



The Hive Awards

2026

POWERED BY **Food & Drink BUSINESS**

Recognising excellence in the food & drink business sector

2026 Entry Kit

thehiveawards.com.au

Entries close: 4pm,
Friday 13 March 2026

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About the Awards

Celebrating innovation and excellence in the Australian food and beverage manufacturing sector.

Now in its third year, The Hive Awards seek to reflect Australia's complex, ambitious, and resilient food and drink manufacturing sector by shining a light on the people and businesses driving the industry forward.

"By entering the awards, you're joining a national platform that showcases best-in-class ingenuity, celebrates impact, and highlights the vital role the sector plays in Australia's economy and future. We look forward to learning more about your work – and sharing your success with the wider industry." – Kim Berry, Editor

TO ENTER

Visit thehiveawards.com.au

- **Entries close:** 4pm, Friday 13 March 2026
- **Awards Long Lunch:** Thursday, 21 May 2026
Linseed House – The Grounds of Alexandria, Sydney

Eligibility period is 2025 calendar year unless otherwise stated.

ENTRY FEES

Entry fee is \$90 + gst



Awards categories

The ten awards will celebrate outstanding projects and companies in the industry.

While the criteria and focus may differ between categories, all entrants must show how they embody the Hive Awards' values of innovation and excellence.

BEST INGREDIENT AWARD

This category recognises breakthrough ingredients transforming how food and beverage manufacturers create flavour, texture, nutrition, function, or sustainability outcomes.

BEST NPD

This category recognises new food and beverage products that convert strong insight, manufacturing excellence, and innovation into commercial success. The award is open to new products launched in calendar year 2025 up to the award's closure date.

BEST BEVERAGE AWARD

This award celebrates beverages that combine technical achievement, innovation, and market resonance.

BEST FOOD PRODUCT AWARD

This award rewards food innovations that stand out through creativity, manufacturing excellence, and consumer-led performance.

BEST PACKAGING

This category recognises packaging solutions that enhance product appeal, functionality, sustainability, and manufacturing performance.

BEST TECH

This award showcases technology shaping the future of food and beverage manufacturing.

BEST LOCAL MANUFACTURER

This category recognises Australian manufacturers delivering excellence, innovation, and community impact.

RISING STAR / EMERGING LEADER

This award honours individuals shaping the future of the industry through leadership, initiative, and innovation. Candidates can self-nominate or be nominated by a colleague.

GAMECHANGER

This award celebrates innovators redefining what's possible in food and beverage manufacturing.

THE GOLDEN HIVE

The Golden Hive recipient is selected by *Food & Drink Business* from the category winners.

Best Ingredient Award

This category recognises breakthrough ingredients transforming how food and beverage manufacturers create flavour, texture, nutrition, function, or sustainability outcomes.

Innovation & technical distinction **40%**

(250 words)

- Describe the novel sourcing, formulation, extraction, fermentation, or processing technologies used.
- Explain the unique functionality that has not previously been available to manufacturers.

Supply scientific evidence supporting performance claims.

Application benefits for manufacturers **30%**

(250 words)

- Detail demonstrable improvements to process efficiency, stability, yield, or finished product quality.
- Describe sensory, nutritional, or functional enhancements validated through trials or customer feedback.

Supply images of the ingredient, processes, and products it is used in.

Scalability, commercialisation & sustainability **30%**

(250 words)

- Detail manufacturing readiness, supply robustness, and cost feasibility.
- Outline sustainability gains such as lower environmental footprint, reduced inputs, or upcycling of by-products.

Best NPD

This category recognises new food and beverage products that convert strong insight, manufacturing excellence, and innovation into commercial success. The award is open to new products launched in calendar year 2025 up to the award's closure date.

Consumer insight & market fit **30%**

(250 words)

- Provide a clear articulation of the market opportunity and unmet need.
- Present evidence of research that validates product direction and positioning.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Innovation in development & manufacturing **40%**

(250 words)

- Outline the novel formulations, techniques, or structural concepts used.
- Describe the smart use of ingredients, technology, or packaging.
- Detail the demonstrated improvements in efficiency, waste reduction, or automation.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Commercial performance & growth trajectory **30%**

(250 words)

- Provide details on sales results, distribution expansion, retailer feedback, or repeat purchase indicators.
- Outline the momentum that signals sustained success.

Supply supporting documents

Best Beverage Product

This award celebrates beverages that combine technical achievement, innovation, and market resonance.

Manufacturing & technical innovation **40%**

(250 words)

- Outline the novel processes, equipment, fermentation, extraction, blending, or stabilisation techniques used.
- Describe the ingredient innovations used to improve taste, health, or sustainability.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Quality, sensory & product excellence **30%**

(250 words)

- Detail the robust sensory performance, consistency, and craftsmanship validated through testing panels or industry benchmarks.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Commercial & category impact **30%**

(250 words)

- Provide evidence of market penetration, consumer response, export success, or trade recognition.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Best Food Product

This award rewards food innovations that stand out through creativity, manufacturing excellence, and consumer-led performance..

Product differentiation & innovation **40%**

(250 words)

- Detail the novel concepts, formulation breakthroughs, unique flavours, nutritional advances, or technical improvements used.
- Provide a clear explanation of what sets the product apart in its category.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Manufacturing excellence **30%**

(250 words)

- Outline the new systems, processes, or technologies used to produce the product.
- Describe efficiency gains, waste reduction, or production scalability that has occurred.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Commercial validation **30%**

(250 words)

- Provide proof of consumer acceptance, retail success, category contribution, or export development.

Supply supporting documents

Best Packaging

This category recognises packaging solutions that enhance product appeal, functionality, sustainability, and manufacturing performance.

Packaging innovation **40%**

(250 words)

- Detail breakthroughs in structural design, materials, convenience, safety, or shelf presentation.
- Provide evidence of solving a real manufacturing, logistics, or consumer problem.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Sustainability & circular design **30%**

(250 words)

- Detail verified environmental improvements such as reduced material use, renewable materials, recyclability, compostability, or refillability.
- Discuss lifecycle thinking or circularity principles applied.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Manufacturing & supply chain efficiency **30%**

(250 words)

- Provide evidence of higher line speeds, reduced downtime, improved transport efficiency, or shelf-life benefits.

Supply images and other supporting documents



Best Tech

This award showcases technology shaping the future of food and beverage manufacturing.

Technological breakthrough **40%**

(250 words)

- Describe how novel and transformative the technology is in automation, robotics, digital tools, equipment, software, predictive analytics, or Industry 4.0 applications.
- Outline the clear technical advantage over existing solutions.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Operational impact **30%**

(250 words)

- Detail the measurable improvements in productivity, yield, throughput, safety, compliance, traceability, or quality.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Scalability & industry adoption **30%**

(250 words)

- Provide evidence of deployment in manufacturing environments.
- Detail demonstrated ROI, ease of integration, and future applicability across industry segments.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Local Manufacturer

This category recognises Australian manufacturers delivering excellence, innovation, and community impact.

Commitment to Australian manufacturing **40%**

(250 words)

- Detail local production and sourcing strategies.
- Outline supply-chain contribution and investment in regional or national capability.

Supply supporting documents

Innovation & continuous improvement **40%**

(250 words)

- Discuss how your product, process, or operational innovation is strengthening competitiveness within Australia and internationally.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Industry, community & environmental contribution **20%**

(250 words)

- Describe the positive social impact, workforce development, sustainability leadership, and contributions to regional economies that have been achieved.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Rising Star / Emerging Leader

This award honours individuals shaping the future of the industry through leadership, initiative, and innovation. Candidates can self-nominate or be nominated by a colleague.

Professional achievement & contribution **40%**

(250 words)

- Provide detail on significant accomplishments within manufacturing operations, product development, technology, quality, sustainability, or commercial roles.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Impact on teams and business outcomes **30%**

(250 words)

- Describe improved processes, efficiencies, culture, project outcomes, or cross-functional collaboration by the candidate.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Future leadership potential **30%**

(250 words)

- Outline the commitment to learning, mentoring others, taking initiative, and contributing to the industry's development.

Supply images and other supporting documents



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Gamechanger

This award celebrates innovators redefining what is possible in food and beverage manufacturing.

Transformational innovation **40%**

(250 words)

- Detail the disruptive idea, product, technology, process, or business model fundamentally shifting how the industry operates.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Industry-wide impact **30%**

(250 words)

- Describe the measurable influence on manufacturing behaviour, category evolution, standards, or competitiveness.

Supply images and other supporting documents

Long-term value & scalability **30%**

(250 words)

- Outline the potential to shape the future of Australian – and possibly global – manufacturing.

Supporting Materials

- A minimum of five images is required in each entry. Please ensure images show products and/or processes clearly. Diagrams and drawings are also permissible where relevant.
- Images should be 300dpi JPG, PNG or TIFF files.
- These images may be used in the awards presentation and the *Food & Drink Business* winners supplement.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

The Awards are open to entries from Australian-based companies only. All entries must be submitted via the online entry portal. An entry fee of \$90 plus GST is required for each entry. Entry fees are non-refundable and must be paid at the time of entering. Entries will not be considered for judging if payment is not received at the time of entry. Entry fees will not be returned. Note the entry deadline – 4pm, Friday 13 March 2026. This date is final and there will be no extensions provided. The relevant eligibility period is between 1 January 2025 - 31 December 2025 unless otherwise stated. You can enter more than one category but only if the entries are deemed by the organisers as significantly different and tailored to the specific category. Entries can not be edited after submitting, if you notice an error in your entry please contact events@twodeforce.com.au. Please note: no changes will be permitted after the entry deadline. Please make sure all entry details are entered accurately, including grammar. Details collected through the online entry portal will be used in the Awards presentation and in print if selected as a finalist.

The decision of the judges will be final and no correspondence will be entered into. All entries are treated as confidential. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to another category if deemed more suitable. Judges reserve the right to disqualify entries that do not follow the entry requirements. The entrant grants *Food & Drink Business* permission to show the entries at The Hive Awards Presentation and in the magazine in print and online at such times as deemed appropriate. Finalists and winners will be covered in the *Food & Drink Business* winners supplement using information from the entry. If there is specific information in your entry that is commercially sensitive and should not be published please make this clear at the time you submit your entry. Any attachments containing sensitive information should include 'JUDGESEYESONLY' in their title. The entrant agrees that *Food & Drink Business* and Two de Force will not accept responsibility for errors or omissions reproduced in the presentation or the winners supplement or for work lost or damaged under any circumstances. The entry is a submission from the company. Should the individual designated to collect the award leave the company, another member of that company, not the individual, will collect the award.