The Big Idea
Competition – Student Opportunity

About ‘The Big Idea’
The Big Idea is a social enterprise concept and planning competition for undergraduate students at participating universities.

Flinders University is participating in 2013 and students from across the university are invited to participate in the competition.

Not only are there great prizes to be won, but participation will provide a unique learning experience and could even earn you credits towards your degree. Participation in the competition offers an opportunity to gain a wealth of “real world” experience and to meet and connect with many high profile business and community leaders. The competition is about creating solutions to real life social issues.

The Big Idea is an initiative of The Big Issue (http://www.thebigissue.org.au/), Australia’s longest standing and most significant social enterprise.

The Big Issue is an independent, not-for-profit organization that delivers solutions to help homeless, marginalized and disadvantaged people to enable them to positively change their lives.

The Big Idea is a national competition, conducted annually, launched by The Big Issue in 2012. The competition is between teams of undergraduate students from participating universities. It requires students to develop an idea for a social enterprise and prepare a business plan for that enterprise. The ultimate objective is to try and develop an idea which could go on to be as successful as The Big Issue in helping disadvantaged people in the community.

The competition offers students unprecedented access to social entrepreneurs, Australian ‘Thought Leaders’ and experts across a variety of business sectors, whose guidance and advice will assist students to develop their ideas and produce high quality business plans for viable social enterprises.
For a short promotional video on The Big Idea competition see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWhYBx_ALXg&feature=c4-overview&list=UUxPVHi_Na7HkrBQy4Ts8AhA

(This video is part of the “thebigissueaustralia’s” You Tube site, at which you will find other relevant videos, including presentations by last year’s Thought Leaders.)

**Some Competition Details**
The competition will be conducted across Semester 2. Registration is open now and students must register prior to the start of the semester (see below for registration information). All business plans must be completed and submitted by October 31 and each team will need to make a presentation of their concept and plan to the Flinders University Judging Panel in either week 12 or week 13 of the semester (on a date to be set). The team of Flinders’ students judged to have presented the best concept and business plan will become a semi-finalist in the competition, competing against teams from other universities, from which The Big Idea Judging Team will determine the finalists.

However, more than one Flinders team can make the semi-finals (and ultimately the final), as there is also opportunity for “wild-card’ entries into the semi-finals.

The members of all of the teams chosen for the final have the opportunity to travel to Melbourne to present their idea and plan to the Judges and to attend the Awards Dinner (which is currently scheduled for Tuesday 3rd December).

**What is a ‘Social Enterprise’?**
A social enterprise is a business that operates on a not-for-profit basis and whose primary aim is to in some way assist disadvantaged groups (or a particular disadvantaged group) in the community. A social enterprise is not however a charity, since the definition of a social enterprise is that its activities are such that it is able to be self-funding.

*Examples of social enterprises will be provided in BUSN3026 (see below).*

**How to Participate**
Flinders University is offering students a number of options for participating in the competition. For all of these options you can enter individually or as a team. Individual entry is particularly encouraged as this will provide the opportunity to meet and to learn from fellow students across different disciplines. The Flinders University Big Idea Coordinator (Kevin Kirchner) will help form teams where required. If you wish to form your own team it is suggested that the optimal size is 4 people. But teams of up to 6 people are allowed within the competition rules.
Option 1
Students can participate by enrolling in BUSN3026 Business Planning for New Ventures in semester 2. This option may enable you to gain 4.5 units of credit towards your degree. To check on this you need to check the requirements of your degree to see whether or not this topic can count towards your degree (eg is an elective space available?); or talk to your Student Program advisor (or equivalent).

Students are strongly encouraged to utilise this option, as it will provide a high level of support and hence is likely to lead to a better learning experience and enable students to produce a better end product than if working independently.

The option of participating in the competition via BUSN3026, however, is available only to students who have already completed at least 36 units of study. Ideally, students should have completed at least 72 units of study.

You will likely need to apply for a pre-requisite waiver to enroll in BUSN3026. When enrolling simply indicate that you are participating in this topic in order to compete in The Big Idea competition and a pre-requisite waiver will be automatically granted.

Students who participate in BUSN3026 as a vehicle for developing a business plan for The Big Idea competition will not be expected to have the same level of specialist business knowledge as Business students who are undertaking this topic as part of their degree.

Students considering undertaking BUSN3026 as a vehicle for participating in The Big Idea should be aware that class attendance is a required component of this topic and that assessment criteria apply. Classes will be held Mondays and Wednesdays 4pm to 5.50pm.

Option 2
Option 2 is to participate in the competition independently, that is, to form your own team (with the help of the Flinders Uni Big Idea coordinator if required) and to undertake the exercise as an extra-curriculum activity. The obvious downsides of this approach are that you would not gain any credit towards your degree and there would not be the same level of support available compared to that that would be available if you were participating in the competition via a topic (such as BUSN3026).

This option, however, may be attractive to students who have a real passion about a particular social issue but do not have time or the room within their degree to undertake an additional 4.5 unit topic.

Students who wish to work independently will still have access to the FLO site for the Big Idea and to all of material to be provided by the Big Issue (ie via their website, webinars and other).

Students who wish to work independently still need to register via the university, however. See below for registration information.

Other Options for Participation
Some Schools are investigating the possibility of students participating in the competition via undertaking a complementary topic within their School or via undertaking a complementary WIL placement. You will need to check if your School is considering such options (ie if this has not been indicated in the covering email to this notice).
Registration and Further Information
All registration is via the Flinders University Coordinator for The Big Idea competition, Kevin Kirchner (kevin.kirchner@flinders.edu.au).

You should express your interest in participating as soon as possible, via email. This is the first step in registering for the competition.

In expressing your interest you should indicate the following:

- whether you are intending to participate via enrollment in BUSN3026, as a member of an independent team (ie outside any topic), or via some other arrangement with your School.

- whether you are looking to join a team or whether you are already part of a team (or are currently putting a team together)
  - if you are entering as a team please list all team members

- please indicate the degree(s) that you (and, if applicable, your team members) are undertaking and student number(s)

Students who express an interest in the competition on an individual basis will be allocated to a team on a consultative basis, rather than randomly. That is, you will have an opportunity to choose who you work with.

If you are intending to participate in The Big Idea as part of undertaking BUSN3026 then please go ahead and enroll in BUSN3026. Please do so asap.

All further enquiries should be directed to:
Kevin Kirchner
Discipline Leader, Entrepreneurship
Flinders Business School
kevin.kirchner@flinders.edu.au