

AAA AUSTRALIAN HAIR FASHION AWARDS

2025/2026



CREATIVE
CATEGORY

APPRENTICE
OF THE YEAR

RULES AND CRITERIA

AHFA Apprentice of the Year

This award recognises the most talented Apprentice hairdresser in Australia/New Zealand. Entrants' collections will be judged on their demonstration of technical skill and consideration of creative concepts.

Entrants into this category are only required to submit a collection of **THREE (3) IMAGES**. Each image must feature a different model, i.e., three unique models must be used for this category.

Entrants must be, or must have been a Hairdressing Apprentice within the Awards Period. AHFA Apprentice of the Year is a **FREE ENTRY** category.

Each entrant is only permitted to submit one entry in this category. Entrants in this category may also enter other categories, provided all entries meet the relevant Category Rules & Criteria.

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

This checklist is **EVERYTHING** that is required from you in order to successfully submit your completed entry on the online AHFA Awards Platform:

1. **3 x Collection Jpeg Images in High Res** (max file size 20MB per image) - Please upload these in the order of 1-3, naming them like the following example without your name in the file names:
 - HighRes_1
 - HighRes_2
2. The same **3 x Collection Jpeg Images in Low Res** (max file size 5MB per image) - Please upload these in the order of 1-3, naming them like the following example without your name in the file names:
 - LowRes_1
 - LowRes_2
3. **3-5 sec Video** of each model on set showcasing your finished look (smartphone videos are acceptable)
4. **Press Kit** as a PDF Document (up to 3 pages - max file size 10MB) which includes:
 - 1 x Cover/Bio Page detailing the entrant's full name, salon name, category being entered, email address, contact number and social media handles
 - Any career highlights, experiences, and accolades, including achievement dates

5. 1 x High Res PR / Headshot of Entrant

6. **Collection credits** (You will be providing this in the SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS TAB on the AHFA Awards Platform - a text box has been labelled for you to copy and paste your answer directly into your entry). Collection credits should include:

- Your Name
- Collection Name
- Stylist/Colourist (if required)
- Photographer
- Makeup Artist
- Fashion Stylist
- Model (add as necessary)
- Any other credits

7. **Statutory Declaration (Stat Dec)** - this is an online form you will complete on the Awards Platform to confirm (no printing required):

- All work is original, accurate, and meets category criteria
- Permissions from models, photographers, and contributors are secured where relevant

TIP: If you are having trouble compressing your PDF document to fit the max file size upload, below is a great free tool for instantly compressing PDFs:

https://www.ilovepdf.com/compress_pdf

Please ensure you read this entire document which covers ALL the Rules and Criteria specific to this category.

RULES

1) AWARDS PERIOD

The 2025/2026 Australian Hair Fashion Awards (AHFA) Awards Periods are:

Creative and Business Categories: 26th July 2024 to 18th August 2025

Product Categories: 26th July 2024 to 7th July 2025

All images and/or video, and/or content submitted/referenced in your entry **MUST** have been created during the above applicable Awards Period.

2) RESIDENCY AND PRACTICE REQUIREMENT

Entrants in Apprentice of the Year must have lived and studied/worked as an Apprentice hairdresser in Australia or New Zealand for the 12 months preceding the entry deadline. This ensures the award reflects contributions to the local hairdressing industry.

The Australian Hair Fashion Awards (AHFA) is honoured to welcome New Zealand Hairdressers to compete within the awards program. All categories, excluding State Group Categories, Australian Hairdresser of the Year, and Global Hairdresser of the Year, are open to New Zealand based hairdressers.

There is a new category created specifically for New Zealand based hairdressers to enter: New Zealand Hairdresser of the Year.

****If you are unsure about whether you meet the criteria above - please enquire with the AHFA Awards team.**

3) ORIGINALITY

To be eligible to enter, images submitted must NOT have been published in ANY prior format and must be brand new and totally 'unseen' in the marketplace.

For example, they **MUST NOT** have appeared or been used/seen in:

- Consumer or trade media, or via any personal or business platforms or
- Any form of PR, marketing promotion or advertising
- Any Social Media platforms - this includes behind-the-scenes images

that might allow the identification of a model/artist or style

- Collections submitted for the AHFA must also NOT have been submitted to any other local or international competition

***Please note:** If you have already shot a collection for another purpose during the current AHFA Awards period, and you have unused and unseen photos from this that you'd like to enter into the AHFA, please note that we have stringent rules around this possibility to ensure the integrity of judging, which we pride on being anonymous.

RULES

If you believe you can enter a significantly different and unidentifiable collection of images, you must first get in contact with the AHFA TEAM to seek approval of such an entry (you will need to share your previously utilised Collection along with your intended AHFA Collection with us at this time). Exceptions are only made where we are confident you have met the requirements as aforementioned. If you enter such a collection without getting this approval, your entry may be subject to disqualification. Please send to info@mdivision.com.au.

4) DIGITAL SUBMISSIONS

All Creative Category submissions into the Australian Hair Fashion Awards are digital only. Entrants are not required to print and submit their physical collection/s. All entries into the 2025/6 Australian Hair Fashion Awards must be submitted through the Awards Platform, available via www.australianhairfashionawards.com

5) DIGITAL IMAGE SPECIFICATIONS

Your collection must be submitted in A4 Portrait Format Only and provided in two digital image formats:

3 x High Res jpeg image (up to 20MB per image)

3 x Low Res jpeg image (up to 5MB per image)

All images must be named using the following format:

Highres_number e.g. highres_1

Lowres_number e.g. lowres_1

All digital images must be submitted through our Awards Platform, available via www.australianhairfashionawards.com

6) STATUTORY DECLARATION

You will find this section as a simple online form pre-loaded on the Awards Platform **(no printing required)**. As you go through the process of completing your entry, you will be directed to sign and submit it online. You will be confirming that all work, details, and materials submitted as part of your entry are your original work and are true and accurate, and meet the specific criteria for the category/s you are entering. It also includes your confirmation that you have the appropriate permissions from models, photographers and any other suppliers that have contributed to your entry.

**Please note that your entry is not valid until this online form has been completed.*

RULES

7) HAIR ENHANCEMENT

Wigs, wefts, hairpieces, and hair extensions are permitted for use, however, please note that the judging criterion is heavily based on realistic presentation including believable formation and movement of the hair.

8) COLLAB COLLECTION BY COLOURIST AND STYLIST

A hairdresser may enter a collection where he/she has completed the cutting and styling, and another hairdresser has completed the colour work, however the colourist's name must be included within the credits (with the entrant only being the Cutter/Stylist). The colourist may enter the same collection into the AHFA Creative Colourist of the Year category, where styling credits are attributed to the other hairdresser (with the entrant only being the Colourist).

9) BEFORE SHOT REQUIREMENTS

A before shot of each model featured within the collection must be available (if specifically requested by judges), in JPG or PNG format, to allow judges to observe the creation process. Smartphone shots are an acceptable format.

10) MODEL SPECIFICATION

You may use a combination of male and/or female models in your collection, however an individual model may only be used once within the collection. Therefore, a minimum of three (3) models must be used in your collection of three (3) images.

11) INTERNATIONAL JUDGING

In the continued pursuit of a wholly independent competition platform and unbiased judging process, the 2025/6 Australian Hair Fashion Awards creative categories will be judged by a select group of international leaders in Hair Fashion (with the exception of Global Hairdresser of the Year). The judging panel are regarded as international leaders and are carefully selected based on their individual and independent merits (often with multiple accolades of recognition and achievement).

Categories that require core competency appraisal i.e, Creative Colourist, are judged by leaders within each particular field, ensuring technical skill, application and execution are fully recognised and considered.

RULES

Photographic collection judging is completed anonymously with a zero tolerance for internal dialogue or score comparison during the judging process.

The recruitment of the AHFA judging panel is an intrinsic part of M Division's ongoing commitment to providing a fluid gateway for the Australia and New Zealand Hair Fashion industry onto the global stage. The judging process looks to position Australia and New Zealand as international industry leaders; connecting members of our national community with those deemed true innovators, authentic creatives, and world leading icons.

Judges are provided with category descriptions as the key criteria to base their decisions. (Please refer to each specific category description for an outline on criteria).

12) FINALISTS ANNOUNCEMENT

For details on the Finalist Announcement, please see information coming soon at: www.australianhaifashionawards.com

13) RELEASING YOUR COLLECTION FOR PUBLICATION

Collections may be published as soon as the Finalist Announcement has been made.

A representation of all finalist collections will be published on www.thejournalmag.com once finalists are announced.

Non-finalists' collections may also be published across M Division digital platforms after the Finalist Announcement.

14) REQUIREMENTS FOR FINALISTS AND WINNERS

Across all internal and external communications, publicity, marketing, and PR, AHFA finalists and winners must include the year of their award alongside their title.

E.g. Richi Grisillo - 2024 AHFA Australian Hairdresser of the Year.

This rule is set to respect all winners and finalists.

RULES

15) COPY OF YOUR WORK

Please note that all collections and information submitted become property of The Australian Hair Fashion Awards / M Division Pty Ltd. Entrants are advised to keep personal copies of their entries.

16) ENTRY FEES

Entry into the Apprentice of the Year of the Year Category has NO entry fee. You must complete and submit your entry on the AHFA Awards Platform.

17) ENTRY DEADLINE

Please refer to www.australianhairfashionawards.com for the entry deadlines.

In rare cases, a deadline extension may be considered – please apply by emailing info@mdivision.com.au with your reason for extension clearly stipulated in your email. Please note that extensions can be difficult to grant due to judging timelines already being confirmed with our busy Judging Panel. If an extension is possible, it is unlikely to be more than a few days extra.

*The AHFA have the right to make adjustments to the above Rules and Criteria if they deem it to be in the best interest of entrants and the integrity that these Awards stand for. We will make all reasonable attempts to inform you of these changes.

For any further general information or questions regarding entry into this category, please email christelle@mdivision.com.au