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LAUNCH Festival – first stop Sydney

Some of the biggest names in the global startup community touch down in Australia's entrepreneurial city this week for the first edition of LAUNCH Festival Sydney. This is the first time the world's largest startup event has been held outside of San Francisco in its 10-year history.

The festival, enticed to Sydney by Business Events Sydney (BESydney), Destination New South Wales (NSW) and the NSW Department of Industry, will take place at the SMC Conference & Function Centre from 19-20 June 2018.

“Business events stimulate economies and are catalysts for trade and investment – it's where deals are made by handshakes, international collaboration sparks and innovation begins,” said BESydney CEO, Lyn Lewis-Smith. “Startups are the pioneers of future industries – they are disrupters to ‘business as usual’ and pave the way for new ways global communities will live, work and play.

Angel investor, author, and LAUNCH Founder Jason Calacanis is startup royalty in San Francisco. “After 10 years’ hosting the largest start-up conference in America, with tens of thousands of attendees and thousands of startups participating, our first choice for taking the event international was Sydney,” said Mr Calacanis. “There's amazing entrepreneurial energy in Sydney reminiscent of the early days in San Francisco. Sydney's an amazing city and we can't wait to celebrate innovation in the ‘other city by the bay’!”

Startup founder passes were snapped up almost immediately, and LAUNCH Festival Sydney has attracted more than 1,400 delegates from 26 countries as far afield as Morocco, India, Brazil, Canada and Germany.

LAUNCH Festival Sydney's impressive speaker line-up includes angel investors, startup entrepreneurs and industry heavyweights, including Stonly Baptiste, Co-founder and Partner of Urban Us; Adir Shiffman, investor and Executive Chairman of Catapult Group International; and, Matthew Dellavedova, angel investor, Australian basketball Olympian and current player for the Milwaukee Bucks.

LAUNCH Festival Sydney will boost NSW's innovation brand globally. “Sydney is the tech centre of Australia and we are delighted to have secured the LAUNCH Festival for NSW, which will shine a light on our innovation capital and showcase the nation's leading startups to the world,” said Ms Lewis-Smith.

According to Startup Muster, NSW is currently home to 44 per cent of Australia's startups. *The Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2018* showed Sydney is number one in the Asia Pacific as a place where startup founders can best connect and build strong relationships, ahead of places like Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

The new A\$35m Sydney Startup Hub is already helping bring innovative ideas to fruition, and numerous technology firms – including Google, IBM, Atlassian, Dimension Data, Dropbox, and Microsoft – have regional headquarters in Sydney.

The busy two-day program includes on-stage feedback and pitching opportunities with Calacanis, ‘fireside chats’, discussions on the future of venture capital, next-level startup growth talks, best investment practices, startup competitions, and networking.

Alongside the main event are several offsite activities including ‘Angel University’, a four-hour course for those interested in becoming a professional angel investor; and ‘Startup Safari’ where delegates have the opportunity to visit the offices of various stakeholders in the Sydney startup ecosystem.

LAUNCH Festival Sydney will return in 2019.

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