

FINANCIAL REVIEW

ANZ-funded tech start-up incubator to hit Sydney

Australian Financial Review

James Hutchinson - 19 November 2013

ANZ Innovyz Start, an incubator for technology start-ups funded by big-four bank ANZ Banking Group, is set to expand operations to Sydney for the first time next year in a bid to attract more entrepreneurs.

The mentor program, which started in Adelaide early last year, gives 10 start-ups 13 weeks to develop an idea and scale their business to the point of being able to receive investment from seed funds or venture capitalists.

Those who take part receive a \$20,000 stipend, funded by ANZ, in return for an 8 per cent equity stake in the company.

For the 2014 intake beginning in February, the program will be reduced to six Adelaide start-ups but open to four in Sydney, joining a host of corporate and philanthropic technology incubators and accelerators that already dot the city.

"There have been some great companies that we have not been able to get to Adelaide so we decided to take the mountain to Mohammed," said ANZ Innovyz Start managing director Jana Matthews.

"I'm all about taking a small number of companies who want to accelerate and giving them a lot of resources to accelerate. It's a small percentage of the market we're looking for."

Dr Matthews, who styled the local program after the similar and highly popular United States-based TechStars incubator, said the move was part of an attempt to grow the opportunity for start-ups to participate.

"The whole process here is [about] demystifying the issue of growth to the point where anybody who is smart and wants to grow their company can learn to do that," she said.

The program has already seen three rounds of start-ups graduate since opening.

One alum, Melbourne-based location start-up [Bluedot](#), recently took investment valuing the company at \$4.5 million and hired PayPal's founding chief financial officer, David Jacques, to help guide the company.

Dr Matthews said she had already fielded more than enough requests to fill the quota for Sydney, but would look for those able to keep with the program's pace.

ANZ's Australian head Philip Chronican recently said the bank's own international innovation department had failed to produce original ideas.

"They have got really good at adapting things to make it work, and have certainly done a lot of the iPad toolwork with us," he said in a recent interview. "But if you want a new idea, it is never going to come from a big corporate department; it is going to be something that is out there."

The ANZ-backed program is one of a number of corporate and private technology incubators that now offer similar services to budding companies. "If you consider it a zero-sum game, then of course we're all competitors," Dr Matthews said. "I think we give people a choice of whatever kind of accelerator experience they want."