

CATERING AWARDS

Terms & Conditions of Entry



Restaurant & Catering Industry Association of Australia Incorporated trading as Restaurant & Catering Australia (R&CA) owns and operates the Restaurant & Catering Hostplus Awards for Excellence.

1. AWARDS ELIGIBILITY

- Members and non-members of R&CA are eligible to enter the Catering Awards.
- Entries and payments are to be submitted online via the R&CA awards website www.rca.asn.au
- Businesses will only be classified as entered into the awards program once payment has been processed.
- Entrants must have an operational business at the time of the announcement of the awards in order to be eligible for recognition as a finalist or winner.
- Member businesses must be a financial member of R&CA when nominating and at the time of the awards presentation to be eligible to participate in the Awards at the member rate, otherwise the non-member rate will apply.
- Entries will only be accepted if they fit the chosen category definition.

2. CATEGORIES

- Definitions of the catering category are included in the nomination booklet on the R&CA awards website www.rca.asn.au
- Caterers can enter as many categories as they wish as long as the entrant fits the chosen category definition.
- Categories will be split into the master category and sub-categories only if there are sufficient entrants. Not all categories listed will be run in all states/regions. Categories will be determined dependent on entries.
- States/regions may be merged if insufficient entries (i.e. North QLD/Northern Territory with South East QLD, Regional NSW with Sydney and Victoria with Tasmania).
- The National Awards Manager and the National Chair of Judges reserves the right to refuse entries for any particular category if in their opinion, the entry is inappropriate for the category entered.
- R&CA reserves the right to determine the final categories to be run in each state/region once nominations have closed.

3. SINGLE ENTRANT CATEGORIES

- Where a category only has one entrant, the entrant will be merged with the master category.
- Where a category only has one entrant and the entrant does not fit into an alternate category, the entrant is already entered in the alternate category or the category cannot be merged into another region/state (i.e. Sydney with Regional NSW), the single entrant will be given the option to withdraw from the category and receive a full refund if the caterer has not been judged.
- If the single entrant fails to meet the appropriate standard, then no finalist will be announced. If the entrant meets the appropriate standard, the entrant will be awarded an Honourable Mention.

4. FINALISTS AND WINNERS

- Finalists will be notified via email and listed on the R&CA awards website www.rca.asn.au
- Finalists are invited to attend their state awards gala dinner for the announcement of the category winners and the major award winner of Caterer of the Year.
- At no time will winners be disclosed prior to the awards events.
- There is no direct entry into the major award for Caterer of the Year. The winner of the major award is determined by the highest score obtained from the winners of the catering categories.
- National Awards - state/regional category winners will be automatically entered into the National Awards at no additional entry fee. Not all categories are presented at the National Awards, some state/regional winners will be merged into alternate categories.

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5. ENTRY PERIOD

- Catering entries close: 31 March 2026.
- Dates for entries may be varied by R&CA.
- Nominations for the R&CA Catering Awards will be open for entry for 7 weeks only. Late entries will only be accepted at the discretion of the National Awards Manager.

6. ENTRY FEES AND REFUNDS

- Financial catering members can enter upon payment of the member fee of \$389.00 per catering category entered.
- Non-member caterers can enter upon payment of the non-member fee of \$749.00 per catering category entered.
- Payments will only be accepted via credit card.
- Non-members can elect to become a member of R&CA to be eligible for the member entry fee of \$389.00 per catering category. Contact the Association on 1300 722 878 or via email membership@rca.asn.au
- Catering entrants withdrawing their entry prior to evaluation will receive a 50% refund of their entry fee.
- No refund will be issued once the entrant has been evaluated under the RACES judging system.
- Remote catering venues – entries for remote judging's are pending location and judge availability. R&CA may need to withdraw the entry if a judge is not available, if this is the case, a full refund will be processed.
- Additional travel expenses for judging may need to be charged to the entrant for venues located in remote locations including transfers, airfares and incidentals. Accommodation will need to be provided for the judge at the entered site. R&CA will request approval from the entrant for any such additional expenses prior to judging.
- If a catering entrant does not provide four event options to be judged with at least 4 weeks' notice and needs to withdraw due to no judge being available, 50% of the entry fee will be refunded only.
- Payment must be received by R&CA prior to a judge being confirmed and for the catering judging to take place.

7. JUDGING PROCESS AND FEEDBACK

- Each entry in the Catering Awards is evaluated by a trained independent judge under the National Restaurant And Catering Evaluation System (RACES).
- Each entrant is assessed on a set of judging criteria. The judging criteria is included in the nomination booklet and on the R&CA awards website page www.rca.asn.au
- Judging can begin any time after the catering entry has been received online, the entry fee has been processed, and the event options or site details have been provided and a judge is available.
- Catering judging must be completed by each state/regions closing date of judging as outlined in the AFE Nomination Booklet and can be viewed on the R&CA awards website.
- Event Caterer categories - caterers are judged on one event only.
- Site & Industrial categories - caterers are judged on one site visit during food and beverage service.
- Financial catering member entrants will receive a judging analysis graph that provides the relative performance of their business against the average and winning result in the entered state category.
- Graphs will be distributed for all state/regions in November. Graphs will only be distributed to member entrants who are financial on the date of the National Awards Gala Dinner 2026.
- Judging analysis graphs are not distributed for entry into the National Awards.
- Single entrants in a category who are awarded an Honourable Mention will not receive a judging analysis graph as there are no category entrants to compare the judging evaluation.
- Written judge feedback and scores will not be provided to entrants.
- Judges reserve the right to not present a category winner if the minimum standards have not been met.

8. JUDGES' DECISION IS FINAL

- The judges' decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into the outcome or judging process.