



# PIDA

## AUSTRALASIAN PACKAGING INNOVATION & DESIGN AWARDS 2026

### ACCESSIBLE & INCLUSIVE PACKAGING

#### ACCESSIBLE & INCLUSIVE PACKAGING DESIGN CRITERIA



## APPLICATIONS CLOSE 27 FEBRUARY 2026

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**WORLDSTAR**  
GLOBAL  
PACKAGING  
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# 2026 ACCESSIBLE & INCLUSIVE PACKAGING DESIGN SPECIAL AWARD CRITERIA

Do you consider Accessible Design and Ease of Use critical design elements of all of your packaging? If you aren't using the Accessibility Packaging Design Guidelines developed by Arthritis Australia, in conjunction with Dr Fain from Georgia Tech Research Institute, and available in New Zealand through a partnership with Arthritis New Zealand, then you could already be losing customers whose abilities are not being considered and their needs are not being met. Packaging that is accessible and easy-to-open empowers consumers, provides convenience and allows you to grow your market share by meeting changing consumer needs. It is not only the ageing population that have issues with difficult to open packaging; it is also people with disabilities, arthritis sufferers and even children. Ease of Use design should be an integral part of your packaging. **The Accessible & Inclusive Packaging Design Special Award is designed to recognise packaging that is accessible, intuitive, easy-to-open and innovative. This is a WorldStar Award Category.**

**Please consider nominating for other relevant categories at the same time for the same innovation within the 2026 PIDA Award Categories. eg: Food, Beverage, Domestic & Household, Health, Beauty and Wellness and Sustainable Packaging Design. The other award categories will be judged independently and based on specific criteria.**

Research from Arthritis Australia shows that:

- All consumers struggle with packaging, but the growing ageing population, consumers with disabilities, arthritis sufferers and children are impacted the most.
- 44% of consumers struggle with packaging everyday.
- 92% of consumers have spilt or damaged a product when trying to open the packaging.
- When consumers experience hard-to-open packaging:
  - o 56% Look for the product but in a different type of packaging.
  - o 21% Look at buying a competitors product.
- 65% of consumers have had to wait for someone to come and open packaging for them.
- 1-in-2 Australians have injured themselves opening packaging - including deep cuts and chipped teeth.
- 89% of consumers are currently feeling frustrated or furious with packaging.
- 67,000 people in the UK visited hospitals casualty departments every year due to an accident involving food and drink packaging.

*(NB: reference to the relevant guidelines is included with each criteria point to assist your application. Your design and/or innovation should address applicable guidelines – not all guidelines may be relevant to your particular product)*



## ACCESSIBLE & INCLUSIVE PACKAGING DESIGN SPECIAL AWARD CRITERIA

The following criteria will be considered by the judges in assessing the applications:

### 1. PACKAGING MUST BE EASY-TO-OPEN AND USE FOR THOSE WITH LIMITED FUNCTIONAL ABILITIES

- o Low opening forces – packaging shall have low opening forces that consumers can exert within the intended grip position (e.g. pinch grip). If available, please provide the opening forces for your packaging.

*Refer to relevant Food Packaging Accessibility Design Guidelines: 2, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15*

- o Obvious opening point / intuitive to use and open – consumers shall be able to use the packaging in an intuitive way and understand how to open and interact with the product or opening features. Consumers may be assisted with understanding the opening process with legible and easy to understand opening instructions.

*Refer to relevant Food Packaging Accessibility Design Guidelines: 9, 16, 17 & 19*

- o Easy to grip, control and manoeuvre – the shape, size and surface finish of the packaging and opening features (e.g. tabs and handles), shall be easy for the consumer to grip, hold and interact with. Provide packaging dimensions and specifications associated with consumers using your packaging e.g. area consumer would grip” (esp if samples not provided)

*Refer to relevant Food Packaging Accessibility Design Guidelines: 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 12 & 15*

- o Doesn't require fine motor control, simultaneous actions or an excessive number of actions

*Refer to relevant Food Packaging Accessibility Design Guidelines: 4, 7 & 8*

- o Doesn't cause pain or discomfort – consumers should not feel pain or discomfort when interacting with the packaging, for example, from sharp edges or needing to undertake awkward hand movements.

*Refer to relevant Food Packaging Accessibility Design Guidelines: 6*

- o Doesn't require the use of tools – consumers should not need a tool, such as a knife or scissors, to open or remove packaging.

*Refer to relevant Food Packaging Accessibility Design Guidelines: 5*

### 2. PACKAGING LABELLING SHALL BE HIGHLY LEGIBLE

- o Packaging labelling including opening and usage instructions, best before dates, warnings, allergens and ingredients should be easy to read and understand. The font size, typeface, layout, format and contrast of text should all be considered. Please indicate font size of key information (esp if samples not provided)

*Refer to relevant Food Packaging Accessibility Design Guidelines: 17, 18 & 19*

### 3. INNOVATION FOR ACCESSIBILITY

- o Developed a new innovative manufacturing technique or process to improve accessibility in a way not previously achieved; and/or
- o Developed a new innovative packaging feature that improved the packaging accessibility in a way not previously achieved.

### 4. PACKAGING SHALL BE FIT-FOR-PURPOSE

- o Packaging shall be designed to meet market and consumer needs, while minimising net impact in a cost-effective way.

*As per the APCO Sustainable Packaging Guidelines: 5*

### 5. OTHER CRITERIA TO BE ELIGIBLE:

- o Packaging shall be new or redeveloped and launched in the past 18 months.
- o Packaging must sold in either Australia and/or New Zealand.

### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION – DEMONSTRATING ACCESSIBILITY:

- Companies can demonstrate they have actively worked with consumer groups when developing accessible packaging.
- Companies can validate their packaging accessibility through evidence-based research.

*Reference:*

*Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation The Sustainable Packaging Guidelines (SPGs) 2011*

*Dr Brad Fain Food Packaging Accessibility Design Guidelines Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) 2012*

# 2026 ACCESSIBLE & INCLUSIVE PACKAGING DESIGN SPECIAL AWARD CRITERIA



## AUSTRALIAN AND/OR NEW ZEALAND PACKAGING DESIGN & INNOVATION

All entrants must confirm that the design submitted has been either developed either in, or for, Australia and/or New Zealand. (The innovation must be new on-shelf in the last 18 months) NB: Should you wish to enter the same product in multiple categories the first entry will cost \$550 + GST with additional category entries costing \$250 + GST per entry.

## JUDGING

The PIDA Award judges are leading experts in the field and have long-standing expertise in this field. All entrants understand that the judges will hold the final decision on the winner and no correspondence will be entered into on the subject of their decision. Finalists will be announced before the 2026 PIDA Awards ceremony, which will be held on the Tuesday 28 July, Aviary, Crown Complex, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

## SAMPLE PRODUCT-PACKAGING SYSTEM/FORMAT

**It is a mandatory requirement that all entries submitted must include 3x physical samples of the packaging; including any Before and After samples.** All entrants understand that once the sample has been submitted that they become the property of the Australasian Institute of Packaging Inc. The samples will not be returned to the entrant unless the entrant incurs all costs associated with the return delivery.

**Samples to be delivered to: 2026 PIDA Awards, 19 Jumbuck Street, Jindalee, Queensland, 4074, Australia. If entries reflect design innovation change to an existing product/package it is essential to provide judges with samples of both formats. Images at minimum are required for Before and After re-designs.**

**Frozen, Chilled and Short shelf life samples – should be clearly identified to indicate this and forwarded in protective packaging and conditions. Arrangement to the AIP Australasian Office should be made for the best timing for these packs to be sent so judges will view the product in optimal conditions.**

## PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Should your submission include any proprietary information on your packaging design systems please ensure that you mark that section with 'private and confidential' so that the judges understand that the information provided is for the sole purpose of evaluating the submission.

## PROMOTIONS & MARKETING

The AIP and the WPO reserves the right to publish details of the winners of the PIDA Awards on websites, trade magazines, at tradeshow and on-line media outlets, nationally and internationally, to acknowledge the winners and raise the profile of the award program. The AIP will showcase the samples after the awards in multiple exhibitions.

## WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT

Winners will be announced at the 2026 Australasian Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) Awards ceremony on the Tuesday 28 July, Aviary, Crown Complex, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

## SUBMISSIONS \*UPDATED

**All nominations for awards must be submitted via the online platform <https://pida.awardsplatform.com> Once you have created a user account in the competition platform, simply fill in the submission form. There is a limit of words for each section. You can also link to external web pages with additional information or a video about your submission. Please upload up to five high resolution images to not only help the judges but to also be used in any marketing material for the awards program. Please include images of ARL on-pack. The judges also encourage all entrants to submit video talking about the criteria and showing the packaging in real-time. Please answer the criteria on the video and upload to your own YouTube or Vimeo platform. In addition, the judges require 3x samples of the pack design including any before and after sample packs, if available. With the on-line platform you can save your entry and finish it later. Don't forget to complete all sections of the form by the 27 February 2026.**

## RECOGNITION:

1. A trophy will be awarded to the Gold Winner. Silver & Bronze will receive a plaque and High Commendations will receive a Certificate.
2. All winners will be recognised within the AIP Newsletter, website and communication channels, as well as within the wider packaging and processing industry trade magazines and websites.
3. All winners will receive a PIDA Award winner logo for use within their marketing material and promotions.
4. All Gold, Silver, Bronze and High Commendation winners will be eligible to enter in to THE SAME category within the WorldStar Packaging Awards in October 2026. Entries to the WorldStar Packaging Awards enable international recognition and opportunities for the nominees. The WorldStar Packaging Awards will incur a cost to enter by the nominee.