

Media release

29 May 2020

Entrepreneurship research gets underway

A partnership between the Cradle Coast Authority (CCA) and Swinburne University's Centre for Social Impact, will see PhD Candidate, Deanna Hutchinson, explore the question, "who is helping grow entrepreneurship in the region, and how might they be supported?".

Embedded within the CCA team since late last year, Ms Hutchinson has refined her research question, gained ethics clearance and can now begin interviewing key stakeholders.

Swinburne University fast-tracked the ethics approval, to allow the research to consider how COVID-19 is impacting entrepreneurs in our region and the institutions that support them.

CCA CEO, Daryl Connelly said the research will help CCA and other organisations do even more to support entrepreneurs.

"There are lots of organisations and agencies trying to support entrepreneurship in lots of different ways. The impact of that work is often difficult to measure and much of the available theory is based on urban areas. Deanna's research will help us and our partners look critically at our work, with a view to having more impact and delivering more public value" he said.

Over the next two and a half years, Ms Hutchinson will engage with entrepreneurs and the organisations that support them through a series of interviews and workshops. In addition to producing a thesis, she will produce some practical guidance for those organisations.

"With entrepreneurship being an important driver of economic sustainability, shocks like COVID-19 really call on the ecosystems of people and organisations supporting entrepreneurs. These ecosystems are vital even in normal times, but not enough is known about what it takes to strengthen them, especially in rural regions. This project explores what these ecosystems look like on the Cradle Coast, and what they need in order to be effective and able to provide appropriate support now and into the future", Ms Hutchinson said.

Swinburne University offered to support the work through a PhD scholarship, after being impressed by the Cradle Coast Regional Futures Plan, an ambitious approach to economic development led by CCA and its Member Councils.

"Local entrepreneurs are key to regional development. We are pleased to be working on a world-leading PhD project here on the Cradle Coast to understand how regional communities can support and nurture entrepreneurship" said Professor Robyn Eversole, Director, RegionxLink Program at Swinburne University's Centre for Social Impact.

The University of Tasmania has also funded research scholarships to support the Futures Plan, details of which will be announced in the near future.

People interested in sharing their knowledge and experience or learning more should contact CCA.

Image: Ms Hutchinson.



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