

A vibrant tropical floral arrangement featuring large green monstera leaves, pink and yellow hibiscus flowers, orange bird of paradise flowers, and a whole pineapple. The background is a gradient of pink and orange.

# NESSA 2026 AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

**AWARD CRITERIA**  
Achiever of the Year

# Achiever of the Year



## CATEGORY DESCRIPTION:

This Award recognises a Participant who has overcome extraordinary disadvantage to achieve their goal and secure a sustained employment outcome.

## CATEGORY ELIGIBILITY:

All applicable elements of the Overarching Award Eligibility Criteria, PLUS:

Open to former Participants who:

- Received employment assistance from a provider of an employment program or service managed by the Australian Government: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations; Department of Social Services; or the National Indigenous Australians Agency; **and**
- Achieved substantive employment resulting in achievement of a full employment outcome since July 2025 \*\* and remains in sustained substantive employment on the date of the awards.

*“Substantive employment” is defined as employment in one or more concurrent jobs with sufficient hours and/or income to qualify for a full employment outcome as defined in the relevant deed for the service/program.*

*“Full employment outcome” is in accordance with the requirements of the program/service in which the Participant was engaged at placement into employment.*

\*\* For clarity the Participants placement may have occurred prior to July 2025 but the outcome must have been achieved during the Awards qualifying period.

## NOMINATION RESPONSE:

Please ensure your nomination response includes:

- Nominating Organisation Name and contact details – these will be used to print on certificates and awards
- Name of the contact in the organisation submitting the Nomination
- The full name and preferred name (Correct spelling) of the individual being put forward for consideration for this Award i.e. the Participant
- Photo of individual being nominated for the Award (Required)
- Selection criteria responses

Note the submission must focus on the former Participant (rather than the organisation or Consultant assisting them). The former Participant must be aware of their nomination and consent to its submission in these awards. NESAs recommends that completion of the submission occur in partnership with the nominated former Participant and they provide consent to share information.



**INTRODUCTION TO THE NOMINEE – UP TO 500 WORDS UNSCORED BUT ESSENTIAL TO PROVIDING BACKGROUND TO JUDGES**

Provide an overview such as, but not limited to, their age, length of unemployment, employment history, qualifications, living conditions, socio-economic environment, personal circumstances and disadvantages when they commenced in employment services with your organisation.

Include a short statement from the nominated Participant's employer outlining in what ways they are a valued employee, or in the case of self-employment how they have progressed their business.

PROGRAM: Name the program or service that the participant was assisted by.

**CRITERION 1 – UP TO 500 WORDS – WEIGHTED 30%**

- Describe how the party being nominated demonstrated determination and resilience in overcoming personal barriers and challenges to start and sustain employment. Provide a clear timeline of key actions and milestones that illustrate their commitment to change.

Examples may include (but are not limited to):

- Engagement with their employment consultant and support services.
- Participation in training, skills development, or vocational activities.
- Steps taken to address non-vocational barriers (e.g., housing, health, family responsibilities).
- Efforts to improve health and wellbeing.
- How they responded to setbacks and adapted to challenges along the way.

**CRITERION 2 – UP TO 550 WORDS – WEIGHTED 40%**

Showcase the positive outcomes and opportunities that have opened up for the nominee as a result of their commitment and efforts. Describe how their journey has led to meaningful change in their life, career, and future prospects.

Examples may include (but are not limited to):

- Securing and sustaining employment and the benefits this has brought (e.g., financial independence, stability).
- Access to new career pathways, training, or further education.
- Improved confidence, resilience, and self-determination.
- Enhanced health and wellbeing or strengthened social connections.
- Contribution to their family or community because of employment.
- Aspirations for future growth and how employment has created new possibilities.

**CRITERION 3 – UP TO 300 WORDS – WEIGHTED 30%**

A short statement from the Participant about their journey to employment, including what they gained from overcoming barriers to employment and how achieving employment has improved their life.

**SUPPORTING MATERIAL (OPTIONAL) – UNSCORED**

You may provide up to five A4 pages of evidence to support the claims made in the nomination. Please cross-reference supporting material in the criteria response. Supporting information may include, but is not limited to, photos, data, graphs, and copies of commendations or other letters of recognition.