PAEC Inquiry into the 2018-19 Budget Estimates – Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearing

Minister Dalidakis, Innovation and the Digital Economy, Friday 1 June 2018

Question 1

What benefits to businesses and regions will flow from eradicating mobile black spots (i.e. better flow of information and better access to real time processes)?

Response

Improved mobile coverage has allowed more regional businesses to operate as effectively and efficiently as their metropolitan counterparts by enabling them to take advantage of core business applications that have migrated to online and mobile environments. These applications include:

- office productivity and financial applications

- physical sales and procurement channels

- online banking, transactions and advisory services; and

- essential information services that are largely delivered over the internet.

The Victorian Labor Government has estimated that improved mobile coverage from the first two rounds of the Victorian Mobile Project (VMP) have provided coverage for 20,000 premises with estimated productivity benefits in the order of $180 million per annum.

Improved mobile coverage has also delivered other regional benefits in the form of improved public safety, and enhancing the desirability of visiting and living in regional Victoria.

The development of 5G capable mobile networks is anticipated to further boost business productivity and provide broad sectoral benefits characteristic of a general-purpose technology. 5G has the potential to:

- support introduction of new goods and services with high data rates and lower latency expected to enable greater use of Internet of Things devices.

- improve business efficiency producing and delivering goods and services as well as innovation through more effective access to cloud computing services, data collection and analysis for real-time decision-making.

The Commonwealth Bureau of Communications and Arts Research has estimated that 5G is likely to improve multi factor productivity growth across the Australian economy, that could add an additional $1,300 to $2,000 in GDP per person after the first decade of the rollout.[1]

The Victorian Government is accelerating the potential derivation of these benefits for regional Victorians through Connecting Regional Communities Program initiatives, including investing $22 million VMP rounds 3 and 4, and $12 million for Internet of Things pilots. Improved mobile coverage along regional rail routes, delivered by the Regional Rail Connectivity Project, is also expected to boost the productivity of commuting workers.

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[1] Bureau of Communications and Arts Research, DOCA, (April 2018), Impacts of 5G on productivity and economic growth, p.1.

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Question 2

Please provide an accounting of the funds that were expended by LaunchVic in 2015-16 and 2016-17, and the anticipated expenditure in 2017-18 and 2018–19.

Response

LaunchVic published a financial report for the sixteen-month period 11 March 2016 to 30 June 2017, covering the initial period from its incorporation. This is available on LaunchVic's website.

Final expenditure for 2017-18 will be reported as part of ongoing reporting obligations after the end of the financial year, and in the Annual Audited Financial Report due in October 2018.

LaunchVic commits expenditure in line with its approved Business Plan.

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Question 3

What percentage of women CEOs have been assisted by LaunchVic?

Response

LaunchVic has a strategic focus on addressing diversity and inclusion, including addressing the gender imbalance in the technology and entrepreneurial sectors. As such LaunchVic has supported a number of initiatives which have helped significant numbers of female entrepreneurs better engage in the startup ecosystem.

Examples include Girl Geek Academy's "SheHacks" program which reached over 200 women through its bootcamps (in Warragul, Bendigo, Warnambool and Melbourne), an all-female hackathon and an eight-week incubator program, which culminated in a showcase event in October 2017. Similarly, the Girls in Tech "Catalyst" conference supported over 270 female attendees across a two-day conference.

Of the projects that LaunchVic has provided a grant or sponsorship to, 44 per cent are female-led. This compares favourably against research in the *Mapping Victoria's Startup Ecosystem Report* (2017) that found only 24.5 per cent of startups in the state were founded by women.