

Boost for SA startups supporting men's health and STEM

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The Innovation and Collaboration Centre has awarded two exciting Adelaide startups major prizes at the SA Startup Pitch for Cash held at the Innovation Box event during Open State.

Ten startups and aspiring entrepreneurs pitched their business ideas to a select panel of judges at the SA Startup Pitch event before a tool that supports men's health and an engagement tool for teachers to deliver STEM in the classroom were announced the winners.

Sponsored by the ICC, a strategic partnership between the University of South Australia, the South Australian Government and Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) supporting technology-based incubation and business growth, these prizes will significantly boost these local startups' business ideas.

Manager of the Innovation and Collaboration Centre, Jasmine Vreugdenburg, says the two SA startup winners are perfect examples of how the ICC can help to leverage world class technology through HPE and UniSA's expertise in business growth, creative thinking and commercialisation.

"The companies supported, are both focusing on areas of critical importance in our society today; increasing the uptake of STEM by our school students and reducing the alarming rates of suicide," Jasmine Vreugdenburg says.

"The ICC supports the lifecycle of startups from idea generation to growth and expansion so I am extremely pleased with the caliber of our winners."

MK2Play was awarded \$5000 for their engagement tool for teachers to deliver STEM in the classroom – Stemtap – and the LifeBACK Mens Mental Health tool won six months Incubation support in the Innovation & Collaboration Centre for their new suicide prevention initiative - LifeBACKTracker.

The entrepreneur behind LifeBACKTracker, Anthony Hart, also won the People's Choice Award.

"I'm incredibly honoured that my LifeBACKTracker initiative won the People's Choice at Innovation Box," Anthony Hart says.

"Suicide is a loss of life that can be prevented and this incredible validation of my idea will help make my vision become a reality.

"The digital and technology component of my LifeBACKTracker program has always been the 'missing link' in my project and having also won 6 months of incubation space in the ICC, I'm now confident the project will become a successful reality."

With STEM a major priority for South Australia the co-founder of MK2Play, Thomas Kuys, was thrilled to take out the top prize.

"For us winning the SA Startups Pitch for \$5000 was incredible," Thomas Kuys says.

“It was great to simply have the opportunity to tell more people a bit about what we are doing at MK2 Play but then to win a prize on top of that is quite breathtaking.

“The Innovation and Collaboration Centre continues to impress me with the level of help and guidance they offer to startups.

“In our time collaborating with the ICC we have grown significantly and the main contributing factor to that without a doubt has been the advice and guidance we have received.

“This cash prize is going to be used to help us to continue bootstrapping MK2 Play for a while longer.”

LifeBACKtracker aims to empower men facing mental health challenges to take action. It has been tried and tested over the 13 years following Anthony Hart’s period when he privately suffered anxiety and depression leading to a serious attempt of his life in 2003.

MK2Play’s Stemtap will be the latest tool in the hands of students to engage them in STEM. Stemtap will also give teachers the confidence they need to facilitate valuable STEM learning through the curriculum matched lesson content provided. Having physical hardware as part of Stemtap brings ‘play’ into the classrooms which is well acknowledged to be the most effective method for students to learn.

The Innovation & Collaboration Centre (ICC) is a strategic partnership between the University of South Australia (UniSA), the South Australian Government and Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), supporting technology-based incubation and business growth.

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