

Responsible AI Impact Challenge (RAIIC 2026)

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1. Background and Rationale

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly transforming how societies learn, work, and solve complex global challenges. However, current educational engagement with AI often focuses on tool usage, rather than critical understanding. Many students interact with generative AI systems daily without fully understanding how they work, the ethical risks they pose, or the role human judgement plays in responsible AI use. The Responsible AI Impact Challenge is designed to address this gap by empowering students to move beyond passive use of AI tools towards critical, ethical, and creative engagement with artificial intelligence. The initiative aims to cultivate a generation of students who are not only capable of using AI technologies but are also able to question, interpret, and shape them responsibly. The programme introduces students to AI through real-world problem solving, ethical reflection, and interdisciplinary collaboration. It encourages participants to explore how AI technologies intersect with social responsibility, creative industries, environmental sustainability, and technological innovation. Students are not expected to have a deep prior understanding of AI, as part of the challenge is for students to build their own knowledge through research.

What Makes This Challenge Unique

Students will develop:

- AI Understanding – how AI systems work
- Ethical Thinking – fairness, bias, responsibility
- Human–AI Collaboration – what humans should decide
- Innovation Skills – solving real-world problems

2. Target Participants

The Challenge is made up of two challenges:

- Primary - targeting Year 6 students
- Secondary - targeting students in Years 7–9

Being the pilot year, we are focusing on schools in South Australia and New South Wales with representation from both metro and regional areas, and a range of public and private sector involvement, with a view to expanding nationally in 2027.

Team Structure

Teams from each participating school will consist of:

- 3–5 students
- One teacher to support the team
- An industry mentor for guidance provided by RAIR

3. Challenge Structure

Primary Submission Format – Year 6

Topic: Explore AI in everyday life

Year 6	Challenge Statement - How might we guide students to responsibly integrate AI into their everyday lives—such as for homework assistance, sports development, and social interaction—while preserving genuine human connection and preventing an over-reliance on technology? Overview - As AI assistants and digital companions become increasingly common in students' daily routines, the boundary between human and machine interaction is blurring. While AI offers highly tailored support for learning and personal development, there is a growing concern about over-reliance and the potential loss of authentic human empathy. Students must critically reflect on how to balance the convenience of AI with the irreplaceable value of real-world human connections and responsible use.
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Teams are requested to create a visual presentation (with voiceover) **OR** a video of up to three (3) minutes to demonstrate a scenario.

At the conclusion of the presentation / role play video, students are asked to provide a reflective explanation / summary via video presentation. This conclusion is to form part of the three-minute presentation.

Secondary Submission Format – Years 7-9

The secondary competition is designed as a two-stage programme that combines digital submission with a live final event.

Stage 1 — Online Submission (Preliminary Round)

Topic: Tackling the use of Generative AI for creating Industry products and services

Years 7- 9	Challenge Statement How might we design an innovative product that uses AI to solve a real-world problem, while ensuring the technology is used responsibly, transparently, and in ways that recognise its limitations and potential impacts on individuals and society? Overview
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	Artificial Intelligence is increasingly embedded in products that shape how we learn, communicate, and make decisions. While it enables powerful features like personalisation and automation, it also raises challenges such as bias, over-reliance, and lack of transparency. In this challenge, students will design and pitch an AI-enabled product that solves a real-world problem, while critically evaluating how AI is used, where human judgement is needed, and what risks or limitations must be addressed. Examples might include an AI nutrition assistant, a mental health support app, a sports training tool, or an AI-powered study buddy. <i>Industry partners may provide specific real-world challenge prompts to guide final solutions.</i>
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Teams are requested to provide a product pitch and a responsible AI breakdown which may be done via a video submission or visual presentation no longer than **five minutes**.

*Students are not expected to submit a technical final product (i.e. the subject of their product pitch) but are encouraged to do so if desired. Additional points **will not** be awarded to groups that do provide a tangible product.*

The pitch should include:

- The problem or issue you are solving
- The AI solution – what does the product/service do
- Where does generative AI fit in
- Responsible AI consideration
 - bias/fairness,
 - private/data use,
 - misinformation or misuse,
 - over reliance on AI
 - accessibility/inclusivity,
 - evidence of the critical thinking in respect of the decision making applied throughout the process of creating their solution.
- Safeguards – how would you make the AI safer or more responsible

Stage 2 — Secondary Final Event

The secondary competition will be judged by an expert panel and the top three (3) finalists in each State will be invited to present at the final in-person events held in Adelaide or Sydney.

Venues & Schedule

The final stage will be divided into two separate one-day events:

- Adelaide** Final (1 Day): Exclusively for Adelaide-area schools.
(Venue: Australian Institute for Machine Learning (AIML), Adelaide).
- Sydney** Final (1 Day): Exclusively for Sydney-area schools.
(Venue TBC).

Final Presentation Format

At their respective local events, the outline will consist of:

- Year 6 winner to deliver a live presentation of their entry
- Year 7-9 finalists to deliver a live presentation their pitch
- Participate in a Q&A discussion with judges following their pitch.
- Industry Keynote Speaker
- An announcement will be made on the day following a short break (catering provided).

4. Registration

Complete an expression of interest form via the link below / available on the website by 9 June.

[RAIIC 2026 Expression of Interest Form](#)

Selected schools will be notified via email on the 10 June.

5. Prizes

- Winners will receive a trophy (Primary and Secondary)
- Primary winners will be asked to present at the Secondary event in their State
- Merchandise donated by our sponsors
- Secondary winners will receive a prize as arranged for their state with industry sponsor (ie. Lockheed Martin excursion or CBA), consisting of a site visit with speakers/staff speaking about career path
- All entries will receive a participation certificate

6. Judging Framework

Judging Timeline – Primary and Secondary

Submissions will close on 3 July.

The judging panel will comprise 4-5 members.

Judging Process – Secondary

There will be two judging panels, each comprising 4-5 members. One judging panel will be allocated to the SA entries, and the second panel will be allocated to the NSW entries.

The panel will select the top three (3) finalists who will be asked to present in person at the final event in their state.

Judging Rubric

Criteria	Weight (Y6 / Y7-9)	Excellent	Good	Developing	Limited
1. Human vs AI Transparency	Yr 6 10% Yrs 7-9 10% Y7-9 Finalist 10%	Clearly and explicitly distinguishes AI-generated content from human input. Demonstrates strong human ownership and decision-making.	Identifies AI vs human contributions, but with some gaps in clarity or detail.	Minimal or unclear distinction between AI and human contributions.	No clear acknowledgement of AI use or human input.
2. Understanding of Responsible AI in Context	Yr 6 30% Yrs 7-9 20% Y7-9 Finalist 20%	Demonstrates clear and accurate understanding of AI in context (Yr 6: everyday life; Yr 7-9: commercial use). Yr 7-9 shows strong application to real-world settings.	Shows general understanding with minor gaps or simplifications.	Basic or partially correct understanding; some misconceptions present.	Little or incorrect understanding of AI or responsible use.
3. Critical Reflection & Ethical Awareness	Yr 6 40% Yrs 7-9 40% Y7-9 Finalist 40%	Insightful analysis of multiple risks (e.g. bias, privacy, over-reliance). Strong connection to real-world impacts. Yr 7-9 demonstrates nuanced thinking and trade-offs.	Identifies relevant risks with some explanation, though depth may be limited.	Mentions risks but with limited explanation or understanding.	Little or no recognition of risks or ethical considerations.
4. Project Execution & Presentation	Yr 6 20% Yrs 7-9 30% Y7-9 Finalist 0%	Highly clear, engaging, and well-structured presentation. Strong communication. Yr 7-9 demonstrates realistic and viable application in an industry context.	Clear and organised presentation with good communication. Some areas could be improved.	Basic presentation; ideas are somewhat unclear or lack structure.	Difficult to understand, poorly organised, or incomplete.
Years 7 – 9 Live Event Finalists Additional Judging Criteria					
5. Live Presentation	15%	Confident, engaging, and well-paced delivery. Clear articulation of ideas with strong audience awareness.	Generally clear delivery with minor issues in pacing or confidence.	Some difficulty communicating ideas clearly; limited engagement.	Unclear, disorganised, or difficult to follow.
6. Q&A Response	15%	Responds thoughtfully and confidently to questions. Demonstrates strong understanding and ability to justify decisions.	Answers questions adequately with some understanding, though depth may be limited.	Basic or partially correct responses; difficulty explaining reasoning.	Unable to respond effectively or demonstrates limited understanding.

7. Key Dates

19 May	Launch
19 May	Expression of interest opens
9 June	Expression of interest closes
10 June	Notification of acceptance sent to schools
10 June	Entries open
10 June	Allocation of Mentors
31 July	Entries close
3-14 August	Judging period
19 August	Winners announced (Primary) Finalists announced (Secondary)
3 September (TBC)	Live event (Adelaide)
10 September (TBC)	Live event (Sydney)

8. Future Development

The Responsible AI Impact Challenge has potential to grow into a national AI education initiative with:

- expanded participation across Australian states
- integration with school AI curricula
- annual innovation challenges.

The long-term vision is to establish a sustainable national platform for responsible AI education and youth innovation.

Contact Information

This is an initiative of the Responsible AI Research (RAIR) Centre is a landmark collaboration of experts from Australia's national science agency, CSIRO and [Adelaide University](#), in partnership with the [South Australian Government](#).

Contact email for further information: raircentre@adelaide.edu.au