



Media release

Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy
and Minister for Small Business
The Honourable Leeanne Enoch

Regional Queensland women London-bound on startup mission

The Palaszczuk Government has announced the five successful regional Queensland women it will be supporting on a startup mission in London from 26 November to 2 December 2017.

Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy Leeanne Enoch said today (Tuesday) Cairns' Jannah Dryden, Megan Avard from Pimpama, Rockhampton's Bronwyn Fenech, Ipswich's Anne-Marie Walton and Bronwyn Buksh from Peregian Beach have been chosen for the Advance Queensland Female Founders Mission.

Ms Enoch said the women will meet with several startup accelerators, visit co-working spaces and gain insights into the European market, the investment climate, and the opportunities available.

"London is the home to hundreds of global corporates and has over 70 startup accelerators and tech hubs, as well as a high number of female startup community leaders and program managers – and having an opportunity to meet some of these people will prove fruitful for our regional female founders," Ms Enoch said.

"They will rub shoulders with other like-minded women who have established themselves and invested in successful startups, and no doubt they will return with strategies to bolster their businesses back home."

The successful regional participants will each receive \$5500 under the Palaszczuk Government's Advance Queensland initiative to fund the Startup Catalyst mission. This covers six nights' accommodation, breakfasts and organised tours and meetings.

The Startup Catalyst London mission will be led by River City Labs CEO Peta Ellis, and the delegation will comprise Queensland founders, investors and corporate and policy decision makers. It continues the Palaszczuk Government's commitment to the regions, which includes the \$6 million Advancing Regional Innovation Program providing up to \$500,000 over three years to support 12 local economies and create jobs for regional Queenslanders.

Jannah Dryden, who founded Album Registry, an online gift registry platform for professional photographers who provide photographic print products/services for their clients, has her sights set on international expansion - but admits dealing with different currencies is daunting.

"This mission is a great opportunity for me to plug into potential mentors and a network of businesses dealing in European markets," Ms Dryden said.

"I'll be meeting and mixing with inspirational people who can explain the barriers and issues around distribution and how to securely handle multiple European currencies, and I could even attract investors."

Megan Avard, who founded software development company SurePact, providing contract and procurement analytics and risk identification solutions to governments/businesses, said she was thrilled to be included in the London mission.

She said it will broaden her horizons and allow her to tap into the knowledge of people with years of experience in tech startups that have international clients. "I will get a greater sense of the possibilities and I hope a better understanding of the risks involved and how to set new pathways that will result in faster growth for SurePact," she said.

Bronwyn Fenech, whose business FMStudios is a bespoke graphic design and website design studio, said she hoped to return from the mission and share world-leading innovation practices with local entrepreneurs and startups.

“It will also allow me to meet world industry leaders in this area, which will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I am extremely excited about this opportunity and I look forward to the challenge of doing business with some of these women,” she said.

Anne-Marie Walton, who created her interactive learning business Wantu to make parenting easier for happy kids, and encourage social play by using technology for quick fun and activities together, off-screen - said the trip would be a catalyst to progress her business.

“My aim is to go global, getting more parents with young children to download our product – and I’m particularly interested in engaging disadvantaged families who would enjoy the fun activities and benefit from what we offer,” she said.

“I’ll be going all out to connect with trailblazers who use technology for positive social change and big businesses that market to families with 2-8 year olds. This is such a rare opportunity. I want to gain all I can from the experience and pass this on to other budding startups when I get home.”

Bronwyn Buksh, whose company Digital Precinct provides a platform for local technologists to create a digital hot-spot in Noosa, where founders, startups and technologists can live and work in a unique beach environment, said she looked forward to the opportunity to connect with other entrepreneurs in Queensland, Australian and international networks. She said the London mission would assist her business to develop programs that attract and enable women entrepreneurs.

For more information visit the Startup Catalyst website (<http://www.startupcatalyst.com.au/>)

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