



# **IDEAS COLLIDER**

## **60 MINUTES TO SAVE THE WORLD**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**NEWCASTLE**  
AUSTRALIA

**I2N** Integrated  
Innovation  
Network



## BACKGROUND

A 2016 study by the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) analysed millions of job advertisements and revealed a growing demand for enterprise skills, sometimes referred to as 'soft' or 'transferable' skills. A well-developed range of enterprise skills, such as critical thinking, presentation skills, creativity, problem solving, teamwork, communication and financial literacy, allows people to navigate complex and increasingly disrupted industries and professions.

FYA call these skills the 'New Basics' and they are critical not just for young Australians, but all of us engaged in today's workforce. Those that develop and practice these skills are more innovative and adaptable and help businesses become more agile and increase their strategic competitive advantage.

Jobs of the future demand enterprise skills 70% more than jobs of the past and no industry or sector is left wanting for them. The growing demand for these transferable skills means employers are willing to pay more for candidates who can demonstrate they have them, in addition to the technical skills they have acquired as part of formal education or on-the-job training.

Engaging a diverse range of people curious about innovation and entrepreneurship is also critical for the development of a pipeline of entrepreneurship ready participants, particularly when an innovation ecosystem is at its early stages of development.

In 2016 the University of Newcastle's Integrated Innovation Network (I2N) developed Ideas Collider, an open source event series that provides participants with the opportunity to work within a mixed team of 3-5 people to develop a potential solution to a challenge in 60 minutes before pitching it to a panel of judges. Ideas Collider builds enterprise skills in a fun and judgement-free environment and is a great primer to hackathons and business pitch competitions.

The I2N has delivered dozens of Ideas Collider events with participants working in diverse teams that include high school students, academics, CEOs and entrepreneurs. Each event comprises approximately 6 teams to keep total pitching time under 30-minutes. It is fast-paced and designed to encourage comfort in the development and presentation of imperfect ideas. It is consistently cited as one of the most engaging program offerings of the I2N. There is no pre-requisite skills or interests required to participate and is not an onerous time commitment. Also, the pizza is free.

[www.newcastle.edu.au/i2n](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/i2n)



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# IDEAS COLLIDER RUNSHEET

2.5 hour event | Approximately 24-30 participants (5-6 teams) | Two event volunteers | Three judges

DURATION	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
8-10 weeks prior	<b>Event coordination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Book venue</li> <li>Confirm event theme</li> <li>Email and confirm judges x 3</li> <li>Develop event collateral</li> <li>Set-up ticket booking platform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead organiser</li> </ul>
5PM (1-hour prior)	<b>Venue setup</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise seating</li> <li>Set out catering</li> <li>Name tags completed</li> <li>Judging matrix printed</li> <li>Stationery (butcher's paper, post its, sharpies)</li> <li>Judges thank you gift</li> <li>AV check</li> <li>Set up Sli.do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 2</li> <li>Volunteer 2</li> </ul>
6PM (10 minutes)	<b>Doors open</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendees arrive</li> <li>Nametags assigned</li> <li>Food and beverage service</li> <li>Judges arrive &amp; briefed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 2</li> </ul>
6:10PM (10 minutes)	<b>Welcome and intro</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intro to Ideas Collider</li> <li>Order of event</li> <li>Challenge brief announced</li> </ul> <b>Attendees break into teams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocate teams</li> <li>Provide handout with challenge brief and requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 2</li> </ul>
6:20PM (1 hour)	<b>Brainstorming commences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Countdown clock</li> <li>Announce time remaining                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 30 mins remaining (wrap up idea)</li> <li>» 20 minutes remaining (pitch plan)</li> <li>» 10 mins remaining (pitch practice)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Collect team names and enter into Sli.do</li> <li>Roam, providing advice if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 2</li> <li>Judges</li> </ul>
7:20PM (5 minutes)	<b>Brainstorming concludes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request teams reconvene at presentation area</li> <li>Judges seated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Judges</li> </ul>
7:25PM (30 minutes approx)	<b>Pitches commence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams pitch by alphabetical order</li> <li>Timekeeping to 3-minutes per team</li> <li>Questions from judges for 2-minute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer 1</li> <li>Volunteer 2</li> <li>Judges</li> </ul>
7:55PM (5 minutes)	<b>Judges deliberate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convene away from participants for deliberation</li> </ul> <b>People's Choice votes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants vote for People's Choice via Sli.do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Judges</li> <li>Volunteer 1</li> </ul>
8:00PM (5 minutes)	<b>Winner announcements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Judges' Choice announced</li> <li>People's Choice revealed via Sli.do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Judge/s</li> <li>Volunteer 1</li> </ul>
8:05PM (25 minutes)	<b>Networking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food and beverage service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All</li> </ul>
8:30PM	<b>Events ends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers</li> </ul>



## **EVENT TEAM**

The majority of your Ideas Collider team will be staff and/or volunteers. Whether they're work colleagues, students or a group of talented friends, it's important to find the right people for the job.

### **LEAD ORGANISER**

The lead organiser is critical to the delivery and experience of Ideas Collider. As the face of your event, this person will open the event, navigate participants through team formation and pitching, then warmly guide through to event close. The lead organiser manages the volunteers. This person is also responsible for approaching and confirming judges, room bookings, catering and equipment


### **EVENT STAFF / VOLUNTEERS**

Search for at least 2 people who can take ownership of certain primary tasks. They should have both the skills and the bandwidth to fulfil their role. Prioritise bringing in organised, self-managed and hard-working individuals. At a stretch, the lead organiser can also act as one of the event staff / volunteers.

Remember, if you don't have event planning experience, try to recruit team members with that kind of experience. They can help provide important insights and help you deliver a smooth-running event.

### **DESIGNER**

It's important your Ideas Collider event has a strong presence online, including social media, as an event listing and other promotional channels. Having a designer develop your event collateral to help spread the word is worthwhile. Perhaps a student could take this on a work integrated learning project.



# VENUE

Choose a space that suits the number of participants. Below are some guiding principles to use when it comes to choosing your space.

- **Aim for practicality and comfort** – it's important to balance the size and features of your space with the size of your audience. Participants are working in teams of 4-5 people so ensure there are enough horizontal surfaces to facilitate teams.
- **Keep it spread out but visible** – the venue will set the feel and accessibility of your event. Make sure teams aren't hiding around corners and up staircases so that mentors are unable to find them.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT SPACE:

- Ability to project or display event holding slide
- Room for event host and teams to present
- Room for teams to work – benches and tables in a classroom or event space
- Room for food and beverage service
- Conveniently located bathrooms
- Storage for personal belongings

## PRESENTATION AREA

Your participants, who are also your audience, will be impacted by the setup of your presentation area. While teams are not expected to include a slide deck as part of their presentation it's important to have a space from which presentations are delivered. Here are a few considerations for your event:

- **Keep your Ideas Collider logo on display** – your stage should display the Ideas Collider event holding slide with your event name visible on screen.
- **Consider the view** – position your event host, presenters and screen so that there's a good view for the audience.
- **Reduce the clutter** - power cables, multiple laptops and projectors will distract the audience. For your guests to give their full attention it's important to keep these things out of sight and out of mind.

## SCREENS AND PROJECTOR SETUP

The screen the event host uses should be placed to be visible to everyone in the audience.

- **Screen presentation** – use a screen with a 16:9 aspect ratio, and that is large enough to display text to the back row of the audience.
- **Screen clock** – the screen will also be used to display the countdown clock for teams during their sixty-minute brainstorming session

- **Sli.do setup** – Sli.do is our voting platform of choice for the People's Choice Award. Have this setup before the event commences, then enter in team names during the 60-minute brainstorming session.

## SEATING ARRANGEMENT

If you are creating your own seating arrangements, think carefully about the comfort of your audience. Make sure that everyone can see the screen and can navigate through their seat rows, as each team must invariably get up to present their idea.

## WORKSHOP SPACE SETUP

Teams will need adequate desk and seating space to brainstorm their solution and develop their pitch as a team. This space should be adjacent the seated area and stage, with tables suitable for teams of four to five seated people.

Also provide a stationery station with butchers paper, Post-it Notes, pens and Sharpies.

## SOCIAL AREA

Networking is an important part of Ideas Collider. Participants should have adequate space to talk and discuss amongst themselves and with judges before and after the event. Usually this is an open space near the food and drink station.

# BRANDING AND PROMOTION

## EVENT COLLATERAL

Consider the event collateral that will be required to promote the event on social media and other digital platforms. Be sure to include 'Ideas Collider' and the challenge theme as a minimum, plus the date, time and location if required.

## EVENT LISTING AND TICKETING

Large, diverse groups are great for Ideas Collider so promote widely and keep the registration simple. A ticketing platform such as Eventbrite is useful for promoting and registering your participants as it's a free, single source for sharing:

- who is organising the event
- what the event is about
- when and where the event is taking place
- to a Facebook page.

Here's an example of an event listing for a past Ideas Collider:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/ideas-collider-for-chronic-pain-tickets-58342073713>

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Suggested post copy:

Ideas Collider is your chance to work with diverse teams, build communication, problem-solving and presentation skills in a fun and judgment-free environment. Join in to help solve very real problems at a global scale. Register at [insert rego link].

Ideas Collider kicks off this Tuesday evening! Come experience startup life and get involved in your local startup community. Free to attend but registration essential. Register at [insert rego link].

Ideas Collider is your chance to work with diverse teams, build communication, problem-solving and presentation skills in a fun and judgment-free environment. It is the perfect chance to learn about the world of hackathons without having to give up an entire weekend and the best part is you don't need to have any specific skills to enter! Register at [insert rego link].

At Ideas Collider we bring together students, researchers, industry experts and community, split you into mixed teams of 4-5 people. We then give you a challenge to come up with a solution for in 60 minutes and then pitch it to the audience and a panel of expert judges to win some great prizes! Did we mention pizza is on us? Register at [insert rego link].





## CHOOSING A CHALLENGE

Your challenge should be engaging, specific and relevant to the participants. It should test each member individually, but as a group be solvable as the team's diversity and skills are discussed and applied.

- **Engaging** – people like to solve problems. Your challenge should spark participant's imaginations and allow them to think outside the box.
- **Specific** – in order to think outside the box the edges must be clearly defined. Articulate in your challenge what the problem is and give real-world examples of how it is affecting people.
- **Relevant** – what critical issues are big thinkers and innovators talking about in your local community? What is top of mind for people in their day-to-day lives?

Suggested Ideas Collider challenges:

- Killer Robots
- Aged Care
- Refugees & Migrants
- Active Travel
- Social Housing
- Securing Food & Water
- Chronic Pain
- Controlling Mosquitoes
- Male Parental Leave Participation
- Disaster Resilience

### Example of a Challenge Brief

#### KILLER ROBOTS

Many prominent leaders in the artificial intelligence community, including Elon Musk, have recently urged the UN to ban killer robots.

What technologies and businesses could be built around this to prevent an 'I, Robot' like scenario from occurring? Consider the legal, social and technological implications of your idea.

You have 60 minutes to develop a solution to this problem and deliver a 3-minute presentation that you would present to a potential investor or government entity to implement your idea. Remember, investment drives technology forward so commercialisation of your idea is an important aspect to consider.

In your 3-minute presentation, you will need to tell us:

- What is your solution to this problem?
- Who are your customers and why would they want this product / service?
- What is unique about your solution?
- What is your business model? How will you generate revenue?
- Who is on your team and what is it about their backgrounds/experience that adds value?

# EVENT DETAILS

## JUDGES

Be sure to allow plenty of time to request and confirm judges at your event. Normally judges are individuals from industry and academia who are experts in the challenge you have set and/or commercialisation. This is so they can gently nudge teams along by asking probing questions as part of their mentoring and judging duty to tease out aspects of a solution that perhaps require more thought by the team.

### Suggested invitation to potential judges

Dear [Name],

By way of introduction, I work for [organisation].

On [date] we will be hosting Ideas Collider, a meet-up between students, researchers and members of our community hosted by [organisation].

At Ideas Collider people with diverse backgrounds come together to develop their enterprise skills by working in teams on potential solutions to real-world problems. After an initial meet and greet attendees are split into teams and asked to come up with a solution to a technology related challenge in under 60 minutes. After a speed-brainstorming session, teams then have 3-minutes to pitch their solution with the winning teams announced by our guest judges.

We would like to extend an invitation to you as one of our guest judges. Ideas Collider is a valuable opportunity for attendees to gain insight from your experience.

You would be required to mentor teams during their 60-minute brainstorm session and then judge each team on their pitch.

If you'd like to take up this opportunity, please confirm your interest by reply email to: [email].

Kindest regards,

[signature]

## REGISTRATION

Make registration easy and friendly – print out an excel spreadsheet with names so you can check them off as they arrive. If you can do this digitally with a device, even better. Eventbrite has an 'organiser app' which allows you to do this.

## NAMETAGS

Participants, judges and organisers wear large, easy-to-read badges that make it easy to start conversations. Create personalized badges incorporating your logo and design, as well as each attendee's name. If you run Ideas Collider regularly you can add the total number of occasions a person has participated. Those with a high number should be encouraged to introduce themselves to someone with a number '1'.

## FOOD AND DRINK

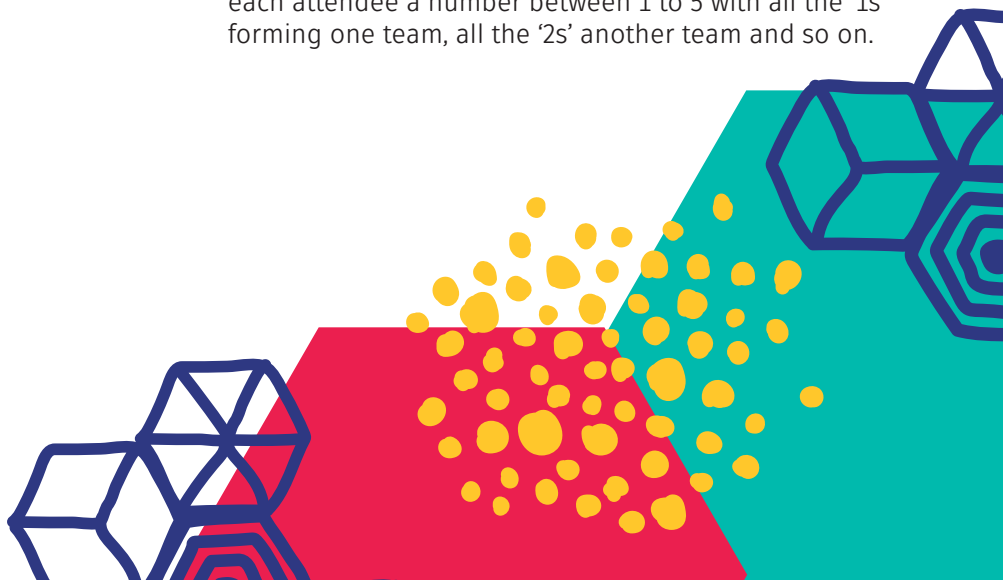
A lack of food is often the biggest critique any event will get, so make sure attendees are properly hydrated and fed. Pizza is always a crowd-pleaser. Just be sure to cater for dietary requirements by adding this question to your registration information.

## NETWORKING

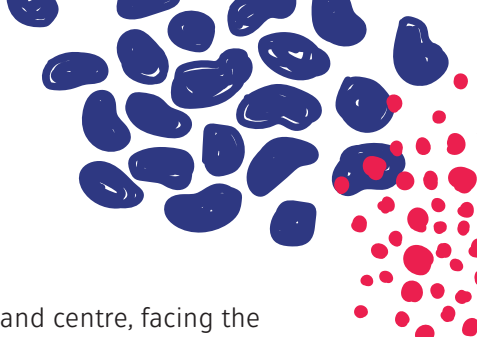
Ideas Collider is not just about solving a challenge - it is also the people you meet. Give participants ample time to interact with each other and engage in event activities.

## TEAM FORMATION

Ideally, you will want to have at least 5-6 teams with 4-5 people per team. How you split your participants into teams is up to you but we strongly suggest you keep your teams interdisciplinary and diverse. Ideas Collider works best when majority of team members do not know each other. An easy way to do this is to allocate each attendee a number between 1 to 5 with all the '1s' forming one team, all the '2s' another team and so on.







## BRAINSTORMING

Once teams are formed and participants are seated at tables around the venue, disseminate the challenge brief. Each team can be provided butchers paper, Post-it Notes and coloured markers for idea sketching and presentation planning, if they choose so.

As the Ideas Collider tagline states, teams will have 'sixty minutes to save the world'. In that time each team will need to understand the challenge, sketch their thoughts on the butchers paper, come up with a solution and then formulate a pitch..

After 5-10 minutes, mentors should travel around the room to each team and see how they are going. Some teams will be happy to receive guidance while others are more reluctant. It is up to each mentor to figure this out as they go.

Announcements are made at 30, 20 and ten minutes to go. At twenty minutes remaining, teams should be working on their pitch and by ten minutes, refining and discussing who will be saying what on stage.

## PITCHING

Each team's work during the sixty-minute ideation session will culminate in a pitch to the event judges. Pitches last three minutes and should aim to answer the following:

- What is your solution to this problem?
- Who are your customers and why would they want this product / service?
- What is unique about your solution?
- What is your business model? How will you make money?
- Who is on your team and what is it about their backgrounds/experience that adds value?

Our preference is for all team members to participate in pitching to help build this critical skill. Keep pitches to exactly three minutes. Teams are not required to develop slides for their pitch, rather each team member addresses the criteria verbally. A short time following each pitch for questions by judges is also recommended.



## JUDGING

Judges typically sit front and centre, facing the presenting area. As well as a judge, they will also be the perceived investor, customer or channel partner and each team will pitch according to their need.

Each judge will need a Judging Matrix (appendix A) and a pen. Each team is assessed against:

- **Problem/Solution Fit** – How well their solution fits the problem they have identified.
- **Innovation** – Is the solution a new approach or an improvement on an existing approach?
- **Presentation** – How well the team articulates their idea to the audience including participation by all team members.

As per the Judging Matrix, each team are assigned a score out of ten for each criterion, with scores tallied to an overall out of thirty.

After each team has presented, judges leave the room for a few minutes to deliberate on their scoring. Once returned, a judge provides general feedback and announce the winner.

## PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Giving participants the opportunity to vote for their favourite presentation is a great way to keep everyone engaged and have another chance at a prize and recognition. We utilise Sli.do as a free solution to crowdsource votes. Before the event, set up the Sli.do vote for People's Choice and once teams have formed, go around the room asking for team names to add to Sli.do. Once the Judges' Choice is announced the People's Choice can be revealed.

## PRIZES

Prizes can vary by audience, location and sponsor of your Ideas Collider. A t-shirt, free tickets to an upcoming course, workshop or seminar work well.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Newcastle acknowledges Sahil Harriram and Siobhan Curran in the development and deployment of Ideas Collider. Thanks to Richard Berry for the development of this document.



# JUDGING SHEET

TEAM NAME	NOTES	PROBLEM/ SOLUTION FIT MARK/10	INNOVATION MARK/10	PRESENTATION MARK/10	TOTAL TOTAL/30

