



37TH NELSON TASMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Business Awards

ENTRANT INFORMATION PACK

Everything you need to enter the 37th Nelson Pine Industries Chamber of Commerce Business Awards.

The Awards celebrate business achievement and innovation across Nelson Tasman. Entering is free and gives you a valuable opportunity to reflect on your progress, benchmark your organisation, gain independent feedback and raise your profile.

Key dates

DATE	MILESTONE
MON 3 AUG 2026 • 10.00AM	Entries open
MON 12 OCT 2026 • 11.59PM	Entries close (no extensions)
MID-OCTOBER	Judging begins
LATE OCTOBER	Finalists announced
LATE NOVEMBER	Final judging and finalist visits complete
FRI 26 FEB 2027	Awards Night • Trafalgar Centre

How to enter

- **1. Create an Award Force account.** Start an entry, save it and return at any time.
- **2. Choose your category.** You may enter more than one category if each entry meets the relevant criteria.
- **3. Prepare your story and evidence.** Answer each question clearly; explain results, challenges and what makes your organisation distinctive.
- **4. Upload the requested material.** This may include your logo, team photo, media statement, supporting documents and your most recent financial report. Video is optional.
- **5. Submit by the deadline.** You can edit a submitted entry until 11.59pm on 12 October; the platform will then close automatically.

Enter online via the Business Awards website → (when entries open)

AWARD CATEGORIES

Choose the category that best matches the organisation, initiative or person you want the judges to assess.

CATEGORY	WHO IT IS FOR
Start Up Business	For a trading business established within the last two years; open to sole traders and employers.
Small Business	For a business with annual turnover below \$1 million.
Medium Business	For a business with annual turnover from \$1 million to \$5 million.
Large Business	For a business with annual turnover above \$5 million.
Innovative Business	For an outstanding business story built on grit and clever thinking - through people, products or processes - that adds value to the Nelson Tasman economy.
Community Impact	For a programme, project, campaign or organisation making a positive difference in Nelson Tasman. Open to businesses, not-for-profits, charities and education or environmental initiatives.
Young Business Leader	For a person aged 30 or under who excels as a collaborator, leader and entrepreneur, either within an organisation or as a business owner. Self-entries and nominations are welcome.
NELSON PINE INDUSTRIES SUPREME BUSINESS AWARD Finalists in the Start Up, Medium and Large Business categories are automatically considered. The Supreme Winner scores strongly across all judging criteria and demonstrates an inspiring 'x-factor'. You do not enter this category separately.	

What the judges look for

Start Up, Small, Medium and Large Business entries are assessed across business overview, management and strategy, sales and marketing, customer experience, people, sustainability and financial information. Innovative Business and Community Impact entries are assessed on their story, evidence, planning and results. Young Business Leader entrants must also meet with the judging panel.

A stronger entry

- Write for judges who may know nothing about your organisation; cover the essential context.
- Use specific examples, evidence and results. Address challenges openly and explain your response.
- Rather than trying to briefly explain everything your business does, focus on what you think are your biggest strengths and talk about these in depth.
- Make every section count, avoid repetition and stay within the word limits.
- Ask someone independent to read the entry before you submit it.
- Involve your team and prepare them for a possible judges' visit if you are a finalist.
- Highlight what makes your organisation different/unique.
- Tell your authentic business story – share your journey with the judges, and what makes your business/organisation special.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU ENTER

Finalist and judging process

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS
Eligibility review	All eligible entries are reviewed by the judging panel.
Finalist decision	If a category has five or fewer eligible entries, all proceed as finalists. If it has more than five, judges may shortlist up to five finalists.
Notification and promotion	Finalists are advised and announced by the end of October and promoted through Chamber channels in the lead up to awards night. Entrants who are not shortlisted will receive feedback and an invitation to attend the awards ceremony.
Judges' visit	Each finalist is assigned a judge, who will arrange a meeting or site visit of approximately one hour. Young Business Leader finalists meet with the judging panel.
Final decision	Judges assess the written entry and visit or interview. Winners remain confidential until Awards Night.

Awards Night

Friday 26 February 2027 · Trafalgar Centre · Black tie

The gala dinner is the region's largest annual business event, bringing together 350+ people to celebrate success. Entering the awards is free, but Awards Night tickets are purchased separately. All entrants are warmly encouraged to attend; finalists are expected to be represented because winners are announced on the night. A representative should be ready to accept the award and say a few words. Ticket and event-time details will be released separately.

Frequently asked questions

QUESTION	ANSWER
Do I need to be a Chamber member?	No. Entries are welcome from eligible organisations across Nelson Tasman.
Is my entry confidential?	Yes. Judges sign confidentiality agreements and declare conflicts of interest. Marketing material such as your logo, photos and media statement may be used to promote entrants or finalists.
Do I need to provide financial information?	Where requested, yes. Supply your most recent financial report. Financial information is treated in strict confidence and is only seen by the judging panel who all sign confidentiality agreements. Financials are not marked; they are supplied to support your entry and confirm your business operations.
Can I enter more than one category?	Yes, provided each entry meets the category criteria. You can use Award Force's copy function, then tailor every answer to the relevant judging criteria.
Can franchises and not-for-profits enter?	Yes. Franchisees provide information for the relevant local branch. Not-for-profits should explain their funding, purpose, operating requirements and impact.
Do I need professional help?	No. Authentic entries written in your own voice are encouraged, and most businesses do this. However, some people do prefer to employ specialist support with their entry. If you have any questions, Chamber support is available.

[See more awards FAQs here →](#)

Questions or support

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