

MEDIA RELEASE

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'Connected state' to play key role in Australia's creative digital boom

A collaborative approach by the University of Tasmania and leading Tasmanian arts organisations have helped secure a key role for Tasmania in a national creative industries initiative announced today by the Federal Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr.

The Creative Digital Innovation Partnership is one of 12 industry innovation precincts that are being established by the Federal Government.

The partnership will grow jobs in what is already one of Australia's fast-growing sectors of the economy – the creative digital industries. A unique, national collaboration of startup companies, small and medium enterprises, international firms, government and tertiary institutions, the partnership will accelerate the take-up of digital technologies and services, innovation, and creative content across all sectors of the Australian economy.

The partnership, led by the University of Technology in Sydney, will be based in the Ultimo area but Tasmania will host one of three initial hubs, the others being in the ACT and Brisbane. The 31 core partners include the University of Tasmania and seven other universities, the ABC, IBM Australia, Cisco Systems, the City of Sydney and the Commonwealth Bank.

It will receive government funding of up to \$6 million to 2016-17, which will be matched cash or in-kind by core partners. The partnership will also have access to a competitive, merit-based Industry Collaboration Fund to support large-scale projects. The amount of funding available for individual projects will range from between \$100,000 to \$10 million per year.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Tasmania, Professor Peter Rathjen, said that a whole-of-state approach had contributed to the success of this competitive bid.

"The University is committed to being part of these innovation initiatives and to be playing a part in transitioning the Tasmanian economy," he said.

"UTAS joined forces with fellow core partners Arts Tasmania, Screen Tasmania and the Tasmanian Creative Industries Council to put the case for Tasmania becoming one of the three hubs.

“It is an endorsement of the collaborative approach to securing a place on the national stage and also a recognition of Tasmania’s burgeoning reputation as a ‘connected state’, partly helped by the fact that the NBN roll-out began here first and by the number of creative industries which choose to work out of this island.

“We are set to have one of the most digitally reliant new economies in Australia,” Prof Rathjen said.

A similar state-wide approach was instrumental in UTAS securing Federal Government funding for the Academy of Creative Industries and Performing Arts (ACIPA), which is to be built next to the Theatre Royal.

“ACIPA is a project that aspires to promote Tasmania as an important international centre for the creative industries,” Prof Rathjen said.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Prof Paddy Nixon, explained the Tasmanian hub would specialise in the development of new digital and creative enterprises originating from regional or geographically remote environments.

“Research and collaboration between researchers and industry on the impact, opportunities and challenges of the NBN are critical in this partnership.”

Tasmanian Creative Industries Council Chairman Andrew Dickinson said that the Council based its strong support for the bid on Tasmania's unique and vibrant creative community, and the ability of the sector to contribute to the state's long-term economic prosperity.

“Tasmania has Australia's highest rate of creative/cultural industry participation per capita,” he said. “In 2011 creative industries made up five per cent of Tasmanian businesses with 33 of those businesses having a turnover of \$2 million or more.

UTS Vice-Chancellor Professor Ross Milbourne welcomed the partnership and said UTS and other national partners greatly valued the collaboration with the University of Tasmania and the wider Tasmanian Creative Industries sector.

“As an NBN-enabled state, Tasmania is highly innovative and agile. The Creative Digital Innovation Partnership is all about open and trusted collaboration, with digital technologies breaking down barriers to distance and time.

“We look forward to working with our Tasmanian colleagues to put Australia on the map as a global creative digital powerhouse.”

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