CONSULT AUSTRALIA

Submission Handbook

2026-27

AWARDS *for* EXCELLENCE

Where excellence takes centre stage



Your Guide to the 2026-27 Consult Australia Awards for Excellence

To Enter

- Entries are open to both member and non-member firms, ensuring the entire industry can compete on a level playing field and celebrate excellence together.
- All entries must be received by Consult Australia no later than Monday 21 December 2026.
- All projects entered must have been completed between 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026.
- Upon purchase of your category or categories you will receive a confirmation email that includes a link to the Awards Force portal where you can undertake your application(s).

Submissions

- All final submissions must be received via Awards Force no later than 5pm on Monday 21 December 2026. Under exceptional circumstances extensions may be applied for, by sending a request for approval to linda@consultaustralia.com.au no later than noon on Wednesday 16 December 2026.
- Submissions that do not come through Award Force will not be accepted.

Awards event

The 2026-27 Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner will be held on Thursday 11 March 2027 at the Fullerton Hotel, Sydney.

How to enter

Purchasing an Awards Entry:

- Click on the Enter Now button 

and follow the directions carefully.
- You will receive an email confirmation and link to awards force, on receipt of your online purchase.

CATEGORY OVERVIEW

Award categories

Below are the categories that can be entered:

- Collaboration for Project Excellence
- Collaboration for Project Excellence – Working with Government
- Client Service Excellence
- Innovation for Excellence
- Superior Sustainability
- Planning for a Digital Future
- People First
- Small Business Excellence - Client Satisfaction
- Emerging Leader
- Leadership in Diversity & Inclusion

Eligibility

To be eligible for entry, all projects, engagements, initiatives and programs, must have been completed between 1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026. The exception being Emerging Leader, Leadership in Diversity & Inclusion, and non project based awards. For further clarification please email linda@consultaustralia.com.au.

Entrants in each category will be competing for the following awards:

- Winner
- Highly Commended

Additionally all firms entering a submission will automatically be considered for the Firm of the Year Awards, outlined below:

- Small Firm of the Year - Sole practitioners or firms with less than 20 employees
- Medium Firm of the Year - Firms with 20 – 299 employees
- Large Firm of the Year - Firms with 300+ employees

Please note that entries will not be accepted separately for these Awards.

SUBMISSION INCLUSIONS

You will be guided through submission inclusions as you work through the Awards Force Portal. Please also pay particular attention to the Awards Category Criteria as outlined in this booklet and also in Awards Force.

DETAILS OF EACH CATEGORY

Collaboration for Project Excellence

Award Description

The Collaboration for Project Excellence Award recognises exemplary project team collaboration initiatives between a member firm and its client.

Criteria

- Effective Partnerships.
- Shared Goals and Outcomes.
- Innovation through Collaboration.
- Positive Impact.

Submission Inclusions

Your submission must include a synopsis/description of the project, demonstrating working within industry. (max 200 words)

- Evidence of strong effective partnerships, including transparent, and trust-based collaboration between the member firm and the client throughout the project lifecycle. (max 500 words)
- Clear demonstration of joint shared goals and outcomes, including defined objectives and the achievement of outcomes that meet or exceed expectations. (max 500 words)
- Examples of innovation through collaboration including creative solutions, processes, or approaches developed through the collaborative effort. (max 500 words)
- Tangible positive impact benefits delivered for the client, stakeholders, and/or the community as a direct result of the collaboration. (max 500 words)
- Pre-approved media release content for marketing purposes. (max 500 words).
- Minimum of three photographs for marketing purposes. Must have permission for Consult Australia to use.



JUDGE'S TIP:

Highlight how your partnership went beyond the ordinary — show real examples of trust, innovation, and shared success that delivered outcomes greater than what either party could have achieved alone.

ENTER NOW

Collaboration for Project Excellence – Working with Government

Award Description

The Collaboration for Project Excellence – Working with Government award recognises exemplary project team collaboration initiatives between government and industry. Government bodies must enter with industry and not stand-alone.

Criteria

- Strong Government/Industry Partnership.
- Alignment of Objectives.
- Innovation and Problem-Solving.
- Public and Stakeholder Benefit.

Submission Inclusions

- Your submission must include a synopsis/description of the project, demonstrating working within industry. (max 200 words)
- Evidence of open communication, mutual respect, and trust between government and industry partners throughout the project. (max 500 words)
- Clear demonstration of jointly aligned and agreed goals that address both public and industry priorities, with measurable outcomes. (max 500 words)
- Examples of creative innovation and problem-solving, including solutions or new approaches developed through collaboration that improved project delivery or impact. (max 500 words)
- Tangible positive outcomes for the community, stakeholders, and the broader industry, as a direct result of the partnership. (max 500 words)
- Pre-approved media release content for marketing purposes. (max 500 words)
- Minimum of three photographs for marketing purposes. Must have permission for Consult Australia to use.

JUDGE'S TIP:

Show us how industry and government worked as true partners — aligning goals, solving challenges together, and delivering lasting benefits for the community.

ENTER NOW

Client Service Excellence

Award Description

The Client Service Excellence Award recognises member firms who have delivered exemplary customer service throughout the course of a client engagement or project.

Criteria

- Understanding Client Needs.
- Exceptional Service Delivery.
- Innovation in Service.
- Positive Client Outcomes.

Submission Inclusions

Your submission must include a synopsis/description as well as demonstrating working within industry. (max 200 words)

- Evidence of understanding client needs by actively listening to and understanding the client's objectives, priorities, and challenges. (max 500 words)
- Demonstrated ability of exceptional service delivery to consistently meet or exceed client expectations through responsiveness, reliability, and professionalism. (max 500 words)
- Examples of creative or proactive innovation in service approaches that enhanced the client experience or project outcomes. (max 500 words)
- Tangible results and lasting value delivered to the client as a direct result of the service provided. (max 500 words)
- Letter of endorsement from the client. (max 500 words)
- Pre-approved media release content for marketing purposes. (max 500 words)
- Minimum of three photographs for marketing purposes. Must have permission for Consult Australia to use.



JUDGE'S TIP:

Show us how you went above and beyond — understanding your client's needs, delivering with excellence, and creating results that truly set you apart.

ENTER NOW

Innovation for Excellence

Award Description

The Innovation for Excellence award recognises member firms who have demonstrated outstanding innovation in any aspect of the design process and excellence.

Criteria

- Innovative Approach.
- Excellence in Execution.
- Impact and Value.
- Industry Advancement.

Submission Inclusions

Your submission must include a synopsis/description of the project, demonstrating working within industry. (max 200 words)

- Evidence of creative and innovative approaches, original, or forward-thinking ideas applied within the design process. (max 500 words)
- Excellence in Execution – Demonstrated high-quality delivery and attention to detail in implementing the innovative concept. (max 500 words)
- Clear benefits and outcomes achieved because of the innovation. (max 500 words)
- Contribution to improving practices, setting new benchmarks, or influencing positive change within the industry. (max 500 words)
- Pre-approved media release content for marketing purposes. (max 500 words)
- Minimum of three photographs for marketing purposes. Must have permission for Consult Australia to use.



JUDGE'S TIP:

Spotlight how your idea blazed a new trail, was brought to life with excellence, and left a lasting mark on your clients and the industry.

ENTER NOW

Superior Sustainability

Award Description

The Superior Sustainability Award recognises the achievement of sustainable outcomes on an internal or external project through innovative design and/or the innovative application of sustainable materials and principles.

Criteria

- Sustainable Outcomes.
- Innovation in Design or Application.
- Integration of Sustainability Principles.
- Long-Term Impact.

Submission Inclusions

Your submission must include a synopsis/description of your work, demonstrating working within industry. (max 200 words)

- Evidence of measurable environmental, social, or economic benefits achieved through the project. (max 500 words)
- Demonstrated innovation in design and creative approaches or use of sustainable materials and principles to deliver superior results. (max 500 words)
- Clear integration of principles throughout the project lifecycle, from planning to delivery. (max 500 words)
- Lasting positive effects on the environment, community, or industry that extend beyond the life of the project. (max 500 words)
- Pre-approved media release content for marketing purposes. (max 500 words)
- Minimum of three photographs for marketing purposes. Must have permission for Consult Australia to use.



JUDGE'S TIP:

Prove your project isn't just green on paper – wow us with smart, creative solutions that deliver real, lasting benefits for people and the planet.

ENTER NOW

Planning for a Digital Future

Award Description

The Planning for a Digital Future Award recognises member firms who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in the innovative application of new or existing technology.

Criteria

- Strategic Digital Vision.
- Complexity and Challenge.
- Implementation Excellence.
- Impact and Broader Value.

Submission Inclusions

Your submission must include a synopsis/description of your work, demonstrating working within industry. (max 200 words)

- Evidence of strategic digital vision though forward-thinking planning and clear direction for leveraging digital technologies to meet future needs. (max 500 words)
- The scale and difficulty of the problem addressed, and how effectively it was overcome through digital innovation. (max 500 words)
- Successful development and integration of the digital solution into the project or organisational processes. (max 500 words)
- Tangible benefits delivered to the project and measurable value or applicability beyond the project itself. (max 500 words)
- Pre-approved media release content for marketing purposes. (max 500 words)
- Minimum of three photographs for marketing purposes. Must have permission for Consult Australia to use.



JUDGE'S TIP:

Demonstrate how your digital innovation tackled real challenges, delivered measurable benefits, and set the stage for future technological success.

ENTER NOW

People First

Award Description

This award recognises member firms who have demonstrated excellence through, collaboration, client engagement, people and culture or in the conduct of their business operations.

Criteria

- Collaborative Excellence.
- Client Engagement.
- People and Culture.
- Business Operations.

Submission Inclusions

Your submission must include a synopsis/description of your work, demonstrating working within industry. (max 200 words)

- Evidence of collaborative excellence through successful partnerships or joint initiatives that have delivered measurable benefits for clients, stakeholders, or the broader community. (max 300 words)
- Demonstrate ability to understand client engagement, by understanding their needs, build strong relationships, and deliver outcomes that exceed expectations. (max 500 words)
- Describe your workplace culture that supports employee wellbeing, professional development, diversity & inclusion. (max 500 words)
- Describe your business operations including efficient and ethical business practices that contribute to the firms's overall success and sustainability. (max 500 words)
- Pre-approved media release content for marketing purposes. (max 500 words)
- Minimum of two photographs for marketing purposes. Must have permission for Consult Australia to use.



JUDGE'S TIP:

Share how your firm's people-focused approach shines. From nurturing a positive culture and building strong client relationships to collaborating with purpose and running your business with excellence.

ENTER NOW

Small Business Excellence – Client Satisfaction

Award Description

This award recognises member firms with less then 20 FTE who have demonstrated excellence through, collaboration, client engagement, people and culture or in the conduct of their business operations.

Criteria

- Excellence in Collaboration.
- Outstanding Client Engagement.
- Commitment to People and Culture.
- Exemplary Business Operations.

Submission Inclusions

Your submission must include a synopsis/description of your work, demonstrating working within industry. (max 200 words)

- Evidence of successful collaboration or teamwork, either internally or externally, that have delivered significant benefits or outcomes. (max 500 words)
- Outstanding Client Engagement – Demonstrated ability to understand client needs, build strong relationships, and consistently deliver exceptional service. (max 500 words)
- Commitment to People and Culture – A positive workplace culture that supports staff wellbeing, diversity, inclusion, and professional growth. (max 500 words)
- Exemplary Business Operations – Innovative, efficient, and ethical operational practices that contribute to the firm's long-term success and sustainability. (max 500 words)
- Pre-approved media release content for marketing purposes. (max 500 words)
- Minimum of two photographs for marketing purposes. Must have permission for Consult Australia to use.



JUDGE'S TIP:

Show us how your small but mighty team earns trust and delivers results, blending collaboration, great culture, and client care into an unbeatable recipe for success.

ENTER NOW

Emerging Leader

Award Description

The Emerging Leader Award acknowledges professional staff of member firms aged 38 years and under (at date of application) who have made a significant contribution to their firm and added value in a demonstrable way.

Criteria

- Professional Contribution.
- Leadership Capability.
- Innovation and Problem-Solving.
- Commitment to Professional Growth.

Submission Inclusions

- Clear evidence of significant professional contribution, including achievements or initiatives that have positively impacted your performance, reputation, or growth. (max 500 words)
- Demonstrated leadership ability to inspire, guide, and influence others, fostering a positive and productive work environment. (max 500 words)
- Proven track record of innovation and problem solving, including developing creative solutions, improving processes, or introducing new ideas that add measurable value. (max 500 words)
- Ongoing dedication to your professional growth, including, learning, skill development, and contributing to the broader industry or community. (max 500 words).
- Pre-approved media release content for marketing purposes. (max 500 words).
- A minimum of three photographs for marketing purposes. Must have permission for Consult Australia to use.



JUDGE'S TIP:

Show how you've stepped up, shaken things up, and made a real impact, proving you're not just the future of the industry, you're leading it now.

ENTER NOW

Leadership in Diversity & Inclusion

Award Description

The Leadership in Diversity & Inclusion award recognises a mid or senior level professional who has demonstrated leadership capabilities and/or is championing change within their firm or in the industry more broadly.

All professionals are encouraged to apply.

Criteria

- Demonstrated Leadership in Diversity & Inclusion.
- Impact and Outcomes.
- Advocacy and Influence.
- Sustainable Commitment.

Submission Inclusions

- Evidence of demonstrated leadership initiatives or strategies that advance diversity and inclusion within your firm or the broader industry.
- Clear examples of measurable impacts or outcomes, results or positive change achieved through diversity and inclusion efforts.
- Active promotion of diversity and inclusion principles, inspiring others to adopt inclusive practices.
- Ongoing dedication to embedding diversity and inclusion into organisational culture, policies, and practices.
- Pre-approved media release content for marketing purposes. (max 500 words)
- Minimum of two photographs for marketing purposes. Must have permission for Consult Australia to use.



JUDGE'S TIP:

Share how you've led with courage, influenced change, and created spaces where every person can contribute, belong, and thrive, in your firm and beyond.

ENTER NOW

KEY DATES

To be eligible for entry in the awards all projects, engagements, initiatives, and programs must have been completed between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026. The exception being Emerging Leader, Leadership in Diversity & Inclusion, and non project based awards. For further clarification please email linda@consultaustralia.com.au.

Entries open: week commencing 13 September 2026.

Submissions due: no later than 5pm Monday 21 December 2026.

Under exceptional circumstances extensions may be applied for, by sending a request for approval to linda@consultaustralia.com.au no later than noon on Wednesday 16 December 2026.

Late submissions, without prior arrangement, will not be accepted.

ENTRY FEES

Entry Category	2026–27 Pricing (incl. GST)
Large Member Firm (> 300 staff)	$1,645
Medium Member Firm (20–299 staff)	$1,078
Small Member Firm (1–20 staff)	$545
Large Non-Member Firm (> 300 staff)	$2,085
Medium Non-Member Firm (20–299 staff)	$1,348
Small Non-Member Firm (1–20 staff)	$765
Small Business Excellence Award (SME members < 20 staff)	Free

Individual Awards	Member Pricing (incl. GST)	Non-member Pricing (incl.GST)
Leadership in Diversity & Inclusion		
Large firm (> 300 staff)	$1,495	$1,895
Medium firm (20 > 299 staff)	$980	$1,225
Small firm (1 > 20 staff)	$495	$695
Emerging Leader		
Large firm (> 300 staff)	$1,495	$1,895
Medium firm (20 > 299 staff)	$980	$1,225
Small firm (1 > 20 staff)	$495	$695

Entry Fees are Strictly NON-REFUNDABLE.

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

- To qualify for entry an applicant must be practicing in Australia at the time of submission.
- An entry may relate to a single project or engagement or be part of a larger project or coordinated projects.
- To be eligible for entry in the awards all projects, engagements, initiatives, and programs must have been completed between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026. The exception being Emerging Leader, Leadership in Diversity & Inclusion, and non project based awards. For further clarification please email linda@consultaustralia.com.au. A consultant may nominate the completion date as the date on which his/her brief was completed or the date on which the whole project was completed. The nominated project/engagement may not be eligible if the completion date is not specified on the Entry Form. If Consult Australia is of the opinion that the dates do not comply, the entrant will be advised. Unless so notified, the entrant will be expected to proceed with preparing the submission.
- Prior to submitting an entry, all Consult Australia member firm and non-member applicants must seek permission from their clients to enter an Award and receive approval for publicity of any Award/s subsequently received. Award documentation and recognition will be accorded to clients whether they are contractors or project owners. ***If awards are withdrawn due to non client approval a refund will not be given. We recommend receiving client approval in the first instance.***
- All submission must be made through the Awards Force Portal.
- Project name on submissions must exactly match project names on entry forms and all firms involved must be listed.
- Please carefully fill in documentation. The information you provide will be copied across to any certificates that may be due, Consult Australia will not be responsible for mis-information.
- Consult Australia reserves the right to return incomplete submissions, at the expense of the applicant, for completion and advise that no extensions to the submission deadline will be granted to facilitate revision/s.
- In the event that an award submission/s is withdrawn, no refund of entry fees paid to Consult Australia will be made. Consult Australia will retain all entry fees paid and will expect receipt of all pending or outstanding payments, regardless of submission withdrawal.
- Consult Australia reserves the right to use all images and media releases provided with submissions for publicity and/or marketing purposes related to the Awards, without further confirmation. Consult Australia accepts no liability for any loss of patent rights or commercial considerations.

JOINT SUBMISSIONS

Firms who submit joint entries will be acknowledged equally - during the Awards ceremony and on Award certificate(s) - only if:

- The joint entry/submission box is ticked on both the entry and submission forms.
- All companies are listed on both the entry and submission form(s).
- Note that when member and non-member firms enter a joint entry, the member fee will apply.
- Only one certificate will be provided, others can be ordered at cost price.

Judging criteria

- Winners will be selected based on the criteria for each individual category. To view these criteria, see the 'Criteria and Submission inclusions' section of this document.
- Judging will be strictly on the merit of the initiative or project delivered – the size of the firm will have no bearing on the judge's decision.
- The judge's assessments will be based on the submission lodged in accordance with the criteria and other enquiries they may wish to make at their discretion.
- Judges also have the right to reallocate entries into different categories based on relevance to category.
- The decision of the judges is final.
- Judging feedback will be provided through logging back into your Awards Force portal, ten days post the awards celebration.

Please contact Linda Gaunt, Head of Engagement at linda@consultaustralia.com.au if you have any questions.