



HUME BUSINESS AWARDS 2026 – ELIGIBILITY & CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to enter the 2026 Hume Business Awards, the business must:

- be a registered business located and operating within Hume City. Where a business operates from multiple locations, the application must reflect the operations carried out specifically in Hume City.
- be the holder of a registered ABN
- hold all appropriate permits and licences; this will include but is not limited to building, planning and health permits
- not be in breach of any state/territory or local government law or regulation

The 2026 Hume Business Awards will **not** be eligible to businesses that:

- are a chain store, franchisor or franchisee (Independently run small franchise businesses with 1-20 staff can apply)
- are charities and have a primary focus of fundraising
- own or operate electronic gaming machines (EGM) or receive funding or in-kind support from EGM venues
- are a sponsor, program supporter and supplier of goods and services to the Hume Business Awards

CATEGORY ELIGIBILITY

The information below provides a brief outline of each category's eligibility criteria.

If you require additional information about any category, please contact Roz Nadjarian on 0436 932 621 or email rozn@hume.vic.gov.au

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<p>Circularity</p>	<p>Recognises businesses across all sectors who are leaders in circular economy practices. The circular economy aims to improve business efficiency, minimise waste and keep materials and products in circulation for as long as possible.</p> <p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business actively identifies ways to minimise the environmental footprint of their business operation, supply chain and waste production ▪ Using sustainable practices in the use of resources ▪ Pursuing opportunities to “close the loop” on material and/or energy cycles – recycle, repurpose, reuse and redesign
<p>Inclusive Workforce</p>	<p>This award recognises businesses that are committed to employing local people and fostering an inclusive workforce. It celebrates organisations that actively recruit and support individuals from underrepresented communities while also embracing social procurement practices to create broader economic and social benefits.</p> <p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to Local Employment – prioritises hiring local talent, contributing to the local economy, and supporting workforce development within the community. ▪ Inclusive Recruitment & Hiring Practices – actively recruits and hires individuals from underrepresented communities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women - Young people - People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including new migrants and refugees - First Nations people - People with a disability - LGBTIQ+ people

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Procurement & Supplier Diversity – demonstrates a commitment to local partnerships with suppliers, purchasing goods and services from social enterprises, businesses, and community organisations to drive positive social impact.
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>This award recognises significant innovative initiatives that have demonstrated new, impactful and meaningful improvements.</p> <p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Originality and Creativity – excelled in implementing a new idea, product, service or process ▪ Use of technology or Process Improvement – used technology to streamline or transform traditional processes; or adopted innovative methods or systems which have provided a competitive advantage through their application ▪ Impact and Value – demonstrated results of the innovation, for example, tangible benefits, improved efficiency, sustainability, profitability
<p>Economic Growth</p>	<p>This award recognises businesses that have achieved significant expansion, demonstrating strong growth, strategic planning, and sustainable success. It celebrates organisations that have expanded their operations, entered new markets, increased their workforce, or diversified their offerings while maintaining financial stability and a positive impact on their industry and community.</p> <p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growth & Market Expansion – demonstrated substantial growth in revenue, market share, or geographic reach through new locations, exports, or expanded customer bases. ▪ Financial Performance & Sustainability – showed strong financial results and long-term viability while managing risks effectively. ▪ Strategic Vision & Leadership – demonstrated clear planning and leadership, to achieve business sustainability and

	industry growth.
Manufacturing Small Business	<p>This award recognises how effectively a business has used its resources to achieve excellence, innovation and impact in their sector.</p> <p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less than 50 employees ▪ Operational Excellence – efficient production processes (lean manufacturing, waste reduction) and quality control systems ▪ Agility and Flexibility – use of limited resources to improve productivity, respond to customer needs and overcome challenges ▪ Innovation and technology – smart use/adaptation of appropriate technology to introduce new products, materials or processes that improve productivity
Manufacturing Large Business	<p>This award recognises excellence in the manufacturing sector, celebrating businesses that demonstrate innovation, efficiency, and a commitment to quality.</p> <p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More than 50 employees ▪ Innovation and technology – implementation of cutting-edge technologies or processes, developing innovative products or solutions and adapting to industry trends and challenges. ▪ Operational Excellence – efficient production processes, quality assurance and control measures and effective supply chain management ▪ Sustainability and Environmental Impact – adoption of eco-friendly practices, reduction of waste and energy consumption and commitment to lean and sustainable manufacturing.
Retail	

	<p>This award recognises excellence in the retail sector, celebrating businesses that demonstrate outstanding customer service, innovation and operational success.</p> <p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer experience and satisfaction – providing exceptional customer service, customer engagement and loyalty and receiving positive customer feedback and reviews. ▪ Innovation in Retail – creative approaches to merchandising and marketing, implementing unique strategies, offerings or technologies, for example, social media, online sales ▪ Business growth and community impact – building business and community relationships in a highly competitive environment and demonstrated growth and stability through a multi-channel retail strategy to grow and develop the business. For example, eco-friendly practices, local support, strong marketing and branding
<p>Startup</p>	<p>This award recognises Startup businesses that deliver across a range of criteria.</p> <p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must be operational for a minimum of 12 months and no longer than 3years ▪ Employ less than 5 employees ▪ Intend to grow beyond the single owner ▪ Effectively developed and validated a sustainable business model ▪ High impact potential that uses innovation
<p>Transport, Logistics & Warehousing</p>	<p>This award recognises businesses in the Transport, Logistics, and Warehousing sector that demonstrate excellence in operational efficiency, workforce development, innovation, and sustainability. It celebrates organisations that play a vital role in the movement, storage, and distribution of goods while prioritising safety, customer service, and environmental responsibility.</p>

	<p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operational Excellence & Innovation – implements best practices, advanced technology, and innovative solutions to improve transport, logistics, and warehousing efficiency. ▪ Workforce Development & Safety – demonstrates a strong commitment to staff training and maintaining high workplace health and safety standards across transport and warehousing operations. ▪ Sustainability & Environmental Responsibility – adopts sustainable transport and warehousing solutions, reduces emissions, and minimises environmental impact through responsible supply chain practices. ▪ Customer Service & Industry Leadership – delivers outstanding customer service, builds strong partnerships, and contributes to the advancement of the Transport, Logistics, and Warehousing sector. ▪ Local Economic Contribution – supports local employment, engages with the community, and contributes to economic growth within Hume City.
<p>Visitor Economy - Hospitality</p>	<p>Recognises hospitality businesses – Cafes and Restaurants that are unique and offer consistent quality and standard in an enjoyable, clean and comfortable atmosphere to the public.</p> <p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistently delivers high quality food and beverage experiences. ▪ Customer Experience – outstanding service, guest satisfaction, and accessibility. ▪ Innovation & Growth – unique offerings, business expansion ▪ Sustainability – eco-friendly practices and reduced environmental impact. ▪ Community Engagement – local support, ethical sourcing, and social responsibility. ▪ Workplace Culture – staff development, diversity, and positive work environment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marketing & Brand Impact – strong branding, digital presence, and customer engagement.
<p>Visitor Economy - Tourism</p>	<p>Recognises businesses that contribute to Hume’s Visitor Economy including growing products and experiences, driving visitation stays and spend and supports local employment. Examples include attractions, accommodation providers*, public events and festivals, event venues, markets and wineries.</p> <p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visitor Experience – delivers a high quality, memorable visitor experiences. ▪ Economic Contribution – drives spend and visitation. Creates substantial economic impact and jobs growth within Hume City. ▪ Innovation – introduces new or improved products or experiences. Creates innovative and unique visitor experiences with planning for future growth. ▪ Sustainability & Resilience – operates sustainably and adapts to challenges. ▪ Collaboration – works with local partners/businesses and supports the community. ▪ Marketing – promotes the business and destination effectively and shows leadership in reaching local and visitor markets. <p>*chains and franchises permitted entry for this business type</p>
<p>Young Achiever</p>	<p>This award is open to any person between the ages of 18 and 25 who has worked in a business based in Hume for a minimum of 2 years. The nomination can be from a business owner (for an employee) or self-nominated, by a person self-employed and running a business in Hume.</p> <p>Nominees for this award do not need to hold a position of leadership in a business. This award will recognise a young person who has</p>

	<p>demonstrated entrepreneurship and leadership qualities that will position them as a future business leader of the community.</p> <p>Nomination Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Entrepreneurial Qualities – demonstrates creativity, resilience and vision in their business endeavours.▪ Achievements – impacts and contributions to the community or industry.▪ Leadership skills – demonstrates management and leadership skills that drive success.
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