



Connexus spearheads world-first regional digital investment program

South Australian town is piloting a world-first 'Pay It Forward' initiative which invests in small and medium businesses

Sydney – 21 August 2019: Historic South Australian town, Gawler, will become the first of a wave of regional Australian communities which will receive free digital phone services under an innovative 'Pay it Forward' scheme to be conducted by Connexus, a telco which provides fuss-free telecommunication services for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs). The project has the dual aims of providing local businesses with future-proof, jargon-free telecommunication services whilst creating a significant boost to the local economy. The world-first initiative funded by Connexus, which is owned by Australian-founded MNF Group, will provide free digital phone services to local SMBs for 12 months. In exchange, the local businesses are being asked to 'pay it forward' and spend with other businesses in their local community. By encouraging businesses to spend the money – money that would have gone towards their phone bills - with other local businesses, it is hoped that the Pay it Forward program will help supercharge the local economy. Those taking part in the scheme can use the #payitfwd hashtag on social media to highlight their participation. "Community and small businesses are the lifeblood of Australia. Our intention is to help boost these businesses and we are thrilled to be piloting this world-first initiative in Gawler," Connexus' General Manager Lee Atkinson said. "At Connexus, we are focused on empowering a new generation of SMBs and to do that we need to bust open and crush myths around how onboarding new technologies is difficult. Increased productivity and time savings are there for the taking, but we recognise that some businesses just need a little help in getting there." Connexus will monitor the local economic impact of the program over the year and will track social return on issues such as productivity, employment, engagement and community wellbeing. During this period, Gawler's local businesses will also be supported with TEDx-style educational events and community activations to further accelerate their growth. Atkinson believes the regional investment program will help create significant value to Gawler and is actively seeking additional towns across Australia to participate in this ground-breaking regional investment program. The Pay it Forward pilot in Gawler kicks off in August 2019 and already has a large number of businesses signed up to participate. Why Gawler? Gawler has recently completed a commercially-focused, flexible business working space, 'The Business Innovation Hub', which is one of fifteen new GigCity precincts throughout Adelaide. The hub benefits from fast and affordable gigabit internet connection speeds (up to 1,000 times faster than the national average). The head of the Gawler Business Development Group, Louise Drummond noted: "Gawler is the perfect place to launch the initiative, as digital innovation in the area is a key focus. We're excited about the possibilities that the Pay It Forward initiative presents for Gawler and look forward to working with Connexus over the next 12 months." SMBs lack a digital strategy Although investing in modern technology is key for SMBs to remain agile and adaptive, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals that only one in five SMBs have a digital business strategy. This is where Connexus, which enables small businesses to succeed through technology, aims to make a difference. Atkinson concludes: "We're excited about this pilot, as by helping SMBs capitalise on technology changes, this can only serve to fuel their own business growth and in turn the wider SMB industry as a whole." /ENDS About Connexus Connexus solves the pain of technology for small business. Connexus makes business-grade phone, mobile and NBN easy to understand, quick to setup and simple to use, leveraging world-class innovation and investment to create the best business telecom experience for SMBs. Connexus is part of the MNF Group, one of Asia-Pacific's fastest growing technology companies. Listed on the ASX since 2006, it is now twice the winner of the Forbes Asia-Pacific "Best under a Billion" award. MNF develops and operates a global communications network and software suite enabling some of the world's leading innovators to deliver new-generation communications solutions. For further information about Connexus visit: <https://www.connexus.com.au/> For further information please contact: Sue Ralston Einsteinz Communications T: (02) 8905 0995 E: sue@einsteinz.com.au

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