

Media Release

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Forward Fest set to pack a punch over five days of business insights

5 days, 120 speakers and thousands of ideas.

That's the promise of local innovation and entrepreneurship body Silicon Coast who will host the inaugural Forward Fest which connects over 1500 world-class researchers, government, NFP's, small business owners, intrapreneurs and higher-degree students.

Event director and Silicon Coast board member Renee Coman said Forward Fest would provide networking opportunities and valuable business insights for small business owners to help them remain competitive and informed in their business approach.

"This is the first event of its type on the Sunshine Coast, you would usually have to travel to a capital city to hear the quality, depth and breadth of speakers we have secured. Best of all our pricing is kept to a minimum to ensure it is affordable and inclusive for all members of the community.

"We see this event as a place where great minds connect, and incredible futures emerge through informative, Ted Talk inspired presentations, panel discussions, interactive workshops, demonstrations and Q&A sessions.

"This unique educational opportunity aims to transform how small businesses operate through analysing 25 different industries with focuses on three distinct themes: Innovation and Technology, Customer Experience and Marketing, and Skills of the Future," Renee said.

Local, national and international speakers confirmed for the event include Andrew Curthoys (Cross River Rail), Nick Ward (Microsoft), Tash Booth (Future Females Australia), Pollyanna Darling (Carbon Positive Australia) and Wayne Nosenzo (Australian Retailers Association).

A special highlight will be a presentation on Thursday 29th September from arguably the greatest featherweight of all-time, Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) athlete Alexander "The Great" Volkanovski.

"We are really excited to have Alexander as our keynote speaker, some might think it's unusual to have a MMA athlete participate in an event like Forward Fest but we believe there are strong linkages between the discipline, resilience and grit of being a professional athlete and a business owner growing and scaling.



“Alexander’s also shown his prowess outside the octagon writing a children’s book which focusses on discipline, morals and work ethic which have become the cornerstone of his career,” Renee said.

Alexander said he was looking forward to visiting the Sunshine Coast and being a part of an event which will help shape the minds of the future leaders.

“My journey is about what I have earned and not been given, that’s the foundation of my success, from concreter to rugby league player and now World UFC champion. My journey is all about passion, courage, discipline and commitment and I am looking forward to sharing this on the Sunshine Coast,” Alexander said.

Co-founder of Silicon Coast Craig Josic said members of the local business community are encouraged to foster an entrepreneurial mindset by supporting emerging students (future employees) and social enterprises by participating in Forward Fest’s Pay it Forward program.

“We strongly believe in supporting the next generation of business leaders by provide local recipients with the opportunity to relish the event’s unique learning experience while also building local capacity. For a small amount of money, local businesses can support the next generation of business leaders by paying it forward,” Craig said.

Forward Fest will be held on the Sunshine Coast between September 26-30 with ticket prices commencing from just \$99.00. For more information or to purchase tickets visit: www.forwardfest.co

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