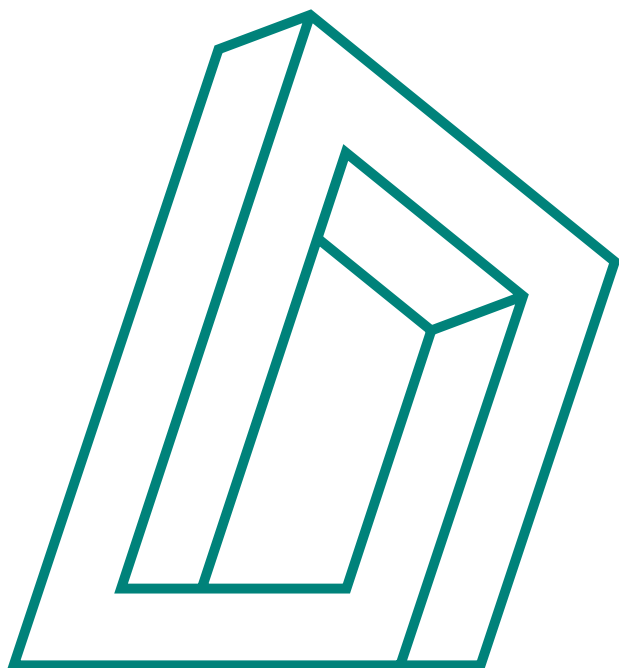




PIDA

AUSTRALASIAN PACKAGING INNOVATION & DESIGN AWARDS 2026

FOOD PACKAGING

FOOD PACKAGING DESIGN CRITERIA



APPLICATIONS CLOSE 27 FEBRUARY 2026

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FOOD PACKAGING DESIGN CATEGORY

The Food Packaging Award will recognise organisations that have designed innovative packaging and processing materials, packaging within food packaging and processing including fresh, frozen or other.

It is recommended that the submissions showcase an innovative solution designed either in collaboration for an existing customer or market. Judges will look for entries that display innovative – design and thinking, technology and/or material use; benefit to consumers; functional and /or convenient elements. They will also take into account design and cost elements between standard packaging and premium/promotional packaging. All categories will also be judged on the sustainability of the pack. Please refer to #4 criteria for the Sustainable Packaging Design considerations. This is a WorldStar Packaging Awards category.

Please consider nominating for other relevant categories at the same time for the same innovation within the 2026 PIDA Award Special Award Categories. e.g. Sustainable Packaging Design, Save Food Packaging Design, Accessible & Inclusive Packaging Design and Marketing. The Special Award categories will be judged independently and based on specific criteria.

CRITERIA 1. PACKAGING DESIGN

Packaging that demonstrates originality and creativity with graphics, decoration, shape and structure. Design which links packaging with a brands heritage.

In this category the judges will be looking for:

- Outstanding structural creativity.
- Quality of artwork.
- Use of images, colour and texture.
- Creative use of brand heritage.
- How the design adds value to the brand.
- How export markets have influenced design.



CRITERIA 2. PACKAGING FUNCTIONALITY

Packaging that demonstrates superior functionality traits such as, antimicrobial properties, increased shelf life, design for dexterity challenges including supply chain enhancements such as improved logistics, traceability and, active and intelligent packaging.

The judges will be looking for:

- Innovation in functional design which solves problems for which no or few solutions currently exist e.g. in the area of improved design for dexterity challenges.
- How the enhanced functionality adds value to the brand.
- How improved functionality e.g. increased shelf life can demonstrate less product wastage versus standard package.
- How use of active and intelligent packaging technology has positively impacted the functionality of the packaging e.g. time temperature indicators, shelf-life sensors, thermochromic inks and labels etc.

CRITERIA 3. PROCESSING INNOVATION

Use of new technologies, products, materials, services or processes resulting in changes to the previously designed packaging or packaging format, providing a beneficial enhancement in the supply chain.

In this category the judges will be looking for:

- Entries where packaging equipment and/or processes have been modified to take advantage alternative raw materials.
- Implementation of new technologies to improve reduce overall packaging material required e.g. lightweighting.
- Where collaborative partnerships between distributors, producers and packaging manufacturers has driven process improvements to avoid packaging waste.
- Following a life-cycle analysis or carbon footprint examination of the previous design to use resources more efficiently and to reduce transport related CO₂ emissions.
- Detail any active and intelligent packaging e.g. time temperature indicators, shelf-life sensors, thermochromic inks and labels etc.

CRITERIA 4. SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The industry has started to review how packaging can meet the founding principles of the 2025 National Packaging Targets but be design ready and recycle ready to meet the in-coming Mandated National Packaging Design Standards.

Please indicate within this criteria how your packaging is meeting the 2025 National Packaging Targets, the 10x sustainable packaging design principles and how the design is considering circularity of the pack and the material where possible.

Key areas of interest to the judges includes:

- All packaging to be reusable and or recyclable as per the current 2025 National Packaging Targets.
- Reduction of all unnecessary single use packaging.
- Avoidance and Reduction of all packaging (primary, secondary and tertiary).
- Emptiability of the pack and ensuring no product waste through intuitive packaging design.
- Reduction of the weight of packaging without impacting product protection or shelf life.
- The avoidance of chemicals of concern such as PFA's, BPA.
- Reduction of materials that are seen as contaminants to recycling systems in Australia & New Zealand.
- Increased use of recycled content material in the packaging where applicable.
- The move to mono material packaging.
- Plastics packaging to be recyclable through kerbside collection, alternate pathways such as the Soft Plastics Stewardship Australia/ Curby or chemical/advanced recycling.
- The ability for the packaging to be recycled or reprocessed in Australia & New Zealand.
- Development of Closed Loop or a Product Stewardship program for packaging that is not suitable for any current recycling solutions.
- Implementation and expansion of models for reusable packaging (primary, secondary and tertiary).
- Improved use of the Australasian Recycling Labelling (ARL) program on all packaging.
- Improved use of off pack communication on the packaging's sustainability journey e.g.: via a 2D code/QR code through to a company website.



2026 FOOD PACKAGING DESIGN 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.