Australia takes second place in WorldStar Student medal tally

With 246 entries from 90 educational institutions across 23 countries entering the 2026 round of the WorldStar Student Awards, the competition this year was fierce, writes AIP executive director **Nerida Kelton**.

TWENTY-ONE AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY students from the Industrial Design School at UNSW and the Master of Food Science and Agribusiness program at Monash University took on the strong global competition and received two Gold, two Bronze and 16 WorldStar Certificates. Australia also placed second in the medal tally behind China, which is an incredible feat for such a small country.

RECYCLE-READY TOOTHPASTE TUBE TAKES TWO

The standout student from Australia was Robin Luo from the Industrial Design School, UNSW, who received a Gold Award in the Health and Personal Care category and a Bronze Award in the inaugural Accessible Packaging category, for his project MINT Recyclable Toothpaste Tube.

The Mint toothpaste tube was designed in response to the significant waste and environmental impact caused by traditional toothpaste tubes. The mixed-media composition renders them unrecyclable through standard kerbside recycling programs and Mint aims to offer a more sustainable packaging solution.

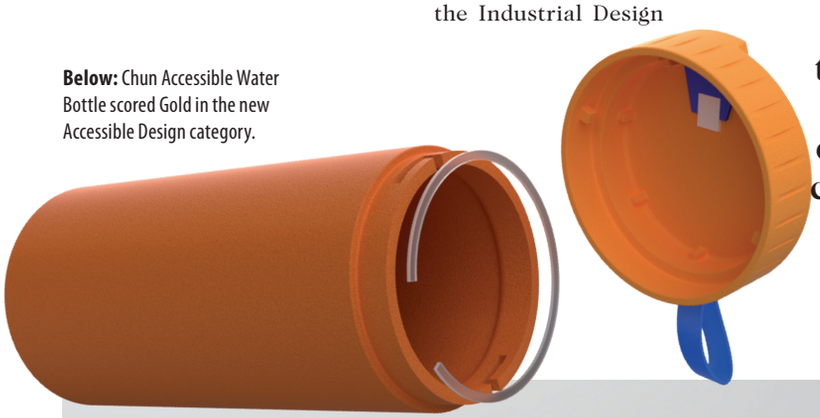
Additionally, toothpaste residue often remains trapped inside, making recycling more difficult and product waste an issue. To address these issues, Luo designed the MINT toothpaste tube entirely from polypropylene. This rigid, mono-material construction allows the tube to be easily recycled through standard kerbside programs. The design, inspired by a glue stick mechanism, features an auger and plunger system. This innovation ensures users can extract nearly all of the toothpaste, thereby reducing product waste, leaving the tube cleaner for recycling. The result is a more user-friendly and environmentally responsible solution.

> **The bottle was developed under the inclusive design and accessibility category, guided by criteria such as ease of use, ergonomic function, and sensory guidance.**

GOLD FOR ACCESSIBLE WATER BOTTLE

A team of students from the Master of Food Science and Agribusiness program at Monash University, Chun Ming Tsang, Queenie Wu and Keith James, received a Gold in the inaugural Accessible & Inclusive Packaging Design category for the Chun Accessible Water Bottle.

The water bottle was designed to support individuals with neurological impairments, particularly post-stroke users who experience limited mobility. Chun Ming Tsang personally suffered a stroke in childhood, which caused a loss of mobility on the left side. Through the daily experiences, realising that how challenging it can be to perform simple tasks like opening a traditional water bottle, which typically requires twisting the lid with two hands. This design aims to address that barrier by enabling single-handed and even hands-free operation, empowering users with limited mobility to drink water independently, safely, and with dignity.



Below: Chun Accessible Water Bottle scored Gold in the new Accessible Design category.

In the Beverage category, H2OLYTE pack design brought home a Bronze

MINT Recyclable Toothpaste Tube received Gold and Bronze recognition.

The bottle was developed under the inclusive design and accessibility category, guided by criteria such as ease of use, ergonomic function, and sensory guidance. Key innovative features include a spring-loaded, mouth-activated opening that allows users to push down with their top lip to drink; once released, it automatically seals to prevent leakage. A bayonet-style twist mechanism replaces the traditional multi-turn cap, requiring only a short turn with one hand.

Together, these features make the bottle significantly more user-friendly, reducing reliance on two hands and making everyday hydration more accessible to people with motor impairments.

BEVERAGE PACK DESIGN SCORES BRONZE

Adding to the Australian student success, Adriano Sturla Gomez, also from the Industrial Design School, UNSW, received a Bronze Award in the Beverage category for his project H2OLYTE. The redesigned electrolyte container prevents landfill waste by addressing sorting challenges at recycling facilities. Its optimised shape ensures compatibility with filtration systems, while reducing material usage by 30 per cent. Enhanced stacking and accessibility features maximise transport efficiency and consumer usability, making this a standout pack on the shelf. ■

16 WorldStar Certificates

In addition to the medal awards, 16 students from across the Industrial Design School, NSW and the Master of Food Science and Agribusiness program, Monash University, were recognised with WorldStar Student Certificates including: Kevin Arulraj, Akshata Sukhtankar, Muniba Mehboob, Satakshi Darmwal, Suzanne Ngasseppam, Angela Jessica, Audrey Victoria Purnomo, Chunyang Wang, Edison Cheng, Eugenia Cheung, Haojie Wang, Jie Yang, Lydia Lei, Melissa Esho, Samuel Thanopoulos, and Victoria Josefine Plastina.

Commenting on the success of the program, Rod Heath, GM Industry and Education, Monash Food Innovation, said, "The AIP has been an invaluable contributor to Monash University's Master of Food Science and Agribusiness course.

"An 'industry informed' unit within the masters, FSC5051 – Innovation, Consumer Behaviour and Food Marketing inspires students to bring a new food product to life inclusive of the all-important pack design."

Heath explains that AIP experts guest lecture in this unit and their expertise brings an essential government and industry perspective to the curriculum, providing students with up-to-date knowledge on packaging regulations, sustainability frameworks, and accurate on-pack communication. AIP's involvement strengthens Monash's ability to develop graduates who understand the complexities of modern packaging and the real-world challenges of commercialising innovative food and beverage products that can be 'better for earth'.

"For Monash students, winning a PIDA Award is genuinely special. It shows that the work they created within a university unit meets national industry standards. It boosts their confidence, opens doors for their career development, and gives them recognition from the industry they aspire to join," Heath adds.

"For the students, it is also a stepping stone to the international WorldStar Student Awards, highlighting the global relevance of their achievements in innovative and sustainable packaging design."

Only winners from the Australasian Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) Student Awards are eligible to enter the WorldStar Student Awards from across Australia and New Zealand.