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Supporting start-ups and scale-ups in industrial ecosystems through incubation and acceleration: NISA's Incubator Support Programme

This Report has been prepared by the University of Technology Sydney ("UTS"), commissioned by the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities.

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Supporting start-ups and scale-ups in industrial ecosystems through incubation and acceleration: NISA's Incubator Support Programme

1 Context

The purpose of this report is to provide a case study of startup incubator and accelerator support programmes in Australia. The report is based on the analysis of documents, policy papers, and other secondary data, as well as interviews with key startup ecosystem stakeholders in Australia.

To put the analysis of incubator support programs by the federal and state governments into perspective, this section provides an overview of how the Australian start-up support ecosystem evolved from prior to the introduction of these programs until present day.

In comparison to the 1980's book in venture capital (VC) in the US, the Australian VC industry emerged around the millennium, unfortunately timed with the dotcom burst (Bliemel et al., 2018). Until the millennium, there was a steady rise to 100 incubators across Australia, then collapsing with the dotcom burst. The VC industry survived but lingered until pension or superannuation funds started investing starting circa 2015,[1] along with the re-emergence of the incubator industry to feed into the VC industry.

Up to 2015, only a few incubators survived the dotcom burst based on their favourable government sponsorship (e.g. free rent) or other institutional support. Support for early-stage startups was very limited and angel investing remained relatively ad hoc. Some of the earliest newer forms of incubators and accelerators founded in Australia were Pollenizer (founded in 2007), Innovyz, (2009), Startmate (2011), Fishburners (2011), and BlueChilli (2012). These did not receive any government support, each relying on a relatively precarious business model, but demonstrating some early successes.

In 2015, a new federal government placed emphasis on innovation, including engaging in policy hackathons (Marshall, 2023, p. 176). While these hackathons were initially received with skepticism whether such short sprints could address such complex challenges, they laid bare the complexity of policies relating to innovation, including bankruptcy regulation, taxation of R&D, employee stock options, angel and venture capital, immigration policy, education policy, and more.[2]

By late 2015, the government launched a National Innovation & Science Agenda (NISA), consisting of 24 different innovation policies across four areas for a coordinated or systems-based policy approach (Australian Government, 2015; Cetindamar et al, 2024). NISA included the inaugural support for incubators and accelerators, covered in this report. Since then, several states have introduced incubator support programs, some of which are included in this report.

Today, the Australian startup support landscape is now recognised for its dynamic funding environment, diverse sectoral growth, and geographical spread in investment and support. The Global Startup Ecosystem Report (GSER) 2023 highlights early-stage funding in the Oceania region growing by 60% from 2018-2022, the highest globally (Startup Genome, 2023). Notably, Melbourne moved up six places from the previous year, indicating a robust ecosystem (ibid.). Other reports reveal growth in pre-seed and seed stage funding, and female founder's getting funded (e.g. Folklore Ventures, 2023). Investors remain optimistic about the increase in activity for the year 2024 (Cut Through Ventures & Folklore Ventures, 2023). This growth is underpinned by the surge in coworking spaces, accelerators, incubators and

[1] https://www.smh.com.au/business/banking-and-finance/venture-capitalists-target-super-fund-members-and-smsfs-20150611-ghlcdc.html and https://www.afr.com/wealth/superannuation/first-state-super-eyes-more-vc-funds-sets-250mn-short-term-target-20151118-gl1ffo

[2] https://www.afr.com/markets/equity-markets/what-happened-at-wyatt-roys-policy-hack-20151018-gkbtpy

startup hubs (collectively called CAISH), from 120 entities in 2013 to 889 in 2023 (Ormiston et al., 2024), covered in greater detail below.

2 Objectives of the programme and rationale

This report focuses on the role and importance of the Incubator Support Programme (ISP) within the 2015 National Innovation and Science Agenda (NISA) and draws on more recent state-level incubator support policies.

NISA was an Australian government initiative to transition Australia from a natural resources-based economy to an innovation-driven economy. It was launched by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in December 2015, within four months of being elected to office, consisting of a $1.1 billion package with 24 separate innovation policies across four areas for a coordinated policy approach (Australian National Audit Office, 2017; Marshall, 2023; Cetindamar et al., 2024). Some argued that the main beneficiaries would be startups, who only represent a small portion of the economy (PwC, 2015), thus creating a political risk for the Prime Minister. Larry Marshall, recent CEO of the national science agency (CSIRO), interviewed Turnbull and the Chair of CSIRO, Catherine Livingston AC, who both reflected that such systems thinking and policy coordination was required despite engaging with stakeholders “who don't think in systems, and are organised in silos so they can't consume what we're telling them” (Marshall, 2023; p. 196). Only recently is systems thinking becoming more common, including recognition of how interconnected components of ’grand challenges’ or wicked problems are, and therefore how interdependent the related policies are (see also Mazzucato, 2018).

The Incubator Support Programme was one of those 24 policies, and initially only resourced with $8m AUD, but quicky changed to $23m AUD and later extended by another $5m AUD. From the beginning, the objectives were not static and changed over time in response to the sector. Separate to the Incubator Support Programme, a $200m AUD Innovation Fund was created for the national science and research institute, CSIRO, including over $20m AUD for their science-based startup accelerator, ON, which was eventually opened up to researchers from any publicly funded research organisation. Other policies were implemented related to intellectual property, tax, education and talent development and attraction, global connections, and regional development (Australian National Audit Office, 2017). The NISA represented a significant shift in Australia's economic policy, emphasising the importance of innovation, science, and technology as drivers of growth and competitiveness in the 21st century.

The objective of the Incubator Support Programme was to increase the quality and quantity of support services for startups, by expanding incubators into regions or industry sectors where none or few exist, and expanding the services offered by existing incubators. To do so, the Incubator Support Programme included two streams (Australian Government, 2016; 2020a; 2020b):

1) **New and Existing incubators (NEI)**, with the objectives to:
    - deliver high quality services to start-ups to improve their chances of commercial success in international markets
    - partner with first-generation migrant and refugee support organisations to assist migrant and refugee founders to establish their business both nationally and internationally
    - assist start-ups with a regional focus to expand and scale their business.”
2) **Expert-in-Residence (EIR)**, with the objectives to: “to increase [the incubators’] capabilities and improve the chance of commercial success for start-ups in international markets by organising and providing access to top quality research, managerial and technical talent through incoming and outgoing secondments of national or international experts.”

A full list of recipients of each funding stream is provided as Appendices A and B to this report.[3]

Launched in September 2016, the program was later revised to reflect the government’s emphasis on regional development (Australian Government, 2019a). Since inception, revisions included:

- Reducing an emphasis on alignment with the federal Industry Growth Centres Initiative for New and Existing incubators

[3] For an interactive directory of all incubators and accelerators across Australia, see also https://your.startupstatus.co/map/#All#3#All#All#All#All#All#All#role

- Reducing the co-funding requirement for regional activities
- Including the objective to support migrant and refugee founders
- Increasing the funding for existing incubators and merging the stream with new incubators
- Engaging four Regional Incubator Facilitators (RIFs) “to assist regional incubators to engage with the initiative and increase their chances of success.” (Australian Government, 2020b; Riley, 2018). This includes providing advice and mentoring to the incubator, brokering relationships to other incubators and migrant and refugee organisations, and helping them with their Expressions or Interest (EOI) and full applications for the New and Existing incubators funding.

An internal post-commencement evaluation of the Incubator Support Programme questioned whether the objectives for regional incubators should be the same as for urban incubators (Australian Government, 2019a). The evaluation pointed out that there was generally positive feedback about the programme, but that “the NEI application, assessment and reporting process could be improved. This could be done by providing further guidance for applicants on the type of information and level of detail required in the application. [And] that data collection would be more reliable and efficient if grantees were fully aware of all reporting and associated data collection requirements at the start of the project, and if reporting templates aligned with agreed data collection needs” (ibid., p. 2). The Regional Incubator Facilitators proved helpful for first-time applicants. For experienced incubators, feedback indicates that the incubator managers understand the metrics and reporting better than the government staff (Email communication with NSW innovation policy office, 21 Mar, 2024). As for the data and metrics, the diversity of incubators and their foci creates a measurement challenge, for which the recent practice is to ask for a common core set of metrics (e.g. survival, jobs created, funds or rounds raised, revenues generated, share of revenues from exports), while asking for each incubator to build on those and report additional relevant metrics, especially those signalling outcomes and impact by their startups; not just activity metrics on how they were supported. See section 3.4 below for more details on reporting.

While there is limited data on whether the above objectives have been met by grant-funded incubators, there have been multiple attempts to map or track the growth of the startup support ecosystem and its impact, indicating significant growth since the launch of the Incubator Support Programme (e.g. Renando, 2020; Ormiston et al 2023; Cetindamar et al., 2024), as visualised in Figure 2.

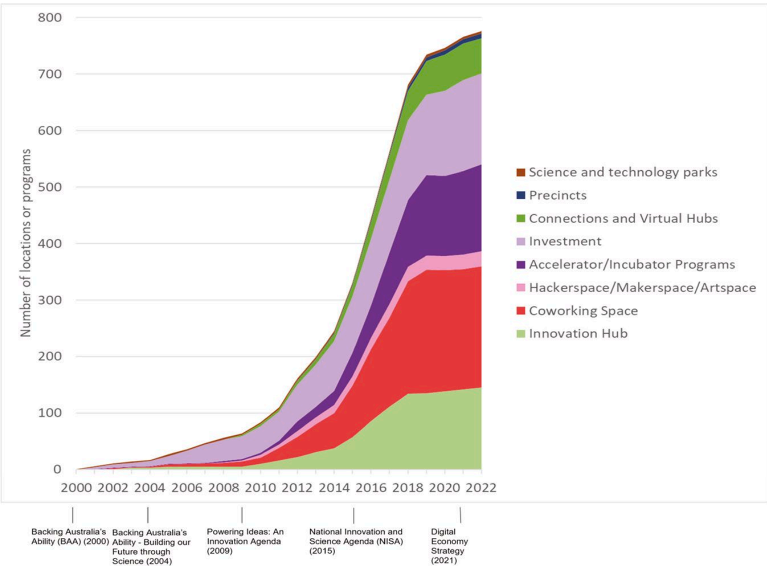

Figure 2. Australian Innovation policies & start-up support organisations (2000-22) (Source: Cetindamar et al., 2024)

Soon after NISA’s launch, state governments created additional programs to support incubator programs, including Advance Queensland (QLD), LaunchVic (VIC) and Boosting Business Innovation Program (aka BBIP) (NSW), as well as establishing startup hubs to co-locate multiple incubators.

Various reports have recorded how incubators and accelerators across Australia attract entrepreneurs by offering low-cost space and seed funding, and that retrospectively the main value is the mentorship and peer community that supports further growth towards becoming a scale-up (Bliemel et al., 2016;

Ormiston et al., 2023, 2024). Hence also the emphasis on mentorship and expertise in the eligibility criteria of the Incubator Support Programme, because of the durability and follow-on effects of such intangible support.

A positive signal for supporting startups is a 2017 national overview of the startup ecosystem (Australian Government, 2017a), which reveals that venture capital in Australia quadrupled from 2015 to 2017. That said, growth of the sector has its own challenges, due to a risk of unnecessary direct competition among support organisations and thus a greater need for them to be coordinated as their own industry (Cetindamar & Ormiston, 2022; Ormiston et al., 2023).

A signal that the higher-level objectives are not being realised is that research and development (R&D) as a percentage of GDP and the economic complexity remain very low in comparison to most OECD countries. These indicators reflect a systemic challenge arising from the composition of the Australian economy: There are very few multi-national companies headquartered in Australia, and most SMEs are too small to consider R&D. The latest 5-Year Productivity Inquiry Report by the Australian Government's Productivity Commission (2023) indicates that the vast majority of innovation by Australia's 'innovative businesses' is only new to the firm, with approximately 10% and 5% being new to the industry within Australia or new to Australia, respectively, and only another ~5% being new to the world; much less when measured as a percentage of all businesses.

3 Description of activities

3.1 Activities supported by the programme

The program is nominally about incubators, but emphasises cohort-based mentoring, which is a hallmark of accelerators. As per the 2020 Incubator Support Programme guidelines (Australian Government, 2020b, p.10), eligible activities supported by the Incubator Support Programme include:

- "providing or facilitating access for start-ups to new knowledge (such as customer acquisition and/ or business development methods) to promote or facilitate international trade
- facilitating start-ups' access to new international networks (e.g. investors and customers)
- providing or facilitating access for start-ups to resources (such as purchase of technical equipment) to promote or facilitate international trade."

These activities are relatively broad, notwithstanding the additional comment that "We may also approve other activities" (ibid.). Applicants should nonetheless demonstrate how they address accessing startups to encourage them to apply, not duplicate services currently available, are inclusive to different backgrounds and locations, and (optionally) how they support first-generation migrant and refugee founders to expand internationally.

Eligible expenditures include labour costs directly related to the program, we well as indirect labour, such as technical, but not administrative, and project management. The latter are capped at 10% of the total labour claimed. Leadership costs are also excluded (e.g. CEOs, CFOs). Other eligible expenditures include contracts (e.g. facilitators and professional services), travel (with overseas travel costs capped at 10% of the total eligible expenditures), staff training, auditing, technology acquisition, fitout, language interpretation, and (for new incubators only) marketing costs.

3.2 Government support for the programme

Funding is provided through two streams: New and Existing Incubators (NEI), and Expert-in-Residence (EIR). Both require matched funding from applicants, with the Incubator Support Programme covering eligible project values up to 65% in regional areas or up to 50% in major cities.

The New and Existing Incubator stream provided matched funding. The initial discussion paper (Australian Government, 2016) proposed $200k AUD for new incubators and $50k AUD for existing incubators. By the time of the launch in 2016, the maximum was set to $500k AUD over two years (Australian Government, 2019a). In 2020, this was revised to a maximum of $250k AUD over two years for each new and existing incubator project (Australian Government, 2020a).

From initial inception to launch, revisions were made due to proactive consultations through hackathons, a discussion paper, research and global benchmarking, roadshows, and direct feedback from ministers and key ecosystems stakeholders.

The programmes' funding is comparable to but below New Zealand's (NZ) $17m NZD incubator support programme's support for 19 incubators. While the Australian incubator ecosystem grew beyond the ISP, the NZ ecosystem peaked at 21 incubators, but then declined to 8 over the 7-year lifespan of their Incubator Support Programme (New Zealand Government, 2008). States within Australia have since developed their own incubator support programs. For instance, the NSW BBIP program is now in its third iteration. It was initially funded by $12m, for twelve universities to spend $500k AUD per annum over two years (2016-2018) on incubator support. The second iteration, extended that by two years at $250k AUD per annum, and included an option to spend any portion of the funding on multiple $25k AUD TechCouchers, which are matched funds for collaborative research commercialisation. In the latest iteration, there is a total of $11m AUD budget to be delivered via 14 universities. Over 4 years, each receives a total of $510,714 AUD each for 'boosting' activities that are analogous to incubation activities, and $275,000 AUD for Tech Vouchers, that are up to $50,000 AUD of matched funding.[4]

For the first 4 years, the ISP had $23m AUD in funding for both streams. It was then extended by another 4 years, albeit with only $5m AUD, with an emphasis on first-generation migrant and refugee founders. This extension at a reduced level is reflected in the grants awarded over time, as shown in Figure 1 and 2. Altogether, the policy supported 77 NEI grants and 129 Expert-in-Residence grants.

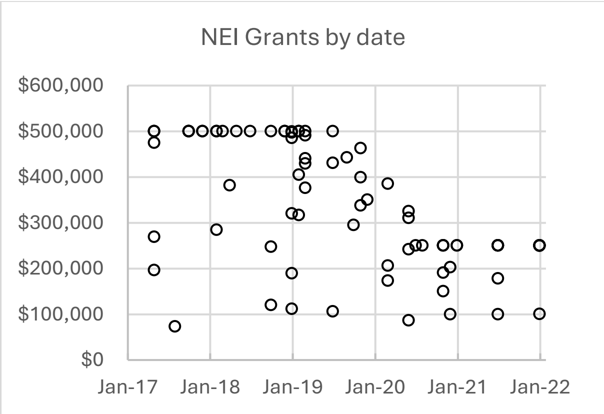

Figure 1. NEI grants given, over time

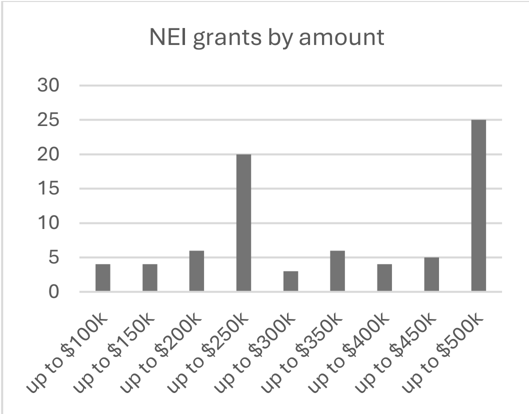

Figure 2. NEI grants given, by amount

The Expert-in-Residence stream provides matched funding of up to $25k AUD when the programme was launched and increased to $100k AUD in 2017. This steam was designed to give start-ups in incubators access to top-quality research, as well as technical and managerial expertise through secondments of national and international experts. To some degree, this stream can offset an incubator's lower internal capacity. The grants awarded over time is reflected in Figure 3, with Figure 3 and 4 showing that the most common amount was about $50k AUD, and that larger amounts were more exceptional.

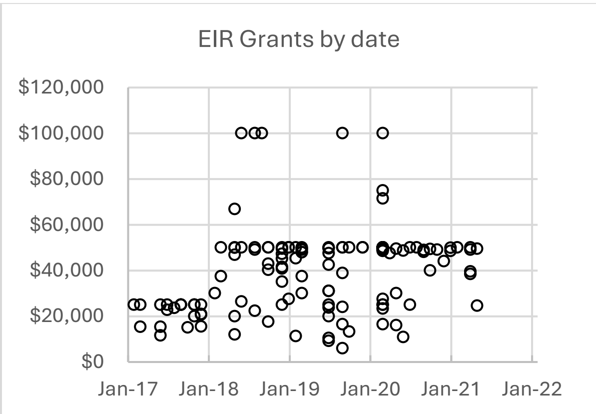

Figure 3. EIR grants given, over time

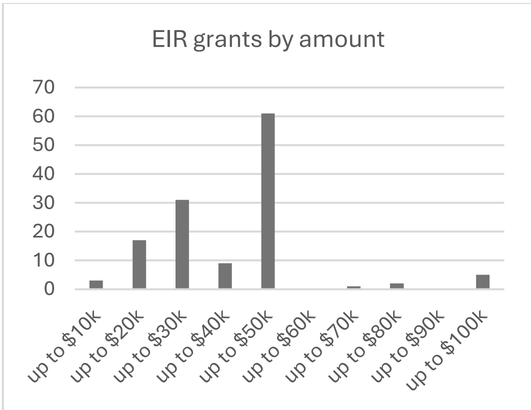

Figure 4. EIR grants given, by amount

[4] https://www.investment.nsw.gov.au/assets/Boosting-Business-Innovation-Program-incl.-TVs-guidelines-1.pdf

3.3 Assessment criteria and application support

Applications for New and Existing Incubator grants are evaluated against three core criteria (Australian Government, 2020b): (i) Management and business capability (50 points), (ii) benefit to the incubator, startups and broader ecosystem (40 points), and (iii) impact (10 points). In 2020, a fourth criteria (if applicable) was introduced: (iv) "How your project will support first-generation migrant and refugee founders to expand internationally?" For examples of basic eligibility checklists, see also Australian government (2017b)

The first criterion speaks to the incubator's current experience and capabilities, including their networks, while the second includes its own capability development. If an incubator needs a capability uplift, they could separately apply for an Expert-in-Residence. Over the lifespan of the policy, 31% of the 77 awardee incubators were also awarded an Expert-in-Residence grant, and 29% of the 129 Expert-in-Residence awardees were also awarded a New and Existing Incubator grant. However, there was no formal interdependency between the two streams. In fact, a change in 2020 explicitly stated that only one grant could be active at any given time, and that all reporting requirements must be completed before another grant would be awarded.

Applicants also received advice as part of the two-stage process of applying for Incubator Support Programme funding. Incubators first submit an EOI, which is then reviewed by a Regional Incubator Facilitator, who were initially employed directly by the federal government and later via the delivery partner, CSIRO. For eligible applications, the Regional Incubator Facilitator then works with the applicant to develop a full application, thereby steering the proposals towards higher quality and sharing lessons learned across applications. The post-commencement evaluation indicates applicants also received advice from Customer Service Managers (CSMs) within the federal government.

The specific role of the Regional Incubator Facilitators was to "assist all regional applicants by:

- providing advice, mentoring and specialist expertise
- helping them to develop their professional networks and national and international connections
- encouraging joint applications and boosting knowledge sharing between regional and
- metropolitan incubators" [emphasis original] (Australian Government, no date (a)).

Additionally, they provided feedback on draft NEI applications for all geographies and assist in providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants. Appointed Incubator Facilitators included Andrew Outhwaite, Brad Twynham, Daniel Smith and Mark Phillips, who collectively had experience in launching startups, consulting, the corporate sector, and designing various startup support programs, including significant international experience (ibid.). Requesting their support could be done via email to the incubator support program email address (incubator.support@industry.gov.au). The role of Customer Service Managers was to receive applications and make recommendations, which are then handled by Assistant Managers, Program Managers and the General Manager to make decisions (Australian Government, 2019b).

3.4 Performance Monitoring

Recipients were asked to complete progress reports and end of project reports, with the government also leaving an option to ask for ad hoc reports. According to the Commonwealth Simple Grant Agreement (Australian Government, 2020c; Schedule 2), the end of project reports were required to:

- be submitted by the report due date
- include evidence of progress towards completion of agreed project activities
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred
- include evidence of expenditure or a declaration they met the grant agreement terms
- outline the types of services provided and how many startups those activities supported, including (i) workshops and mentoring, (ii) financial, marketing and product development, (iii) delivery of events such as pitch and networking events, (iv) international activities, and (v) any other specific services
- include company data on start-ups participating in project activities, consisting of a list of startups' names, registered business number (ABN) and contact details
- Provide counts of the following:
    - How many start-up participants received incubator support services under your project?

- How many start-up participants were based in a regional area?
  - How many were first-generation migrant/refugee start-ups?
  - As a result of the Incubator Support grant, how many new networks or connections have you (the Incubator) established?
  - How many networks or connections were established domestically?
  - How many networks or connections were established internationally?
  - How many start-up participants have attracted interest from investors or received investment offers from your project?
  - How many start-up participants that had contact with investors were located in a regional area?
  - How many start-up participants that had contact with investors were first-generation migrant/refugee start-ups?
  - How many start-up participants have increased their engagement in a market outside of Australia?
  - How many start-up participants are trading in, a new international market as a result of this project?
  - How many start-up participants trading in, a new international market as a result of this project were located in a regional area?
  - How many start-up participants trading in, a new international market as a result of this project were first-generation migrant/refugee start-ups?
  - How many of the start-up participants did you assist in accessing and using the DataStart program?
  - How many start-ups accessing the DataStart program were regional?
  - How many start-ups accessing the DataStart program were first-generation migrant/refugee start-ups?
  - What is the total value of private sector investment in participant start-ups that is attributable to the project to date?
- Summarise the overall project benefits, including:
  - What ongoing impact will the project have?
  - What benefits has the project achieved?
  - Did the project result in any unexpected benefits? If yes, explain why.
  - Is there any other information you wish to provide about your project? If yes, provide details.

The post-commencement evaluation indicated that the measure of network connections was unclear and that question about the DataStart program were off topic since the public data provided by DataStart was not integrated into the ISP's design. Generally, some of this data is pre-mature if the startups are still at the idea stage and not yet registered businesses. The most recent national survey of startups and startup support organisations (Startup Muster, 2023) indicated that less than half of incubators collected any data on their activities, largely due to a lack of resourcing (Ormiston et al., 2024). Standard startup metrics include jobs created, revenue growth incl share of exports, and funds raised (with emphasis on equity funding over grant funding or loans) (Bliemel et al., 2016; Ormiston et al., 2024). Incubators then aggregate these metrics, while also considering their own operational metrics like number of applications (and rejection rate) and profitability (or at least breakeven).

3.5 Direct relevance to the case study ecosystems in Portugal

This OECD case study for Portugal has identified health, digital economy and blue (marine) economy as industrial ecosystems of special focus. While the Australian Incubator Support Programme was not targeted at specific sectors or priority industries, it did enable generalist incubators to expand their activities to specialist cohorts like Health (Interview data, Ormiston et al., 2023). That said, the general issues faced by the Portuguese incubator support program resonate with the Australia system, each of which is elaborated on in Section 6.

1) **Building the capacity of incubators, particularly those focused on regional development situated outside of major centres.**

On one hand, the evaluation criteria are biased towards incubators with existing capabilities. On the other hand, the Regional Incubator Facilitators and Customer Service Managers were there to support applicants as they prepared their full applications, with particular emphasis on supporting regional incubators. Regional incubators also had less pressure for matched funding, with matching at a ratio of nearly 2:1. Lastly, the Expert-in-Residence program was designed to help incubators build capacity throughout their projects.

2) **Providing support for mentoring.**

Where possible, the ISP expects strong access to mentors and the regional ecosystem by each applicant, with the option to apply for the EIR grant to supplement their network.

3) **Supporting the certification and professionalisation of incubators/accelerators.**

While the federal and state-based programs do not currently consider certification or professionalisation of incubator managers, recent national gatherings of innovation district professionals and incubator managers consistently revealed a desire for there to be some common training among them. Many felt they learned too much on the job, and there could be more structured programs for new staff, including cohort and peer learning effects. The next best options to date are economic development programs run by Economic Development Australia, and cross promoted by TCI Network.[5] While handbooks for incubators, accelerators and startup ecosystems exist (e.g. incubators, accelerators, and ecosystems), there are not well known among practitioners.[6]

4) **Providing support for incubators to access testbeds and facilities in specific areas of specialization.**

The ISP did not specifically address this. However, at least 9 of the 77 recipients explicitly mention prototyping, advanced manufacturing, or similar labs in their project descriptions as a point of distinction. Meanwhile, it is also common for university-based incubators to offer access to maker spaces and to make referrals to researchers and labs on a case-by-case basis.

5) **Reducing bureaucracy in the application for funding support for incubators/accelerators.**

The ISP post-commencement report (Australian Government, 2019a) reveals that the effort to apply was generally 'very high', with a median of 25 days to develop their application. Meanwhile the reporting effort had a median of 6 days, rated as 'moderate' effort. This negative feedback about the effort predates the introduction of the Regional Incubator Facilitators to help craft the applications and navigate the bureaucracy.

6) **Supporting the internationalisation of incubators and their clients.**

Australia and NZ are arguably the birthplace of the term 'born-global'. Australian ventures have a bad reputation for complacency with a domestic market and lacking in ambition or effort to internationalise (Prabaharan et al., 2021; Marshall, 2023). Supporting the internationalisation or at least the potential to internationalise is one of the objectives of the Incubator Support Programme. While most project descriptions mention general support for internationalisation, at least 10 are specific about the geography they and their mentors are targeting (e.g. China, India, America, Vietnam, with some being more specific like New York City, or less specific like Asia Pacific and Nordics).

4 Key success factors

In consideration of the above, key success factors in the program's approach include:

1) **Early and comprehensive engagement with the startup sector**, leading into the launch of the NISA, including 24 interrelated innovation policies, coordinated in a way to bolster innovation, including the Incubator Support Programme

[5] https://www.edaustralia.com.au/training/ and https://tci-network.org/on-clusters/#cluster-training

[6] https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/handbook-of-research-on-business-and-technology-incubation-and-acceleration-9781788974776.html on incubators, https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/accelerators-9781786434081.html on accelerators, and https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/research-handbook-on-start-up-incubation-ecosystems-9781788973526.html on ecosystems.

2) **Commissioning an independent review of the global evidence** about incubators and accelerators leading into the design. The review revealed the critical role of management capabilities as well as access to mentors and the broader ecosystem. This critical aspect supported the rationale for a separate Expert-in-Residence stream to help address a general deficit in experience in high-growth ventures.
3) **Recruiting RIFs to adopt a more hands-on approach to helping applicants**, reinforcing that the government is there to help address market failures and broker insights across incubators.
4) **Raising the quantum of funding** from the initially proposed $200k AUD to a maximum of $500 AUD and allowed regional incubators to match funding at a ratio closer to 2:1. Some consultations indicated that this was still not enough to cover the rental bond for urban incubators and still does not cover operating costs for some incubators.

In the first year of commencement, the ISP received 74 New and Existing Incubator applications, of which 47 were invited to the second stage, and 18 were approved, indicating reasonable levels of demand for the program by high quality applications (p.8 in 2019 eval). Withdrawn applications (28%) were usually for lack of evidence of matched funding or other changes in circumstances; some reapplied later, successfully.

The major success of the Incubator Support Programme is its contribution to create a national innovation mindset and changing the public perception of being an entrepreneur or startup founder. While the first wave of post-dotcom incubators were focussed on digital technologies (e.g., SAAS or games), the system has grown substantially with increasingly specialised incubators. Ormiston et al. (2024) finds that the regional startup support organisations are particularly successful in supporting diverse founders such as gender and First Nations entrepreneurs.

5 Key challenges and obstacles faced

Five groups of obstacles are observed for the Incubator Support Programme.

5.1 Diversity of incubator programs

The list of eligible activities was quite broad, with some key terms like 'new networks' and connections made leaving considerable room for interpretation. From the outset of the designs of the Incubator Support Programme, the classic policy question prevailed, whether government should address a market failure and support incubators in sectors and geographies where the private sector did not, or whether to reinforce high-performing incubators in pursuit of international competitiveness. The post-commencement evaluation (Australian Government, 2019a, p. 4) elaborates this point:

> *"Overall, interviewees held diverse views about the appropriateness of this regional focus. Some interviewees said the initiative provides opportunities for regional Australia, including for diversifying rural economies, engaging and retaining young people, and boosting employment. A range of interviewees, including representatives of regional incubators, also said that the reduced co-funding requirement for regional projects would make the grant more accessible for regional incubators. However, a minority of internal and external interviewees said the realities of regional contexts present a challenge for achieving intended program outcomes. Reasons included that they lack the density of networks, international connections and diversity of expertise needed to support successful entrepreneurship."*

With such a broad remit, the Incubator Support Programme needed to remain flexible in applying evaluation criteria to award grants. Within the first year, the Incubator Support Programme saw a wide mix of (i) urban versus regional, (ii) backing by private sector, universities or local economic development actors, (iii) specialisation by stage versus all-stages, (iv) specialisation by sector versus being sector agnostic, and (v) some specialised services versus relatively generic 'growth services' (ibid., p. 10-13).

In more recent years, there is growing focus on sectors such as greentech, health and biotech, and advanced manufacturing, with greentech experiencing a significant 9% increase in startup activity since 2018 (Startup Muster, 2023). Incubators remain a largely urban phenomenon, with some regions being dramatically underrepresented (Ormiston et al., 2023). This is exacerbated by startups in the regions seeking out virtual or hybrid incubator support, with preference for urban incubators with a longer operating history and richer suite of services.

5.2 Lack of aggressive goals for the incubator Support program

Close to the time of the launch of PM Turnbull's NISA and Incubator Support Programme, a federal performance review of the Australian innovation systems (Australian Government, 2016) painted a picture of Australian businesses as incremental innovators with generally low levels of new-to-market innovation, despite the research sector producing above average levels of fundamental research. In 2020, the same division of the government, governed by the same party but under a new Prime Minister, suggested a policy to 'rebalance' towards non-R&D innovation, undermining the previous government's efforts to commercialise research into inventions and innovation.

Despite the lofty intensions of the earlier Turnbull government, the total quantum of support for innovations remains modest in comparison to countries such as Singapore. A 2016 study comparing NISA with the corresponding policy carried out by the Singaporean Government reveals Australia lagging Singapore by a factor of nearly 20 times (Suseno & Standing, 2018).

5.3 Policy coordination and governance related issues

An academically researched commentary on NISA lauded NISA for attempting to address the complexity and plurality of policies relating to innovation and science (Carter, 2017). However, it also criticized NISA for still underestimating the complexity and pointed to gaps relating to (STEM) education policy, bioeconomy and undoing the pre-Turnbull government's gutting of climate change research. Additionally, the challenge of coordinating policies across national, state, regional and municipal levels remain a barrier in addressing large-scale socioeconomic development.

The post-commencement evaluation of Incubator Support Programme identified delays in launching the program, scepticism about eventual outcomes and impacts, and recommendations reliant on assertions rather than evidence (Australian National Audit Office, 2017).

Even for the recipients of government support, there is longstanding criticism that the beneficiaries are each treated separately, not coordinated or differentiated enough, and end up competing more than they collaborate. A lack of program or incentives for collaboration is coined as a key 'problem' (George & Tarr, 2021), rather than an opportunity or even demonstrate capability. Instead, there is what CSIRO's recent CEO calls the "classic Australian 'copy and compete' phenomenon" (Marshall, 2023; p. 182). The problem is reinforced by the previous decade of R&D projects trending away from collaborations to single-firm projects (George & Tarr, 2021).

As indicated earlier, recent national gatherings of innovation district professionals and incubator managers consistently revealed a desire for there to be a forum or stronger incentives for them to collaborate and learn from each other, representing similar policy coordination challenges at the very local level. This represents a missed opportunity to bring recipients of the same incubator support programme together to learn from each other, even as they specialise to service different geographic or sectoral markets.

5.4 Longevity and sustainability:

The above lack of aggressive resourcing at the national level and political cycles have flow-on effects at the level of each incubator. The Incubator Support Programme allowed for incubators to apply for funding for up to two years, allowing them to reapply for further funding at a later date. The post-commencement report recognised that their "interviewees expressed concern about the sustainability of this short-term funding approach, while a survey respondent described it as creating a 'cliff situation' for new incubators" (Australian Government, 2019a, p.6). Especially for the second round, $5m over four years, there was concern whether it would provide enough for each incubator or was enough to have a material impact on the ecosystem. A similar dynamic is playing out at the state level, with the NSW BBIP program being redesigned from a one-off $1m AUD grant *per* university, to $5m AUD spread over 4 years for all 14 NSW-based publicly funded research organisations (2022 BBIP guidelines). Notably, even one of the world's largest and longest running networks of incubators, Techstars, struggles to find a sustainable operating model, and a survey of International Business Innovation Association's (InBIA) incubators reveals that the vast majority have under $500k USD in annual revenues.[7] Especially for business models relating to investment and equity, the complex systems dynamics nature is well known, with the requirement for at least one firm or one cohort being a runaway success to offset the masses of stragglers and closures.

5.5 Metrics

While research qualitatively shows the positive benefit of incubator programs by its recipients, the quantitative results reveal a more tentative relationship. The gold standard would be randomised controlled trials (see also Edovald & Firpo, 2016), as used extensively in medical research, but which clash with commercial desires to pick winners.

With multiple grant schemes by multiple agencies and multiple levels of government, in addition to the private capital and self-funded growth, the ideal case would be a single reliable data source, rather than each policy evaluation study having to generate its own primary data. There remains a longstanding need for improved data on startups and startup-support to evaluate policy interventions. Data consistency has been a significant issue for policymakers, and a proposal for a detailed set of innovation metrics at the national level was published in 2019 (Australian Government, 2019c) and refined at state levels (e.g., Bliemel et al., 2023). There are improvements on the horizon to make more use of business tax claim data. It remains debatable how to identify which businesses are classified as startups, and how to link their tax data to having received support from a given incubator. One proxy would be to consider only 'early-stage innovation companies' that have registered as such to enable tax benefits for investors.[8]

Only roughly half of all incubators and accelerators track or report on impact metrics, with an emphasis on jobs and revenue generated (Ormiston et al., 2024). Tracking at least such a standard set of metrics then opens the door to collect additional data that can tell a more nuanced story for each incubator relative to its niche (e.g. patent registrations and licencing for deeptech incubators, or app store registrations and downloads for gaming incubators).

6 Relevance and lessons for Portugal

The startup ecosystem in Portugal has grown significantly over the past few years, attracting attention from entrepreneurs and investors worldwide. Portugal is home to approximately 4,073 startups, generating a combined turnover of €2.3 billion and exports worth €1.3 billion, providing around 25,000 jobs. 75% of these startups are considered to have no risk of bankruptcy, indicating a relatively resilient ecosystem (Startup Portugal, 2023). With a quality of life comparable to Australia, the national innovation agenda for 2030 is focused on creating a favourable environment for a high-potential tech-based startup ecosystem (Portugal2030, 2024).

Portugal has two metropolitan areas, Lisbon and Porto, which are also the primary startup hubs, with Lisbon being one of the most unicorn-dense cities in Europe. This compares with Australia having five metropolitan cities with over 1m population, and the next largest city being just under 500,000. The Portuguese startup scene is diverse, with a significant presence in technology, e-commerce, fintech, and clean energy sectors. Startups in Portugal are also known for their innovative approaches in AI, software development, and digital marketing. The Portuguese government has supported the startup ecosystem through initiatives like the Startup Visa and Tech Visa programs, which attract foreign entrepreneurs and tech talent. The country offers startup investment incentives, such as tax benefits for R&D activities (Remofirst, 2023).

Portugal's thriving startup ecosystem offers numerous opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors, supported by a favourable business environment and government initiatives. The National Incubator and Accelerator Network in Portugal connects and enables over 150 incubators and accelerators nationwide. These incubators are crucial for the success rate of innovative ideas and startups, promoting cooperation and sharing resources and knowledge within the ecosystem (Portugal Digital, n.d.).

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[7] https://techcrunch.com/2024/02/28/leaked-documents-techstars-lost-7-million-2023-layoffs-enough-cash/ and https://inbia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/impact_whitepaper2_3.pdf
[8] https://www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/income-deductions-and-concessions/incentives-and-concessions/tax-incentives-for-innovation/in-detail/tax-incentives-for-early-stage-investors/qualifying-as-an-early-stage-innovation-company

In this section, we elaborate on insights from the Australian Incubator Support Programme in relation to the six issues faced by the Portuguese incubation network (see section 3.5). We add to these, some lessons learned in relation to the key challenges the ISP faced (section 5), which may be applicable to other incubator policy contexts.

6.1 Lesson 1: Building capacity

The question of where to allocate limited public resources remains a classic innovation policy question. The most extreme position is that government should simply step out of the way and let the market decide. However, such minimalist government intervention is at odds with the return towards mission-oriented innovation policies or industrial policy, whereby governments play a more active role in shaping the economy and wealth distribution (Mazzucato, 2018)[9], whether at the federal, state or municipal levels. Australia has long been an early adopter of innovations but struggled to generate first-to-world innovations. A government investment in building innovation capacity can help shift that conversation from creating jobs generally, to creating innovation jobs, which arguably have a causal 'multiplier effect' that generates five more jobs outside the innovation sector (Moretti, 2012).

Whether in the regions or in the cities, there remain a limited number of people with the expertise, networks and interest in supporting startups, with the capacity constraints being greater in the regions. The capacity constraints are complex, too. Incubator operators need to know how to support startups, and they need to know how to apply for government grants and other means to underwrite the incubator.

To overcome the lack of experience with grant applications, Incubator Support Programme's engagement of Regional Incubator Facilitators to help applicants was a wise move, as an additional level of support to the general Customer Service Managers in the government office. This support for applicants is especially important with new grant schemes, where it is extremely unlikely that applicants have developed similar applications before or that they do so year after year.

While the Incubator Support Programme readjusted the requirement for matched funding for regional incubators and directed the RIFs to provide them more support, there were still concerns that the evaluation criteria and reporting metrics unnecessarily favour metropolitan incubators. One consideration might then be to create a separate stream for regional versus metropolitan incubators, instead of the new versus existing incubator streams.

To overcome the lack of experience in supporting startups, the Incubator Support Programme operated the Expert-in-Residence program in parallel. This allowed incubators to 'top up' the in-house support for startups while learning from the Expert-in-Residence for the next cohort. The network of mentors and experts is a hallmark of most accelerators, with franchised accelerators like Techstars and Founders Institute connecting their mentors and startups at a global level, gaining economies of scale and network effects.

Considering that there are now approximately 150 incubators in Portugal[10], it is recommended that future incubator support programs enhance specialisation of each incubator, whether for its region, its focal technology, sector, overseas market, or other differentiator. With that specialisation in mind, the peer learning and sharing of resources among incubators may be coordinated in a way to increase capacity across grant recipients.

6.2 Lesson 2: Sourcing in mentors

While the selection criteria favour applicants with strong access to networks including mentors, professional service providers, follow-on capital, and markets (domestically and internationally), the Incubator Support Programme also provides support for Expert-in-Residence who can augment such a network. This allows early-stage incubators to establish themselves, build capacity and offer support at a more competitive level, thereby reducing the chances startups will leave the area to seek support, and increasing the chances of drawing in stronger applications. The locations of recipients of Expert-in-Residence grants were roughly 55% in metropolitan cities (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Canberra, Perth) and 45% in a regional setting, with some applying on behalf of a mix of locations.

[9] See also the new OECD Mission Action Lab https://oecd-missions.org/
[10] https://startupportugal.com/rni-portugal-incubators/network-members/

Especially for startups being launched in relatively small domestic markets, there is a strong need to be a 'born-global' and internationalise quickly. As a result, the ISPs need to cultivate local mentors who can support their startups on relatively short notice as well as ones with that experience of having scaled a company globally. Mentors in the Expert-in-Residence program ranged from general pitch coaching through to directors of overseas pharmaceutical companies.

The project titles in Appendix B include several ambiguous descriptions of who the experts are. Classification by type is challenging based on this data. Based on those descriptions, it is certain that the EIRs were quite broad, reflecting experts who are experts in a sector (e.g. cyber security, aged care), a function (e.g. raising capital, IP, regulatory), a geography or market (e.g. Asia, Silicon Valley).

For Portugal, depending on how saturated the need for more incubators is, the services offered by existing incubators may be strengthened by a similar Entrepreneur-in-Residence program, including sharing the Expert-in-Residence across incubators.

6.3 Lesson 3: Professionalisation and collaboration

The adjustments made to the Incubator Support Programme still largely treat each incubator as a separate organisation within the ecosystem, and incidentally nudge them towards competing. Competition is inherently of benefit to the startups if it leads to higher quality options. However, it can also lead to duplication and wasted opportunities to differentiate in other ways for the ecosystem to operate better as a coordinated whole.

When ecosystems or roles are still emergent, there can be bottlenecks because there are only "a small number of quality managers" available (New Zealand Government, 2008, p. 3). One solution is for the government to proceed with people who learn-on-the-job at risk of the first generation learning largely though failures and on their own (Lerner, 1996). Another solution is to provide some training and certification. Recent national gatherings of innovation district professionals and incubator managers consistently revealed most of them learned on-the-job and on their own. In line with the first lesson above, this presents a missed opportunity for there to be a common foundation or baseline capacity among cohorts of incubator managers. Australia no longer has a national incubator association (ANZABI, with NZ). Before the dotcom, such an organisation developed good practice guides for incubator operators. The NZ Incubator Support Programme took the additional step to require grant recipients to have membership in the now defunct ANZABI incubator association.

As an example, the US-based InBIA currently offers an Entrepreneurship Center Management (ECM) Certificate and has previously offered a Business Incubation Management Certificate.[11] Members from the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centres (GCEC) have recently formed the Centre Leader Academy, to "provide base-in-class knowledge and training supporting career development for entrepreneurship centre leaders and those who aspire to be one."[12]

There are also free online events, like an ~8,000 person 'audio event' on LinkedIn about 'Role of Business Incubators / Accelerators in Startup Funding & Growth.'[13] Meanwhile, for similar roles, there is certification, including as a Technology Transfer Professional, investor or mentor/coach.[14] The latter can be important as a means to improve the methods by which mentors with startup experience share that experience.

Because such certificate programs tend to run on cohorts, not on-demand, they facilitate peer learning and therefore reinforce that each incubator is one part of a larger ecosystem. It stands to reason that such cohort effects would be built into a grant program, by having a cohort-based application deadline, whereby applicants join workshops to help craft their applications and that successful applicants then complete the same program together. This is directly analogous to how some business plan

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[11] https://inbia.org/ecm/ and https://www.credential.net/group/71556 with an 'open' LinkedIn group of 3,108 members https://www.linkedin.com/groups/160955/
[12] https://centerleader.org
[13] https://www.linkedin.com/events/7125525508401881088/
[14] https://techtransfer.org.au/rttp/, https://www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/income-deductions-and-concessions/incentives-and-concessions/tax-incentives-for-innovation/in-detail/tax-incentives-for-early-stage-investors/the-sophisticated-investor-test and https://coachingfederation.org/credentials-and-standards

competitions are run, whereby all applicants have access to a common set of public workshops and seminars, and finalists get paired with mentors with more bespoke support.

Questions remain about who a certifying organisation would be, and what their operating model is, if not a tertiary education institution. In absence of a national association of incubators, the next closest non-profit or private programs is by Economic Development Australia, cross-promoted by TCI Network. Portugal does not currently have any members in TCI Network or have a national incubator association and may consider those as options as a vehicle to build domestic capacity to professionalise the field.[15]

Extrapolating this insight to innovation policy more generally, most government grants get allocated and distributed. This is often done with limited support to develop proposals and awardees are rarely (if ever) coordinated to form a collective peer community. This applies to incubators, as much as to Collaborative Research Centres, and other grant schemes,[16] resulting in perpetuating an unnecessary degree of competition among the recipients.

6.4 Lesson 4: Access to testbeds and facilities

The Incubator Support Programme did not specifically address this. However, at least 9 of the 77 recipients explicitly mention prototyping, advanced manufacturing, or similar labs in their project descriptions as a point of distinction. This indicates that government support is required to address a demand for higher cost facilities and equipment for startups.

Reviewing the list of recipients for applications by universities, 12 had a university as the lead applicant. However, most of those were in a regional setting with more emphasis on regional development while remaining relatively agnostic to technological or sectoral specialisation. Access to university-based labs, prototyping facilities and experts is implied in being part of any university-based incubator, noting that people who operate those labs review and approve access on a case-by-case basis.

6.5 Lesson 5: Managing bureaucracy in the application process

With the explosive growth of accelerators, there has been a reduction in the negotiation and customisation of investment term sheets. Each startup within the same cohort receives the same terms, and the industry is converging on some standard terms across incubators. While the terms are relatively standardised, it still requires a considerable amount of work for startups to apply to each accelerator.

This experience of the startups with the accelerators is somewhat analogous to the experience of the incubators with the Incubator Support Programme. The website for the Incubator Support Programme provides a sample EOI form, sample application form, and sample grant form among the Key Documents.[17] However, the process of pulling together an application was still rated as being 'very high', with a median of 25 days to develop their application (Australian Government, 2019a).

To make the process of submitting an EOI and completing an application friendlier, the Incubator Support Programme engaged four Regional Incubator Facilitators to help craft the applications and navigate the bureaucracy. This did not reduce the bureaucracy, but still helped improve the quality of submissions. Even if the incubators had hired a third-party grant writer to help them, the result would be the same; easier navigation of the bureaucracy, but not a reduction of it. In defence of the bureaucracy, some degree of bureaucracy is expected, since this is public funding, which requires diligence in its allocation and accountability than can be probed for transparency and fairness.

6.6 Lesson 6: Supporting Internationalisation

While the NISA report is relatively short (Australian Government, 2015), page 11 mentions "providing access for entrepreneurial Australians to landing pads in Silicon Valley, Tel Aviv and three other locations, and leveraging the expertise of the Australian diaspora in key markets." Creating landing pads was another policy measure complementary to the Incubator Support Programme that is still maintained.[18]

[15] At the time of writing, https://www.rni.pt/ was down
[16] https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/cooperative-research-centres-crc-grants
[17] https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/incubator-support-new-and-existing-incubators
[18] https://www.austrade.gov.au/en/how-we-can-help-you/programs-and-services/landing-pads

Internationalisation for startups is an embedded aspect within the Incubator Support Programme's guidelines and criteria (Australian Government, 2020b). For instance, it is mentioned across three out of five intended outcomes for recipients. Most project descriptions mention general support for internationalisation. On the one hand, this indicates it is a criterion that is being taken seriously. However, internationalisation requires intimate market knowledge of each diverse market. So, startups and incubators would be wise to focus their internationalisation strategy on one market at a time.

Only about 10 are specific about the international geography they are focussing on, namely China, India, America, and Vietnam, with some being more specific like New York City or vague like Asia Pacific or Nordics. The breadth of geographies is encouraging, considering that the most recent survey of startups and CAISH (Startup Muster, 2023; Ormiston et al., 2024) provides some important indicators:

- Only 14% of startups reported having international customers
- International customers were predominantly in the US, UK and New Zealand, with very limited expansion into Asia
- 80% of startups intended to internationalise in the next two years

Altogether, this suggests there is still a lot of work to be done to help startups get a toehold in international markets. That said, internationalisation is a form of scaling, and 'premature scaling' is a well-known cause of failure for startups.[19] While scaling is strongly encouraged, it is critical to avoid failing at scaling, so it is understandable if incubators push for internationalisation at an appropriate pace. An even more nuanced approach is to introduce internationalisation-readiness as early as possible, as suggested by one state-level incubation policymaker:

> *"It is really important to incorporate internationalisation at the very beginning of an Australian business. Not necessarily to go international early, but to ensure that the new products or services would be exportable. That is particularly the case of compliance with EU or US regulations. New software must comply with European GDPR rules, and have that from the start, or face being limited to Australia in the future. Similar with, say, electronics should be conceived to withstand the US and EU tests, not just the Australian ones, for future scalability. So, it's not necessarily pushing for internationalisation per se, but providing early legal and regulatory advice to ensure startups are future internationalisation capable." (Hubert Bastide, email exchange, 21 Mar 2024)*

6.7 Lessons 7: Data

For any formal policy evaluation, collecting timely and accurate data is important. Incubators in the ISP were provided a standard form to report on (see Appendices 1 and 2 in Australian Government, 2020c). The responses to these forms are not currently publicly available. Worth noting, many of the questions were counts from the perspective of the incubator that are largely indicative of the volume and diversity of activities. After the grid of quantitative questions, there are some open-ended questions about the ongoing impact, benefits and unexpected results. What is absent are questions from the perspective of the startups about the perceived value or impact of the activities and services offered. Getting high response rates and triangulating data from startups remains a challenge, as witnessed by Startup Muster's annual survey and more qualitative attempts (Ormiston et al., 2023). Some startups prefer to answer surveys by their incubator, while others would prefer if the survey were run by the government or an independent third party. Sources like Dealroom or Crunchbase are useful but have limited value due to their bias towards the US market and focus on venture backed startups, versus those that grow from revenues.

For comparability, it would also be wise to retain the contact details of applicants who applied for incubator support but did not receive it. Likewise, incubators could be asked to keep a list of startups who were not able to join their incubator to contact them as a comparison group.

6.8 Lesson 8: Sustainable Milestone-Based Funding

Governments have a role to play in steering industries, beyond enabling growth for growth's sake (Ben-Hafaïedh & Hamelin, 2021; Brown et al., 2017). Developing mission-oriented innovation policies can involve encouraging balanced economic growth (Autio & Rannikko, 2016; Edwards, 2021) and supporting goals like the UN Sustainable Development Goals, such as: (1) sustainable/social goals, (2) rural and

[19] https://startupgenome.com/articles/a-deep-dive-into-the-anatomy-of-premature-scaling-new-infographic

regional goals, (3) indigenous-oriented goals, (4) women-oriented goals, and (5) refugee/migrant-oriented goals.

The evaluation of the NZ Incubator Support Programme noted that incubators have a startup phase of about five years, and eight to ten years for them to become mature. A bespoke analysis by Startup Muster in 2021 on the survival of all incubators and accelerators participating in their 2016, 2017, and 2018 Startup Muster surveys indicated that at least 27% had closed, and only 22% could positively be verified to still be operating. To meaningfully support a given mission, funding would ideally be structured to support two or more business cycles. The Australian Incubator Support Programme funding for incubators was up to two years, and earlier state-based funding was also only on two-year terms. Multi-year funding may be structured as milestone-based funding, whereby low-performing incubators are asked to take an evidence-based approach to revising their approach before receiving the next round, and high-performing incubators get a reward for successful outcomes. Some argue that purely outcomes-based funding would be more effective, noting it is biased towards only those who can afford to independently start and operate for the first iteration. Timing of payments may also vary, such as quarterly installments, including depending on whether the funding is required upfront for capital expenditures, or over time for operations.

6.9 Lesson 9: Collaborative Policy Design

While many of the above lessons are general or highly contextual, the key lesson to bring them to life is to design policy with meaningful engagement with the sector. In the lead up to NISA, the hackathons revealed the diversity of policies affecting startups for the government to develop a coordinated and systems-based approach, with 24 policies. Such a process can be extended to each specific policy to try and anticipate challenges and shape policy design prior to its commencement. Even with such a collaborative or co-design approach at the start, a post-commencement review is advised, as is a full review upon policy completion. As a by-product of co-designing the policy, incubator operators can see and experience being part of a wider ecosystem, which opens doors for further specialisation and collaboration among incubators.

7 Overall issues with incubation and acceleration policy that are illustrated by this case

This case describes and analyses the design, evolution, and implementation of Australia’s Incubator Support Programme, while drawing on insights from similar incubator support programs in other countries and at the state level. The analysis reveals multiple issues with the Incubator Support Programme and the context in which it was launched:

- There are a wide range of business incubator models, each tailored to a specific context and purpose, such as regional economic development, specific sectors, marginalised communities, or international connections. And the business models of incubators change with the times (de Klerk et al., 2024), compounding the challenges with offering all incubators with the same guidelines and terms for grants.
- The quantum of funding for each incubator and especially the duration of it remains a challenge. One-off or even two-year grants are very short compared to time it takes for new incubators to become sustainable or established. Milestone- and outcomes-based funding over a longer period is recommended.
- The quantum of matched funding required, creates a bias towards incubators supported by larger organisations with deeper pockets, such as venture capital funds, large corporations, universities or even municipalities. Each supporter then also has their own bias of which type of startup or sector to support, or other agendas like regional development.
- The groundwork leading into the launch of the Incubator Support Scheme as one of 24 inter-related policies helped the government tailor the entire suite of policies to the startup and SME sectors. This is above and beyond the engagement that other policy development includes, and can still be built on for further co-design.
- The first generation of the rebirth of the incubator sector remained relatively independent of each other, with more competition than collaboration in the sector. This presents a missed opportunity to guide the sector as a whole, such as through a national association.

- Adding to the above, there remains a need for capacity building in the sector, such as training and professional development for incubator operators, preferably in a way that facilitates peer learning among a community of incubator operators. While adding an Expert-in-Residence stream addressed some capacity constraints, there are ways to further leverage the stream for the sector.
- Engaging Regional Incubator Facilitators to help develop applications was greatly appreciated by incubator operators to help navigate the bureaucracy.
- Governments will always have to decide how to shape policies and how much to step in to address market or coordination failures. This includes tailoring policies to support regions, minorities (e.g. first generation migrant and refugee founders), Sustainable Development Goals, or priority sectors. As argued extensively by Mazzucato (e.g. 2018), the planetary and societal health needs more mission-oriented policy.
- Internationalisation remains a necessity but also a risk challenge, if done prematurely.
- The crux to evidence-based policy is accurate and timely data about the impact of the program on its beneficiaries, ideally in comparison to the performance of those who applied but did not receive such funding. Further work remains to collect and analyse such data, whether directly from startups, via incubators, or through third parties like the Australian Tax Office and the data it makes available via the Australia Bureau of Statistics. This lack of a direct relationship between the ISP program administration and the startups, and thus timely and accurate data collection was echoed in direct email feedback from the federal innovation policy office.

The programme and how the team engaged with the startup sector demonstrated meaningful commitment by the Australian government. There remains debate whether the Incubator Support Programme should be revived at the federal level. Its closure has certainly not slowed the sector down; the sector has grown tremendously and benefited from support at the state levels.

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Appendix A – Approved New and Existing Incubator Projects

77 approved projects, as of February 2024. Grant amounts in the right-hand column exclude the matched funding provided by the applicant.

Round	Applicant Name	Project Title	Project Description	Project Location	Grant Amount (ex GST) in AUD
May 17	Paspalis Enterprises Pty Ltd	Darwin Innovation Hub	Paspalis Enterprise Trust will use grant funds to create Darwin's first Innovation Hub. Paspalis will utilise funds to develop a pipeline of start-ups in the Northern Territory, assist those start-ups commercialise their businesses in international markets and develop a culture of innovation in industry. A critical focus of Paspalis is to develop commercialisation in Asia Pacific and China and indigenous innovation.	Darwin, NT	$500,000
May 17	Flinders University	Advanced Manufacturing Incubator	The New Ventures Institute at Flinders University (NVI) will use grant funding to develop a program to assist innovative advanced manufacturing focused start-ups achieve commercial success in international markets. Through this project an international focused incubator program will be established that will be run for many years and provide long term benefits for the innovation ecosystem in Australia. The incubator program will be located in the Tonsley Innovation Precinct in Adelaide, SA and will be supported by some of the leading existing South Australian technology and advanced manufacturing companies who will mentor the participating start-ups.	Tonsley, SA	$196,265
May 17	Slingshot Accelerator Pty Ltd	I2N Regional Accelerator	The I2N Hunter Regional Accelerator is an initiative which adds a further critical element to the Hunter's innovation ecosystem by creating a program tailored to the unique character of the region at an exciting moment its history. Building on longstanding collaboration between Slingshot and the University of Newcastle, the I2N Hunter Regional Accelerator will identify, invest in and support up to 16 start-ups over 2 years. It will additionally run a pre-accelerator program designed for potential entrepreneurs at ideation stage. This initiative will enhance the local ecosystem by generating greater inter-disciplinary and intra-regional collaboration, with a focus on taking Hunter innovations to a global market.	Charlestown, NSW	$474,535
May 17	The Studio Limited	The Studio Incubator	As a new Australian incubator, The Studio will foster, support and enable innovative and new start-up enterprises in the media-tech and creative-tech space with a focus on assisting them to trade internationally. This support is a mix of incubator services; accelerator programs; specialist workshops, masterclasses and conferences; mentoring and business advice; links to private equity and capital; links to a global network of mentors, incubators, accelerators and creative tech hubs; access to facilities that support creative/media-tech initiatives such as test devices, new technologies, green screens, studio and editing facilities; and serious networking events.	Sydney, NSW	$500,000
May 17	Vektor Innovation Pty Ltd	Hardware Innovation for Global Startups	Introducing Brisbane's first large scale commercial makerspace: The Advance Innovation Hub. The Hub provides resources and technical knowledge to hardware-based start-ups. Resources include; advanced prototyping and manufacturing equipment, curated programs, hands-on training and industry mentorship. The Hub will provide access to innovative equipment and industry specialists to maximise the benefits to hardware start-ups seeking global expansion. Moving into the Fortitude Valley Start-up Precinct, the Advance Innovation Hub is connecting industry with hardware start-ups to facilitate the development of ground breaking innovations and building rapidly scalable businesses from the ground up.	Fortitude Valley, QLD	$268,674
Aug 17	FD Global Connections Pty Ltd	USA Accelerate Program – New York	The project consortium will use grant funds to create a highly curated program for start-up's ready to scale into New York, as the gateway to the potentially lucrative USA market.	Sydney, NSW	$ 73,000

Oct 17	The Flinders University of South Australia	eNVision Limestone Coast	eNVIsion Limestone Coast is a custom-made incubator in the southeast of South Australia delivering born-global new ventures and fast-tracking export start-ups. Centred at Mt Gambier, powered by Flinders New Venture Institute, it accesses a knowledge and asset base via a high speed digital bridge to the Tonsley Innovation Precinct. It localises award winning acceleration and innovation programs, delivers tailored workshops, and facilitates international investment via inbound and outbound study tours. eNVIsion Limestone Coast will see new ventures born global, and regional start-ups develop their global competitiveness in export markets.	Mt Gambier, SA	$500,000
Oct 17	Blue Chilli Technology Pty Ltd	SheStarts Global Growth Accelerator	Following on from the SheStarts accelerator for early-stage female-led start-ups, BlueChilli will use grant funds to create a structured alumni program for later-stage companies to develop skills for scaling their businesses and establishing distribution channels in the US and Asia. This program will support female founders to demonstrate global scale and international distribution opportunities in order to access Series A funding overseas. This program is about addressing the significant gaps in the pipeline for female founders, who remain grossly underrepresented in tech, particularly when it comes to accessing capital as they move from start-up to scale up.	Sydney, NSW Melbourne, VIC Fortitude Valley, QLD	$500,000
Oct 17	Collective Campus Pty Ltd	Corporate Accelerators powered by Collective Campus	Collective Campus will use grant funds to expand the scope and size of its upcoming Corporate Accelerator programs. The programs combine the domain expertise, networks and resources of large organisations with the agility of start-ups, increasing the likelihood of success. The accelerators condense 2 years of effort into a structured 13 week program and provides start-ups with guidance, mentorship, education, corporate support, co-working space access, networks and funding to underpin growth.		$500,000
Dec 17	Blackbird Startmate Ops Pty Ltd	Startmate – National Expansion of Australia's World Class Accelerator	Blackbird Startmate Ops will use grant funds to expand the scale and scope of its existing accelerator program. The project is focused on discovering Australian entrepreneurs. As part of the expanded program, they intend to deliver multiple roadshows across metro and regional locations in Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, Canberra and Brisbane.	Melbourne, VIC	$500,000
Dec 17	Fledge Innovation Labs Pty Ltd	Fledge Innovation Labs – Commercialising MedTech	FLEDGE has been established to support the design, development and commercialisation of medical devices by Australian start-ups. Co-located with CSIRO and the National Measurement Institute, FLEDGE provides a collaborative working space for 40 users, access to labs, cleanrooms, 3D metal printing, microscopy, metrology, and a Maker-Space equipped with state-of-the-art technologies such as 3D printers, laser cutters, prototyping and testing facilities. FLEDGE provides access to an extensive network of experienced founders, executives and mentors, as well as experts and industry leaders in MedTech and Venture Capital. FLEDGE also supports professional development opportunities for interns, through experiential learning on real-world projects.	Lindfield, NSW	$500,000
Feb 18	Petri Exchange Pty Ltd	Petri BioIncubate	Petri BioIncubate incubates biotechnology startups to support them as they successfully launch Australian biotechnologies in international markets. Petri BioIncubate gives significant mentoring through a structured 12 month program in IP strategy, market and competitor analysis, valuation and investor analysis, investor pitching and ensuring the best path to market. Petri BioIncubate also connects biotechnology startups with domestic and international investors, with a focus on Asian markets. Petri BioIncubate focuses on developing the skills of the project's startup co-founders and ensures that the biotechnologies being commercialised have significant global impact.	Sydney, NSW	$284,500
Feb 18	Innovyz Institute Pty Ltd	Innovyz Advanced Materials Program	Grant funding will be used to increase the number of companies that are created by Innovyz in a calendar year by running a second Innovyz program in 2018 focusing on advanced materials. Innovyz will travel to universities and research institutions in Australia with advanced material programs and meet with researchers and commercialisation arms to determine what research might be suitable for participation. 8-10 innovations will be selected according to the Innovyz process in conjunction with industry bodies. The Innovyz program will provide structure, governance, training in business skills and concepts, access to mentors and industry leaders, communication and pitching skills and introductions to investors and investment funds.	Clovelly Park, SA	$500,000

Feb 18	Australia China Technology Incubator Pty Ltd	Accelerating Medtech Startups in China's Healthcare Market	ACTI's Chinese partner JIMC will be investing $500,000 cash in the Project, $200,000 as direct investment into Australia, to fund 4 core programs as a seamless pathway into China, the 2nd largest healthcare market. These programs are - China Bootcamp; China Readiness; China Immersion; & China Residency. The first 2 programs develop executable market entry strategies to help 60+ medtech start-ups overcome risks & maximise success factors of China market entry. The remaining 2 programs cement these in-market linkages, as start-ups spend 3+ months in a JIMC incubator in China implementing market plans, receive in-market mentoring & build relationships to secure funding from JIMC s Angel Fund & achieve license or other export outcomes.	Melbourne, VIC	$500,000
Mar 18	The Actuator Operations Ltd	Scaling MedTech's Got Talent Regionally, Nationally & Globally	MedTech s Got Talent is Australia s premier and longest running MedTech entrepreneurship challenge and early-stage MedTech startup accelerator/catalyst. The program has rapidly built a thriving national MedTech community, galvanising an ecosystem that has otherwise remained fragmented, and bringing recognition to Australia s long-hidden strengths in medical technology innovation, commercialisation and advanced manufacturing. Now in its fourth year, MedTech s Got Talent is going regional, national and global. MTGT s goal is to help and inspire early-stage MedTech entrepreneurs and innovators, providing skills, opportunities and connections that translate into jobs, products, market success, exports and global healthcare impact.	Melbourne, VIC	$500,000
Apr 18	University of Wollongong - Bega	Bega Valley innovation hub – Fostering Regional Entrepreneurship	iAccelerate is Australia's most active start-up accelerator and incubator with a focus on developing regional entrepreneurial capabilities to stimulate new economic and job opportunities. iAccelerate is developing a Regional Entrepreneurial Ecosystem to provide access to iAccelerate's specialised programming and substantial growing support network across the region, Australia and internationally. Qualifying iAccelerate startups have access to the $10M iAccelerate Seed Fund that provides critical financial support that can be leveraged for further investment. In order to facilitate reaching entrepreneurs working across the region iAccelerate will support startup hubs in regional communities, the first of which will be the Bega Valley.	Bega, NSW	$382,000
May 18	University of Western Sydney	Launch Pad - Start-up SydWest	Western Sydney University's Launch Pad project involves supporting high level digital tech startup businesses across five sectors in Western Sydney to develop access to international markets with a focus on China, India and Vietnam. The project will run from 1 July 2017 to 30 September 2019. The Launch Pad project will engage 30 start-ups across three university campus sites and expand WSU's service offering by upscaling their current activities.	Western Sydney, NSW	$500,000
Jul 18	YBF Pty Ltd	YBF Mesh Building and Growing The World's First Dedicated Web 3.0 Hub	YBF will provide a platform to facilitate the web's next major iteration - the shift towards a decentralized web (Web 3.0). Start-ups will take advantage of YBF's established incubation and service offering which is what has made it Australia's go-to innovation hub since 2011. YBF Mesh will offer a dedicated co-working environment, advisory services, educational and networking events. In addition, it will provide access to influencers and leaders within the Web 3.0 ecosystem, a global network of investors, and to YBF's diverse network of corporate, government, and ecosystem partners. YBF seeks to provide a strong foundation for start-ups that wish to be a part of a global movement, enabling them to scale at home and internationally.	Melbourne, VIC	$500,000
Oct 18	Bridge Hub Pty Ltd	Regional agrifood tech innovation hub	The Bridge Hub (BH) is a regional agrifood tech innovation hub that will identify, test and commercialise ideas and technologies of Australian researchers and entrepreneurs. BH will be a collaborative program that brings together the 3 pillars of industry, research & government to create pathways to test and commercialise ideas and research for the benefit of farmers & consumers. It will provide support to Australian startups through all stages of the commercialisation process in collaboration with its ecosystem partners. BH will leverage partnerships with global innovation centres for Australian startups and will facilitate access to Australian farms, supply chain participants and food manufacturers to trial and validate new ideas and tech	Wagga Wagga, Sydney, NSW Tel Aviv, Israel	$500,000

Oct 18	Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast Pty Ltd	The Australian Health Accelerator (AH-x) program, Sunshine Coast	The Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast (IC) will deliver a new, structured six month AH-x program, to incubate 20+ international technology startups in health, wellbeing and med-tech (the largest employment industry sector in the region). AH-x can deliver a world class intensive program at the newest, most advanced $2B hospital in the Asia Pacific region ensuring quality startups exit with a fully validated business model (and advanced MVP), strong market traction and a defined, scalable pathway to international markets and investment. The AH-x goal is to deliver new capacity that helps develop, launch and scale high quality, investible international health related startup companies.	Sunshine Coast, QLD	$120,000
Oct 18	SpaceCubed Ventures Pty Ltd	Plus eight academy – pre-accelerator in Perth and regional WA	Spacecubed will use grant funds to expand its Plus Eight Accelerator Program to offer the Plus Eight Academy in Perth and regional Western Australia (incl. Geraldton, Bunbury and Port Hedland) to help startups participate in Australian innovation and develop skills to think globally. Plus Eight Academy is intended as a practical, fast-track education program targeted at early-stage Australian entrepreneurs designed specifically for the Western Australian ecosystem. It draws on real-world experience from mentors and contemporary models used by leading global startups to help the participants take an idea and turn it from concept to commercial reality. It features two programs targeted toward idea and early stage entrepreneurs.	Perth, Geraldton, Bunbury and Port Hedland, WA	$247,250
Dec 18	Deakin University	ManuFutures Export Acceleration Program (MEAP)	Deakin will use the grant funding to develop and deliver the ManuFutures Export Acceleration Program (MEAP) to enable the innovative emerging advanced manufacturing enterprises co-located in ManuFutures to strengthen their export focus and accelerate their entry into global markets. ManuFutures is a hub for innovation in the Geelong Economic Futures Precinct on the Waurn Ponds Campus. The program will offer business skills training, highly skilled mentors, project teams of Work Integrated Learning students and interns, and access to researchers from across the University as well as subsidised access to trade missions. The program will assist these enterprises to grow at an accelerated rate and produce for export earlier than usual.	Waurn Ponds, VIC	$500,000
Dec 18	The Energy Laboratory Ltd	National rollout of new EnergyLab incubator programs	The Energy Laboratory Ltd (Energy Lab) will use the grant funds to roll out their successful incubator program that has been operational in Sydney since early 2017 across Australia. Energy Lab plans to open up this program in Melbourne (VIC), Canberra (ACT), Hobart (TAS) and the regional area of Northern Rivers (NSW), in order bridge the gap of clean-tech start-up opportunity in Australia, and across the globe. The program will allow for the start-up businesses within the program to develop their ability to create sustainable clean-tech businesses within Australia, with hope of expanding these businesses into the international market as well.	Melbourne, VIC; Canberra, ACT; Hobart, TAS; Northern Rivers, NSW	$500,000
Jan 19	Hunter Business Centre Ltd	Start House: Developing diversity in innovation	The Business Centre currently provides mentoring and business education to entrepreneurs across northern NSW. Grant funds will support a scalable distributed accelerator model for regional founders at ideation, startup or scaleup phase. Based on last years proof of concept, the Start House project aims to accelerate business growth and success and decrease the likelihood of failure for up to 50 high growth potential businesses with a great idea that don't fit the profile of traditional for profit or University accelerator programs. With the Business Centres existing International networks, participants have the opportunity to scale globally under Hunter Business Centre's guidance.	Newcastle West, Singleton, Wyong, Salamander Bay, Forster and East Maitland NSW	$189,500
Jan 19	The University of New England	SRI AgTech Gateway: Global focus for Australian AgTech startups	The SRI AgTech Gateway program will support AgTech startups in the UNE SMART Region Incubator (SRI) to leverage commercial successes in Australia and develop international businesses. This program supports these early stage companies with a global network of expert mentors, specialist workshops and masterclasses, business development advice and facilitated introductions to sources of capital. Utilising the UNE Smart Farm to provide access to world-class agricultural researchers and facilities, the SRI AgTech Gateway brings together AgTech startups and agricultural producers, supported by experts to co-design, develop and translate on-farm trials through to adoption, and ultimately launch new AgTech solutions into the global marketplace.	Armidale NSW	$320,000

Jan 19	Clinic Media Pty Ltd	The business incubator for startups in organic innovation	Clinic Media Pty Ltd, trading as Venture Organic, will use grant funds to create a series of "innovation challenges" to identify and incubate startups designed to disrupt the international organic food industry by creating technologies, systems and products that enable exponential growth in organic food production, processing, distribution and consumer demand. The Venture Organic mission is: - to commercialise innovations that will enable organic food to become the mainstream, affordable and default choice for all consumers; - to make organic farming a preferred commercial option for farmers; - to position Australia as the world leader in organic innovation.	Mullumbimby NSW	$111,579
Jan 19	The University of Adelaide	ThincLab International Incubator Program: A pathway for global success	The University of Adelaide (UoA) will use funding to establish the ThincLab International Incubator Program to assist Australian startups with global expansion into Asia and Europe through the collaboration of industry partners and a world leading educational organisation. The goal of this project is to create an incubator program that will maximise the potential for global commercial success of Australian startups by developing their internationalisation readiness in Australia before embedding them in supported international ecosystems in France and Singapore. This will provide startups with access to global customers/markets and will help them overcome the lack of networks and support startups usually encounter in international markets.	Adelaide SA	$499,440
Jan 19	Vektor Innovation Pty Ltd	Arc hardware incubator - Hardware innovation for global startups	Arc will run five distinct programs over two years to support hardware startups looking to bring their innovation to the market. These are: 1. Startup Weekends 2. Pre-accelerator Programs 3. Post-accelerator Programs 4. International Investor Trips 5. Pitch Nights Because of its available cutting-edge prototyping equipment and product commercialisation know-how, Arc is best positioned to support high growth companies developing technologies in the Internet of Things and robotics space (this includes: automation, artificial intelligence and sensor related tech). The programs are designed to provide startups with resources and support throughout four main stages: 1. Product Design and Development 2. Market Fit and Strategy 3. Manufacturing 4. Investment and Sales	Fortitude Valley QLD	$496,800
Jan 19	Agristart Pty Ltd	CONNECT: Regional Innovation Hubs	CONNECT: Regional Innovation Hubs is a centrally managed incubator model that will scale start-ups in three high growth regional areas of Western Australia through the design and delivery of structured training, mentoring and networking events. External expertise will be purposefully brought to each region with a focus on training local innovation facilitators and developing long-term connections to start-up capital investment markets. These incubation activities will leverage our proven expertise in scaling existing start-ups, whilst developing new start-ups and fostering collaboration between regional entrepreneurs with Perth and key international markets.	Busselton, Albany and Northam WA	$485,000
Feb 19	Rockhampton Regional Council	SmartHub Rockhampton turbo-traction lab	The Turbo-Traction Lab – Build a Modern Business in 80 Days is a structured 'hands-on' program designed to: - Build entrepreneurial capacity and skills in our region; - Help founders to gain traction; and - Deliver to the entrepreneurs in the Rockhampton region first-hand experience in the global marketplace. Co-ordinated and run by an Entrepreneur in Residence and facilitated together with seven other subject experts, the 80-day workshop style/hands on program delivered with a 'lab' mindset will assist and guide participants in practically building their modern businesses.	Rockhampton, QLD	$500,000

Feb 19	Cicada Innovations Pty Ltd	Rapid prototyping space and design thinking capabilities for start-ups	Presently our startups are relying on overseas entities to provide prototyping services which severely impacts and slows product design, iterating and testing together with compromising IP. To solve for this, we propose to set-up and manage a rapid prototyping learning space inside Cicada - home to Australia's largest community of deep tech entrepreneurs - and foster a collaborative community of deep tech innovators by delivering targeted design thinking programs to effectively support and direct prototyping activities. The project will enable Cicada to rapidly roll out the initiative to 120 participants impacting up to 20 established early-stage start-ups and a further 40 new businesses progressing through accelerator programs in 2019.	Eveleigh, NSW	$316,906
Feb 19	Central Highlands Development Corporation Ltd	AgFrontier: new agtech incubator for regional and remote start-ups	The Central Highlands Development Corporation (CHDC), with partner X-Labs, will establish a new Regional Agtech Incubator (AgFrontier) specifically designed for startups who live and operate in our key catchment area, the inland regional corridor, of Queensland and Northern NSW, and who have a deep and practical understanding of agriculture and agricultural supply chains. Combining X-Labs startup network and tech ecosystem with CHDC s agribusiness leadership and expertise, AgFrontier s unique model will provide these regionally-based startups with the opportunity to work and grow in a dedicated Incubator program to become confident participants in global markets.	Emerald QLD and Mungindi NSW	$405,000
Feb 19	University of South Australia	Innovation and Collaboration Centre (ICC) Whyalla - a hub for regional SA	Grant funding will be used to create a new regional Innovation and Collaboration Centre in Whyalla (ICC Whyalla). This hub will be a node of the Adelaide based ICC – a successful tripartite model between the University of SA (UniSA), the State Government of SA and industry partners. ICC Whyalla will create a dynamic pathway for innovative start-ups to reach their global capacity by providing a dedicate coworking space and program of support, combined with fast gigabit network speeds and injecting expert mentors. Based on the Adelaide experience, the Whyalla business community will benefit from a suite of training forums led by professionals with a track record of driving a local innovation into an international market.	Whyalla and Adelaide, SA	$500,000
Mar 19	Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship Limited	Breakout accelerator	Breakout Accelerator is a collaboration between Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (ACRE) and SecondMuse. Centred around the creation of a new incubator at the Old Beechworth Gaol, Breakout is designed to leverage regional, national and international networks in order to open up and introduce regional and rural start-up entrepreneurs to the broad innovation ecosystem. Combining SecondMuse s network-centred methodology with ACREs deep understanding of rural enterprise capacity building, we will build an accelerator for 10 start-ups from rural and regional Victoria and Southern New South Wales to develop and grow their businesses, and give them access to new domestic and international markets.	Beechworth, VIC	$491,100
Mar 19	Australian Computer Society Incorporated	River City Labs (RCL) Scale-Ups - supporting entrepreneurs to scale businesses globally	Australian Computer Society, Australia's leading professional ICT association with River City Labs (RCL) Scale-Ups seeks mid-late stage start-ups to join our accelerator in the heart of the business/tech area of Barangaroo. With access to a network of 45,000 tech professionals across industry, government, research organisations and education institutions in Australia and abroad, founders will undertake a structured program with our partners Founders Space in San Francisco and RCL. The focus is on developing business maturity through our extensive networks in Australia and abroad. Our goal is to create value for founders, to help them develop unique commercial export products to go to market and to retain highly technical jobs and skills in the Australian economy.	Sydney, NSW	$500,000
Mar 19	Core Hub Pty Ltd	Strategic pathways for new enterprise in the resources and energy sector	CORE seeks to use the Incubator Support grant funding to develop, deliver and scale a series of structured support and growth pathways for start-up businesses in the resources and energy sector from 2019-2020. The strategic pathways for new enterprise in the resources and energy sector program will build the knowledge, networks and skills to enable 50-100 start-up technology businesses to access customers and mentors, demonstrate products and services, and access investment to ensure Australias position as a global resources and energy technology leader.	Perth, WA and Brisbane, QLD	$429,000

Mar 19	Farmers2Founders Pty Ltd	Farmers2Founders: supporting producer-led agriculture and food technology start-ups	Farmers2Founders (F2F) is a new incubator designed to support Australian primary producers in developing new agriculture technology/food technology and food ventures. Primary producers have critical domain knowledge that is currently not leveraged in agriculture technology. F2F is designed to build entrepreneurship and business capabilities for producers, equipping them to become successful, investible founders and/or members of new ventures. F2F's pre-accelerator and accelerator programs will be mainly delivered in regional locations and will include tools, resources, and coaching/mentoring based on design thinking and lean start-up. F2F will also connect participants to global agricultural technology/food technology accelerators and investors to support commercialisation into international markets.	Manly, NSW; Yungaburra, QLD; Churchill, VIC; Armidale, NSW; Sippy Downs, QLD and Albany, WA	$376,285
Mar 19	Realtechx Pty Ltd	RealTech Accelerator - Commercial impact for real estate start-ups	The RealTech Accelerator will support Australian RealTech start-ups with their go-to-market execution including a focus on international expansion. The term RealTech describes technology start-ups working in urban planning, architecture, construction, development, real estate, energy, mobility, infrastructure and smart assets, precincts and cities. The accelerator will offer an integrated 10-week program that includes seed investment, capability development, start-up coaching, industry mentoring, strategic customer introductions and an international linkages tour. Start-ups participating in the accelerator will graduate with a validated go-to-market plan, new commercial opportunities and an entry strategy plan for an overseas market.	Sydney, NSW	$440,450
Jul 19	Melt Accelerator Pty Ltd	Melt accelerator and incubator - growing and scaling hardware start-ups	The Melt Project will be Australia's first fully integrated hardware technology hub combining three elements, a hardware accelerator, an incubator and a large industrial co-working/production lab where Start-ups will learn, create, commercialise and scale. The Melt accelerator and incubator programs will revolutionise the way hardware Start-ups prove, prototype, pilot and produce globally scalable products and companies. The Melt harnesses the collective experience, knowhow, capability and capacity of three Hunter region based companies including; Melt Accelerator: focussed on growing/scaling Australian hardware Startups for international success Ampcontrol: a 50 yr old electrical engineering company Dantia: Lake Macquarie s Economic Development Company.	Warners Bay, NSW	$500,000
Jul 19	Cyrise Accelerator Pty Ltd	World-class cyber bootcamps for aspiring startup founders	CyRise will use grant funds to create a five day Cyber Bootcamp program for aspiring cybersecurity founders to be delivered in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra between June and September 2019 to develop skillsets needed to build and grow a global startup - create connections to potential co-founders and the wider cyber startup community - build solid foundations for international growth. These Bootcamps will improve the quality and quantity of future cybersecurity founders in these markets, and ensure that the resulting start-ups are operating from a disciplined place of knowledge and improve their likelihood of future global success.	Docklands, VIC	$106,025
Jul 19	Canobolas Ventures Pty Ltd	Sparklabs Cultiv8 Stretch	Cultiv8 are developing this stretch program to support a wider group of start-ups across the full growth lifecycle. The stretch program will provide the connections and network that growing start-ups need to succeed, including access to leading investors, researchers, customers and other key stakeholders. We also have continuous sessions with our mentors covering areas like product development and resource planning, operations and hiring, legals and intellectual property protection, growth hacking, investor readiness and pitching. Our philosophy is driven by our 150+ strong network of mentors from different sectors and locations around the globe.	Orange, NSW	$430,379
Sep 19	Enterprize Tasmania Ltd	Enterprize Tasmania: Born global incubator program	Enterprize Born Global Incubator program will build on a pilot to develop an incubator program for Tasmanian tech startups to develop the skills, knowledge and business models to successfully sell their products and services into international markets. The 14-week program will accelerate the startups' development utilising the latest global best practice startup training. Nothing like this exists in Tasmania and this program will allow Enterprize to develop local capability to deliver high quality startup programs. The program has been designed by entrepreneurs with international experience and will be delivered from the Enterprize Hubs in Hobart and Launceston, and also Burnie.	Launceston and Hobart, TAS	$442,247

Oct 19	University of New South Wales	Health 10x program – solving for NCD challenge globally	Health 10x program is accelerating start-ups, developing solutions for non-communicable diseases (NCD's) with particular focus on emerging markets as this is where the growing demand for these solutions will be. Health 10x builds on existing initiatives delivered by UNSW's Entrepreneurship Unit. TGI complements this model with their extensive global network, healthcare expertise with particular focus on managing NCD's in emerging markets. TGI have extensive experience in management of large-scale clinical trials and regulatory requirements. Health 10x will use grant funds to roll out its comprehensive program to support commercialisation of innovations for the fastest growing healthcare markets in the world.	Sydney, NSW	$295,000
Nov 19	The Trustee for MacTavish West Family Trust No. 1	SeedLab Tasmania: Tasmanian food, drink & agri start-ups to export	SeedLab Tasmania will support and empower entrepreneurial startups in the food, drink and agri-food/tourism sectors to be export-ready and to craft compelling business models. A network of experts, resources and market insights are being cultivated to accelerate these ventures towards exports, and high wage jobs in regional Tasmania. A three-stage curriculum (Germinate, Cultivate and Propagate), will offer up to 216 startups the skills, tools, connections and access to specific resources (as required by the stage of their venture). SeedLab Tasmania will deliver a pipeline of startups that have 'born global' visions, the creation of many new and improved exportable products, and businesses more confident and ready to accelerate growth.	South Hobart, Launceston, Sandy Bay, TAS	$463,100
Nov 19	Latrobe City Council	Startup Gippsland helps regional founders grow global businesses	Startup Gippsland will build the region's capability to start & scale international businesses. 1. Accelerating the progress of early-stage startups to scale-up & trade internationally. By delivering a 12-week preaccelerator program for 10-12 startups per council & a 12-week accelerator for 12-15 more advanced startups across the region. Programs will include: Masterclasses run by program facilitators alongside guest speakers such as specialists & founders Weekly 1:1 mentoring with a Gippsland business leader or program alumni Presenting at a local pitch showcase with the chance to be selected into the top 2 & go on to the Gippsland-wide final 6 month postprogram support including monthly cohort catch ups & mentoring. 2. Strengthening the funnel of early-stage startups by delivering public events including: 3 themed meetups to inspire startups to think on an international scale, build their capability, & network to find collaboration opportunities 6 standalone workshops to help founders build foundation skills to scale upon. 3. Amplifying startup support networks from the wider community by delivering 3 community campaigns around: Displaying traction & international growth with program alumni inspiring future founders to think on an international scale through current participants, and building community capability.	Morwell, Wonthaggi, Sale, Leongatha, Drouin, Bairnsdale, VIC	$399,498
Nov 19	La Trobe University	Global markets accelerator program	The Global Markets Accelerator Program is an innovative initiative, which intends to accelerate the growth and commercialisation potential of Australian startups. With a proven track record and an established network, the La Trobe Regional Accelerator Program (LTAP) has partnered with three international accelerators to deliver this initiative. The program will benefit from LTAP's strong regional footprint (in particular: Albury-Wodonga, Bendigo, Mildura, Shepparton, Melbourne & Sydney) to provide a platform & close mentoring to nurture & develop regional startups into becoming global and commercially independent. This program will focus on the 3 main strengths of La Trobe University - Health and wellbeing, Agri-Food, Cybersecurity and ICT.	Bundoora, West Wodonga, Bendigo, Mildura, Shepparton VIC, Belgium, Singapore, Jakarta	$337,800
Dec 19	Antler Innovation Pty Ltd	Individuals at idea-stage form world-class founder teams and start-ups	Antler Australia is part of Antler Global, a worldwide startup generator that selects impressive individuals to become founders capable of capturing international markets. Antler's mission is to develop Australia's best talent into founders of innovative and data-driven startups focused on international trade. We select the most brilliant and determined individuals and will co-found 150 to 200 startups within our incubator Program over the next five years. To internationally scale our startups, Antler Australia leverages the global Antler team and our international resources and mentor network in the USA, South-East Asia, the Nordics, UK, the Netherlands, and East Africa.	Sydney, NSW	$350,000

Mar 20	Social Impact Hub	Scaling impact: impact investment readiness for social start-ups	Scaling Impact, a new initiative of the Social Impact Hub, will use grant funds to run (1) an accelerator program for cohorts of social start-ups to support their impact investment readiness and grow and scale their impact internationally, including masterclasses, tailored advisory support and mentoring; (2) longer-term support for a smaller subset of social start-ups to raise capital. The initiative is focused on addressing the needs of social start-ups at a crucial point in their development - where support services are currently lacking - the inflection point between building a proven track record and preparing to take on investment.	Sydney, NSW Melbourne, VIC	$385,000
Mar 20	Maker & Co Collective Pty Ltd	Maker Nest: space and time for start-ups to hatch, grow and fly.	Maker Nest has been designed to create the optimum social, cultural and economic environment for ideas and enterprise to grow and take flight. Tiered incubation programs will realise Maker + Co's vision of creating a better, smarter future by connecting a global community of inventors, creatives, entrepreneurs and innovators. Our inherently creative programs will champion and commercialise the value of innovation and social, cultural and economic sustainability to create a better future for generations to come.	Bunbury, WA	$206,050
Mar 20	Compton School Pty Ltd	TENACITY NETWORK. Learning. Empowerment. Opportunity	TENACITY NETWORK is an incubator for creative professionals living and working in regional Australia. Run over nine months, Tenacity offers participants a series of workshops and a community, on and offline, where they can build new networks, learn new skills, start new creative ventures and discover how to take them to the world. A collaboration between Compton School, four regional partners and four major screen production houses, Tenacity is the first iteration of a continuing annual program designed to deliver learning, empowerment and connection to creative people living regionally, and to incubate successful and innovative creative start-ups.	Wagga Wagga, Sydney, Broken Hill, Castlemaine, Launceston	$173,207
Jun 20	The Storyboxes Pty Limited	PopLabs: An incubator for creative start-ups	Poplabs is an incubator for founders building creative businesses focused on storytelling and social impact. Stories are told through films, documentaries, podcasts, VR, AR and Apps. Poplabs brings agile and lean methodologies to the creative industry for early market-validation making a currently unsustainable sector, sustainable. Poplabs will globally scale these start-ups and their first saleable product. PopLabs will help them structure their business and strategy, prepare a pitch deck for the company and sizzle reel for their first product, and then pitch with them to their international network. Open data will be used to track social impact change, simultaneously building creative business and Australia's knowledge economy.	Brisbane	$241,624
Jun 20	Health Management Pty Ltd	Launch FNQ Incubator program for accelerating technology start-ups	YEP Cairns will use grant funds to develop and deliver Launch FNQ Startup incubator program for technology startups. The program is an entrepreneur-centred, unique and world-class bespoke, competency-based curriculum which will be delivered to innovative startups in Cairns. The personalised program will give founders the skills they need to grow their businesses to enter new markets, access capital investment and acquire customers to build a sustainable business. YEP Cairns will foster the innovation ecosystem in the Far North Queensland region through complementary activation events combined with startup ideation, startup education and pre-accelerator programs.	Cairns	$325,000
Jun 20	Canvas Coworking Inc.	FLAIR Incubator: Female Led Aspiring International Regional businesses	Canvas Coworking Inc. will use grant funds to establish the FLAIR Incubator for five female-led, regionally based businesses that aspire to trade internationally. The program will be delivered in-person and virtually in order to overcome barriers to participation by regional women. It is designed in response to a lack of entrepreneurial support for regional women and in order to develop diversity business opportunities in a drought-stricken region. The 16-week program will be tailored to the cohort and designed to develop entrepreneurial skills, behaviours and connections locally and internationally, that will enable them to confidently launch or grow their business into an international market.	Toowoomba	$86,450
Jun 20	Collective Campus Pty Ltd	Corporate startup partnership programs (CSSP)	Since 2016, Collective Campus has been partnering startups with corporates. We have worked with the likes of Mills Oakley, Charter Hall, BNZ, Lufthansa, Microsoft, Village Roadshow, NTUC Income and local government councils and partnered them with over 50 startups from across Australia. CSSP is about identifying key challenges and problems that large organisations face with solutions that start-ups and scale-ups can deliver. It's about plugging real problems with real solutions in order to deliver immediate benefit to both the sponsor corporates and the startups/scale-ups. The latter get revenue, case studies and testimonials, whereas the former get working solutions. We will use these funds to double our efforts & impact in this space.	Melbourne	$310,000

Jul 20	SBE Australia Limited	Early stage accelerator program expansion, and hybrid online program	SBE Australia is a not-for-profit accelerating women entrepreneurs. Our programs provide the skills, knowledge, confidence and networks required to grow and scale their businesses in a sustainable manner, with specific emphasis on capital raising and international expansion. Our programs support high-growth potential, women-led businesses, and take no equity. To date, SBE Australia programs have enabled founders to raise more than $458m to grow their businesses. This new funding will expand SBE Australia initiatives in a targeted way to address key opportunities for Australia: - Early Stage program (E3) Expansion - Development of a Hybrid Online/Face to Face program for regional Australia.	Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, Armidale, Adelaide, Perth	$250,000
Aug 20	Insurtech Gateway Australia Pty Limited	The fastest place to build and launch your insurtech idea to the world	Gateway is a specialised incubator for early stage startups. After originally launching in London & proving the model we now have a Gateway Australia. The insurance industry has signicant barriers to entry & has remained fundamentally unchanged for >100 years. Founders too often run out of energy & money trying to get in. We are seeking key support from the grant funds to contribute working capital. We help derisk startups and achieve successful pilots through 5 features: regulatory permissions (world's 1st authorised incubator); access to insurance capacity; investment capital; a 3 month incubation program; & facilitated international scaling via the Gateway & GITA network. We quantify the incremental gains @ >$195k per insurtech.	Sydney, Murrarie, Coffs Harbour	$250,000
Nov 20	Hatch Quarter Pty Ltd	MENA Bridge For Startups	Middle East and North Africa (MENA) ecosystem. The project harnesses the experiences and connections of Hatch Quarter and Mo Works within MENA to deliver a world-class program to assist Australian startups in connecting with and expanding to the MENA region. By the end of the 24 months project, a total of 20 startups will partake in the accelerator program, and 4 startups will be further shortlisted as finalists for the in-market experience. HQ will utilise its experience in engaging with first-generation migrants and refugees entrepreneurs to attract diverse teams to participate in the program.	Melbourne	$250,000
Nov 20	Western Sydney University	Start-up SydWest – Global Connections Accelerator	Western Sydney University's Launch Pad Technology Business Incubator is seeking funding support from the Incubator Support Initiative to establish the "Startup SydWest-Global Connections" (Global Connections) Tech startup Accelerator program. This new accelerator will build on the previous SydWest accelerator program funded by ISI but with a specific focus on supporting first generation, migrant and refugee tech start-ups (multi-cultural start-ups). The initiative will seek to attract and support multi-cultural start-ups with high growth potential to further develop Western Sydney's innovation ecosystem and create high-value jobs for the Western Sydney region. Over a 6 month period, the accelerator will develop and launch 20 new multi-cultural start-up businesses with a focus on developing international market opportunities. Based on previous Launch Pad accelerator outcomes, the program will reasonably aim to create 20-30+ new high-value jobs and establish export-oriented businesses that will add substantial value to the Australian economy.	Kingswood, NSW	$250,000
Nov 20	Co Hort Space Pty Ltd	LuminaX: health and wellness start-ups accelerator	The project objectives are to develop and facilitate the first health and wellness specialised accelerator program on the Gold Coast. The program aims to validate and commercialise up to ten internationally oriented start-ups. Key activities are the provision of co-working: access to hospitals, laboratories, and units; connections to leaders within the health industries; mentoring; coaching; workshops; international market access and connections; exposure to investors; and rewards. The program also enables COHORT to develop an innovative start-ups ecosystem, build sustainability and start-ups attraction. Also, lead the start-ups health innovation by leveraging the existing resources on the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct.	Southport, QLD	$150,003
Nov 20	The Corporation of the City of Adelaide	The Smart City Support Program	The City of Adelaide and 10 partner organisations will use funding to establish The Smart City Support Program.The Program is designed to unlock industry development and economic growth by creating opportunities for urban technology trials in Adelaide. The Program will allow for startups to access public infrastructure and services owned by local government. This will assist startups by providing faster pathways to market as well as resources to expand internationally. The result will be more startups focused on creating smart cities. This is achieved through the use of data and technology to create efficiencies, improve sustainability, create economic development and enhance the quality of life for people in cities.	Adelaide SA	$190,400

Nov 20	Bega Valley Shire Council	Bega Valley Innovation Hub 2.0	Bega Valley Innovation Hub (BVIH) 2.0 will build on and expand the BVIH 1.0, a proven successful regional innovation incubator model. BVIH 2.0 will expand it's reach to neighbouring LGA's and industry sponsors within the Canberra Joint Organisations region. Through the continued partnership with University of Wollongong (UoW) Bega Campus & Bega Cheese, BVIH.20 will provide a structured pathway for regional business owners to access the UoW iAccelerate specialised Activate program and will now also include access to iAccelerates Grow program. Delivering 36 licences over two years through 2 structured Incubator Programs with cohort-based entry and exit, co-working, mentoring and access to growing national and international Innovation Network.	Bega, NSW	$250,000
Dec 20	Climate-KIC Australia Ltd	Climate Launchpad Australia	ClimateLaunchpad (CLP) is a pre-accelerator program for climate start-ups. Its mission is to unlock the global potential for cleantech to address climate change and help to fast track ideas into businesses. Climate-KIC Australia (KIC) runs the annual program in Australia in collaboration with partners to provide an opportunity for entrepreneurs and start-ups to connect to a global network of investors, accelerators and market opportunities. The program is structured as a competition and provides training, mentoring and pitching opportunities at a state, national and global level to help participants grow their concept into a sustainable business.	Sydney Brisbane Melbourne Bentley, WA	$202,226
Dec 20	Connections 4 You Pty Ltd	Next Generational Entrepreneur	This proposal is to deliver a First-Generation Entrepreneur Program (Generation Entrepreneur) by Connections, a migrant-focused organisation, in collaboration with InQ Innovation Global (InQ), a well-established global incubator program, and MultiConnexions (MCX), Australia's leading multicultural marketing and cross-cultural agency. This partnership proposes to collaborate with eco-system partners to provide Australia's first-generation entrepreneurs, start-ups a unique one-stop innovation ecosystem to incubate, scale and launch their projects globally.	Sydney	$100,000
Jan 21	Enterprising Partnerships Pty Ltd	Regional Globalisation Incubator	Enterprising Partnerships will work with startups, with special focus on first-generation migrants and refugees, to enable their development of global mindsets and capabilities to access international markets EP will work with 10 Scalable Founders in regional Victoria every six months over two years for a period of 12 – 16 weeks per series to overcome: 1. A lack of information about markets, cultures, contacts, jurisdictional processes, etc; 2. A lack of experience of export processes; 3. A lack of knowledge about international support measures; 4. A lack of knowledge of how to utilise technologies to set up online sales into international markets; 5. A lack of an overall supportive regional ecosystem for scalability to globalisation.	Yarraville (VIC) Churchill (VIC) Mount Helen (VIC) West Wodonga (VIC)	$250,000
Jan 21	Griffith University	Homebase	Homebase will be an inclusive and impact-led business incubator. By 'impact-led', we mean businesses that create both social and economic value. By 'inclusive', we mean serving the rich diversity of the Logan region, especially migrant and minority groups. To maximise accessibility and impact, Homebase will offer three tiers of development support: 1. Community entrepreneurship education 2. Business design and start-up accelerator 3. Growth Lab for businesses looking to scale locally and internationally. Homebase will build entrepreneurship capability, foster new businesses, unlock investment, and create decent jobs in the region.	Meadowbrook, QLD	$250,000
Jul 21	Creative Industries Precinct Pty Ltd	Market Entry Accelerator	The Market Entry Accelerator supports Australian FMCG businesses to enter the UK market through, support to help companies build and execute a market entry strategy, invaluable UK insight and guidance and a curated trade mission, including an exclusive opportunity to secure a launch partner, by pitching to Sainsbury's, a leading British supermarket. The program has been written and delivered by the co-creator of Virgin StartUp, and therefore offers current, relevant and deep UK knowledge and connections to participants. Following the successful trial of the program in Queensland, EP funding will allow delivery of this program Australia-wide, and will build pathways for promising FMCG companies that want to establish themselves in the UK.	Kelvin Grove, QLD	$178,000
Jul 21	Runway Geelong Limited	New Regional Incubator Programs & Expansion of International Network	Runway is seeking support from the Federal Incubator Support Program to deliver a targeted cohort for Refugee and / or Migrant entrepreneurs over a 24 months period as part of a new incubator program offering titled "Ready", "Set", "Grow". Runway is also seeking support to further extend on its international network of partners, experts, mentors and advisers. Runway is targeting engaging at least 156 Refugee and / or Migrant entrepreneurs across 48 program instances and targeting the addition of at least 50 new partners. These activities are expected to create at least 112 new jobs and $36.9M+ in economic benefit.	North Geelong	$250,000

Jul 21	Wolfpack Space Hub Pty Ltd	Australia's first dedicated incubator for space technology start-ups	Saber Astronautics with TCG® Group aim to expand the offered services of the existing successful incubator Wolfpack Space Hub, and further assist existing and new space start-ups to develop capabilities that will help them succeed. The new services will encourage and support entrepreneurs to enter the space industry, develop capabilities and achieve commercial success nationally and globally, and contribute towards the Australian space industry and innovation ecosystem. The grant will boost the effectiveness of the Hub in incubating space start-up companies focused on deep tech manufacturing, like satellites and space robotics, currently is NOT available in Australia.	Chippendale, NSW	$249,868
Jul 21	Moonshot Space Company Pty Ltd	Moonshot Space Elevator 2021	Moonshot supports remarkable people to commercialise new technologies into international markets. We have close working relationships with organisations across the globe such as US and European space-tech investor networks, space agencies from our own Australian Space Agency to NASA and ESA, and to powerful organisations such as Airbus, Virgin Galactic and SpaceX. Support from the Incubator Support Scheme will enable us to upskill and coach at least 20 Australian space-tech startups so they can take advantage of our global networks and build their businesses.	Sydney, NSW	$250,000
Jul 21	ACH Australia Pty Ltd	Startupbootcamp EnergyNext - Australian Stream	Startupbootcamp EnergyNext - Australian Stream (SBC EnergyNext-AS) will support Australia's ambition to become an energy superpower by selecting and developing leading Australian startups to address key opportunities and challenges in the energy sector.	Melbourne, VIC	$250,000
Jul 21	The Energy Laboratory Ltd	New acceleration program to help Cleantech startups expand internationally	The Incubator Support grant will enable EnergyLab to launch a new acceleration program focussed on helping cleantech startups raise capital and expand internationally. Cleantech startups in Australia face barriers to achieving these goals that the program has been designed to help them overcome.	Chippendale, NSW Melbourne, VIC Brisbane, QLD	$100,000
Jan 22	Arrow Internet Pty Ltd	The Big LEAP Incubator Program for Migrant Entrepreneurs	Arrow Digital in partnership with enterprise delivery teams from LaTrobe University, Investible and T-Hub (India) will deliver a new incubator program for first generation migrant entrepreneurs. With a strong focus on entrepreneurs in regional communities who have a validated product, the incubator will foster and facilitate the development of their businesses internationally and in particular South East Asian markets.	Melbourne, VIC Sheppartin, VIC Flora Hill, VIC	$249,200
Jan 22	Atomic Sky Pty Ltd	QuantumTX Australia	A structured incubation program delivering capability building, investment attraction and opportunities in the international space & technology sector for Australian tech startups. Expanding the Australian space sector ecosystem by accelerating regionally-based or first-generation migrant Founders to Start Something, and incubating scale of tech startups from automation, remote operations, robotics and computing to Fast Forward their startups into international space sector supply chains. The project includes workshops, mentoring, online training portal access, space sector industry speed-dating and networking, and a number of international space & technology forums and showcase events.	Perth, WA Fortitude Valley, QLD Adelaide, SA	$250,000
Jan 22	Hydraco Australia Pty Ltd	FOMENT - Australia's Viti, Wine and Tourism Revolution	FOMENT is a vertically focussed accelerator fosters the next generation of tech for viticulture, wine and tourism in Australia. Tech developed here will benefit local industry. It will lift the profile of Australia's wine and tourism globally as that tech is exported to the world and increase inbound investment. Delivered by Flinders University New Venture Institute (NVI), Wine Industry Suppliers Australia (WISA) and Hydra Consulting, FOMENT offers intensive support to Viti, Wine or Tourism Tech start-ups to scale up their business to take their innovation to Australia and the world. This project involves growing our offering including an expanded Accelerator Program, a new coaching stream for migrant founders and a new Alumni program.	Tonsley, SA Clovelly Park, SA	$100,250

Jan 22	Logan City Council	USA Market Access Program	Logan City Council, supported by its membership with the Los Angeles-based Network for Global Innovation, will deliver the USA Market Access Program through The coLab Growth Centre in the City of Logan. The incubator will build the capability of scaling ventures to enter the USA market, providing the programming, connections and practical support for scale-ups ready for significant domestic and/or international expansion. The City of Logan is home to people from 217 different cultural backgrounds, so our firm goal over time is for a minimum of 30% of companies participating in the incubator to be migrant/refugee-led start-ups. The incubator will run over 8 months. It is a unique initiative for an Australian local government.	Underwood, QLD	$250,000
Jan 22	Food Futures Company Pty Ltd	Food Futures Impact Incubator: International Growth Pathways	Food Futures Company has developed a framework for a fully integrated Incubator service that is focused on identifying and supporting Australian agrifood tech and innovation startups looking to create impact and to scale globally. The suite of programs supports startups as they progress from early ideas stage through to capital raising and internationalisation. This project covers 2 new programs: ScaleUP Catalyst for later stage startups looking to scale and raise investment and GROW2Asia for startups ready to internationalise. A key design element is on promoting diversity in the agrifood innovation ecosystem with project targets related to: female founders; migrant and refugee entrepreneurs; and Indigenous-led startups.	Callala Beach, NSW Churchhill, VIC Dubbo, NSW Ourimbah, NSW	$250,000
Jan 22	77 Partners Pty Ltd	77 Venture Challenge - Enabling Industrial Tech Ventures	The 77 Venture Challenge is a 3 month program designed for tech ventures preparing to raise early stage funding, scale commercial operations, and enter international markets.	Fortitude Valley, QLD	$250,000

Appendix B – Approved Expert-in-Residence Projects

129 approved projects, as at February 2024. Grant amounts in the right-hand column exclude the matched funding provided by the applicant.

Round	Applicant Name	Project Title	Project Location	Grant Amount (ex GST)
Jan 17	Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast Pty Ltd	Expert Mentoring, Workshops & Connections for Sunshine Coast Startups	Sippy Downs, QLD	$25,000
Jan 17	Creative Industries Precinct Pty Ltd	Creative industry CEO's Business Accelerator Series	Kelvin Grove, QLD	$10,000
Feb 17	Collective Campus Pty Ltd	Mentoring and office hours for Australian startups from StartupGrind	Melbourne, VIC	$25,000
Mar 17	Innovation NQ Inc.	Entrepreneur in Residence (JCU / iNQ)	Townsville, QLD	$25,000
Mar 17	Spacecubed Innovation Ltd	Plus Eight International Accelerator: Expert in Residence	Perth, WA	$25,000
Jun 17	Rockhampton Regional Council	Rockhampton Smart Hub Startup Club Lean Launch Pad mentoring program	Rockhampton, QLD	$15,325
Jun 17	Centre for Entrepreneurial Research and Innovation Limited	IP Strategy: Developing long-term product development goals	Nedlands, WA	$11,519
Jun 17	The University of New England	Mentoring and workshops for agribusiness startups	Armidale, NSW	$25,000
Jul 17	Creative Universe Pty Limited	Mentoring & workshops for startups & entrepreneurs from USA AI expert	Melbourne, VIC	$22,725
Jul 17	Girl Geek Academy Pty Ltd	SF "unicorn" founder Holly Liu to mentor Aussie startups	Footscray, VIC	$25,000
Aug 17	The University of Wollongong	Workshops and intensive one-on-one's for Social Enterprise Startups	North Wollongong, NSW	$23,540
Sep 17	Vektor Innovation Pty Ltd	Hardware Innovation for Global Startups	Fortitude Valley, QLD	$25,000
Sep 17	CBR Innovation Network Limited	Innovation-driven export growth - South-east NSW	Canberra, ACT	$25,000
Sep 17	Hunter Business Centre Ltd	International development and scaling-up for regional start-ups	Wyong, NSW	$15,000
Oct 17	Girl Geek Academy Pty Ltd	Mentoring and workshops for female founders from Colin Kinner	Docklands, VIC	$25,000
Nov 17	Stone and Chalk Limited	Fostering a vibrant cyber security ecosystem in Australia & the globe	Sydney, NSW	$20,000
Nov 17	Blackbird Startmate Ops Pty Ltd	Mentoring and Strategy for AU startups by International startup expert	Melbourne, VIC	$25,000
Nov 17	RCL Accelerator Operations Pty Ltd	Going Global from Day One	Fortitude Valley, QLD	$25,000
Dec 17	ACH Australia Pty Ltd	Startupbootcamp Energy Australia Program	Melbourne, VIC	$20,700
Dec 17	ACH Australia Pty Ltd	Design Thinking & Scale expert for SBC Energy Australia program	Melbourne, VIC	$21,000
Dec 17	Centre for Entrepreneurial Research and Innovation Ltd	Fundamentals of entrepreneurship and forming successful "A Team"	Nedlands, WA	$15,425
Dec 17	Eighteen04	Embedding innovation in Eighteen04's CleanTech and SmartCity Scale-ups	Newcastle West, NSW	$25,000
Feb 18	Creative Industries Precinct Pty Ltd	Growth and scale-up business support initiative (Creative industries)	Brisbane, QLD	$30,000
Mar 18	Byron Bay Region Community College	Mentor in residence for regional business incubator hub	Byron Bay, NSW	$50,000
Mar 18	Spacecubed Ventures Pty Ltd	Plus Eight Accelerator – Entrepreneur in Residence	Perth, WA	$37,500
May 18	Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast Pty Ltd	Tailored Mentoring & Workshops for knowledge based startups/ scaleups	Sippy Downs, QLD	$66,800
May 18	New Orion Investments Pty Ltd	Y.hub mentoring and workshop program for small-to-medium enterprise.	Yanchep, WA	$12,028
May 18	YBF (York Butter Factory) Pty Ltd	Technology Mentoring and Support By International Expert.	Melbourne, VIC	$46,860
May 18	The Council of the City of Sydney	City of Sydney's Visiting Entrepreneur Program	Sydney, NSW	$50,000
May 18	Upstairs Foundation Pty Ltd	Mentoring, events and workshops for Central West Startups	Bathurst, NSW	$49,953
May 18	The Moonshine Lab Pty Ltd	Community Event Directing & Mentoring of Startups	Adelaide, SA	$20,000
Jun 18	Paspalis Enterprises Pty Ltd	Events, mentoring and workshops provided by 3 experts in residence	Darwin, NT	$100,000
Jun 18	The University of New England	Mentoring and workshops for global AgTech start-ups by start-up experts	Armidale, NSW	$50,000
Jun 18	La Trobe University	Getting global our regional entrepreneurship	Mildura, NSW	$26,333
Aug 18	ACH AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Mentoring and Workshops for Startupbootcamp startups by Growth Hacker	Melbourne, VIC	$22,267
Aug 18	CBR INNOVATION NETWORK LIMITED	Connecting the Canberra Region to Innovation Capabilities (Phase 2)	Canberra, ACT	$50,000

Aug 18	The University of Wollongong	Embedding Design Thinking Capability in iA Educate Program	Wollongong, NSW	$100,000
Aug 18	Tech Ready Women	Mentoring and workshops for women-led startups by a woman startup expert	Sydney, NSW	$49,000
Sep 18	Capital Pitch Pty Ltd	International and scaleup expert for national and global accelerator	Sydney, NSW	$100,000
Oct 18	Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce	Pilbara startup business development program	Port Hedland, WA	$17,525
Oct 18	The Council of the City of Sydney	City of Sydney's visiting entrepreneur program	Sydney, NSW	$50,000
Oct 18	Mining Leaders Group Pty Ltd	Mining Leaders accelerator	Brisbane, QLD	$50,000
Oct 18	My Crowd Pty Ltd	Mentoring and workshops for start-ups from global crowdfunding experts	Sydney, NSW	$42,945
Oct 18	Co Hub Collaborative Education Hub Pty Ltd	Masterclass series for scalable social enterprise youth startups	Perth, WA	$40,225
Dec 18	SpaceCubed Ventures Pty Ltd	Entrepreneur in Residence- Plus eight muru-D Perth.	Perth, WA	$41,500
Dec 18	Byron Region Community College Inc.	Expert in Residence, Kylee Ingram - Developing IP for the Sourdough gegional start-up program	Mullumbimby, NSW	$50,000
Dec 18	Girl Geek Academy Pty Ltd	Silicon Valley Bank EIR Shruti Shah joins the #SheHacks Incubator	Melbourne, VIC	$49,500
Dec 18	Co Hub Collaborative Education Hub Pty Ltd	Mentoring and workshops for startups within Aged Care Innovation	Butler, WA	$40,850
Dec 18	University of Western Australia	Incubator program facilitation from global experts	Perth, WA	$45,178
Dec 18	Gold Coast Innovation Hub Limited	Advisory Board, Mentoring & Visiting Expert Program	Robina, QLD	$47,300
Dec 18	Livingstone Shire Council	Innovation expert in residence mentoring start-ups	Yeppoon, QLD	$25,000
Dec 18	Cyrise Accelerator Pty Ltd	Learning from the Best - Going global in cyber security	Docklands, VIC	$35,000
Jan 19	Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship Ltd	Breakout Accelerator mentoring to support rural and regional startups	East Melbourne, VIC	$50,000
Jan 19	The Council of the City of Sydney	City of Sydney's Visiting Entrepreneur Program	Sydney, NSW	$50,000
Jan 19	Girl Geek Academy Pty Ltd	Precursor Ventures' Sydney Thomas to help Aussie founders globally	Melbourne, VIC	$27,500
Feb 19	Muru-D Pty Ltd	Hacking your first seed round of investment with Alan Jones	Sydney, NSW	$45,250
Feb 19	Australia China Technology Incubator Pty Ltd	Targeted China market mentorship of Australian health technology start-ups	East Melbourne, VIC	$50,000
Feb 19	ACH Australia Pty Ltd	Growth marketing and lean start-up expert for 2019 SBC Energy Australia	Melbourne, VIC	$11,250
Mar 19	Creative Industries Precinct Pty Ltd	CEA Expert in Residence	Kelvin Grove, QLD	$48,000
Mar 19	SBE Australia Limited	Attracting and managing finance with a United States angel for women-led start-ups	Sydney, NSW	$48,000
Mar 19	University of South Australia	Innovation and Collaboration Centre - Expert in Residence	Adelaide, SA	$49,475
Mar 19	SBE Australia Limited	Expansion strategies for life sciences start-ups with United States biotechnology expert	Melbourne, VIC	$49,000
Mar 19	The Moonshine Lab Pty Ltd	Selection and mentoring of start-ups who successfully apply to Moonshine Lab Pty Ltd	Adelaide, SA	$30,000
Mar 19	Pollinators Inc	Regional Innovation Facilitation Leadership Program	MS19-000581	$37,500
Mar 19	Mining Leaders Group	Mining Leaders Accelerator	Fortitude Valley, QLD	$50,000
Jul 19	ACH Australia Pty Ltd	Global FinTech expert for 2019 SBC FinTech Melbourne	Melbourne, VIC	$9,125
Jul 19	Centre for Entrepreneurial Research and Innovation Limited	Turning high-knowledge ideas into successful global businesses	Nedlands, WA	$20,000
Jul 19	Community Lifestyle Support Ltd	AgTech and Assistive Tech Incubator Program	Kalkie, QLD	$49,950
Jul 19	Core Hub Pty Ltd	CORE Expert-in-Residence: Global expertise for resources startups	Perth, WA	$23,750
Jul 19	Creative Corner Inc.	Generator Online Innovation: Validator Bootcamp	Margaret River, WA	$25,000
Jul 19	Curtin University	Global experts to up-skill startups through Curtin Ignition	Bently, WA	$42,450
Jul 19	La Trobe University	Strengthener International Connections for La Trobe Accelerator (LTAP)	Bundoora, VIC	$49,650
Jul 19	Livingstone Shire Council	Innovation expert in residence - investment readiness	Banana, QLD	$31,000
Jul 19	Maker & Co Collective	First Nations Language and Tech Fostering Start-up Opportunities	Bunbury, WA	$10,500
Jul 19	The Space Australasia Pty Ltd	Mentoring & workshops for Transformative Technology startups	Robina, QLD (Gold Coast)	$47,580
Jul 19	Sparklabs Cutiv8 Pty Ltd	SparkLabs Cultiv8 food, agriculture and sustainability accelerator	Orange, NSW	$50,000

Jul 19	The Trustee for QUTBluebox Trust	Guest EIR and Y Combinator alum brings experience and connections	Brisbane, QLD	$31,000
Sep 19	Curtin University	Mentoring for sustainability, digital and blockchain startups	Bently, WA	$38,825
Sep 19	Australia China Health Accelerator Ltd	ACHA employment of expert in Residence - Mr Jun Liu	Melbourne, VIC	$50,000
Sep 19	Australia China Health Accelerator Ltd	ACHA employment of expert in Residence - Mr Qiang Li	Melbourne, VIC	$50,000
Sep 19	Wheatbelt Business Network (Inc)	Mentoring for participants in WBN LAUNCH and WBN GROW	Northam, Moora & Merredin	$16,500
Sep 19	Coffs Harbour City Council	Inspirational Young Entrepreneur @ Coffs Coast's Biggest Startup Event	Coffs Harbour	$6,000
Sep 19	La Trobe University	Skills development workshops and mentoring for regional startups	Bendigo, Albury-Wodonga, Shepparton, Mildura VIC	$99,950
Sep 19	Eastern Innovation Business Centre	Mentoring and events for EI startups by an experienced founder	Melbourne, VIC	$24,000
Oct 19	Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast Pty Ltd	15/10/19-14/10/20 Expert in Residence Program for start-ups	Sippy Downs, QLD	$50,000
Oct 19	Bentleys (QLD) Pty Ltd	Mentoring and workshops for aged-care start-ups by 3 innovation experts	Brisbane, QLD	$13,200
Dec 19	Upstairs Foundation Pty Ltd	Regional Entrepreneur Ecosystem Support and Expansion	Bathurst, NSW	$49,980
Dec 19	The University of New England	Expert mentoring and support for Health and AgTech Scale-ups	New England, NSW	$50,000
Mar 20	Enterprize Tasmania Ltd	Startup Growth, Fundraising & Pitching expert for Enterprize Tasmania	Launceston, Tas	$23,375
Mar 20	Paspalis Enterprises Pty Ltd	Regional Expert in Residence for Investment Readiness of Start-Ups	Darwin, NT	$75,000
Mar 20	Atomic Sky Pty Ltd	Business masterclasses and coaching for cross sector startups	Perth, WA	$48,500
Mar 20	The Exchange Dubbo Pty Ltd	Design Thinking and Inspiring the Orana to Start, Scale and Succeed	Dubbo, NSW	$49,760
Mar 20	5E Digital Pty Ltd	Business Intelligence and the broader data ecosystem	West Gosford, NSW	$25,000
Mar 20	Realtechx Pty Ltd	International capability development for real estate tech businesses	Sydney, NSW; Melbourne, VIC	$50,000
Mar 20	Macquarie University	Startup mentoring and education on human-centred design principles	Macquarie Park, NSW	$71,500
Mar 20	University of Western Australia	Incubation and acceleration for startups by commercialisation experts.	Crawley, WA	$49,000
Mar 20	University of New South Wales	Founders Program 10x Accelerator	Sydney, NSW	$16,500
Mar 20	Noosa Shire Council	FireTech 2020	Noosa, QLD	$100,000
Mar 20	Cyrise Accelerator Pty Ltd	EIR learnings to position for global success in cyber security	Docklands, VIC	$25,000
Mar 20	Griffith University	In-person and Online 3 Day Startup Programs for the SE Qld Community	Brisbane, QLD	$50,000
Mar 20	Australia China Health Accelerator Ltd	Mentoring and workshop for startups by Venture Capitalist expert	Melbourne, VIC	$49,990
Mar 20	Australia China Health Accelerator Ltd	Mentoring and workshop for healthtech startups by IP expert	Melbourne, VIC	$49,990
Mar 20	Spacecubed Ventures Pty Ltd	Plus Eight Asia Connect & Scale-Up Support	Perth, WA	$48,925
Mar 20	Charles Sturt University	CSU Expert in Residence Program: Reaching Out In Our Regions	Wagga Wagga; Dubbo; Port Macquarie; Bathurst, NSW	$49,999
Mar 20	Learning Guide Pty Ltd	Global entrepreneurs inspiring start-ups in regional Australia	Coffs Harbour, NSW	$27,500
Apr 20	City of Subiaco	Creative meet markets for local and regional creative innovators	Subiaco, WA	$47,500
May 20	Odonata Foundation Ltd	Wild Idea (Digital)	South Melbourne, VIC	$30,000
May 20	Split Spaces Ltd	Masterclasses and mentoring for Mackay, Isaac & Whitsunday region startups.	Mackay, QLD	$49,535
May 20	Eastern Innovation Business Centre Ltd	Advisory Network for SE Victorian Founders and Entrepreneurs	Mulgrave, VIC	$10,900
Jun 20	IIHub Ltd	iiHub EIRs build skills and capabilities to drive Far North Qld global start-ups	Cairns, QLD	$48,700
Jun 20	Swinburne University of Technology	Supporting the Swinburne Accelerator	Hawthorn, VIC	$25,000
Jul 20	Centre for Entrepreneurial Research and Innovation Ltd	CEOin Residence to accelerate the commercial success of start-up companies.	Nedlands, WA	$50,000
Jul 20	The Australian Institute of Music Ltd	AIM Innovation Hub startup	Surry Hills, NSW	$50,000
Aug 20	Australia China Health Accelerator Ltd	Mentoring and workshops for startups by medical regulatory expert Mr Chang	Melbourne, VIC	$48,125

Sep 20	Sparklabs Cultiv8 Pty Ltd	Program Extension	Orange, NSW	$48,850
Sep 20	Unico Computer Ssystems Pty Ltd	uSpark Expert in Residence: Igniting Start-up Engagement	Melbourne, VIC	$49,400
Oct 20	Reach Asea Pty Ltd	REACH Proptech Program	West Melbourne, VIC	$40,000
Oct 20	Smart Precinct NQ Ltd	Experts in Residence to scale NQ start-ups	Townsville, QLD	$49,031
Nov 20	James Cook University	JCU Entrepreneur-in-Residence - Accelerating Startup Growth	Cairns, QLD; Mount Stuart, QLD	$44,000
Dec 20	The Space Australasia Pty Ltd	Agile minimum viable data for health and wellbeing businesses	South Brisbane, QLD; Manunda, QLD	$16,000
Jan 21	Tech Ready Women Pty Ltd	EIR to Support Tech Ready Women Online/Hybrid Program	Sydney, NSW; Watsons Bay NSW	$49,900
Jan 21	City of Fremantle	Emerging industry clusters startup support	Fremantle, WA	$48,480
Feb 21	The Studio Limited	The Studio Founders' Program	Sydney, NSW	$50,000
Apr 21	Spacecubed Ventures Pty Ltd	Plus Eight - Global Startup Ecosystem Connections	Perth, WA	$38,475
Apr 21	Coventured Pty Ltd	EIR Coaching: Productioneering for International Markets (P4IM)	Sydney, NSW; Warners Bay, NSW	$50,000
Apr 21	INQ Innovation Global Pty Ltd	Women EIRs to Support Australia - India Innovation Women Entrepreneurs	Sydney, NSW	$49,000
Apr 21	Leap Enterprise Group Pty Ltd	LeapSheep Expert in Residence	Adelaide, SA	$39,610
May 21	Shire of Murray	Western Australia Food Innovation Precinct Experts in Residence	Pinjarra, WA	$49,504
May 21	The Space Australasia Pty Ltd	Entrepreneur in Residence Transformative Technologies Australia	Southport, QLD; Fortitude Valley, QLD	$24,500