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# 2026

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**YMCA South Australia  
Awards for Excellence**

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**NOMINATION PACK**



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# INTRODUCTION

Our people are not only employees, but also co-heirs of the purpose and legacy of the YMCA. When we each joined the Y, we were effectively grafted into a much bigger story, the “long arc of history” as Martin Luther King Jr. put it. Not only the 175 years gone by, but the history yet to be made in the life of our State, communities and the individuals within them. As in a relay race, we now hold the baton.

We work together every day to create opportunities for people and communities grow in body, mind and spirit. The Awards for Excellence are the perfect way to celebrate our achievements from the past year and acknowledge the valuable work we do for the community.

YMCA South Australia Awards for Excellence encourage, promote and recognise excellence and innovation. Participating in the Awards program allows you and your team to highlight your most outstanding qualities, successes and initiatives over the past year.

The 2026 Awards for excellence are related to achievement from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.

The awards will be presented at a party to be held on **29 August 2026** at **Jackson Square, 57 Manton St, Hindmarsh SA 5007**.

# AIM OF AWARDS

The overall aim of the YMCA South Australia Awards for Excellence is to:

- Highlight the exceptional staff working in our organisation showing leadership and management qualities
- Recognise excellence demonstrated by YMCA South Australia programs and services
- Create public awareness of the level of expertise and excellence in the industry.

# AWARD CATEGORIES

## SERVICE AWARDS

To recognise the service of employees and volunteers over 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years.

## INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

- George Williams Impact Award
- Rising Star Award
- Young Achiever Award
- Unsung Hero Award

## GROUP / TEAM AWARDS

- Brighter Futures Team Award
- Active Excellence Team Award
- Elevated Operations Team Award

## SOCIAL IMPACT AWARDS

- Connected Communities Award
- Beyond Boundaries Award

## JUDGING

An independent selection panel of 4 individuals will be responsible for the judging of all entries. Each category will be judged on its merits. All applications will be considered on the criteria of each category as detailed in the online e-Awards portal.

## ENTRIES

All nominations for the YMCA South Australia Awards for Excellence must be submitted by close of business 13 July 2026. The portal will be open from 15 June 2026.

If you are uncertain about eligibility or have any questions in relation to the information provided, please email [awards@ymcasa.org.au](mailto:awards@ymcasa.org.au) or contact Komala Champion on 8200 2500.

## E-AWARDS

Our online e-Awards portal provides entrants with a secure user-friendly, web-based interface to guide you through the submission process.

- Nominations are submitted via email to your Senior Manager
  - Once approval is provided, a link to the E-Awards portal will be shared and the nomination can be uploaded
  - One attachment per submission is accepted, and nominations must include a photo of the nominee or nominees
- An email will be sent with instructions on how to register and create an e-Awards account.

## HERE ARE SOME TIPS!

- Discuss the nomination with your Manager first, this will help with ideas and also to ensure that you are not doubling up with another nomination.
- Don't leave your submission to the last minute
- Write your submission in Word first to assist with formatting, spell check and word count. You can then cut and paste into the portal.
- You have the ability to upload a powerpoint, photograph, audio or video file to enhance your application. This is not a way to add additional words to the word count but some visual evidence of the submission.

## KEY DATES

**Entries open:** 15 June

**Entries close:** 13 July

**Judging closes:** 31 July

**Party:** 29 August

**2026 finalists announced 7 August**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q.

Can I nominate someone who was nominated, or was the recipient or finalist of the same award last year?

### A.

Yes. All staff and volunteers are eligible to be nominated regardless of previous nominations or awards. However, it is only the nominee's contribution throughout the period of 1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026 that will be considered.

### Q.

Can you nominate someone who has not been employed for the entire year?

### A.

Yes. All staff that have been employed during the year can be nominated.

### Q.

Can volunteers be nominated in all categories?

### A.

Volunteers can be nominated in all individual categories.

### Q.

Will there be an interview?

### A.

There are no interviews. Entries are judged solely on the written submission and supporting attachment.

### Q.

How do I purchase tickets for this year's awards evening?

### A.

Tickets can be purchased through TryBooking with a link being sent via mail chimp. Tickets go on sale 22 June 2026 and places are strictly limited so you are encouraged to purchase your tickets early.

### Q.

I am not nominated, can I still attend the Awards Party?

### A.

Yes, all YMCA staff and volunteers are encouraged to attend.

### Q.

Can I bring a friend or partner to the Awards Party?

### A.

Yes. You can purchase a guest ticket at the same time as you buy your ticket.

### Q.

I am nominated for an award. Do I need to buy a ticket?

### A.

No. All individual nominees and service recipients will receive a complimentary ticket.

# INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

## AWARD CATEGORY

# GEORGE WILLIAMS IMPACT AWARD

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### Eligibility

Any individual who was an employee or volunteer of YMCA South Australia between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

### Award Outline

This is our peak award for individual performance, named in honour of the YMCA's founder, Sir George Williams. This award recognises the most outstanding employee of the year across the entire organisation — an individual who goes far beyond the expectations of their role to deliver exceptional impact for YMCA, South Australia, the people we serve, and the broader community.

The recipient embodies the Mission, Vision and Values of YMCA South Australia in an authentic and inspiring way. They demonstrate exceptional leadership, initiative and a deep commitment to the Y's purpose — making a measurable difference to the organisation and the community it serves.

### Nomination Questions

1. Nominee's name, role, program/site, and three words that describe them. *Max 100 points. 5 pts*
2. Highlight the reason for nominating this person in this category. Why do you believe they represent the very best of the Y? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
3. How does this person embody the Mission, Vision and Values of YMCA South Australia? Describe how they demonstrate "the Y Factor" in their daily interactions with their team, members and community. *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
4. Provide specific examples of the nominee's most outstanding achievements during the submission period (1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025). Detail the impact these achievements had on the organisation and/or community. *Max 500 words. 20 pts*
5. Manager's recommendation/reference statement. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*

## AWARD CATEGORY

# RISING STAR AWARD

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### Eligibility

Any individual who was an employee or volunteer of YMCA South Australia between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026. Nominees should be new to a leadership role or clearly demonstrating emerging leadership capacity — they do not need to currently hold a formal management title.

### Award Outline

A key priority of YMCA South Australia is to develop a strong pipeline of future leaders who will take our centres, programs and organisation forward. This award recognises a new leader or someone who is actively demonstrating the capacity and drive to lead — stepping up in meaningful ways, inspiring those around them, and living out the Y's mission with authenticity.

The nominee will demonstrate self-awareness, emotional intelligence and a commitment to continuous growth, showing they are ready to take on greater responsibility within the Y.

### Nomination Questions

1. Nominee's name, role, program/site, and three words that describe them. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*
2. Highlight the reason for nominating this person in this category. What makes them stand out as an emerging leader at the Y? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
3. How has the nominee shown leadership capacity, initiative and a positive impact on those around them? How do they demonstrate the Y's values in their everyday actions? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
4. Provide specific examples of the nominee's most significant achievements or leadership moments during the submission period. Include how they were achieved and the impact they had. *Max 500 words. 20 pts*
5. Manager's recommendation/reference statement. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*

# INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

## AWARD CATEGORY

# YOUNG ACHIEVER AWARD

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### Eligibility

Any individual aged 25 years or under who was an employee or volunteer of YMCA South Australia between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

### Award Outline

This award recognises a young person who is making an outstanding contribution within their role at the Y and/or within their broader community. Whether through exceptional performance at work, community leadership, volunteering or other initiatives outside the organisation, this person is showing what it means to be a young person who makes a real difference.

The award aims to celebrate, encourage and inspire young people employed with the Y to grow, develop their skills and gain valuable experience — both inside and outside the organisation. The nominee will demonstrate a positive attitude, a willingness to go above and beyond, and a commitment to the Y's values.

### Nomination Questions

1. Nominee's name, role, program/site, and three words that describe them. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*
2. Highlight the reason for nominating this person in this category. What makes their contribution outstanding for someone at their stage of career? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
3. How has the nominee gone above and beyond in their role and/or community? How do they reflect the values and culture of the Y in what they do? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
4. Provide specific examples of the nominee's most significant achievements during the submission period — within their role, their team and/or community. Detail the impact of these achievements. *Max 500 words. 20 pts*
5. Manager's recommendation/reference statement. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*

## AWARD CATEGORY

# UNsung HERO AWARD

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### Eligibility

Any individual who was an employee or volunteer of YMCA South Australia between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

### Award Outline

Behind every great team and every successful program, there is someone who quietly makes everything work — the person who goes above and beyond without seeking recognition, who supports their colleagues, lifts the standard of those around them, and holds the team together when it matters most.

This award shines a light on that person. The Unsung Hero is an exceptional team player who consistently goes the extra mile for their team, service or centre, upholds the Y's culture and values, and makes a genuine difference through their everyday actions. Their contribution may not always be visible in headlines — but the people around them know exactly how much they matter.

### Nomination Questions

1. Nominee's name, role, program/site, and three words that describe them. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*
2. Highlight the reason for nominating this person in this category. Why do they deserve to be recognised as an unsung hero of the Y? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
3. How does this person support, uplift and strengthen their team, service or centre? How do they demonstrate the Y's values through their everyday actions? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
4. Provide specific examples of the nominee going above and beyond for their team or community during the submission period. What impact has this had? *Max 500 words. 20 pts*
5. Manager's recommendation/reference statement. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*

# GROUP/TEAM AWARDS

## AWARD CATEGORY

# BRIGHTER FUTURES TEAM AWARD

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### Eligibility

Any team, service, centre or business unit within YMCA, South Australia's Children & Families programs that operated between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

### Award Outline

This award celebrates service excellence within Children & Families — recognising a team that has gone above and beyond to deliver outstanding outcomes for children, young people and families. The award highlights teams that champion safeguarding best practice, nurture child development, and build strong, caring environments where children and families thrive.

The winning team will have demonstrated a deep commitment to the wellbeing, safety and development of the children and families they serve and shown how the Y's values come to life in every interaction.

### Nomination Questions

1. Team/service/program name, site, and three words that describe the team. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*
2. Highlight the reason for nominating this team in this category. What makes their contribution to children and families exceptional? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
3. How has the team demonstrated a commitment to safeguarding, child development and family wellbeing? How do they bring the Y's values to life in their work? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
4. Provide specific examples of the team's outstanding achievements or initiatives during the submission period. What was the measurable impact on the children, families and community they serve? *Max 500 words. 20 pts*
5. Manager's recommendation/reference statement. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*

## AWARD CATEGORY

# ACTIVE EXCELLENCE TEAM AWARD

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### Eligibility

Any team, service, centre or business unit within YMCA South Australia's Sport & Community programs that operated between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

### Award Outline

This award recognises service excellence within Sport & Community — celebrating a team that has delivered outstanding outcomes in participation, performance and community engagement. The winning team will have found innovative and impactful ways to connect people to sport and community, breaking down barriers to participation and creating opportunities for all people to grow in body, mind and spirit.

The team will have shown exceptional energy, dedication and collaboration — and made their community stronger as a result.

### Nomination Questions

1. Team/service/program name, site, and three words that describe the team. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*
2. Highlight the reason for nominating this team in this category. What makes their contribution to sport and community exceptional? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
3. How has the team driven participation, performance and community engagement? How do they bring the Y's values to life in their work? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
4. Provide specific examples of the team's outstanding achievements or initiatives during the submission period. What was the measurable impact on the community and the Y? *Max 500 words. 20 pts*
5. Manager's recommendation/reference statement. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*

# GROUP/TEAM AWARDS

## AWARD CATEGORY

# ELEVATED OPERATIONS TEAM AWARD

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### Eligibility

Any team, service, centre or business unit within YMCA South Australia's Operations or Innovation functions that operated between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

### Award Outline

This award recognises service excellence within Operations & Innovation — celebrating a team that has demonstrated a commitment to best practice, operational excellence and innovative thinking in how they deliver for YMCA South Australia. The winning team will have raised the standard of what we do and how we do it, whether through process improvements, technology adoption, system efficiencies or creative problem-solving.

They will have shown what it looks like when operational rigour meets genuine innovation — creating better outcomes for staff, members, and the communities the Y serves.

### Nomination Questions

1. Team/service/program name, site, and three words that describe the team. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*
2. Highlight the reason for nominating this team in this category. What makes their operational or innovative contribution exceptional? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
3. How has the team demonstrated operational excellence and/or innovative thinking in their work? How do they bring the Y's values to life? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
4. Provide specific examples of the team's outstanding achievements or innovations during the submission period. What was the measurable impact on the organisation, staff experience, members or community? *Max 500 words. 20 pts*
5. Manager's recommendation/reference statement. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*

# SOCIAL IMPACT AWARDS

## AWARD CATEGORY

# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES AWARD

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### Eligibility

Any individual, team, service or program of YMCA South Australia that operated between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

### Award Outline

This award recognises an individual or team that has built strong, meaningful partnerships with their community — or delivered above-and-beyond service within a community setting. The recipient will have demonstrated that the Y is more than a service provider; it is a genuine and trusted partner in the communities where it operates.

The nominee's work will have strengthened relationships, increased community connection and made a lasting difference to the people and places they serve. Partnerships may be with community groups, sporting organisations, other non-profits, local or state government, schools or other stakeholders.

### Nomination Questions

1. Nominee/team name, role, program/site, and three words that describe them. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*
2. Highlight the reason for this nomination. What makes this person's or team's community contribution exceptional? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
3. How have they built and sustained meaningful community partnerships or delivered outstanding community service? How do they reflect the Y's values in their community work? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
4. Provide specific examples of the nominee's community impact during the submission period. What partnerships were formed or strengthened, and what was the measurable difference made? *Max 500 words. 20 pts*
5. Manager's recommendation/reference statement. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*

## AWARD CATEGORY

# BEYOND BOUNDARIES AWARD

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### Eligibility

Any individual, team, service or program of YMCA South Australia that operated between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

### Award Outline

This award highlights social impact through innovation, program initiatives and out-of-the-box thinking. The recipient will have pushed the boundaries of what the Y does and how it does it — thinking creatively, taking considered risks, and achieving outcomes that have made a genuine difference to the lives of individuals or communities.

Nominations may relate to a new program or service, an innovative community initiative, a creative approach to a social challenge, or any other example of impact-led thinking that has delivered measurable social benefit. The award celebrates the Y's role as a forward-thinking social enterprise committed to creating lasting change.

### Nomination Questions

1. Nominee/team name, role, program/site, and three words that describe them. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*
2. Highlight the reason for this nomination. What makes this initiative, innovation or approach stand out as going beyond boundaries? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
3. How does this nomination demonstrate innovative or out-of-the-box thinking? What social issue or challenge is it addressing, and why is the approach significant? *Max 250 words. 10 pts*
4. Provide specific examples of the social impact achieved or being achieved during the submission period. What are the measurable outcomes or potential long-term benefits for the community? *Max 500 words. 20 pts*
5. Manager's recommendation/reference statement. *Max 100 words. 5 pts*



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