



MEDIA RELEASE

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The 12 brands Australian premium consumers are backing in 2026

The 2026 NEO Brand Awards identify the brands earning loyalty from the 5.5 million Australians who account for the majority of elective spending. Tonight's results reveal not just the winners but also who is driving in the fast lane of the two-speed consumer economy.

The NEO Brand Awards will be announced this evening in Melbourne, recognising 12 category winners across travel, luxury, retail, finance, home, digital life, mobility, and energy. The awards are evidence-based and cannot be purchased or sponsored: winners are determined through Roy Morgan Single Source data, the NEO psychographic lens, and cultural judgement applied to brands whose influence outpaces their scale.

NEO mindset Australians are 24 per cent of the population aged 14 and over — 5.5 million people — but they account for the majority of elective spending and outspend the 11.5 million Australians with a Traditional consumer mindset three to one. They are disproportionately the most valuable customers in almost every category.

This year's winners share a clear profile: they reduce uncertainty, treat consumers as capable adults, and deliver emotional alignment alongside functional excellence. The 2026 pattern is unambiguous — premium is no longer primarily about price or materials. It is about how well a brand removes friction and creates a sense of earned access, intelligent design, or genuine agency.

2026 NEO Brand Award Winners

Category	Winner	Score
Airline of the Year	Singapore Airlines	14/15
Hotel & Resort of the Year	Longitude 131°	14/15
Luxury Brand of the Year	Paspaley Pearls	14/15
Retailer of the Year	MECCA	14/15
Fashion Brand of the Year	Bassike	13/15
Daily Ritual Brand of the Year	Aesop	14/15
Financial Partner of the Year	Australian Ethical	14/15
Architect & Spatial Designer of the Year	Carr Design	14/15
Residential Developer of the Year	Nightingale Housing	14/15
Digital Life Partner of the Year	Canva	14/15
Auto Brand of the Year	Volvo	13/15
Energy Partner of the Year	Amber Electric	14/15

Category highlights

In Travel, **Singapore Airlines** took Airline of the Year for making long-haul feel like a smooth passage — grown-up service, fewer pain points, dignity at every handover. **Longitude 131°** won Hotel & Resort of the Year for combining First Nations discovery, adult standards, and a quality of earned access described by the judges as “immersive experience that stays with you.”

In Shopping, **MECCA** won Retailer of the Year for using the physical store as a brand engine — sampling, guidance, and confidence-building at scale. **Bassike** took Fashion Brand of the Year for maintaining defensible premium in a discount-obsessed category, while **Aesop** won Daily Ritual Brand of the Year for turning product use into repeatable pleasure with an intelligent spirit.

Australian Ethical won Financial Partner of the Year for delivering money with meaning — clarity and integrity that makes commitment feel welcome. In Home & Place, **Carr Design** won Architect & Spatial Designer of the Year for producing spaces that raise capability and pleasure, while **Nightingale Housing** took Residential Developer of the Year for treating housing as a social product: design-led, liveable, and aligned to the decade’s constraints.

Canva won Digital Life Partner of the Year for building creation as a system — fast, tasteful, and friction-light in the AI agent era. **Volvo** took Auto Brand of the Year for future-forward restraint and mature confidence. **Amber Electric** won Energy Partner of the Year for making solar, EVs, and real-time pricing feel controllable rather than opaque.

“The common thread in 2026 is not aesthetics or price. It is the removal of uncertainty. The brands that win NEO loyalty are the ones that treat their customers as intelligent adults — designing for flow, reducing friction, and building a sense of earned access or genuine agency. That is a transferable lesson for any category.”

— Dr Ross Honeywill, social scientist and founder of The Right Customer

Methodology

The NEO Brand Awards use a three-layer assessment: Roy Morgan Single Source data to identify brand leaders by penetration and preference; the NEO psychographic lens to evaluate emotional tone, ethical alignment, and creative leadership; and cultural and curatorial judgement to recognise emerging brands whose influence outpaces their current scale. Awards are not externally influenced and cannot be purchased or sponsored.

About the NEO Operating System

The NEO Brand Awards are produced by The Right Customer, whose NEO Operating System — a suite of eight agentic AI tools built around the NEO psychographic — gives brands on-demand access to NEO intelligence for customer identification, brand diagnostics, proposition design, and campaign optimisation.

Media enquiries

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Notes to editors

NEOs (New Economic Order) are a psychographic population classification identified in Roy Morgan Single Source data. They represent 24 per cent of Australians aged 14 and over (approximately 5.5 million people) and account for the majority of elective spending in Australia. NEOs spend three times more than the 11.5 million Australians with a Traditional consumer mindset. Dr Honeywill is available for interview and can provide category-specific commentary on request.