

RESTAURANT 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 Restaurant Awards.
- Entries and payments must 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.
- Restaurants must have been open for at least 12 months to enter in the Restaurant and/or Casual Dining categories except for the New Restaurant category.
- New restaurants can only enter the New Restaurant category and must have been in operation no greater than 12 months from the opening of the 2026 nominations (10th February 2026). Entry qualifying period - openings from 11 February 2025 to 10 February 2026. The New Restaurant category does not qualify for Restaurant of the Year.

2. CATEGORIES

- Definitions of the restaurant and casual dining categories are included in the nomination booklet on the R&CA awards website www.rca.asn.au
- Restaurants can enter as many categories as they wish as long as the entrant fits the chosen category definition except for New Restaurants.

- New restaurants can only enter one category - New Restaurant.
- 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 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.

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4. FINALISTS AND WINNERS

- Finalists will be notified via email and listed on the R&CA awards website page.
- Finalists are invited to attend their state awards gala dinner for the announcement of the category winners and the winners of the major awards for Casual Dining of the Year and Restaurant of the Year.
- At no time will winners be disclosed prior to the awards events.
- There is no direct entry into the major awards for Restaurant of the Year and Casual Dining of the Year. The winner of each of the major awards are determined by the highest score obtained from the winners of the qualifying categories. See category definitions for the qualifying categories for each major award.
- 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 National Awards, some state/regional winners will be merged into alternate categories.

5. ENTRY PERIOD

- Restaurant entries close: 31 March 2026.
- Dates for entries may be varied by R&CA.
- Nominations for the R&CA Restaurant 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 restaurant members can enter upon payment of the member fee of \$199.00 per restaurant category entered.
- Non-member restaurants can enter upon payment of the non-member fee of \$399.00 per restaurant 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 \$199.00 per restaurant or casual dining category entered. Contact the Association on 1300 722 878 or via email membership@rca.asn.au

- No refunds will be issued.
- Payment must be received by R&CA at time of entry otherwise the entry will be withdrawn.

7. JUDGING PROCESS AND FEEDBACK

- The National Chair of Judge is a trained experienced independent judge under the National Restaurant And Catering Evaluation System (RACES), who oversees and reviews all entrants.
- Each entrant is evaluated on a set of judging criteria. The restaurant 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 entry form has been received online and the entry fee has been processed.
- Financial restaurant 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 states/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.