



NESA 2026 AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

AWARD CRITERIA

Outstanding Service to the
Employment Services Sector

Outstanding Service to the Employment Services Sector

CATEGORY DESCRIPTION:

This Award recognises individuals within the employment services sector who have made exceptional and enduring contributions to advancing employment inclusion for people experiencing hardship.

CATEGORY ELIGIBILITY:

Covers all applicable elements of the Overarching Award Eligibility Criteria. In addition, the nominee must still be employed within the sector.

NOMINATION RESPONSE:

Please ensure your nomination response includes:

- Nominating Organisation Name/Individual and contact details
- Name of the contact if an organisation is submitting the Nomination
- Nominee Name (full name and preferred name)
- Photo of Nominee (Required)
- Selection criteria responses

Note the response must focus on the Individual (rather than the organisation they be associated with). The Individual 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 Individual and they provide consent to share information.

INTRODUCTION TO THE NOMINEE – UP TO 300 WORDS UNSCORED BUT ESSENTIAL TO PROVIDING BACKGROUND TO JUDGES

Provide a high-level overview of the nominee, highlighting their career-long commitment to advancing employment inclusion within the Australian employment services sector. Outline the organisation(s) they have contributed to over the years, their current role, and the geographic or community context in which they have worked.

Include a brief description of the socio-economic landscape of the region(s) they have served, and the scale or reach of their work (e.g., number of staff led, programs delivered, or communities impacted).

Note: All other responses must relate to the achievements and outcomes of the nominee

CRITERION 1 – UP TO 500 WORDS – WEIGHTED 40%

Describe how the nominee's long-term contribution, leadership, and values have strengthened employment inclusion for people experiencing hardship. Highlight their role in improving outcomes for priority cohorts, championing equitable access, and influencing practice across teams, communities, or the broader sector.

Include examples of initiatives, strategies, or innovations they have led or contributed to, such as employer engagement, community partnerships, place-based responses, or system improvements demonstrating excellence, integrity, and measurable impact on employment inclusion.

CRITERION 2 – UP TO 500 WORDS – WEIGHTED 40%

Provide a specific deidentified case study or initiative that showcases how the nominee has used creativity, innovation, and community or sector collaboration to deliver meaningful and lasting change.

Describe how the nominee went beyond standard practice to influence outcomes for participants, employers, or communities through program design, service transformation, advocacy, or leadership.

Include evidence of impact, demonstrating how their approach lifted performance, created new pathways, or addressed barriers at scale. Identified case study or initiative that showcases how the nominee has used creativity, innovation, and community or sector collaboration to deliver meaningful and lasting change.

CRITERION 3 – UP TO 400 WORDS – WEIGHTED 20%

Share how the nominee has demonstrated sustained commitment to the employment services sector over time, including their professional growth, personal values, and contribution to building capability in others.

Describe how they embed equity and inclusion in their day to day practice, mentor colleagues, strengthen organisational or sector capability, and contribute to long-term cultural or systemic change.

Highlight how their legacy, through leadership, relationship building, knowledge-sharing, or practice excellence, has positively influenced participants, practitioners, employers, and the sector as a whole.

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.