



Winners announced for the 2026 Australasian Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) Awards

Winners for the 2026 round of the annual Australasian Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) Awards have been announced at a gala awards evening with 320 people in attendance, that was held on the 28th of July at The Aviary, on the rooftop of the Crown Complex in Melbourne, Victoria. The 2026 PIDA Awards coincided with foodpro.

Coordinated by the Australasian Institute of Packaging (AIP), the PIDA awards are designed to recognise companies and individuals who are making a significant difference in their field across Australia and New Zealand.

The 2026 Finalists come from the following PIDA categories:

1. Food Packaging Design
2. Beverage Packaging Design
3. Health, Beauty & Wellness Packaging
4. Domestic & Household Packaging
5. Labelling & Decoration
6. Outside of the Box
7. Marketing
8. Accessible & Inclusive Packaging Design
9. Save Food Packaging Design
10. Sustainable Packaging Design
11. Young Packaging Professional of the Year
12. Industry Packaging Professional of the Year
13. Packaging Technologist of the Year
14. 2026 ABA Scholarship Program – Diploma in Packaging Technology & Certificate in Packaging
15. AIP President Scholarship

The PIDA Awards are also the exclusive feeder program for Australia and New Zealand for the prestigious WorldStar Packaging Awards run by the World Packaging Organisation (WPO). All 2026 PIDA winners will be automatically eligible for entry into the 2027 WorldStar Packaging Awards competition.

2026 Food Packaging Design of the Year

The Food Packaging Design of the year award recognises organisations that have designed innovative packaging and/or materials, within food packaging and processing including fresh, frozen or other. This is a WorldStar General Award Category.

The 2026 Food Packaging Design of the Year GOLD winner is Primo Sliced Meats Peel & Reseal Pack: Primo Foods & Amcor Flexibles.

The Primo Sliced Meats & Reseal Pack was a collaboration between Primo Foods and Amcor Flexibles Australia New Zealand and was designed to meet a consumer need for more functional packaging.

Primo Foods iconic sliced meats range has transitioned from a standard peel top film to a peel and reseal top film, designed with consumers in mind.

The new pack is easy to open, resealable, offers a 10% reduction in plastic and now uses recycle ready mono material PET for the bottom film.

There was tie for the 2026 Food Packaging Design of the Year SILVER award. The first silver winner is Arctic Shield EPS Replacement: Opal ANZ and the second is RePlay Returnables: Bonson Packaging.

The 2026 Food Packaging Design of the Year BRONZE winner is Honey Squeeze Pack: Caps & Closures.

2026 Beverage Packaging Design of the Year

The Beverage Packaging Design of the Year award recognises organisations that have designed innovative packaging and/or materials, within packaging and processing for liquid or dry tea, coffee, water and soft drinks including wine, beer and spirits. This is a WorldStar General Award Category.

The 2026 Beverage Packaging Design of the Year GOLD winner is Asahi Carlton Dry 6x330ml Bottle Shrink Replacement Wrap: Graphic Packaging International & Asahi Beverages.

The new pack moves away from the original six-pack beer format wrapped in plastic shrink, reducing single use plastic and transitioning to kerbside recyclable fibre-based packaging.

The rigid walls provide strong physical protection by absorbing shocks and preventing crushing during transport and the design is consumer-friendly, offering easy carrying & stacking. The locking tab-and-slot design eliminates the need for glue and significantly improves packing efficiency.

The Fibreboard Wrap fits tightly around the bottles, enhancing security and overall pack strength. Tab insertions create stable partitions that hold the

bottoms of the bottles firmly in place. In addition, features such as easy-access openings and finger holes for carrying ensure a user-friendly experience, making the packaging both practical and convenient.

Exposing the neck of the bottle shows the consumer the quality of the product and superior branding is also achieved through 360-degree, high-quality, full-colour printing that enhances marketing impact.

The 2026 Beverage Packaging Design of the Year SILVER winner is 600ml Spring Water: Woolworths.

The 2026 Beverage Packaging Design of the Year BRONZE winner is capR: Interpack.

2026 Health, Beauty & Wellness Packaging Design of the Year

The Health, Beauty & Wellness Packaging Design of the Year award recognises organisations that have designed innovative packaging and/or materials, within cosmetics, toiletries, personal hygiene, supplements, vitamins, perfumes, hair body and oral care. This award also covers packaging of all medicines including over the counter medicines and medical equipment packaging. This is a WorldStar General Award Category.

The 2026 Health, Beauty & Wellness Packaging Design of the Year award GOLD winner is Mono material HDPE tube & cap range: Impact International.

This innovative Australian manufactured mono material range replaces the difficult to recycle tube and cap, which are traditionally made of PE and PP. By replacing the PP resin in the flip top cap, Impact International can now offer a tube and flip top cap made using HDPE resins that is designed for the consumer to dispose of both the tube and the cap as one single item, at disposal. The new tube and cap range has been designed to end up in the HDPE recycling stream.

The tube is also manufactured using HDPE PCR resin, which is also made in Australia. The tube can contain between 30%-50% PCR recycled content, depending on the tube length required. The Australian made PCR HDPE material is located in the non-contact layer of the tube wall. This makes it easier for brand owners to incorporate the use of PCR HDPE in their tube packaging as there is no direct contact with PCR materials.

The 2026 Health, Beauty & Wellness Packaging Design of the year SILVER winner is Libra Range Outer Packaging with 50% PCR LDPE: ProAmpac New Zealand.

The 2026 Health, Beauty & Wellness Packaging Design of the Year BRONZE winner is Esmi Cleanser Butter Balm.

2026 Domestic & Household Packaging Design of the Year

The Domestic & Household Packaging Design of the Year award recognises organisations that have designed innovative packaging and/or materials, packaging within domestic and household items, toys, stationery, gifts, clothing, garden equipment and decorating. This is a WorldStar Packaging General award category.

The 2026 Domestic & Household Packaging Design of the Year GOLD winner is Click & Grow Garden Care System: Yates Group.

Existing Do-it-yourself Garden care sprayers are either disposable and messy, or reusable but difficult to control. Users often handle chemicals directly, risking exposure and spills. The challenge was to create an intuitive, leak-proof sprayer that seamlessly connects to standard hoses, while offering controlled chemical dilution.

The new design needed to accommodate pre-mixed pouches ranging from 500ml to 1L and ensure easy operation with minimal instruction.

Click & Grow features a uniquely engineered venturi system that draws liquid from pre-mixed pouches into the water stream, with an intuitive dial to control mixture ratios. A thumb-activated shut-off valve enhances safety and control, while multiple spray settings accommodate different garden care needs.

Designed for durability, the handset is made from UV-stabilised polymers to withstand outdoor conditions. It eliminates direct chemical handling, preventing spills and exposure.

The collar of the pouch has been modified to be filled on a standard pouch filler, whilst being able to incorporate the patented Pick Up Assembly (PUA) closure mechanism. The PUA is a wedge fit design with a series of internal valves and O-rings to ensure that the pouch only opens when clicked into the handset with the sprayer. This ensures that the pack format is truly contactless. Once the handset has been purchased, there are a range of 8 refill pouches.

The 2026 Domestic & Household Packaging Design of the Year SILVER winner is Tahwalhi Towable Bodyboard: Rebel Sports Australia.

2026 Labelling & Decoration Design of the Year

The Labelling & Decoration Design of the Year award is designed to recognise the addition of content to a pack which creates a unique or innovative appearance, function or communication. This may include labels, sleeves, tags, coding/markings, etching, directly applied inks or by any other similar process. This is a WorldStar General Award Category.

2026 Labelling & Decoration Design of the Year GOLD winner is RePlay Returnables: Bonson Packaging.

RePlay Returnables is a returnable container system by Bonson Packaging, designed specifically for food & deli services to not only replace single-use containers, but to also create a reusable system.

The system allows customers to buy deli goods in transparent reusable PP containers using a simple tap of their phone or debit card.

Each container features a dishwasher-resistant Variable Data IML label with a unique scannable code, enabling track-and-trace from purchase to return, through the cleaning cycle, and then back to reuse.

Customers use Tap to RePlay™ technology to link containers to their account, encouraging cleaning, returning, and reuse, supporting up to 50 cycles.

The pack has been designed with a soft-edged square shape that balances visual appeal with practical performance, improved spatial efficiency and is combined with a leak-resistant lid that provides the reassuring audible 'click' sound when sealed.

The large radiused on the tub walls and bases offers easy scooping and serving and avoids food catchment areas. Avoiding food residue and moisture catchment areas in both the tub and lid designs was also critical to ensure efficient washing and drying during the sanitation process between uses.

The QRcode also allows Bonson to track the container throughout the borrow & return cycle, and to see how many times the container has been borrowed/returned.

Also, by scanning the QR code with their phone the consumer will be taken to the RePlay website which explains how the RePlay Returnable system works, and its benefits.

The 2026 Labelling & Decoration Design of the Year SILVER winner is Ecomark Natural Branding: Costa Group, Result Group & The Packaging Hippie.

2026 Labelling & Decoration Design of the Year BRONZE winner is EL TORO Tequila Blanco Vok Beverages, Bickfords Australia: MCC Label Australia (Asia Pacific).

2026 Outside of the Box Design of the Year

The Outside of the Box Design of the Year Award has been established for miscellaneous packs and materials that are not included in any other category.

The Outside of the Box Design of the Year Award GOLD winner is Milk Bottle Recycling System: Popit Recycling, Martogg & Procal Dairies.

Australian company Popit Recycling has set new global standards in the recycling of HDPE plastic milk bottles. In partnership with Martogg and Procal Dairies, they have broken the long-standing barrier of recycled HDPE being prohibitively more expensive than virgin material. Milk processors can now switch from a virgin to a recycled HDPE bottle and generate net savings.

The Milk Bottle Recycling solution is a transformative system of post-consumer milk bottle recovery and recycling in a truly circular, closed-loop process.

Empty Bottle Takeback enables producers to 'take back' post-consumer HDPE bottles from their food-service customers, (in the original crates), and return them to site for recycling.

On-Site Bottle Recycling recycles the returned PCR HDPE milk bottles on-site using the innovative machine, Popit. Popit is a small, modular hot-wash plant that was designed, engineered and manufactured right here in Australia. It comprises two modules. 1. The Recovery Module that integrates with the producers existing crate wash infrastructure and it does two things; (1) automates the emptying of bottles from returned crates, and (2) scanning of bottles and removal of any contaminants.

The second module is the Wash Module; which is a fully enclosed unit that cuts the bottles into flakes, hot-caustic washes the flakes, purifies the flakes, dries the flakes, sorts the flakes, and then packages the flakes in bulk bags.

The key is making the economics of recycling on-site at milk processing plants work. The major innovation that makes all of this possible is the small footprint and low cost of Popit. Popit is 10x smaller and 10x cheaper than conventional industrial-scale hot-wash systems. The technology provides significant supply chain improvements in the areas of logistics, traceability, sustainability and cost.

The Outside of the Box Design of the Year Award SILVER winner is Nally Folding MegaBin: Viscount.

The Outside of the Box Design of the Year Award BRONZE winner is Scaling Traceability: Result Group & Australian Table Grapes Association.

2026 Marketing Design Special Award

Packaging can elicit emotional responses in consumers and should be seen as your best form of marketing. The right packaging design and eye-catching aesthetics can create emotional stimuli that ensures a brand is

purchased. This can incorporate the functionality of the pack, the aesthetic design and the outstanding visual appearance that makes the pack stand out on shelf, the premium and gifting style design, and/ or unique and interactive communication tools on the pack. This is a WorldStar Packaging Award Special Category.

The 2026 Marketing Design of the Year GOLD winner is RePlay Returnables: Bonson Packaging. This is the second Gold award for the RePlay system in the 2026 round of the PIDA Awards.

The 2026 Marketing Design of the Year SILVER winner is Ecomark Natural Branding: Costa Group, Result Group & The Packaging Hippie.

The 2026 Marketing Design of the Year BRONZE winner is G'day Honey Anti Dust spray Propolis & Kakadu Plum: Pure Australia.

2026 Accessible & Inclusive Packaging Design Special Award

The Accessible & Inclusive Packaging Design Special Award is designed to recognise packaging that is accessible, intuitive, easy-to-open and innovative. Accessible Packaging Design needs to include measuring techniques, understanding injuries caused by packaging and consumer satisfaction levels with packaging accessibility. This is a WorldStar Packaging Award Special Category.

The 2026 Accessible & Inclusive Packaging Design of the Year GOLD winner is Betty & Margie adaptive makeup tools & accessible mailer box: ByStorm Beauty.

ByStorm Beauty is an Australian accessible beauty brand creating adaptive makeup tools designed with, and for, the disability community. Founder Storm Menzies was born with mild cerebral palsy, but it wasn't until she broke her dominant hand that she realised how inaccessible the world of beauty really was. In an industry built on confidence and self-expression, access is still treated like an afterthought, and too many people are left to improvise, struggle, or opt out.

Instead of waiting for the industry to catch up, Storm taught herself 3D modelling and prototyping to start designing solutions that actually work for hands that move differently. From the beginning, ByStorm Beauty has been shaped through co-design with people with disability, using real feedback to refine form, function, comfort, and usability. This disability-led approach is central to everything they create, from the product design to the packaging experience.

ByStorm Beauty designs adaptive makeup tools that make everyday beauty products easier to use for people with disability and anyone with hands that work differently. Their first products, Betty and Margie, are the same product in two different shapes that support different movement patterns.

Betty is a rounded grip designed to sit comfortably in the palm and supports users who can curl their fingers. Margie is a flatter, paddle-style grip designed to support a more open-hand hold, offering stability for users who find finger curling or pinch-based control difficult. Both grips are designed to fit a wide range of cylindrical beauty products, and ByStorm Beauty provides a product compatibility checker to help customers confirm fit before purchase.

ByStorm's accessible mailer box has been designed so customers can open their order independently, without tools, or needing to ask someone else for help. The pack includes an easy-tear strip to reduce opening force and removes the need to peel tape or pick at edges. The mailer box also includes a ribbon feature designed for an under-hand motion. Customers slide their hand under the ribbon and lift the lid, reducing the need for pinch grip and tightly curled fingers. The opening point is clear and intuitive, guided by the wording 'Tear into this beauty'.

Inside the box, an accessible insert includes braille indicating the QR code location (including a braille outline to help users locate it). The QR code links to audio and visual instructions and an Easy Read format, ensuring customers can access product information in the format that works best for them.

The 2026 Accessible & Inclusive Packaging Design of the Year SILVER winner is Honey Squeeze Pack: Caps & Closures.

2026 Save Food Packaging Design Special Award

The Save Food Packaging Design special award is designed to recognise companies that are working to minimise or prevent food waste from paddock to plate using innovative and intuitive design features that can contain and protect, preserve and extend shelf life; all the while meeting global sustainable packaging targets. This is a WorldStar Packaging Award Special Award category.

The 2026 Save Food Packaging Design Special Award GOLD winner is Birds Eye Frozen Single Vegetables 825g Range: Simplot.

The 825g product range was launched with new packaging design that was a first in ANZ market for the frozen vegetables category. The design incorporates a 50% recycled content PE laminated block bottom bag with SealStrip's Peel&Seal resealable tape attached on the bag.

The launch of the new packaging for Birds Eye core vegetables 825g range is the brand's first leading packaging design change over the last two decades.

The key driver was addressing the number one consumer packaging pain point for frozen vegetable ranges; product spillage for loose vegetables during consumption and storage, and household food waste.

The provision of block bottom bag and resealable tape formats are aimed to educate consumers to use the innovative Save Food Packaging design feature of resealable tape in portion control consumption.

The introduction of reseal tape allows consumers to reseal the opened bag for multiple servings and to protect product from spillage during storage. By rolling the opened bag down as tight as possible to the leftover product and resealing the bag will ensure limited to no frozen product spilling onto freezer during storage and reducing risk of food waste.

The 2026 Save Food Packaging Design Special Award SILVER winner is AUSTLON SG Self Sealing Shrink Bag: IPE Pack and Technology.

The 2026 Save Food Packaging Design Special Award BRONZE winner is Heinz Taste Tap Dispenser: Kraft Heinz Australia.

The 2026 Save Food Packaging Design Special Award HIGH COMMENDATION winner is Paper Food Tub and Lid System: Pinnacle Packaging.

2026 Sustainable Packaging Design Special Award

The Sustainable Packaging Design special award is designed to recognise companies that have developed innovative packaging or processing solutions that incorporates sustainability considerations. Elements include social, material, source reduction, energy and recovery.

The award also considers all environmental impacts across the pack including meeting the 2025 National Packaging Targets, embedding the Australasian Recycling Label on pack, adhering to as many of the Sustainable Packaging Design Guidelines as possible and more. This is a WorldStar Packaging Award Special Category.

Due to the high number of entries across varying Sustainable Packaging Design principles the judges separated the winners into five subset activities. This year there are 5x gold Sustainable Packaging Design winners, 4x silver and 1 bronze.

The subset categories awarded are:

- 1. Resource Reduction*
- 2. Reuse*
- 3. Recycled Content*
- 4. Design for Recovery*
- 5. Innovations in Resource Recovery*

The 2026 Sustainable Packaging Design – Resource Reduction GOLD winner is Ecomark Natural Branding: Costa Group, Result Group & The Packaging Hippie.

This project was delivered in collaboration with Costa Group and was developed around a shared and practical question. Can seasonal communication be delivered without adding more packaging?

The project delivered this idea in a live retail environment, focusing on material reduction while maintaining operational fit, regulatory compliance and shopper acceptance.

This project represents the starting point of Ecomark's journey in Australia, demonstrating that sustainability and effective marketing can be achieved together under real retail conditions. The project with Costa Group explored a packaging led approach to reducing material use in seasonal fresh produce campaigns.

Traditionally, seasonal marketing in fresh produce relies on additional packaging components such as promotional labels, sleeves or tags. These elements are often produced for short periods and discarded soon after use, increasing material use and waste without changing the core packaging system.

For Costa's Easter 2025 avocado campaign, decoration was applied directly onto individual avocados using precision laser marking technology. The fruit itself became the communication surface, removing the need for additional promotional packaging elements. The laser interacts only with the outer layer of the avocado skin, creating a permanent, food safe mark without penetrating the fruit or affecting quality, shelf life or eating experience.

The Costa Group project validated that decorative and promotional communication can be delivered without increasing packaging material inputs, providing a clear pathway toward more material efficient fresh produce packaging systems.

The 2026 Sustainable Packaging Design – Resource Reduction SILVER winner is 600ml Spring Water: Woolworths.

The 2026 Sustainable Packaging Design – Resource Reduction BRONZE winner is Coles Antibacterial Handwash 250ml: TrendPac & Coles.

The 2026 Sustainable Packaging Design – Reuse GOLD winner is RePlay Returnables: Bonson Packaging. This is the third Gold award for the RePlay system and the most gold awards for any company in the 2026 round of the PIDA Awards.

The 2026 Sustainable Packaging Design – Reuse SILVER winner is Nally Folding MegaBin: Viscount.

The 2026 Sustainable Packaging Design Recycled Content GOLD winner is ReCree8 PCR Pallet Wrap Range: thinkpac.

A core capability of Thinkpac is the development of ReCree8® resin, a proprietary recycled polymer produced from 100% post-consumer soft plastic waste. All products in the range contain 50% ReCree8® post-consumer recycled (PCR) resin.

The ReCree8 PCR Pallet Wrap Range is designed for high-pressure industrial pallet wrapping applications, maintains load containment, elongation and recovery performance. The range is compatible with existing hand and machine wrapping equipment.

The mono-material PE film reduces the amount of virgin material uses in pallet wrap and supports recyclability in Australia, where soft plastics collection pathways exist. The range is designed for logistics and warehousing environments where pallet wrap is essential to product protection and transport efficiency.

The 2026 Sustainable Packaging Design – Design for Recovery GOLD winner is Honey Squeeze Pack: Caps & Closures.

By weaving recycled materials and recovery-focused design into every possible product, Caps & Closures ensures their closures deliver leak resistance, shelf-life protection, less product waste, and easy dispensing.

Designed for the Australian honey industry the Squeeze Pack blends precise dispensing, dependable leak resistance, and recycled-content materials into a single solution that advances the entire category. The pack adapts to Brand's needs, offering options with different levels of recycled content, including a 100% PCR version for bottle, cap and valve.

The Honey Squeeze Pack replaces silicone with a fully recyclable valve material, ensuring the entire cap is recyclable. This breakthrough strengthens the pack's recyclability.

The Honey Squeeze Pack brings together bottle, flip-top cap, and dispensing valve in perfect harmony. The dispensing valve is designed to support controlled flow and clean cut-off, helping reduce drips, mess and product waste during everyday use.

The design's real-world strengths include no leaks, precise squeezes, effortless one-handed use, accessible design, and minimal honey left behind. Intuitive, single-handed operation supports a broader range of users and use contexts, improving usability when grip strength or dexterity is limited.

This thoughtfully engineered pack ensures mess-free, precise pours of thick, golden honey, while championing sustainability with recycled materials and a design focused on responsible disposal.

The 2026 Sustainable Packaging Design – Design for Recovery SILVER winner is Mono material HDPE tube and cap range: Impact International.

The 2026 Sustainable Packaging Design – Innovations in Resource Recovery GOLD winner is Smart Circular Satchel: Australia Post, iQRenew, RollsPack & Signet.

The Smart Circular Satchel is made from 100% Australian post-consumer recycled LDPE derived from Australian household soft plastics. Processing and manufacture were undertaken entirely onshore in Australia through a fully domestic, end-to-end chain, from pellets to film to finished satchel.

This is an Australian-first, multi-stakeholder coordinated onshore circular satchel made from Australian household soft plastics (LDPE). The mono-material LDPE structure uses 100% post-consumer recycled content and supports compatibility with established recycling processes.

The lightweight design improves transport efficiency and network performance, with the satchel engineered to a film gauge of ~65 microns to minimise material use in production and recovery, while keeping total package weight to approximately 20g and meeting durability requirements for postal handling.

Australia Post has also included a tracking barcode and customer declaration via a QR code.

The satchel supports a controlled, closed-loop return pathway via Australia Post, rather than commingled disposal, helping keep the material stream clean and consistent so the LDPE can be more readily recycled, ultimately maximising recovery yield.

The 2026 Sustainable – Innovations in Resource Recovery SILVER winner is Milk Bottle Recycling System: Popit Recycling, Martogg & Procal Dairies.

2026 Young Packaging Professional of the Year

The purpose of the Young Packaging Professional of the Year Award is to provide incentive and recognition to young professionals who are both currently working in and wish to continue their career path within the Packaging industry in both Australia and New Zealand. This can be within any industries such as Food, Beverage, Health, Beauty & Wellness, Domestic & Household. This is a wonderful opportunity to showcase young professionals within our great industry.

The winner of the 2026 Young Packaging Professional of the Year is Pooja Ganesh Nayak, Packaging Engineer, Coles.

Since moving to Australia in 2018 to complete her master's in chemical engineering at Monash University, Pooja Ganesh Nayak has built a career that seamlessly integrates engineering principles with practical, retail scale packaging implementation.

Her academic grounding in areas such as process optimisation, continuous improvement, biomass and biorefineries, mass balance, and reaction engineering have provided her with a strong technical base—one she now applies every day as a packaging engineer. This background enables her to make evidence-driven decisions on recyclability, material performance, logistics efficiency and machinability, while also guiding and supporting growers as new packaging formats are tested across varying equipment.

In 2022, Pooja joined Coles Supermarkets as a Packaging Technologist and progressed to Packaging Engineer. She has become a key part of the packaging specialist team at Coles supporting the Own Brand Fresh Produce and Convenience business units to shift formats from non-recyclable to recyclable, in line with Coles' R3 Packaging Framework and the 2025 National Packaging Targets.

Over her four years at Coles, Pooja has contributed to further positioning sustainable packaging as a core priority that sits within 'Circularity'. She is recognised as a subject-matter expert across Fresh Produce and Fresh Convenience; she combines strong technical capability with supplier-focused engagement and structured project management. Her analytical and cross-functional leadership consistently delivers outcomes that advance the objectives of Coles' R3 Packaging Framework and key Sustainable Packaging Guideline (SPG) objectives.

Pooja Ganesh Nayak is a standout professional in sustainable packaging: a trusted expert to growers, and a results driven asset to internal teams. Her portfolio demonstrates how thoughtful design, recycled materials, clear consumer information, and accessible formats can deliver substantial environmental outcomes at retail scale. With millions of plastic components removed, hundreds of tonnes of virgin plastic avoided, CO₂ emissions reduced, and recyclability advanced across categories, Pooja's work exemplifies the effect of passion applied with purpose: practical in execution, collaborative in approach, and transformative in impact.

2026 Industry Packaging Professional of the Year

The Industry Packaging Professional of the Year Award is designed to recognise and acknowledge the outstanding achievements and contribution by an individual currently working within the Packaging in both Australia and New Zealand. The judges were looking for individuals who have demonstrated vision and leadership, shown innovation and were not afraid to take risks. Another criteria was the significant and continued contribution of an Individual to the packaging industry over a minimum period of 20 years.

The winner of the 2026 Industry Packaging Professional of the Year is David Kilpatrick MAIP, R&D, Quality & Innovation Director, Zipform Packaging.

Starting his packaging career in 2002 with Dysons Packaging, David's packaging passion grew to the point that in 2010 he set up his own packaging business with partner Eddy Pahor. The business was called SOTA Packaging, the acronym being 'State of the Art', and their focus was on paper-based packaging. David's vision was for 'More Paper, less Plastic.' This business is known today as Zipform Packaging.

David's contribution to the industry far exceeds his work at Zipform Packaging. David is single-handedly responsible for introducing the liner-formed fibre technology into Australia in 2011 and paper-bottomed packs in 2016; long before sustainability was such a key driver for businesses.

His drive and vision have changed the world of liner-formed fibre technologies in the Southern Hemisphere. The new state-of-the-art manufacturing plant in Melbourne is a testament to his vision.

Representative of David's technical expertise, innovative mindset and industry standing, Zipform Packaging's linear formed packs have won 4 Gold, 1 Silver and 2 Bronze PIDA Awards and 2 Worldstar Awards in the period 2021 to 2026.

David is also an Active Member of the AIP, sits on standards working groups for the Institute, presents whenever asked, represents Zipform on APCO working groups and was one of the consortium members of the AIP led Save Food Packaging Design guidelines project with RMIT University and End Food Waste Australia; which has now been globalised through the WPO, UNIDO and Foundation FSSC.

David continues to drive innovations in the fibre industry and has developed a paper bottle which combines multiple technologies (linear forming, dry moulded fibre and dispersion coatings) to deliver a bottle which is widely kerbside recyclable, being > 95% fibre, has over 60% post-consumer recycled content, and, most critically is commercially scalable.

With the support of the Meat & Livestock Association of Australia, David has also completed Phase 1 trials of a dry moulded fibre meat tray which will be a world-first using this technology.

David has led the charge in progressing the use of fibre packaging and has made a huge personal and business, contribution to packaging advancement locally, regionally and globally.

2026 Packaging Technologist of the Year

The Packaging Technologist of the Year Award is designed to recognise and acknowledge the outstanding achievements and contribution by an individual currently working within the Packaging industry across Australia, New Zealand & Asia. The judges were looking for packaging technologists, engineers, specialists, designers who have demonstrated advanced

technical packaging skills and competencies through projects, initiatives and unique packaging designs.

The winner of the 2026 Packaging Technologist of the Year is Christopher Cester Dip.Pkg.Tech. MAIP, Senior Packaging Technologist, Flavour Makers.

During his 20-year career with Flavour Makers, Christopher Cester has grown alongside the business. In two decades, the business has evolved from a simple dry-blending operation, into a sophisticated manufacturer with a diverse range of capabilities.

Christopher has led the design and implementation of every format Flavour Makers utilise - from dry goods and hot-fill to form-fill-seal and rigid plastics, re-designing many to meet modern sustainability standards.

As a packaging professional from a non-technical background, the AIP have been an invaluable partner in Christopher's journey. The AIP's technical and specialised courses have been able to bridge his knowledge gaps and inspired him to 'level up' by undertaking the Diploma of Packaging Technology; of which he is now a graduate.

Beyond education, the AIP have encouraged Christopher to step outside of his comfort zone, providing a platform to present his incredible technically-advanced work at multiple events across the globe and help build his personal and professional confidence to keep growing and striving for excellence.

In a packaging career, it is rare to work on projects underpinned by genuine world-first technical breakthroughs; Christopher has been fortunate to lead two such projects in the last 5 years.

The first during 2022–2023: the launch of The Australian Organic Food Co: Mono-Material Retort Pouch, the first mono-material pouch for retort sterilisation applications that is CEFLEX compliant. The innovation developed a barrier PP film that could maintain performance after enduring harsh retort temperatures. This project overcame a long-standing technical barrier to the circular economy and won a Bronze and a Gold PIDA Award (2023) and a WorldStar Packaging Award (2024).

During 2023–2024, he faced an even greater challenge of bringing a mono-material retort spout pouch to market the Australian Organic Food Co: Mono-Material Retort Spout Pouch. This was a major technical feat that required overcoming an entirely new set of technical and collaborative hurdles. While the finished product may resemble a standard spout pouch, it represents a massive leap forward in mono-material innovation. This project was recognised as a World-first innovation and won both Silver and Gold PIDA Awards (2025), a WorldStar Packaging Award (2026) and an FPA (USA) award for excellence in flexible packaging.

2026 ABA Scholarships

The Australasian Bioplastics Association (ABA), in partnership with the Australasian Institute of Packaging (AIP), is pleased to offer an annual Scholarship program for Australia and New Zealand. The Scholarship program will enable one eligible candidate the opportunity to undertake a Diploma in Packaging Technology and a second person the opportunity to undertake a Certificate in Packaging.

The winner of the ABA Scholarship for a Certificate in Packaging is Andrew Rennie AAIP, Sales Representative, Oji Fibre Solutions New Zealand.

Over the past year, a great deal has changed for Andrew Rennis professionally and personally. He has graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry, completed three years as a Packaging Technologist at Synlait Milk Limited, and recently begun a new chapter as a Sales Representative for Oji Fibre Solutions. These experiences have shaped his skill set, but also his understanding of the career path he wants to pursue.

Andrew added "If you had asked me during university whether I imagined myself in the role I am in today, I would have said you were crazy. Entering the packaging industry has been a pivotal moment in my career, giving me the opportunity to demonstrate multiple facets of my character and capability. It has challenged me, shaped me, and ultimately confirmed that this is the industry in which I want to build my future,"

"Winning this scholarship represents the next step in that journey. It will allow me to further develop the skills that matter most in this field and position me to not only excel among my peers but also to contribute meaningful, long-lasting change to the industry," he said.

"What excites me most about the packaging industry is the ability to intersect science, design and process engineering to solve global problems. This is an industry where even the small changes can have significant impact on businesses and the environment. The evolving nature of this industry offers endless opportunities to innovate and drive progress which is one of the reasons I am so passionate,"

"Ultimately, I aspire to become a packaging manager within the industry. Someone who can make informed, balanced decisions that not only drives success within the organisation, but also supports sustainable, responsible solutions that benefit the wider global community. My long-term ambition is to help guide the industry toward practices that create lasting, positive impact." he said.

The winner of the ABA Scholarship for the Diploma in Packaging Technology is Ola Wicik AAIP, Packaging Engineer, Opal Fibre Packaging Australia.

As a Packaging Engineer Ola sits at the intersection of technical packaging development, performance validation, compliance standards and customer communication. She plays a key technical and strategic role, bridging the gap between design, manufacturing and customer needs.

Primarily her responsibility is to ensure that all packaging solutions, typically made from corrugated cardboard or fibreboard, are fit for purpose, cost-effective, sustainable and manufacturable at scale.

Ola is not simply executing tasks, but influencing decisions, validating specifications, evaluating risks and guiding people towards correct technical outcomes.

As Ola added 'Whilst I don't see myself as a teacher, I have developed a strong interest in educating colleagues across the business about the technical foundations of this industry: what makes paper strong versus weak? Why does one type of corrugation matter more than another? How can one box be so different from the next?'

"As my passion for materials and packaging has continued to grow from seeing the profound impact this industry has on society, I have become increasingly aware of a broader challenge: how can I amplify and elevate an industry that often operates outside the spotlight?"

"Winning this scholarship represents the next deliberate step in my personal and professional development and career. It will allow me to deepen my technical expertise, strengthen my career capability, and accelerate the impact I can have within the industry. With this opportunity, I will be positioned to translate knowledge into measurable improvements in engineering, design, sustainability, and stakeholder education over the next five years." she said.

2026 AIP President Scholarship

The AIP President Scholarship has been designed to work in collaboration with the ABA program to help one additional person undertake either a Certificate in Packaging or a Diploma in Packaging Technology, should the judges deem an additional scholarship is deserved due to the quality of submissions. This scholarship was open to AIP Members that reside outside of Australia and New Zealand.

The winner of the AIP Scholarship for a Diploma in Packaging Technology is Wilsen Kannan AAIP, CPP, Assistant Packaging Manager, Vinda Malaysia.

Wilsen Kannan has worked with Vinda Malaysia for almost 9 years and has been responsible for technical packaging, supply chain and logistics and sustainability. He has handled multiple projects within the business, from

new machinery set up, installation and also the biggest of them all, the new Automated Storage Retrieval System Warehouse.

Wilsen does not see his job, as a job, but views it as something he loves doing. He sees challenges as a way to express himself to improve not only the things around him, but others as well.

In 2018 Wilsen decided he needed more technical packaging knowledge and discovered the AIP. He started by enrolling in the Certified Packaging Professional in Training (CPIT) program with the AIP. He then followed by becoming a fully-fledged Certified Packaging Professional (CPP) and just this month re-certified his designation.

Wilsen's thirst for knowledge is at a level rarely seen by the AIP. He has attended webinars, on-line courses, participated in multiple tradeshows with the AIP, bought all of the textbooks and more recently joined the Australasian Delegation to ProPak Asia and for the first time this year he joined his first AIP forum as a panelist in Thailand.

Wilsen added 'The AIP has been a life changing experience for me. My goal is to be the youngest Certified Packaging Professional Lifetime in Asia,'

"Winning this scholarship is a game changer for me as I will now be able to gain a better understanding of technical packaging from many different perspectives and not limited to only packaging in my country,"

"In the future I would like to be a change maker in the industry and hopefully can start my own packaging organisation in Malaysia." Wilsen said.

AIP Special Awards

One of the core objectives of the Australasian Institute of Packaging (AIP) is to ensure that individuals are recognised for their significant contributions to the packaging industry.

AIP Special Awards are not given often and are designed to recognise inspirational individuals who have contributed significantly to the packaging industry over many years. The people who stand out for making a difference.

LIFE membership

How does the AIP recognise someone who is already a Fellow of the AIP, an Industry Packaging Professional of the Year, a recipient of the AIP Founders Award, is a Certified Packaging Professional and a World Packaging Organisation Lifetime Achievement Award winner?

The answer is by recognising them with an AIP Special Award that has only ever been awarded seven times in 63 years, until the 28th of July 2026.

The recipient has become one of the most influential packaging educators in the Asian region. They have trained and mentored thousands of packaging professionals over their career and has been instrumental in advancing industry understanding of sustainable packaging design, the Australasian Recycling Label (ARL), PREP recyclability assessments, circular economy principles and Australia's National Packaging Targets.

This talented person stands among the most highly respected technical packaging professionals in Australasia. Combining deep technical expertise with a passion for education, sustainability, standards development and professional advancement, they have helped shape modern packaging practice across multiple industries. Their legacy extends beyond packaging innovation to the thousands of professionals they have trained, mentored and inspired throughout a distinguished career spanning more than 40 years.

Please join the Australasian Institute of Packaging in formally welcoming our new LIFE Member Ralph Moyle.

AIP Special Awards - Fellowship

The grade of Fellow is the highest recognition to AIP members and is designed to recognise the significant and sustained contribution to the technology, science or application to packaging in the industry.

The 2026 AIP Fellow is one of Australia's most influential sustainability entrepreneurs and a recognised pioneer of compostable foodservice packaging. They have spent nearly two decades transforming the packaging industry by proving that environmental responsibility and commercial success can work hand in hand.

Their vision was to provide practical, commercially viable alternatives that could reduce dependence on fossil-fuel-based plastics while supporting the needs of businesses across the foodservice sector. Their commitment to innovation has driven the development and adoption of renewable, certified compostable packaging solutions that have helped reshape industry expectations and standards.

They were instrumental in the creation of Compost Connect, a not-for-profit initiative designed to connect businesses with commercial composting services, helping address one of the biggest barriers to compostable packaging adoption. The initiative has become an important catalyst for circular economy outcomes and emissions reduction.

This person stands among the most influential sustainability leaders in the packaging industry. Combining entrepreneurial vision, technical expertise and a commitment to environmental stewardship, they have helped transform compostable packaging from a niche concept into a mainstream business solution. Through the business they run with an incredible partner, Compost Connect and broader industry advocacy, this AIP Member has

delivered lasting environmental, commercial and societal impact, leaving a significant legacy for future generations.

Please welcome AIP's newest Fellow, Richard Fine, Co-Founder & Sustainability Director, BioPak.

All winners of the 2026 round of the Australasian Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) Awards are now eligible exclusively to enter the 2027 WorldStar Packaging Awards and represent Australia and New Zealand on a global level.

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