



2026 Bass Coast Business Awards

Terms and Conditions

The Bass Coast Business Awards honour and celebrate the excellence, success, and innovation of businesses and events within the Bass Coast Shire. These awards offer a unique opportunity for participants to showcase their achievements, network with peers, and contribute to our community's economic and cultural growth. This document outlines the terms and conditions for participation, designed to ensure a fair, transparent, and rewarding experience for all entrants. Please review these carefully as you prepare your submission.

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Award Objectives

The 2026 Bass Coast Business Awards are committed to recognising and celebrating the outstanding contributions of our local business and events community.

Our objectives are:

- **Celebrate Excellence:** To honour the achievements and quality standards set by businesses and events in the Bass Coast Shire, highlighting those who lead by example in excellence and innovation.
- **Promote Community and Economic Growth:** To showcase the vital role of businesses and events in driving economic activity, creating jobs, and contributing to the cultural richness of our community.
- **Encourage Innovation:** To inspire businesses and event organisers to pursue innovative practices and solutions, fostering progress and sustainability within our local economy.
- **Foster Networking and Collaboration:** To provide a platform for participants to connect, share insights, and build meaningful partnerships with peers, government bodies, and industry leaders.

Eligibility and Submission Criteria

Business Categories

Registered business owners within the Bass Coast Shire are eligible to apply for various award categories that reflect their operational strengths and achievements.

Eligible parties may submit applications for multiple categories, provided they meet the respective criteria for each. Submissions will be evaluated by an independent panel of judges, ensuring an impartial and comprehensive review of all entries.

New Business category

To be eligible for the New Business category, your business must have commenced operations after May 2024 (i.e. be operating for no more than two years). This refers to the date the business began actively operating – including trading, delivering products or services, or undertaking substantive business activities such as marketing, promotion, staffing or operational set-up.

Please note that the purchase or transfer of ownership of an existing business does not qualify the business as “new” for the purposes of this category.



Event Excellence Category

The Event Excellence category recognises festivals, events, and exhibitions that significantly contribute to the cultural and social fabric of Bass Coast. Eligible events must have occurred between May 2025 and April 2026, attracting up to 50,000 guests. Events scheduled beyond May 2024 are advised to consider submission for the following year's awards. This category aims to acknowledge the dedication and effort required to produce events that resonate with and enrich the community.

How to Apply for the Judged Awards

Apply online at <https://bass-coast.smartygrants.com.au/2026basscoast-businessawards>

Businesses may apply for one or more of the categories in the Judged Awards.

Judged Award categories

The Judged Award categories are:

- Access, Equity and Inclusion
- Business Innovation
- Environmental Sustainability
- Events Excellence
- Marketing and Communications
- New Business

Judged Award application dates

| | Date |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Applications open | 9.00am on Thursday 5 March, 2026 |
| Applications close | 5.00pm on Friday 8 May, 2026 |

Hall of Fame

Businesses that win the same judged award category for three consecutive years are honoured with induction into the Hall of Fame, recognising their sustained excellence and outstanding contribution to the local business community. Hall of Fame recipients are then ineligible to enter

the awards for a period of three years, ensuring continued opportunities for new businesses to be recognised and celebrated.

Terms and Conditions – Judged Awards

1. Businesses and events must be located within Bass Coast Shire.
2. Applicants cannot have financial debt with Council, including any previous unacquitted grants. Please note, businesses on payment plans with Council will be considered.
3. Applicants must have all the appropriate permit approvals in place to run their business or event, including but not limited to Planning, Building, Environmental Health, Local Laws, or any other relevant Council department.
4. Applicants must not have any active infringements or investigations with any departments in Council.
5. Being recognised as a finalist or winner in this awards process does not provide any preferential treatment in future Council applications, including permits or grants.
6. The business must have been actively trading for a minimum of six months (except for the New Business category). To be eligible for the events category, the event must have been held between May 2025 and April 2026.
7. All entries must be submitted online at <https://bass-coast.smartygrants.com.au/2026basscoast-businessawards>
8. The person entering the Awards must be authorised to do so by the business owner.
9. Sponsors, Council employees and members of the judging panel and their families are not eligible to enter the Judged Awards.
10. A business is not eligible to enter if it is publicly listed, a government agency, or has been subject to court proceedings in the prior 12 months from the close of entry date.
11. All entries must be submitted by 5.00pm on Friday 8 May, 2026. Entries received after this time will not be accepted.
12. Entrants must allow judges access to their business for an announced site visit or an offsite meeting where appropriate. In some instances, site visits may be conducted unannounced.
13. No alterations to applications will be permitted after the closing date.
14. The judges' decisions are final.
15. Finalists will be announced on 29 June 2026.
16. Bass Coast Shire Council reserves the right to take photographs and use any part of the application for media and promotional purposes without consultation.
17. There is no fee charged to enter the Awards, however any associated costs, including attendance at the Awards Presentation Dinner, will be the responsibility of the entrant.
18. Hall of Fame winners cannot enter the category they achieved a Hall of Fame award for three years. They can apply for a different category.



How to Nominate for the People's Choice Awards

Nominate online at <https://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/services/business/business-development-and-training/2026-bass-coast-business-awards/peoples-choice>

Members of the public may nominate one business per category.

People's Choice Award categories

The People's Choice Award categories are:

- Accommodation and Tourism Attraction
- Food and Beverage
- Hair and Beauty
- Health and Lifestyle
- Online, Mobile and Home-Based Business
- Retail and Services
- Trade

People's Choice Award nomination dates

| | Date |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Nominations open | 9.00am on Thursday 5 March, 2026 |
| Nominations close | 5.00pm on Friday 29 May, 2026 |

Terms and Conditions – People's Choice Awards

1. Businesses/events do not need to register to be eligible for the People's Choice Awards.
2. Businesses/event organisers cannot self-nominate for these awards.
3. Businesses/event organisers must be trading/operating in Bass Coast to be eligible to receive a People's Choice award.
4. One vote per person, per People's Choice Awards category.
5. Finalists will be announced in on 29 June 2026.
6. Winning businesses/events will be announced at the Awards Presentation in August 2026.
7. Members of the public who vote for their favourite businesses in the People's Choice Awards go into the draw to win one of two \$100 local business vouchers. There will be two winners. The winner's names will be drawn in August 2026 and they will be notified via email.

Privacy and Conditions of entries for People's Choice Awards

Bass Coast Shire Council values the privacy of all nominations for the People's Choice Awards. We are committed to protecting and respecting your personal information. The information collected from participants in the awards, such as name, contact number, email address and suburb/town, will only be used for the purpose of running the competition, including notifying winners, for research and feedback purposes and for internal analysis to improve future campaigns.

By nominating a business in the People's Choice awards, you agree that Bass Coast Shire Council may display your name and image in media releases, website, and social media in connection with the Competition. It is important to note that displaying your name does not give Bass Coast Shire Council the right to use your name or image for any commercial purposes, unless otherwise agreed by you in writing.

Additionally, you acknowledge that Bass Coast Shire Council will not be held responsible for any damage or loss arising from the display of your name or image in media releases, website, and social media.

Bass Coast Shire Council takes all reasonable steps to ensure the security of personal information it holds, and implements strict security measures to protect it from unauthorised access, modification, or destruction.

Participants have the right to access their personal information and to request its correction. If you have any questions regarding our privacy policy, please contact us at basscoast@basscoast.vic.gov.au.

Award Celebration Night

Winners of the 2026 Bass Coast Business Awards – both Judged Awards and People's Choice Awards - will be announced at the Awards Presentation Dinner. The Dinner provides an opportunity to network, showcase services and thank staff.

The Awards Presentation Dinner will be held on Friday, 21 August 2026.

Business Support Contact

For further details regarding the Bass Coast Business Awards, please visit <https://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/services/business/business-development-and-training/2026-bass-coast-business-awards>



or contact Business Support via business.support@basscoast.vic.gov.au or 1300 BCOAST (226 278) or (03) 5671 2211 or via the National Relay Service (for people with speech or hearing difficulties) on 13 36 77.