

MEDIA RELEASE

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BIG BENEFITS SET TO COME FROM SMALL-SCALE PROJECT

Scale-ups and start-ups collaborate for Rapid Prototyping and Micro Manufacturing project in Mackay

A new pilot project for the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday (MIW) region will see participating local businesses design and produce their own printed circuit boards, electronics, and sensors in a shared micro manufacturing facility located in Mackay's CBD.

The Rapid Prototyping and Micro Manufacturing Collaborative Pilot project seeks to remove a significant gap in the design and manufacture of small-scale electronic products and pave a pathway for scale-up and start-up businesses to grow and diversify.

The project, funded by METS Ignited and Mackay Regional Council, is being facilitated by Split Spaces and Resource Industry Network and adds to the already impressive manufacturing capability and diversification efforts of the MIW region.

The collaboration is actively seeking additional partners to join leading industrial IoT company Vayeron in utilising a new robotic Pick and Place machine to produce printed circuit boards, electronics, and sensors in a shared facility at Split Spaces to gauge the viability of a common micro manufacturing facility for the region.

The new clean room facility holds a NeoDen pick-and-place machine for circuit board assembly in printed circuit board manufacturing. A robotic placement head picks up electronic surface mounted technology components and places them on a printed circuit board, then a soldering oven reflow station completes the process.

With headquarters right here in Mackay, globally focused technology company Vayeron was the first business to come on board with co-founder and CEO Ryan Norris saying the project boasts many benefits for local METS businesses.

"It means we have a local capability to develop new product designs, prototype and manufacture them; not just for our local market but for our international customers," he said.

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PROJECT PARTNERS



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Split Spaces community manager Tegan McBride said the project was a significant milestone for manufacturing capability and diversification of the MIW region and was in line with Australia's transition to Industry 4.0.

"The ability for our region to perform high tech manufacturing, alongside our existing manufacturing sector, shows the potential for our region to service new customers, bigger projects, and boast a more diverse industry base.

"The success of the pilot project could also provide a solution to certain supply chain issues experienced by SMEs and start-ups in the past couple of years," Ms McBride said.

Resource Industry Network general manager Dean Kirkwood said the project was an extension of some of the great work already being undertaken by the organisation's members.

"It reinforces the potential that this type of manufacturing has for the region and provides a ready-to-go platform for other businesses to undertake diversification.

"The good news is that there are still places available in the project so if you want to investigate this line of manufacturing for your business, get in contact today.

"This project encourages a collaborative approach among local businesses, and we look forward to it driving innovation and helping facilitate entry into new markets for our SMEs," Mr Kirkwood said.

Mackay Regional Council Mayor Greg Williamson said council, along with a number of key partners, was proud to support this innovative and cutting-edge project not just for our region, but for Queensland and Australia.

"The Rapid Prototyping and Micro Manufacturing Regional Collaboration Pilot Project is a real collaboration between industry, government and business to provide an opportunity to prototype, trial, and manufacture right here in Mackay," Mayor Williamson said.

"The 12-month trial will provide important information about the demand for the project, future viability and will guide the project operations for the future," he said.

METS Ignited CEO Adrian Beer describes these projects as critical enablers for our region.

"We have a rich supply of skills and capability embedded in our regions. This project enables our regional capability to expand and scale, which will not only benefit Queensland but our entire economy," Mr Beer said.

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PROJECT PARTNERS



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The Rapid Prototyping and Micro Manufacturing Collaborative Pilot is part of the METS Ignited Bowen Basin Cluster Program and interested businesses can contact Split Spaces or Resource Industry Network to learn more.

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For further information, or to discuss interview opportunities, please contact:
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ABOUT SPLIT SPACES

Split Spaces is a nest for new ideas, founded in 2016 to promote a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity in our region. The regional hub provides coworking spaces, programs, and events to support students, individuals, start-ups and scaleups through the ideation, validation, incubation, and acceleration process of business development. We aim to deliver:

- *A thriving co-working space*
- *introducing youth to innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship*
- *collaboration with stakeholders to support economic development outcomes*
- *bring global ideas to Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday*

PROJECT PARTNERS

