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Finalists announced for record Business Hunter Awards

Finalists for the 2026 Business Hunter Awards have been announced, with a record number of entries highlighting the strength, innovation and diversity of the Hunter business community.

More than 300 entries were received across the awards program, making it the largest number of submissions in Business Hunter's 140-year history.

Recognised as the region's premier business awards program, the Business Hunter Awards celebrate excellence among individuals, businesses and organisations across a broad range of industries and sectors.

This year's awards feature 20 self-nominated categories recognising outstanding achievement by businesses and business leaders, among them dedicated awards for local chambers, visitor experiences and community organisations, and for areas of excellence including innovation, sustainability and diversity and inclusion.

In addition, the coveted Business of the Year Award will be selected from the winners of 10 business excellence categories, while the prestigious President's Award is a discretionary honour awarded to an individual or organisation that has made a significant contribution to the Hunter region through leadership, community impact or business achievement.

Business Hunter CEO Bob Hawes said the calibre and diversity of this year's finalists reflected the strength of the regional economy and entrepreneurial spirit across the Hunter.

"The Business Hunter Awards continue to showcase the incredible range of businesses that call our region home, from sole traders and family-owned enterprises through to some of the Hunter's largest employers," Mr Hawes said.

"The finalists represent every corner of our economy and demonstrate the innovation, resilience and ambition that drive our region forward.

"We're also delighted to see such exceptional representation in the individual award categories, recognising both established leaders and the next generation of business talent emerging across the Hunter."

The most competitive categories this year included the Excellence in Micro Business (0-5 employees) and Excellence in Small Business (6-20 employees) awards, with more than 30 entries received in each category. The Outstanding Employee and Outstanding Community Organisation categories also attracted strong fields, reflecting the depth of talent and community impact across the region.

Winners will be announced at the Business Hunter Awards Gala Ceremony at NEX Newcastle on Friday, 11 September before more than 550 business and community leaders. The full list of finalists is on the Business Hunter website: [2026 Business Hunter Awards | Business Hunter](#).

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