

How to complete your awards entry

Putting together your entry should be straightforward. This guide is here to help you avoid common pitfalls and submit with confidence.

Whether it's your first time entering or you've done this before, this will walk you through what's needed and what judges are looking for.

The process at a glance

A simple overview of how it works:

1. Check your eligibility and category
2. Prepare your content (PDF, images, key details)
3. Complete the entry form
4. Submit your entry
5. Entries are reviewed and assessed by the judging panel

Quick checklist before you begin

Before you jump into the form, make sure you've got the basics sorted:

Approvals

- You have client or project owner approval to enter

Files ready

- Your entry PDF is complete (max 10 pages, A3, 20MB)
- Your images are ready (JPG, high resolution, max 5MB each)

Project information

- All collaborators and contributors are confirmed
- Project naming is consistent across all materials

If you've got those sorted, you're good to go.

What you'll need to submit

Each entry includes:

- A completed entry form (including your project nomination statement and project details)
- A project PDF (max 10 pages, A3, 20MB)

- Between 1 and 8 images (JPG, max 5MB each)

Key sections of the entry form

Some parts of the form need a bit more thought. Here's what we're looking for.

Project nomination statement (max 250 words)

This is your project in a nutshell, and often the first thing judges read.

Focus on:

- what the project is and where it sits
- the key idea or response to the brief
- what makes it successful
- any standout outcomes (design, planning, environmental, social)

Keep it clear, specific, and grounded in real outcomes.

Collaborators or mentors

List everyone who has contributed to the project.

This includes:

- other landscape architects or practices
- collaborators from earlier project stages
- mentors or reviewers where relevant

If multiple parties were involved, be clear about your scope of services. This is important for both attribution and eligibility.

Products

Include key materials or products used in the project where relevant.

This might include:

- planting suppliers
- paving or material systems
- specialist components

If products are not a meaningful part of your project, you can indicate this clearly (for example, "Not applicable" or a brief explanation).

Only include products that are significant to the outcome of the project.

Project details

Keep naming and information consistent across your entry:

- project name matches your PDF

- client name is accurate and approved
- dates reflect the project stage being entered

Your project PDF

Your PDF should stand on its own. Judges assess what's in the PDF, not external links.

What to include

- a clear project overview
- drawings and or diagrams where helpful
- strong, relevant imagery
- concise, readable text (minimum 11pt font)

How to write a strong entry

The key to a well-written entry is showing clearly how your project meets the awards criteria.

Judges are looking for:

- specific examples, not general statements
- clear evidence of outcomes and impact
- alignment with both general and category-specific criteria

Recommended structure

A strong nomination is usually built in three parts:

Opening statement

Start with a clear and direct statement of why the project deserves recognition. Outline the brief, approach, and key outcomes in the first few sentences.

Supporting statement(s)

Back this up with specific examples that demonstrate how the project meets the criteria. Focus on what was achieved and how.

You might cover:

- which criteria are most relevant and how they are met
- key challenges and how they were addressed
- methods, leadership, teamwork, or innovation
- environmental, social, or cultural outcomes
- benefits for community, client, or place

Closing statement

Summarise how others regard the project. This could include:

- expert opinion
- community response

- wider recognition or impact

What good looks like

- clear structure and flow
- a balance of visuals and text
- easy to read at A3

What to avoid

- relying on external links
- overly dense pages
- text smaller than 11pt

Images

Requirements

- Upload between 1 and 8 images
- JPG format, maximum 5MB each
- Full caption including image credits

Choosing images

- Select images that clearly represent the project
- Think about how they tell the story at a glance

For awards promotion

- The first 4 uploads should be your preferred promotional images
- Include at least one landscape image suitable for certificates
- Make sure every image is credited accurately for promotional use

Common pitfalls (and how to avoid them)

A few easy wins:

- **Be specific** General statements don't score well. Show what you actually did.
- **Explain your role** Especially on shared projects. Be clear about your contribution.
- **Acknowledge others properly** This is important for fairness and eligibility.
- **Keep it readable** Use clear structure and avoid overloading pages.
- **Spell out acronyms** Not everyone reviewing your entry will know them.

Submissions that do not meet formatting guidelines, including text smaller than 11pt, will be returned. You will have 7 days to resubmit.

Final checks before submitting

Before you hit submit, take a moment to check:

- Your PDF opens and reads well
- Images are uploaded correctly with full credits and captions
 - Images are in order with one/s for promotional use first
- Names and dates are consistent
- Word limits are met
- Your entry clearly aligns with the category criteria

What happens next

After submission:

- You'll receive confirmation your entry has been received
- Entries are reviewed and assessed by the judging panel
- You'll be contacted with outcomes following the judging process

Need help?

If you're unsure about anything, it's always better to ask early.

For any questions or support, get in touch at:

events@nzila.co.nz