

MEDIA RELEASE



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ABCN's *ENTREPRENEURS UNEARTHED* PROGRAM WINS GLOBAL BEST AWARD FOR BUSINESS-EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

The **Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN)** has been awarded a Gold Global Best Award for [*Entrepreneurs Unearthed*](#), a competition and mentoring program that aims to promote and cultivate entrepreneurship and build enterprise skills amongst students in public secondary schools.

The award, presented by the [International Partnership Network \(IPN\)](#), is in recognition of the program as a world-class business-education partnership. Peta Magick, Program Development Manager at ABCN, travelled to Houston, Texas, to accept the award on ABCN's behalf. The ceremony was held on October 19 at the NASA Space Centre in Houston.

ABCN is a not-for-profit organisation that partners with business to deliver world-class mentoring programs to school students from low socio-economic schools Australia-wide, preparing them with the skills they'll need for jobs of the future. In 2017 more than 5,500 students participated in ABCN programs.

The *Entrepreneurs Unearthed* program was developed in a unique collaboration between [Australian Business and Community Network \(ABCN\)](#) and partners, Financial Services firm EY, and Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA).

This year's *Entrepreneurs Unearthed* competition was held recently in Sydney and Melbourne, with volunteer mentors from EY and CBA, who worked with students to develop their innovative idea for a business or a product. Over a series of workshops with their mentors the students learnt how to bring their business idea to life and how to pitch their idea to a "Shark Tank" style panel in the final session.

ABCN's Peta Magick facilitated the *Entrepreneurs Unearthed* program which was co-developed with EY and CBA. "The students all brought innovative ideas that were so impressive. Their mentors taught the students communication and presentation skills, and helped them put together a storyboard, so that they were well prepared to pitch their ideas to the panel of business experts."

The 2018 *Entrepreneurs Unearthed* winners in Melbourne were three Year 11 students from Fountain Gate Secondary College. The girls' winning idea was a product they named

the Track Mat, a smart shower mat device that can track a person's water usage in the shower, to help people be more conscious of their water usage.

In Sydney, the winners were another trio of girls, from Georges River College Penshurst Campus. The group pitched their idea for a safety bracelet, ProTech Band, a wristband that can be activated in an emergency, to help young women protect themselves against violence.

Allegra Spender, CEO of ABCN, was on the Sydney judging panel. "The ProTech bracelet is a great idea, and we were particularly impressed with the pitch from the winning students, who developed their ideas with their mentors and delivered a confident pitch."

"Entrepreneurs Unearthed is a great example of the impact ABCN programs have on the students who participate in our mentoring programs, that deliver the skills, confidence, and mindsets they'll need to help them reach their potential in the workplace of the future."

Mentor Vanessa Pignatelli, from CBA, found the experience of mentoring the young students extremely valuable. "It's a good way to give back, in terms of my own work experience and skills, and it's been rewarding to be able to see these students grow. They are really listening and taking on the feedback as they refine their ideas. I loved it."

Mentor Nick Jarman, from EY agrees it was rewarding to give back using his professional experience. "It was a lot of fun working with such enthusiastic kids. They have such great ways of thinking about problems – it is really encouraging and exciting."

Ends.

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Interviewees available:

Allegra Spender, CEO, ABCN

Peta Magick, Program Development Manager, ABCN

Winning Students in either Melbourne or Sydney

Mentors from EY or CBA

