



GOOGLE AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA INSTITUTE LAUNCH NATIONAL HUNT FOR TOP REGIONAL ONLINE BUSINESSES

Google and the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) have launched a national competition to find Australia's 'Regional Online Heroes' – the top small and medium regional businesses (SMBs) using the internet to grow. The top ten Heroes will be flown to Google's Sydney HQ and rewarded with unique money-can't-buy experience: a masterclass that will help them grow their business even faster.

The collaboration between Google and RAI recognises the critical importance of technology and digital innovation for business success in regional Australia. Research shows Australia's SMBs could unlock \$49 billion of economic value if they made better use of online and mobile technologies ([PwC, 2015](#)). The majority of this economic value, \$26 billion, stands to be realised outside inner metropolitan areas.

"Our research shows one of our greatest national competitive challenges is ensuring regions have the strategies and support necessary to make the most of the internet," RAI CEO Jack Archer said.

"We've seen first hand the significant impact an online strategy can have for regional businesses. It's a challenge every regional business owner needs to step up to, and our biggest responsibility as a nation to support," Mr Archer continued.

The competition will identify outstanding regional online innovators, and encourage regional SMBs around the country to recognise the potential of mobile and internet technologies.

"Regional Australia has some of the most innovative, clever small businesses in the country," said John Ball, Head of Small Business at Google Australia.

"They are using the internet to grow, hire more people and contribute to their community - and we want to help them do even more. Small businesses that are making the most of the internet are twice as likely to be growing as those that aren't. But all small businesses in Australia deserve to see the benefits of being online. We hope this initiative will encourage more small businesses to get online and grow."

Entries are open until Wednesday 21st October 2015. Regional small businesses can enter online now at <http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/regionalonlineheroes>, for a chance to be flown to Google for the growth masterclass in November this year.

The competition judges will be looking for businesses that can show how the internet has helped them in one or more of the following ways:

- Growing revenue;
- Finding new customers;
- Exporting overseas;
- Hiring new staff; and
- Giving back to the local community.

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About the Regional Australia Institute

The Regional Australia Institute (RAI) is an independent policy think tank and research organisation. It's the vital link between research, policy and implementation. The RAI advocates for change to build a stronger economy and better quality of life in regional Australia – for the benefit of all Australians. For more information on the RAI go to www.regionalaustralia.org.au

To organise an interview please contact:

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