

Question on Notice

No. 1239

Asked on 23 August 2017

MR S STEWART ASKED THE MINISTER FOR INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY AND MINISTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS (HON L ENOCH)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister update the house on the great work Advance Queensland is doing in regional Queensland to support jobs?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

Advance Queensland is about creating economic opportunity and improving the lives of Queenslanders. This agenda is about positioning this state for long-term success, and the investments we are making will help strengthen existing industries and diversify the economy to drive growth that creates jobs.

As at 30 June 2017, the Palaszczuk Government has backed 1650 innovators across Queensland from the Norman River to Noosa, from Townsville to Toowoomba. Over a third of Advance Queensland recipients are located outside Brisbane.

Recipients have reported that their projects will drive 4821 jobs, with over 50 per cent being attributable to regionally based recipients. This is a strong result and reflects the strength of innovation outside Brisbane.

Regional innovation is being encouraged through our Advancing Regional Innovation Program (ARIP), with over 100 partners across the state working to increase regional opportunities.

ARIP is a \$6 million commitment that is designed to support initiatives that connect and leverage key strengths, lift innovative capability and build new opportunities and jobs for Queensland regions.

Funding of up to \$500,000 over three years has been allocated to each of the 12 designated ARIP regions – Far North Queensland, North Queensland, Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday, Fitzroy, Outback Queensland, Wide Bay-Burnett, Darling Downs and Maranoa, Sunshine Coast, Moreton Bay, Ipswich and West Moreton, Redlands and Logan, and the Gold Coast.

We are also helping regional Queenslanders embrace the opportunities that innovation and the digital economy are providing, through our broader range of Advance Queensland programs.

In the North Queensland region, over \$3.67 million of Advance Queensland funding has been provided to recipients. This includes small businesses sharing in over \$80,000 through the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program which enables a graduate to be brought into a business to work on an innovative project. Townsville Engineering Industries (TEI), a recipient of the program, is one example of how their project is driving job growth. Their graduate provided them with the skills required for the low cost wireless sensors project, claimed to be a world first, and was employed into a full time position by the company following the program. Nearly two years on, the graduate is still working with TEI and the company continues to work on prototyping and commercialising data design.

In Townsville, organisations are being supported to help further build the capability within Queensland's startup community. For example, over \$95,000 has been provided to Townsville based recipients through the Queensland Startup Events and Activities Fund to run entrepreneur mentoring programs and 'Startup Weekends'.

Townsville locals Space Counts Pty Ltd are being supported to gather and analyse student engagement data to inform course design, subject delivery planning, student support services, space planning and timetabling. The project, which was funded over \$95,000 through the Advance Queensland Ignite Ideas program, anticipates the creation of nine new jobs at completion of their project.

Innovators from Regional Queensland are also being supported to connect with some of the world's best corporates, entrepreneurs and investors through Advance Queensland's partnership with Startup Catalyst. This partnership has seen regional startup leaders travel to the United States earlier this year, agtech companies travel to Israel, and four female founders being funded to attend the United Kingdom mission in November 2017.

Drawing people together, boosting grassroots activities and building connections across communities is a process that takes time. By harnessing our collective strengths and creating new partnering opportunities, we're supporting local economies to develop new ideas and create new knowledge-intensive jobs for regional Queenslanders.