

AAA AUSTRALIAN HAIR FASHION AWARDS

2025/2026



PRODUCT
CATEGORY

BEST NEW
HAIR ESSENTIAL

RULES AND CRITERIA

AHFA Best New Hair Essential

This category will be awarded to the company with the most innovative professional hair essential launched in Australia/New Zealand during the Awards Period. Entered items will be sent to select local industry experts to be judged. Entries will be evaluated according to a strict set of criteria, largely weighted on the innovative nature of the item, but also inclusive of performance, design, user-friendliness, functionality, and value proposition – all of which MUST be outlined in the requested accompanying PDF Document. The answers in this document play a fundamental role in the judging process.

This category is for professional hair essentials available for purchase in various outlets by professionals (it is acceptable if it is available for purchase by consumers as well).

Essentials can include, but are not limited to: brushes, combs, hair cutting tools (e.g., scissors or trimmers), mixing bowls/brushes and other hair colouring tools, foils, specialist aprons/clothing, sectioning clips/pins, specialist applicators/bottles, extensions, hair kits, innovative tech accessories, eco-friendly accessories, and specialist male accessories.

You may enter a single item or a set of essentials that work together as one entry. If you are unsure if your item is appropriate, please contact us via email at: christelle@mdivision.com.au

Each entrant is permitted to submit more than one entry in this category, provided all entries meet the Category Rules & Criteria.

Entry into this category is a two-part process:

1. Uploading all submission and necessary documentation onto the AHFA Awards Platform, and
2. Sending your product(s) samples by post to:

M Division Pty Ltd / AHFA
Suite 88, 20-40 Meagher St,
Chippendale NSW 2008

Please check the Submission Checklist below to ensure you have completed all steps.

All products MUST be received before Product entries close.

Please refer to www.australianhairfashionawards.com for deadline dates.

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. **8 x individually wrapped items** for Judges to test, sent via post to M Division (address provided above). We must receive a quantity of 8 of the items entered for judges to test accurately over a period of time. They are unable to share items.
2. **1 x PDF Written Answers Document** providing details for the following topic headings and the points requested underneath each topic (max file size 20MB & max 3 pages - you will upload this separately on the AHFA Awards Platform):

Introduction to the brand and product:

- Describe how to use the item and its unique selling point (USP).
- What makes this a must-have item?

Innovation and Uniqueness:

- Does the product introduce a new concept, feature, or solution to the hair industry, or is it a fresh take on an existing essential, or does it address a previously unmet need? Explain how/why.

Functionality and Performance:

- How well does the product perform its intended function?
- Is it easy to use, efficient, and effective for its purpose?
- Does it enhance the user's experience (e.g., saves time, improves results, or simplifies a process)?

Design and Durability:

- How is the product visually appealing and well-designed?
- Does it have a modern, stylish, or professional look that aligns with current trends?
- Is it ergonomic, user-friendly, and/or eco-friendly?

Market Impact:

- What makes this product stand out in its relevant category, and who is the target market?
- Has it already gained traction or positive feedback in the market? Share any relevant feedback or testimonials.

3. **1 x High Res Jpeg Image** of the product (max file size 20MB per image). You have the option to upload up to 3 photos.

4. The same **1 x Low Res Jpeg Image** of the product (max file size 5MB per image). You have the option to upload up to 3 photos.

5. **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) LAUNCH REQUIREMENT

Product Category Entrants must have launched their entered Product/s in Australia or New Zealand respectively during the Awards Period.

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

3) SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY

All entries into the 2025/2026 Australian Hair Fashion Awards must be submitted through our AHFA Awards Platform, available via www.australianhairfashionawards.com

Entry into AHFA Best New Hair Essential is a **two-part process**:

1. You must upload and submit all required content on the AHFA Awards Platform.
2. You are also required to send your product(s) samples by post to the following address:

M Division Pty Ltd / AHFA
Suite 88, 20-40 Meagher St,
Chippendale NSW 2008

Product(s) samples must be received before the deadline, along with digital submissions on the Awards Platform, to be considered for this category.

Please reference the Submission Checklist above for a complete list of what is required to successfully complete your entry.

4) 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

RULES

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. Where relevant, 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.

5) JUDGING

The AHFA has introduced a revamped, two-part judging process for its Product Categories to ensure fairness, transparency, and thorough evaluation.

The process includes an In-Person Judging Day for hands-on testing of Best New Hot Tool and Best New Colour Innovation, and an extended At-Home Judging phase for Best New Hair Essential, Packaging and Design, Hair Care, and Hair Styling Product categories.

Judges will participate in a moderated Zoom discussion midway to clarify product understanding, followed by independent scoring to maintain integrity. These changes, supported by industry moderators and extended evaluation periods, aim to celebrate innovation and uphold the AHFAs as the gold standard in recognising excellence in the hair industry.

The Judges will be made up of local respected professionals who are best suited to Judge the Product Categories. For more detailed information on these exciting new changes, please visit www.australianhairfashionawards.com

6) FINALISTS ANNOUNCEMENT

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

7) 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

8) 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.

9) ENTRY FEES

Entry into the Best New Hair Essential Category is \$AUD350 (ex GST) per entry, which is payable upon successfully submitting your entry on the AHFA Awards Platform.

10) 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