

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Continuation of support for National Capital Attractions Association and the Canberra Region Tourism Awards Program in 2024 and beyond

Proposal: Continued financial support from the ACT Government to the National Capital Attractions Association to provide engagement and support to the tourism industry and prospective entrants for Canberra Region Tourism Awards Program for 2024 and beyond.

The National Capital Attractions Association (NCAA), now through the Canberra Region Tourism Industry Council (CRTIC) has been managing the Canberra Region Tourism Awards (CRTA) program and events since 2018 with the financial support of the ACT Government. NCAA has delivered on this program and event by meeting all obligations of the agreed contract. With a record number of entrants in 2019 the progression to continued improvement is underway to bring normalisation after natural disasters and the pandemic changed the tourism platform.

Whilst the tourism industry continues to face challenges, visitors to the Canberra Region is at an all-time high domestically with international on the return. As a result, businesses are busy and maybe not as prepared as they used to be. The tourism platform has changed, and we need to help businesses help themselves. This can be done with offering support to participate in the Tourism Awards Program and Accreditation. These programs offer self-analysis of the business whether large federal government, local government, private or a Mum and Dad business.

NCAA through the driver of CRTA continues to focus on supporting businesses by utilising the Quality Tourism Framework which includes Tourism Accreditation, Tourism Awards and Star Ratings. This framework enables business planning, along with new modules including Accessibility, Risk Assessment and Sustainability. The messaging and delivery of the program and events for 2024 will be inclusive and supportive to all in industry.

Canberra Region Tourism Awards program delivery will include:

- **2024 CRTA and Top Tourism Town launch;** to take place in early May. Ideally to have the Chief Minister providing a recorded video like what was provided in 2023 was deemed beneficial for our communications to industry and reaching a greater audience. We would like to have the option to also offer an industry event in-person to further support. Specific targeting will also be conducted and invited to businesses deemed suitable.
- **CRTA 2024 program;** Committee to reconvene to provide planning for program, including entrant preparedness and innovation in lessons learned and what can be done to best assist. Training and recruitment of judges and mentors.
- **Industry workshops and training;** multiple workshops/webinars to be conducted to work on business analysis for tourism award questions and categories, this will flow into business preparedness for the 2024 CRTA. Handbooks made with detailed information as a step-by-step guide to assisting entrants. Giving entrants the tools needed to meet what is required for a submission.

- **Accreditation:** Accreditation is a key focus moving forward with a drive from the Federal Government supporting the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) and flow on to state/territories. Base Accreditation is important for all Canberra Tourism businesses to obtain to be on par nationally. ATIC continues to improve the program through ease of technology, new modules such as Risk, Accessibility and Sustainability which have been included and would see our businesses in Canberra continue to achieve and improve. It should be noted that all entrants representing the Canberra Region at the Australian Tourism Awards are Accredited businesses except for events. We will work closely with VisitCanberra and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) to assist in achieving these objectives noting that one of the key objectives for the CRJO is tourism as noted in the MoU with the ACT Government.
- **Mentoring and business assistance;** engaging qualified providers in industry that can provide knowledgeable support and guidance to entrants. This in turn will put back money into the economy and support other small businesses along with better business practices for the entrants. Recommending where possible for the business, writers that are trained in writing award winning submissions to help. The results from entrants that have engaged good writers has spoken volumes in their quality submissions. If we have financial resources, we are better able to support entrants with skilled assistance.
- **Tourism Industry end of year event;** In 2023 the gala event was deemed successful. In 2024 it would be viewed appropriate to continue to build the momentum of the event. A dinner/gala to celebrate and unite all in the tourism industry in the Canberra Region, announcing the CRTA winners and a night to bring the tourism industry together. Feedback from attendees suggests they love the opportunity.
- **Sponsorship:** in previous years sponsorship from businesses in Canberra both in cash and in-kind has helped deliver the CRTA program and events. Sponsorship is better than the last few years however most businesses won't commit beyond the current year, so it leaves it as a year-to-year task to gain support. Discretionary spending is lower due to the higher costs of living, and this is true when it comes to putting on an event.

Ongoing funding

The NCAA is requesting a new multi-year Agreement for ongoing funding for the Canberra Region Tourism Awards Program for 2024 and beyond. A sum of \$100,000 plus GST per annum would assist in the delivery and incorporate an agreed base funding for the partnership moving forward. This will ensure appropriate resourcing and efforts can be applied to the CRTA while recognising and maintaining the success of the CRTA program, and events into the future. It also recognises the work that the NCAA does in helping the tourism industry in the Canberra Region.

Return on investment:

Continued investment from the ACT Government will allow the NCAA to continue to deliver on the Canberra Region Tourism Awards program with additional support for businesses in a time where our industry continues to need our support. The Canberra Region has specific resources to gain knowledge and closely monitor our engagement with domestic markets, to ensure we are meeting the needs of visitors in their planning process by providing quick and accurate information and advice.

The NCAA is committed to continue working with VisitCanberra in providing a quality Tourism Awards Program and Accreditation in helping the visitor economy through our existing relationships. The NCAA can provide continued focus on product development and refining the support offered during a fluid environment utilising the existing awards program and thereby providing greater support for entrants in 2024 and beyond.

The NCAA is committed to the ongoing partnership that delivers the CRTA Program. The support requested through this business submission is vital for the NCAA to remain a sustainable program and assure continuity in an ever-competing tourism market.

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