2027

AUSTRALIAN HAIR FASHION AWARDS

CREATIVE CATEGORY

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

RULES AND CRITERIA

AHFA Newcomer of the Year

AT A GLANCE	*Quick reference for entrants - full detail below.*
Category type	Creative Category
Key dates	www.australianhairfashionawards.com
Who it's for	Australian or New Zealand hairdressers qualified for a minimum of 1 year, emerging as top-performing salon stylists with a true fashion edge.
What you submit	4-look photographic collection + press kit + on-set videos + headshot + collection credits + Statutory Declaration (digital submission PLUS printed and mounted collection - see Submission Checklist)
Judging weights	100% photographic collection (no written component).
Entry fee	$AUD 285 (ex GST) per entry
Awards Period	Premium, Creative & Business Categories: 10 November 2025 - 18 January 2027
Submit via	www.australianhairfashionawards.com
Questions	Contact ahfa@mdivision.com.au

This award recognises early career hairdressers in Australia or New Zealand emerging as top-performing salon stylists while demonstrating a true fashion edge.

This category is open to qualified hairdressers across every business setting - salon-employed, salon owners, chair-renters, suite operators, freelance, and independent operators alike.

Your collection must demonstrate and express your innovative and creative flair. Hairdressers who have been qualified for a minimum of 1 year or more may enter. Submission into AHFA Newcomer of the Year must include a collection of four (4) photographs showcasing four different looks. Photographic collections should look to present conceptual consistency, strong technical execution, and versatility with regards to hairdressing skills and techniques.

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. 4 x Collection JPEG Images in High Res (max file size 20MB per image)

Please upload these in the order of 1-4, naming them like the following example without your name in the file names:

- HighRes_1
- HighRes_2

2. The same 4 x Collection JPEG Images in Low Res (max file size 5MB per image)

Please upload these in the order of 1-4, naming them like the following example without your name in the file names:

- LowRes_1
- LowRes_2

3. Printed Mounted Collection

In addition to your digital submission, you must send a printed and mounted A4 copy of each photograph in your entered collection. The printed mounted collection is what the Australian judging panel will view in person at the Live Gallery Judging Day:

Print: professional quality, A4 size, one print per photograph in your entered collection.

Mount: each A4 print must be mounted - we recommend Core Flute (lightweight, sturdy, and ideal for gallery display).

Deadline: the printed mounted collection must be received by the same date as your entry closing date. Send to:

Attn: Christelle Mannah
Australian Hair Fashion Awards
20-40 Meagher Street
CHIPPENDALE NSW 2008

For professional A4 printing and Core Flute mounting in Sydney, we highly recommend Pixel Perfect, located in Ultimo - visit pixelperfect.com.au or call 02 9319 0455.

4. 3-5 sec Video of each model on set showcasing your finished look

(smartphone videos are acceptable)

5. Press Kit as a PDF Document

(up to 3 pages - max file size 10MB) which includes: (Please note, Press Kits are not for judging purposes)

- 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
- 1 x Inspiration Page, detailing the inspiration / stimulus behind your collection, inclusive of your collection title and collection credits

6. 1 x High Res PR / Headshot of Entrant

7. 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
- Any other credits

8. 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 2027 Australian Hair Fashion Awards (AHFA) Awards Periods are:

Premium, Creative, and Business Categories: 10 November 2025 - 18 January 2027

Product Categories: 18 September 2025 - 2 November 2026.

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 Newcomer of the Year must have lived and worked as hairdressers in Australia or New Zealand for at least 80% of the Awards Period. 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 Eastern Australian Hairdresser of the Year, Western/Central Australian Hairdresser of the Year, Australian Hairdresser of the Year, and Global Hairdresser of the Year, are open to New Zealand based hairdressers. There is a 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. 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 ahfa@mdivision.com.au.

4) Image Specifications

DIGITAL SPECIFICATIONS:

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

4 x High Res jpeg image (up to 20MB per image) 4 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

PRINTING AND MOUNTING SPECIFICATIONS:

In addition to your digital submission, you must send a printed and mounted A4 copy of each photograph in your entered collection. The printed mounted collection is what the Australian judging panel will view in person at the Live Gallery Judging Day:

Print: professional quality, A4 size, one print per photograph in your entered collection.

Mount: each A4 print must be mounted - we recommend Core Flute (lightweight, sturdy, and ideal for gallery display).

5) 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.

6) 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.

7) 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).

8) 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.

9) 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 four models must be used in your collection of four images.

10) Judging Panel - Live Gallery in Sydney

This category will now be judged at the AHFA Live Gallery Judging Day in Sydney, by an Australian panel of the country's most respected hairdressers, each highly qualified with a strong understanding of the local creative market. Entrants send in printed and mounted collections, which are placed in a gallery for the panel to view in person, side by side, in real time. Judges score independently on this dedicated judging day, and all scores are entered through Award Force, a globally recognised, third-party awards software platform used by competitions across many industries internationally. No-one can override a judge's score once it has been entered in the platform, and the entrants in the live gallery photographic collection judging remain anonymous during the judging process.

11) Finalists Announcement

For details on the Finalist Announcement, please see information at: www.australianhairfashionawards.com

12) 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 MDivision digital platforms after the Finalist Announcement.

13) 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. Winners name - 2027 AHFA Newcomer of the Year.

This rule is set to respect all winners and finalists.

14) Copy Of Your Work

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

15) Entry Fees

Entry into the Newcomer of the Year Category is $AUD285 (ex GST) per entry, which is payable upon successfully submitting your entry on the AHFA Awards Platform.

16) 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 ahfa@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 ahfa@mdivision.com.au