The Big Idea is an immersive social enterprise experience for students at participating universities.

Login to learn from experts in the field, develop your own idea, and (if you like!) submit your Big Idea for judging against your peers around the country. The judging process exposes you to top industry executives, graduate recruiters from PwC, and puts you in the running for prizes.

The Big Idea will sharpen your employability skills, but is unlike a traditional internship. You won’t be based in our Melbourne HQ, which means the opportunity is available regardless of where you live! You will spend time with our key senior managers through a webinar series, and gain practical experience in teamwork, leadership and self motivation. You may also get credit towards your degree. Find out more from your university project manager.

The Big Idea is run by The Big Issue, Australia’s longest standing and most significant social enterprise. The Big Issue is an independent, not for profit organisation that develops solutions to help homeless, marginalised and disadvantaged people positively change their lives. This is done through a number of social enterprises and initiatives.

Students are asked to develop a concept and business plan for:
1. A new social enterprise or a new social business; or
2. A social enterprise or social business for a not-for-profit of your choice.

The Big Idea is a national competition, being delivered at undergraduate level at universities including:

- Australian Catholic University
- CQ University
- Curtin University
- Macquarie University
- Monash University
- Murdoch University
- Queensland University of Technology
- RMIT University
- University of Adelaide
- University of Melbourne
- University of New South Wales

At postgraduate level, The Big Idea is being delivered at universities including CQ University, Curtin University, Monash University, RMIT University, the University of Melbourne, and the University of New South Wales.
GETTING STARTED

- All you need to get started with The Big Idea is enthusiasm for the project. You will develop your employability skills, be part of an exciting team project, and contribute to the community.

- You don’t need to have an idea to get started - university project managers may match you with a team mate who has an idea, or you and your team can brainstorm an idea together.

- Speak to your university project manager about enrolling and joining a team.

PARTICIPATION TIMELINE AND CHECKLIST

- **Getting Started**
  - Check out key information in this guide
  - Register with your university
  - Form a team

- **Use Resources Provided**
  - Login at thebigidea.org.au - the password is student2019
  - Refer to the Facebook group and suggested readings
  - Attend your on-campus lecture and look at webinar schedule

- **Write Your Business Plan**
  - Start by filling in your Business Model Canvas
  - Refer to our business planning templates
  - Work with your team
  - Be creative!

- **Submit Your Plan For Judging**
  - University judging - one team per university will be chosen to compete in the semi-finals
  - All business plans will be considered by The Big Issue as part of the ‘wildcard’ process
  - Finalists nominated at the semi-finals are invited to present at the National Finals in Melbourne on 28 November
LEARNING RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITY

We recommend that you download our business planning template and budget template for suggestions about how to structure your business plan. Other suggestions we have include working from a business model canvas, logging into our webinar series featuring Australian business leaders, The Big Issue management team, and personal stories of disadvantage, and checking out suggested readings. Discuss your ideas and feel free to ask us questions through the Facebook group, and contact your university representative for any additional details. All documents are available via thebigidea.org.au.

Our webinar line-up features access to The Big Issue’s management team, and CEOs and senior managers from companies including Synergistiq, Australia Post, and Origin. These opportunities are awesome - interns and even staff at most organisations don’t get to spend time and ask questions with such senior members of staff!

Learn more about our high profile Thought Leader and judging panels at thebigidea.org.au.

COMPETITION RESOURCES

Before getting stuck into your project, you should check out The Big Issue’s definitions of social enterprise and social business, and have a look over the student guide to The Big Idea, the submission coversheet, judging criteria, and Terms and Conditions, which you will need to know about to enter the competition officially. All documents are available via thebigidea.org.au, and some are contained at the back of this document.

Every year, each winning team tells us that they worked on their Big Idea for a few hours every week from the beginning of semester – getting started early will give you a huge advantage.

For access to more information and learning resources including webinars, business planning templates, and suggested readings, head to thebigidea.org.au. The login password is student2019.
SUBMISSION AND JUDGING

You officially enter The Big Idea when you fill in a submission coversheet and hand your business plan to your project manager. There are four stages to judging.

• University judging – there may be many teams participating in The Big Idea at your university, and one will be chosen to represent your university at the semi-finals. Your university project manager will let you know details.

• Wildcard judging – The Big Idea team will review all business plans, and may select additional teams to participate in the semi-finals. Teams will be notified if they’re selected at wildcard stage.

• Semi-finalist judging – will be held via webinar, with one team representing each university (unless a wildcard finalist has also been nominated). Undergraduate semi-finals will be held on 13 November and postgraduate semi-finals on 14 November. Teams will be given information as required.

• Finalist judging – will be held in Melbourne on 28 November and followed by an Awards Event that evening. Both undergraduate and postgraduate finals judging will be held on the same day. If you’re not able to make it to Melbourne, we will make arrangements for you to compete via webinar.

Whether you’re a finalist or not, The Big Idea is a great experience to include on your resume and talk about in interviews.