

Guidelines for Assessing Whanganui Camera Club Competitions 2020

Our club competitions are an opportunity for members to show their colleagues what they have been doing photographically; to get constructive feedback from a qualified or experienced “judge”; and to learn from assessments of their own and other members’ images. It should be a positive experience that both members and assessors can benefit from. This is best achieved through an assessment or evaluation approach rather than a purely competitive or judgmental approach.

Our preferred method of assessing images is based on “the PSNZ way” developed in recent years and employed in the accreditation of assessors by PSNZ.

This involves the assessor

- interpreting the image in terms of how it communicates to them and what emotions it evokes. (This should be the most important element in assessment)
- evaluating how the creative processes employed by the photographer aid the interpretation of the image, including the choices made re
 - visual design (craft and tools)
 - composition (artistry and interpretation)
 - expressing purpose and style
 - alignment with the Set subject (unless entered as Open)
- considering the decisions that might have been made differently to strengthen the image. E.g.
 - What elements might or might not have been excluded?
 - Perhaps a different perspective?
 - Perhaps a different moment or time of day?
 - Or???
- assessing each image on its own merits and assigning it an award within its grade as Honours, Highly Commended, Merit or Accepted. Images not gaining an award are deemed Not Accepted (A grade only).

In providing feedback to photographers, assessors are asked to express their comments as their opinions rather than as assertions or facts and to do so in a thoughtful, constructive, engaging and helpful way.

In assessing images, assessors are asked to take a broad view of the Set subject and not penalize images unduly for what they may perceive as a weak alignment with the set subject. There are no constraints on the number of awards at each level. Apart from selecting Trophy winners when required, the images are not competing against each other.

B grade can be viewed as a development grade and assessors are encouraged to provide feedback on how images could have been improved (always in the assessor’s opinion) including technical suggestions.

In A grade the photographers can be assumed to have made deliberate choices and their images should be evaluated on the effectiveness of those choices in creating a work of art.

Our preference is for assessors to avoid excessive technical criticism, show respect for the photographer as an artist and inject humour where appropriate. It is always good to finish on a positive comment. We look forward to receiving your assessments of our members’ images.