

Business Awards Categories 2026

Excellence in Business Award

Sponsored by Unison Networks

Presented to an organisation that excels in various aspects of their operations, including innovation, growth, and customer satisfaction. The recipient of this award demonstrates outstanding performance and sets a benchmark for excellence within the Hawke's Bay business landscape. This accolade celebrates businesses that continually strive for improvement and contribute positively to the region's economic growth and development.

Outstanding Social Impact Award

Sponsored by MediaWorks

Presented to an organisation that addresses pressing social issues, improves lives, and creates positive change in communities. We value initiatives that empower marginalised or underserved populations, foster inclusivity and diversity, advance social justice, promote education and healthcare access, and contribute to the overall well-being and advancement of society.

Best Emerging Business

Presented to honour a promising and exceptional new business in its start-up phase (in operation from 1-4 years) that has experienced tangible growth and success within its field or industry. A company that has executed good planning, leadership, innovation, and engagement.

Outstanding Māori or Pasifika Business

This award recognises a Māori or Pasifika-owned business that demonstrates excellence in leadership, cultural integrity, business performance and community contribution. We are looking for businesses that honour their cultural values while achieving strong commercial outcomes, supporting whānau or community wellbeing, and contributing meaningfully to the Hawke's Bay economy. This award celebrates success that is grounded in identity, resilience and kaupapa Māori or Pasifika principles.

Supreme Award

in association with Yorb

The Supreme Winner is to be chosen each year from the winners of the Outstanding Social Impact, Best Emerging Business, Excellence in Business or Outstanding Māori or Pasifika Business Categories and announced at the awards celebration dinner.

The Supreme Award represents the highest honour chosen from one of these category winners. The recipient of the Supreme Award should stand out as a role model and inspire others with their outstanding overall performance, visionary thinking, transformative impact, and commitment to excellence.

Leader of the Year

Sponsored by 2degrees

This award recognises an individual who has demonstrated exceptional leadership, inspiring positive change within their community or organisation. It celebrates those who lead by example, fostering growth, inclusion, and ethical responsibility, and who have made a lasting impact through their vision, integrity, and dedication to the well-being of others.

People's Choice Award

Presented to organisations that have garnered success through support from their community, stakeholders, staff, and customers. The winner of this category is chosen via public online voting, reflecting a genuine community connection. This award highlights the significance of strong relationships and positive impact within the Hawke's Bay business community.

Best Micro Business

Sponsored by EIT

This award recognises a business that is a one-person operation (or less than two FTE employees including the owner/operator), handling all aspects from administration to service delivery, and excelling in their trade. Honors individuals operating alone within their business, making a significant impact on the local economy and business community.