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IMAA opens applications for 2026 Pitch-Chella



by Vihan Mathur

Posted on 8 May 2026



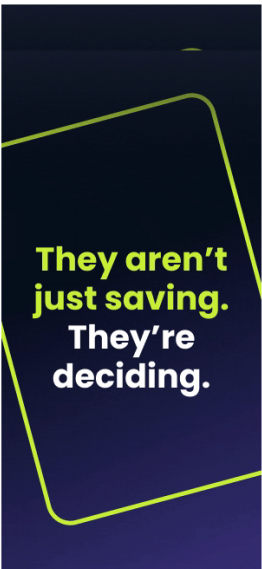
Applications for the 2026 program close on Wednesday, 20 May.

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IMAA – Independent Media Agencies Australia has opened applications for its 2026 Pitch-Chella program, with emerging indie agency talent set to develop campaign ideas for *You Can Sit With Me*.

Now in its third year, Pitch-Chella gives up-and-coming talent across **IMAA** member agencies the chance to sharpen their pitching skills while working with peers from across the Independent media agency sector.

The program has attracted nearly 170 participants since launch, representing independent media agencies from across the country.



A brief for You Can Sit With Me

This year's participants will prepare a written brief for *You Can Sit With Me*, an Australian anti-bullying charity focused on kindness, belonging and inclusion in schools.

The charity works to empower children to combat loneliness by fostering friendships among their peers. Its work includes public advocacy, educational programs, literacy support to close the reading gap, and "safe spaces" initiatives outside school, on the playground, and in the classroom.

Sophie Sparks, Founder and CEO of *You Can Sit With Me*, said the charity was grateful to be part of the program.

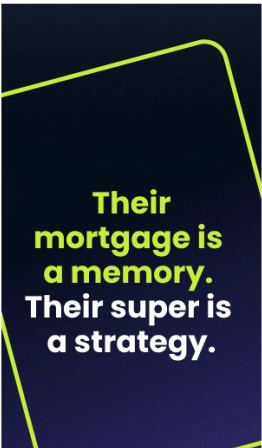
"At *You Can Sit With Me*, we believe kindness and inclusion can genuinely change lives, and having the support of the IMAA community helps us continue creating safe spaces where every child feels seen, valued and connected. We can't wait to see the inspiring ideas that come from this collaboration."



How the program works

Teams will prepare written submissions for *You Can Sit With Me*, which will be assessed across several criteria.

These include industry relevance, ability to address the objective and problem, insight and strategy, and idea and execution.



The top eight teams will then be selected to deliver a live pitch before a judging panel.

Judges include Audience360 Managing Director **Jenny Parkes**, TrinityP3 Business Director and Global Media Lead **Stephen Wright**, Orand Founder **Adam Hickey**, and **Sophie Sparks**, Founder and CEO of You Can Sit With Me.

Winners will be announced at an award ceremony at Sydney's Beresford Hotel on Thursday, July 30.

Sponsors and steering committee

The 2026 Pitch-Chella program is supported by gold sponsor Audience360 and supporting sponsors Are Media, Channel Factory, News Australia, Meta, Microsoft Advertising, Snapchat and Taboola.

This year's initiative is being led by a steering committee of independent agency leaders, including **Lisa Blackshaw** from Co.gency and **Taylor Fielding** from TFM Digital, alongside the IMAA team.

Taylor Fielding on indie talent

IMAA Pitch-Chella Steering Committee member and TFM Digital CEO Fielding said the program provides emerging professionals with a platform to collaborate and develop pitching skills.

"Pitch-Chella is all about showcasing the incredible talent we have within Australia's indie agency sector. It offers a dynamic platform for budding professionals to team up, enhance their pitching skills, and share knowledge, while also providing support to our nominated charity.

"Every year, we continue to be impressed by the calibre of submissions and ideas from our emerging industry talent. They have demonstrated fresh perspectives and bold ideas well beyond their experience; it just shows that the future of the industry is in good hands."

Lisa Blackshaw on what judges want

IMAA Pitch-Chella Steering Committee member, Leadership Team member and Co.gency Senior Account Manager Blackshaw said this year's participants are being encouraged to push their thinking.

"This year, we're looking for participants to wow us with their submissions – to create work that challenges us, that excites us, and that inspires us.

"We want teams to be innovative with their cross-channel thinking, from traditional and digital media to unexpected activations and social-led storytelling. We can't wait to see what they come up with."

Key dates

Pitch-Chella is open to IMAA agency members with 5 years or less of industry experience.

Applications for the 2026 program close on Wednesday, May 20.

Finalists will be announced on Friday, June 26, with virtual pitches taking place on Tuesday, July 14.

Top Image: IMAA

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Moving is equal parts exciting and wearisome. No matter how prepared you think you are, you'll most likely run out of packing tape or bubble wrap at the last minute. Or for those hoping to **secure their rental bond back**, you might clock a scuff in the hallway, or forget to patch a wall just as you're heading out the door for the final time. But thanks to the new partnership between **Uber Eats** and **Bunnings**, there's no reason to panic. Whether you need more moving boxes or a new can of paint, you can now have it delivered to your door in less than an hour*. That's right, the iconic hardware and garden centre store is now available for on-demand delivery via the Uber Eats app, offering in-store prices with **delivery in under 60 minutes**. For the first time, households around the country can shop for more than 30,000 products from the Bunnings catalogue, without leaving home.



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ARN punished by shareholders with executive pay increase denied



By [Natasha Lee](#)

Posted on 8 May 2026



It comes after revelations that the fallout from Kyle and Jackie O wiped \$26.4m in revenue.



ARN Media shareholders have delivered a major rebuke to the company's leadership team, overwhelmingly voting against the broadcaster's executive remuneration report at Thursday's annual general meeting.

More than 90% of votes cast opposed the pay package, handing the company an official first strike under Australia's two-strikes rule for remuneration reports.

According to [The Australian Financial Review](#), the result ranks among the largest shareholder protest votes in recent Australian corporate history.

It comes as the broadcaster continues to navigate the fallout from the collapse of *The Kyle and Jackie O Show*, the commercial fallout of which was laid bare at the AGM, with the broadcaster revealing that advertiser concerns linked to the show contributed to \$26.4 million in lost metro and regional revenue during FY25.

It was an extraordinary admission, given that the company were paying **Kyle Sandilands** and **Jackie 'O' Henderson** a combined \$20 million each year.

The company is now embroiled in a legal battle against the pair, after the termination of both Sandilands' and Henderson's contracts, and the show's subsequent implosion.

However, despite the ongoing noise surrounding the saga, CEO **Michael Stephenson** attempted to calm waters, telling the meeting that "we expect a significant percentage of the \$26m of revenue that was lost last year because of brand safety concerns to return, improving both our metro radio revenue and revenue share."



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One of the biggest protest votes in recent memory

A vote on ARN's remuneration proposal, which included Stephenson's \$1.1 million annual salary, was overwhelmingly voted down by 90.1% shareholders.

The strike means ARN lost the support of key shareholders, including Samuel Terry Asset Management, which holds 23% of the company, and Spheria Asset Management, which owns 14.4%.

Under Australia's corporate governance rules, a second strike at next year's AGM could trigger a spill motion that would place all board positions up for re-election.

While first strikes are not uncommon on the ASX, votes above 90% are rare – particularly for a media company already under sustained commercial and legal pressure.

Main image: Michael Stephenson

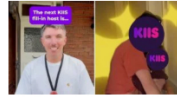
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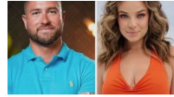
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