

UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA

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# STARTUP SMARTS: UNIVERSITIES AND THE STARTUP ECONOMY



**UNIVERSITIES**  
AUSTRALIA



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**Universities and their graduates are the driving force in Australia's startup economy**

# FOREWORD

Over the past decade, the startup economy has become an important part of Australia's strategy for economic diversification and new growth.

Yet what has not been widely understood is the extent to which universities and their graduates are responsible for that growth.

Now, for the first time, this joint project between Universities Australia and Startup Muster takes a closer look at the data.

It confirms that **universities and their graduates are the driving force in Australia's startup economy.**

Drawing on the *Startup Muster 2016* survey of startup founders, this snapshot puts some hard numbers on precisely how crucial universities are to Australia's startup economy.

It finds that **more than four in five Australian startup founders are university graduates.**

Many startups, too, have been nurtured into existence by a university incubator, accelerator, mentoring scheme or entrepreneurialism course.

Such programs provide support, physical space and direct access to the latest research and expertise to help great Australian ideas grow into great Australian businesses. There are now more than 100 of these facilities at Australian universities.

Universities have reshaped course offerings, programs and facilities to equip the next generations of graduates with the skills they need to start their own enterprises.

This report also includes case studies of startup founders.

If we want to see even more startups founded in the years ahead, universities will be at the very centre of making that a reality.

Universities and their graduates are the driving force in Australia's startup economy.



**Professor Barney Glover**  
Chair  
Universities Australia



**Monica Wulff**  
CEO and Co-founder  
Start Up Muster



**Belinda Robinson**  
Chief Executive  
Universities Australia



**A record \$568 million was raised by Australian startups in 2016**

# OVERVIEW

By the time today's kindergarten students finish high school and start applying for university, startups will have created over half a million new jobs across the country.

Australia's economy is in the midst of a seismic shift.

Key economic forecasts suggest that 40 per cent of today's jobs will not exist within two decades.

Today's school leavers are expected to have an average of 17 different jobs and up to five career changes over their lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

Against this backdrop, universities have a crucial role to help millions of Australians upskill and reskill throughout their working lives.

Amidst such structural shifts, the potential to create new jobs in startup businesses that use technology to reach local and global markets is immense.

By the time today's kindergarten students finish high school and start applying for university, **startups will have created over half a million new jobs across the country.**<sup>2</sup>

And this new sector of the economy is already starting to attract significant investment.

**A record \$568 million was raised by Australian startups in 2016—73 per cent more than in the previous year.**<sup>3</sup>

Australia's universities are the essential ingredient to expand this promising part of our economy.

“You've heard of Akron—one of the smartest places on earth? You had four old tyre companies gone practically overnight, a life-threatening challenge, then a second element, the president of the university Luis Proenza, who got people together to collaborate because they had no other choice, and what stayed in Akron was the world class polymer research that has given us things like contact lenses that change colour if you have diabetes, tyres that can drive under all kinds of road conditions and hundreds more inventions. They now have 1000 little polymer companies that have more people working for them than the four old tyre companies. It's always university centric. Each of these rustbelts becoming brain belts always have universities.”

Antoine van Agtmael Co-author *The Smartest Places on Earth*

1 McCrindle Research 2014, *Job mobility in Australia*, using HILDA and Department of Employment data. <http://mccrindle.com.au/the-mccrindle-blog/job-mobility-in-australia>

2 PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2013, *The Startup Economy: How to support tech startups and accelerate Australian innovation*, Google commissioned report <https://www.digitalpulse.pwc.com.au/australian-tech-startup-ecosystem/>

3 Australian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (2016) *2016 Yearbook: Australian Private Equity and Venture Capital Activity Report*, November 2016. <https://www.avcal.com.au/documents/item/1315>



“Entrepreneurship at Melbourne is the seed that is driving a rapidly expanding innovation eco-system and start up culture across our University and in this city.”  
Professor Glyn Davis Vice-Chancellor, The University of Melbourne

## EQUIPPING STUDENTS FOR A CHANGING ECONOMY

Many students now anticipate their career paths will be very different to those taken by previous generations.

At some universities, up to 40 per cent of students and recent alumni have either founded their own startup or are considering doing so.<sup>4</sup>

That stands in stark contrast to student expectations, even just a decade ago.

Back then, the overwhelming majority of students anticipated going on to work in a salaried job for an employer after graduation.

Universities are answering the call to equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to create their own job, their own company—and even their own new industries.

Many more students are choosing courses in entrepreneurship, then taking what they’ve learnt straight into a university incubator or accelerator program to develop a startup company.

In turn, that economic activity is helping to grow the overall Australian economy—sustaining jobs and living standards for Australians right across the country.

<sup>4</sup> A 2015 survey of UTS students,  
<http://newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2015/12/next-generation-entrepreneurs-ready-innovate>

## KEEPING JOBS IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

While there is a stereotype that startups are most often found in the major capitals, regional and rural Australians are also part of this new economic story.

Universities play a vital role to help Australians living in the regions and on our farms claim their stake in the startup economy too.

The idea of the ‘silicon paddock’—using technology to take farm-based businesses to the markets of the world—is no longer a distant dream.

Technology also enables our regional entrepreneurs to stay in our regions—building and running businesses without the need for long commutes or city relocations.

Universities and their graduates are driving this new economic opportunity for Australia.

This report documents the significant role they are playing.

## WE NEED TO KEEP PACE—SO WE AREN'T LEFT BEHIND

Amid these profound economic changes, some may fear that not everyone will find jobs in the new economy. The role of universities becomes even more crucial in this context—helping Australians to change careers and upgrade their skills for jobs not yet imagined.

Higher education is no longer for the few, but for the many.

Over the last decade, Australia has dramatically expanded access to university education—in line with global trends.

More than 37 per cent of people aged 25 to 34 now have a degree. A growing number of them are among the new graduates setting out on their own with a startup idea.

Growing that community is a vital part of opening new sources of economic growth for Australia.

“The Cairns Innovation Centre will nurture a new generation of students and young graduates who can engage deeply with industry and business via work-integrated learning, and apply innovative technologies in established industries and drive start-up businesses in emerging industries. This will further diversify the Cairns economy, boost its exports and attract innovators from around the world to the city.”

**Professor Sandra Harding**

Vice-Chancellor, James Cook

University

## IT'S PART OF A GLOBAL TREND

Advanced economies around the world understand the value of universities in rapidly-changing economies.

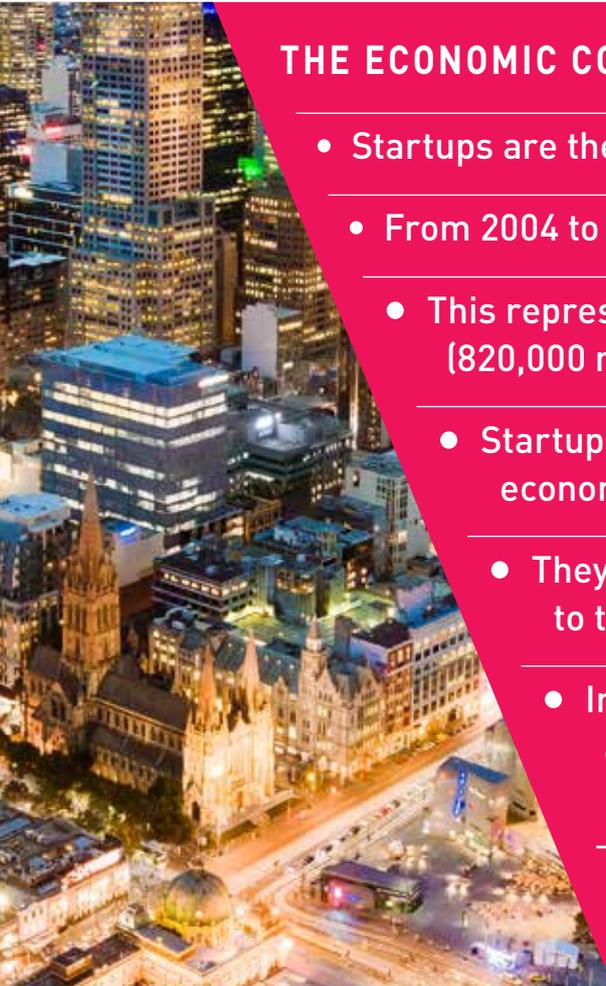
One of the world's leading startup nations—Israel—now spends more than four per cent of its GDP on research and development, much of it going to their universities and other national research institutions.

In the US, Stanford University is geographically and philosophically in the heart of Silicon Valley.

The university's cutting-edge research, infrastructure and alumni/student networks act as connectors between people and ideas—and are vital to the innovation for which the region is renowned.

In their recent book, *The Smartest Places on Earth*, authors Antoine van Agtmael and Fred Bakker describe how universities and their graduates are founding new startup companies in many former rustbelt regional economies.

"Innovation is no longer limited to places like Silicon Valley and Cambridge," van Agtmael told the Brookings Institution last year. "It's spread across the country. From more than 30 brain belts in the US to more than 15 brain belts in Europe."



## THE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF STARTUPS

- Startups are the largest contributor to job creation in Australia.
- From 2004 to 2011, they created more than 1.2 million new jobs.
- This represented 90 per cent of net positive job creation (820,000 new jobs) over the same period.
- Startups contributed \$164 billion to the Australian economy between 2004 and 2011.
- They contributed nearly 40 per cent of the value added to the economy in those years.
- In 2013, universities, medical research institutes and publicly funded research agencies had equity holdings in 180 startups.

Source: Australian Government 2016, *Australian Innovation System Report 2016*, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, Office of Chief Scientist, Canberra.

# ANALYSIS AND CASE STUDIES



UTS Hatchery Photo: Shane Lo

The 2016 *Startup Muster Survey* was conducted between 4 July 2016 and 15 August 2016. A total of 685 verified startup founders are included in the final statistical sample for the report.<sup>5</sup>

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In 2016, 84.4 per cent of startup founders had a university qualification.

The Startup Muster data also found 5.8 per cent of founders had a vocational qualification—9.8 per cent had a high school education—as their highest level of education.

70.5 per cent of founders with a university education attended an Australian university, with the remaining 29.5 per cent having gone to university in another country.

This is not surprising—given that 67 per cent of startup founders were born in Australia, while the remaining 33 per cent were born overseas.

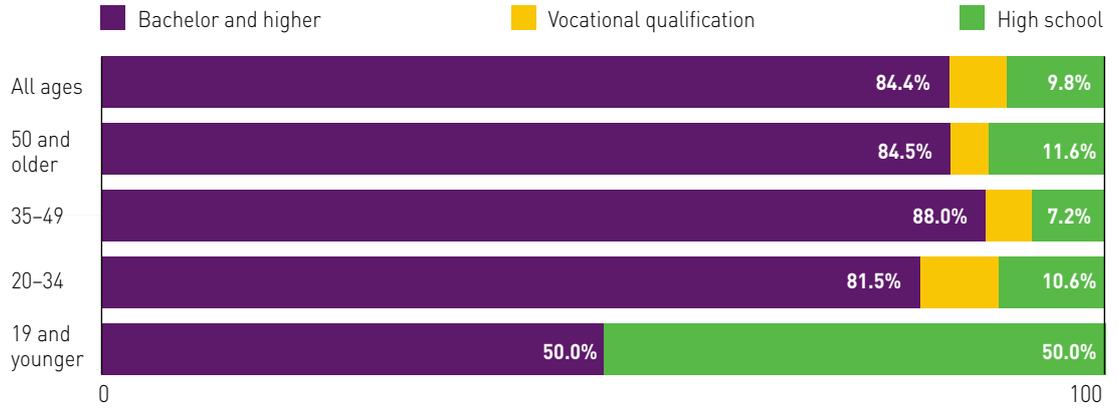
More than 80 per cent of founders over the age of 20 had a bachelor degree or higher.

The top skills for founding team members were also strongly tied to professional university-level qualifications.

These include software development (64 per cent), business (61 per cent), marketing (37 per cent), scientific research (13 per cent), engineering (14 per cent) and legal skills (11 per cent).

<sup>5</sup> For detailed information about the methodology of the *Startup Muster 2016 Survey* please visit <https://www.startupmuster.com>.

**Figure 1: Highest level of educational attainment by age cohort**



Female founders are more likely to have a university qualification than male founders, with 89 per cent of female founders—nearly nine in ten—having a degree, compared with 83 per cent of male founders.

Female founders are also more likely to have a postgraduate degree than male founders.

**Figure 2: Highest level of educational attainment by gender**



“Universities bring young people into (regional) cities, which leads to startups and new and emerging industries. Universities can’t do it alone. It requires shared leadership from civic leaders, business, industry and academic partners. But once there is a shared vision, it is possible to reshape the DNA of place and transform it into a new city.”

**Professor Caroline McMillen**

Vice-Chancellor, The University of Newcastle



Name: Angela Liang

Location: Sydney, New South Wales

University: The University of Sydney

How many of us dream of turning something we love into a paying job?

Angela Liang took that leap five years ago and has never looked back.

After a double degree in commerce and law at the University of Sydney, she set out on a career in investment banking in Hong Kong.

Liang worked the long hours but had no creative outlet. Unhappy and burnt-out, the self-confessed 'nerd' returned to Sydney and pursued her creative passions, shaping a new freelance career in fashion styling and creative direction.

Not long after, she started to think about taking the skills she learnt from the finance world to the fashion world. Some 4.2 per cent of startups are in fashiontech.

Her case is not unique. In fact, job dissatisfaction is a driving factor for one third of Australian startup founders.

Years of crunching the numbers and analysing commercial ventures, both at university and working for international banks, meant she could see the inefficiencies in the fashion market.

There was one big problem she saw again and again: the difficulty of connecting independent labels with their audience in a crowded marketplace.

So Lustr was born.

The startup matches fashion-conscious shoppers' styles with emerging designers, while helping the designers to break into markets normally swamped by the big brands.

The company was the only Australian startup selected for the highly competitive AngelHack global accelerator program. Within three months, Liang's team formed the idea into a beta product and presented Lustr at AngelHack's Global Demo Day in Silicon Valley.

Now the public soft launch of their beta product is just around the corner. Looking back, Liang says it was made possible by the skills, discipline and networks that she developed at university.

She hopes in the future to keep that university connection going by helping the next generation of designers and fashion graduates as they start their own careers in the creative industries.



Photos: Lustr

## INDUSTRIES

In 2016, the top-three industries in which founders were developing startups varied with their level of educational attainment.

The most popular field for startup founders with a PhD were medtech, healthtech or biotech—with 16.4 per cent of their startups in these specialist areas.

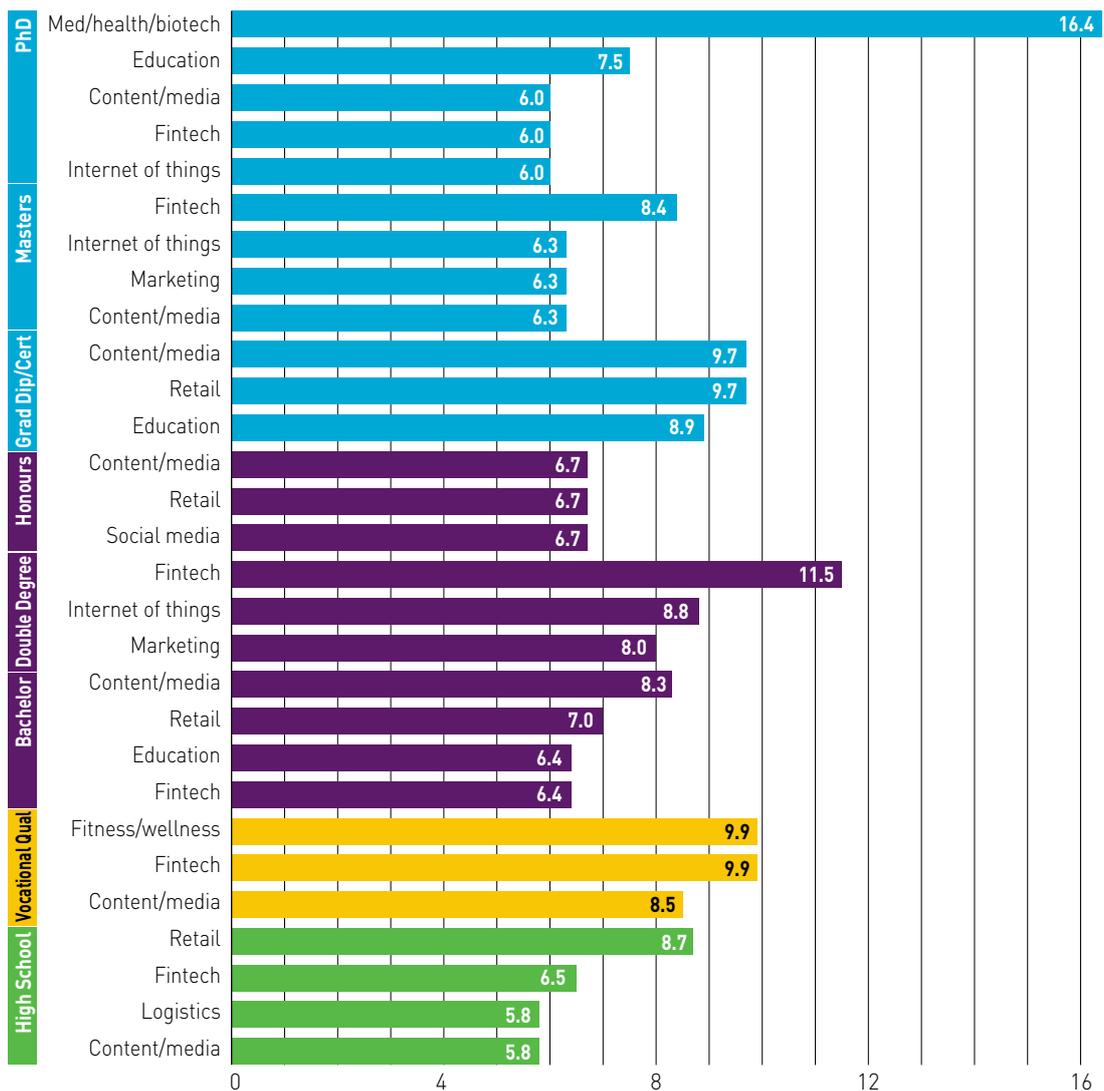
For founders with a vocational education, the fitness or wellness industries had strongest appeal—9.9 per cent of their startups were in this field.

And for founders with high school as their highest level of education, retail was the top destination—with 8.7 per cent of their startups in that sector.

Education startups are also among the top three industries for founders with a bachelor degree and graduate diploma.

Fintech and content or media were popular industries irrespective of the level of educational attainment.

**Figure 3: Top-three industries by highest level of education attainment (per cent)**






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Name: Simone Eyles

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Location: Wagga, New South Wales

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University: Charles Sturt University

Ever been stuck in a long queue waiting for a cup of coffee—when you needed to be somewhere else?

Where most people might see a problem, Charles Sturt University graduates Simone Eyles and Mariusz Stankiewicz saw a business opportunity.

They created 365 cups—a mobile app that allows people to skip the queue and pre-order their coffee.

The pair became friends as housemates at university.

Both were the first in their families to graduate with university qualifications—Simone in graphic design and Mariusz in information technology.

The idea for the app came to Simone when she was having coffee with friends.

Like more than 60 per cent of startup founders, she joined forces with someone who had skills in software development.

She asked her former housemate to build a smart platform that could pre-order coffee ahead of time.

Proving that startups aren't just for teenage tech-heads, Simone went for their big bold startup idea when she was 34, her young son already in tow.

As it turns out, she's not alone. Most startup founders in Australia—54 per cent—are aged between 30 and 44.

After years of hard work, the app finally went live in 2011.

Today more than one million orders have been placed using the app. The company now employs a number of people in Mariusz and Simone's hometown in regional Australia.

They're also using the app to power smart ordering platforms around the world. Just last year, they entered the US market with a major retail contract.

Simone is now helping the next generation of tech entrepreneurs with Incubate at 35 degrees—which seeks to nurture and support people with startup ideas in regional Australia. Some 23 per cent of startup founders are based outside capital cities.

At a time when working in the cloud is increasingly commonplace, her vision is to bring Silicon Valley to the back paddocks and get regional Australians to think about starting their own online companies.

The 365 cups trajectory has not been an easy one. But their story shows that regional Australia—with a good idea and the right skills—can compete in the new global economy.



Photos: Jackie Cooper from Jack of Hearts Studio & 365cups

## JOB CREATION

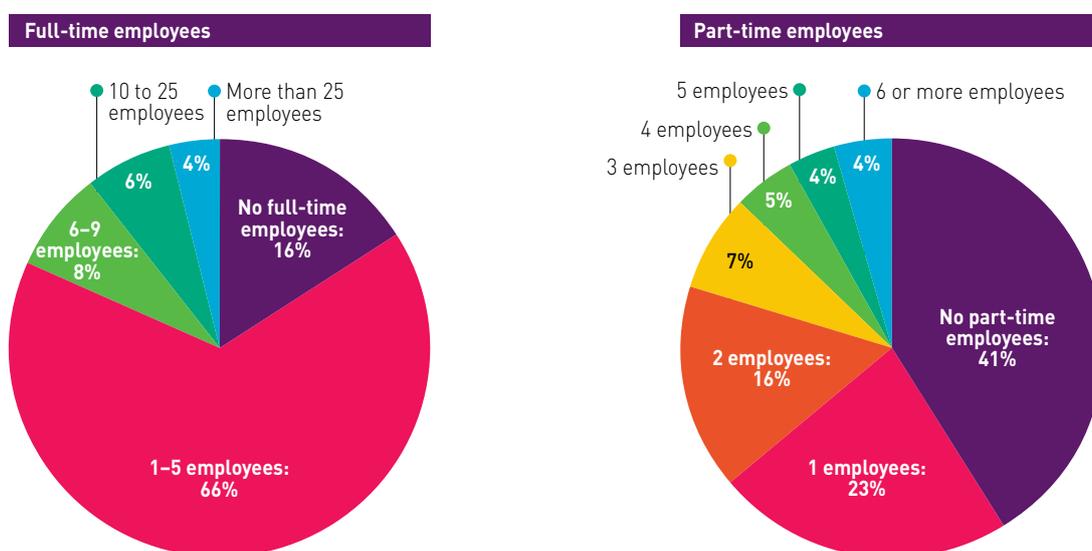
In 2016, the majority of startups in Australia—66 per cent—had between 1 and 5 full-time employees.

Four per cent of startups had more than 25 employees.

Only 16 per cent of startups—around one in six—had no full-time employees.

More than one in five startups (23 per cent) had one part-time employee, and a further 16 per cent had two part-time employees.

**Figure 4: Current number of employees**



Even more importantly, most startups are using business services provided by Australian based companies.

While 90 per cent of startups outsourced parts of their work, 70 per cent of those tasks were outsourced to other firms based in Australia.

The top three functions outsourced in Australia were accounting (68.7 per cent), legal (62.4 per cent) and software development (50.3 per cent).

Many of these professional services also require a university qualification.

**“Last year as a university we decided it was really important to provide entrepreneurial skills throughout the university...we want to be the one place students can come not just for a qualification, but to have the skills to create jobs and businesses.”**

**Ian Palmer** Pro Vice-Chancellor and Activator Board Member,  
RMIT



When Matt and Leanne first began dating as students at the University of Wollongong, they didn't think that ten years down the track they would end up co-founding a startup company together.

Yet that's what the now husband-and-wife team did.

Just under 30 per cent of founders said having a supportive partner or spouse was critical to founding their startups.

Along with another University of Wollongong alumnus Fletcher Thompson, they founded Me3D—a company that produces affordable 3D printers specially designed for schools.

Names:  
 Leanne Connelly  
 Matt Connelly  
 Fletcher Thompson

Location:  
 Wollongong,  
 New South Wales

University:  
 The University  
 of Wollongong

After working around the world for more than a decade, the three friends—with skills in design, engineering and business—ended up back in their hometown.

Matt and Leanne, by then in their 30s, wanted to start a family but were finding it hard to find work that was rewarding but flexible enough to accommodate life with kids.

After spotting a gap in the market, the trio started to tinker with soldering irons in backyard garages until they came up with Me2—an educational 3D printer designed with school-age learning in mind.

Now in 140 schools, the printers come with lesson plans, training materials and fun competitions to get kids excited about engineering, technology, science and maths.

Like nearly 20 per cent of startup founders they have been supported by an accelerator program: in their case University of Wollongong's iAccelerate.

The program not only incubates early startups through the first stages of development, but provides ongoing support and space at the university until they are fully established.

The program aims to boost the local regional economy by investing in new industries and new ideas, as traditional industries begin to disappear.

Now the company is up and running, Matt, Leanne and Fletcher are also keen to give back to the community.

The company has now expanded some of their assembly and testing to Greenacres—a local employment service that provides meaningful employment for people with disabilities in the Illawarra.

They are also particularly excited about their next phase: the launch of the Seed3D. This program, they hope, will help communities and businesses to build their own 3D printing capability. This will give even more kids access to this cutting-edge technology.

Balancing a business and family life is always difficult. But the trio say it would have been even harder without the support they received in the iAccelerate program and without the skills they acquired at uni.



Photos: UOW

## FUNDING OR HELP RECEIVED

Since their startups were founded, 30.5 per cent of founders reported that they had received grants and scholarships.

Almost one in five—18.7 per cent—said they benefited from an acceleration or incubation program.

Around 23 per cent of founders had used the R&D tax offset to fund their startups.

In the next six months, 46.2 per cent of founders indicated that they would be looking for grants and scholarships to assist their startups.

More than 21 per cent said they would be looking for acceleration or incubation programs to help progress their startup venture.

Of the incubators or accelerators surveyed, 92.1 per cent offer mentorship, 69.7 per cent offer connections to startups, 57.9 per cent offer investment and 52.6 per cent offer professional development.

“Universities are moving with the times. The futurists tell us how many jobs will be transformed or lost to robotics or Artificial Intelligence (AI). So we’re not thinking about training our graduates for specific jobs because who’s to say what those jobs will be in five years’ time. We’re developing students with the skillset to navigate that uncertainty.”

**Professor Colin Stirling** Vice-Chancellor, Flinders University



**Almost one in five benefited from an acceleration or incubation program**



Name: Alisha Geary

Location: Gold Coast, Queensland

University: Bond University

As one of the world’s oldest art forms, it’s hard not to be inspired by Indigenous art. Now Alisha Geary—a Bond University student—is taking her inspiration into the world of business with a new line of active wear.

She first had the idea as one of 40 Indigenous students acting as tour guides for Australia’s largest private collection of Indigenous art on public display, Corrigan Walk, housed at Bond.

Until then, she’d had limited opportunities to connect with her Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

Seeing these artworks at the university and learning more about the meaning behind them inspired her to learn more about this aspect of her own culture.

Alisha, who is studying business and law, wanted to bring the vibrant colours and energy of this art to a fashion market better known for its drab dark colours and bland greys.

She saw the potential for these designs to carve out a new niche in the \$2 billion activewear industry, while also introducing Indigenous art to a broader audience.

That’s where the university’s accelerator program came in, helping her to create her company, Faebella.

Bond Business Accelerator provided support and expertise to help her develop the early stage of the business in an intensive 12-week start-up boot camp.

After the experience, she rolled out the first line of luxury sportswear, now available for sale.

The plan is to expand beyond tights and singlets—to create yoga mats and swimwear with designs sourced from Indigenous artists all over Australia.

Needing to juggle study with a new business has been challenging. That’s part of the reason why fewer than 5 per cent of startup founders are under the age of 24.

But she says it’s the passion for the project, as well as the confidence she gained through her degree and the university’s accelerator program, that has turned her vision into a business.



Photos: Bond University, Faebella & Wendy Rix



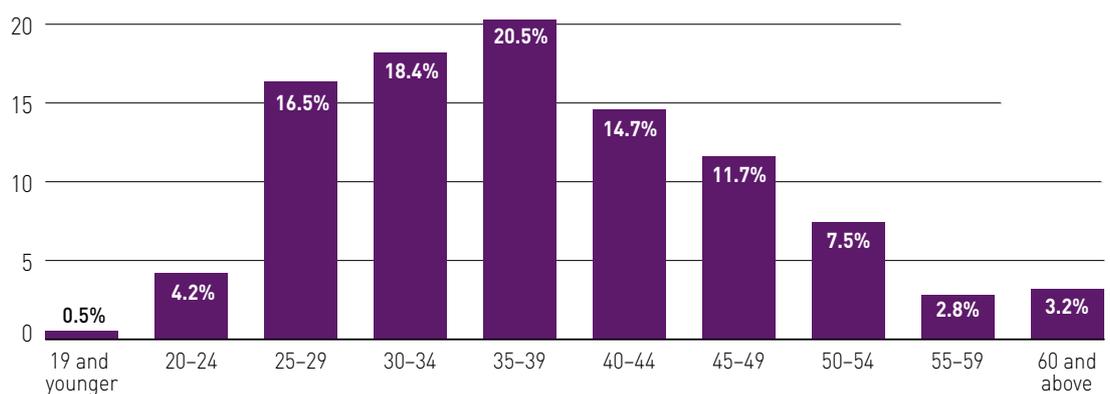
## AGE OF FOUNDERS

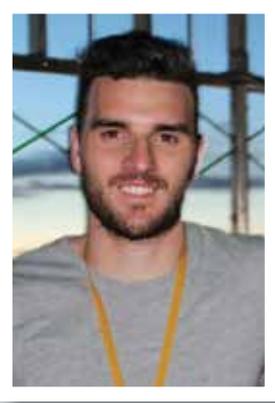
Most startup founders in Australia—70 per cent—are between 25 and 44 years old.

The biggest single group—around one in five startup founders in Australia—are people in their mid to late 30s.

In this age bracket, 34 per cent of founders have a masters degree and a further 4 per cent are graduates with a PhD.

**Figure 5: Proportion of startup founders by age cohort**





Name: Ben Tripodi

Location: Adelaide, South Australia

University: Flinders University

At 24 years of age, Ben Tripodi's passions have already taken him far.

By the time many of his contemporaries were just starting their careers, Tripodi was already on to co-founding his third startup company.

He's one of the 11 per cent of founders who have created three or more startups. He's also among the one in five startup founders to set up their businesses before they hit 30.

An amateur triathlete with an entrepreneurial instinct, Ben went to Flinders University to study his passions in health sciences and nutrition.

Within a couple years of starting his degree, he co-founded Recoverite which makes advanced sportswear to aid in recovery and athletic performance.

Along the way, he was bitten by the startup bug.

He jumped at the opportunities offered by Flinders University's newly-established New Venture Institute. It's an incubator that helps to nurture new entrepreneurs, including students, in the early stages of creating a business.

Among the 180 startups created with the support of New Ventures, Tripodi co-founded company number two—Finch Composites—with fellow student Brodie Syrus.

They wanted to create a better performing cycling wheel made from carbon fibre with specially engineered disc braking.

The award-winning Finch Composites used the resources and skills made available by Flinders University to research, design and test the new wheels, giving them a distinct advantage.

Not only were they able to call on the expertise that Flinders University had to offer, but they were also able to involve the university's engineering students directly through industry placements, giving students valuable work experience.

But the university connection didn't end there.

His next venture was MIK Health, a health technology startup co-founded with Adam Callen, based in Adelaide.

MIK Health is developing new ways to improve employee health, reduce absenteeism and improve productivity through ground-breaking software.

Flinders' digital health division has been a key research partner from the early days of development. It's been vital to make sure the software is informed by the latest medical and data research.

From higher education, to incubator, to research partner, Tripodi says the whole journey into the world of startups simply wouldn't have happened without the university being there every step of the way.



Photos: Stephen O'Brien Fuse Multisport

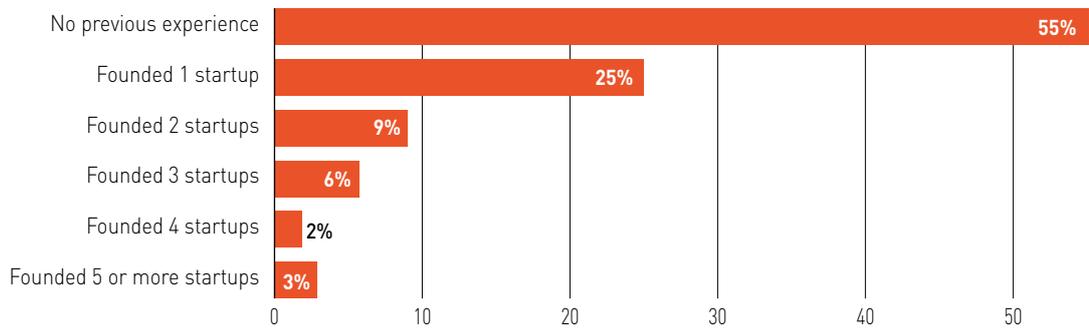
## PREVIOUS STARTUP EXPERIENCE

In 2016, 55 per cent of startup founders in Australia had no previous experience in startups.

A quarter of founders have previously founded one startup and 11 per cent have previously founded three startups or more.

Of those that have previous startup experience, 50.2 per cent reported that their last startup is still operating and 21.5 per cent reported that they are still actively involved in their last startup.

**Figure 6: Previous startup experience**

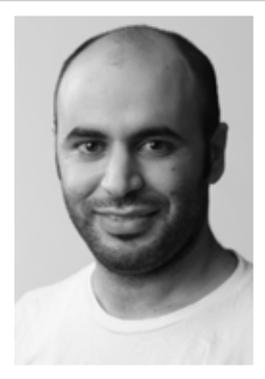




Name: Anna Robson and Nirary Dacho

Location: Sydney, New South Wales

University: University of Canberra



There are often plenty of struggles on the road to building a new business. But few have a story quite like Nirary Dacho.

Nirary and his family arrived in Australia in 2015. They had fled war-torn Syria. As he set about building a new life here, he faced a new set of challenges.

Nirary, who was an IT consultant and university lecturer in his home country, struggled to find work. It wasn't for a lack of qualifications—just a lack of local experience.

Happily for Nirary, he met Anna Robson, a University of Canberra graduate passionate about helping people seeking asylum in Australia. They met at a hackathon that sought tech-based solutions to issues faced by refugees.

That's where they asked the question. What if you could unlock the skills and talent in Australia's refugee community—and help businesses to diversify their workforces at the same time?

Anna brought her marketing and management skills to the table. Together they created Refugee Talent—a new kind of employment service for refugees.

It was a big leap into the unknown. But it's not an uncommon one for most startup founders. In 2016, 55 per cent of startup founders in Australia had no previous startup experience. The startup is now fully operational and helps companies to find skilled refugees for job openings.

For the refugees, the service helps them to develop their resume, prepare for interviews and offers ongoing workplace support.

Based in Sydney, Refugee Talent now has more than 100 companies engaged in the social enterprise, from government departments and big corporates to small businesses.

They now have more than 200 refugees on their platform—with a wide range of skills from accounting and IT to sales and design.

Nirary and Anna use the skills they acquired at universities on opposite sides of the globe—one in a war zone and one in Australia—every day in their new business.

And now their startup is starting to make real strides—helping people apply their skills and talents in a new country.



## CRITICAL EVENTS

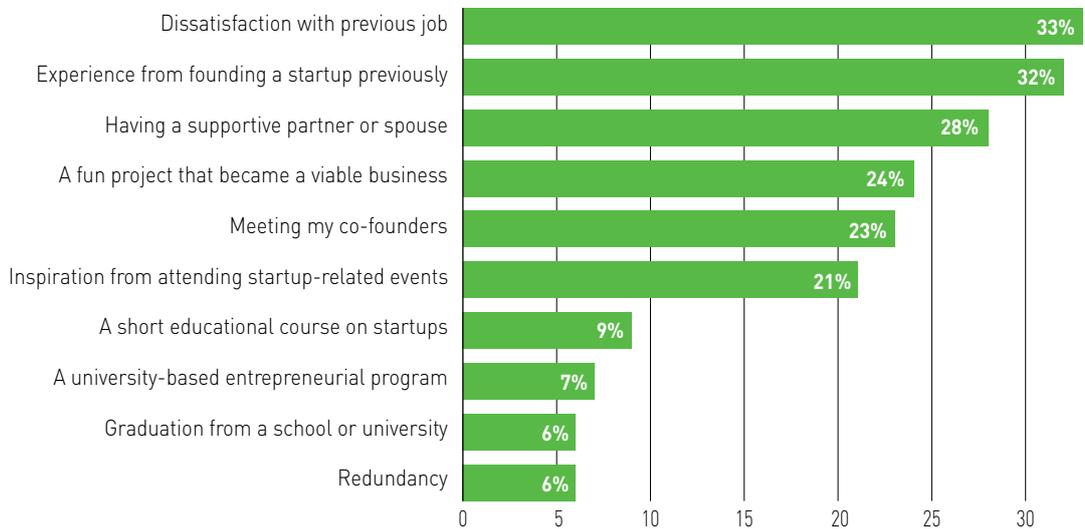
Of the founders surveyed, 33 per cent indicated that one of the most critical reasons for founding their startup was dissatisfaction with their previous jobs.

One in four founders said their startup originated as a fun project that became a viable business.

And 27.9 per cent of founders said having a supportive partner or spouse was crucial to founding their startups.

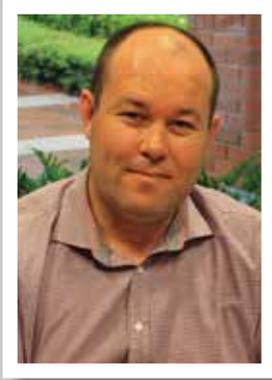
Other factors that led people to set up a startup business included taking a short educational course on startups (which was the case for 9 per cent of founders), or doing a university-based entrepreneurial program—a path taken by 7 per cent of founders.

**Figure 7: Reason for pursuing a startup**



“The Cairns Innovation Centre will nurture a new generation of students and young graduates who can engage deeply with industry and business via work-integrated learning, and apply innovative technologies in established industries and drive start-up businesses in emerging industries. This will further diversify the Cairns economy, boost its exports and attract innovators from around the world to the city.”

**Professor Sandra Harding** Vice-Chancellor, James Cook University



Name: Chris Dorian

Location: Fremantle, Western Australia

University: Curtin University

Sometimes all it takes is one email at the right time.

That moment came for Chris Dorian in 2014. It was from Curtin University, his alma mater, offering the chance to kick-start a business through their new acceleration program.

After ten years travelling the world working as a civil engineer, he was back in Australia. And he just happened to be scoping out an idea for a business.

The idea was simple: what if you could use a website to check instantly whether your plans to build a granny flat or backyard pool comply with local building regulations?

But like all simple ideas, there was plenty of complexity behind it. To make it work, he needed everything from software development to the latest expertise on spatial science.

Dorian took the idea to Curtin University's business accelerator program, run in collaboration with the University of Sydney Union.

Of the incubators or accelerators surveyed by Startup Muster, 92.1 per cent offer mentorship, 69.7 per cent offer connections to startups, 57.9 per cent offer investment and 52.6 per cent offer professional development.

With 12 weeks of support, mentoring, and one-on-one time with experts, Dorian got Building Approvals.com up and running.

With plenty learnt along the way, the business 'pivoted'—as they say in the startup world—and is now embedding its software into other builders' websites under a new name: Builder's e-Commerce.

It's been a long road, but Dorian's love of all things building started at a young age. He had an early obsession with Lego and his father's career was in construction and property development.

Once he left school, he became the first in his family to study at university, where he did a bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

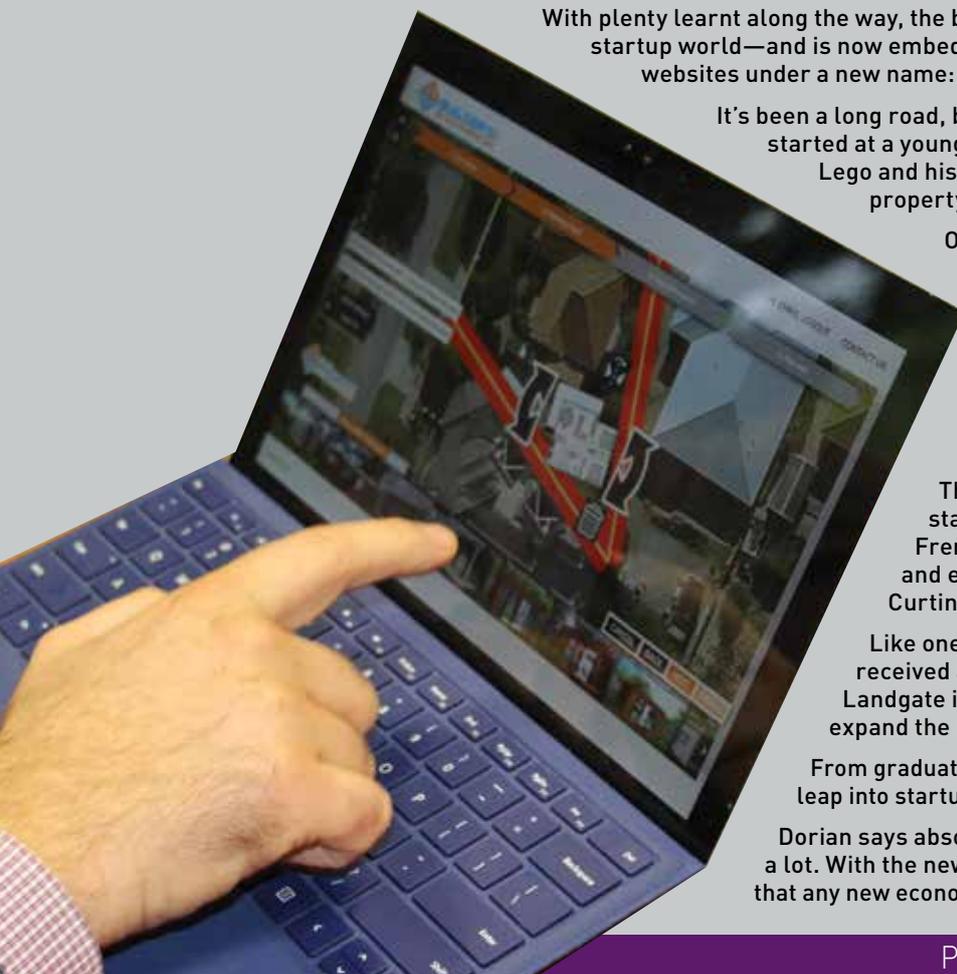
His professional skills meant he ended up helping to build resorts in the Caribbean. It was idyllic. Until the Global Financial Crisis hit.

That was when he pressed reset and started up again in his hometown of Fremantle. He now employs developers and engineers, including graduates from Curtin.

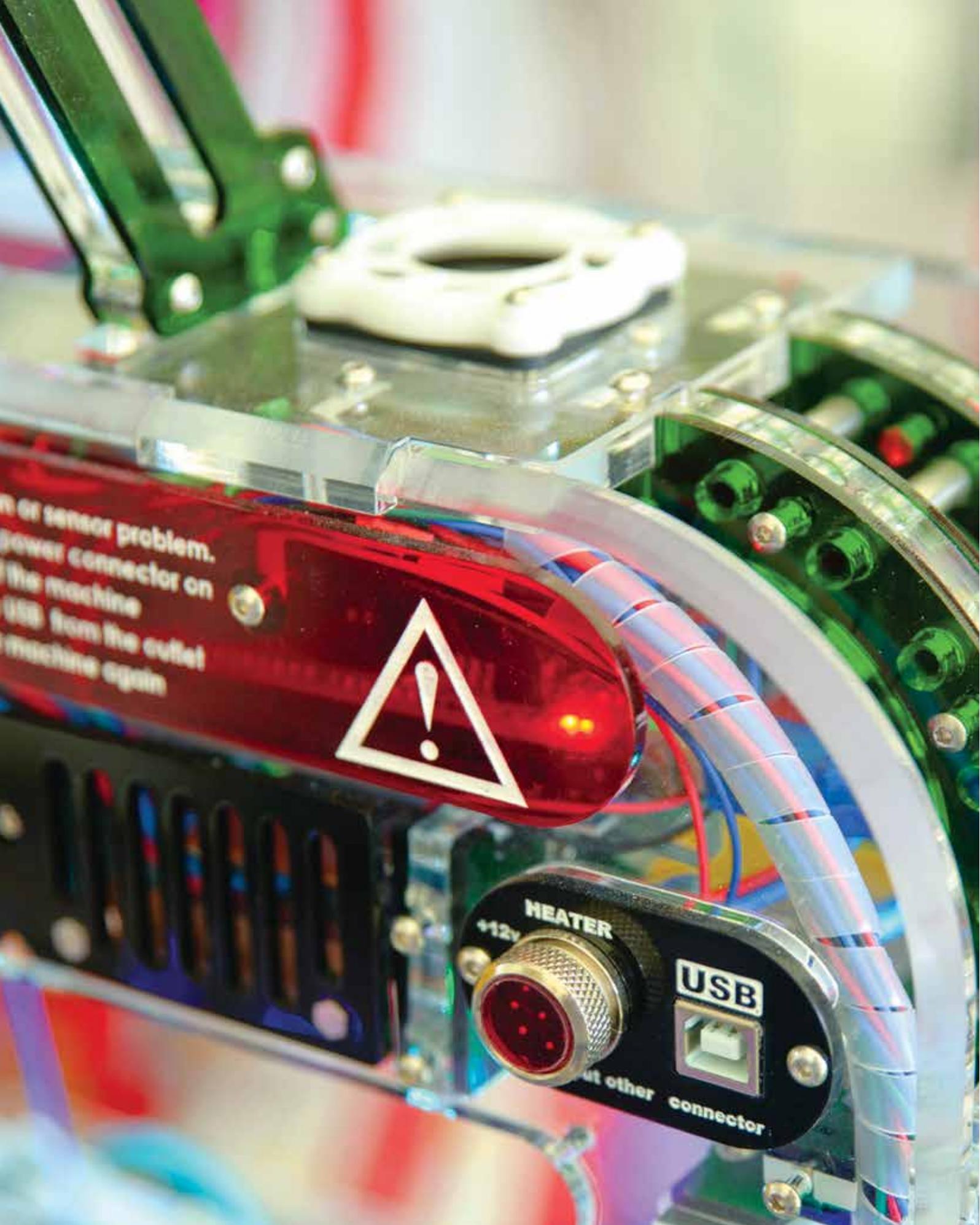
Like one third of Australian founders, he's now received a grant to help boost his business. Landgate in WA has provided some capital to expand the business and get access to new data.

From graduate to university accelerator, has the big leap into startups all been worth it?

Dorian says absolutely, he's learnt and accomplished a lot. With the new skills in business, he feels confident that any new economic downturn won't get in his way again.



Photos: Curtin University, April Kleer



A record \$568 million was raised by Australian startups in 2016—73 per cent more than in 2015

# UNIVERSITY STARTUP SUPPORT PROGRAMS

University	Kind of support	Name of program	Website
Australian Catholic University	Accelerator startup support co-working space	ACU Collaborate Plus	<a href="http://www.acu.edu.au">www.acu.edu.au</a>
The Australian National University	Other startup support	CBR Innovation Network (Foundation member)	<a href="http://cbrin.com.au">cbrin.com.au</a>
	Pre-Accelerator	Innovation ACT	<a href="http://www.innovationact.org">www.innovationact.org</a>
	Incubator	Cicada Innovations (co-owner)	<a href="http://cicadainnovations.com">cicadainnovations.com</a>
	Co-working space	Entry29	<a href="http://entry29.org.au">entry29.org.au</a>
Bond University	Accelerator	Bond Business Accelerator	<a href="http://bond.edu.au">bond.edu.au</a>
CQUniversity	Startup partnership	Split Spaces	<a href="http://www.cqu.edu.au">www.cqu.edu.au</a>
	Incubator	Social Innovation Studio (Gladstone)	<a href="http://www.cqu.edu.au">www.cqu.edu.au</a>
	Startup partnership and event	3 Day Startup (3DS)	<a href="http://www.cqu.edu.au">www.cqu.edu.au</a>
Charles Darwin University	Incubator	Darwin Innovation Hub	In development
Charles Sturt University	Other startup support	Digital Showcase and Start Up Hub (Bathurst)	In development
	Other startup support	Indigenous Entrepreneurship Pop Up Innovation Hub (Albury, Dubbo, Lismore, Port Macquarie)	In development
	Incubator	AgriTech Incubator Hub (Wagga)	In development
Curtin University	Accelerator	Curtin Accelerate	<a href="http://research.curtin.edu.au">research.curtin.edu.au</a>
	Innovation centre	Cisco Internet of Everything Innovation Centre	<a href="http://research.curtin.edu.au">research.curtin.edu.au</a>
	Seed funding	Curtin Kickstart	<a href="http://research.curtin.edu.au">research.curtin.edu.au</a>
	Innovator in residence	Professor Bill Tai	<a href="http://research.curtin.edu.au">research.curtin.edu.au</a>
	Startup competition	OzAPP Awards	<a href="http://ozapp.com.au">ozapp.com.au</a>
Deakin University	Incubator	SPARK@Deakin	<a href="http://spark.deakin.edu.au">spark.deakin.edu.au</a>
	Incubator	ManuFutures	In development <a href="http://www.deakin.edu.au">www.deakin.edu.au</a>
Edith Cowan University	Coworking space	Sixty27	<a href="http://www.sixty27.com.au">www.sixty27.com.au</a>
	Incubator	ECUBIC	<a href="http://www.ecu.edu.au">www.ecu.edu.au</a>
	Other startup support	THE LINK at ECU	<a href="http://thelink.space">thelink.space</a>
	Masterclasses	ECU Watermark GetLINKED! Series	<a href="http://www.ecu.edu.au">www.ecu.edu.au</a>
	Student enterprise	ENACTUS ECU	<a href="http://enactusecu.org">enactusecu.org</a>
	Co-working space	The Hybrid 935	<a href="http://www.thehybrid935.space">www.thehybrid935.space</a>
	Accelerator	ON Program	<a href="http://oninnovation.com.au">oninnovation.com.au</a>
Federation University	Incubator	Greenhill Enterprise Centre (GEC)	<a href="http://btp.federation.edu.au">btp.federation.edu.au</a>
Flinders University	Accelerator	Venture Dorm	<a href="http://www.nviflinders.com.au">www.nviflinders.com.au</a>
	Accelerator	Flinders Innovation Centre	<a href="http://www.nviflinders.com.au">www.nviflinders.com.au</a>
	Incubator and co-working space	eNVision	<a href="http://www.nviflinders.com.au">www.nviflinders.com.au</a>
	Other startup support	INNO program	<a href="http://www.nviflinders.com.au">www.nviflinders.com.au</a>
	Other startup support	Flinders Enterprise Consulting	<a href="http://www.nviflinders.com.au">www.nviflinders.com.au</a>
Griffith University	Student hatchery	Studio 39	<a href="http://www.griffith.edu.au">www.griffith.edu.au</a>

University	Kind of support	Name of program	Website
James Cook University	Innovation centre	Cairns Innovation Centre	www.jcu.edu.au
	Innovation precinct	Technology Innovation Complex	In development
	Innovator in residence	Entrepreneur-in-Residence program (InnovationNQ)	www.jcu.edu.au
	Other startup support	Festival of Ideas master classes	www.festivalofideas.com.au
	Other startup support	Design and Build Centre	In development
La Trobe University	Innovation centre	Centre for Technology Infusion	www.latrobe.edu.au
	Accelerator	La Trobe Accelerator Program (LTAP)	In development
Macquarie University	Incubator	Macquarie University Incubator	In development mq.edu.au/incubator
	Innovation precinct	Macquarie Park Innovation District	mpid.com.au
Murdoch University	Other startup support	Start Something program	media.murdoch.edu.au
Monash University	Incubator	Incubate	incubate.org.au
	Startup support	The Generator	entrepreneurship.apps.monash.edu
Queensland University of Technology	Accelerator	QUTCEA – Fashion Accelerator	qutcea.com
	Coworking space	The Coterie	qutcea.com
	Accelerator	Creative Tech	In development
	Seed funding	Creative Startup Fund	qutcea.com
	Startup event	Creative3 forum	creative3.com.au
	Incubator	CEA Business Hub	qutcea.com
	Startup event	Creative Tech Startup Weekend	www.up.co
	Competition	QUT bluebox Innovation Challenge	www.qutbluebox.com.au
	Accelerator	QUT bluebox accelerator program	www.qutbluebox.com.au
	Coworking space	QUT Foundry	In development
Other startup support	QUT Founders Fund	In development	
RMIT University	Incubator accelerator and co-working space	RMIT Activator	www.rmitactivator.edu.au
	Other startup support	Research Innovation & Entrepreneurship branch	www1.rmit.edu.au
Southern Cross University	Other startup support	Southern Cross Enterprise Lab	In development (contact: enterpriselab@scu.edu.au)
Swinburne University of Technology	Innovation precinct and incubator	Swinburne Innovation Precinct	www.swinburne.edu.au
The University of Adelaide	Incubator	ThincLab Business Incubator	www.ecic.adelaide.edu.au
	Innovation Hub	ThincLab Adelaide	www.ecic.adelaide.edu.au
University of Canberra	Co-working space	Entry29	entry29.org.au
	Other startup support	CBR Innovation Network (Foundation member)	cbrin.com.au
	Accelerator	Social Enterprise Accelerator (The Mill House)	In development
The University of Melbourne	Accelerator	Melbourne University Accelerator	themap.co
	Coworking space	Carlton Connect	www.carltonconnect.com.au
	Student program	The Wade Institute (Masters of Entrepreneurship)	wadeinstitute.org.au
The University of New England	Incubator	SMART Region Incubator	www.une.edu.au
UNSW, Sydney	Innovation centre	Michael Crouch Innovation Centre (MCIC)	www.mcic.unsw.edu.au
	Other startup support	Student Entrepreneurship	www.innovations.unsw.edu.au

University	Kind of support	Name of program	Website
UNSW, Sydney	Incubator	Torch Prototype Incubator	<a href="http://www.mcic.unsw.edu.au">www.mcic.unsw.edu.au</a>
	Innovation precinct	Torch Innovation Precinct	<a href="http://www.torch.unsw.edu.au">www.torch.unsw.edu.au</a>
University of Newcastle	Innovation centre	Newcastle Innovation	<a href="http://newcastleinnovation.com.au">newcastleinnovation.com.au</a>
	Innovation Network	Integrated Innovation Network	<a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au">www.newcastle.edu.au</a>
	Hub and co-working space	Three76 Hub	<a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au">www.newcastle.edu.au</a>
	Pre-accelerator	Star4000	<a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au">www.newcastle.edu.au</a>
The University of Queensland	Accelerator	iLab	<a href="http://www.ilabaccelerator.com">www.ilabaccelerator.com</a>
	Incubator	Idea Hub	<a href="http://ideahub.uq.edu.au">ideahub.uq.edu.au</a>
University of Southern Queensland	Event	AgInnovate	<a href="http://www.usq.edu.au">www.usq.edu.au</a>
The University of Sydney	Incubator	Incubate	<a href="http://incubate.org.au">incubate.org.au</a>
The University of Tasmania	Innovation centres	Tas-i Entrepreneurship & Incubator hubs	In development
University of Technology Sydney	Incubator	The Hatchery	<a href="http://hatchery.uts.edu.au">hatchery.uts.edu.au</a>
	Innovation centre	Innovation and Creative Intelligence Unit	<a href="http://www.uts.edu.au">www.uts.edu.au</a>
	Accelerator	Hatchery +	<a href="http://hatchery.uts.edu.au">hatchery.uts.edu.au</a>
	Incubator	Deep Green Biotech Hub	<a href="http://deepgreenhub.uts.edu.au">deepgreenhub.uts.edu.au</a>
UniSA	Incubator and innovation centre	The Innovation Collaboration Centre	<a href="http://icc.unisa.edu.au">icc.unisa.edu.au</a>
	Accelerator	The Venture Catalyst	<a href="http://icc.unisa.edu.au">icc.unisa.edu.au</a>
	Accelerator	Centre for Business Growth	<a href="http://centreforbusinessgrowth.com">centreforbusinessgrowth.com</a>
	Commercialisation and spinout support, investment management	UniSA Ventures	<a href="http://www.itek.com.au">www.itek.com.au</a>
University of the Sunshine Coast	Innovation centre & coworking space	Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast	<a href="http://innovationcentre.com.au">innovationcentre.com.au</a>
	Accelerator	Grow Coastal: food&beverage accelerator program	<a href="http://innovationcentre.com.au">innovationcentre.com.au</a>
	Other startup support	Pitch Competition & DemoDay events	<a href="http://innovationcentre.com.au">innovationcentre.com.au</a>
	Other startup support	Startup Weekend Sunshine Coast	<a href="http://www.up.co">www.up.co</a>
	Accelerator	Health Accelerator Program	In development
	Other startup support	Innovation Education Program	In development
The University of Western Australia	Innovation Centre	UWA Innovation Quarter	<a href="http://www.innovation.uwa.edu.au">www.innovation.uwa.edu.au</a>
	Pre-accelerator	Start Something	<a href="http://www.innovation.uwa.edu.au">www.innovation.uwa.edu.au</a>
	Innovation Education	Innovation and Startup Unit	<a href="http://handbooks.uwa.edu.au">handbooks.uwa.edu.au</a>
	Innovation Education	Masters in biotech commercialisation	<a href="http://handbooks.uwa.edu.au">handbooks.uwa.edu.au</a>
	Technology Transfer Unit	Research Development and Innovation—Commercialisation	<a href="http://www.rdi.uwa.edu.au">www.rdi.uwa.edu.au</a>
	Co-working space	Masonic Hall	In development
	Maker space	UWA Makers	<a href="http://www.facebook.com">www.facebook.com</a>
The University of Western Australia/ St Catherine's College	Innovation centre	BloomLab	<a href="http://www.stcatherines.uwa.edu.au">www.stcatherines.uwa.edu.au</a>
	Co-working space and incubator	Bloom	<a href="http://www.bloom.org.au">www.bloom.org.au</a>
	Innovation Education	Bloom Start-Up LaunchPad	<a href="http://www.bloom.org.au">www.bloom.org.au</a>
Curtin, Edith Cowan University, Murdoch, Notre Dame and UWA	Research and Industry Innovation Program	iPrep	<a href="http://www.waresearch.com">www.waresearch.com</a>
University of Wollongong	Accelerator	iAccelerate	<a href="http://www.iaccelerate.com.au">www.iaccelerate.com.au</a>
Victoria University	Entrepreneur in residence, other startup support	The VU Hanger	<a href="http://www.vuhanger.com">www.vuhanger.com</a>
Western Sydney University	Innovation centres	Launch Pad	<a href="http://www.westernsydney.edu.au">www.westernsydney.edu.au</a>



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