

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



AUSTRALASIAN PROMOTIONAL  
PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

# INDUSTRY AWARDS 2026

## ENTRY & CATEGORY DEFINITION GUIDE

Thirteen categories. One unforgettable evening.  
The best in the business — on our 40th birthday.

# Important dates and details

Entries Open	1 June 2026 11am AEST   1pm NZST
Entries Close	26 June 2026 5pm AEST   7pm NZST
Eligibility Dates	Campaigns conducted during the period of 1 July 2024 to 26 June 2026
Finalists Announced	23 July 2026
Awards Night & Winners Announced	Winners will be announced at the APPA Industry Awards Evening, following the APPA Leadership Summit.
Venue	Rydges World Square, Sydney APPA Awards Evening – a cocktail celebration will be held following the <a href="#">APPA Leadership Summit</a> on Thursday 13 August 2026. Tickets on sale soon!
Submit entries at	APPA Awards Platform from 11.00am AEST   1.00pm NZST 1 June 2026

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## ABOUT THE AWARDS

# Recognising the best in the business!

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The APPA Awards are returning — and we're making it count.

The awards exist to shine a light on the work that moves our industry forward. The campaigns that went beyond the brief, the partnerships that created something neither party could have made alone, the suppliers who raised the bar, and the distributors who showed what's possible.

We recognise members who have generated marketing initiatives and products that are original, highly creative, socially responsible, and environmentally conscious — and most importantly, effective in exceeding client goals and expectations.

Whether you're a distributor, supplier, decorator, or both — if you've done work you're proud of between 1 July 2024 and 26 June 2026, this is your moment to be recognised for it.

This year, winners will be announced at the APPA Awards Cocktail Celebration, held on the evening of Thursday 13 August following the APPA Leadership Summit in Sydney. Tickets on sale soon — more information to follow.



## KEY DATES &amp; ENTRY FEES

# Your window to enter — don't miss it.

Milestone	Date
Entries Open	1 June - 26 June 2026
Finalists Announced	23 July 2026
Awards Evening – A Cocktail Celebration	Thursday 13 August 2026 Rydges World Square, Sydney

## ENTRY FEES

Entering is straightforward — the more you enter, the better value it gets.

Entry	Fee (AUD, ex GST)
First entry	\$115.00
Each subsequent entry	\$55.00
<p><b>BUY 3, GET THE REST FREE</b></p> <p>Submit 3 or more entries and your fourth entry onwards is completely free. Have work across multiple categories? Enter them all.</p>	<p><b>BONUS FREE ENTRIES</b></p>

All entries submitted online at [appa.awardsplatform.com](http://appa.awardsplatform.com). Entry fees must be paid on submission by direct credit or credit card.

ELIGIBILITY & GENERAL CONDITIONS

# Who can enter, and how.

APPA Members Only	The APPA Awards are open to current financial APPA members only.
Eligibility Period	Promotional product programs and activities must have been conducted or launched between 1 July 2024 and 26 June 2026.
Online Submission	All entries must be submitted online via the APPA Awards Platform. You may start your submission and return to it at any time during the submission window.  Peer Voted Categories (Supplier) to be submitted via the APPA website.
One Category Per Entry	The same entry cannot be submitted in multiple categories and will only be considered in one. Judges may reposition an entry if required.
Address All Criteria	Entries must address all required criteria and contain sufficient information for the judging panel to adequately assess the submission's merits.
Blind Judging Policy	To support impartial judging, please ensure your entry and any supplementary documents do not identify your business by name. Redact your company name, logo, or any identifying branding from submitted materials wherever possible.
Copyright Compliance	All entries must adhere to copyright and patent protection laws. Entries contravening exclusive distribution arrangements, patent, or copyright will be disqualified.
Finalists Announced	Up to three finalists per category will be announced prior to the Awards Cocktail Celebration on 23 July 2026.
Publication Rights	APPA reserves the right to publish entries and results. By entering, entrants agree to allow APPA to promote, publish, and archive winning entries. Client contact details and sales figures are kept confidential.

For any questions, contact APPA at [info@appa.com.au](mailto:info@appa.com.au)  
Judges' decisions are final. High Commendations may be awarded at the judging panel's sole discretion.

## AWARD CATEGORIES 2026

# 13 categories across Distributor, Supplier and Collaboration programs.

From B2B campaigns and event activations to product innovation, sustainability, and not-for-profit work — there's a category for the work you're most proud of. Review the full definitions below and select the category that best fits your entry.

Category (Alpha Order)	Program
Apparel & Wearable Products	Distributor
Business to Business (B2B)	Distributor
Consumer Promotion	Distributor
Event Merchandise & Activations	Distributor
Limited Budget	Distributor
Locally Made	Distributor
Merchandise / Uniform Program	Distributor
Not for Profit	Distributor
Sustainable / Eco-Friendly Initiative	Distributor
Best Decorator (Peer Voted)	Supplier
Product Innovation	Supplier
Service Excellence (Peer Voted)	Supplier
Collaboration Project	Cross-Sector (Distributor & Supplier)

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# Distributor Award Categories

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## Apparel & Wearable Products

UPDATED FOR 2026

Recognises an outstanding branding campaign or program centred on apparel or wearable items. An entry may be built around a single hero piece or a set of coordinated wearable items that together create a brand statement. Celebrates the creative and effective use of wearable products to convey a consistent brand message.

**Entries should demonstrate:**

- How the apparel or wearable product was used to communicate and reinforce the brand
- Design quality, brand alignment, and creative execution
- Whether the entry is a single piece or a coordinated set — and the rationale for that approach
- The target audience and how the wearable product engaged or represented them
- Measurable outcomes — brand visibility, audience engagement, event impact, or sales

Entries for this award are to be submitted via [appa.awardsplatform.com](https://appa.awardsplatform.com) from 1 June to 26 June.

## Business to Business (B2B)

UPDATED FOR 2026

Recognises outstanding achievement in the development and performance of promotional products within a Business to Business marketing campaign. The promotional products must be an integral part of the campaign and should have contributed to the client's business objectives. Campaigns can be ongoing or have a finite end date.

**Entries should demonstrate:**

- A clearly defined B2B objective and how the promotional product contributed to achieving it
- How the promotional product was central to, not peripheral to, the campaign
- Results achieved against the campaign objective — increased sales, brand awareness, social reach, digital engagement, campaign response rates, employee engagement, or other measurable outcomes
- The strategic rationale for the product selection — why this product for this client and this objective

Entries for this award are to be submitted via [appa.awardsplatform.com](https://appa.awardsplatform.com) from 1 June to 26 June.

## Consumer Promotion

UPDATED FOR 2026

Champions the most effective consumer promotional product marketing programs through retail or other sales channels. Includes incentive programs, gift with purchase, point of sale, retail product merchandising, and consumer activation programs. Entries may combine multiple consumer promotion mechanics within a single submission.

### Entries should demonstrate:

- Clarity of the consumer objective — sales uplift, brand trial, loyalty, or engagement
- How the promotional product was selected and used to drive the intended consumer behaviour
- Sales results, redemption rates, or other channel-based performance data
- Creativity and appeal of the product or program to the target consumer

Entries for this award are to be submitted via [appa.awardsplatform.com](https://appa.awardsplatform.com) from 1 June to 26 June.

## Event Merchandise & Activations

UPDATED FOR 2026

Showcases outstanding merchandise programs or brand activations of any type — including events, pop-ups, experiential activations, sporting events, festivals, conferences, and activations. Recognises the highest outcome achievable in brand messaging through the creative and effective use of merchandise, branded products, and onsite marketing initiatives.

### Entries should demonstrate:

- The activation or event type and the brand objective it was designed to serve
- Creativity and uniqueness of the merchandise or activation product selection
- How the merchandise contributed to the overall brand experience and message
- Engagement data, take-up rates, audience reach, or other evidence of program effectiveness
- Custom product development, packaging design, redemption offers, or large-scale fulfilment where applicable

Entries for this award are to be submitted via [appa.awardsplatform.com](https://appa.awardsplatform.com) from 1 June to 26 June.

## Limited Budget

UPDATED FOR 2026

Promotes the most enterprising and effective promotional product or campaign where creativity and results were achieved within a tightly constrained budget. Two parameters apply: the per-unit product cost (\$5.00 AUD/NZD or less) and the total campaign budget (\$5,000 AUD/NZD or less).

### Entries should demonstrate:

- The cost of the promotional product was \$5.00 AUD or NZD or less per unit
- The total campaign budget was \$5,000 AUD or NZD or less (full campaign cost including product, production, and delivery)
- How the budget constraint drove creative thinking rather than limiting it
- The results achieved relative to the modest investment — ROI, reach, engagement, or client outcomes
- Why this entry demonstrates that effective promotional products work at any budget level

Entries for this award are to be submitted via [appa.awardsplatform.com](https://appa.awardsplatform.com) from 1 June to 26 June.

Note: Entries must clearly state both the unit product cost and total campaign budget in the submission.

## Locally Made

UPDATED FOR 2026

Celebrates promotional product programs that champion products sourced and manufactured locally in Australia or New Zealand. Supports APPA members who actively choose to work with local manufacturers and suppliers, promoting Australian and New Zealand-made craftsmanship and supporting local industry.

### Entries should demonstrate:

- Evidence that the product or key components were sourced and manufactured in Australia or New Zealand
- How the locally made story was incorporated into the campaign or client message
- The benefit to the client of choosing a locally made solution — quality, speed, sustainability, or brand story

Entries for this award are to be submitted via [appa.awardsplatform.com](https://appa.awardsplatform.com) from 1 June to 26 June.

Note: Entrants must substantiate the country of origin claim. AU members: demonstrate AU manufacture. NZ members: demonstrate NZ manufacture.

## Merchandise / Uniform Program

UPDATED FOR 2026

Recognises the most effective and comprehensive promotional merchandise or uniform programs where promotional products form the centrepiece of the marketing or brand strategy. Rewards members who have developed a cohesive, considered solution — where all elements work together to deliver a unified brand experience. Entries may be B2B, B2C, or a combination.

### Entries should demonstrate:

- The breadth and cohesion of the merchandise or uniform program — how products work together as a whole
- Strategic thinking behind the program design — not just product selection but the overall creative concept
- Whether the program is B2B, B2C, or both — and how the strategy was tailored accordingly
- Evidence the program delivered measurable outcomes for the client
- Scale, complexity, or creative execution

Entries for this award are to be submitted via [appa.awardsplatform.com](https://appa.awardsplatform.com) from 1 June to 26 June.

## Not for Profit

Promotes the most effective use of promotional products within a not-for-profit, charity, cause-related, or social awareness program or campaign. Recognises members who use promotional products to drive meaningful social impact — whether raising awareness, changing attitudes, driving fundraising, or supporting a community cause.

### Entries should demonstrate:

- The not-for-profit, charity, or social awareness objective of the program
- How the promotional product was central to communicating the cause, changing behaviour, or driving fundraising outcomes
- Measurable impact — awareness uplift, behaviour change, funds raised, community reach, or other relevant outcomes
- The creative rationale for the product selection — why this product for this cause
- Evidence of the program's effectiveness in serving the not-for-profit's mission

Entries for this award are to be submitted via [appa.awardsplatform.com](https://appa.awardsplatform.com) from 1 June to 26 June.

Note: The APPA member entering may be a commercial distributor who executed the program on behalf of a not-for-profit client. The promotional product program itself must have served the not-for-profit purpose.

## Sustainable / Eco-Friendly Initiative

Celebrates marketing campaigns or initiatives that incorporate sustainable promotional products. Recognises members who demonstrate genuine environmental responsibility through the promotional products they specify and the programs they create. Products may be manufactured using sustainable or recycled materials, focused on waste reduction, carbon neutral, or locally sourced.

### Entries should demonstrate:

- Clear sustainability objective and how the product or program addresses it
- Evidence that sustainability claims are substantiated — compliant with ACCC (Australia) or CCNZ (New Zealand) guidelines
- The promotional product's role in reinforcing the environmental message or program
- Measurable environmental impact or client outcomes where available

For guidance on making a strong, compliant submission and avoiding greenwashing, read our full article: [Don't Greenwash Your Way Out of a Win](#)

Entries for this award are to be submitted via [appa.awardsplatform.com](http://appa.awardsplatform.com) from 1 June to 26 June.

Note: All sustainability claims must be verifiable. Entries claiming biodegradability, recyclability, accreditations, carbon neutrality must provide supporting certification or scientific testing documentation.

## Supplier Award Categories

### Best Decorator

#### PEER VOTED BY DISTRIBUTORS

Voted by distributors, this award recognises the best decoration provider in the promotional products industry. Open to businesses whose primary operation is decoration. Celebrates those decorators who combine technical excellence, creative capability, and exceptional service to deliver superior branded outcomes.

### In making your choice you should consider these following attributes:

- Decoration quality — processes and standards that ensure consistently superior outcomes
- Customer service — responsiveness, accuracy, and partnership with distributor clients
- Branding capability — range and quality of decoration methods offered
- Creativity and innovation — delivering standout decoration results for clients
- Response times to enquiries, sample requests, and production turnarounds

## Best Decorator

### PEER VOTED BY DISTRIBUTORS

Please provide a short statement to tell us why you are voting for the nominated business.

Nominations for this award are to be submitted via the APPA website. Nominations open 1 June and close 26 June.

Note: This category is open to businesses whose primary operation is decoration. Peer-voted by distributors via the APPA website during the voting period. One vote per APPA Member business. Nominations are processed via the APPA website.

## Product Innovation

Showcases the most genuinely innovative new promotional product introduced to the market during the eligibility period. Celebrates suppliers who push the boundaries of what a promotional product can be — whether first to market, featuring unique materials or design, offering a locally sourced alternative, using unique sustainable materials, or serving a specific need in a way not done before.

### Entries should demonstrate:

- What makes the product genuinely innovative — first to market, unique materials, unique design, unique application, or a meaningful local alternative to an imported product
- The vision behind the product — what gap in the market or client need it was created to address
- How the product has been received by distributors and their clients since launch
- Evidence of commercial success, distributor adoption, or market impact during the eligibility period

Entries for this award are to be submitted via [appa.awardsplatform.com](https://appa.awardsplatform.com) from 1 June to 26 June.

Note: The product must have been introduced to the market between 1 July 2024 and 26 June 2026. Entries should be accompanied by a physical sample where possible. Nominations are processed via awardsforce.

## Service Excellence

### PEER VOTED BY DISTRIBUTORS

Voted by distributors, this award celebrates the supplier who is leading the industry through outstanding service, reliability, and partnership. Distributors nominate and vote for the supplier they regard as their most valued partner. The award recognises that the best suppliers go far beyond product supply — they are true business partners who help distributors win and retain clients.

#### **In making your choice you should consider these following attributes:**

- Product range — breadth, relevance, and availability to meet distributor needs
- Communication — responsiveness, accuracy, and clarity of information
- Customer service — flexibility, problem resolution, and proactive client support
- Creativity — how the supplier goes above and beyond to help distributors win briefs
- Website functionality, marketing support materials, and overall partner experience
- Delivery reliability — response times to briefs, quote requests, and order fulfilment

Nominations for this award are to be submitted via the APPA website. Nominations open 1 June and close 26 June.

Please provide a short statement to tell us why you are voting for the nominated business.

Note: Suppliers may self-nominate or be nominated by a distributor. Voting is open to all APPA distributor members during the voting period. One vote per APPA Member business. Nominations are processed via the APPA website.

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# Cross-Sector Award Categories - Open to Distributors, Decorators and Suppliers

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## Collaboration Project

### DISTRIBUTOR & SUPPLIER PARTNERSHIP

Recognises and celebrates the power of partnership between APPA distributor and supplier members. Open to projects that were the result of genuine collaboration — where the combined expertise of both parties produced an outcome that neither could have achieved alone. Programs must demonstrate the creative and commercial value of the APPA supply chain working at its best.

## Collaboration Project

### DISTRIBUTOR & SUPPLIER PARTNERSHIP

**Entries should demonstrate:**

- The nature of the collaboration — how distributor and supplier worked together from concept to delivery
- The creative or innovative outcome that resulted directly from the partnership
- The client result — how the collaboration served the end client's brief or objective
- Why the outcome would not have been possible without the specific distributor-supplier partnership

Entries for this award are to be submitted via [appa.awardsplatform.com](http://appa.awardsplatform.com) from 1 June to 26 June.

Note: Entries must be submitted jointly and acknowledge both the distributor and supplier involved. Both parties must be current financial APPA members at the time of entry.

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# Individual Recognition & Industry Milestones

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Awards recognising individual achievement and industry milestones will be held at a separate event in 2027. Keep an eye out for more information coming soon.

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## JUDGING PROCESS

### How entries are assessed.

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Independent panels

Judging panels are comprised of marketing and branding experts from a range of industry groups, independent of all submissions.

Final decisions

Judges' decisions are final. High Commendations may be awarded at the judging panel's sole discretion.

Electronic submission

Entries are assessed on the electronic copy submission only, in accordance with these Entry Guidelines.

**Blind Judging Policy**

To support impartial judging, please ensure your entry and any supplementary documents do not identify your business by name. Redact your company name, logo, or any identifying branding from submitted materials wherever possible.

**Category repositioning**

Judges have the authority to reposition an entry into a different category if the submission is better suited elsewhere.

## Standard Judging Criteria - All Categories

Section	Word Limit	Judging Weight
<p><b>The Objective</b></p> <p>What was your vision for this new product, marketing tool, branding or digital innovation? Why was it created, what need does it fulfill?</p>	300 words	10%
<p><b>The Strategy</b></p> <p>Explain your solution and describe the process/es implemented to fulfil your objectives.</p>	600 words	40%
<p><b>The Result</b></p> <p>Explain why this was successful. What results did you achieve?</p>	600 words	40%
<p><b>Additional Supporting Material (incl. digital evidence)</b></p> <p>What relevant additional information can support your submission such as client references/ testimonials, videos and other material.</p>	300 words	10%

NOTE to all entrants:

All entries must adhere to copyright and patent protection laws; if they do not comply with these laws they will be immediately disqualified. If it is found that any product entered contravenes patent or copyright, the entry will be disqualified.

To support impartial judging, please ensure your entry and any supplementary documents do not identify your business by name. Redact your company name, logo, or any identifying branding from submitted materials wherever possible.

Entries must be submitted online at [appa.awardsplatform.com](http://appa.awardsplatform.com). Judges have the authority to reposition an entry into a different category if required. The same entry cannot be submitted in multiple categories.



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

# Enter the 2026 APPA Industry Awards

Entries open 1 June 2026 and close 26 June 2026.

[appa.awardsplatform.com](http://appa.awardsplatform.com)

Join us Thursday 13 August at Rydges World Square, Sydney — an evening of recognition, celebration, and 40 years of this industry.

For more information regarding [APPA Leadership Summit + APPA Awards Evening](#) [click here](#). Tickets on sale soon!

Questions? Contact APPA at [info@appa.com.au](mailto:info@appa.com.au)