

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mackay Isaac Whitsunday region is leading the innovation conversation

Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3), in collaboration with a range of collaborative partners including the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday regional councils has been leading delivery of the Advancing Regional Innovation Program (ARIP) in the MIW region since 2017.

GW3 Interim CEO, Ms Kylie Porter said this week, representatives from the twelve ARIP regions and a number of regional Startup Hubs being funded by Advance Queensland will gather in Mackay for the annual two- day ARIP Conference tomorrow and Friday at Split Spaces.

“The ARIP program is providing our region with critical funding in the innovation space to create new opportunities, encourage our youth and entrepreneurs to pursue their ideas and offer support and education to businesses and startups across our region,” said Ms Porter.

“Embracing innovation is a critical feature of our region’s future success and through ARIP activities, we are working hard to ensure that the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday region is a place for innovation and entrepreneurial spirit to thrive.

“We are delighted to welcome delegates to Mackay for the annual ARIP conference and are excited to share our regional stories of innovation success.”

This year’s conference theme of Connected Regions aims to enhance and build connections across regional Queensland and the 30 regional delegates will use the opportunity to share learnings and successes from their individual programs, as well as share their plans the next twelve months.

Innovation Minister Kate Jones said that the Queensland Government supported the Advancing Regional Innovation Program because it will create jobs.

“Supporting innovators and entrepreneurs through Advance Queensland’s regional partnerships means that start-ups and scale ups can access the support they need to grow and create jobs.”

Ms Porter said the ARIP Conference caps off a busy fortnight in the innovation space regionally, with ARIP supported *Mackay Entrepreneur in Residence* and *Big Ideas Challenge* events held only last week.

“We might be a region typically recognised for our world class mining, METS, agriculture and tourism industries, but with the support of the Advancing Regional Innovation Program, innovation is becoming a central theme in ensuring these industries remain strong and viable well into the future.”

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