

Young Innovator Awards

Creating Tomorrow's Innovators

OUR MISSION - To build a culture of innovation in schools to prepare our future workforce with the skills they require to compete in a rapidly changing work environment.

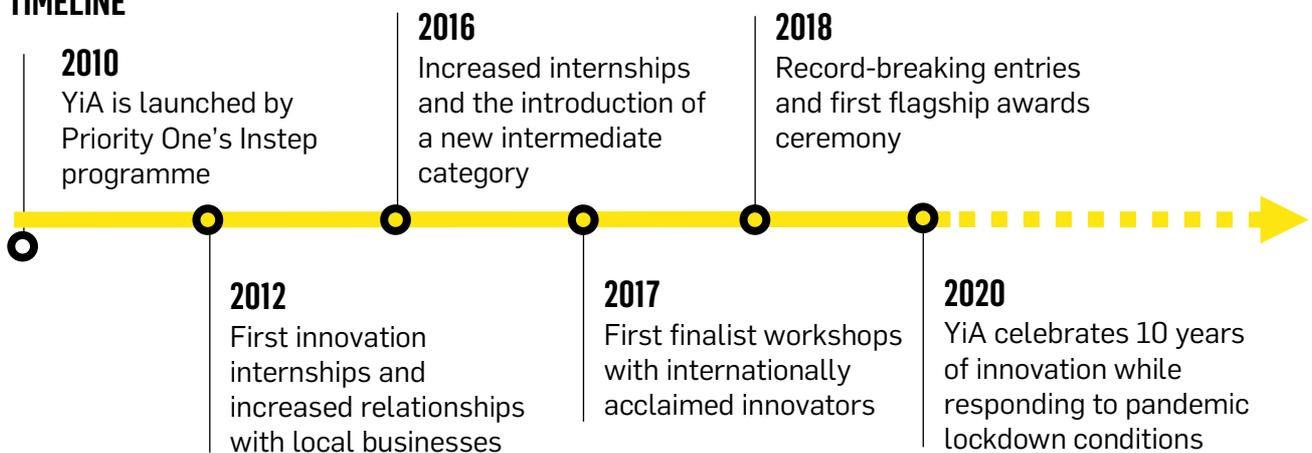
Young Innovator Awards (YiA) is a local awards programme which celebrates innovation amongst students in the Western Bay of Plenty. Students identify a real-life problem and innovate a solution, giving them an opportunity to learn by doing and discover what the process of innovation involves.

We live in a dynamic world. YiA equips students for success in this rapidly evolving work environment by challenging students to build and apply skills for critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication. YiA provides an authentic context to student learning through projects that are founded in students' curiosity and empathy. Through solving real-world problems they have a voice to help drive social and economic change.

Entries are judged by top innovators, both local and international, based on five main categories. Students who stand out earn the opportunities of workshops and internship experiences led by leading innovative business leaders, as well as cash prizes.



TIMELINE



KA MUA, KA MURI: LOOKING BACK IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD

We will continue working to foster a culture of innovation in the Bay, with students, schools and businesses alike. YiA is an example of innovation itself, evolving in response to the changing needs of our region. Looking forward, we will support the integration of project-based learning in schools and align YiA to celebrate projects which demonstrate excellence.

“The mind of an engaged kid is a sponge; a mind that is lectured to is a leaky sieve.”

Tony Wagner, Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for the Innovation Era

YiA is supported by a comprehensive website. Check it out at www.yia.co.nz



OUR NEMESIS: COVID-19

Stopping COVID-19 is a huge challenge and the world's greatest minds are working on this right now. The impact of the virus is creating problems for people all over the world. Think about how it's impacting your life, your parents' lives, your brother or sister's life, even your pet; what problem could you solve for them?

Here are some ideas:

- How might I grow food at home?
- How might we socialise when we can't meet in-person?
- How might we keep young children entertained when we can't go out?
- How might we keep elderly people active and connected without face-to-face visits?

Remember: All current [COVID-19 lockdown restrictions](#) apply

Communicating during lockdown

You may be in isolation but you've never been more connected.

- There are heaps of video tools for team discussion and researching with people: FaceTime, Whatsapp, Messenger, Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts/Meet etc
- There are also loads of great software tools for you to collaborate on documents, share information and discuss ideas: Microsoft Teams, Basecamp and Google Shared Drive etc

Prototyping during lockdown

Prototyping is the process of building your idea so you can share it with someone for feedback - it doesn't need to be the perfect model but rather something you can build quickly to answer a question.

- During lockdown you can't go out to buy special items for your prototype so you'll have to use what's available - get resourceful with the things around you. Try the recycling bin, the Lego pile or the arts and crafts box.

Researching during lockdown

All great innovation starts with great research

- You still need to understand what your customer (who you're designing for) really needs - what's their problem; why does it frustrate them; what are they doing now to solve the problem today?
- When you have an idea, you need to research all the aspects to understand if it'll work - what's the technology; will it be affordable; will it be sustainable?
- Pick up the phone and speak to people, interview the people in your bubble, FaceTime a relative - don't forget that you may be solving someone else's problem so you need to learn from them

Getting feedback during lockdown

Innovation is an iterative process - you build an idea (prototyping), test it with someone who may use or buy it, then improve it based on their feedback. Then you go again: prototype, test, improve, prototype...

- You can't get feedback in-person during lockdown so you have to use the video tools to share your ideas for live feedback
- Or create a video and send it to people for feedback: Whatsapp and Messenger are great for this

Do a shout-out on social media asking for feedback. If you're solving someone's problem, your idea will be more interesting than Netflix!