



Presents:

2023 Geelong Business Excellence Awards



A Geelong Chamber of Commerce initiative

Clever. Creative. Innovative.

Entry Criteria

Welcome to the 2023 Geelong Business Excellence Awards

The Geelong Business Excellence Awards is designed to recognise and celebrate our clever, creative and innovative business community. Our incredible businesses and business leaders inspire us with their passion, innovation, and drive to succeed.

We are honoured and delighted to again partner with LBW Business + Wealth Advisors as the major sponsor of this years' awards and sincerely thank LBW for their support in celebrating business excellence in our region.



Geelong has a vibrant and connected business community. Our appreciation is extended to our incredible category sponsors and award partners. Their generosity and commitment ensures the Geelong Business Excellence Awards are a continued success each year.

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce is proud to provide the platform to celebrate and recognise business excellence. Through our entry and review process, businesses are also provided the opportunity to receive valuable and constructive feedback from highly professional and experienced judges. Our gratitude goes out to our judges for their time and contribution, and we encourage you to enter this exciting awards program to celebrate the ingenuity and success of the Geelong business community.

From the Geelong Chamber of Commerce team, we wish you the best of luck!

Jeremy Crawford

CEO, Geelong Chamber of Commerce



Top 10 Tips – From the Chair of Judging

The most asked question is: *“How do I write a winning entry?”*

1. A winning entry is often one with well-considered answers accompanied with evidence. When writing your entry, have in the back of your mind... *how can I validate my statements?* Use statistics/graphs, industry benchmarks, testimonials etc.
2. Make sure you address ALL the entry criteria with equal importance. For example, don't just provide an exceptional answer for the innovation question. By providing well-considered answers for ALL the criteria, this will put you in the BEST position to become a finalist.
3. Attend an information session organised by the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, which provide valuable tips from the judges and past winners. If you are unable to make any of the sessions, a recording will be made available on gbea.com.au
4. Don't get overwhelmed with the criteria. You just need to make a start! Write down your top 10 points for each question and in no time, you will have addressed the entry criteria.
5. Do NOT go over the total word count of 2500. We do count and if you exceed the limit, you won't be eligible to become a finalist.
6. We encourage you to write bullet points to address the entry criteria—it's not a thesis.
7. Use helpers—you don't need to write it yourself. Speak to the GBEA team if you are looking for writing assistance on 03 5222 2234. Better still, allocate sections to your employees to complete. It is a great way to get your team involved.
8. As a first step, I encourage you to save your answers in a word document. Once complete, then copy and paste your answers into the online entry. It's always good to have a backup!
9. If you are a first time entrant or have never been a finalist in the Geelong Business Excellence Awards (businesses and individual entrants), I encourage you to use our review service. You just need to submit your answers to the entry criteria in a word document to the awards team at gbea@geelongchamber.com.au before the 4th of July. This is a complimentary service, whereby our review judges will read your submission and provide feedback on how the submission may be improved.
10. If you are shortlisted as a finalist, I encourage you to maximise the opportunity. Attend events you are invited to, network with fellow finalists and sponsors. You just never know what opportunities may arise.

I understand many of our entrants are aiming to win a category. However, we also have some entrants who decide to enter each year as a way to improve their business. This program gives you a focus for you to work ON your business. Here is a real opportunity to reflect and gain valuable insights and identify key improvements of your business. Best of all, the only thing it costs to do this, is your time.

Best of Luck!

Simon Flowers

Principal, LBW Business + Wealth Advisors

Geelong Business Excellence Awards Chair of Judging



How to enter: Business Entry

Entering your Business in the Geelong Business Excellence Awards is a 2-part process:

1. The Written Entry
2. The Site Visit

Stage 1: The Written Entry

The online written entry is your opportunity to respond to the criteria outlined below and to convey—what you do, how you do it and the resulting benefit(s) for your business.

It is free to enter the awards and you do not need to be nominated to apply.

The Judging panel will not look at your website in marking your written entry.

The judges will score all written entries and will determine the number of short-listed entrants to proceed to stage 2, where entrants will be invited to conduct a site visit. The site visit gives you the opportunity to present to the judges and add additional information and examples to enhance your written entry as well as show them around your business (if applicable).

Word Count

- **2500 words maximum – including the Business Summary.**
- Businesses that exceed the word limit will be ineligible to win an award.
- The number of words per criteria are just a guide. Business entrants may allocate more words to a particular answer over another. Please be aware that all criteria carry the same weight when judges score your entry.
- Any attachments you include to support your written entry **are** included in the word count. This excludes descriptions of photos and graphs. If you include a news article, the words in that article will be included in the word count.

Online Form

- It is an online entry application: gbea.com.au. You must include your answers to the entry criteria in the online format. Do NOT upload a separate document with your answers.
- It is recommended that you document your responses in a word document to allow you to share with your team for input. Your answers to the entry criteria can then be copied and pasted to your online application. It is always good to have a backup!
- The online written entry accounts towards 50% of your total score

Review Service - Complimentary

If you are a first-time entrant or have never been a finalist of the business awards (including individual entrants), you are able email your written entry (word format only) to the awards team for initial feedback from our appointed review judges. Entries will be accepted from 2nd June to 4th July, 4pm. This is a free service. Email: gbea@geelongchamber.com.au

Once you have received your feedback from the review judges, you will need to formally submit online by the 14th July, 4pm deadline at gbea.com.au

Stage 1: The Written Entry - Criteria

Business Summary ~250 Words

Provide a general overview of your business.

- Assume the judges do not know your business. Explain what your business does and include the number of employees.
- What is your point of difference versus your competition?

The business summary may be used for marketing purposes, e.g. content for media releases, social media, features on the GBEA website, awards presentation, etc.

Please provide the following (if applicable):

- Business website address
- Name of business Instagram page
- Name of business Facebook page
- Name of business LinkedIn page

Note: The judging panel will not be viewing your website and social media platforms. This information will be used by the awards team and partners to tag businesses when finalists and winners are announced.

Stage 1: The Written Entry - Criteria

Important Items

Team photo

It's important that we have a news-ready photo, should we require to promote your business on our website, social media or other media outlets. We recommend a photo of your team (or yourself if you're a sole trader).

You will need to supply us with a minimum of 1 High Resolution colour photo.

- Minimum 1MB or larger (ideally minimum 1080x720 pixels)
- Colour
- PNG or JPEG format

Business logo

Please supply us with your business logo.

- **Vector Formats Preferred:** .EPS, .SVG, .PDF, or;
- Minimum 1080x720 pixels .PNG or .JPEG.

It is free to enter the Geelong Business Excellence Awards
Entries close 4pm, Friday 14th July 2023

How to enter: Business Entry

Stage 1: The Written Entry - Criteria

1. Business Achievements ~400-450 Words

Please note: You are NOT required to state actual results in dollars (\$), use percentage terms (%)

1. Describe your business achievements over the last 3 years.

Tip: Consider the following areas:

- Awards
- Financial Achievements
- Revenue Generation
- Capital Expenditure
- New Employees
- Organisational Restructure
- Changes to your Costs and Expenses
- How do you measure against industry competition?

Please note: The judges are aware of the impact of COVID-19 to all businesses. As a result, you won't be marked down due to closing businesses etc during this time.

Please base your responses to remaining questions on the 1 April 2022 to 31 May 2023 period.

2. Describe innovative practices you have introduced.

Innovation – examples of new growth, products or services

An innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (goods or services), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations.

3. Describe your sustainability & environmental initiatives & accomplishments.

Describe any efforts to:

- Make your power or lighting more efficient and/or use clean energy;
- Manage or conserve water more efficiently;
- Work towards a circular economy by eliminating, reducing, reusing and/or recycling your waste;
- Produce or supply goods or services which achieve positive environmental outcomes (e.g. carbon emission reduction, energy efficiency, reduced waste, reduced material use or are designed for a longer life);
- Track the benefits of your environmental activities (e.g. costs savings, carbon emissions reductions, reductions in water use or waste, improved staff/customer satisfaction, increased awareness among staff/customers/suppliers);
- Engage with staff and/or the community on sustainability and environmental practices through committees/meetings (e.g. education programs about the local impacts of climate change, encouraging the community to adopt sustainable practices);
- Engagement and influence with your suppliers, contractors and partners to reduce waste, conserve water and save energy;
- Describe the processes, including training, for your business to achieve the environmental and/or sustainability outcomes you've achieved.



Stage 1: The Written Entry - Criteria

2. Marketing ~400-450 Words

Describe your approach to:

1. Marketing (including digital marketing).

2. Engaging your target market.

Tips:

- *How did you keep engaged with your clients?*
- *Share how you implemented your marketing strategy*
- *Target markets for your products and services*
- *Make sure you show that you have a coordinated approach (informal/formal)*
- *If you can show success - campaigns*
- *What media advertising do you do?*
- *Sponsorships*
- *Apprenticeships/traineeships*
- *Donations*
- *eMarketing*
- *Online*
- *Plan, do, check, act*

How to enter: Business Entry

Stage 1: The Written Entry - Criteria

3. Customer Service ~400-450 Words

1. Describe your approach to customer service.

Tips:

- *What is your customer service philosophy?*
- *How do you/your staff do it, examples?*
- *How do you manage quantitative measurements?*
- *Show examples of improvement*
- *Guest surveys and feedback*
- *Cultivate service standards*
- *Effective management*
- *Staff recognition*
- *External & internal operational audits*
- *Handling of customer complaints*
- *Cultivate customer loyalty*
- *How do you seek feedback and if so what do you do with it?*
- *How do you measure performance?*
- *How do you deal with unhappy clients?*
Provide an example of a time you turned an unhappy client into a happy one.
- *How do you acknowledge positive feedback?*

2. Describe your approach to addressing inclusiveness and accessibility.

Tips:

- *Social inclusion policies and practice (i.e. access, attitude, choice, partnerships, communication, policy and opportunities. How do you communicate this?)*
- *Physical accessibility (ease of access) within your place of business*
- *Do you use the universal design guidelines? (i.e. flexible, low physical effort, size & space etc)*
- *Accessible information available to your customer*

3. Describe your approach to addressing corporate social responsibility.

Tips:

- *What contribution did your business make to the community*
- *Who did you support?*
- *Which specific groups are you aligned with?*
- *Social inclusion within your workplace*
- *Corporate citizenship - support of local community, traineeships, apprenticeships, local suppliers' purchases*



Stage 1: The Written Entry - Criteria

4. People & Culture ~400-450 Words

*Please note: If you are a home-based business or micro business, please address the following questions with how you develop, support, and train your **own** health, wellbeing and skills*

1. Outline your business strategies

Tips:

- Describe your culture - elaborate how that is embedded into your organisation
- Describe your management structure
- How did you communicate to staff and keep connected?
- Recruitment processes / Strategy
- Staff training and development, individual development. Give details-amount of training in house, external, mandated, regulatory
- Monitoring performance and performance reviews
- Staff incentives, benefits and rewards, work functions, engagement with staff
- Position descriptions & employment agreements
- Provide real life examples (can be expanded upon at site visit if required)

2. Describe your practices to support a workplace culture focusing on health and wellbeing.

Tips:

- Describe how you communicate and model your commitment to health and wellbeing for employees
- How is management involved with health and wellbeing? How do they communicate with staff?
- Explain how your workplace provides activities to support health and wellbeing in one or more of the following areas; physical activity, alcohol, smoking, healthy eating, skin cancer, injury prevention, sexual health, oral health?
- Are resources committed to health and wellbeing programs (e.g. staffing, programs, budgets)?
- Describe how you assess the benefits to your employees and workplace
- Has your workplace assessed the health and wellbeing needs of its workers?
- Has your workplace evaluated or measured any past or present health and wellbeing programs?

3. Demonstrate your understanding of, and commitment to protect the health and safety of your employees and clients

Tips:

- What did you do to protect staff?
- How do you reduce health and safety risks in your workplace?
- How do you identify the risks?
- What are your safety reporting procedures?
- What are your training and supervision requirements?

How to enter: Business Entry

Stage 1: The Written Entry - Criteria

5. Finance ~400-450 Words

IMPORTANT NOTE: We do not want to see any confidential financial data. You do NOT need to state actual results in dollar amounts (\$), use percentage terms (%).

1. Outline your financial management

Tips:

- What are your financial management procedures?
 - Budgeting process
 - Cash flow management
 - Stock control
 - Profit
 - Debt management
 - Re-investment
 - Capital expenditure
- Do you meet with your accountant/financial controller regularly?
- Do you set KPI's for your business? Are they measured continuously?
- Do you use an accounting computer system?
- How do you control your debtors/creditors? Do you know your lock up days?

2. Please complete this table

Please note: We do not need to see the calculations, just the percentage (%) of these calculations. This table is not included in your word count. By completing this financial table, you are demonstrating to the judges that you understand your financial position. The judges are not comparing your financial results with another business (as this is not possible given businesses are in completely different industries).

Financial Ratios	Example	Percentage
Gross profit margin (growth profit/sales x 100)	$\$400,000/\$1,000,000 \times 100 = 40\%$	
Liquidity ratio (current assets/current liabilities x 100)	$\$500,000/\$450,000 \times 100 = 111\%$	
Solvency ratio (cash/current liabilities x 100)	$\$200,000/\$450,000 \times 100 = 44\%$	
Return on total assets (net profit/average total assets x 100)	$\$100,000/\$500,000 \times 100 = 20\%$	

Please note: If you are shortlisted as a finalist for Business of the Year, you will be required to provide written confirmation from your accountant that the above ratios accurately represent your business.

3. Outline your risk strategies and practices

Tips:

- Minimisation of risks may include:
 - Competitors
 - Market shifts
 - Supply chain loss
 - Staff skills shortages
 - Leasing of premises
 - Information technology
 - Personal property security legislation compliance
 - Personal credit card information

Submitting Your Entry:

Official entry guidelines and conditions of entry are available at gbea.com.au

All business entry criteria must be submitted online at gbea.com.au

A coloured business/team photo will be required to be uploaded as part of your entry. You will also need to provide a business logo. Please complete the entry application online. Hard copy entry applications will not be accepted.

Entries close 4pm, Friday 14th July 2023

Stage 2:

The Site Visit

90min Total

60-70min	10min	10-20min
Presentation	Workplace Tour	Judge Questions

If you're short-listed by the judges, you may have the opportunity to present to the judges at a site visit and add additional information and examples to enhance your written entry as well as show them around your business (if applicable).

- The top entrants get a site visit and are considered finalists.
- Finalists will be announced via socials on Thursday 3rd August 2023
- A minimum of two judges will attend your site visit
- If it is not suitable to conduct the site visit at your workplace, the site visit can take place at a selected Geelong location or the Geelong Chamber of Commerce
- Provide evidence of what you have submitted in your written entry
- You must address the entry criteria in order from 1 to 5
- A workplace tour may be useful to increase the judges' understanding of your business
- Judges require the final 10-20 minutes to ask questions relating to your entry/presentation
- Scores for written entry and site visit will be combined and averaged to determine your final score.

If selected as a finalist, you must be available to host a site visit between Monday 14th August to Wednesday 13th September 2023. A date and time will be advised by the Awards team.

How to enter: Individual Entry

Business Leader & Young Entrepreneur

If you would like to apply for the Business Leader or Young Entrepreneur of the Year award or both, you must submit a separate online entry for each individual category.

Business Leader of the Year Award

Open to all business professionals who can demonstrate successful leadership skills.

Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award

Recognises entrepreneurial achievement among business professionals and business owners (aged 18 to 40 years) who can demonstrate vision, leadership and success.

Option A: Nominate Someone

To nominate an individual, please:

- Complete the nomination form at gbea.com.au. You may opt to remain anonymous.

Following receipt of this nomination, we will contact the individual to alert them of their nomination and advise them on how to proceed with entering the Awards (if they choose).

Please note: You do not need to be nominated to enter the Awards.

Option B: Enter Yourself

To enter either or both of the individual categories, please answer the questions about yourself. The maximum word count for each award is 1500 words.

Questions for Business Leader of the Year award (1500 word limit)

1. Provide an overview of yourself including a brief description of your leadership qualities, achievements and skills.
2. What are your key leadership strengths?
3. What leadership skills do you feel you have significantly developed over the last 5 years and how did you do this?

Questions for Young Entrepreneur of the Year award (1500 word limit)

1. Provide an overview of yourself including a brief description of your entrepreneurial qualities, achievements and skills.
2. Outline any challenges you faced and how you overcame these
3. Describe your key strengths as an entrepreneur

Submitting Your Entry:

Answer the questions online at gbea.com.au

Please also include the following in your online entry:

- A current Curriculum Vitae (CV) including contact details for one reference.
- It's important that we have a news-ready photo, should we promote you.
You will need to supply us with a minimum of 1 High Resolution profile photo.
 - *Minimum 1MB or larger (ideally minimum 1080x720 pixels)*
 - *Colour*
 - *PNG or JPEG format*

If shortlisted as a finalist you must be available to attend an interview on Friday 11th August 2023

**Entries close 4pm,
Friday 14th July 2023**

Key Dates

Entries open

Thursday 4th May 2023

Information Sessions

Tuesday 9th May - Thursday 18th May 2023

Opportunity to learn how to write a winning entry. To register your attendance, visit gbea.com.au/enter/information-sessions

- Tuesday 9th May 2023, 10:00am - 11:00am
- Friday 12th May 2023, 10:00am - 11:00am
- Tuesday 16th May 2023, 5:00pm - 6:00pm
- Thursday 18th May 2023, 12:00pm - 1:00pm

Review service open

Friday 2nd June - Tuesday 4th July 2023

Allows first time entrants or entrants who have never been a finalist of the awards to submit their entry early for feedback from the judges

Entries close

Friday 14th July 2023

Finalists announced via socials

Thursday 3rd August 2023

Business Leader and Young Entrepreneur of the Year finalist interviews
Friday 11th August 2023

Site visits

Monday 14th August - Wednesday 13th September 2023

Celebration of Finalists event (Geelong Chamber After 5 event)
Thursday 17th August 2023, 5:30pm - 7:00pm

Business of the Year finalist interviews
Thursday 5th October - Friday 6th October 2023

Finalists Information Session
Thursday 12th October 2023, 2:00pm - 3:00pm

**The Geelong Business Excellence Awards 2023
Presentation Event**
Thursday 19th October 2023, 6:00pm - 10:30pm

Winners Celebration Cocktail Event
Tuesday 31st October 2023, 5:30pm - 7:00pm

Categories & Sponsors



Business of the Year



Business Leader of the Year



Young Entrepreneur
of the Year



Safe & Healthy
Business



Health & Wellbeing
Promoting Workplace



Best First Year Entry



Inclusive &
Accessible Business



Corporate Social
Responsibility



Sustainable Business



Innovation, Research
& Development



Advanced Manufacturing
& Industry



Customer Service



Digital Engagement



Retail Business



Tourism & Hospitality

Categories & Sponsors



Home-based &
Micro Business



Regional Business



Emerging Business
- Under 3 Years



Small Business



Medium to Large Business

Award Partners



HIGHER MARK



Major Sponsor



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Business
Excellence
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