Longreach Regional Council
Ilfracombe Isisford Longreach Yaraka

Small Business Friendly

Longreach Region Small Business Awards
Program Guidelines

1 About the Awards

1.1 Small businesses are an important part of the Longreach Region. They provide goods and services, create employment and investment, and help our communities thrive. The Longreach Region Small Business Awards recognise and celebrate outstanding small businesses across the Longreach Regional Council (Council) local government area.

1.2 The Awards are designed to be straightforward and accessible to businesses of every kind, whether they are a sole trader, family business, retailer, tourism operator, professional service, trades business, agricultural enterprise or other type of small business.

1.3 There are three award categories:

(a) Business Excellence Award
(b) People's Choice Customer Service Award
(c) People's Choice Community Spirit Award

1.4 The Business Excellence Award is determined by a judging panel.

1.5 The two People's Choice Awards are determined by nominations from the public.

2 Eligibility

2.1 To be eligible for the Longreach Region Small Business Awards, a business must:

(a) Be a private sector entity with a current Australian Business Number (ABN);
(b) Be based within the Longreach Regional Council Local Government Area;
(c) Employ no more than 20 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees; and
(d) Have no overdue or outstanding payments to Council accrued.

2.2 Eligible businesses can be considered in each of the Business Excellence Award and People's Choice categories simultaneously.

2.3 Council may reasonably request information necessary to confirm a business's eligibility.

2.4 Council may verify eligibility and exclude a nomination that does not comply with these Guidelines.

2.5 Council's delegated officers have ultimate discretion to interpret these Guidelines and determine any matters arising in the administration of the Awards, consistent with the awardee selection processes set out in these Guidelines.

2.6 The decisions made in administering and determining the Awards are final.

3 Timing

3.1 Nominations will open on Monday 2 November 2026.

3.2 Nominations will close at 5pm on Wednesday 25 November 2026.

3.3 Recipients will be announced by Council no later than its 10 December 2026 ordinary meeting.

4 Prizes

4.1 Award recipients will receive a combined advertising package to the total value of:

(a) $6,000 for the Business Excellence Award;
(b) $3,000 for the People's Choice Customer Service Award; and
(c) $3,000 for the People's Choice Community Spirit Award.

4.2 Each prize will comprise advertising credit split evenly between 4LG/West FM (Resonate Radio) and the Longreach Leader (Today News Group).

4.3 Recipients will select the advertising products and services that best suit their business from those ordinarily offered by the relevant provider, subject to availability and the provider's normal advertising requirements.

4.4 Prize credits:

(a) must be fully expended within three months of the prize being awarded;
(b) are not redeemable for cash;
(c) cannot be sold or transferred to another business or person; and
(d) may only be used to promote the winning business.

4.5 Council will not be responsible for costs above the awarded prize value.

4.6 Any unused credit remaining at the end of the redemption period will expire.

4.7 Advertising may run after the redemption period, provided it is booked within the redemption period and the timing is agreed with the relevant provider.

4.8 Advertising providers will provide Council with an acquittal confirming the advertising or services delivered, and the amount of prize credit redeemed.

5 Nominations

5.1 Nominations must:

(a) be submitted using the official online form;
(b) contain the information required for the relevant award;
(c) be received before the advertised closing time; and
(d) relate to an eligible business.

5.2 Council may contact a nominee where information is required to confirm eligibility or clarify information submitted.

5.3 Nominations should provide enough information for judges to understand the business and the examples given in responses, but the Awards are not intended to require nominees to prepare extensive documentation to enter.

6 Business Excellence Award

6.1 The Business Excellence Award recognises a well-managed small business that demonstrates strong performance, continuous improvement, capability and clear direction for the future.

6.2 The award recognises business excellence rather than business size. Nominees will be considered in the context of the nature and scale of their business. A sole trader or microbusiness does not need to demonstrate the same resources, staffing or scale as a larger small business to be competitive.

6.3 Businesses nominate themselves for the Business Excellence Award by completing the application form during the nomination period.

6.4 Applicants for the Business Excellence Award may upload additional supporting information via the online form if they choose to.

6.5 The application will ask businesses to respond to four weighted criteria:

(a) **Business Performance and Planning, 40%**
How do you plan for your business and measure its performance against the goals or targets you have set?

Tell us about the goals or targets you use, how you monitor progress, and an example of how this has helped you make decisions or improve the business.

Judges will consider how clearly the business demonstrates that it sets objectives, monitors its performance and uses that information to manage and improve the business.

(b) **Innovation and Improvement, 20%**
How do you identify and implement opportunities to improve or innovate in your business?

Tell us how you identify opportunities for improvement, give an example of a change or new idea you have introduced, and explain the difference it has made to your business.

Innovation does not have to mean developing something completely new. Judges may consider improvements to products, services, systems, technology, processes or the way the business operates.

(c) **People and Capability, 20%**
How do you make sure your business has the skills and capability it needs to succeed?

Tell us how you identify the skills your business needs, how you develop those skills in yourself or your staff, and give an example of how this has strengthened your business.

For businesses with employees, this might include staff development, training, apprenticeships, leadership or workforce development. For sole traders and owner-operated businesses, it may include the owner's professional development, skills development or use of external expertise.

(d) **Criteria 4: Future Direction, 20%**
How do you plan for the future of your business and prepare for opportunities or challenges ahead?

Tell us about your longer-term goals, the opportunities or challenges you expect to face, and what you are doing now to prepare for them.

Judges will consider whether the business demonstrates a clear understanding of where the business is going and practical steps towards achieving its goals.

6.6 A judging panel will independently assess eligible applications solely against the four published criteria. A business will not receive a higher score simply because it has more employees, greater financial resources or operates on a larger scale.

6.7 The applicant receiving the highest aggregated assessment from the combined panel will be selected as the award recipient.

7 People's Choice Award Categories

7.1 There are two People's Choice Award categories:

(a) The People's Choice Customer Service Award; and

(b) The People's Choice Community Spirit Award.

7.2 The People's Choice Customer Service Award recognises the small business that the public believes provides an outstanding customer experience. This could be demonstrated through friendly and helpful service, knowledgeable advice, responsiveness to customer needs, willingness to resolve problems, or simply through the care and attention a business gives its customers.

7.3 The People's Choice Community Spirit Award recognises the small business that the public believes makes an outstanding contribution to the life of the community. This could be demonstrated through support for local events, organisations, clubs, causes or community activities, or simply through the role a business plays in the community via its operations.

7.4 Members of the public will be invited to nominate the business they believe deserves recognition in the two people's choice categories.

7.5 Nominations will be made via Council's online form and must be accompanied by a valid email address and a short testimonial describing why the business should be recognised.

7.6 The eligible business receiving the highest number of nominations in each people's choice category will receive the corresponding award.

7.7 Businesses should not offer payment, gifts or other material incentives in exchange for nominations from the public.

7.8 Council will endeavour, to the extent possible, to share the testimonial from each public people's choice nomination with the relevant business at the conclusion of the program.

8 Accepting an Award

8.1 By accepting an award, a business agrees that Council may publish:

(a) the business name;

(b) the award received;

(c) photographs supplied or taken in connection with the program; and

(d) a general description of the business and the reasons for its recognition.

8.2 Council may promote nominees and recipients via its usual communication channels.