

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 ideas.

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 support helps students build 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 !

We're also open to tailoring partnerships to align with your organisation's goals and priorities.

Platinum Partner - \$6,000 + GST

Our premier partnership tier, positioning your organisation as a supporter of innovation, education and emerging talent across the region, while offering maximum visibility and meaningful engagement with students, schools, and the broader community.

Platinum Partner benefits include:

Event Presence

- Speaking opportunity on the **Awards Night**
- Presentation of the **Young Business Mind of the Year award** (overall winner)
- Premium on-stage banner placement during awards presentation

Brand Visibility & Promotion

- Recognition as a Platinum Partner across media releases and publications
- Prominent logo placement across all marketing collateral (website, school information packs, EDMs, fliers and posters)
- A series of tailored social media posts across YBMA platforms highlighting your partnership and involvement
- Featured article in Youth Links, distributed to Careers Advisors in schools
- Social media amplification
- Advertisement in the official event program
- Logo included on all winners' certificates

Engagement & Impact

- Opportunity to participate in mentoring or student engagement activities
- Opportunity to provide resources for students and teachers



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:

- Presentation of awards in your chosen category
- Opportunity for event involvement including speaking (where appropriate)
- Recognition as a Gold Partner across media releases and publications
- Logo placement across key marketing collateral (website, school information packs, EDMs, fliers and posters)
- On-stage banner inclusion during awards presentation
- Feature in YBMA newsletter/latest news
- Amplification of your organisation's social media content across YBMA channels
- Printed logo in the official event program
- Business logo printed on winners' certificates
- Opportunity to participate in mentoring or student engagement activities

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
- Recognition as a Silver Partner across media releases and publications
- Logo inclusion in event signage and function room during awards presentation
- Logo included on key marketing collateral (website, school information packs, EDMs, fliers and posters)
- Social media acknowledgement across YBMA platforms
- Printed logo in the official event program
- Business logo included on winner's certificates

2025 Impact Summary

Participation Growth

The 2025 YBMA saw strong momentum, with increasing student and school engagement across the Hunter region. Entry numbers have steadily risen over the past three years - 22 entries in 2023, 44 in 2024, and 54 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, followed closely by Innovation and Sustainability. This highlights strong ongoing 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 engage schools in the Hunter region.

Marketing reach:

- 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