to Newcastle's tourism/hospitality sector.
- **Professional Growth & Development (20%)** – Actively pursues career development and training.
- **Collaboration & Networking (15%)** – Engages with industry peers and stakeholders to drive growth and innovation.

Customer Service Champion presented by Peter Drayton Wines

Recognising the employee or business that consistently delivers outstanding service.

Criteria:

- **Consistency in Excellence (35%)** – Consistently provides high-quality, memorable customer service.
- **Customer Feedback & Reviews (30%)** – Evidence of exceptional customer satisfaction (testimonials, ratings, mystery shopper results).
- **Problem-Solving & Adaptability (20%)** – Ability to handle challenges and exceed customer expectations.
- **Industry Reputation & Community Impact (15%)** – Recognised by peers or the industry for service excellence.

Employer of the Year presented by Paramount Liquor

Awarding an employer that ensures their guests have the best experience while remaining resilient in the face of new challenges.

Criteria:

- **Workplace Culture & Employee Satisfaction (35%)** – Demonstrates a commitment to staff well-being, training, and professional growth.
- **Innovation & Adaptability (25%)** – Successfully navigates industry challenges and implements innovative workforce solutions.

- **Sustainability & Social Responsibility (20%)** – Supports community initiatives and promotes ethical business practices.
- **Business Growth & Guest Satisfaction (20%)** – Shows strong business performance with consistently high guest satisfaction.

Employee of the Year presented by Good Food Distributors

Honouring someone who has taken their commitment and dedication to the next level.

Criteria:

- **Dedication & Passion (35%)** – Shows exceptional commitment to their role and industry.
- **Customer & Peer Recognition (30%)** – Acknowledged by guests and colleagues for outstanding service.
- **Problem-Solving & Initiative (20%)** – Demonstrates leadership, innovation, or creative problem-solving in the workplace.
- **Professional Growth (15%)** – Actively pursues career development and industry engagement.

Industry Leader of the Year presented by Soqual

Honouring an individual who has dedicated significant effort over the past year to the growth and success of Newcastle's tourism industry.

Criteria:

- **Impact & Contribution (35%)** – Demonstrates outstanding leadership and dedication to driving growth, innovation, and success in Newcastle's tourism industry.
- **Innovation & Vision (25%)** – Introduces forward-thinking ideas, strategies, or initiatives that have positively influenced the sector.
- **Collaboration & Community Engagement (25%)** – Actively engages with industry partners, local businesses, and the community to foster tourism development.
- **Leadership & Development (15%)** – Earns respect through strong leadership by inspiring others, fostering individuals growth, and developing talent.