



Sydney School of  
Entrepreneurship



# Annual Report

2020 - 2021

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# Message from our CEO and Board Chair



**Dr Sarah Jones**  
CEO



**Emeritus Professor Annabelle Duncan**  
Independent Director and Chair

We would like to start this message with a sincere congratulations and **thank you to our teams, supporters, clients, and friends across the ecosystem**. This has been another globally volatile year, and we continue to rise to the challenges and seize the opportunities to create impact, supporting our communities to build resilience, develop skills of innovation, problem solving and creativity, and grow an entrepreneurial mindset. SSE is proud to be a pivotal member of the Australian entrepreneurial, innovation ecosystem.

In late March 2020 Josep Borrell remarked: *“COVID-19 will reshape our world. We don’t yet know when the crisis will end. But we can be sure that by the time it does, our world will look very different. How different will depend on the choices we make today.”* As the world begins to emerge from and discuss post-pandemic environments, Sydney School of Entrepreneurship (SSE), can confidently say we are proud of the choices we made over the past 12 months; choices made with tenacity to adapt, transform, and continue to deliver impact.

Over the past year SSE has impacted the lives of thousands of individuals across Australia and around the world, delivering impact to diverse communities across Australia, both regionally and in central business district hubs. Early and swift adoption of a digital-first strategy enabled SSE to continue supporting our educational institution partners, industry networks and individual participants throughout the pandemic. Through digital enablement and espousal, SSE has been well-placed to expand engagement and impact across new markets, and to meet evolving demands and participant needs.

One such example is SSE’s enhanced reach internationally through the offering of our Virtual Start-up Internship Program (VSIP). To date we have seen over 16,000 participants and have observed a significant increase in demand over the past 12-months. We have witnessed the global trend of upskilling for new careers post pandemic, and an amplified appreciation of developing transferable, employability skills in innovation, entrepreneurial thinking, and growth mindsets.

According to a recent Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report on the [State of Global Education](#), 2020 saw 1.5 billion students across 188 countries locked out of their schools; this number has continued across 2021, particularly in Australia. Students across these communities experienced great disruption to their learning as teachers rapidly adapted to digital teaching, and many classes remain online at the time of writing. Whilst the impact created significant challenges, it also delivered inspiring opportunity for SSE to enhance its outreach locally and regionally, and to support school networks and teachers to digitally embed entrepreneurial teaching in their hybrid classrooms.

With change forced upon society as a whole, SSE initiated our Schools Strategy to help equip young people, and their teachers, with growth mindsets and the ability to nimbly adapt and adopt to unknown environments. Embedding such skills and knowledge are the principal foundations upon which SSE operates. Through partnership activity, such as our recent delivery of the *Discovery* Program to Trangie Central Secondary School, SSE is proud to witness the impact and growth made possible through equipping youth with ability to create, originate, and forge their own paths forward. SSE delivered similar *Discovery* Programs to other schools across NSW, both private and public, including St Joseph’s College, Marsden High, and Korowal High School; it is expected that these

engagements will continue and develop across the coming year with a strategic shift to collaborating with school clusters for scalability and expansion.

The previously referenced OECD report acknowledges the significant growth and value in such innovative and collaborative partnerships that have emerged throughout the pandemic, and highlights that *‘the spirit of those partnerships should continue and should evolve into an innovation culture as a legacy of the crisis, with an open and constructive approach to improving educational outcomes and equity for all.’* Similarly, the authors remark that *‘a culture of innovation will always rely on learning at the individual, organisational, and system levels and involves [...] purposeful collaboration and learning.’*

SSE aligns to these views and embeds life-long learning and innovation in all of our engagements, both internally and externally. Through successful delivery and evidential impact, SSE is confident in our forward ability to continue expansion across the schools network, working with both students and the teaching communities to deliver impact at scale, helping to develop resilient, employable and innovative citizens and critical problem-solvers.

Another area of significant focus for SSE has been that of Work Integrated Learning (WIL); innovatively collaborating with our founding member institutions to develop job-ready graduates and ameliorating talent pipelines for our industry partners. As noted in a recent [McKinsey paper](#) *‘we know that digital and AI technologies are transforming the world of work and that today’s workforce will need to learn new skills and learn to continually adapt as new occupations emerge. We also know that the COVID-19 crisis has accelerated this transformation. We are less clear, however, about the specific skills tomorrow’s workers will require.’* Such thinking and observations align neatly with SSE’s purpose and mission **‘to build a diverse community of next-generation entrepreneurs, creating purposeful, sustainable companies and jobs of the future.’** We are preparing diverse cohorts for jobs that do not yet exist, and essential skills that are constantly changing; the one constant we are working with is *change*.

SSE recognizes the significant, and ongoing, job-ready skills gaps and shifts in industry demands and needs; with accelerated and amplified times of change, now more than ever we can see the importance and value of lifelong learning and growth mindsets. We are committed to equipping individuals and organisations with transferable skills to enhance employability outcomes and growth opportunities across the intersections of Government, industry, education, and the wider community. Recent discussions across our networks and founding member institutions, orbit the priority of developing T-Shaped Leaders and supportive models of education both in, and outside the classroom. A Forbes [article](#) describes T-shaped employees as those who *‘excel in their core responsibilities and also perform other tasks effectively. In addition to technical skills—like proficiency in programming or design expertise—T-shaped persons also possess cognitive skills like emotional intelligence and creativity. Their ability to contribute, pinch-hit and problem-solve makes them high-performers who can boost an organisation’s overall productivity.’*

Such demand for T-shaped skills and abilities are what drives many of SSE’s partnerships and contributions to educating our future leaders. Over the past year, the Entrepreneurship Team at SSE have

made significant strides in adapting and refining our product and service offering to ensure alignment and embedment of these in-demand skills exhibited by T-shaped leaders, including creativity, critical thinking, communication and coordination, complex problem solving, and growth mindsets. Through our unique positioning, SSE has been able to expand collaborative engagements aligned to this priority, particularly through our suite of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) activities. Programs such as SSE’s Virtual Startup Internship Program (VSIP) are connecting our industry partners with our university and VET-sector members and students to build transferable skills in a real-world environment. Successful pilots this year with partners including Western Sydney University and TAFE NSW have already confirmed future iterations and scaled activity for the year(s) to come, and we are excited by numerous discussions currently underway.

To enable scalability and facilitate the forecasted growth in demand for WIL activities, SSE has identified strategic partnerships with innovation ecosystems such as Tech Central. With ideal locality and established foundational relationships, SSE is well-positioned to deliver dual-pronged value to industry partners and startups, and the large network of learners across educational institutions, all within, or connected to Tech Central and its diverse ecological community. Parallel to growing this tactical partnership SSE has recently chartered a new strategic focus on development of channel partnerships through professional Associations. Significant efforts in this space will be deployed across the coming year as SSE seeks to understand and contribute to the needs of industry networks both in terms of members’ skills and knowledge, and employers’ talent pipelines.

This past financial year has seen SSE diversify not only its delivery networks, but also service offerings and targeted partnerships. Successful receipt of numerous grants and research engagements has seen enhanced brand awareness and recognition. One such example is successive grant acceptances in leading delivery of custom training opportunities throughout the Hunter Region in collaboration with the University of Newcastle’s I2N’s Hub Honeysuckle, partnered startup businesses, and the City of Newcastle. It is through such opportunities that SSE can scale impact and ensure thriving economies for today, tomorrow, and the long-term future.

SSE is excited for, and dedicated to, the recovery and advancement of our economy and communities. In a labour force driven by disruption, automation, and digital dynamism, it is essential we equip our citizens with foundational skills to succeed and grow. A relevant [article](#) by the University of London noted, *‘The world is changing at an incredible pace ... innovation and adaptability are traits every business must have in order to survive.’*

Recognising we live in this ever-changing world with evolving demands, SSE is consciously committed to ensuring its educational material and learning outcomes remain nimble, relevant, and applicable. The team is currently undertaking a product and service delivery review which is driven by our learnings and observations from programs of work across the past financial year, which will accelerate SSE’s commitment to equipping participants with both relevant and transferable entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and personal development experiences that build enriched confidences ready to make a positive impact in the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended life as society knew it. The education system has been significantly disrupted, and there is an even more urgent need for a multi and trans-disciplinary approach to education. However, as with any black swan event, there are ‘black swan opportunities.’ We have rediscovered the importance of substances such as meaningful jobs, supportive peers and colleagues, diversity, connectedness, flexibility and balance. Such priorities align to those demanded by millennials who, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, will make up 75% of the workforce by 2030. Conscious of such shifts, SSE continues to function as the connective tissue between industry, youth, and industry partners to ensure collective comprehension of current, and future expectations.

An example of this commitment in action is an exciting piece of work SSE has been involved with in collaboration with Young Change Agents (YCA). Across the first half of 2021 SSE worked with YCA on a White Paper collaboration looking at the state of Youth Entrepreneurship in NSW. This Paper explores perspectives from a multitude of stakeholders, including youth themselves, employers, community members and industry networks. The work seeks to ignite necessary discussions on the educational values and needs of our youth, and recommendations forward. At time of writing the team are in the early stages of Paper release and will shortly be presenting findings at the upcoming SPARK festival 2021.

Across 2020-2021, society was reminded that change is the only constant; we cannot predict the future, nor can anyone remain impervious to unforeseen impacts. Companies like McKinsey have moved beyond the term ‘future-proofed’ and are instead referencing ‘future-ready.’ In discussions about the postcrisis landscape, companies who will succeed will consider the term ‘future-ready’ and will convey Einstein’s quote, *“in the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity.”* SSE embodies a culture which is entrenched with entrepreneurial thinking and innovation; equipping ourselves and our networks with growth mindsets that can adapt to evolving environments and opportunities. The Team at SSE are committed to leading with empathy and compassion as we navigate this revitalisation together—delivering enhanced integration, evolution, and meaningful community impact.

A connected, not-for-profit organisation, SSE’s success across the year is realised in collaboration, and with sincere thanks and recognition to our partners and wider innovation ecosystem. We hope you enjoy this year’s Annual Report, the reflections, the learnings, the highlights, and a glimpse into our ambitious future directions.

**An evolutionary world needs evolutionary minds ... are you ready to embrace the journey?**

Talk to us and discover your community’s possibilities today!

**Dr Sarah Jones**  
CEO

**Emeritus Professor Annabelle Duncan**  
Independent Director and Chair

# The SSE Team

## Meet the Team behind our year of impact at SSE.

Resilient, creative, and high – performing personnel who lead with vision, curiosity, and integrity.



**Dr Sarah Jones**  
CEO



**Emeritus Professor Annabelle Duncan**  
Independent Director and Chair



**Emily Chang**  
Director, Growth and Marketing (Acting)



**Frances Lee**  
Director, Operations



**Krithika Ramakrishnan**  
Information and Business Systems Support Officer



**Lucas Hakewill**  
Growth Program Lead



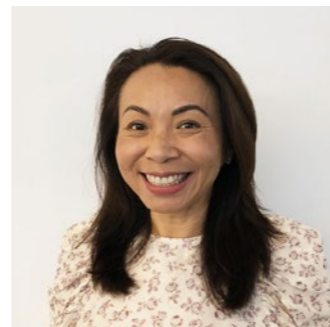
**Lynn Erkens**  
Business Development and Projects Lead



**Nada van Kempen**  
Project Coordinator



**Sam Bhatia**  
Product Innovation Specialist



**Vicky Lee**  
Director, Finance



**Daniel Smith**  
Director, Entrepreneurship (Acting)

Throughout the past year, SSE has had an incredible impact on the lives of thousands of innovators and entrepreneurs through the short course, schools programs and WIL experiences we have delivered. I look forward to continuing to increasing our ability to partner with leading organisations to create a community of future-ready leaders.

**Daniel Smith**  
Director, Entrepreneurship (Acting)

# Board and Committee Members



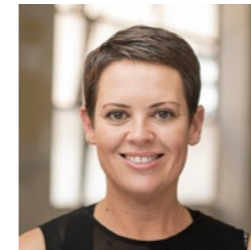
**Associate Professor Paul Martin**  
Company Secretary



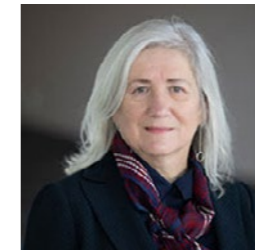
**Tze Masters**  
Independent Director



**Fiona Pak-Poy**  
Independent Director, previous Chair, SSE AFRC



**Liane Gawne**  
Government Nominated Director



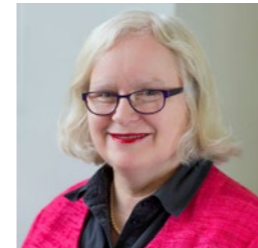
**Professor Brigid Heywood**  
Member Representative Director



**Professor Glenn Wightwick**  
Member Representative Director



**Professor John Germov**  
Academic Committee Member



**Professor Philippa Pattison**  
Academic Committee Member



**Professor Todd Walker**  
Academic Committee Member



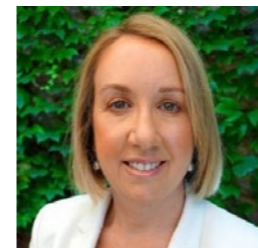
**Susie George**  
Member Representative Director



**David Caspari**  
Member of Audit, Finance and Risk Committee



**Zoe Williams**  
Member of Audit, Finance and Risk Committee



**Amanda Johnston-Pell**  
Advisory Board Member



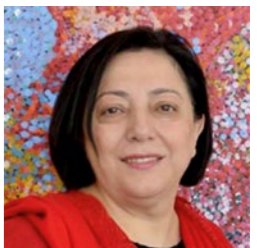
**Andrea Culligan**  
Advisory Board Member



**Dr Dave Kennedy**  
Advisory Board Member



**Dr Michael Molinari**  
Advisory Board Member



**Helen Rule**  
Advisory Board Member



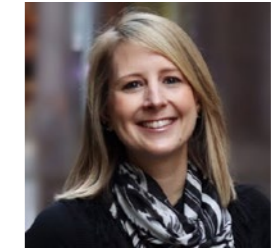
**Jilian Kilby**  
Advisory Board Member



**Martin Rogers**  
Advisory Board Member



**Maryam Khajeh Tabari**  
Advisory Board Member



**Nicola Hazell**  
Advisory Board Member



**Nicole Cook**  
Chair of Advisory Board

# Our Values and What We Do

## Mission

To build a diverse community of next-generation entrepreneurs, creating purposeful, sustainable companies and jobs of the future.

## Vision

SSE is recognized as a leading entrepreneurial school in Australia with a powerful, global reputation. Powered by excellence in innovation and entrepreneurship, where enterprising people drive the growth of a vibrant innovation ecosystem.

## What we believe in

### Distinctive Experiences

Customer-centric learning experiences that are relevant, transferable, and impactful.

### Meaningful Impact and Social Advancement

Actively aware of society's evolving needs and challenges, SSE maintains a strong focus on, and connection to, enabling positive impact through innovative thinking, and enhanced skills development.

### Agile and Empowering

Nimble and responsive partnerships and programs that adapt to customer needs and enable delivery through inspired engagement.

### Diversity and Inclusion

Our diverse networks span global borders and backgrounds, equipping SSE with an engaged community of collaborators ready to connect with SSE's participants and partners.



### Nimble not-for-profit organization working with diverse cohorts

A not-for-profit organization that designs and delivers innovative learning experiences adapted to our partners' needs and society's demands.



### Government and Institution foundations and alliances

SSE is Australia's first, and only, Government-initiated School of Entrepreneurship, espoused by a powerful association of founding member institutions comprising all 11 NSW Universities and TAFE NSW.



### Intersection of industry, education, government and community

Embedded across the intersection of education, industry, government, and the wider community, SSE is prime positioned to forge collaborative partnerships that empower positive impact at both an individual, and societal level.



### Innovating in an evolving world

Through experiential learning and development, our participants emerge ready to adapt and succeed in an ever-changing society, confident to impress impact on the world.

*Powered by excellence in innovation and entrepreneurship, SSE is a network of enterprising leaders driving impactful growth of a vibrant innovation ecosystem.*

SSE is Australia's first, and only, Government-initiated School of Entrepreneurship. It was established to enhance and embed growth mindsets, entrepreneurial skills, and innovative thinking across diverse communities - empowering positive global impact both now and in the future. SSE's global networks and community impact is espoused by a unique foundation and structure; a not-for-profit organization, with a powerful association of founding member institutions comprising all 11 NSW Universities and TAFE NSW.

SSE brings practical, experiential and project-based programs to equip young people with the skills and mindsets needed for the workforce of today. SSE's programs help the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators create real impact by exposing them to challenges faced by their community and the world, providing a framework that can be used to develop creative and robust solutions.

Combining deep experience, broad knowledge, and industry expertise and insight, SSE works with our partners to deliver the latest learnings and critical thinking from the global entrepreneurial and innovation landscapes, positioning creativity and flexibility of thought at the centre of practice and outcome.



# Our Impact

*SSE is proud of its continued impact amongst communities near and far. This past year has seen new and established partnerships and collaborative engagements across a wide range of industries and community locations.*

## Human-Centred Design Workshops

Working in partnership with the University of New England (UNE) SMART Region Incubator and Exchange Dubbo, SSE delivered a series of workshops for over 200 regional NSW Public Service employees, which focused on human-centred design. The initiative was coordinated by the NSW Department of Primary Industries Global Ag-Tech Ecosystems, and supported by the NSW Public Service Commission.

**Impact:** Public Service employees learnt how to apply human-centred design in their own projects to deliver positive services to their regional communities and capitalise on the opportunity for growth in regional NSW.

## SSE's Badging Program Launched

SSE's Credly badge platform launched in December 2020, empowering SSE to officially recognise participants for demonstrated competencies and skills. Since this launch SSE has issued over 1000 credentials, and expects this number to rise as badges increasingly become 'the common language of verified skills'.

**Impact:** With over 1,100 credentials issued since launch, SSE's badging performed above average in terms of both acceptance and share rates amongst participants.

**Future Direction:** As awareness of micro-credentials continues to rise within the education and industry sector in Australia, SSE expects to see increase in badge engagement. SSE is also designing new badges for recent programs delivered to ensure maximum learner engagement and enhanced brand awareness.

## Developing entrepreneurship mindsets and cultures: Australian Academy of Technology & Engineering

Dr Sarah Jones, CEO of SSE, was invited to present at the Australian Academy of Technology & Engineering (ATSE) conference: Scaling up research commercialisation. The presentation focused specifically on developing entrepreneurship mindsets and cultures, and showcased the value in research commercialisation efforts. Attendees included many senior University Executives, and significant industry members in the STEM sector.

**Impact:** The high-profile event positioned SSE as a strategic partner in research commercialisation, enabling opportunity to highlight the value of the knowledge and skills SSE delivers through its numerous programs of work. Furthermore, the presentation was delivered in collaboration with one of SSE's impressive alumni, Scott McKeon, Co-Founder, Espresso Displays. Scott followed Sarah's presentation as an outstanding case study and success story.

**Future Direction:** One of SSE's upcoming areas of focus includes enhancing partnerships and engagement with professional associations, such as ATSE. With wide networks and member databases, SSE is confident such collaborations will deliver scaled and rapid impact across a number of industries. SSE is currently identifying association leaders with whom to have these initial discussions.

## Microcredential Short Courses: Innovate Like A Startup Founder

TAFE NSW and SSE launched its first collaboration to deliver an online short course available to people across the state. 'Innovate Like a Startup Founder' was the first online short course delivered from the TAFE NSW and SSE partnership and was made available to anyone who wants to step out of their comfort zone and into the innovation space. The Program was SSE's first fee-paying short course.

**Impact:** 77% completion rate and 91% satisfaction rate amongst participants.

**Future Direction:** Collaboration with industry and professional associations in applying and incorporating entrepreneurial mindsets with technical skills training such as cybersecurity and programming.

## Women's Week Event Series

SSE partnered with Women NSW to host and livestream a panel session at The Exchange in Dubbo. The event highlighted how women are "leading in times of change and challenge". Inspiring stories were shared from prominent panelists, The Hon. Bronnie Taylor MLC, Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, Hannah Beder (2020 NSW Young Woman of the Year winner), Julia Weber (2020 NSW Young Woman of the Year finalist) and Krystal Hinds (2020 NSW Regional Woman of the Year winner). As part of the week's events SSE also delivered an Innovation Bootcamp at the Dubbo Zoo.

**Impact:** Shared insights and lessons about how women can overcome workplace challenges and create impact in (traditionally male-dominated) industries.

**Future Direction:** The insights and networks gained through this event have evolved into future discussions and engagement opportunities. SSE is committed to continuing successful efforts in supporting female participation and success in the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems.

## Design Thinking workshops: Australian Marketing Institute (AMI)

SSE delivered a for-fee design thinking workshop as part of AMI's event series. Participants learnt design thinking principles, and developed a personal plan to embed this knowledge in their current and future careers.

**Impact:** This well-attended event drew broad positive results against deliverable goals. The recordings remain available on demand in the AMI Content Library.

**Future Direction:** SSE will continue engagement with AMI, and explore opportunities to deliver support and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to the Institute's members. This is part of a wider strategic piece of work looking at integrating SSE's offerings within professional associations and networks.

## City of Newcastle NewSkills Program

SSE received a grant from the City of Newcastle to deliver the latest NewSkills initiative - New Digital Skills Program (NDSP). This customisable, self-paced, short course equips participants with the knowledge and skills to drive innovation, introduce automation, and leverage data insights in their everyday work.

**Impact:** Successful attainment of grant submission which enhances SSE's regional engagement, brand awareness and broad networks.

**Future Direction:** SSE has designed the NDSP as a scalable and adaptable solution for similar future partnerships. The Program's learning outcomes are relevant and applicable to a wide audience; allowing for simple content customisation that aligns to future delivery partners' desired area of focus.

## Virtual Startup Internship Program: Smart Cities

Sponsored by the City of Newcastle, the new Virtual Startup Internship Program (VSIP) took participants behind the scenes of three innovative startups to showcase what it's like to work in an innovative business that is delivering real impact.

**Impact:** Participants developed in-demand skills, gained direct insights and solved real-world problems with startups that are innovating for smart cities. A total of 1,332 participants have taken part in the Program to date.

**Future Direction:** Due to its evidential success, the VSIP Program is now being adapted to different areas of focus, such as Future Economies, and is being scaled with new networks and industry partners. Discussions are currently also underway with the Tech Central precinct team, identifying significant opportunities to embed Work Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities amongst their network of industry partners and members.

## Pitch Workshop & Collaboration: Sydney Quantum Academy

In early 2021 SSE begun conversations with Sydney Quantum Academy to explore collaboration opportunities based on aligned goals and visions in developing entrepreneurially minded quantum researchers and students. As part of the early collaboration scoping, SSE delivered a pitching workshop for Sydney Quantum Academy Higher Degree Research (HDR) students which formed part of their professional development program.

**Impact:** Participants were equipped with essential skills and knowledge to apply when exploring research commercialisation opportunities; an essential component of their future success and impact realisation.

**Future Direction:** SSE is exploring ongoing collaboration with the Academy, and opportunities to scale reach beyond HDR students. The value of equipping such cohorts with entrepreneurial knowledge is essential. This complements awareness raising activities such as SSE's CEO presentation at the 2021 Australian Academy of Technology & Engineering to discuss the value of entrepreneurship mindsets in research commercialisation.

## White Paper Collaboration: Young Change Agents

SSE's collaboration has continued with Young Change Agents. A co-authored White Paper on the current state of youth entrepreneurship in NSW was developed and released for 'close group' viewing in early June. The project will deliver a series of findings and recommendations for ensuring NSW graduates are equipped with growth-mindsets from a young age.

**Impact:** Learnings from the White Paper will be shared at a roundtable event; facilitating conversation and discussion about this important topic with a wide audience across NSW. SSE's proposal for this event was successfully selected as a highlight event of the 2021 SPARK Festival.

**Future Direction:** The White Paper will enable SSE to build on the strategic conversations it is having with the Department of Education and University stakeholders on supporting NSW to enhance its reputation as the entrepreneurial state of Australia. The upcoming participation at SPARK Festival seeks to not only build advocacy for the Paper's recommendations but also raises SSE's brand awareness and exhibits opportunities to engage with SSE.

## Discovery Program: Trangie Central School

Building on previous engagement, Phase 2 of the Discovery Program was delivered to year 9 and 10 students from Trangie Central School. SSE worked with the regional town to inspire a new generation of future innovators; offering students the opportunity to study a subject in entrepreneurship and to take their innovative ideas and entrepreneurial journey to the next level. Trangie Principal Gary Hansen: "In regional towns such as ours, it has never been more important to ensure we support young people with transferrable life skills that help them to pursue whatever career path they decide and to build their resilience for the future"

**Impact:** Students' projects and ideas impressed the judges. One in particular, a personalised coffee carrying device has been developed and has since sold over \$1,500 worth of pre-orders.

**Future Direction:** Following this successful delivery SSE has launched its next iteration of the Discovery Program with both St Joseph College and Marsden High school, continuing expanded engagement efforts across the secondary school network.

## Entrepreneurship learning content provision and input: TAFE NSW

SSE Provided entrepreneurship learning content to TAFE NSW's TVET20 Entrepreneurship units. The royalty-free licensing of the content heightened the SSE brand amongst a target market, and enabled cross-promotion opportunities of SSE's suite of learning offerings.

**Impact:** Industry-informed, and relevant learning experiences were built into the TAFE NSW units, providing students with the latest knowledge and skills in entrepreneurial thinking and business. The engagement also raised awareness of SSE amongst a target audience.

**Future Direction:** SSE will continue its expansion of collaborations with TAFE NSW, and delivering the next iteration of short courses in upcoming teaching sessions.

# Impact Highlights

## Virtual Startup Internship Program: Smart Cities



In March 2021 SSE launched the second iteration of the Virtual Startup Internship Program (VSIP) - Smart Cities, with both the City of Newcastle and selected local startups. The Program was delivered in collaboration with innovative companies – Liftango, SwitchDin, and GreenBe, who all presented real-world challenges they face in their operations. Focused on Smart Cities, SSE selected three startups who are leveraging the power of shared mobility, unlocking the distributed renewable energy network, and incentivising real, sustainable societal change.

The Work Integrated Learning (WIL) initiative was designed to give participants a ‘behind the scenes’ experience to gain insight as to what its like to work in an innovative business that is making real impact. The program received an incredible uptake with over 2,300 participants registering to date. Of these, 75% were international, evidencing the global interest in entrepreneurship and innovative thinking, and the broad application across all areas.

**The Program was designed to give participants a sought-after experience, and deliver impactful value, including:**

- Digital Badge attainment upon completion
- Self-paced and flexible learning activities
- Real work experience and industry engagements
- Skills and knowledge to add to resume and LinkedIn profiles

Since inception SSE's VSIP Program has gained significant traction and interest amongst the innovation ecosystem. In the second half of 2021, SSE is proud to be launching VSIP: Future Economies with Western Sydney University Launchpad. Three NSW startup organisations have been selected, providing an engaging, relevant, and real world immersive learning experience for participants.

With a scalable model that can be customised to various areas of interest, such as Future Economies or Smart Cities, VSIP proves an ideal WIL solution for a wide range of audiences and supported programs. WIL opportunities are expanding in both nature, and demand; with participation benefits increasingly understood and valued amongst both education experts and industry partners. VSIP's adaptable structure offers a clever and unique engagement opportunity for students, educators, and participating companies, and can be scaled to support innovation hubs such as Tech Central.

Positioned at the intersection of community, Government, industry, and educational institutions, SSE is uniquely placed to forge collaborative partnerships through initiatives such as Work Integrated Learning programs, empowering positive impact at both an individual and societal level. SSE is confident VSIP will continue to scale and expand as the world continues to adopt more online learning experiences and technologies to engage.

## Regional & Major-Regional Centres Outreach



In Dubbo, SSE's CEO and Director, Entrepreneurship travelled to the region to deliver a number of interactive workshops and engagements to highlight the value of, and opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship in the local community. As part of SSE's commitment to diversity and inclusion, this past financial year has seen a significant increase in engagement outside of greater Sydney – expanding delivery in to both regional, and major-regional centres across NSW. Two areas of great success have been the Hunter Region, and Dubbo NSW. In the Hunter Region SSE has successfully partnered with a number of key stakeholders including the City of Newcastle, I2N Hub Honeysuckle, University of Newcastle, and a number of startup organisations, to deliver collaborative programs of work.

As stated by Newcastle's Lord Mayor, Nuatali Nelmes, in SSE's media release with the NewSkills Program - *“City of Newcastle's suite of NewSkills training programs will assist residents and local businesses to expand their knowledge and abilities through specialist training providers, to address current and projected skills gaps and strengthen areas of rapid change.”* Cr Nelmes said. *“Providing opportunities for people to learn new skills is how we make businesses more competitive and encourage emerging industries, which will create more local jobs.”*

Through such successful pilots, SSE has seen sustained engagement and subsequent opportunities evolve, including successive grant attainment with the City of Newcastle's NewSkills initiative, and workshop and event collaborations with I2N Hub Honeysuckle. SSE is confident such growth will continue to expand in to the future, and is excited to continue its contributions to the regional communities, developing growth mindsets and innovative thinking across all industries and populations.

## Secondary Schools



In line with a strategic focus of expanding SSE's networks and partnerships, this past year has seen positive growth in Secondary School collaborations and engagement. Through these efforts SSE successfully piloted adaptation of the Discovery Program with schools across Sydney and regionally in NSW. Originally developed for university student cohorts, Discovery was adapted and piloted with a few small student groups, and has since been scaled with strong validation from both public and private school stakeholders, including principles, career counsellors, teachers, and the students themselves.

SSE takes a dual-audience approach in enhancing the entrepreneurial skills and innovative thinking amongst school communities; delivering learning activities and interactivity not only with the students themselves, but also with teaching staff. This commitment to teachers' skills development and enablement ensures longevity of the impact delivered across the communities. In early 2021 SSE partnered with the Department of Education to deliver a pilot professional development program that supported NSW Teachers to build their capability in introducing and facilitating entrepreneurial education in their classrooms. The pilot received impressive positive feedback from both the teachers and program sponsors, with 91% of participants indicating high satisfaction with SSE's delivery.

Following the successful pilot, the SSE team were invited to deliver the customised Discovery Program with Trangie Central High School. SSE worked with the school's teaching professionals to embed the Program into a subject focused on entrepreneurship. The program was a success, and saw a number of innovative solutions and ideas posed by the participating students. One example to highlight was a Coffee Caddy solution which students developed after observing teachers struggling to carry multiple coffee cups back to the school from the local café. The students have since sold over \$1,500 worth of pre-orders for the innovative solution, and continue to work with their teacher on further developments. Phase 2 of the program with Trangie saw a supportive transition to teacher-led delivery of the Discovery Program and entrepreneurial teachings.

SSE is now engaged in a number of new discussions with public and private schools across NSW, and throughout 2021 has also delivered Discovery to St Joseph College, Marsden High, and Korowal High. Observing confirmed demand for enhancing entrepreneurial education and innovative thinking amongst school students, SSE partnered with Young Change Agents (YCA) to deliver a White Paper on the matter. Over the first half of 2021 SSE and YCA engaged with a number of stakeholders, including students, community members, teachers, and school leadership teams, to explore the state of entrepreneurial education amongst youth in NSW. The developed Paper identifies opportunities and areas of growth for creating sustainable impact in entrepreneurial education in the secondary school sector, and seeks to ignite and amplify dialogue and collaboration on this important opportunity.

Over the coming year, SSE will be focusing efforts to cultivate new relationships with secondary schools across both Greater and Regional NSW. SSE seeks to expand its teacher-led delivery model of Discovery; transitioning from the current approach of individual school engagement, to working with school clusters to deliver impact at scale.

**50%**  
female participation

**30%**  
regional engagement

**21,000+**  
participants

**16,000+**  
Work Integrated Learning experiences

**1,100+**  
digital badges issued in first year of launch

# Growing Our Impact

As SSE's impact and networks continue to expand, so too does our innovation and ongoing commitment to advancing entrepreneurial capabilities and growth mindsets. Over this past year the team at SSE have seen significant shifts in market demand and delivery opportunities. In many areas the pandemic has enhanced openness to change, and supported recognition of the need to innovate and adapt rapidly. Products and services needs have adjusted, and the significant adoption of 'digital first' has delivered new opportunities and widened audience reach.

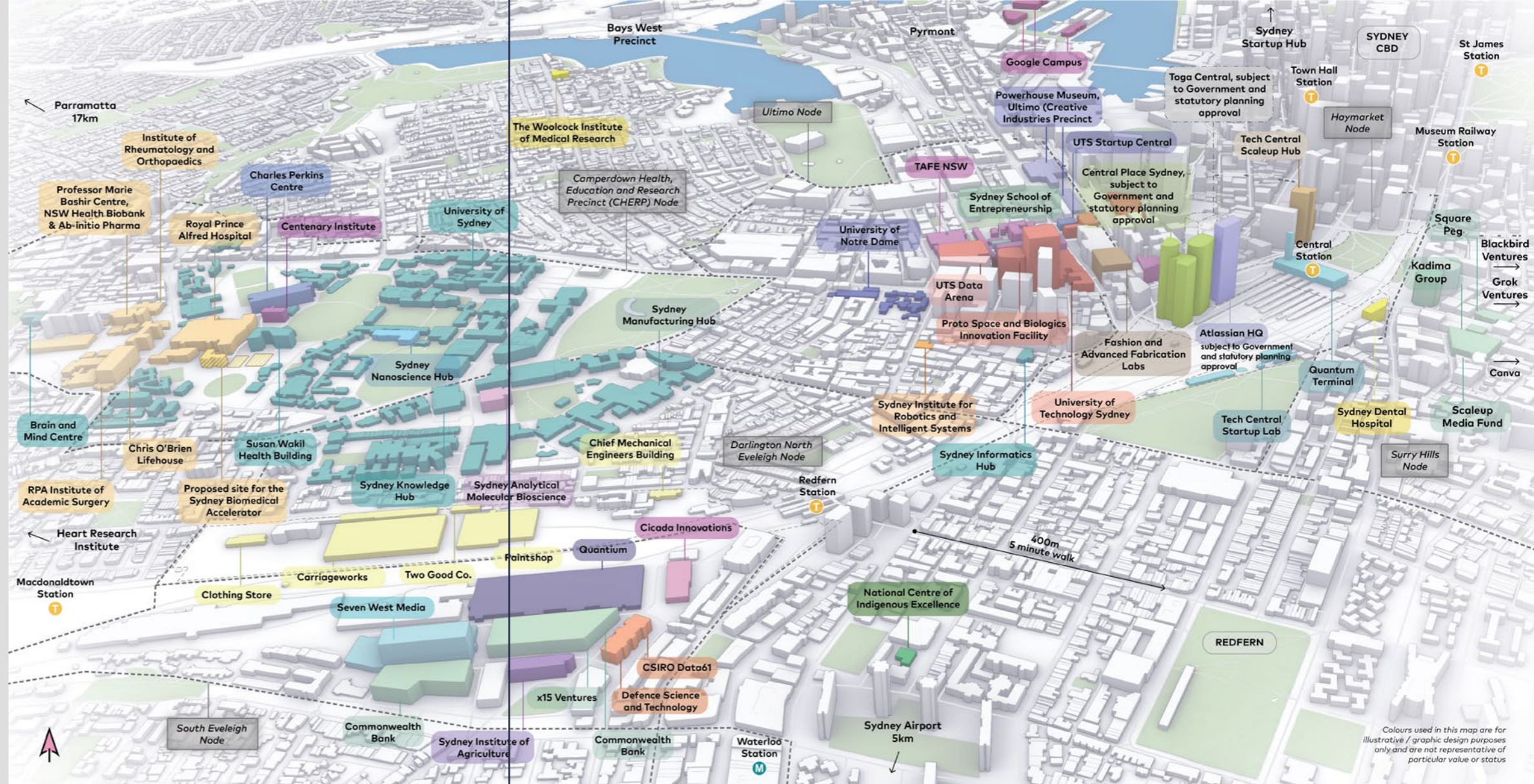
The ability to adopt to change, innovate with new ideas, and transform for future success, requires entrepreneurial thinking and growth mindsets. These skills and capabilities are at the core of SSE's teachings, educational programs, and engagement activities; ideally positioning SSE as an integral partner to help develop and impart necessary knowledge and proficiencies to ensure economic recovery, growth, and strength as we lead into an exciting future.

Entrusted with delivering the latest contemporary and relevant thinking in entrepreneurship and innovation, SSE is continuously reviewing and reforming its offerings. With the recent appointment of a new Product Innovation Specialist, SSE will, in early FY22, conduct a detailed market validation exercise, particularly focused on reviewing SSE's product alignment with demand for short courses. As part of this exercise SSE will also be initiating strategic efforts to develop channel partnerships with professional associations. Such associations represent various industries and can facilitate expansive reach across member networks. With complementary missions and aligned priorities of equipping industry with necessary skills, knowledge and talent that is ready to succeed in an evolving world, SSE is confident these partnerships will yield mutually beneficial results and community impact.

SSE has a commitment to growth and scalability, enduring partnerships, and long-lasting impact. With these areas of strategic focus, many of the collaborations and initiatives that SSE has proudly delivered across 2020 – 2021 will both continue, and evolve in to the coming year(s). Two such examples include a new iteration of the Virtual Startup Internship Program focusing on Future Economies with Western Sydney University Launch Pad, and another successful grant submission with the City of Newcastle to deliver the New Digital Skills Program (NDSPP) as part of their NewSkills initiative. Both of these new projects of work have evolved following successfully piloted collaboration programs delivered over the past year.

Similarly, SSE has confirmed scaled engagement with secondary school partners, and is proposing strategic delivery models that work with Area school clusters. Such an approach yields greater impact by simultaneously engaging with multiple schools and divisions, scaling reach and equipping a greater number of educators to innovatively embed entrepreneurship skills and teachings into their education programs.

SSE looks forward to similar such partnerships and pilot programs expanding and evolving in the next year, and beyond; applying entrepreneurial principles of rapid prototyping, human centered learning design, and scaled delivery to grow our combined impact across the community.



## Tech Central Ecosystem

SSE is proud to be strongly aligned to, and embedded within the rapidly rising NSW Tech Central. Tech Central is set to be the future focal point of Sydney's innovation and technology community, creating a vibrant innovation and technology precinct in the heart of Sydney's CBD, with strong links to international markets, Greater Sydney, and the rest of NSW.

Over the last year SSE has been proactively engaged with NSW Government Departments and relevant stakeholders throughout Tech Central's initial development stages. In 2021 SSE collaborated on the Tech Central Place Collaboration Tool, and looking towards 2022, SSE remains committed to continual support and collaboration as the project excels towards its ambitious future goals.

As noted by The Hon. Stuart Ayres MP Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney:

*"Our plans for Tech Central ('the precinct') are ambitious and focused on long-term economic recovery and growth. The precinct will be the future home of the innovation and technology community to thrive and create the jobs of the future... The time is right to create a vibrant innovation and technology precinct in NSW that will future-proof and diversify the NSW economy. The NSW Government's initial commitment of \$48.2 million to provide up to 25,000 square metres of affordable space for startups and scaleups will provide the building blocks for the creation of the biggest technology hub of its kind in Australia."*

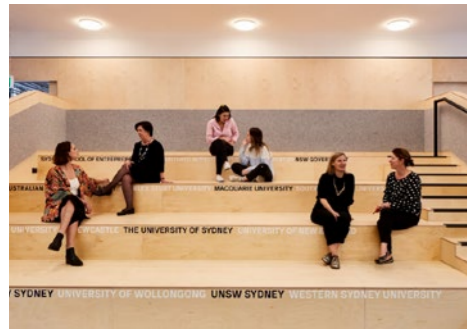
Embedded at the intersection of education, industry, government, and the wider community, SSE is ideally positioned to support Tech Central's vision and long-term goals. This includes:

- 25,000 new students, with a focus on STEM and life sciences
- 50,000 square metres of floorspace will be available as affordable work space for startups and early-stage companies
- Top five global ranking for industry-university collaboration
- 100 new scaleup companies
- 25,000 additional innovation jobs

Already engaged with a number of Tech Central organisations, SSE will play an integral role in ensuring successful delivery of the Precinct's objectives. Across 2020 – 2021, SSE delivered collaborative initiatives with Tech-Central organisations including UTS, TAFE NSW, the University of Sydney, Sydney Quantum Academy, and more. Moving forward, SSE is focused on augmenting such existing relationships, and also expanding outreach amongst new networks and industry partners that will expedite attainment of Tech Central's goals and delivery of community impact.



# Strategic Directions



*Looking forward I am most excited about expanding our programs and impacting the lives of more people through the powerful medium of education.*

**Nada van Kempen**  
Project Coordinator

## Diversity and Agility

- Increase our engagement and impact across regional, remote, and rural areas to support development of innovation and entrepreneurial skillsets.
- Adapt and define SSE's product and service offering to align with market demand and community needs in a post pandemic world.
- Diversify engagement in new, and existing industry ecosystems through targeted outreach and connexions amongst professional associations and their member networks.

## Partnerships and Collaborations

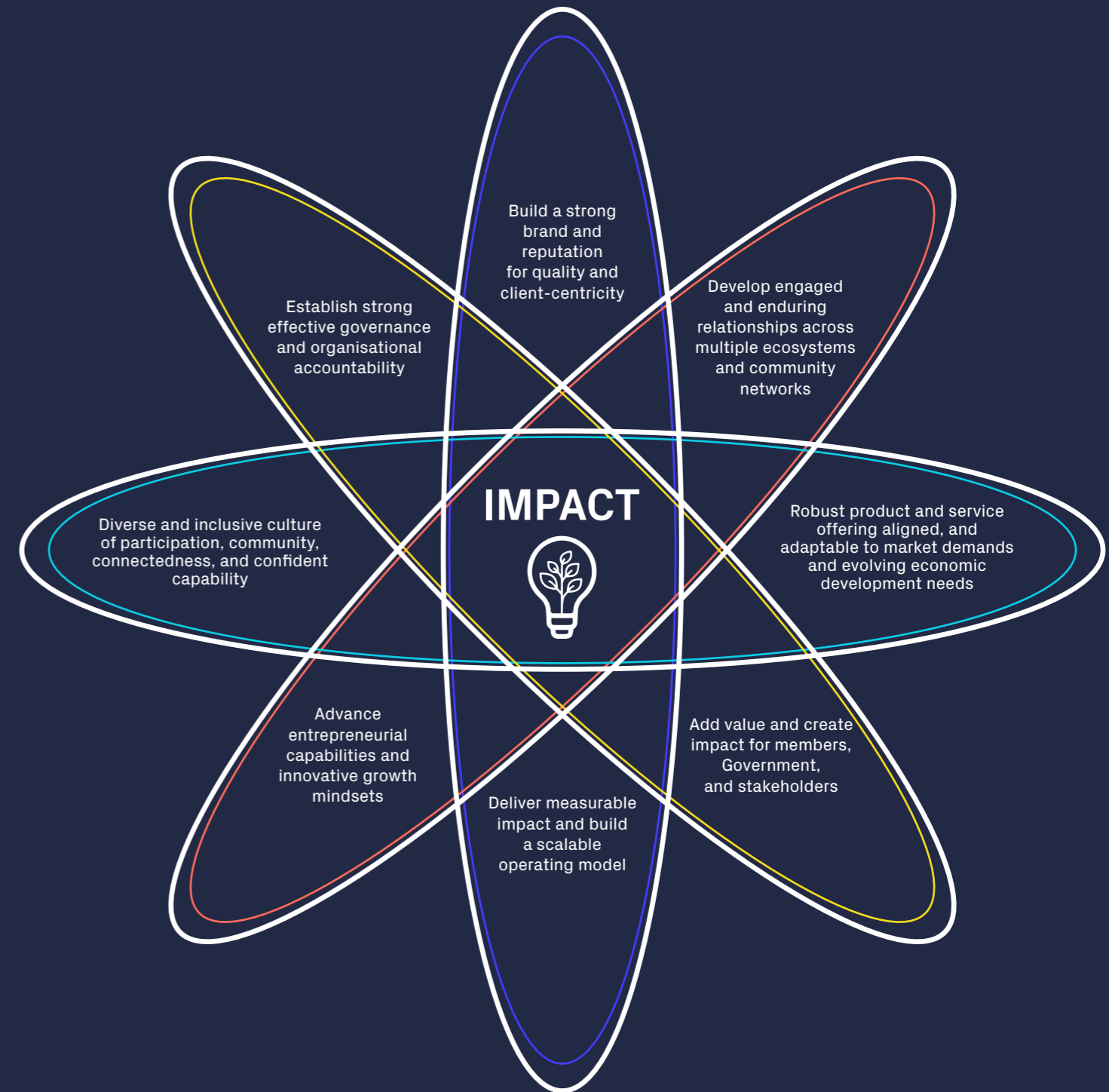
- Nimble scale and enhance founding member engagement and partnerships, aligned to mutually shared strategic priorities.
- Augment both new and existing collaborative partnership opportunities accessible through relevant grants and research projects that align with SSE's mission.
- Extend association and outreach amongst the secondary schools network in NSW, scaling impact through engagement with school clusters as well as individual institutions; advancing entrepreneurial skills and growth mindsets amongst both students and teacher networks.

## Impact with Purpose

- Promote collaboration and catalyse partnership opportunities across the innovation ecosystem to build an inclusive community that nurtures the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs.
- Mobilise innovation and entrepreneurial capability development within education, government and business.

## Enablers

- A strong and trusted brand with a reputation for quality.
- A high-performing, agile Team driven by SSE's vision and opportunity to deliver impact.



# Thank you

## to our Partners and Networks

**SSE is incredibly grateful for the commitment and continual support of our partners and networks across a range of industries and communities.**

This past year has been described as one of the most challenging in recent times, with the impact of the global pandemic felt at both a local, and international level. Through these demanding months, SSE's partnerships and networks have displayed strength and innovation; working collaboratively to navigate new environments and adapted ways of working, to ensure continual success and impactful engagement. The team at SSE look forward to succeeding through all that this next year will bring, and embracing the opportunities that emerge through change.



To read more from our valued partners and alumni please see here:  
<https://sse.edu.au/stories>

*I am most proud of the secondary schools with whom we worked to deliver our innovation capability program 'Discovery'. They showed great resilience as they embraced the change the pandemic imposed.*

**Lynn Erkens**

Business Development and Projects Lead

### Founding Tertiary Partners

Australian Catholic University  
Charles Sturt University  
Macquarie University  
Southern Cross University  
TAFE NSW  
The University of New England  
The University of Newcastle  
The University of Sydney  
University of New South Wales  
University of Technology Sydney  
University of Wollongong  
Western Sydney University

### Government Partners

City of Newcastle  
City of Parramatta Council  
City of Sydney  
NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer  
NSW Department of Communities and Justice  
NSW Department of Education  
NSW Department of Industry  
NSW Treasury  
Sydney Startup Hub  
Transport for NSW  
Wagga Wagga City Council

### Other Education Partners

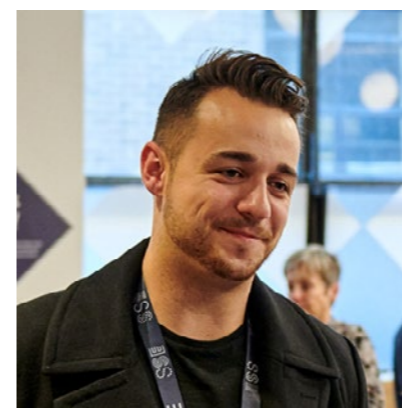
Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centres  
I2N Hub Honeysuckle, University of Newcastle  
Knox Grammar School  
Korowal School  
Launch Pad, Western Sydney University  
Liverpool Girls High School  
Macquarie University Entrepreneurship Club  
Marsden High School  
Singularity University  
Smart Regional Incubator, University of New England  
St Joseph's College  
Sydney Quantum Academy, University of Sydney  
The Exchange  
The Summer Institute on International Education, Japan  
Trangie Central School  
Warners Bay High School  
Young Change Agents

### Ecosystem Partners

Australian Marketing Institute	MyTradie
Credly	Neutopia
dARTbase	Remarkable
Deloitte	SAPHI
Everitas	Engineering
GreenBe	Spark Festival
Haymarket HQ	Startup Status
IBM	SwitchDin
Infrastructure Collaborative	The Business
IP Group	Blocks
KTM Capital	Tyro
Liftango	

# Alumni Stories

At SSE we are constantly impressed by our inspiring Alumni. Their growth and passion drives continual impact across communities near and far and confirms value in our mission and ongoing commitment.



*"Resilience is everything. If you fail, you are only better positioned to capitalise on the next opportunity out there."*

**Anthony Theofanidis**  
SSE alum



Read more of Anthony's story here:  
<https://sse.edu.au/stories/may-2020/alumni-profile-anthony-theofanidis>  
Or scan the QR code.

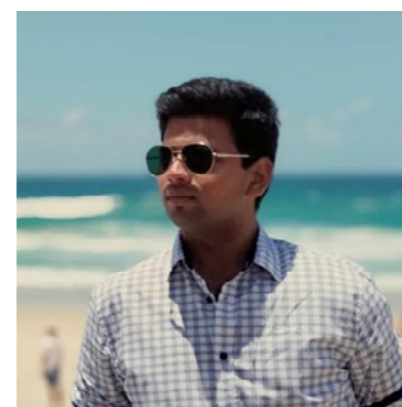


*"SSE puts you in a room with people who want you to succeed. They teach you that you can be innovative without becoming a lone wolf."*

**Rose Lewis**  
SSE alum



Read more of Rose's story here:  
<https://sse.edu.au/stories/August-2020/alumni-profile-rose-lewis>  
Or scan the QR code.



*"SSE really teaches you teamwork, how to collaborate effectively and how to learn new things along the way."*

**Rithwik Reddy Rudra**  
SSE alum



Read more of Rithwik's story here:  
<https://sse.edu.au/stories/august-2020/alumni-profile-rithwik-reddy-rudra>  
Or scan the QR code.



*"The people that you meet... everyone is so open to new ideas, as well as helping you to build on your own business. There's no competition, only collaboration."*

**Zoe Randall**  
SSE alum



Read more of Zoe's story here:  
<https://sse.edu.au/stories/november-2019/business-is-blooming-flower-stream-startup-story>  
Or scan the QR code.

# SSE's Founding Partners

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