

# Advancing Regional Innovation Program

Report to the  
Greater Whitsunday Alliance

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# 1. The Greater Whitsunday Region

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The Greater Whitsunday Region comprises the Local Government Areas of Isaac, Mackay and Whitsunday. It is a geographically diverse region with primary economic pillars of mining, agriculture and tourism.

Our vision for the region is:

- A thriving economy based on our acknowledged industry strengths, enhanced by a shared culture of innovation that supports diversification, growth and new businesses.
- Job and business opportunities that will help retain our young people in the region, equipped by our education sector with skills that encourage them to be creative, confident and prepared to back themselves and develop their own ideas.
- A vibrant community championing our great regional lifestyle, attracting people to live, work and invest in our region.

## 2. Methodology

### **Pre-Registration**

This was held Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November and included key stakeholders from the region. Regional Innovation Group from DSITI participated via teleconference as did Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Councils. Stakeholders were canvassed as to who might be a suitable lead Applicant for the region. All stakeholders were in agreement that the Greater Whitsunday Alliance which was currently being formed was the most logical Lead Applicant. DSITI advised that they were a suitable lead applicant.

High level discussion on the intent of the project. Draft wording for the pre-registration application was circulated to the group for comment. The final wording for the pre-registration was:

*Establish a leadership Group to drive innovation in the region and establish an action plan to coordinate a collaborative approach to innovation between the currently identified minimum 25 project partners across the region.*

*Whilst the mainstream innovation organisations of Split Spaces and Startup Mackay are mid stage in the lifecycle the rest of the ecosystem needs increased connectivity to maximise the benefits from an established innovation ecosystem. There will be three main streams of innovation.*

- 1. Identifying, developing and promoting the innovation that exists within our established industry base including facilitating the development of innovation into commercial outcomes;*
- 2. Fostering innovation as a new industry sector for the region, seeking to drive world leading businesses coming out of this region and attracting innovative businesses into the region;*
- 3. Tap into the inherent innovation within the community to create an Innovation Culture to deliver improved social and recreational activity that enhances the liveability of the region whilst delivering a region of choice for innovators.*

*The focus areas will be leadership/culture, promotion, connectivity and collaboration through pipelines to commercial outcomes. We will establish appropriate physical locations including outreach locations servicing all aspects of the Innovation Ecosystem and develop "Human Capital" to support and drive the innovation agenda.*

*The formation of the Greater Whitsunday Alliance as the Regional Economic Development Group servicing the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Council areas is being driven by Whitsunday ROC Ltd (WROC) as they recognised that as a region we were missing out on important initiatives due to the lack of a suitable industry led leadership group. Formation is underway with the entity registered with ASIC and recruitment is underway for Chairman, Board Members and CEO. This project will be an important focus area for the newly formed organisation to work with business and industry to develop the regional innovation economy.*

### **Expression of Interest**

Interim CEO for the Greater Whitsunday Alliance Ken McLoughlin released an Expression of Interest for the development of the Collaborative Action Plan. A Consortium of Heather Norris (norris Consulting) and Geoff Fleming (rainbow Consulting) was chosen to develop the Collaborative Action Plan and ARIP Full Application for a fixed price of \$20,000.

### **Collaborative Action Plan and Funding Application**

Group workshops were held as follows:

Location	Date	Attendees
Mackay	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2017	16

Moranbah	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2017	12
Whitsunday	14 <sup>th</sup> March 2017	9

In addition meetings were held with individuals and groups over February and March. The full list of stakeholders consulted is in Appendix B

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## 3. The Regional Innovation Ecosystem

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An innovation ecosystem comprises all the entities that contribute to a ubiquitous culture of innovation. The regional innovation ecosystem people with the skills required in a modern, agile economy, encourages and celebrates innovation in existing industries and supports innovators and entrepreneurs to build their own businesses. Appendix A shows the major stakeholders in the Greater Whitsunday regional innovation ecosystem.

### 3.1 Government

Governments provide leadership, education and training programs and funding. Our region is well connected at all levels of government with an effective Federal RDA, State Government Regional Offices, and Councils who collaborate at a regional level through the Whitsunday ROC and take a regional approach to economic development through the Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3).

The Department of State Development Regional Office and the RDA currently provide advice and assistance for a number of innovation activities and projects in the region.

### 3.2 Education

Educational institutions help to build a culture of innovation in the region and equipping students with the required knowledge and skills.

#### 3.2.1 Universities & TAFE

**CQUniversity** is one of Australia's leading regional universities and combines both University and TAFE courses. The Mackay campus is one of its largest. The university has embarked on a program of innovation through its accreditation with Ashoka U, an international organisation that catalyses social innovation in higher education through a global network of entrepreneurial students, faculty and community leaders. They aim to incorporate innovation into their regular programs of study to encourage innovative thinking and establish student links with the community.

The University has a strong policy of engagement and partners with the community in innovation projects such as the Ooralea Engineering Centre, a Mining/Resources Centre of Excellence and a Sports Centre of Excellence.

**James Cook University** also has a presence in the region, notably in medical research and training at the Mater hospital.

**QUT** is involved in the sugar industry and biofuels/bioproducts industry, operates a biofactory at Racecourse Mill and is a proponent of developing a Regional Biomass Innovation Industry Precinct at this site.

#### 3.2.2 Schools

There are pockets of innovation at a number of regional primary and secondary schools, driven by teachers and parents who encourage participation in activities such as Young ICT Explorers, Robotics Challenges and Club Kidpreneur. These programs would benefit from closer engagement with the business community for mentoring and support.

### 3.3 Business

#### 3.3.1 Industry/Corporates

Most large corporates and industry sectors in the region understand the imperative to innovate and diversify. Big players such as Rio Tinto and BMA also see the benefits of broader innovation in the

communities in which they operate and fund some local initiatives through programs such as the Hail Creek Community Development Fund (Rio Tinto) and the Local Buying Program / C-RES (BMA).

Specific projects that have the potential to be catalysts for and focal points of the regional innovation ecosystem are at various stages of development. These include:

Project Catalyst: Reef Catchments and the sugar industry have obtained substantial corporate funding through WWF to research and trial new precision farming methods to reduce farm costs, increase yields, and minimise the impact of chemicals and fertilisers on the barrier reef catchment. Numerous on-farm trials are in progress and involve technologies such as GPS guidance, robotics, drones and remote sensing and monitoring.

Regional Biomass Industries Innovation Precinct (RBIIP): Mackay Sugar, Wilmar and QUT were partners in a 2013 proposal to develop an innovation precinct at Racecourse Mill, based around the existing pilot-scale biofactory operated by QUT. There is renewed interest in the project, with a genuine prospective tenant keen to proceed. With QUT's involvement the precinct could be a hub for research and innovation in bioproducts and renewables as well as a sound commercial venture.

Growing Greater Whitsunday Agrifood Project: a group taking a collaborative approach to focus on future markets for agrifoods in the region.

Mining/Resources Centre of Excellence: there are concerted efforts to develop a Centre of Excellence for the METS and Resources sector to build an export market for skills, technology and training. Key proponents are CQU and RIN members, assisted by RDA and State Government.

Sports Centre of Excellence: this is a proposed partnership between CQU and Harrup Park Country Club to capitalise on CQU's new Sports Precinct to develop a sports academy.

### **3.3.2 SMEs**

SMEs are mainly represented in the ecosystem by their industry bodies – the various Chambers of Commerce (small business), Resource Industry Network (RIN, for METS SMEs), MITN (ICT industry) and Young Professionals chief among them. These organisations are trusted pathways to their members in promoting innovation and collaboration.

The Chambers and RIN in particular have been arranging innovation-focused programs for their members, such as RIN's Innovative Solutions program which introduces METS SMEs to major customers and gives them the opportunity to "pitch" their ideas. RIN also runs annual Chairman's Awards that include innovation categories.

## **3.4 Startups/Entrepreneurs**

The startup ecosystem in the region is new but evolving. It is centred largely on Mackay, and with the exception of the Whitsunday Innovation Network, the other regions do not have much infrastructure in this space.

Split Spaces is a recently established co-working space that is currently the primary contact for the ecosystem. They plan to evolve as an incubator and innovation hub to help startup businesses develop from concept to reality. Split Spaces collaborates with Startup Mackay and other organisations and individuals with complementary roles in the ecosystem. They have plans to expand their reach into other regional centres but do not have the resources to do much at present beyond occasional workshops.

Startup Mackay has been running for two years. It is aligned with national and global Startup movements and provides a forum for people to meet, network and collaborate on their ideas for startup businesses. It also organises local events including Startup Weekends and Mentor Blazes.

The Whitsunday Innovation Network is a recently formed startup/innovation group with similar objectives to Startup Mackay. It is based at Airlie Beach in the Whitsunday region.

Mackay Innovation Centre has an innovation focus, but to date has largely been involved with private clients and delivery of government-funded programs. They are focused on innovation developing from established businesses and have plans to develop a shared micro-manufacturing facility.

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## 4. Gap Analysis

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In workshops and consultations across the region, stakeholders (listed in Appendix B) were asked about the current and desired state of the ecosystem in terms of:

Places and Spaces

Connectivity (Networks)

Collaboration

Leadership

Communities of Practice (Learning Communities)

The information was used to identify the priority gaps in resources and infrastructure that needed to be addressed by the collaborative action plan.

The main gaps and issues identified were:

### 4.1 Leadership/coordination

Ecosystem not cohesive, needs coordination, and in the case of the outreach locations, a point of focus.

### 4.2 Outreach Location Facilities

Places, spaces and networks

### 4.3 Pathway to Innovation

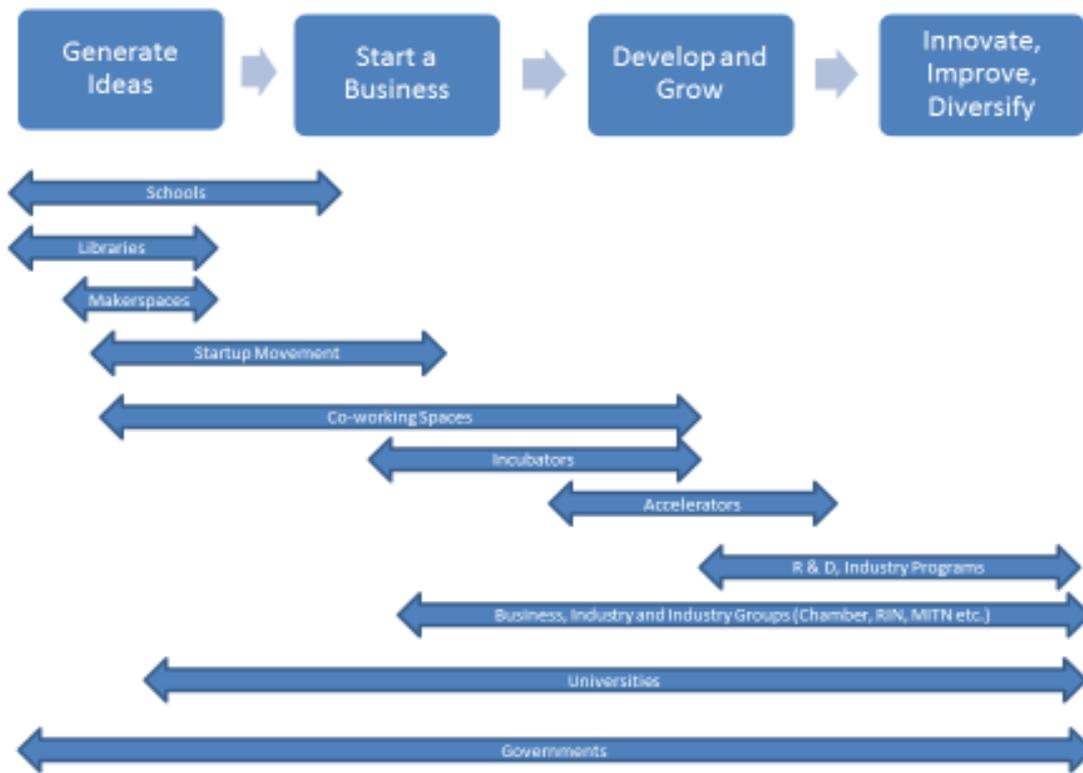
Stakeholders wanted a defined and accessible “pathway” that people could access at any stage between developing an idea to innovation within an enterprise. This is illustrated in Figure 1:

### 4.4 Marketing/PR

Let people know about the ecosystem and how to participate. Find the latent innovators in the region.

### 4.5 Youth

Young and bright people leaving – need job/business opportunities, careers paths, challenges.



**FROM IDEA TO ENTERPRISE**

**FIGURE 1: Pathway to Innovation**

Adequate resources are required at each stage of the pathway, from “ideation” to assisting startup businesses to establish and grow, and connecting established businesses to the ecosystem to collaborate on problems with local innovators.

## 5. Collaborative Action Plan

The major programs in the Collaborative Action Plan in Year 1 are based on the feedback from the Gap Analysis and consultation process. They are geared to identify and grow the Innovation Ecosystem in the region including the Outreach Locations, and address the major gaps and needs identified by stakeholders during consultation. The high level programs are:

1. Innovation Coordination
2. Outreach Locations
3. Marketing and Communications
4. Youth Innovation
5. Turning Ideas into Wealth
6. Business Innovation Incubation

### 5.1 Collaboration Partners

This is taken from the application

**The Greater Whitsunday Alliance** was formed late 2016 and the CEO commenced January 2017. It has been promoted and backed by the Whitsunday Regional Organisation of Councils who saw the need for a regional economic development organisation as a peak advocacy group promoting the region. Initial funding was confirmed at \$550,000 per annum provided by the three councils of Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday for a 3 year period with an expectation that regional business and industry will finance the organisation long term.

**CQUniversity** is one of Australia's leading regional universities and combines both University and TAFE courses. The university has embarked on a program of innovation through its accreditation with Ashoka U, an international organisation that catalyses social innovation in higher education through a global network of entrepreneurial students, faculty and community leaders. They aim to incorporate innovation into their regular programs of study to encourage innovative thinking and establish student links with the community including a specific focus on social innovation.

The University has a strong policy of engagement and partners with the community in innovation projects such as the Ooralea Engineering Centre, a Mining/Resources Centre of Excellence and a Sports Centre of Excellence. The CQUniversity City campus is home to Split Spaces.

**RDA Mackay Isaac Whitsunday** is a regional leadership entity that identifies priorities and advocates to all levels of government.

**Startup Mackay** has been running for two years and is aligned with national and global Startup movements and organises local events including Startup Weekends and Mentor Blazes. They are keen to actively participate in the ecosystem, staging and participating in events.

**Resource Industry Network (RIN)** is a peak industry association representing companies actively engaged in and allied to the resource sector. They have recognised the importance of innovation in the METS sector and have been actively promoting it through their annual chairman's awards and "Promoting Innovative Solutions" programs.

**Mackay Innovation Centre (MIC)** provides innovation support services for the region. MIC is particularly focused on developing innovation within the region's large industrial and agricultural sectors and has worked with regional SMEs looking to develop ideas into new products and services.

**Split Spaces**, is the leading innovation incubator in the region with access to a wide range of national and international mentors, entrepreneurs, business partners, accelerators, angel investors and groups, as well as other incubators.

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## 6. Projects/Activities

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The high level programs are:

1. Innovation Coordination
2. Outreach Locations
3. Marketing and Communications
4. Youth Innovation
5. Turning Ideas into Wealth
6. Business Innovation Incubation

Timeframes are based on an in-principle funding approval 30/6/2017 and detailed contract finalised 30/8/2017.

Each of these programs is profiled in the following sections with details including:

**Who** Collaborative partners

Capabilities

Target Customers

**How** Operating Model

Revenue Streams

Sustainability

Value for Money

**What** Proposed activities

**Where** Locations

**When** Timeframes and deliverables

## 6.1 Innovation Coordination

This program is the cornerstone to the ongoing development of the Innovation Ecosystem. Consultation particularly in Isaac and Whitsunday has highlighted the need to have some local coordination in the outreach locations. The Coordination function has the central coordinator as a 0.5 FTE who will also manage the outreach coordinators who will be part time outcomes focussed positions whose primary role will be to manage the outreach locations, build the local network and facilitate its interaction with the broader regional network. It is appreciated that this is a diversion from the normal approach of one central coordinator, but this was firmly articulated by the stakeholders in the consultation process.

There is a history in the region of programs being perceived as being Mackay centric and the establishment of outreach coordinators will ensure that is not the case from the outset.

**Lead:** Greater Whitsunday Alliance

**Other Partners** All identified partners and stakeholders

**Capabilities:** As the Regional Economic Development Group, the Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3) formed in 2017 will work with business and industry in the region to grow the regional economy. They have identified Innovation as one of their seven economic pillars. They will engage a Project Officer who will manage the innovation coordination function in conjunction with a range of stakeholder engagement and project research functions. It is important that this role is integrated into the project functions of the organisation as it clearly identifies that innovation is not a separate project but rather an integral part of all aspects of the regional economy. This will ensure that innovation coordination becomes an ongoing part of the business of GW3 and will be appropriately budgeted in the future. ARIP funds will assist in the formative stages where considerable additional effort is required to further develop the ecosystem and tools for ongoing management including communication networks.

**Target Customers:** Business, Industry innovators, government, R&D, Education, startups, SMEs, community.

**Operating Model** The primary regional coordinator will be an employee of the Greater Whitsunday Alliance with 50% (0.5FTE) specifically dedicated to growing the innovation ecosystem and the digital economy uptake in the region. The total cost of the position will be in the order of \$120,000 with \$40,000 of ARIP funds and the rest contributed by GW3 who will also provide considerable in-kind contributions from the CEO and Board in managing the position. An Innovation Portfolio will be assigned a company Director who will meet regularly with project partners to steer the project.

In addition, there will be part time coordinators attached to outreach locations (initially 2) to coordinate activities and develop local networks. This is crucial to the success of the outreach locations to ensure that the innovation system is encouraged to grow.

**Revenue Streams:** The Coordinators will actively seek funding streams for specific innovation projects. Current sponsorship options will not fund the coordinator role.

**Sustainability:** Relies heavily on the ability for GW3 to provide matching funding for the central coordinator and regional councils to provide matching funding for outreach coordinators. On completion of the ARIP program innovation will become an established pillar of the ongoing operations of GW3 and will be resourced accordingly.

Requirements for outreach coordinators will depend largely on the ultimate operating model for those locations, e.g. a council run facility or a regional branch of a co-working/innovation/incubator space. The ongoing need for outreach coordinators may vary between locations depending on the nature of the innovation network and the final operating model. Part of the role of the coordinators will be to develop the funding model for ongoing operation.

### Activities

#### **Central Coordinator**

- Develop trusted relationships with collaboration partners across the ecosystem
- Consolidate and manage the network of innovators and entrepreneurs

- Coordinate activities across all ARIP partners including funding reporting and acquittals
- Coordinate innovation events calendar with project partners and other stakeholders in the community as a single point of reference for innovation events
- Conduct Innovation Audit and identify new stakeholders
- Stakeholder engagement and management
- Collate success stories, and lessons learnt
- Manage outreach coordinators
- Contract development and management for contract resources under ARIP
- Manage marketing and communications plan

#### ***Outreach Coordinators***

- Plan physical aspects of outreach locations including physical and virtual spaces and equipment.
- Identification of and engagement with local stakeholders, building strong working relationships with all local stakeholders
- Serve as a local point of contact for innovation events and activities
- Identify knowledge gaps and events/programs to address the gaps

**Location:** Entire region

#### **Timeframe**

Recruitment will commence when funding is confirmed. Recruitment will take in the order of 8 weeks. Outreach coordinators will be recruited by the regional coordinator through an Expression of Interest process.

#### **Deliverables**

- Initial Innovation Audit completed by December 2017
- Outreach coordinators appointed October 2017
- EOI Marketing and Communications awarded by October 2017
- EOI Youth Innovation awarded by October 2017
- Website and social media operational December 2017
- Innovation calendar operational December 2017
- 6 Innovation stories on website March 2018
- Additional 6 innovation stories added each quarter
- Innovation Audit update completed June 2018
- 6 monthly review completed March 2018
- 6 monthly review September 2018
- 6 monthly review March 2019
- 6 monthly review September 2019
- 6 monthly review March 2020
- Final report September 2020

## 6.2 Outreach Locations

This program will establish a physical presence in the outreach locations, with required connectivity to other facilities. This will take the form of video conferencing equipment, tailored to suit the needs of the outreach location but will most likely be large monitors, HD cameras and conference microphones utilising a platform such as Skype. It will be easy to use and readily available to groups and individuals identified as part of the innovation ecosystem. This will be the stimulus for groups based in Mackay to spread their footprint throughout the region and to allow innovators in the outreach locations to access events, mentoring etc. without being impacted by their location. This will provide equitable access to information across the region. We anticipate that this could lead to local chapters of groups such as Startup Mackay, Mackay IT Network and Young Professionals becoming established in outreach locations.

**Lead:** Greater Whitsunday Alliance

**Other Partners** Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Councils year one, Mackay Regional Council when Sarina outreach location established, Startup Mackay, Split Spaces, RIN, Mackay IT network, Young Professionals

**Capabilities:** As the regional Economic Development Group the Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3) formed 2017 will work with business and industry in the region to grow the regional economy. They will coordinate with the appropriate regional council on the establishment of suitable outreach facilities initially in Moranbah and Airlie Beach/Cannonvale.

**Target Customers:** Innovation ecosystems in Isaac and Whitsunday LGAs.

**Operating Model:** A different model will be investigated in each of the two initial outreach locations.

*Moranbah:* Feedback from consultation recommends a part time location in Moranbah in existing council facilities equipped with video conference equipment to allow linkages with other regional, Queensland and national innovation networks.

*Whitsunday:* A preference for a dedicated co-working/innovation space location, however more research is needed on the potential operating model for this facility. ARIP funds will be used for video conference and other outfitting of the facility. It is an estimate at this stage, as a managing body must first be determined.

**Revenue Streams:** The Whitsunday facility will require paid participation by local innovators to meet the ongoing running costs of the facility. Whilst initial research suggests there is sufficient interest, further due diligence is required.

**Sustainability:** The Moranbah model relies heavily on the ongoing support of Isaac Regional Council. The Whitsunday facility requires uptake of subscriptions by local innovators to support the operations of the facility.

### Activities

- Focal point for innovators to network with innovators at the local, state, national and international levels.
- Focal point for activities and meetings of the local innovation network.

### Locations

Moranbah Community Centre; Whitsunday location to be determined.

### Timeframe

- Moranbah location operational by December 2017 at latest.
- Date of operation for Whitsunday location unknown at this stage.

## 6.3 Marketing and Communications Program

This program is crucial to the success of the ARIP project. Consultation demonstrated that we have not yet identified the full extent of innovation in the region and much high level innovation in businesses may not translate to commercialisation outside the region. A marketing campaign is required to build awareness of innovation in the region and encourage innovators to participate in the ecosystem. This will build a strong profile of the existing support network within the ecosystem to encourage innovators to participate in the ecosystem.

The Resource Industry Network (RIN) in conjunction with the Moranbah Traders Association (MTA) ran a successful Promoting Innovative Solutions program in 2017 to assist local businesses to refine and develop the way they present themselves and their product to market. This culminated in an expo-like event pitching the products and solutions to major resource companies operating in the region. It is planned to build on the lessons learnt in the 2017 program to extend the reach and the business involvement in the program and pitch not only to business in the region, but also head offices of major resource companies in Brisbane.

A campaign to sell our regional innovation will commence in the METS sector initially, expanding the current programs conducted by the Resource Industry Network outside of their member base. The region is gaining an international reputation for providing innovative solutions in the METS sector; we want to grow that reputation with consistency in branding and messaging. The marketing and communication strategy will identify opportunities to sell the region as an innovative region and it is envisaged that additional external marketing programs will be conducted in year two and three.

The need for online collaboration networks has been identified in several sectors which appear to have some common requirements that may allow for a single platform solution. Requirements include networking and collaboration (forums, chat rooms, collaboration tools), posting content such as videos, virtual tours. It is proposed to develop a storyboard and test the marketplace to see whether there is a close fit readily available that can be tweaked to suit specifications.

Outputs from other programs will feed in to this program.

**Lead:** Greater Whitsunday Alliance, Resource Industry Network (RIN)

**Other Partners** All identified partners and stakeholders, particularly Regional Councils, RDA Mackay Isaac Whitsunday, Split Spaces and Startup Mackay.

**Capabilities:** As the regional Economic Development Group the Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3) formed 2017 will work with business and industry in the region to grow the regional economy.

The Resource Industry Network is the peak body representing the METS sector in the region. They have an established program to identify and foster innovation in the sector and will expand this program to include regional industry in general not just their membership base.

**Target Customers:** Business, Industry, innovators, government, R&D, Education, startups, SMEs, community and potential investors.

**Operating Model** A mixture of ARIP, partner, sponsorship funds and participant fees will be used to fund the program initially with the longer term aim to grow the participation rate by local business and industry. The success of the program is anticipated to generate interest from corporate sponsors in funding the program ongoing through sponsorship rights.

**Revenue Streams:** Existing corporate sponsorship programs and participant fees.

**Sustainability:** ARIP funds will be utilised to develop the program and demonstrate the benefits to build the business case for ongoing corporate sponsorship of the program.

### Activities

- Develop a marketing and communication strategy to build an innovation culture within the region.
- Develop corporate branding for the regional innovation ecosystem.
- Develop online marketing platforms as determined in the strategy (Website, social media).

- Develop consistent messaging to be used at regional, state, national and international events.
- Develop case studies and videos of regional innovation for use online and as handouts at events.
- Conduct the Innovative Solutions program at least once per annum to put ten innovators through a six-week training program culminating in a pitching event to resource companies. Initially hold pitching event regionally with a future aim to target Australian Head Office locations of major resource companies.
- Regional Innovation Stand at major Australian resource conferences.
- As the pool of innovation talent grows, commence marketing the regional innovation story to national and international audiences.
- Develop specifications for regional online collaboration networks to service the various sectors in the innovation ecosystem. Specifications to include the following functionality:
  - Ability to segment the network into specific sectors as required (e.g. startups, METS, agriculture, tourism, logistics)
  - Ability to participate in separate sectors or overall as a user preference
  - Online collaboration tools including blogs, discussions, chat rooms
  - Events calendar
  - Online resources (videos, webinars, real time video interaction)
  - Research the market place for existing products
  - Final report to recommend solution, cost, ongoing operating model, management and sustainability.

**Location:** Entire region

#### **Deliverables**

- Marketing and Communication Strategy completed by November 2017
- Report on online collaboration networks by December 2017
- Website and Social Media platforms launched by February 2018 (if separate platforms recommended and not integrated into online collaboration network).
- Innovative Solutions Program held February-March 2018
- Innovative solutions pitch to head offices April-May 2018
- Regional Stand QME Mackay July 2018
- Regional stand Austmine Mining Innovation Conference Perth 2019
- Regional Stand Asia Pacific International Mining Exhibition (AIMEX) Sydney August 2019
- Regional participation in International Delegation to India November 2017 (not funded under ARIP)
- Regional stand India Metals and Minerals Exhibition November 2018 (not funded under ARIP however material developed through the ARIP program will be utilised in this and other international events)
- Investigate other potential conferences such as Sugar Industry ASSCT Conference, Beef Australia Rockhampton

## 6.4 Youth Innovation Program

Youth retention is a problem in regional areas. A focus on youth innovation and entrepreneurship will demonstrate opportunities for youth to remain in the region. A focus on youth makes the innovation ecosystem itself self-sustaining by developing a continual stream of new blood and new ideas into the ecosystem through the youth pathways. The initial focus will be on school students but the program will be expanded in years two and three to look at late teens, university students and early career professionals.

Club Kidpreneur is operating successfully in a few primary schools in the Bowen region. A part time resource with expertise in the youth area will be engaged to map programs currently operating in regional schools such as Club Kidpreneur, ICT Explorers, Robotics Challenges and develop a plan to increase the take-up of these programs in regional schools where appropriate. The aim is to develop youth innovation and digital discovery hubs within the region in conjunction with organisations such as CQUniversity and PCYC.

**Lead:** Split Spaces

**Other Partners** CQUniversity, PCYC, Regional Councils, Startup Mackay, RDA Mackay Isaac Whitsunday, GW3.

### **Capabilities:**

Split Spaces is the leading innovation incubator in the WIIM region with access to a wide range of international mentors, entrepreneurs, business partners, accelerators, angel investors & groups, as well as other incubators.

CQUniversity is the primary tertiary facility in the region offering both University and VET courses. PCYC is very active in the region and has expressed interest in participating in the expansion of the Youth Innovation Program.

**Target Customers:** State and private schools, Universities, youth organisations such as PCYC, school students.

**Operating Model** Promote adoption of the programs such as Club Kidpreneur in regional schools. This is already operating successfully in schools in Bowen and will be promoted across the region. A consultant will be engaged with identified expertise in this area to work with the schools to map existing innovation programs in the schools and develop a plan to increase the take-up of these programs across the region. Individual program costs will be met by schools and students participating in the programs.

**Revenue Streams:** Club Kidpreneur costs will be met by schools and students participating in the program. Proceeds of the entrepreneurial activities of the groups are donated to charity.

**Sustainability:** The longer term aim is to get youth innovation accepted into the school system, PCYC focusing on youth innovation programs and CQUniversity looking at pathways for students in conjunction with other key partners such as Split Spaces and Startup Mackay. The ARIP program will raise the awareness and engage with these stakeholders to get the ball rolling.

### **Activities**

- Map existing innovation, entrepreneurial and technology programs in schools across the region.
- Work with state and private primary schools and education department to build participation in these programs.
- Participate in the planning for a Youth Startup Weekend to be held in April-June 2018.
- Develop pathways for youth innovators to participate in the innovation ecosystem including participation in innovative projects, reverse mentoring.
- Work with Youth Groups and Regional Councils to investigate demand for permanent youth innovation/digital enterprise hubs.
- Develop strategy with Foundation for Young Australians for a Youth Innovation Hub in Mackay.

**Location:** Entire region

## **Deliverables**

Note: it is difficult to set specific targets until the extent of participation is mapped. Indicative targets are:

- A minimum six additional schools participating per regional council area in mid 2018 school year.
- Continue to build participation rates during 2018 school year with a target of 25 schools in 2018
- Target 40 Schools across the region 2019
- Youth Startup weekend held annually April to June (Note this is not costed under ARIP but this program will assist in the participation in the activity)
- Report on potential demand for permanent youth Innovation/ digital inclusion hubs completed June 2018

## 6.5 Turning Ideas into Wealth Program

The Mackay Innovation Centre has worked with regional SMEs looking to develop ideas into new products or services. They showcase, mentor and cultivate innovation in the region. They have determined a need for locally run workshops to assist regional innovators. The workshops will be tailored to regional needs and delivered by local experts helping to establish a trusted pathway for innovators.

**Lead:** Mackay Innovation Centre

**Other Partners** Small Business Advisory Service, Split Spaces, RIN

**Capabilities:** Whilst the Mackay Innovation Centre was registered in November 2015, they have a track record in the Innovation space trading as Innovation Training since 2004. These are all registered business names of NewLife Community Services, registered as a charity and not for profit organisation.

**Target Customers:** Innovators, entrepreneurs, startups, SMEs.

**Operating Model:** The program costs are subsidised through ARIP funds. Participants in the program will be charged participation fees but not on a full cost recovery basis in the initial pilot phase. Feedback will be sought during the program to establish the potential demand, perceived value and optimal participation fees to achieve required outcomes.

The pilot for the trusted pathway will fund 50% of total costs provided by the participants. It is anticipated that there will be significant costs associated with setting up the trusted pathway, establishing high level business contacts to participate in the program.

**Revenue Streams:** Sponsorship funding will be applied for through the Local Buy Foundation and Hail Creek Community Fund. There are specific competitive funding rounds under these programs.

**Sustainability:** ARIP funds required to establish the workshop material and trial the workshops to obtain feedback on their potential to deliver required outcomes. This will influence the ongoing operating model for the workshop program, however it is anticipated that it will require ongoing subsidy as there are free government programs on offer at various times.

It is anticipated that the trusted pathway will be self-funding through participation fees once established.

### Activities

- Develop material to run a series of innovation workshops. Material will be sourced from international open learning sources and tailored to regional needs. Local professionals will be used to deliver workshop material where appropriate.
- Conduct a series of six workshops twice a year on business structure, IP, commercialisation pathway, market research, pitching and prototyping.
- Develop and trial the process to ensure that innovation ideas from businesses and start-ups are given the best opportunity to attract funding from appropriate sources including use of Tier 1 accounting firms. Pilot will put 10 firms through the process and evaluate the benefits of the program. Trial participants will be selected through an open and transparent process. The assessment panel includes CQUniversity, resource company community engagement staff and other regional stakeholders.

**Location:** Whilst based in Mackay, participation in workshops and the trusted pathway will be open to the entire region.

### Deliverables

- Workshop material developed by October 2017
- First series of workshops completed December 2017
- Second series workshops completed June 2018
- Pilot Trusted pathway completed June 2018

## 6.6 Business Innovation Incubation Program

Split Spaces is the leading innovation incubator in the WIM region with access to a wide range of international mentors, entrepreneurs, business partners, accelerators, angel investors & groups, as well as other incubators.

This showcase program will bring together several new startup cohorts each year under the leadership of significant international entrepreneurs-in-residence. The incubation program is designed to rapidly develop innovative startups and scale-ups to international success by exposing them to contemporary education, proven entrepreneurs, global networks and funders. Split Spaces expects to continue to attract business migrants to Mackay for access to the world's leading mining companies.

**Lead Partner:** Split Spaces

**Other Partners:** Startup Mackay, RDA, CQUniversity, MIC

**Capabilities:** Non-profit company led by global startup mentors & coaches. Their network of partners & team members span the world and incorporate a 30-year history of exporting, technology company leadership, industry association support, and startup mentoring & funding. They have access to corporate programs by leading techs like Microsoft, Google, Apple, Salesforce, Techstars, Hackers & Founder etc.

**Target Customers:** Innovators, entrepreneurs, startups, SMEs.

**Operating Model:** The program will operate as both a paid and free program with Applicants competing for fully subsidized places in each program. Led by contracted entrepreneurs-in-residence, each cohort will be exposed to a series of rapid business development educations as well as having access to leading industry and global mentors and being introduced to investors & potential partners & customers. Cohorts will work together sharing knowledge and learnings. 'Light' education sessions will also be made available to the casual business building through inexpensive workshops, talks and seminars. The breakdown of participant fees and sponsorship is not available at present but will be a part of overall program development.

**Revenue Streams:** Program will be funded from internal operating funds, corporate sponsors as well as NGPs. community and industry bodies.

**Sustainability:** Experience to date and with other incubators suggests that seeing proof of the successful creation of new businesses will result in the attraction of further corporate sponsorship, particularly from the global mining industry. The program is expected to morph into a fully funded Accelerator Program with significant corporate sponsorship.

### Activities

- Awareness-raising marketing of the contemporary incubator programs
- Mini workshops, talks & seminars
- Roadshow to promote and prime regional prospective applicants
- Hiring of EIR
- Digital Competition for scholarships to fully-funded course
- 2 x 4 month intensive cohorts run each year
- Prime delivery of formalised startup & innovator program by EIR
- Supplementary and specialist delivery by specialist mentors & advisors, and industry executives or specialists.
- Hand holding and specialised assistance from senior mentors & tech company outreach programs

**Location:** Based in Mackay. Streamed delivery open to participants in the entire region digitally. Video Conferences for specialised mentors & partners from around the world.

### Deliverables

- 1 x Marketing roadshow & 3 x mini-incubation workshops – by February 2018
- Hiring of at least 1 EIR(s) – by January 2018

- Formalisation of the education program - by February 2018
- Establishment of first cohort – by March 2018
- Engagement of 5+ global & specialist mentors – by March 2018
- Formalising of 1 or more partnership with tech industry leaders – by March 2018
- Delivery of training sessions for both cohorts & community members – 24+ sessions over 12 months
- Delivery of mentoring sessions – minimum fortnightly for cohort members during cohort program terms
- Introductions to mentors, business partners, cofounders and investors – ongoing during cohort term

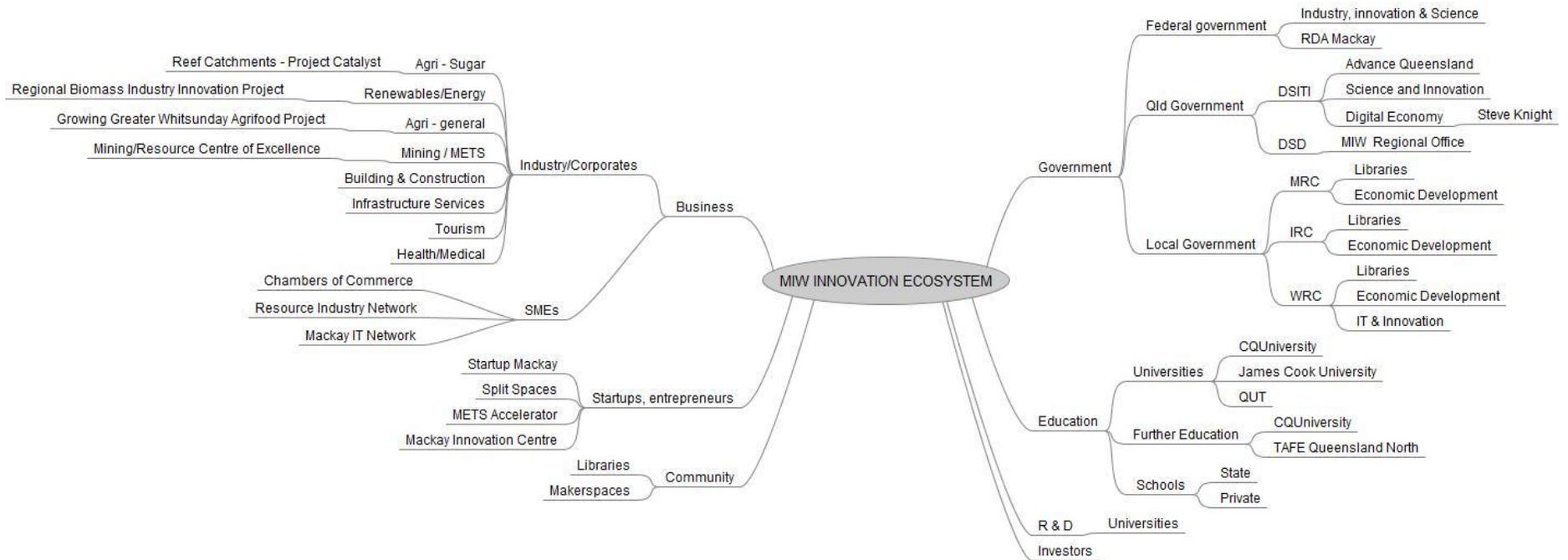
## 6.7 Potential New Programs Year two and three

The expansion of existing programs in year two and three has been indicated in the previous sections and is currently costed in the three year plan.

During the consultation phase, potential new projects have been suggested. These require further investigation/ consultation or are awaiting other funding outcomes so cannot be costed at this stage. It is also anticipated that other projects will emerge from ongoing consultation and as the innovation ecosystem matures.

- Micro Manufacturing Facility - possibly integrated with METS ignited testing facility and/or Resources Centre of Excellence
- Social Innovation

# 7. APPENDIX A: MACKAY-ISAAC-WHITSUNDAY INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM



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## 8. APPENDIX B: List of stakeholders involved in consultations

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4RFM Community Radio  
Anglo American  
Aurecon  
Ausindustry  
Australian Small Business Advisory Service  
Barefoot in Business  
Bob Bogie  
Chris Pannen  
CQ University  
Darren Foster  
Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation  
Department of State Development  
Direct Hotels Group  
Farmacist/ John Markley  
Greater Whitsunday Alliance  
Hail Creek Community Development Fund (Rio Tinto)  
Isaac Regional Council  
Lisa Mulvihill  
Local Buy Foundation (C-RES/BMA)  
Mackay Innovation Centre  
Mackay IT Network  
Mackay Region Chamber of Commerce  
Mackay Regional Council  
Mackay Sugar  
Makerspaces  
Megan Taylor  
Melissa Westcott  
Member for Mirani  
Michael Fitzgerald  
Moranbah Traders  
Proserpine Chamber of Commerce  
QUT  
RDA Mackay Isaac Whitsunday  
Reef Catchments/ Catchment Solutions  
Resource Industry Network  
Roseanne Byers  
Split Spaces  
Startup Mackay  
The Life Approach  
Trade and Industry Queensland  
Trysett le Garde  
Whitsunday Coast Chamber of Commerce  
Whitsunday Innovation Network  
Whitsunday Regional Council  
Wilmar Sugar