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BONNIE-MAI SMITH WINS THE 2026 SENATE SHJ FCF SCHOLARSHIP AT RMIT, AUSTRALIA



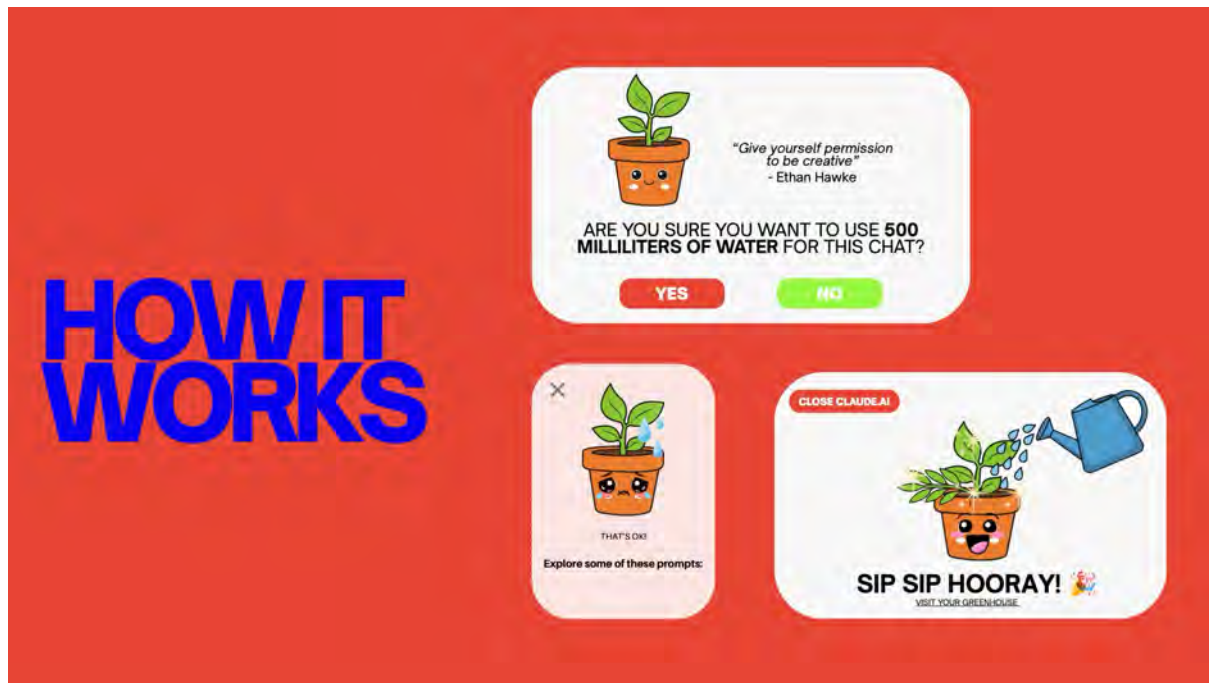
(Melbourne, Australia, 28th August 2026) — SenateSHJ and the Future Communicators Foundation (FCF) are proud to announce **Bonnie-Mai Smith** as the winner of the **2026 SenateSHJ Future Communicators Foundation Scholarship**. [SenateSHJ](#) sponsors a yearly **\$2500 AUD** FCF Scholarship for senior undergraduates enrolled in Public Relations or Digital Communication at [RMIT University](#), Melbourne. The winning recipient also receives one year of mentorship from a senior member of SenateSHJ to support the implementation of their project.

The SenateSHJ FCF Scholarship is focused around a yearly theme addressing PR strategies for sustainability, with 2026 focusing on “**Catalysing Awareness of AI’s Climate Impacts.**” Aspiring communicators are tasked with designing an inventive communications campaign that not only raises awareness of the theme, but motivates people to act.



Bonnie-Mai Smith won for her “**Thirsty for Prompts?**” campaign that “incites students to identify both the benefits and environmental costs of AI while inspiring them to challenge their own creativity, curiosity, and independent thinking.”

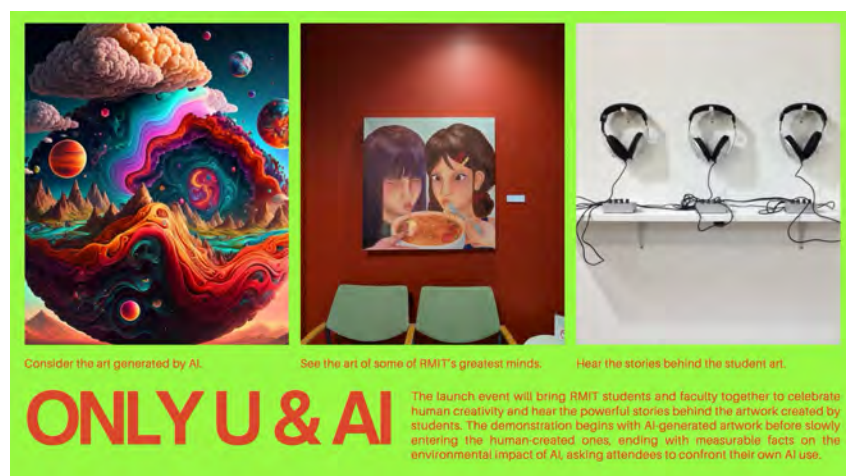
“I’m grateful to receive the SenateSHJ FCF Scholarship,” says **Bonnie-Mai Smith**. “AI feels so overwhelming, and every day there is a new update or a new think piece on why it’s good or why it is bad. So, with **Thirsty for Prompts?** I wanted to cut out all of the noise, lay all of the facts on the table and ask students to stop and pause before immediately going to AI as a solution,” says Smith.



At the core of the **Thirsty for Prompts?** campaign is “**Pothos**,” a “gamified browser extension featuring a small digital plant with a cute face” that “introduces a split second of rumination” before the user defaults to AI. Students “have one Pathos Plant over the semester,” and if they say “no” to AI, “the plant grows larger and healthier, acting as a visual marker of a student's commitment to independent thinking.” The event launches with an “Only U & AI” art exhibition, which “juxtaposes AI artwork with that created by RMIT students.”

“I wanted to create something that spoke to our humanity, and instead of fearmongering, find different solutions that may inspire my peers to reflect on their usage of AI models,” says **Bonnie-Mai Smith**.

“I believe **Thirsty for Prompts?** will resonate with university students because its approach celebrates individuality and creativity by inviting them to reflect on their own AI use,” **Smith** adds.





"**SenateSHJ** is proud to support the next generation of communication leaders through the Future Communicators Foundation," says **SenateSHJ Founder and Chair Angela Scaffidi**, who met with Bonnie-Mai to present her with the FCF Scholarship. "In a world where chaos abounds, clear communication strategies that build trust are more important than ever. Bonnie-Mai's campaign, that encourages critical thinking amid rising AI use, is driven by insights and designed for real impact. Congratulations on this very well-deserved recognition," adds Scaffidi.

"Thirsty for Prompts?" Campaign Mentorship for RMIT Capstone Project

Bonnie-Mai is commencing her mentorship with **SenateSHJ Senior Client Director Bridget Moylan**, who will guide and advise the FCF Scholarship winner. Bonnie-Mai's **Thirsty for Prompts?** campaign will be brought to life as a collaborative RMIT Capstone project, with her team of four working together to turn the campaign vision into reality.

"It was a delight to meet with Bonnie-Mai to learn more about her aspirations and begin our mentorship," says **SenateSHJ Senior Client Director Bridget Moylan**. "I look forward to supporting her in her professional growth and providing guidance as she prepares to embark on her career," adds Moylan.

Dr. David Micallef, Senior Lecturer and Program Manager in Public Relations at RMIT University congratulated Bonnie-Mai Smith on her achievement. "The '**Thirsty for Prompts?**' campaign by Bonnie-Mai Smith showed both creativity and strategic thinking around addressing the costs and benefits of AI," said **Dr. Micallef**. "The Future Communicators Foundation Scholarship is a great opportunity for students to put the skills they are learning to a problem that is a key challenge globally. Students' unwavering passion and concern for climate change has clearly come out in the creative proposals that they put together to respond to this brief," says **Dr. Micallef**.

SenateSHJ: Supporting Students and Sustainability

The **SenateSHJ FCF Scholarship** competition is open to senior undergraduate students enrolled in Public Relations and Digital Communications programs at RMIT University, Melbourne, including the [Bachelor of Communication](#) and the [Bachelor of Professional Communication](#). Along with the award, the Scholarship winner receives mentorship with a senior executive at SenateSHJ and future opportunities with FCF international programs.



About SenateSHJ

SenateSHJ was founded in 2002, and since that time has grown to become one of Australasia's most successful independent consultancies. We have won multiple awards, including being recognised in the 2021 Holmes Report, which ranked us in the top 250 for public relations agencies in the world. Our diverse backgrounds include government, healthcare, journalism, media, marketing and business consulting, digital and social strategy management, as well as communication consulting. We pride ourselves on our work, our people and our industry.

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ABOUT THE FUTURE COMMUNICATORS FOUNDATION

The Future Communicators Foundation (FCF) provides aspiring young professionals with scholarships, learning opportunities, and outreach programs that foster communication skills around sustainability, climate and social justice. The FCF is an initiative of The PR Trust, a 501(c)(6) non-profit organisation that provides knowledge and networking opportunities, student scholarships and awards programs that elevate and empower aspiring professionals and young leaders in communications. Learn more at: <http://futurecomms.org>

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