



Upskilling for Startup Success in the Regions

Regional Delivery Partner Case Study: Startup Gippsland

STARTUP ONRAMP REGIONAL DELIVERY PARTNER CASE STUDY

Startup Gippsland

QUICK STATS

Number of Applications: 113 applications for 40 places

Number of Graduates: 44

Startup Gippsland was established to support four local councils in fostering the startup community. Startup Onramp partnered with Startup Gippsland to deliver a customised, region-specific education program focussed on building local, long-term capabilities that not only changed the lives of the program participants but also changed the conversation about startup success in the regions.

THE CHALLENGE

“There aren’t any startups in Gippsland”.

For GippsTech founder and delivery partner Elena Kelareva, the goal in delivering the Startup Onramp program was not only to provide world-class education for startups in the region. Startup Gippsland wanted to prove that there were plenty of founders looking for support, and that these startups had the potential to reach global scale. According to Elena, upskilling startup founders in the regions makes sense from an economic perspective, because “with fewer local customers, the effort required to sell to the nearest major city may not be that much different than the effort required to sell on a global market.”

There was considerable opportunity to reach founders and aspiring founders who were disconnected from the startup ecosystem, and provide them with the training required to take their startups to a global level.

THE SOLUTION

Startup Gippsland partnered with Startup Onramp to deliver our flagship 12-week program across four regional council areas. According to the Director of Startup Gippsland, Elena Kelareva, Startup Onramp was chosen because of its significant differences from other training programs:

- Startup Onramp is based on a deep understanding of startups and what it takes for them to succeed, coupled with a strong focus on understanding the nuances of regional startup communities and how to communicate startup best practices locally.
- Local facilitators are trained by the Startup Onramp team to bring expertise back to the regions but are also given access to a broader community with whom they can share ideas and challenges.
- The quality and depth of the content exceed anything else on the market. The Startup Onramp program was developed over 12 months to the highest standard, which strongly appealed to the Startup Gippsland team.
- The focus of the program is not on pitching investors, but on building a startup that was going to succeed, a very different approach from other programs on the market.
- The success of Startup Onramp graduates is demonstrable, with almost 200 graduates across 20 regions around Australia gaining investment, being accepted into international accelerators and seeing considerable growth.

- The program is specifically for businesses looking to start a global, high-growth business rather than providing generic business training.
- It was possible to customise the content of the program to suit the needs of the region. For Startup Gippsland, the program was modified to better target female founders by ensuring there were female role models included throughout the content. Startup Gippsland also modified the program content to feature more Australian and regional examples, as well as more physical and services startups as their target market had a smaller percentage of tech startups.

Finally, Startup Gippsland identified that it was significantly more cost- and time- effective to utilise the Startup Onramp program. The depth and currency of the Startup Onramp program made it an obvious choice, and it was ready to deliver immediately.

THE RESULTS

Before launching the Startup Onramp program, the startup scene in Gippsland was perceived to be non-existent. However, there were almost three times as many applications as places available, proving a significant demand for education on how to launch a startup in the regions.

Startup Gippsland were inundated with 113 applications for just 40 places, but even more significantly, they were able to change the conversation around startups. The broader community and the government have changed their perception about the number of startups in the region, and whether those startups can be successful.

For the participants in the program, the biggest change was in their mindset. No longer constrained by the 'small business' label, the founders in the inaugural Startup Onramp program realised they had the capacity to build global businesses and compete with the rest of the world.

The practical applications of the program were also significant for the participants:

"One of the benefits has been the connections and the networking opportunities. Startup Gippsland has opened several doors which otherwise, not only would have been closed but we wouldn't have known they were there!"

Steve McLaren, Founder (Aeromedical Solutions)

According to Elena, the biggest lessons learned by the founders who participated in the program was the resilience to move away from failed ideas. In addition to personal growth, Startup Gippsland was able to foster a community through the in-person delivery of the Startup Onramp program. Elena says, "if you're doing a program online, it's easy to get stuck in self-doubt. However, if you're part of a larger community, you see others going through the same problems. We still see the Startup Gippsland cohort catching up for coffee and they all see the value of having a community of people trying to do the same thing".

The ultimate goal for Startup Gippsland is to be seen as a showcase example of a new model of regional ecosystem for startups, sharing their learnings with the wider world.

“We were proud to work with Startup Onramp for our inaugural Startup Gippsland program. We were under a very tight timeframe and Startup Onramp's proven content, abundant resources and 1:1 mentoring from Colin was instrumental in bringing our program to life. I'd highly recommend Startup Onramp to any council or organisation wishing to run a startup program in their local area.”

Stephanie Thoo, Head of Community Programs (Startup Gippsland)

NOTABLE GRADUATES

Aeromedical Solutions

Aeromedical Solutions is a medical evacuation startup founded by two ex-staff members of the Royal Flying Doctors. Specialising in transportation for injured people, they were regularly contacted by people who were sick or injured overseas and who weren't able to fly commercially but may have been under- or uninsured and unable to get back to Australia.

Navigating the system of providers, insurance and considerable expense of getting a sick or injured relative back home is extremely difficult, so Aeromedical Solutions launched a brokerage service to help people in that situation get the right service for the right price.

The founders participated in the Startup Onramp program run out of Startup Gippsland and since graduating have partnered with DFAT, a number of travel insurance agencies, and have made their first five figure international sales.

Checkit Health App

After years as a nurse both within Australia and abroad, Dr Lucy Nijam realised that many Australians are suffering from diseases that could have been prevented with the recommended health checks. The problem is that many of us don't know what checks we should be getting and when. Dr Nijam was selected as one of the participants in Startup Gippsland's Startup Onramp program where she leveraged her experience and her passion to develop Checkit Health App which aims to help Australians reduce their risk of disease by allowing users to automate their health checks for life.

As part of the Startup Onramp program, Dr Nijam pitched her idea for Checkit and was awarded Most Innovative Idea at the Pitch Showcase. Checkit is now in the process of prototype development and Dr Nijam is working with experts in technology development and now have a GP advisor.

“Without a doubt, I would not have made any progress on Checkit without doing the program. Before starting, Checkit was just an idea. Without business or start up experience, I felt overwhelmed with all the things to consider both in conceptualising the idea into something meaningful let alone the prospect of a business!”

Dr Lucy Nijam, Founder (Checkit Health App)

Want to learn more about delivering the Startup Onramp program in your regional startup hub? Find out more at www.startuponramp.com/partnerships