

## **BIG TICKET ITEMS INCLUDING STARTUP YEAR FOR ENTREPRENEURS PASS THROUGH PARLIAMENT**

**THURSDAY 9 MARCH 2023**

The Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN) says the introduction of the Startup Year legislation is a red-letter day for young Australians who want to pursue their dreams and make their mark in business.

Startup Year is among several big-ticket Higher Education items which have now passed through parliament. ATN Universities will play a lead role in helping the next generation of entrepreneurs and job creators bring their ideas to life.

Startup Year will deliver 2000 HELP-style loans and provide graduates and businesses with a year-long opportunity to access mentoring at our university campuses, to learn from academic experts, access world-class facilities, and test new business ideas.

ATN Executive Director, Mr Luke Sheehy, said Australia's world-class income contingent loan scheme, HELP, is one of Australia's greatest policy innovations having served us well for more than 30 years and has played a direct role in expanding access to higher education without the barrier of up-front costs.

"I particularly want to extend congratulations to the Federal Government and Education Minister, Jason Clare, and to Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, Ed Husic, for their work in this area. The Startup Year program rightly recognises that Australia's universities play a critical role in driving new ideas, innovation and opportunity in the Australian economy," he said.

"As Australia's leading university grouping for industry collaboration, innovation and enterprise, our universities, students and graduates are uniquely placed to take advantage and be a leader of the Government's Startup Year program."

ATN Universities currently supports student entrepreneurs, and hosts hundreds of start-ups and micro-businesses at our campuses and through Curtin Accelerate, Deakin ManuFutures, The University of Newcastle's Integrated Innovation Network, RMIT Activator, UniSA Venture Catalyst and UTS Startups.

The 2,000 HELP loans allocated each year will allow final-year undergraduate students and current post-graduate students to participate in a higher education-based incubator or accelerator program.

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**The Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN)** was established in 1999 and brings together Australia's six real world universities focused on enterprise, impact and finding solutions to issues facing our rapidly changing economy and society. Our member universities are Curtin University, Deakin University, RMIT University, The University of Newcastle, University of South Australia, and University of Technology Sydney. Our universities produce Australia's most job-ready graduates and undertake world-class research with real-world impact. Through our innovation we are proud disruptors challenging the status quo. ATN universities provide world-class education to almost 310,000 students and teach 20 per cent of domestic higher education students and 19 per cent of international students. We are the fastest-growing university grouping in terms of domestic students. Together, we are proud of who we include, not exclude, with a strong commitment to equity, excellence, and social justice. ATN is one of Australia's leading university peak bodies with a track record of advocating and shaping positive policy outcomes with all levels of government.