

COMMUNITY AWARDS

Awards in this Category are:

DECORATOR OF THE YEAR

Recognises the outstanding overall decorator selected from the winners of the Artistic Achievement Awards.

The judging panel considers the category winners collectively and selects the artist who demonstrates the strongest overall combination of technical mastery, artistic quality, consistency and breadth of achievement.

This award is not separately entered. Eligibility is automatic for winners of the Artistic Achievement Awards.

ACDN CHOICE AWARD

The ACDN Choice Award is a discretionary recognition presented to an artist whose work demonstrates consistently high artistic and technical achievement, but who has not received another major award in that year.

It is not open for nomination or entry.

The ACDN Awards Committee may present the award where it believes an artist's body of work, consistency, contribution or repeated high-level performance warrants special recognition.

The award may not be presented every year.

JO MCINTOSH CAKE MATE AWARD

The Jo McIntosh Cake Mate Award honours the legacy of Jo McIntosh, a much-loved member of the cake-decorating community whose generosity, friendship and commitment to supporting others left a lasting impact on the sector.

Over the years, the award has recognised wonderful members of our community who embody the spirit of connection, kindness and support that Jo represented.

As ACDN continues to evolve, we are taking the opportunity to pause this award for 2026 and we are working alongside Jo's family to consider how this special recognition should evolve alongside our community.

The Jo McIntosh Cake Mate Award will therefore not be presented this year, while we thoughtfully consider its future form and ensure Jo's legacy continues to be recognised in a meaningful way.

RISING TALENT

Recognises an emerging cake artist who has been actively decorating or participating in the cake-decorating sector for approximately two years or less and who demonstrates exceptional early technical and artistic promise.

Artists may self-nominate or be nominated by another person.

All nominations are first vetted by a sector expert to confirm that the artist meets the emerging-talent eligibility requirements. The ACDN Awards Committee, in consultation with relevant sector experts, then considers the eligible nominees and selects the recipient.

The assessment may consider the artist's technical development, artistic growth, consistency, originality, engagement with the sector and demonstrated potential.

RISING TALENT YEAR KEY DATES

Process	Description	Date
Public Nominations	Business are nominated or may self nominate for each award category.	11 August – 30 August
Accept Nominations	All nominees will be contacted via email and asked to accept their nomination. Nominees will be asked to provide a logo, head shot and other images of their work as required to allow TCN to promote and run the awards processes.	11 August – 3 rd September
Nominee Vetting	Nominees will be vetted by the Awards panel to identify eligibility of nominees.	10 th September – 12 th October
Judging	Once vetting is complete, an experienced sub-panel of judges. They will assess the artists skill against published criteria. The Awards panel will meet with the judges and provide moderation of the results to determine the final rankings. The Artist with the top ranking will be awarded the trophy.	10 th September – 12 th October
Awards Presented	During the ACDN Community Night, the top ranked artist will be announced as the award winner and the second ranked artist will receive the Highly Commended award.	20 th November, 7pm Hijinx Hotel QV Melbourne.

Rising Talent Judges Rubric										
Criterion	Limited		Developing		Promising		Very Strong		Exceptional Rising Talent	
Scoring Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Demonstrated Technical & Artistic Ability	Work remains at a very early stage, with significant inconsistency in technique, finish or artistic decision-making		Some sound skills are emerging, but execution and artistic confidence remain inconsistent.		Demonstrates a solid and increasingly confident technical and artistic foundation, with generally consistent work.		Demonstrates strong skill, finish and artistic judgement for their limited time in the sector, with an emerging individual style.		Demonstrates exceptional technical and artistic ability for an emerging decorator, with highly accomplished work, strong consistency and a distinctive developing voice.	
Growth & Development	Limited evidence of significant progression across the period assessed.		Some improvement is evident, but development has been gradual or inconsistent.		Clear progression is visible in skill, confidence, complexity and quality over time.		Demonstrates substantial development in a short period, with increasingly ambitious and successfully executed work.		Demonstrates exceptional progression within approximately two years, showing a striking transformation in technical ability, artistic confidence and quality of work.	
Emerging Potential	Current work provides limited evidence of a clear future development trajectory.		Some promising qualities are evident, but future direction or progression is not yet strongly demonstrated		Shows clear potential for continued development, supported by increasing skill, confidence and ambition.		Demonstrates very strong future potential, with clear momentum, curiosity and an increasingly individual artistic direction.		Demonstrates exceptional emerging potential, with rapid progression, strong artistic direction and a trajectory that clearly distinguishes the artist among their peers at this stage of development.	

