

— VESPIIA PRESENTS —

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

2026

VESP//A

ABOUT VESPIIA

VESPIIA is Australia's national professional body for the organisations, staff, and volunteers who support veterans, emergency services, police, and their families.

We exist for the people behind the frontline — those who deliver programs, provide support, and keep the system running. Our role is to ensure they have access to the training, resources, recognition, and representation needed to do their best work.

ABOUT THE AWARDS

The VESPIIA Awards for Excellence recognise best practice, strong outcomes, and outstanding contribution across the veterans, emergency services, and police support sector. The awards celebrate the work of staff, volunteers, organisations, suppliers, allied providers, and researchers — providing peer recognition, a benchmark for excellence, and a platform to showcase the work that often goes unseen.

NOMINATIONS

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO SUBMIT?

There is no fee to enter the VESPIIA Awards for Excellence. Submit as many categories as you like.

To help us deliver the best possible awards program, sponsorship opportunities are available. Visit vespiia.org/awards or email events@vespiia.org for more information.

HOW TO ENTER

Submit your nomination via the online form at vespiia.org/awards. You will be asked to complete a written nomination addressing the criteria for your chosen category and upload supporting material as required.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

All entrants will be asked to provide the following:

- Your organisation's logo (high-res EPS or JPG, 600dpi minimum)
- At least two images suitable for the awards publication
- Up to three pieces of supporting material to enhance the submission — this may include video, audio, collateral, or other media suitable for display at the Awards Cocktail Evening

Supporting materials may be used in presentations and other published materials related to the awards. VESPIIA reserves the right to reproduce entries in all VESPIIA publications and promotional materials, including the VESPIIA website and media releases.

REQUIREMENTS

- Submissions must be approved by the Board Chair, CEO, Head of Department, or equivalent before they are submitted
- The submitting organisation or individual does not need to be a VESPIIA member, but must meet all criteria for their selected category
- Activities must have been conducted, or partially conducted, within the last 18 months unless otherwise specified
- Past winners of individual award categories are not eligible to nominate again within two years

THE AWARDS COCKTAIL EVENING

Winners and finalists are announced at the VESPIIA Awards Cocktail Evening, held on Tuesday 26 August 2026 at the National Wine Centre of Australia, Adelaide – alongside the Future Frontlines 2026 Conference.

Tickets are available separately for those not attending the full conference.

Date: Tuesday 26 August 2026 **Venue:** National Wine Centre of Australia, Cnr Botanic & Hackney Roads, Adelaide SA **Dress:** Cocktail attire **Tickets:** vespiaa.org/awards



CATEGORIES

AWARD CATEGORIES

Seventeen categories across individual achievement, organisational and team excellence, and programs delivered to the community.

INDIVIDUAL

- // Volunteer of the year
- // Staffer of the year
- // Academic of the year
- // Student of the year
- // Service Chaplain of the Year

PROGRAM

- // Transition Program of the year
- // Social Program of the year
- // Volunteer Program of the year
- // Impact on a shoestring
- // Impact through events
- // Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program of the Year

ORGANISATON & TEAM

- // Research Piece of the Year
- // Best Strategic Partnership
- // Supplier Team of the year
- // Allied Team of the year
- // Organisation of the year
- // New kid on the block

READY TO NOMINATE?

Nominations for the 2026 Awards for Excellence are open. Review the criteria in the Awards Kit, then submit your nomination using the online form.

[VESPIIA.ORG/AWARDS](https://vespaa.org/awards)

INDIVIDUAL

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

This award recognises a volunteer or team of volunteers who have made a significant contribution to an organisation and the community it serves – giving their time and effort to advance a cause they believe in.

Volunteering is the backbone of many organisations across our sector. This award is for the people who show up, keep showing up, and make a genuine difference because of it.

CRITERIA

VOLUNTEER'S PROFILE

20%

Include a biography along with a list of volunteer activities undertaken in recent years.

VOLUNTEER'S KEY INVOLVEMENT (ORGANISATION'S CAUSE)

10%

Provide a description of the volunteer's key involvement with the organisation's cause.

VOLUNTEER'S IMPACT

30%

Provide a description of the volunteer's impact they have had on the community and the activities/programs/initiatives they seek to benefit.

SUMMARY OF AWARD NOMINATION

30%

- Tell us about any other important aspects of the nominee's voluntary work, such as obstacles overcome, innovation, initiative, dedication, broader benefits of the volunteer role etc. We want to know how this volunteer has gone above and beyond the call of service.
- Please provide a short (approx. 1-3 min) video telling us why the nominee should win this award. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

REFERRAL LETTER - 20%

20%

A referral letter from the nominee's referee (CEO or equivalent) is required.

**VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR 2025
ANDREW TIMMS
BUDDY UP**



INDIVIDUAL

STAFFER OF THE YEAR

This award recognises a staff member from across the sector — working in an organisation, supplier, or allied provider — who has made an outstanding contribution in their field in support of veterans, emergency services, police, and their families.

The nominee demonstrates passion, integrity, and a commitment to their profession. They show strong and emerging capability in leadership, innovation, and strategic thinking, and serve as a role model for others in their workplace and community.

The nominee must be formally employed but can work anywhere across their organisation, including programs and events, fundraising, finance, leadership and management, community services, or administration.

CRITERIA

STAFFER'S PROFILE

20%

Include a biography along with a list of projects/programs they have worked on in recent years, including any volunteer or extracurricular work undertaken outside of their employment. Please note this information may appear in the final awards publication for winning entries.

STAFFERS KEY INVOLVEMENT (ORGANISATION'S CAUSE)

40%

Describe the staffer's role and their key involvement with the organisation's cause. Address one or more of the following:

- // **Professional excellence** — innovation, strategic thinking, quality of work, communication, and problem-solving in the workplace
- // **Project or activity impact** — a specific project or initiative that advanced the organisation's work and delivered meaningful outcomes for beneficiaries
- // **Professional development** — commitment to continuing development through institutes, networks, events, or relevant voluntary activity
- // **Leadership and advocacy** — serving as a role model or advocate for other professionals in the sector or workplace
- // **Sector contribution** — demonstrated leadership qualities and contribution to the broader community or sector

Include specific projects, achievements, and other factors such as obstacles overcome, innovation, initiative, and the broader benefits of their role. We want to understand how this staffer has gone above and beyond in their work.

STAFFERS IMPACT

30%

- a. Provide a description of the impact they have had on the community they seek to benefit & their organisations mission.
- b. Please provide a short (approx. 1-3 min) video telling us why the nominee should win this award. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process — it's about the story you tell.

REFERRAL LETTER

10%

A referral letter from the nominee's referee (CEO or equivalent) is required.

INDIVIDUAL

ACADEMIC OF THE YEAR

This award recognises an individual academic who has made an outstanding contribution within their university or institution to support Veterans, Emergency Services, Police, and their families. It celebrates academics who demonstrate leadership, mentorship, and commitment, significantly enhancing the educational and institutional environment.

The award highlights individuals who go beyond their research roles, actively contributing to their academic community, influencing institutional policies, mentoring students and peers, and fostering collaborations that positively impact sector-related communities.

CRITERIA

ACADEMIC PROFILE

30%

Provide a biography outlining the nominee's professional background, highlighting their roles and responsibilities within their institution and community involvement.

LEADERSHIP AND MENTORSHIP

30%

Demonstrate how the nominee has exhibited leadership within their institution, mentoring peers or students, driving change, and contributing to a supportive educational environment.

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken and that the partnership aligns with the VESPIIA Code?

COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

20%

Outline how the nominee has fostered collaboration within their institution or with external organisations, enhancing connections and opportunities for meaningful partnerships and community engagement.

REFERRAL LETTER

10%

Include a referral letter from a senior academic leader (such as a Head of School, Dean, or equivalent) supporting the nomination and outlining the nominee's impact and contributions.

**ACADEMIC OF THE YEAR 2025
DR HENRY BOWEN
MESHA**



INDIVIDUAL

STUDENT OF THE YEAR

This award recognises outstanding work by an individual tertiary student. It is awarded for a substantial project, report, book, thesis, article, or piece of research that makes a significant contribution to the sector and/or outcomes for the community we serve.

The award will be given to a project completed by the student during studies at an accredited tertiary, research, or learning institution.

Nominations can address any, or a combination, of the following core focus areas:

- Commemoration
- Transition to civilian life
- Health and mental health
- Wellbeing
- Advocacy

CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to at least one the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** – Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** – Demonstrate how the nomination achieved, or will achieve, a very high-quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** – Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of issues facing the sector.
- **Implementation & Transferability** – Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's elements and methodology can further the cause of best practice operations.
- **Collaboration** – Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

COMPULSORY MATERIALS

All entries are to be in electronic format only and must include:

- **Nomination Statement** – maximum of 5 x A4 pages (approximately 2500 words). This nomination statement must address the selection criteria and outline the key issues and ideas addressed in the project and the key contribution the project makes to best/leading practice and learning for the profession.
- **Abstract** – An abstract of no more than 200 – 250 words.
- **Contributor Consent Forms** executed by the client or initiating body, as well as all entities involved in the project, or other proof the nomination is made with full consent of all relevant parties involved in the project. Download the Contributor Consent Form from www.vespia.org/awards

Additional supplementary material may be submitted electronically where it is the subject of the nomination. Examples include: a book, PhD thesis, strategic plan, framework document. However, the judges will refer primarily to the Nomination Statement.

INDIVIDUAL

SERVICE CHAPLAIN OF THE YEAR

This award recognises a chaplain within Defence, Veterans, or First Responder agencies who has demonstrated exceptional dedication, compassion, and support to personnel and their families. It acknowledges chaplains who have gone beyond their standard duties, significantly contributing to the well-being and resilience of their service community.

The award honours chaplains who exemplify outstanding commitment, empathy, and leadership, fostering an environment of spiritual care, moral support, and community connection.

CRITERIA

CHAPLAIN PROFILE

20%

Provide a biography detailing the nominee's professional background, including their role and responsibilities within their agency and their contributions to community engagement.

SUPPORT AND CARE

30%

Demonstrate specific instances where the nominee has provided exceptional emotional, spiritual, and moral support to service personnel and their families, significantly impacting their lives.

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken and that the partnership aligns with the VESPIIA Code?

LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

25%

Highlight how the nominee has demonstrated leadership within their role, implementing innovative strategies or programs to enhance spiritual and emotional well-being within their service community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

15%

Detail the nominee's efforts to foster partnerships and collaborations within and beyond their agency, enhancing the overall support network available to personnel and their families.

REFERRAL LETTER

10%

Include a referral letter from a senior officer or organisational leader supporting the nomination, highlighting the nominee's contributions and impact within the service community.

ORGANISATION & TEAM

BEST STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

This award recognises highly successful partnerships that achieve mutual benefit and program success – between charities, companies, industry bodies, government, trusts, foundations, community groups, media outlets, individuals, or other not-for-profits.

Applicable partnership types include: Fundraising, digital campaigns, partnered programs, research initiatives, grants and foundations, corporate partnerships, media partnerships, ambassador arrangements, and joint government initiatives.

Eligibility: Partnerships must span at least 12 months, or a defined campaign or project period within the last 18 months, and must be focused on driving common strategic outcomes for both parties.

CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20%

- Tell us about your partnership. How does it benefit your organisations activities and your organisation's objective, as well as benefit the partnering organisation?
- Please provide a short (approx. 1-3 min) video telling us about your strategic partnership and the impact it has had on your fundraising organisational goals. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

40%

What led you to partner with this organisation? How do both organisations' strategies align, and how does the partnership deliver mutual benefits to both?

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken and that the partnership aligns with the VESPIIA Code?

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

20%

How was the relationship managed to ensure it achieved the objectives of your organisation/business and that of your partner? What changes, if any, were made to your operations/program/s due to this relationship? What lessons were learned?

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

30%

What was the impact of the partnership on the organisation? What was the impact of the partnership on the partner? How were these measured?

**BEST STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP 2025
INVICTUS &
UNSW CANBERRA**



ORGANISATION & TEAM

SUPPLIER TEAM OF THE YEAR

This award recognises a supplier team that has built meaningful relationships and delivered strong outcomes – financial or otherwise – for VESPIIA member organisations or directly for the veterans, emergency services, police, and family community.

Suppliers play a critical role in the sector's ability to deliver. This award is for the teams whose products, programs, or initiatives have made a real difference to the organisations and people they serve.

CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20%

- a. Tell us about your initiative, program or product. How does it benefit other organisations and/or the community we serve.
- b. Please provide a short (approx. 1-3 min) video telling us about your program/product/initiative and the impact it has had on your business and your beneficiaries. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

ENGAGEMENT

30%

- a. What led you to engage with this community? What problem were you trying to overcome? Is this a new program/product/initiative or long-term?
- b. Detail the working relationship you have with the community. Describe the research/activities you have undertaken to reach the right people within the community/sector to achieve the goals set out for your program/product/initiative.

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken to deliver your program/product/initiative?

RESOURCING AND EXECUTION

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken to deliver your program/product/initiative?

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

30%

What was the impact of the partnership on the organisation? What was the impact of the partnership on the partner? How were these measured?

ORGANISATION & TEAM

ALLIED TEAM OF THE YEAR

This award recognises an allied provider team that has built meaningful relationships and delivered strong outcomes – financial or otherwise – for VESPIIA member organisations or directly for the veterans, emergency services, police, and family community.

Allied providers bring specialist expertise and complementary capability to the sector. This award is for the teams whose work has meaningfully strengthened the organisations and communities they support.

CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20%

- a. Tell us about your initiative, program or product. How does it benefit other organisations and/or the community we serve.
- b. Please provide a short (approx. 1-3 min) video telling us about your program/product/initiative and the impact it has had on your business and your beneficiaries. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

ENGAGEMENT

30%

- a. What led you to engage with this community? What problem were you trying to overcome? Is this a new program/product/initiative or long-term?
- b. Detail the working relationship you have with the community. Describe the research/activities you have undertaken to reach the right people within the community/sector to achieve the goals set out for your program/product/initiative.

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken to deliver your program/product/initiative?

RESOURCING AND EXECUTION

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken to deliver your program/product/initiative?

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

30%

What was the impact of the partnership on the organisation? What was the impact of the partnership on the partner? How were these measured?

ORGANISATION & TEAM

ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR

This award category recognises organisations across all their teams/departments working across a variety of campaigns to support the ongoing work of the organisation. The focus of the award is on teamwork and leveraging internal resources to achieve the organisation's objectives.

This award recognises the whole organisational team including, programs, beneficiary support, fundraising, operational and leadership.

CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

30%

- Provide a comprehensive summary of the award submission and how the whole team contributes to the organisation's purpose. Outline the campaigns/programs the team have worked on, and how teamwork was important to the overall success of these campaigns/programs.
- Please provide a short (approx. 1-3 min) video telling us why your team should win this award. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

TEAM STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

10%

Please outline the team structure and how responsibilities were allocated. Explain the management of the team and how it impacted on results of the activities and performance of the team. How did the team work within the broader organisation to improve cooperation and effectiveness?

ACTIVITIES DELIVERED AND KEY PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

20%

Please tell us about the activities (campaigns/projects/programs) this team has delivered and how you measured the success of each activity. How did the team leverage resources/knowledge of each of the activities delivered to increase the overall performance of the collective effort? How did this match up to strategic and operational KPI's set for the organisation?

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How did you ensure the team's activities were best practice and aligned to the VESPIIA Code?

TEAM DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

20%

Please outline the organisation's team and staff development strategy. Detail commitment to professional development and how that contributed to the success of the activities and team effectiveness. Note: this may include both personal and professional development strategies. Please detail staff retention in this team and what strategies are used to retain staff.

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

20%

Please tell us the overall impact that this team had on your activities. How was this measured?

ORGANISATION & TEAM

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

This award recognises new organisations, suppliers, and allied providers – operating for less than three years – who have already made a meaningful impact. Whether that's building strong relationships, delivering outcomes for VESPIIA members, or making a direct difference to veterans, emergency services, police, and their families, this category is for the ones who hit the ground running.

Eligibility Open to organisations, suppliers, and allied providers who have been operating for less than three years. If your organisation has been operating for three years or more, please consider the relevant category for your work.

CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20%

- Tell us about your organisation, its purpose and your programs. How does it benefit other organisations and/or the community we serve.
- Tell us how you have grown over the last three years and how you have achieved or exceeded your original goals as an organisation.
- Please provide a short (approx. 1-3 min) video telling us about your program/product/initiative and the impact it has had on your business and your beneficiaries. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

ENGAGEMENT

20%

- What led you to engage with this community? What problem were you trying to overcome? Is this a new program/product/initiative or long-term?
- Detail the working relationship you have with the community. Describe the research/activities you have undertaken to reach the right people within the community/sector to achieve the goals set out for your program/product/initiative.

TEAM STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

10%

Please outline the team structure and how responsibilities were allocated. Explain the management of the team and how it impacted on results of the activities and performance of the team. How did the team work within the broader organisation to improve cooperation and effectiveness?

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken to deliver your program/product/initiative?

TEAM DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

20%

Please outline the organisation's team and staff development strategy. Detail commitment to professional development and how that contributed to the success of the activities and team effectiveness. Note: this may include both personal and professional development strategies. Please detail staff retention in this team and what strategies are used to retain staff.

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

20%

Did your program/product/initiative achieve the goals and outcomes you had planned? What impact did your program/product/initiative have on its beneficiaries? What lessons were learned? What made the achievements beyond normal expectations?

PROGRAM

TRANSITION PROGRAM

This award recognises a program that supports veterans, emergency services personnel, police, or their families through a significant life or career transition – whether that's leaving service, moving into civilian employment, or rebuilding after a difficult period. Strong transition programs change trajectories. This award is for the ones that do exactly that.

Programs may include employment support, transition to civilian life, training and development, career summits, mentoring, and similar initiatives.

CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20%

- a. Provide a comprehensive summary of your program/initiative. How does it benefit other organisations and/or the community we serve.
- b. Please provide a short (approx. 1-3 min) video telling us about your program/product/initiative and the impact it has had on your business and your beneficiaries. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

ENGAGEMENT

20%

- a. What led you to engage with this community? What problem were you trying to overcome? Is this a new program/product/initiative or long-term?
- b. Detail the working relationship you have with the community. Describe the research/activities you have undertaken to reach the right people within the community/sector to achieve the goals set out for your program/product/initiative.

RESOURCING AND EXECUTION

10%

What resources were used to execute this activity? This should include human resources (number of staff and volunteers and their roles), financial, suppliers and other resources. How did you maximise these resources?

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken to deliver your program/product/initiative?

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

40%

Did your program/product/initiative achieve the goals and outcomes you had planned? What impact did your program/product/initiative have on its beneficiaries? What lessons were learned? What made the achievements beyond normal expectations?

Programs should be conducted, or partially (if a recurrent activity) during the last 18 months.

If your activity is not outcome based and a one off event, the applicant should apply under the 'Impact through Events' category.

PROGRAM

SOCIAL PROGRAM

This award recognises a program that builds connection, belonging, and wellbeing for veterans, emergency services personnel, police, or their families through social participation. The best social programs do more than fill a calendar — they reduce isolation, build community, and give people somewhere they genuinely want to be.

Programs may include sports and recreation activities, social groups, camps, luncheons, playgroups, book clubs, and similar community-building activities.

CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20%

- a. Provide a comprehensive summary of your program/initiative. How does it benefit other organisations and/or the community we serve.
- b. Please provide a short (approx. 1-3 min) video telling us about your program/product/initiative and the impact it has had on your business and your beneficiaries. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

ENGAGEMENT

20%

- a. What led you to engage with this community? What problem were you trying to overcome? Is this a new program/product/initiative or long-term?
- b. Detail the working relationship you have with the community. Describe the research/activities you have undertaken to reach the right people within the community/sector to achieve the goals set out for your program/product/initiative.

RESOURCING AND EXECUTION

10%

What resources were used to execute this activity? This should include human resources (number of staff and volunteers and their roles), financial, suppliers and other resources. How did you maximise these resources?

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken to deliver your program/product/initiative?

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

40%

Did your program/product/initiative achieve the goals and outcomes you had planned? What impact did your program/product/initiative have on its beneficiaries? What lessons were learned? What made the achievements beyond normal expectations?

Programs should be conducted, or partially (if a recurrent activity) during the last 18 months.

If your activity is not outcome based and a one off event, the applicant should apply under the 'Impact through Events' category.

PROGRAM

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

This award recognises a program that actively supports, develops, or celebrates volunteers contributing to the veterans, emergency services, and police support sector. Volunteers are essential to how this sector functions. This award is for the organisations that take that seriously and invest in them accordingly.

Programs may include DVA claims support, long-term beneficiary support, volunteer coordination, and internal or community-facing volunteer roles.

CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20%

- a. Provide a comprehensive summary of your program/initiative. How does it benefit other organisations and/or the community we serve.
- b. Please provide a short (approx. 1-3 min) video telling us about your program/product/initiative and the impact it has had on your business and your beneficiaries. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

ENGAGEMENT

20%

- a. What led you to engage with this community? What problem were you trying to overcome? Is this a new program/product/initiative or long-term?
- b. Detail the working relationship you have with the community. Describe the research/activities you have undertaken to reach the right people within the community/sector to achieve the goals set out for your program/product/initiative.
- c. How do you support, recognise and reward your volunteers?

RESOURCING AND EXECUTION

10%

What resources were used to execute this activity? This should include human resources (number of staff and volunteers and their roles), financial, suppliers and other resources. How did you maximise these resources?

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken to deliver your program/product/initiative?

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

40%

Did your program/product/initiative achieve the goals and outcomes you had planned? What impact did your program/product/initiative have on its beneficiaries? What lessons were learned? What made the achievements beyond normal expectations?

Programs should be conducted, or partially (if a recurrent activity) during the last 18 months.

If your activity is not outcome based and a one off event, the applicant should apply under the 'Impact through Events' category.

PROGRAM

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PROGRAM

This award recognises an organisation leading the way in building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce or beneficiary base. This award is for programs, policies, and initiatives that have made a measurable difference — removing a barrier, improving representation, changing a culture, or creating genuine belonging for people who previously felt excluded.

This category may cover: Indigenous engagement, gender equity and respect, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, disability and ongoing health conditions, and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

Examples of eligible programs and activities: Initiatives that reduce barriers and promote equal opportunity; flexible work or leave policies supporting families and cultural practices; community projects fostering inclusion and access; leadership programs promoting inclusive behaviours; and strategies that improve retention and outcomes for staff, volunteers, or students from diverse backgrounds.

All activity must be in excess of what would be expected in the normal performance of the organisation.

Eligibility Programs must have been conducted, or partially conducted, within the last 18 months. If your activity is not outcome-based and is a one-off event, apply under Impact Through Events instead.

CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20%

- Provide a comprehensive summary of your program/initiative. How does it benefit your organisations and/or the community we serve.
- Please provide a short (approx. 1–3 min) video telling us about your program/product/initiative and the impact it has had on your business and your beneficiaries. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

ENGAGEMENT

40%

- What led you to engage with this community? What problem were you trying to overcome? Is this a new program/initiative or long-term?
- Detail the working relationship you have with the community. Describe the research/activities you have undertaken to reach the right people within the community/sector to achieve the goals set out for your initiative.
- Challenges faced in internal engagement (buy-in) and how these challenges have been overcome.

RESOURCING AND EXECUTION

10%

What resources were used to execute this activity? This should include human resources (number of staff and volunteers and their roles), financial, suppliers and other resources. How did you maximise these resources?

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How did you align your program with the VESPIIA Code of Professional Conduct and with the VESPIIA Objectives set out in the Constitution?

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

30%

Did your initiative achieve the goals and outcomes you had planned? What impact did your initiative have on its beneficiaries? What lessons were learned? What made the achievements beyond normal expectations? How did this create visibility of the DE&I culture within the business?

Nominations must evidence the impact the activity has had on equity, diversity or inclusion and all activity mentioned must be in excess of what would be expected in the normal performance of the organisation.

PROGRAM

RESEARCH PIECE OF THE YEAR

This award recognises an outstanding piece of research that advances understanding of the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing veterans, emergency services, police, and their families in Australia.

It is awarded for substantial, impartial, and evidence-based work – whether commissioned research, academic research, a clinical trial, or doctoral study – that makes a genuine contribution to how the sector understands and responds to the needs of the community it serves.

Eligibility Research must be impartial and evidence-based. PhD research should be submitted in this category rather than Student of the Year.

CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to at least one the following selection criteria:

// Originality & Innovation – Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.

// Quality – Demonstrate how the nomination achieved, or will achieve, a very high-quality outcome.

// Strategic Alignment – Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of issues facing the sector.

// Implementation & Transferability – Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's elements and methodology can further the cause of best practice operations.

// Collaboration – Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

COMPULSORY MATERIALS

All entries are to be in electronic format only and must include:

// Nomination Statement – maximum of 5 x A4 pages (approximately 2500 words). This nomination statement must address the selection criteria and outline the key issues and ideas addressed in the project and the key contribution the project makes to best/leading practice and learning for the profession.

// Abstract – An abstract of no more than 200 – 250 words.

// Contributor Consent Forms executed by the client or initiating body, as well as all entities involved in the project, or other proof the nomination is made with full consent of all relevant parties involved in the project. Download the Contributor Consent Form from www.vespiia.org/awards

Additional supplementary material may be submitted electronically where it is the subject of the nomination. Examples include: a book, PhD thesis, strategic plan, framework document. However, the judges will refer primarily to the Nomination Statement.

PROGRAM

IMPACT ON A SHOESTRING

This award recognises programs and campaigns that deliver significant impact with limited resources. It exists to give smaller organisations the opportunity to celebrate work that punches above its weight – where creativity, determination, and smart use of what's available produced results that larger budgets couldn't guarantee.

Examples of eligible activities: Community fundraising, digital campaigns, individual giving, merchandise campaigns, advocacy and awareness raising, and transition, social, or volunteer programs delivered on a tight budget.

Eligibility Open to organisations with an annual turnover of up to \$2,000,000 and a campaign budget of up to \$30,000, excluding staff costs. Activities must have been conducted, or partially conducted, within the last 18 months.

CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20%

- a. Tell us how you used limited resources to make a big impact on your program and organisational strategy. What was the purpose of the activity/campaign and how did it relate to overall organisational strategy?
- b. Please provide a short (approx. 1-3 min) video telling us about your campaign and what impact it had. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

STRATEGY

20%

What was your campaign strategy? What did you set out to achieve? How did limited resources impact on the type of campaign you ran or decisions you made? How did the campaign team ensure the project reached its objectives while maintaining its budget?

RESOURCING AND EXECUTION

20%

What resources were used to execute this activity? This should include human resources (number of staff and volunteers and their roles), financial, suppliers and other resources. How did you maximise these resources?

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

How do you ensure best practice and ethical delivery is undertaken to deliver your program/product/initiative?

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

30%

What was your return on investment against input and/or against strategy? How did the outcomes have a big impact on the organisation? What lessons were learnt?

PROGRAM

IMPACT THROUGH EVENTS

This award recognises outstanding achievement in fundraising or beneficiary engagement through a special event – demonstrating exceptional strategy, efficient execution, a clear point of difference, and meaningful return on investment for the organisation.

Examples of eligible events: Major gift and capital campaigns, community fundraising events, online or virtual events, one-off social events, and focus groups or roundtables.

Eligibility Events must have been conducted, or partially conducted, within the last 18 months. If your activity is outcome-based and recurring, consider the relevant program category instead.

CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20%

- a. Tell us about your special event. What impact has it had on your fundraising or your beneficiaries? What makes it unique?
- b. Please provide a short (approx. 1–3 min) video telling us about your special event and why it should win this award. This can be a simple video filmed on your phone. The quality of the production will not be considered in the judging process – it's about the story you tell.

EVENT STRATEGY

30%

What was the strategy for the event and how does it fit with your organisation's overall strategic direction? What problem or issue was it aiming to address? What insights and data were used to develop this event?

EXECUTION

20%

How was the event executed? How does it differ from other events in the market? What resources were used including volunteers and external suppliers? What fundraising, marketing, or engagement channels were used?

VESPIIA CODE ALIGNMENT

10%

State one way you ensured ethical fundraising or best practice development was undertaken and how it aligned with the VESPIIA Code.

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

20%

What impact did this event have on your overall fundraising program and organisational objectives? How did this event strengthen relationships with key stakeholders? What was the ROI for the organisation? What lessons were learned?

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By participating in the VESPIIA Awards for Excellence, entrants agree to abide by these terms and conditions and the VESPIIA Code of Professional Conduct.

Awards can be attributed to an individual or organisation. If an entrant changes their place of employment during the judging process, they must advise VESPIIA at events@vespiia.org.

There is no fee to submit a nomination. Entrants may submit across as many categories as they wish.

Awards are only given to the attributed individual or organisation. However, copies can be arranged for teams, colleagues, or clients. Please contact the VESPIIA team if you wish to purchase additional trophies.

All accompanying materials must comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act (www.privacy.gov.au) and the Copyright Act (www.copyright.com.au).

Entries and supporting documentation must be submitted no later than the specified closing date. Under no circumstances will entries be accepted after the deadline. No alterations to entries will be permitted after the closing date.

Judges have discretion in assessing entries, applying the judging criteria and terms and conditions, and determining the recommended results. VESPIIA's decision is final and no correspondence or discussion will be entered into in relation to decisions made. Judges' comments and feedback may be made available to all entrants after the awards upon request.

The assessment, conduct, and results of the awards will not create any legal obligation between entrants and VESPIIA.

No judge will be allowed to participate in judging a category if their organisation, agency, or allied businesses have entered that category, or if there is any other conflict of interest VESPIIA becomes aware of. Judges are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest and step aside from judging an entry where any conflict may occur.

If an entrant who is judged a winner is subsequently found to have failed to satisfy or abide by the terms and conditions, they will not be entitled to the relevant award and their submission into the VESPIIA Awards program will no longer be applicable. Consequently, VESPIIA may present the relevant award to another entrant or choose not to present the award at all.

By entering the VESPIIA Awards, each entrant acknowledges that their entry is true, accurate, complete, and original work, that any intellectual property rights arising in connection with that entry rest with the entrant, and that the entry does not interfere with any third-party rights.

VESPIIA reserves the right to decline a submission or disqualify an entry at its absolute discretion, including but not limited to a situation in which the entrant or a related person is under ethical investigation by VESPIIA, or where the acceptance of the entry may otherwise be detrimental to the objectives of VESPIIA's awards program.

VESPIIA reserves the right to reproduce entries with the aim of furthering excellence in the sector and providing relevant materials for students and the profession. Only the entry document itself will be made public, excluding any information noted as CONFIDENTIAL.

VESPIIA, its employees, officers, and agents do not accept any liability, however arising, including liability for negligence, for any accident, loss, injury, or damage arising at any time out of or in connection with this awards program, except for any liability that cannot, by law, be excluded.

VESPIIA reserves the right to amend the terms and conditions in any way, at any time, before the closing date for entries and at its absolute discretion. Entrants will be notified of any such amendments prior to the closing date.

Entrants who breach any of these terms and conditions are subject to disqualification.

All submissions must be approved or endorsed by the Board Chair, CEO, Head of Department, or equivalent of the submitting organisation prior to lodgement. This applies whether the submission is prepared internally or by a consultant on the organisation's behalf.

Under no circumstances shall VESPIIA be held responsible for the payment of any royalties or other charges for the use of materials provided in support of the awards. All entries become the property of VESPIIA on submission.

JUDGING GUIDELINES

All nominations will be reviewed by the judging panel.

The judging panel comprises the CEO, Board Members, Fellows, and third parties as chosen by the Board and/or CEO.

Nominations deemed by the awards organisers and/or judging panel to have insufficient information or evidence may not be considered.

The judging panel reserves the right to reallocate nominations to different categories where appropriate.

The judges' decision will be final with no correspondence being entered into.

Winners will be chosen based on merit, rather than the number of nominations received.

Nominees and nominators may be contacted for further clarification during the selection process.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

The VESPIIA conflict of interest guidelines are based on the understanding that in all cases an actual conflict of interest in judging is to be avoided, and that even a perceived conflict can be damaging to all parties.

All judges sign a conflict of interest declaration.

A conflict is considered to arise where a judge has a personal or professional relationship with a person that may call into question their ability to fairly and independently assess an entry.

Being from the same organisation does not necessarily constitute a conflict of interest.

Prior to judging, all panel members are sent a list of entrants for the categories they will judge, enabling them to identify possible conflicts and alert VESPIIA and other judges.

The onus for declaring a conflict falls on individual judges. If the conflict is considered significant, the judge will be replaced. Where the conflict is contained, the judge will refrain from participating in any discussion concerning the relevant entrant.

VESP//A