

CATEGORY DESCRIPTION AND APPLICATION TIPS



HOBSONSBAY CITY COUNCIL





We want to know what makes your business special! To help you prepare your application, we have outlined the application questions below and included some prompts to consider when crafting responses.

QUESTION 1

Tell us about your business, including:

(150 to 300 words)

HISTORY OF BUSINESS

- Share the story of how and when your business was established.
- How long have you been operating, and what is your company structure (e.g., sole trader, partnership, or company)?
- Have you experienced growth in turnover, customer base, or staffing numbers since starting?
- Who makes up your workforce, and who are your key customers or clients?
- Have there been significant changes in your business, such as a change in location, size, or market focus?

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- Describe your current operations, including what your business offers and does.
- What are your major products or services, and how do they meet your customers' needs?
- Do you operate in a niche market, or are you in a competitive industry?
- Highlight any unique aspects of your offerings or operations that differentiate your business.

FUTURE DIRECTION

- What are your short-term and long-term goals for the business?
- Outline any specific plans you have for:
 - Improving business activity or profitability.
 - Entering new markets or seizing growth opportunities.
 - Expanding employment or creating new job opportunities.
 - Increasing or upgrading your physical presence, such as expanding premises or relocating.
 - Making future investments to enhance your business operations.
 - Adapting or changing your marketing strategy to reach a broader or more targeted audience.

QUESTION 2

Explain why you nominated yourself for this business category?

(150 to 300 words)

This question is to assess how your business has made an impact towards the award category you have chosen.



QUESTION 2 *CONT.*

Explain why you nominated yourself for this business category?

(150 to 300 words)

EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

This award celebrates businesses that consistently deliver exceptional customer service, going above and beyond to create memorable experiences. It recognises a commitment to excellence at every stage of the customer journey, showcasing dedication to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

TIPS

When preparing your submission for this award, consider including details about your initiatives, achievements, and strategies in one or more of the following areas:

- **Exceeding Expectations**—Share examples of how your business identifies customer needs and goes the extra mile to deliver outstanding service. Highlight specific actions that surpass expectations, leave lasting impressions, and build customer loyalty.
- **Continuous Improvement**—Outline how your business implements strategies to continually improve customer service processes. This could include quality control measures, staff training programs, or adopting innovative practices to enhance service delivery.
- **Leveraging Technology**—Describe how you integrate technology to improve communication with customers and personalise their experience. Examples might include customer relationship management (CRM) systems, online chat tools, or automated feedback mechanisms.
- **Measuring Customer Satisfaction**—Explain the methods you use to evaluate customer satisfaction and measure the impact of your customer service efforts. This could involve customer surveys, feedback forms, or other customer-centric performance metrics.
- **Employee Empowerment**—Highlight how you empower and train your team to provide exceptional customer service. Include examples of initiatives like customer service training programs, reward and recognition systems, or fostering a customer-first culture.
- **Handling Challenges**—Provide examples of how your business successfully manages and resolves customer complaints or challenging situations. Demonstrate how these experiences have led to improved service processes or strengthened customer relationships.
- **Community Engagement**—Show how your business connects with the community to enhance the customer experience, such as through partnerships, local collaborations, or tailored services that meet unique community needs.

By incorporating these elements into your application, you can effectively demonstrate your business's commitment to delivering excellence in customer service.



QUESTION 2 *CONT.*

Explain why you nominated yourself for this business category?

(150 to 300 words)

CREATING SOCIAL CHANGE AND DIVERSITY

This award celebrates businesses that lead initiatives fostering meaningful and lasting positive change. It recognises efforts to create opportunities, drive social impact, and improve outcomes for individuals and communities, particularly those facing hardship, vulnerability, or disadvantage.

These businesses demonstrate a commitment to making a difference through innovative, inclusive, and compassionate practices.

TIPS

In making a submission to this award category, you may like to include what you have done in one or more of the areas below:

- **Hiring**—Providing examples of successful incentives and exemplary practices which encourage hiring and retaining people who have lower representation in their industry (e.g. people with disability, women, CALD community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members)
- **Infrastructure**—Demonstrating deliberate modifications to their business infrastructure (digital or physical) to improve equitable access or experiences of all people especially those facing additional barriers through disability, gender, culture, language, sexual orientation and faith.
- **Initiatives**—Introducing innovative initiatives in addition to standard operations that reduce social challenges and empower the community, particularly those who experience hardship, vulnerability or disadvantage.
- **Training**—Provide examples of how you educate and train staff or the community to advocate for and create greater social cohesion.
- **Community connection**—Explain how you are actively enhancing community connection by supporting Hobsons Bays most vulnerable citizens through an initiative or campaign.



QUESTION 2 *CONT.*

Explain why you nominated yourself for this business category?

(150 to 300 words)

EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

This award celebrates businesses that have demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation, and commitment to sustainability and the circular economy. It recognises organisations that integrate environmentally responsible practices into their operations, reduce waste, and promote resource efficiency.

Businesses in this category are acknowledged for their efforts to minimise their environmental footprint while creating positive social, economic, and ecological impacts. This includes implementing sustainable practices, designing waste-free systems, or contributing to a circular economy by rethinking how resources are used, reused, and regenerated.

TIPS

In making a submission for this award category, consider including details about your initiatives and achievements in one or more of the following areas:

- **Circular Supply Chain**—Highlight strategies your business has implemented to create a circular supply chain. Share examples of how you've repurposed, reused, or redesigned materials and energy to reduce waste, conserve resources, and improve sustainability throughout your operations.
- **Innovative Sustainable Practices**—Showcase the innovative or exemplary environmental sustainability practices you've adopted within your business. This might include reducing energy consumption, water conservation, waste minimization, or incorporating renewable resources. Provide details of how these initiatives have positively impacted your business and the environment.
- **Creating Positive Impact**—Explain how your business has worked to eliminate or significantly reduce harmful environmental impacts. Share specific examples of initiatives or processes that enhance positive outcomes, such as reducing carbon emissions, supporting biodiversity, or improving the health of ecosystems.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships**—Highlight how your business collaborates with external stakeholders, such as suppliers, customers, community organisations, or industry groups, to drive sustainable change. Provide examples of partnerships that have delivered tangible benefits for your customers, community, or the natural environment.
- **Employee Engagement**—Share how you've engaged and empowered your employees to contribute to sustainability goals. This could include staff training, awareness programs, or encouraging sustainable practices in the workplace.
- **Customer Education**—Detail how you've educated or supported customers to adopt sustainable practices. This might include offering eco-friendly products, providing sustainability tips, or creating programs that enable customers to participate in circular economy initiatives (e.g., recycling programs or refill stations).
- **Tracking and Measuring Impact**—Explain how your business measures the success of its sustainability initiatives. Include data or metrics that show reductions in waste, energy use, carbon emissions, or other indicators of environmental improvement.
- **Community Contribution**—Highlight your efforts to create a positive impact on the local community through sustainability initiatives. This could include environmental education programs, community clean-ups, or supporting local environmental groups.
- **Future Sustainability Goals**—Share your long-term sustainability vision and goals. Describe plans for further integrating circular economy principles or scaling your existing sustainable practices to drive even greater environmental and social impact.



QUESTION 2 *CONT.*

Explain why you nominated yourself for this business category?

(150 to 300 words)

EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

This award recognises businesses that have leveraged technology and creative thinking to make significant contributions to their industry and community. It celebrates the implementation of innovative solutions that deliver practical benefits on customer, social, or environmental levels, demonstrating a commitment to progress, impact, and excellence.

TIPS

In making a submission to this award category, consider including examples of your work in one or more of the following areas:

- **Innovative Thinking**—Share how your business has created new value by developing innovative ideas, methods, technologies, processes, or applications. Highlight how these initiatives have driven change and delivered measurable results.
- **Improved Business Efficiency**—Describe how you've enhanced internal processes and systems to streamline operations, increase productivity, and reduce costs. Provide examples of efficiency improvements and their impact on your business.
- **Innovative Products or Services**—Showcase how you identified a gap in the market and developed a product, service, or offering to address it. Highlight the problem it solves and its success in meeting customer or market needs.
- **Organisational Culture**—Explain how you've fostered a workplace culture that encourages and supports innovation. This might include staff training, brainstorming initiatives, or creating an environment where creativity thrives.
- **Creative Marketing**—Provide examples of how you've applied innovative approaches to develop or promote your business. This could involve unique advertising campaigns, digital marketing strategies, or leveraging new platforms to engage with your audience.
- **Community Connection**—Highlight how your business has implemented innovative initiatives to connect with the community. Describe creative activities or programs that have strengthened relationships and delivered social benefits.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability**—Share how your business has demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in response to changing circumstances. Highlight examples of how you've pivoted to deliver better products, services, or solutions.
- **Competitive Advantage**—Explain how your innovation has given your business a competitive edge in the market. Provide examples of how it has set you apart, improved your market position, or enhanced customer loyalty.
- **Sustainability and Impact**—If applicable, describe how your innovation supports environmental or social sustainability. Share how it contributes to long-term positive outcomes for your business, industry, or community.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration**—Highlight how working with other businesses, organisations, or stakeholders has supported your innovative efforts and amplified their impact.



QUESTION 2 *CONT.*

Explain why you nominated yourself for this business category?

(150 to 300 words)

NEW/START-UP BUSINESS (UP TO 2 YEARS OLD)

This award celebrates new businesses in Hobsons Bay that have been operating for two years or less and have demonstrated remarkable growth, innovation, and a commitment to making a positive contribution to the local community. It recognises emerging businesses that are not only starting strong but also creating a significant impact in their industry and beyond.

ELIGIBILITY (To be eligible for this award, the nominee must meet the following criteria):

- This award is designed for newcomers who are just starting their journey but have already made significant strides in building a thriving business and contributing to the Hobsons Bay community.
- Hold an active ABN registered on or after 1 July 2023 within the City of Hobsons Bay.
- The business must be independently owned and not purchased, acquired, or part of a franchise.
- Be operational for a minimum of 12 months and no more than 2 years at the time of nomination.

TIPS

In making a submission to this award category, you may like to include what you have done in one or more of the areas below:

- **Business Planning**—Highlight how your business planning has contributed to your success. Share details about market research, goal setting, financial management, and strategic planning that laid the foundation for your growth.
- **Innovative Products or Services**—Explain how you've identified a gap in the market and developed unique products or services to address it. Showcase the innovation behind your offerings and how they meet customer needs in a novel way.
- **Successful Business Model**—Describe the structure of your business model and why it works. Highlight how your model enables profitability, scalability, or sustainability and ensures long-term success.
- **Business Growth**—Provide evidence of significant growth in your customer base, revenue, or market reach. Use metrics, testimonials, or case studies to illustrate your rapid growth and the factors contributing to it.
- **Community Presence and Business Expansion**—Highlight how you've expanded your physical presence or upgraded your facilities to support growth. Include examples of how this expansion has strengthened your connection to the Hobsons Bay community.
- **Job Growth and Local Hiring**—Share how your business has created new jobs, particularly emphasising the hiring of local talent. Explain the roles you've added, the impact on the local economy, and any initiatives to support employee development.
- **Marketing and Brand Development**—Provide examples of how you've successfully built and marketed your brand. Include creative campaigns, social media strategies, or other innovative methods to attract and retain customers.
- **Overcoming Challenges**—Share how you've navigated challenges or setbacks as a new business. Describe the steps you took to overcome them and the lessons learned along the way.
- **Community Contribution**—Highlight ways your business actively contributes to the local community. This could include partnerships, sponsorships, donations, or programs designed to give back to Hobsons Bay.



QUESTION 2 *CONT.*

Explain why you nominated yourself for this business category?

(150 to 300 words)

HOME-BASED BUSINESS

The home-based business category celebrates the diverse and talented entrepreneurs operating businesses from their homes in Hobsons Bay. This award recognises individuals who demonstrate excellence through their innovative products or services, operational success, and positive contributions to the local community. It highlights the creativity, adaptability, and dedication required to thrive in a home-based business environment while embodying the spirit of entrepreneurship and community engagement.

ELIGIBILITY (To be eligible for this award, the nominee must meet the following criteria):

- The business must be registered in Hobsons Bay and operate primarily from the business owner's residence.
- The business must not be part of a franchise or multi-level marketing/networking group.

TIPS

In making a submission to this award category, you may like to include what you have done in one or more of the areas below:

- **Innovative Products or Services**—Explain how you identified a gap in the market and developed a unique product or service to meet that need. Share how your home-based business has introduced something innovative, distinctive, or beneficial to your industry or the local community.
- **Business Growth**—Demonstrate how your business has experienced growth since it began. This could include increases in revenue, customer numbers, product lines, service offerings or market reach — all while operating from your home.
- **Community Contribution and Value**—Highlight how your business positively contributes to the Hobsons Bay community. This could include providing valuable products or services, supporting local causes, collaborating with other local businesses, or enhancing community wellbeing.
- **Business Systems and Operations**—Describe the systems and processes you have implemented to successfully operate your business from home. This could cover how you manage operations, technology, customer service, and communications in a home-based environment.
- **Business Vision and Planning**—Share your long-term vision for your business and outline the plans you have in place to achieve growth and sustainability. Explain how your strategic planning has supported your business's success and adaptability.
- **Online Presence and Marketing**—Outline how you use digital platforms to promote your business, such as your website, social media channels, or online marketplaces. Highlight successful campaigns, customer engagement strategies, or innovative digital marketing initiatives that have driven awareness and sales.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability**—Explain how running your business from home has allowed you to be flexible and responsive to new opportunities or changing conditions. Share any examples where you have pivoted your business model, products or services to meet evolving customer needs or market trends.
- **Customer Experience and Relationships**—Describe how you deliver excellent customer service and build strong customer relationships, even when operating from home. Share customer testimonials, reviews or examples of how you've gone above and beyond to create positive customer experiences.
- **Sustainability and Local Sourcing**—If relevant, highlight how your home-based business incorporates environmentally sustainable practices, such as minimising waste, using eco-friendly materials, or sourcing products and services locally.



QUESTION 3

What other attributes or success stories help your business stand apart from your competitors?

(150 to 300 words)

Examples of what you might elaborate on are:

- **Innovation and Creativity**—Describe how your business has introduced innovative ideas, products, or practices that differentiate you from competitors. Highlight the impact of these innovations on your industry or customers.
- **Business Achievements**—Share notable milestones, such as growth in revenue, market expansion, or key partnerships, that demonstrate the success and progress of your business.
- **Awards and Recognition**—Detail any awards, nominations, or certifications your business has received, and explain what they signify about your excellence and impact.
- **Funding and Grants**—Mention grants or funding you've secured and how they've supported your business goals or community initiatives.
- **Customer Testimonials**—Include feedback from customers that demonstrates the quality, reliability, or uniqueness of your products or services. Highlight examples of outstanding customer experiences.
- **Securing New Opportunities**—Share stories of winning new contracts, expanding your client base, or entering new markets.
- **Collaboration with Local Businesses**—Explain how you've worked with other local businesses or participated in joint ventures to support the local economy and foster collaboration.
- **Community Engagement and Support**—Highlight activities like sponsorships, fundraising events, or volunteering that demonstrate your commitment to giving back to the community.
- **Trade and Export**—Share details of any export or trade initiatives that showcase your business on a broader scale.
- **Employment and Training**—Explain how your business supports local employment, including hiring practices, youth services, apprenticeships, or traineeships. Include efforts to provide staff training or professional development opportunities.
- **Sustainability and Buying Local**—Describe your commitment to sustainability, such as sourcing local products and services, reducing your environmental footprint, or supporting local suppliers.
- **Networking and Industry Engagement**—Highlight your involvement in networking events, business groups, or industry associations that enhance your visibility and contribute to professional growth.

You don't need to address all these points—focus on the activities and achievements that best showcase your business's strengths and contributions. Provide specific examples to paint a clear and compelling picture of what sets your business apart.