

### **1. The BEST BLAK START-UP BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**

The Best Blak Start-Up Business Award recognizes exceptional start-up ventures that display innovation, sustainability, and promise for future growth in the last three (3) years.

Your Business: (500 words)

1. What inspired the nominee to start this business?
2. Can you describe the business product or service in a nutshell?
3. What sets this startup apart from others in the industry?

Growth, Challenges, Achievements: (500 words)

1. How has the business grown since its inception?
2. What challenges did the business face in getting their startup off the ground, and how did they overcome them?
3. Can you share any notable milestones or achievements the startup has reached in the past year?

Community Engagement: (500 Words)

1. How has the business demonstrated a positive impact on the economic, social, and cultural well-being of Indigenous communities and people? Please reference Indigenous employment, training and supply chain activity in your response.

### **2. The BEST BLAK BUSINESS GROWTH OF THE YEAR**

The Best Blak Business Growth Award recognizes Indigenous-owned businesses that have demonstrated exceptional growth, expansion, and sustainability over the past 24 months.

Your Business and Key Achievements: (500 words)

1. What inspired the creation of your business, and how has that initial vision evolved as you've grown?
2. Can you highlight some key milestones or achievements that have contributed to the growth and success of your business over the past two years?
3. How does your business contribute to the economic development and empowerment of Aboriginal communities?

Business Growth Strategies: (500 words)

1. What role does innovation/new ideas play in driving the growth of your business, and can you share any examples of innovative products, services, or processes you've introduced?
2. How do you prioritise customer satisfaction and feedback within your growth strategy, and how has this focus on customer experience impacted your business's success?
3. Can you discuss any expansions or new market opportunities that your business has undertaken in the past year, and the rationale behind these strategic moves?

Business Growth Culture: (500 words)

1. What measures do you take to foster a culture of continuous improvement and learning within your business, and how does this contribute to your growth?
2. How do you approach talent acquisition and retention as your business expands, and what strategies have proven effective in building a strong team?
3. Could you share any partnerships or collaborations your business has forged with other organizations, and how these alliances have contributed to your growth and market presence?
4. How do you measure and evaluate the impact of your growth initiatives, both in terms of financial performance and broader societal or environmental outcomes?

### **3. BEST YOUNG BLAK ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR**

The Best Young Blak Entrepreneur Award celebrates outstanding Indigenous individuals 30 years of age or under who have demonstrated exceptional entrepreneurial spirit, innovation, and success in their business ventures. Nominees for this award may be individuals who have founded and operated their own businesses, as well as those who have demonstrated exceptional leadership within Indigenous-owned enterprises.

Business Success and Innovation: (500 words)

1. Can you provide examples of significant achievements or milestones reached by the business in the past year?
2. How has the business grown or expanded under the nominee's leadership?
3. How has the business demonstrated innovation or adaptability in response to challenges or changing market conditions?
4. How does the nominee stay ahead of the curve in their industry?

Leadership, Empowerment and Community Impact: (500 words)

1. What leadership qualities do you bring to your role as a business owner?
2. How does the business support and empower Indigenous young people, both within the organisation and in the broader community?
3. Are there any initiatives or programs aimed at promoting young Indigenous employees and equality in the business?
4. Can you share success stories of Indigenous young people who have benefited from the business's support or mentorship?

Challenges and Motivation: (500 words)

1. What challenges has the nominee faced as a young Indigenous business owner, and how have they overcome them?
2. Can you share any stories of resilience or perseverance in the face of adversity?
3. What inspired the nominee to start their own business?
4. How do they stay motivated and focused on their business goals?

5. Do they have any role models or mentors who have influenced your entrepreneurial journey?
6. What advice would you give to other young and/or aspiring Indigenous business owners?

#### **4. BLAK CREATIVE AWARD OF THE YEAR**

The Best Blak Creative Award celebrates the exceptional creativity, talent, and cultural expression demonstrated by Indigenous individuals or groups across various artistic disciplines. This award recognizes outstanding achievements in visual arts, music, literature, performing arts, traditional crafts, and other forms of creative expression that honour and promote Indigenous culture and heritage.

Creative Type and Business: (500 words)

1. How does the nominee's creative activities showcase and celebrate Blak culture, heritage, or identity?
2. What unique products or services does your creative business offer to customers?
3. How do you differentiate your business from other creative ventures in your industry?

Collaboration, Ethics and Achievements: (500 words)

1. Can you highlight any collaborations or partnerships the nominee has formed with other Blak-owned businesses or community organisations for projects?
2. What efforts do you make to promote culturally ethical practices within the creative business?
3. Can you share any success stories or milestones that the nominee has achieved in the past year?

Celebrated Project: (500 words)

1. Can you describe one or two of the most important projects the creative has undertaken in the last 12 months, describing the process, story, impact, audience, and cultural significance.

#### **5. BLAK COMMUNITY CONTROLLED ORGANISATION OF THEY YEAR**

The Blak Community-Controlled Organisation Award honours Indigenous-led organizations that exemplify community-driven governance, leadership, and service delivery to improve the well-being and empowerment of Indigenous peoples.

The Organisation: (500 words)

1. Can you provide an overview of the organisation's mission and the community it serves?
2. What inspired the formation of your community-controlled organisation, and how has it evolved over time?
3. How does your organisation involve community members in decision-making processes and governance structures?

Initiatives and Operations: (500 words)

1. Can you share some examples of initiatives or programs your organisation has implemented to address the needs and priorities of the community?
2. How do you ensure transparency and accountability in the management of your organisation's resources and operations?
3. What measures do you take to promote Indigenous employment, management and control, within your organisation and among the communities you serve?

Challenges, Change and Future: (500 words)

1. How does your organisation adapt to changing community needs and challenges over time?
2. What are your organisation's future goals and aspirations for furthering its mission and impact in the community?
3. Can you share any testimonials or success stories from individuals or groups who have benefited from your organisation's services or programs?

#### **6. BEST BLAK MALE BUSINESS OWNER OF THE YEAR**

The Best Blak Male Business Owner Award celebrates the outstanding accomplishments and leadership of Indigenous male business owners who have demonstrated remarkable business acumen, innovation, and commitment in their business ventures.

Business Success and Innovation: (500 words)

1. Can you provide examples of significant achievements or milestones reached by the business in the past year?
2. How has the business grown or expanded under the nominee's leadership?
3. How has the business demonstrated innovation or adaptability in response to challenges or changing market conditions?
4. How does the nominee stay ahead of the curve in their industry?

Leadership, Empowerment and Community Impact: (500 words)

1. What leadership qualities do you bring to your role as a business owner?
2. How does the business support and empower Indigenous men, both within the organisation and in the broader community?
3. Are there any initiatives or programs aimed at promoting Indigenous employees and equality in the business?
4. Can you share success stories of Indigenous men who have benefited from the business's support or mentorship?

Challenges and Motivation: (500 words)

1. What challenges has the nominee faced as an Indigenous male business owner, and how have they overcome them?
2. Can you share any stories of resilience or perseverance in the face of adversity?
3. What inspired the nominee to start their own business? How do they stay motivated and focused on their business goals?
4. Do they have any role models or mentors who have influenced your entrepreneurial journey?
5. What advice would you give to other Indigenous male business owners?

## **7. BEST BLAK TOURISM BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**

The Best Blak Tourism Business Award celebrates Indigenous-owned businesses that showcase cultural authenticity, environmental stewardship, and memorable visitor experiences, contributing to the sustainable development and promotion of Indigenous tourism.

Your Business: (500 words)

1. Can you describe the unique experiences or services your Indigenous tourism business offers to travellers?
2. What key Indigenous destinations or attractions does your business focus on, and why?
3. How do you ensure an exceptional and memorable cultural experience for your customers?

Impact and sustainability: (500 words)

1. What efforts do you make to promote sustainable cultural tourism practices and minimise environmental impact?
2. Can you share any partnerships or collaborations with local Indigenous communities or businesses that have enhanced your offerings?
3. What initiatives do you have in place to support cultural preservation and heritage awareness in the areas you operate?
4. What future plans or expansions do you have for your tourism business to continue providing exceptional experiences?

Community Engagement: (500 Words)

1. How has the business demonstrated a positive impact on the economic, social, and cultural well-being of Indigenous communities and people? Please reference Indigenous employment, training and supply chain activity in your response.

## **8. BEST BLAK SOLE TRADER or MICROBUSINESS OF THE YEAR**

The Best Blak Sole Trader or Micro Business Award recognizes the achievements and contributions of Indigenous individuals or small enterprises celebrating their entrepreneurial spirit, resilience, and innovation despite the challenges they may face.

Your Business: (500 words)

1. What inspired you to start your own business as an Blak sole trader or micro business owner, and how does your cultural background influence your entrepreneurial journey?
2. Can you share some key achievements or milestones that your business has reached in the past year?
3. How do you incorporate Indigenous perspectives and values into your business operations, products, or services?

(500 words)

1. Can you discuss any challenges you've faced as a sole trader or micro business owner, and how you've overcome them to continue growing and thriving?
2. What strategies have you employed to overcome challenges unique to Blak entrepreneurs, such as accessing funding or navigating cultural barriers?
3. How do you differentiate your business in a competitive market, and what strategies have you employed to achieve success as a sole trader or micro business owner?

Sustainability, Impact and Future: (500 words)

1. What measures do you take to ensure the financial stability and sustainability of your business in the long term?
2. Could you share any lessons learned or valuable insights you've gained from your experience as a Blak sole trader or micro business owner?
3. How do you envision the future of your business within the context of Indigenous entrepreneurship, and what goals or aspirations do you have for its continued growth and success?

## **9. BEST BLAK CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR AWARD**

The Best Blak Consultancy Business Award recognises Indigenous-owned consulting firms that demonstrate excellence, expertise, and commitment to providing valuable services and solutions to clients while advancing Indigenous perspectives, values, and interests.

Expertise and Innovation: (500 words)

1. What specific areas does the consultancy specialise in?
2. Can you provide examples of how the consultancy's expertise has benefited clients?
3. How does the consultancy encourage and deliver innovation and creativity in their approach to problem solving for clients?

Cultural Safety and Business Impact: (500 words)

1. How does the consultancy apply Cultural Safety and BlakFirst/Indigenous principles to their delivery?
2. How does the consultancy protect Cultural Intellectual Property?
3. Can you provide examples of how the consultancy's recommendations and/or works have led to tangible improvements for clients?
4. Do you have any testimonials or feedback that you could attach as evidence?

Thought Leadership and Ethics: (500 words)

1. How does the consultancy contribute to thought leadership within their industry or field of expertise?
2. Can you provide examples of how the consultancy demonstrates professionalism and integrity in their consulting engagements?
3. What measures does the consultancy have in place to ensure transparency and accountability?

## **10. BEST BLAK FEMALE BUSINESS OWNER OF THE YEAR**

The Best Blak Female Business Owner Award celebrates the exceptional achievements and leadership of Indigenous women business owners who have demonstrated excellence, resilience, and innovation in their business ventures.

Business Success and Innovation: (500 words)

1. Can you provide examples of significant achievements or milestones reached by the business in the past year?
2. How has the business grown or expanded under the nominee's leadership?
3. How has the business demonstrated innovation or adaptability in response to challenges or changing market conditions?
4. How does the nominee stay ahead of the curve in their industry?

Leadership, Empowerment and Community Impact: (500 words)

1. What leadership qualities do you bring to your role as a business owner?
2. How does the business support and empower Indigenous women, both within the organisation and in the broader community?
3. Are there any initiatives or programs aimed at promoting gender diversity and equality in the business?
4. Can you share success stories of Indigenous women who have benefited from the business's support or mentorship?

Challenges and Motivation: (500 words)

1. What challenges has the nominee faced as an Indigenous female business owner, and how have they overcome them?
2. Can you share any stories of resilience or perseverance in the face of adversity?
3. What inspired the nominee to start their own business?
4. How do they stay motivated and focused on their business goals?
5. Do they have any role models or mentors who have influenced your entrepreneurial journey?
6. What advice would you give to other Indigenous female business owners?

## **11. BEST BLAK CONSTRUCTION AND/OR RESOURCES BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**

The Best Blak Construction and Resources Business Award recognizes Indigenous-owned enterprises that excel in the construction, mining, forestry, or other resource-related industries.

Projects, Quality and Innovation: (500 words)

1. What notable projects has the business completed in the past year?
2. Can you describe scale and complexity of these projects?
3. How does the business ensure high quality construction in their projects?
4. Have there been any significant client testimonials or feedback that you could attach as evidence?
5. Has the company leveraged technology or innovation to improve their business? (Please answer in 300 words or less).

Safety and Sustainability: (500 Words)

1. What is the safety record of the business over the past year?
2. What measures does the business have in place to ensure safety of workers, subcontractors and community?
3. How does the business care for Country and incorporate sustainable practices into construction practice?
4. Can you provide examples of sustainable materials or techniques used by the business?

Community Engagement: (500 Words)

1. How has the business demonstrated a positive impact on the economic, social, and cultural well-being of Indigenous communities and people? Please reference Indigenous employment, training and supply chain activity in your response.

## **12. Best Ally Business OF THE YEAR AWARD**

The Best Ally Business Award recognizes non-Indigenous businesses that have demonstrated exemplary commitment and support for Indigenous communities, businesses, and initiatives.

1. Explain how the nominee has engaged in meaningful partnerships and collaborations with Indigenous communities, businesses, organisations, and entrepreneurs to support economic development, capacity-building, and cultural preservation initiatives. (Please answer in 300 words or less)
2. Describe how the nominee actively engages Indigenous suppliers or businesses within the supply chain, prioritising procurement from Indigenous-owned enterprises and contributing to the economic development and empowerment of Indigenous communities through supply chain partnerships and opportunities. Please provide an indication of Indigenous spend for the 2023/3024 financial year. Please provide a response within 300 words.
3. Please explain how the nominee has invested in Indigenous employment, training, and workforce development programs, including recruitment, mentorship, and career advancement opportunities for Indigenous individuals. Please provide a response within 300 words.

## **13. BUSH FOODS & BOTANICAL BUSINESS OF THEY YEAR AWARD**

The Best Blak Bushfoods and Botanicals Business Award celebrates Indigenous-owned enterprises that excel in the cultivation, harvesting, processing, and marketing of bushfoods and botanical products.

The Business and The Product: (500 words)

1. Can you share the story behind the founding of the bushfood and botanical business?
2. How does the business honour Indigenous traditions and knowledge in sourcing and utilising bushfoods and botanicals?
3. What unique bushfood products or botanical offerings does the business provide to customers?

Sustainability and Ethics: (500 words)

1. How do you ensure sustainable harvesting practices and preservation of native flora in your operations?
2. Can you highlight any partnerships or collaborations your business has formed with Indigenous communities or organizations in sourcing or promoting bushfoods and botanicals?
3. What initiatives do you have in place to give back to Indigenous communities or support Indigenous-led projects and causes?
4. How do you engage with Indigenous elders, knowledge holders, or cultural experts to ensure authenticity and respect in your business practices?

Challenges and Impact: (500 words)

1. What challenges have you faced as a Blak entrepreneur in the bushfood and botanical industry, and how have you overcome them?
2. How do you measure the impact and reach of your business within Indigenous communities and the wider market?
3. How do you envision your business contributing to the preservation and promotion of Indigenous culture and knowledge for future generations?

#### **14. NT BLAK BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**

The Indigenous Business of the Year Award recognizes the top-performing Indigenous-owned business that exemplifies excellence, innovation, and leadership across all aspects of its operations.

Your Business: (500 words)

1. Can you share the journey of your business, from its inception to its current success, highlighting key milestones along the way?
2. How does your business contribute to the economic development and empowerment of Blak communities?
3. In what ways does your business embody and promote Blak culture, values, and traditions?

BlakFirst: (500 words)

1. What sets your business apart from others in terms of innovation, quality, or service within your industry?
2. How do you prioritise Caring for Country and recognition of Traditional ownership in your business practices?
3. Can you discuss any partnerships or collaborations your business has established with other Blak-owned businesses, organisations or communities?

Impact, Challenges and Success: (500 words)

1. What impact has your business had on job creation and skill development within Blak communities?
2. Could you share any challenges you've faced as a Blak-owned business and how you've overcome them?
3. How do you measure the success and impact of your business beyond financial metrics, particularly in terms of social and cultural outcomes for Blak people?