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| General Awards |
| Entry tips and advice |
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* **Make sure your entry is in the right award category.** Please review the award category description and criteria to decide on the most appropriate category for your entry as we cannot review or advise which award you should apply for.
* **Answer all the award category’s specific assessment criteria.** Be aware that criteria questions may change from one category to the other so it is important to read, understand and respond to the criteria specific to the award category you are entering. Your entry should provide information about the individual, organisation or initiative; the reason for the entry; and the benefits that have flowed to consumers or the community.
* **Pay attention to criteria weighting.** Criteria questions that are weighted more heavily (with a higher number) are worth more than others. Details of weighting can be found in the award category criteria.
* **Wait for program results before you consider entering the initiative into the awards.** Many entries are submitted too early. It’s imperative you include reliable data to demonstrate your achievements.
* **Understand the judging criteria.** The judges can only score the entry based on the judging criteria. Make sure you plan your entry around answering all of the selection criteria, paying more attention to the sections with higher weighting. Stronger entries articulate how the work will continue and how it is relevant to other parts of the healthcare sector. It is vital that your stated 'objectives' relate to the 'outcomes' in your entry.
* **Evidence is paramount.** The judges are looking for evidence that supports your assertions, particularly when describing the benefit to the consumer, community or region. Refer to the evidence in your entry and use the attachments to show the supporting data. Never make assertions or generalisations unless they can be supported by reliable data. If it relates to a national standard, you need to demonstrate how you have gone above and beyond the requirements under the standard.
* **Be careful with big claims.** If you say that you're the first, the biggest or the most…back it up! If your entry wins, it will be published, and you want to be able to support your claim as the first/biggest/the most.
* **Is your catchment really ‘the most disadvantaged’?** It is amazing how many organisations claim this. If you claim disadvantage, you should demonstrate your commitment to tackling and addressing it.
* **Have you claimed consumer involvement and participation?** The judges want evidence that you had meaningful engagement with consumers throughout your initiative, which has resulted in better care, better outcomes and better patient experiences.
* **Impact is important.** Top-ranked entries outline the number of people impacted by the initiative and why the approach was an effective and efficient way of achieving these results. The judges are not looking for the largest budgets or initiatives, but rather a demonstration of achieving the best value through outcomes and supporting quantitative data.
* **Tell a convincing story and demonstrate how your story was achieved.** Judges are looking for passionate stories about innovation, quality and excellence that benefit the community. Sell your project – innovation, sustainability and the replicability of your initiative are key points judges look at when scoring.
* **The way you write your entry is important – make it interesting and informative.** It's often the care in writing an entry that is the difference between finalist and non-finalist entries. Take the time to write your best possible entry, include robust statistics – and don't be afraid to blow your own trumpet!
* **Get a fresh opinion.** Ask someone outside of your area (or even better outside the health sector) to check your entry. A really good entry will be a compelling read, using plain English and free of acronyms (or spell it out in full first) and jargon. It's best to assume the judges are not from a health background.
* **More than core business?** Convince the judges that what you have achieved is more than core business or what could normally be expected from the amount of money or resources invested in the program. Explain why your results are significant in terms of the overall investment.
* **Resubmitting a previous entry?** Include new data or developments, and focus on new achievements or results that support the initiative – for example, what has happened since you last submitted the entry? Don't re-enter your submission without describing what has changed since you last submitted it. Remember, if it has **previously** won, you cannot re-enter, with the exception of the Premier's Health Service of the Year Awards.
* **Winning entries demonstrate outstanding patient experiences and engagement**, and that the individual or team have gone ‘above and beyond’ – not just at the beginning or end, but all the way through.
* **Be mindful of partnerships and acknowledge collaboration.**
* **Keep to the specifications in the online entry form** – this is how the judges determine your entry score.
* **Benchmark your submission.** Previous winning entries are set out in our annual [awards showcase booklets](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/recognition-and-awards/previous-winners-of-victorian-public-healthcare-awards) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/recognition-and-awards/previous-winners-of-victorian-public-healthcare-awards>. Can you fine tune your entry to set the standard for this year?

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