

PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

Young Business Mind Awards

2026



Showcasing the Hunter region's next generation of innovators and problem solvers!



RECENT PARTNERS & SPONSORS



About the Awards

Since 2017, the Young Business Mind Awards (YBMA) has provided a platform for primary and secondary students to develop and showcase entrepreneurial, innovative and creative projects.

Students are encouraged to submit a business idea, design a new product, or present a creative or community-focused project for a chance to win cash prizes, school recognition and industry mentorship. The Awards aim to inspire students to take meaningful steps toward a future where their ideas can make a positive impact.

Participants can enter one of six categories:

- Innovation
- Community Project
- Sustainability
- Start-Up Business
- Business Idea
- STEAM Award

Additional prizes include:

- Primary School Award
- Most Creative Video
- Encouragement Award
- Young Business Mind of Year
- Teacher Award

Teachers are also recognised through the **Innovation in the Classroom Award**, acknowledging the essential role educators play in the developing the skills required for future leadership and success.

Entries require students to submit a 2 - 4-minute video pitch outlining their project. Submissions are judged by sponsors, business leaders and industry mentors. Winners and runners-up are celebrated in the annual awards ceremony, receiving cash prizes, certificates and trophies for themselves and their schools.

It was an incredible experience getting to hear from so many inspiring people...seeing the different winners and their ideas. It was really just quite inspiring and finding out I was one of the winners – that was incredible as well."

Akash Enjeti, winner of the Social Enterprise award 2024.



About Career Links

in 2024, Career Links took over the management of the Young Business Minds Awards. Career Links is a community-focused, not-for-profit organisation with strong networks across education, industry and the business community. The organisation delivers a suite of Programs, events and expos that build the foundations of the future local workforce. Servicing Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the Hunter region, the group has operated since 2000.

The core focus of Career Links is supporting young people as they transition from school to further education and work. through a range of programs,

Career Links programs include:

- **Work Placement Program** - coordinating more than 3,000 student placements annually across local industry
- YAKKA - an indigenous introduction-to-work program
- **Get Back in the Game** - a mentoring and re-engagement program supporting young people
- **Building Women's Careers Program** - supporting women to enter non-traditional and emerging industries, increasing access to opportunities and strengthening workforce participation.
- **Youth Links** - a weekly online career publication highlighting current career, training, and employment opportunities for young people across the region

Career Links also delivers a number of youth-focused events and expos in Newcastle:

- **Newcastle & Lake Macquarie Career Expo** - The region's largest career event, attracting over 4,000 attendees
- **Future choices Expos** - Supporting young people with disability as they plan for the future
- **The Electric Vehicle Challenge** - A STEM-based program for primary and secondary school students, fostering teamwork, innovation, and hands-on learning in renewable technology
- **Young Business Minds** - Showcasing the region's youngest innovators and entrepreneurs as they bring their ideas to life.



The Value of YBMA

The Young Business Mind Awards has a lasting impact that extends far beyond the event itself. YBMA gives students a platform to explore ideas, develop practical solutions, and validate their innovations at an early stage. It helps cultivate confident, capable problem-solvers who are inspired to see themselves as creators, innovators and entrepreneurs.

Over the past 8 years, the Awards have showcased outstanding student concepts - some of which have led to real world success. To view past entries, visit <https://ybma.com.au/previous-winners/> Examples include:

- 2017: A runner-up from Tomaree High developed a low-cost online student rewards software program that was later sold for a substantial profit.
- 2021: First place winners, Myla Tucker and Olivia Lorenz founded Cinnamon Cove, a sustainable tween swimwear label addressing a clear gap for stylish and age appropriate, designs. Their business went on to secure investment on Shark Tank Australia in 2023.
- 2023: Year 8 students from Hunter School of Performing Arts won the Social Enterprise category for their innovative accessible self-checkout design, now being trialed in collaboration with Woolworths.
- 2025: Year 5 student from Shoal Bay Primary School won the Primary School category for her sustainable project Eco Ninja, now being used to fund a school-wide recycling initiative.

'Thank you for the wonderful opportunity you and the Young Business Minds Awards have offered us. We are absolutely thrilled to be a part of something so impactful and meaningful. This experience has truly inspired us to continue ideate, innovating and designing as we shape our futures. Your support and encouragement mean so much—thank you for being such an incredible source of inspiration!'

JENNY GURR, HEAD OF TAS & VET, BISHOP TYRRELL ANGLICAN COLLEGE

'Thank you all for providing such a wonderful event and evening. So much talent in the room! I was honoured to have been a part of it. Such a rewarding, inspiring (and humbling) experience!'

ANDY OLRICH, MANAGING DIRECTOR, NORTH ST PARTNERS, SPONSOR.



Seeking Sponsors

Sponsoring the Young Business Minds Awards positions your organisation as a supporter of emerging talent and innovative thinking across the Hunter region. Your involvement helps students develop real-world skills, gain confidence and explore future pathways - while strengthening your connection with schools, communities and the future workforce.

It's a meaningful way to back fresh ideas and contribute to positive change !

Platinum Partner - \$6,000 + GST

This premier sponsorship level offers maximum visibility and engagement, including prominent logo placement across all YBMA communication and events, recognition in media, and meaningful ways to connect with and support participating students.

Platinum Partner benefits include:

- Speaking opportunity on the Awards night
- Presentation of the Young Business Mind of the Year award (overall winner)
- Acknowledgement of sponsorship in all media releases and publications
- Logo on all marketing collateral (website, school information packs, EDMs, fliers, posters)
- Premium on-stage banner placement during awards presentation
- 10 tailored social media posts across YBMA platforms
- Article in Youth Links sent to Careers Advisors in schools
- Liking and sharing of your social media content promoting your support
- Advertisement/Introduction piece in the souvenir program
- Business logo printed on winners' certificates
- Option to participate in mentoring or incursions opportunities with participating students
- Opportunity to provide online resources for student & teacher participants



Seeking Sponsors

Gold Partner - \$4,200 + GST

The Gold level provides strong brand visibility across YBMA communications and events, including recognition throughout the awards program and opportunities to meaningfully engage with participating students.

Gold Partner benefits include:

- Speaking opportunity on the presentation night
- Presentation of Awards in your chosen category
- Acknowledgement of sponsorship in all media releases and publications
- Logo on all marketing collateral including website, school information packs, EDMs, fliers, posters etc.
- Logo and onstage banner inclusion during awards presentation
- 5 Unique social media posts on all YBMA platforms
- Article in the YBMA newsletter/latest news
- Marketing analysis report following completion of the awards
- Liking and sharing of your social media content promoting your support
- Printed logo in the souvenir program
- Business logo printed on winners' certificates
- Open to mentorship and incursion opportunities with participating students

Silver Sponsor - \$2,900 + GST

The Silver level provides strong brand recognition across event collateral, digital channels and the awards night. This tier is ideal for organisations looking to demonstrate community impact and support innovation in a meaningful way.

Silver Partner benefits include:

- Presentation of Awards
- Acknowledgement of sponsorship in all media releases and publications
- Logo and banner inclusion in function room during awards presentation
- Logo on all marketing collateral including website, school information packs, EDMs, fliers, posters etc.
- 3 tailored social media posts that align your business with the award categories on all YBMA platforms
- Acknowledgement post in the YBMA newsletter/latest news
- Liking and sharing of your social media content promoting your support
- Printed logo on the souvenir program
- Business logo printed on winner's certificates

2025 Impact Summary

Participation Growth

The 2025 YBMA saw strong momentum, with more students and schools engaging across the Hunter region. Entry numbers have steadily increased over the past three years: 22 entries in 2023, 44 in 2024, and 52 in 2025. This upward trend highlights growing awareness of the program and continued enthusiasm from participating schools.

In 2025, the most popular category was Business Idea, closely followed by Innovation and Sustainability, demonstrating sustained interest in entrepreneurial thinking and future-focused problem-solving.

Submissions were received from 15 Hunter region schools, spanning Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Port Stephens and the Hunter Valley. Attendance at the Awards night was at capacity with around 140 people in attendance.

YBMA continues to reach all schools in the Hunter region.

Marketing reach includes:

- 68 High Schools & 170 Primary Schools
- 37 Careers teachers
- 986 Subscribed Contacts
- 511 YBMA Facebook Followers & 1,300 Career Links Facebook Followers
- 154 Career Links Instagram Followers
- 262 YBMA LinkedIn Followers & 401 Career Links LinkedIn Followers

Don't miss this opportunity to play a meaningful role in developing the skills that will strengthen our region's future.



Key Dates

Entries Open: March 2026
Entries Close: Nov 2026
Awards Event: 19 Nov 2026

Contact

Ashley Kelly / Events Team at Career Links
Email: events@careerlinks.nsw.edu.au
Phone: 4967 1050