



Media release

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SPARK FESTIVAL KICKS OFF IN SYDNEY THIS WEEK

The Spark Festival - a celebration of startup companies - kicks off this week in Sydney, with 13 days of events in the Sydney CBD, Western Sydney, the North Shore, Newcastle and Armidale.

“There are more than 100 events available and many of them are free,” said Program Director Maxine Sherrin. “Last year more than 6,000 people came to learn, admire and get connected with our startup community.”

Sherrin said there was something for everyone at the Festival, with events to show you how to build a startup, learn entrepreneurial skills, coding, and even a session where young children get to program robots.

“We also have an important event where entrepreneurs will pitch their ideas to potential investors,” said Sherrin. “There will also be some startling revelations about the future of automation, agtech, space exploration, as well as the potential impact of the growing medical cannabis industry in Australia.

Sherrin said the Spark Festival, sponsored by Jobs for NSW and the City of Sydney, was reaching beyond Sydney for the first time, since it began 3 years ago.

“The increase in interest from Newcastle and New England is indicative of the new environment that’s developing. Every person will be affected by new technology and innovation, creating a natural environment for entrepreneurs with new ideas to flourish,” she said.

Program highlights this week include:

- The [Everything IoT Global Leadership Summit 2017](#), commencing Wednesday, where a host of global and local experts will reveal how the IoT (Internet of Things) revolution, will impact a range of industries, including agriculture, cyber security, healthcare and resources and energy. Tickets to some events still available.
- [Blade Runner Cometh or Just Another Industrial Revolution?](#) Mike Priddis from Faethm.ai will share new insights into Australia’s future workforce impacted by artificial

intelligence and robots. His world-first Tandem.ai platform accurately identifies which jobs will be impacted by robots, which jobs may be meshed with new technology, which industries will be affected and where future job opportunities may lie.

Visit the [Spark Festival](#) website to see all the programs. Other key events include:

- The [Tipping the Balance](#) event, which will hear the fascinating stories of 3 indigenous women who've founded their own successful startups. Jocelyn King, CEO of First Australians Capital, Mikaela Jade, Managing Director of InDigital and Melissa Lacey, Director at River Point Networks.
- The future of the emerging [Medical Cannabis Industry](#), set to be worth more than \$50 billion in the next 10-years will be the topic of this event by Budding Tech. Hear insights from speakers including Cardiologist Dr Ross Walker, NSW Nationals Member for Tamworth, the Hon. Kevin Andrews, and Budding Tech founder Adam Miller.
- Taking your [Australian startup to China](#). The Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce and KPMG presents an opportunity to hear from founders and investors about why now is the perfect time for aussie startups to head to China. Features Austrade and Andrea Myles, CEO of the Australian Millennial Project.
- ANZ and Robogals will host a [Kids Robotics Workshop](#). An interactive workshop is designed to inspire tomorrow's engineers where kids aged between 8-13 years of age get to program EV3 Lego Mindstorm robots at the Sydney Town Hall.
- How [A.I and machine learning](#) are transforming industries forever. This is a fascinating panel discussion, presented by the Israeli Chamber of Commerce, is about how we need to consider ethical and responsible use of future technologies.
- [Tech on Toast : Corporate Innovators](#) takes a look at the way companies approach innovation. Mat Beeche, the founder of Startup Daily, will be joined by innovators from [Gilbert and Tobin](#) lawyers, General Assembly, Lendlease and the [International Towers](#) team for a fireside chat around their approach to innovation, how its driven and its impact beyond the bottom line.
- Israel Calling 2017 - [Tel Aviv Landing Pad Insights](#). A panel discussion hosted by NSW Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, the Hon. Matt Kean MP on the recent Israel mission to the Austrade landing pad in Tel Aviv.
- The future [50-years of space activity](#), presented by Space Ops Australia. The global space landscape has changed with SpaceX and Blue Origin showing the world they don't need enormous government funds to develop space launch capability. Hear what this means and what's next on the new frontier.

Media: Jennifer Havilah 0421 829 913 for interviews with any of our 100 event presenters
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