

## Grant sees incubator Eighteen04 expand to create smart jobs in the Hunter region

After gaining local support, Eighteen04 opened its doors in September 2015. It was the first Australian business incubator to exclusively support clean tech\* (clean technology) and smart cities^ startups.

The incubator provides access to collaborative working spaces and incubator programs, paired with support from experienced mentors and startup capital, to help boost the commercial viability of the startup businesses. Assistance from Jobs for NSW will see the facility service even more startups.

### The need for investment: Eighteen04 meets Jobs for NSW

With six startup companies in residence, and a range of mentors and advisors swinging by, the 10-seat facility was no longer able to provide adequate collaboration space.

Having already scouted out a new potential venue in Newcastle West, the Eighteen04 team set out to build financial support to establish operations, and to acquire the resources and equipment that business incubators need to flourish.

To help Eighteen04 expand, Jobs for NSW invested \$300,000 under the **Accelerators and Incubators** program.

With this investment, Eighteen04 was able to relocate and expand to a new 30-seat facility nestled in the heart of Newcastle's digital precinct. The investment was also able to assist in the fit-out of the new space, and provide rental assistance to the business incubator.

Most importantly, the expansion of Eighteen04 will help to attract new talent to the region, assisting in the creation of up to 218 new jobs.

### A seaside startup community

Named as Australia's largest regional economy, Newcastle and the Hunter region have traditionally been known to most as a coal-mining and power hotspot.

Today it is home to an active and growing startup community.

Members of the clean tech and smart cities community are relocating north to enjoy the region's enviable seaside lifestyle, creating a collaborative cluster of new technologies committed to creating energy sources.

As an entrepreneur with more than 30 years' experience working with businesses in the electrical engineering and sciences field, Dr Gunilla Burrowes, Chair of Eighteen04, recognised this trend early.

Dr Burrowes saw the need to establish a not-for-profit business space which supported the growth of clean tech and smart cities startups in the Hunter region.

Eighteen04 hopes to encourage the creation of a thriving startup ecosystem, helping to generate jobs in a new and emerging sector and allowing NSW to capture talent.

With close proximity to industry, universities and investors, the goal of Eighteen04 is to drive economic development and employment diversity for Newcastle and the Hunter region.

Dr Burrowes says establishing the incubator in Newcastle is instrumental to its success.



‘We see Eighteen04 as an exciting addition to Newcastle’s Smart City Strategy. There are strong links here to research and development institutions, which startups can work with and learn from.’

‘By placing startups at the centre of the action, we hope to encourage them to build on the city’s history of innovative businesses and manufacturers in times of transition.’

### Growth opportunities

The Hunter region is currently experiencing a labour transition away from more traditional sectors, towards tech industries within the regional cluster.

With this in mind, Eighteen04 will foster the development of scalable,

product-based enterprises which target global markets and create sustainable jobs for the future.

Local support for the incubator is strong, with committed partners including TAFE NSW, the CSIRO Energy Centre, Newcastle City Council, HunterNet, AiGroup, Mayfield Business Association, #Newystartups and the local business community.

With this local support, and assistance from Jobs for NSW, Eighteen04 hopes to enhance collaboration in the region, drawing talent from the national startup scene and facilitating networks locally, while providing links to world-class innovators.



Dr Burrowes says she envisages Eighteen04 as the Asia–Pacific home for clean tech and smart city startups.

‘Our visions are aligned to drive growth in the Hunter and the NSW economy by delivering jobs and developing new and innovative industries for our future, and we would like to thank Jobs for NSW and the NSW Government for their support.’



*\*Clean tech or clean technology startups are focused on reducing environmental impacts through more efficient and sustainable processes, products and services.*

*^Smart cities are productive, accessible liveable cities that attract talent, encourage innovation and create jobs and growth to succeed in the 21st Century economy.*

**Jobs for NSW supports startups, small to medium enterprises and regional business to build momentum and grow jobs in NSW.**

**Find out how Jobs for NSW can help your business.**