



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Startup Catalyst announces their next cohort of 20 youths heading to Silicon Valley on a fully-funded two-week mission**

**2 November 2016:** Startup Catalyst today announced the next cohort of 20 tech-savvy youths for their upcoming fully-funded 10-day immersive mission to Silicon Valley to take place from 13-25 November.

A total of 201 individuals from across Australia, between the ages of 18 and 29, applied for a place on the mission, including 121 from Queensland, 32 from NSW, 22 from Western Australia, 9 from Victoria, 7 from South Australia, 2 from Tasmania, and 2 from the ACT. 50 candidates were interviewed, 30% of which were female.

The twenty selected participants are made up of 7 females and 13 males, aged from 19 to 29, with an average age of 24.5, spread across Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Canberra, and Perth.

The group has a range of skillsets and experience, and range from undergrads through to PhD candidates, across computer science, mechatronics, and electronics, with many specializing into areas such as data science, computer vision, and drones.

#### **More information on the participants is available at:**

<http://www.startupcatalyst.com.au/youth-mission-2016-cohort-announced/>

Each of the 20 participants now receives a scholarship to attend the Silicon Valley mission, funded by mission partners including the QUT Business School, the University of Queensland, the University of Sydney, Technology One, Business Models Inc, the Government of South Australia, the QUT School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, the University of Queensland School of Info Technology and Electrical Engineering, Griffith University, Data61, McCullough Robertson, CBR Innovation Network, Uber, and Vision6.

One of the selected participants from Queensland, Kaitlyn Sapier, said “I applied to the program because I always had a passion for startups and entrepreneurial ventures but lacked insight into their internal processes. I was hungry to learn from the best in the tech industry to better equip myself to face the challenge of crafting my own company or product in the future.”

Adrian Di Marco, founder and Executive Chairman of Technology One, said “as Australia’s largest enterprise software company, it’s important to us to engage with Australia’s youngest and brightest minds in STEM. We’ve partnered with Startup Catalyst to actively foster a diverse and vibrant IT industry, and create excitement around this exciting time in Australia’s economy.”

“These kids are the next generation of IT professionals and our future industry leaders. It’s exciting to consider their potential and the creative impact they can have on the future of IT” says Adrian.

Participants on the mission will visit the offices of global tech companies such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Google*, attend networking events with startup founders and student entrepreneurs, meet with fellow Australians who are running tech startups in the Valley, visit Stanford, and take part in educational events to equip them with an understanding of what it takes to develop and launch a globally successful tech startup.

Associate Professor Ross Coleman, the University of Sydney’s Director of Graduate Research, said “the University of Sydney is proud to support two of our students, as the first NSW Startup Catalyst participants. They’re exceptional students, and I have no doubt they’ll make the most of this unique opportunity.”

“Supporting the development of entrepreneurial skills in our students is a key priority for the University, and this program offers an invaluable opportunity to learn from startups at the forefront of the technological, economic and cultural shift being experienced around the world. I look forward to seeing how their ideas for entrepreneurial and technological solutions to the problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century progress” he said.

Startup Catalyst also recently received funding under the Queensland Government’s Advance Queensland Global Partnership Awards Program (Outbound Insights), allowing it to expand its operations nationally, and to launch new missions for investors, corporates, and startups to new destinations, including London, Tel Aviv, Singapore and Shenzhen.

Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business Leeanne Enoch said Startup Catalyst allows entrepreneurs to immerse themselves in an environment where scaling an idea to a global marketplace happens every day.

“Participants will experience the pace and pressure of life in these global hotspots and connect with some valuable networking contacts in these overseas centres of excellence.”, Ms Enoch said.

### **About Startup Catalyst**

Startup Catalyst takes groups of youths, startups, investors, corporates, and innovation leaders to international startup hotspots including Silicon Valley, Europe, Israel, and Asia with the goal of transforming the startup and innovation landscape in Australia. Our goal is to assist in the cultural transformation of the Australian economy to one that is fast paced, startup aware, and “global first”.

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