

SUPPORT FOR START-UPS IN REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

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Partially
Confidential

Katrina,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to submit and for someone finally asking this important question, there is so much opportunity and so many gaps!

The only way to support our startups is to do business with startups.

I have a few themes I want to talk about, in no particular order, one doesn't outweigh the other.

Consultation

Constant consultation and talk fest are time consuming and time wasting. This week alone I have been asked 3 times to submit or be interviewed on this subject, which is great BUT how much time do I have to give away to talk and submit to these conversations yet get no support and see no action?

One was a consultancy firm on behalf of [REDACTED] - I asked the caller if I would be paid for my time, he said no, I asked him if he was being paid and he said yes, and I said without payment I can't give my time and share all my knowledge. The second was on behalf of [REDACTED] - I was offered payment for my time so I participated. The other was a trip to Bega to attend the info session at CoWs on the coast, give a 5 minute talk and talk on ABC radio - [REDACTED] was in town presenting StartupMuster - I did this at no cost, because I do, do my bit for the ecosystem and support other regions and their startup community. Now at 8pm at night I am doing this, because this is important. So 4 this week and its only Wednesday night, the constant asking for my input is exhausting, this conversation needs to be consolidated, hopefully this review will highlight/do that.

Support

What support? We spent 6 months working with our local LGA to be our partner for the NSW and Federal incubator support funding, we had support from our local MP [REDACTED] and Fed [REDACTED] - councillors couldn't even have the courtesy to respond to the information email we sent them. The next council meeting they agreed to fund a Sydney Film maker, after already funding another Sydney film maker. So frustration and disappointing.

Myself and [REDACTED] created incubate@35degrees and our aim is to create #100startupsby2020 - we ran our first incubator as a pilot to prove the concept - there was no funding available but we were constantly talking to [REDACTED] office, who was keen to support us somehow, we eventually got a once off 10k in funding, 3 weeks after our pilot finished, which was fantastic. When the incubator funding was released, we were told we were ineligible because of our previous

one off payment. We never knew funding was available, we go ahead and get stuff done, then their is funding released - for the exact thing we are doing. We don't have our hand out for money we are doing so much stuff some funding any funding would make such an impact.

There are over 19 employment agencies in Wagga yet we have our lowest rate of unemployment, it is hard seeing so many (inept) govt. funded agencies - even worse is seeing local agencies like the BEC engaging with "Sydney" consultants to deliver services locally. This is the case with the BEC and RDA - as I said before, the only way to support startups is to do business with them, any regional agency that is govt. funded engaging "Sydney" consultants is a slap in the face to the local economy.

There is nothing more insulting than being treated like a country hick by our city cousins below is a para taken from the jobs for NSW Startup Hub brochure

"The hub will address the need of regional startups and SMEs to move to metropolitan areas of NSW— they will have dedicated space to conduct their business when necessary but crucially can grow their business and accelerate jobs growth in regional areas"

When is anyone going to realise that people in the regions don't want to have to go to Sydney to do "business" or network or whatever, when is anyone going to realise that because of technology I can get anything I want by opening my laptop. I find this notion insulting and just stupid, I don't get it?

MVP funding/ jobsfor NSW funding

This is my biggest beef, you can get matched funding but you need to prove you have the cash in the bank, most startups are doing what they can with what they have, if they had cash in the bank they wouldn't be applying for funding. It is such a frustrating, time consuming process dealing with these grant applications. I have spoke to over 10 people across NSW and gone in to battle for them against jobsforNSW - none of the grants got funded, its MVP funding - it should be easy to get.

Travelling to Sydney

"No I can't spend \$900 and fly to Sydney tomorrow to see you for 40 minutes. Your 1 hour meeting in Sydney is 2 days away from home for me - I have to manage my child, and no, there isn't 17 flights to choose from" The people in the regions just get on with it and most of the time can't even be bothered dealing with the Sydney startup/govt scene. Tech removes geographical barriers, I find it insane that no-one seems to comprehend that! In 2013 the trend was for ex Sydney startups now in Silicon Valley to tell everyone to pack up and move to the US - we can be global from our smartphone in a paddock from day dot, that is a secret sauce and no-one

seems to get that, no I don't want to move to Sydney and sit in traffic 25hours a week! (I grew up in Sydney and moved to Wagga as a 20yp to go to uni)

Anyway I could complain all day and even though I have had a whinge its all about problem/solutions so I would like to offer some solutions

Stop consulting and start doing, there is massive opportunity in the regions to support what is already happening and to highlight and encourage the leaders (Coffs Harbour is leading the way in this space) but this needs to be lead regionally by regional activators, not Sydney siders who haven't gone past Kiama.

Engage with the people already doing it, there is plenty and highlight the success stories, if people can see people doing it, from Wagga or Bega or Dubbo - they will believe they can do it too.

Support the activators that have already done the grassroots work, but just practice the startup methodology of lean, fast, all we need is a private facebook group - a regional roadshow and an info/opportunity packs for the LGAs - I can talk till I am blue in the face to my local council but if it comes top down I am sure they will listen. This could be a simple infograohic - and a digital marketing campaign.

A regional road show to Silicon Valley - want to think bigger and open your mind a trip to the Valley would do that, even better a trip through regional USA and look at Boulder and the #riseoftherest movement https://www.startups.co/articles/the-next-big-thing-is-small-towns?utm_campaign=Startup+Stories&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=36009506&hsenc=p2ANqtz-8JvenyrG8p3v_o2NE_QQWzufbyQOvLPyl0zzbvYko2ACTzq4E2vLBr3_iJNugbRRyXI7dUESJlyt2MCK5OkQ5fVvMg&hsmi=36009104

The regional startup scene is bigger than you think [REDACTED] just did an op-ed peice in the Australian the 44bn regional opportunity <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/technology/silicon-paddock-a-multibilliondollar-opportunity/news-story/64767b08dfa4dd73685273bf24cd2c56>

Regional Activators

[REDACTED] - CoWs on the Coast - <http://intoitsapphirecoast.com/>

[REDACTED] - Buron Bay - <https://www.startinno.com/blog/regional-innovation>

[REDACTED] - CHCC <https://sixdegreescoworking.com/category/digital-innovation->

challenge/

I am very tired so I hope that helps!

Simone

[REDACTED]

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