

Attachment C

**Councillor Robert Kok's Presentation and
Speech at the Global Innovation and
Entrepreneurship Fair**

CHENGDU FORUM – DIGITAL AND INNOVATION

May 18-19, 2018

Thank you, [MC] and hello, everyone. I welcome this opportunity to tell you something of the development of digital and start-ups in Sydney and the work that we are doing at the City to support this vital sector.

As the global economy evolves, most countries recognise the need to invest in innovation to support future growth and economic sustainability.

As Australia's only global city, Sydney is unsurprisingly Australia's innovation capital. A report produced last year by Deloitte, with the Sydney Business Chamber and the Business School at the University of Technology Sydney examined the scene for innovation and start-ups.

It found a healthy sector right across the Metropolitan Sydney but its so-called "heat map" of Sydney's most innovative regions found that three of the five most innovative hot spots were within the City of Sydney.

These regions were the City centre, nearby Pyrmont-Ultimo and Surry Hills.

Each had characteristics which help it thrive. The CBD is home to the NSW State Government, to the Big Four banks, the Big Four accountancy and consulting firms, the major property and infrastructure companies and the global supply chain logistics companies.

Pyrmont-Ultimo, which is home for the University of Technology Sydney, is a knowledge hub and a centre for digital creative start-ups and co-working spaces for innovative small companies. These include a mix of digital, soft-ware and design companies.

Surry Hills is also home to an increasing number of fast-growing start-ups but is also home to a key publishing company and major food retailers.

Another hot spot, though not in the top five, is the Alexandria-Redfern-Erskineville and Chippendale area which includes Australian Technology Park, key media players and innovative construction companies.

Importantly, though, all these hot spots benefit from the City of Sydney's work to create local environments that are attractive places to live and work. We have always believed that places that are attractive places to live – places that

have tree-lined streets, open spaces, a mix of residential and commercial uses – will also be attractive places for people to open new businesses.

These inner-Sydney hot spots are places where like-minded people congregate, work in a variety of shared spaces, have informal meetings in cafes just a short stroll from their offices, and have the chance encounters that allow for the easy exchange of information and ideas.

They have the density, the high growth potential, the entrepreneurs and opportunities for collaboration that together form a fertile environment the innovative economy.

They are home to major universities that are strong in engineering, computer science and business graduate programs. They are in the heart of a city that has strong global connections and good proximity to the markets of Asia.

Our city planning and policies have played a significant role in creating the fertile physical and regulatory environment that will help this new economy to flourish and grow.

At the City of Sydney we have had a strong policy focus on this new economy for some years now and we can lay claim to a number of internationally successful start ups like Atlassian, BigCommerce, Freelancer, Shoes of Prey and Canva.

. We know that StartupAUS estimates the Australian tech start up sector could contribute up to four per cent of Australia's GDP and generate as many as half a million jobs by 2033.

And Sydney of course has the highest number of tech start ups at 64 per cent, as well as the accelerators, incubators, co-working spaces and active venture capital firms and angel investors.

The recent Global Start up Ecosystem Report identified 2,300 individual start-ups in Sydney.

In 2016, we endorsed a Tech Start-up Action Plan to foster an open, inclusive, skilled and highly connected tech start-up ecosystem. We believe this is how to create more jobs, boost Sydney's economy, strengthen our global connections, and make our city an even better place to live, work and visit.

The Action Plan focuses on five key areas. The first is to bring a strong entrepreneurial community which we have done through a number of initiatives.

Since 2012, we have held regular business education and networking seminars in which leading business people from various sectors mentor young would-be entrepreneurs. And we now have a three-year agreement to sponsor the Spark Festival, a two-week celebration of the tech start up ecosystem.

Last year we partnered with SBS Australia television to profile some of Sydney's start-up success stories which reached a national audience of 1.2 million viewers, raising the City's profile as a creative place to do business.

And finally, we have been working with the NSW State Government since 2016 when the Lord Mayor requested a joint working group on innovation to share information about projects which support tech start-ups.

A second focus of the plan is to Create Skilled and Connected Entrepreneurs which we do through grants and sponsorships. An important element of that is the City's visiting Entrepreneur Program which last year brought three very successful international entrepreneurs to Sydney to accelerate the education of our local entrepreneurs. It was supported by the NSW government and by 15 industry hosts and it included 25 events over 10 days.

We also sponsor StartCon, Australia's largest start up conference and sponsor programs for high school students as well as running library programs to provide opportunities for young people in creative thinking, digital citizenship and the creative application of digital skills.

We have also sponsored Haymarket HQ to produce a series of events and videos to showcase Asian Australian entrepreneurs to inspire others and share the secrets to their success.

The third aim of our Action Plan is to increase the density of Sydney's start-up ecosystem and so, through a Voluntary Planning Agreement with developer Lendlease, we will create 3,600 square metres of space for tech start-ups on Sydney's premier street. This project, which is now under way, is part of our work to encourage more short and long-term affordable innovation spaces.

We also want to Develop Entrepreneurs' access to markets and so we sponsor CeBIT's annual Business Technology Exhibition and Conference. This event has

a significant economic impact and showcases both international and local expertise.

It also gives tech start-ups an opportunity to showcase their company to potential consumers or investors and last year, there were well over 15,000 attendees from 34 countries, with an estimated economic contribution of \$13.6 million.

The final aspect of our Start-ups Action Plan is to improve access to the funding which all new ventures need. In particular, we look to help women entrepreneurs who have been under-represented in the ecosystem.

As part of our Visiting Entrepreneurs Program, the City hosted an event looking at why supporting women entrepreneurs is good for business and for the community, and at how women can thrive when they have access to capital and the business networks they need.

We also have introduced cash grant that will help fund a program to give at least 450 women in Sydney access to mentorship in becoming entrepreneurs. It will give them access to experts to develop their business skills and find investment opportunities and also help educate women who are not yet tech savvy in how they might develop their ideas.

We are also funding a not-for-profit organisation to develop a start-up website as a central resource and information hub for our local tech start-up community.

It is a two-way process which will make it easier for international companies looking to establish a base or to invest in Sydney, as well as making it easier for Sydney-based companies to go abroad, especially to South-east Asia.

We know at the City of Sydney that we need to continue to learn and grow with the digital world and we need to keep attracting people to work in our City if our local businesses and our economy to continue to thrive.

The spread of technology means that we must make the changes that are necessary to keep pace in the fast-moving digital world. Providing many of our services on-line not only helps us reduce costs at a time when our population is continuing to grow but it makes it easier for our residents and businesses to deal with us at a time and place that suits them.

And so we have adopted a digital strategy to help us do this, devising programs that will build a literate community – programs that are designed around the

people who will use them so that they can access our online services at any time, from any device.

We support our businesses to become more resilient and collaborative and we advocate for, and sometimes provide, the smart infrastructure that is now necessary to remain globally competitive.

Without action on all these front, we would be left behind. But Sydney is a dynamic and energetic city, outward looking and eager to embrace the new. We believe that with the right strategies in place, and co-operation between all levels of government and the business world. Sydney is well-equipped to continue to prosper in the 21st century.

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