



**CALL FOR ENTRIES**

**2026**

**Celebrating leadership excellence in the Australasian packaging industry**

**Entries open: 23 February 2026**

**Entries close: 4pm, Friday 27 March 2026**

**[pknwomeninpack.com.au](http://pknwomeninpack.com.au)**

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# About the Awards



## ABOUT THE AWARDS

Now entering its third year, the *PKN* Women in Packaging Awards continues to build momentum as a flagship program celebrating the leadership, talent, and impact of women across the Australasian packaging industry.

As the region's leading source of packaging news and insight, *PKN* is committed to recognising the remarkable contributions women are making across all parts of the value chain – from design, technology, manufacturing and sustainability to communications, brand building and emerging leadership.

While progress is accelerating, women remain underrepresented in many areas of the packaging sector, particularly in technical, operational, and senior leadership roles. Increasing diversity is essential to driving the innovation, collaboration, and systems thinking needed to meet the industry's biggest challenges – from circularity and resource efficiency to digitisation and advanced manufacturing.

The *PKN* Women in Packaging Awards plays a critical role in elevating high performers and creating visible pathways for the next generation of female leaders.

The program champions excellence across a broad range of disciplines:

- **Celebrating Achievement:** Honouring women whose work is shaping the future of packaging – whether through breakthrough design, technological advancement, operational excellence, sustainability leadership or strategic brand building.
- **Empowering Leadership:** Showcasing role models who inspire others to step forward, develop their skills, and pursue leadership opportunities in this dynamic industry.
- **Driving Sustainability:** Highlighting women who are advancing circular solutions, reducing environmental impact, and steering the transition to more sustainable packaging systems.
- **Fostering Innovation:** Recognising the creative and technical thinkers whose diverse perspectives are delivering fresh ideas, solving complex challenges, and propelling the industry forward.
- **Strengthening Industry Recognition:** Establishing a prestigious platform that shines a light on the value of gender diversity and reinforces the strength and capability of the Australasian packaging sector.

Through these awards, *PKN* is proud to champion the women whose dedication, expertise, and leadership are reshaping our industry – and to inspire many more to follow in their footsteps.

## TO ENTER

**Visit:** [www.pknwomeninpack.com.au](http://www.pknwomeninpack.com.au)

**Entries can be submitted by a colleague or self-nominated**

**Entries Close:** 4pm, Friday 27 March 2026

**Event:** Melbourne, 25 June 2026

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# Awards categories

While the criteria and focus may differ between categories, all entrants will show how they embody the *PKN Women in Packaging* values of leadership and excellence.

## Rising Star Award

**Criteria:** Celebrating an emerging female talent who is making her mark in the Australasian packaging industry. This award recognises a woman early in her career who has shown outstanding potential, leadership, and dedication to professional growth. The Rising Star demonstrates initiative, creativity, and a commitment to driving positive change, whether through innovation, technical achievement, sustainability, or community engagement, positioning herself as a future leader in packaging.

## Sustainability Leader Award

**Criteria:** Honouring a woman who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to sustainability in the Australasian packaging industry. This award recognises initiatives such as reducing packaging waste, promoting recyclability, advocating for eco-friendly materials, or implementing circular packaging practices.

## Packaging Technology Leader Award

**Criteria:** Recognising a woman who has demonstrated exceptional expertise and contributions as a packaging technologist in the Australasian context. This award celebrates achievements in developing, driving and implementing advanced packaging technologies, processes, and solutions that have had a significant impact on the Australasian packaging industry.

## Design & Branding Excellence Award

**Criteria:** Acknowledging a woman whose creative prowess has reshaped packaging design and branding in the Australasian context. This

category recognises excellence in creating visually appealing, impactful packaging that resonates with consumers and boosts brand identity.

## Manufacturing Leader Award

**Criteria:** Recognising a woman who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and excellence in an Australasian packaging manufacturing operation. This award honours achievements such as optimising production processes, improving quality control, enhancing efficiency, and fostering a culture of innovation and safety within the manufacturing environment.

## Communications & Marketing Excellence Award

**Criteria:** Recognising a woman who has demonstrated exceptional skills and achievements in marketing and communications within the Australasian packaging industry. This award acknowledges outstanding efforts in promoting packaging products, brands, and sustainability initiatives, as well as effective communication strategies that have made a significant impact on the industry.

## STEM Explorer Award

**Criteria:** Recognising the outstanding achievements of a woman who demonstrate excellence in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics within the packaging industry. This award honours an individual who has made significant contributions to innovation, leadership, and advancement in engineering or machinery design for packaging equipment manufacture, or within a packaging manufacturing environment.

# Rising Star Award



RISING STAR AWARD

Celebrating an emerging female talent who is making her mark in the Australasian packaging industry. This award recognises a woman early in her career who has shown outstanding potential, leadership, and dedication to professional growth.

The Rising Star demonstrates initiative, creativity, and a commitment to driving positive change – whether through innovation, technical achievement, sustainability, or community engagement – positioning herself as a future leader in packaging.

## **Describe a standout achievement demonstrating the nominee's early impact (30%)**

Provide details of a project, initiative, or contribution led by the nominee that highlights her early impact and potential in the Australasian packaging industry. This may include innovation in packaging design or technology, operational improvements, sustainability initiatives, technical problem-solving, or meaningful contributions to workplace culture.

(300 words or less)

## **Explain how the nominee is creating value and driving positive change (40%)**

Outline the outcomes, improvements, or influence resulting from the nominee's work. This could include measurable results, strengthened team or organisational capability, improved processes, enhanced customer or stakeholder outcomes, or contributions to broader industry discussion or initiatives.

(300 words or less)

## **Describe the nominee's commitment to professional growth, including challenges navigated or proactive strategies employed (30%)**

If relevant, describe any challenges the nominee has encountered early in her career and how she addressed them. Where no specific challenge applies, focus on the proactive steps she has taken to build capability and accelerate her development – such as training, mentoring, volunteering, cross-functional collaboration, community engagement, or participation in industry networks and programs.

(300 words or less)



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# Sustainability Leader Award



SUSTAINABILITY LEADER AWARD

Honouring a woman who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to sustainability in the Australasian packaging industry. This award recognises initiatives such as reducing packaging waste, promoting recyclability, advocating for eco-friendly materials, or implementing circular packaging practices.

## **Describe a specific sustainability initiative the nominee has championed (30%)**

Provide details of an initiative aimed at reducing packaging waste, promoting recyclability, advocating for eco-friendly materials, or implementing circular packaging practices in the Australasian packaging industry. (300 words or less)

## **Explain the impact of the nominee's sustainability initiative (40%)**

Explain the quantifiable results and broader benefits of the initiative. Describe how the nominee's efforts have reduced environmental impact, supported circularity, improved resource efficiency, or otherwise positively influenced the Australasian packaging sector. (300 words or less)

## **Describe challenges navigated OR strategies used to enable successful delivery (30%)**

If challenges arose (for example regulatory, technical, commercial, or behavioural barriers), describe how they were addressed. Where no specific challenge applies, outline the planning, stakeholder engagement, change management, or other strategies the nominee used to successfully design, implement, and embed the sustainability initiative. (300 words or less)



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# Packaging Technology Leader Award



## PACKAGING TECHNOLOGY LEADER AWARD

Recognising a woman who has demonstrated exceptional expertise and contributions as a packaging technologist in the Australasian context. This award celebrates achievements in developing, driving and implementing advanced packaging technologies, processes, and solutions that have had a significant impact on the Australasian packaging industry.

### **Describe a specific packaging technology, process, or solution the nominee has developed or implemented (30%)**

Provide details of an advanced packaging technology, process, or solution the nominee has worked on that has had a significant impact on the Australasian packaging industry. This may include materials innovation, machinery or line improvements, process optimisation, or quality and safety enhancements. (300 words or less)

### **Explain how the nominee's work has positively influenced the industry (40%)**

Explain the outcomes and advancements their work has delivered. This could include improved performance, efficiency, safety, product protection, sustainability, cost-effectiveness, or supply chain resilience within the Australasian packaging sector. (300 words or less)

### **Describe challenges overcome and/or strategic/technical approaches used to achieve success (30%)**

If relevant, describe any technical, regulatory, commercial, or operational challenges encountered and how they were resolved. Where no specific challenge applies, outline the technical rigour, innovation approach, collaboration, or problem-solving methods the nominee used to successfully develop and implement the technology or solution. (300 words or less)



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# Design & Branding Excellence Award



## DESIGN & BRANDING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Acknowledging a woman whose creative prowess has reshaped packaging design and branding in the Australasian context. This category recognises excellence in creating visually appealing, impactful packaging that resonates with consumers and boosts brand identity.

### **Describe a packaging design or branding project the nominee has led (30%)**

Provide details of a packaging design or branding project the nominee has led or played a key creative role in, which has had a significant impact on visual appeal, consumer resonance, and brand identity in the Australasian context. (300 words or less)

### **Explain the contribution the nominee's work made to brand or product success (40%)**

Explain the key outcomes and the ways in which the design or branding work contributed to the success of the brand or product. This may include sales uplift, improved shelf stand-out, stronger brand recognition, consumer engagement, differentiation in market, or alignment with sustainability or premium positioning goals. (300 words or less)

### **Describe creative challenges navigated and/or the creative/strategic process employed (30%)**

Where relevant, describe creative, commercial, or technical challenges encountered during the project and how they were addressed. If no specific challenge applies, outline the creative strategy, insight development, design rationale, collaboration with stakeholders, and/or testing and refinement process that underpinned the successful outcome. (300 words or less)



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# Manufacturing Leader Award



## MANUFACTURING LEADER AWARD

Recognising a woman who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and excellence in an Australasian packaging manufacturing operation. This award honours achievements such as optimising production processes, improving quality control, enhancing efficiency, increasing sustainability, and fostering a culture of innovation, safety and diversity within the manufacturing environment.

### **Describe a specific achievement or initiative the nominee has led in a packaging manufacturing operation (30%)**

Provide details of an achievement or initiative related to optimising production processes, improving quality control, enhancing efficiency, reducing waste, increasing sustainability, strengthening safety, or driving innovation within a packaging manufacturing environment. (300 words or less)

### **Explain how the nominee's leadership contributed to operational success (40%)**

Explain the outcomes and benefits of the nominee's leadership and achievements. This could include measurable performance improvements, cultural shifts, capability building, successful change programs, or strategic investments that have strengthened the manufacturing operation and its contribution to the Australasian packaging sector. (300 words or less)

### **Describe leadership challenges navigated and/or leadership strategies employed (30%)**

If applicable, describe any leadership or operational challenges the nominee faced – such as workforce, supply chain, safety, quality, or transformation issues – and how these were managed. Where no specific challenge applies, focus on the leadership styles, communication approaches, decision-making, and team-engagement strategies used to foster excellence within the manufacturing environment. (300 words or less)



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# STEM Explorer Award



## STEM EXPLORER AWARD

Recognising the outstanding achievements of a woman who demonstrate excellence in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics within the packaging industry. This award honours an individual who has made significant contributions to innovation, leadership, and advancement in engineering or machinery design for packaging equipment manufacture, or within a packaging manufacturing environment.

### **Describe a specific STEM-driven initiative or technological advancement the nominee has led in the packaging industry (30%)**

Provide details of a significant project, research, or technological development the nominee has contributed to, demonstrating the application of Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM) in packaging. Explain how this initiative has advanced materials, processes, or sustainability within the Australasian packaging industry. (300 words or less)

### **How has the nominee's STEM expertise positively impacted the industry? (40%)**

Explain the measurable outcomes and benefits of the nominee's work. How has their application of STEM principles improved packaging innovation, efficiency, safety, or sustainability? Provide specific examples of how their contributions have influenced the Australasian packaging sector. (300 words or less)

### **How has the nominee demonstrated leadership and advocacy in STEM within the packaging sector? (30%)**

Describe the nominee's efforts in mentoring, educating, or advocating for STEM careers in packaging. Highlight their role in promoting diversity, supporting emerging talent, or influencing policy and industry standards. (300 words or less)



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# Communications & Marketing Excellence Award



## COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Recognising a woman who has demonstrated exceptional skills and achievements in communications and/or marketing within the Australasian packaging industry. This award acknowledges outstanding efforts in promoting packaging products, brands, and sustainability initiatives, as well as effective communication strategies that have made a significant impact on industry.

### **Describe a communications and/or marketing initiative the nominee has led (30%)**

Provide details of an initiative related to promoting packaging products, companies, brands, sustainability messaging, or industry engagement. This may include campaigns, brand positioning, stakeholder communication, education programs, events, or digital communication strategies. (300 words or less)

### **Explain how the nominee's work has positively influenced the packaging industry, brand, or organisation (40%)**

Explain the outcomes and results of the initiative. This may include increased awareness, strengthened reputation, improved stakeholder engagement, business growth, behaviour change, or meaningful contributions to industry understanding. (300 words or less)

### **Describe challenges navigated OR communication/marketing strategies used to secure success (30%)**

If relevant, describe obstacles such as limited resources, sensitive messaging, complex stakeholder environments, or market conditions, and how they were managed. Where no challenge applies, outline the strategy, audience insight, messaging, creative approach, channel selection, and measurement framework that enabled success. (300 words or less)



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# Supporting Materials



## SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Entrants are encouraged to upload relevant supporting materials to help illustrate the nominee's achievements. These may include project summaries, case studies, images, artwork files, performance data, reports, presentations, reference letters, or other documentation that strengthens the entry.

Please limit supporting materials to three (3) files.

A high-resolution headshot of the nominee (minimum 300 dpi) is required for all entries.

The supporting materials may be used should the individual be selected as a finalist. Please ensure you have gained the relevant approvals before submitting any materials.

### TERMS & CONDITIONS

The Awards are open to Australasian & NZ based individuals where the company they work for has operations in both countries. All entries must be submitted via the online survey. Note the entry deadline 4pm, Friday 27 March 2026. This date is final and there will be no extensions provided. The relevant eligibility period is between 1 January 2025 – 31 March 2026 unless otherwise stated.

You can enter more than one category but only if the entries are deemed by the organisers as significantly different and tailored to the specific category. Entries cannot be edited after submitting, if you notice an error in your entry, please contact [events@twodefence.com.au](mailto:events@twodefence.com.au). Please note: no changes will be permitted after the entry deadline. Please make sure all entry details are entered accurately, including grammar. Details collected through the online entry portal will be used in the Awards presentation and in print if selected as a finalist.

The decision of the judges will be final, and no correspondence will be entered into. All entries are treated as confidential. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to another category if deemed more suitable. Judges reserve the right to disqualify entries that do not follow the entry requirements. The entrant grants *PKN Packaging News* permission to show the entries at the *PKN Women in Packaging Presentation* and in the magazine in print and online at such times as deemed appropriate. Finalists and winners will be covered in the *PKN Packaging News* winners supplement using information from the entry.

The entrant agrees that *PKN Packaging News* and Two de Force will not accept responsibility for errors or omissions reproduced in the presentation or the winners supplement or for work lost or damaged under any circumstances.



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