

YMCA Geelong Policy – Rewards, Recognition and Celebrations Policy



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Policy Number	Date Approved	Date Last Amended	Status
YG 216-O	12/02/2026	21/01/2026	APPROVED

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the framework for recognising, rewarding, and celebrating employee and volunteer achievements, milestones, and contributions and farewells. It aims to foster a culture of appreciation, motivation, and inclusivity across the organisation.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees of The Young Men’s Christian Association of Geelong Inc. and related entities and Geelong and District YMCA Youth Services. For the purposes of this document, we refer to these entities as the Y.

3. POLICY

3.1 Policy Principles

- **Timeliness:** Recognition should be prompt and relevant to the achievement.
- **Inclusivity:** All employees should have equal access to recognition opportunities.
- **Transparency:** Criteria for rewards and recognition must be clear and consistently applied.
- **Alignment:** Recognition should reflect the organisation’s values and culture.

3.2 Types of Recognition

Rewarding employees and volunteers can be celebrated in many ways, which enables us to create a culture of worth and recognition.

3.2.1 Informal Recognition

Informal recognition is spontaneous, personal, and often peer-driven. It’s essential for reinforcing positive behaviours and building a culture of appreciation. Some examples of informal recognition can be seen as;

- **Verbal Praise:** A manager or colleague expressing appreciation during a meeting or one-on-one.
- **Thank-You Notes:** Handwritten or emailed messages acknowledging effort or support.
- **Peer Shout-Outs:** Recognition shared in team meetings, or using the Employment Hero feedback function.

3.2.2 Formal Recognition

Formal recognition is structured, often tied to performance metrics, and typically includes tangible rewards. It's ideal for celebrating sustained excellence or significant achievements.

- Monthly or Quarterly – Shining Star Awards
- Annual Awards – Staff-nominated Awards

3.2.3 Y Geelong Annual Awards Categories

Category	Description	Recipients	Frequency of Recognition
The Y Welcomer (Employee or Volunteer)	Outstanding customer service is vital to the Y's ongoing success. This award celebrates an individual who consistently goes above and beyond to serve our customers with care and professionalism. Their dedication, friendly approach, and commitment to helping others create a positive experience for everyone, making the Y a welcoming place for all.	1 Individual	Not mandatory
Caring Vibes (Employee or volunteer)	This award celebrates someone who always looks out for others, making mental health and well-being a top priority. By checking in on friends, spreading positivity, and creating a supportive vibe, this person shows how much caring can truly make a difference.	1 individual	Not mandatory
Inclusion Champion (Employee or Volunteer)	This award recognises someone who stands up for diversity and inclusion at the Y, making sure everyone feels welcome, respected, and valued—no matter who they are.	1 individual	Not mandatory
Inspiration Igniter (Employee or Volunteer)	This award goes to someone who has inspired children and young people this year to believe in themselves and reach their full potential. Whether it's cheering others on, helping friends try new things, being a positive role model, or encouraging everyone to keep going when things get tough, this person shows what it means to lift others up.	1 individual	Mandatory

Category	Description	Recipients	Frequency of Recognition
Leadership Excellence (Employee)	This award celebrates an outstanding leader at the Y who has truly inspired others through their passion, vision, and commitment this year. With a positive attitude and a drive to make a difference, this leader brings out the best in their team, encourages everyone to aim higher, and turns challenges into opportunities for growth. Their leadership lights the way, showing what's possible when you lead with heart, courage, and a belief in others.	1 Individual	Not mandatory
Child Safety Award (Employee)	This team member is committed to making sure every child and young person feels safe and is safe—at the Y, with their families, and in their communities. They work to empower, support, and include everyone, helping each young person know they matter and have a voice.	1 Individual	Mandatory
Vision Impact Award (Employee or Volunteer)	This person has truly stood out this year through their dedication and achievements in one or more of the Y's Vision 2030 pillars—whether by supporting community wellbeing, creating meaningful work, helping build a sustainable planet, or working towards a just world. Their efforts have made a real difference and inspired others to get involved.	1 individual	Not mandatory

3.3 Milestone Celebrations

Celebrating personal and professional milestones strengthens employee loyalty and emotional connection to the organisation. As outlined in the table in Clause 5. Monetary value must fit within the budgeting parameters.

3.4 Staff Engagement Activities: Rewards

The Y creates connections through social events and activities, such as, but not limited to. There may be prizes awarded at the discretion of the manager.

- Active April
- Footy Tipping Competition
- Melbourne Cup Sweep

Please see table below for monetary spending values for gifts

3.5 Rewards Framework

The Rewards framework provides guidance on the reward and recognition scheme and provides an approximate value that can be applied to ensure consistency across the organisation and business units.

Rewards can be in the form of Gifts, Gift Vouchers, Products or Hero Points.

Category	Descriptions/Examples	Frequency	Approval Required	\$ Value
Informal	verbal praise, thank-you email, EH feedback, shout-out	when necessary	nil	Nil
Shining Star	Celebrate an employee's great work	Monthly or Quarterly	Manager per site	\$30 (Monthly) \$50 (Quarterly)
Annual Staff and Volunteer Awards	See the table above for the Awards 10 awards	Annually in October/November	CEO	Corporate Services Budget Trophies
Traineeship Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor Leadership • Business Administration • Sport and Recreation • School Aged Education and Care 	On completion of Certificates	Manager	Morning Tea or Lunch
Work Anniversaries	3 Years of Service	As per the monthly report	Manager	Certificate and Name Badge
	5 Years of Service	As per the monthly report	Manager	Certificate, Name Badge with years of service, and Milestone Pin
	10 Years of Service	As per the monthly report	Manager	Certificate, Name Badge with years of service, and Milestone Pin Morning Tea or Lunch

				Gift to the value of \$ (ie, value of Flowers \$60 - \$80)
	15 Years of Service	As per the monthly report	Manager	Certificate, Name Badge with years of service and Milestone Pin Morning Tea or Lunch Gift to the value of \$ (ie value of Flowers \$100 - \$120)
	20 Years of Service	As per the monthly report	Manager	Certificate, Name Badge with years of service and Milestone Pin Morning Tea or Lunch Gift to the value of \$ (ie value of Flowers \$120 - \$200)
	25 Years + of Service	As per the monthly report	Manager	Certificate, Name Badge with years of service and Milestone Pin Morning Tea or Lunch Gift to the value of \$ (ie value of Flowers \$the discretion of the manager)

Campaigns	Examples are but not limited to; Active April, AFL Footy Tipping, AFL Grand Final, Melbourne Cup Sweep,	Annually during April	CEO	\$ Site Budgets
Birth of a child	Parents at the Y who welcome a new baby	When required	Manager	\$ Site Budget \$ Site Budget (ie, value of Flowers \$60 - \$80)
Farewells	Employees who have completed 7 years or more with the Y Geelong	When required	Manager	\$ Site Budget \$ Site Budget (ie, value of Flowers \$60 - \$80)
Tragedies such as a Death	Families at the Y who have lost an immediate family member	When required	Manager	\$ Site Budget (ie, value of Flowers \$60 - \$80)

3.6 Celebration Guidelines

- Celebrations should be inclusive and respectful of age, gender, cultural background, and held in an environment that is safe and inclusive for all abilities. This also includes ensuring catering is inclusive of dietary requirements.
- Budget allocations for team events must be approved by managers.
- Remote employees should be given the opportunity to be included via virtual celebrations or mailed gifts where possible.
- Celebrations must comply with Work, Health and Safety Legislative Requirements and Regulations. This will require risk assessments to be completed before events that pose a risk to the health and safety of our people.

3.7 Communication

All recognition programs and celebration events will be communicated via internal channels such as email, Employment Hero, posters in staff rooms and in team meetings.

4. DEFINITIONS

Rewards	An employee reward is a tangible or non-monetary benefit, given to an employee to acknowledge their achievements, motivate higher performance, and foster loyalty
Recognition	Employee recognition is a company's formal or informal way of acknowledging and appreciating an employee's efforts, behaviour, or achievements that support the organisation's goals and values
Discretion	The freedom for managers to decide, using their budget

	parameters as the guide.
Milestone	An employee milestone is a significant event, achievement, or stage of development in an employee's career or personal life
Hero Points	Hero Points from the Employment Hero platform is a digital reward credit, earned for achievements, milestones, or outstanding performance, and can be redeemed for gift cards, discounts, or other items through the Employment Hero Work Store, acting as a form of non-cash recognition and a motivator.

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Department/Area	Role/Responsibility
CEO, COO, Managers, Directors and Coordinators	Identify and nominate employees for recognition; ensure timely acknowledgment. Ensure Milestone Celebrations are offered to staff reaching the milestone.
People and Culture Team	Administer formal programs, track milestones, and coordinate celebrations.
Employees	Participate in annual Staff and Volunteer award nominations, peer recognition, and contribute to a positive culture.

6. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually. Employees are encouraged to provide feedback to improve recognition practices.

7. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (LINKS TO PROCEDURES, LEGISLATION, FORMS, WORK PRACTICES)

YG 128-G Risk Management Policy

YG 184-G Occupational Health and Safety Policy

YG 106-G Code of Conduct Policy

Work Instruction - People and Culture - Catering for staff events – Allergen Control (YMCA HR\YMCA Geelong\Operations & Program (Sites) - Documents\HR\Work Instructions)

8. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Approved by: SLT

Meeting number and date: 12/02/2026

Reviewed: 11/12/2025

Review date: 12/02/2029

Policy Owner: Adele Andrew – People and Culture Director

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Amendment history:

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
V1	12/08/2025	Adele Andrew	Draft Policy, Approved
V2	21/01/2026	Adele Andrew	Clause: 3.5 Rewards Framework Farewells

As Adopted by the YMCA Geelong on 12/02/2026



Shona Eland
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