

Frontline Quality Support Award Nomination Guide 2026

**“Creating Safety, Connection and
Empowerment in Community Support”**

What are the awards about?

Welcome to Australian Community Industry Alliances (ACIA's) **Frontline Quality Support Award 2026**, where we honor outstanding contributions in healthcare and community services. This year, ACIA celebrates the transformative impact of trauma-informed care and support in community-based services. The **"Creating Safety, Connection and Empowerment in Community Support"** themed award recognises individuals, teams, or organisations that foster safe, respectful, and supportive environments where the voices, experiences, and strengths of those they support are valued and understood.

Nominees will have demonstrated how trauma-informed approaches contribute to improved wellbeing, stronger engagement, and better outcomes, particularly for individuals navigating complex, traumatic, or life-altering experiences. From innovative service models and culturally safe practices to relationship-based support and collaborative decision-making, the award highlights approaches that promote trust, resilience, dignity, and empowerment.

As we honour these achievements, we spotlight the leaders advancing trauma-informed practice across the community sector, ensuring every individual feels safe, heard, respected, and supported to move forward in ways that reflect their unique needs, goals, and strengths.

What are the key dates?

Monday 7 September 2026 – Nominations open.

Thursday 22 October 2026 – Nominations close.

Thursday 29 October 2026 – Winner announced.

Thursday 5 November 2026 – Award presented at ACIA's AGM.

ACIA may alter the nomination dates at any time, with all updates being posted on the ACIA website.

What does quality look like for the 2026 award?

Nominees will have demonstrated how **trauma-informed care and support** creates safe, empowering, and inclusive environments that promote wellbeing, resilience, and meaningful participation. Through practices grounded in trust, respect, collaboration, and understanding, nominees support individuals to achieve positive outcomes while recognising the impact that trauma can have on a person's experiences, relationships, and engagement.

Whether through relationship-based support, culturally safe practices, innovative service models, or approaches that foster safety, choice, and empowerment, these nominees exemplify quality care that upholds dignity, compassion, and person-centred support.

As we celebrate these contributions, we recognise the changemakers who are embedding trauma-informed principles across the community care sector, ensuring every individual feels safe, heard, respected, and supported to achieve their goals and reach their potential.

What are the award criteria and scoring guidelines?

1. **Creating Safety and Trust (35%)**

- **Description:** Evaluate how the nominee fosters physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe environments that build trust and promote positive engagement.
- **Assessment Questions:**
 - How has the nominee created environments that promote safety, trust, and respect?
 - What practices demonstrate an understanding of the impact of trauma on individuals?
- **Scoring Guidelines:**
 - 1–2: Limited evidence of trauma-informed practices or consideration of safety.
 - 3–4: Demonstrates some awareness of safety and trust-building approaches.
 - 5–6: Consistent practices that promote safety, respect, and positive engagement.
 - 7–8: Strong trauma-informed approaches embedded across service delivery.
 - 9–10: Exemplary leadership in creating safe, trusting, and supportive environments.

2. Impact on Wellbeing and Outcomes (30%)

- **Description:** Assess how the nominee's work has improved wellbeing, resilience, engagement, and quality of life for those they support.
- **Assessment Questions:**
 - What measurable or observed outcomes demonstrate improved wellbeing or engagement?
 - How has the nominee adapted their practice to better respond to individual needs and experiences?
- **Scoring Guidelines:**
 - 1-2: Limited impact on wellbeing or outcomes.
 - 3-4: Some positive outcomes evident.
 - 5-6: Consistent evidence of improved wellbeing and engagement.
 - 7-8: Strong outcomes that demonstrate meaningful positive change.
 - 9-10: Transformative impact resulting in exceptional outcomes and enhanced quality of life.

3. Empowerment, Choice and Collaboration (15%)

- **Description:** Recognise how the nominee empowers individuals through choice, shared decision-making, and collaborative support approaches.
- **Assessment Questions:**
 - How has the nominee encouraged individuals to actively participate in decisions affecting their lives?
 - Are there examples of co-design, collaboration, or strengths-based support approaches?
- **Scoring Guidelines:**
 - 1-2: Limited opportunities for participation or decision-making.
 - 3-4: Some evidence of individual involvement and collaboration.
 - 5-6: Demonstrates consistent promotion of choice and participation.
 - 7-8: Strong collaborative approaches that actively empower individuals.
 - 9-10: Exemplary commitment to co-design, partnership, and empowerment.

4. Inclusive, Culturally Safe and Innovative Practice (20%)

- **Description:** Evaluate how the nominee demonstrates inclusive, culturally responsive, and innovative approaches that support diverse needs and experiences.
- **Assessment Questions:**
 - How does the nominee ensure services are culturally safe, inclusive, and responsive?
 - Has the nominee introduced innovative approaches that enhance trauma-informed support?
- **Scoring Guidelines:**
 - 1-2: Conventional approaches with limited responsiveness to individual needs.
 - 3-4: Some evidence of inclusive or culturally aware practices.
 - 5-6: Demonstrates adaptable, inclusive, and person-centred approaches.
 - 7-8: Strong examples of innovation and culturally safe practice.
 - 9-10: Outstanding leadership in delivering innovative, inclusive, and culturally responsive support.

What are the eligibility requirements?

To be eligible for nomination in the Frontline Quality Support Award 2026, nominees must:

- Be an individual, team, or organisation currently working in the community services industry who is an ACIA member and/or ACIS certified.
- Consistently meet or exceed job performance expectations and not be under investigation by any regulatory body or organisation.
- Not be a current ACIA employee, Board member, or part of the judging panel.

Nominations can be submitted by peers, supervisors, clients, or the nominees themselves. Nominees must consent to their nomination and acknowledge that the information provided in the nomination form (excluding contact details) may be used for publicity and promotional purposes.

Want to know how to submit a nomination?

To submit your nomination, click [here](#), or go to the homepage of [ACIA's website](#) and follow the prompts on the nomination form.

How will the nominations be judged?

A Selection Committee consisting of leaders, peers, and representatives from the community will review the nominations and select a winner. The nominations will be based off the scoring guidelines listed above under “What are the award criteria’s and scoring guidelines?”.

How will the winner be announced?

The winner will be announced on Thursday 29 October 2026 and presented at ACIA's AGM on Thursday 5 November 2026, located at the icare Head Office: 321 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000. A virtual option to attend will also be available.

The winner will be given additional details and receive the following:

- An invitation to speak at the award presentation about their achievement.
- A trophy award detailing their achievement
- A space on ACIA’s website for a 1-year period, recognising their achievement.
- A gift voucher valued at \$150.

What are the terms and conditions?

The Frontline Quality Award 2026 is conducted by Australian Community Industry Alliance, ACN 153 423 799, Level 5, Nexus Norwest 4 Columbia Court, Norwest NSW 2153.

1. Nominations will be judged based solely on the information provided within the submission, reflecting the details available to ACIA and the Judges at the time of consideration.
2. Each nomination will be evaluated based on its alignment with the Award category and criteria, as outlined in the nomination guide available on the ACIA website.
3. Nominees can only be nominated once, but multiple nominations from the same organisation are permitted if they pertain to different individuals or teams.
4. ACIA reserves the right to contact the Nominee or any other individual mentioned in the nomination to obtain consent for using any provided information (textual, photographic, or otherwise) for promotional purposes.
5. ACIA accepts no responsibility for nominations that are lost, delayed, or misdirected.
6. Nominations may be withdrawn by the Nominator or at the request of the Nominee prior to the deadline or by contacting the awards administrator after the deadline.
7. Judges must declare any real or perceived conflict of interest and recuse themselves from assessing any nomination where they are associated with the Nominator, Nominee, nominated team, or organisation.
8. The Judges' decisions are final, and no correspondence regarding the outcome will be entertained.
9. ACIA reserves the right to disqualify any individual who tampers with the entry process and may cancel the awarding of the prize in such cases.
10. ACIA reserves the right to cancel the awards in the event of tampering, unauthorized intervention, fraud, or any other causes beyond its control that compromise the administration's security, fairness, integrity, or proper conduct.
11. ACIA is not liable for any loss or damage, including direct or consequential loss, or for any personal injury sustained in connection with any prize, except where liability cannot be excluded by law.