

# Next step in making an empire

Makers Empire awarded almost \$300K grant to develop new Makeshop program for schools

Hon David Pisoni MP

Minister for Innovation and Skills

Hon John Gardner MP

Minister for Education

South Australian company Makers Empire will enhance its educational design software and equip

more school students with 3D printing skills thanks to almost \$300,000 in support from the Marshall Liberal Government.

The State Government's funding will be matched dollar for dollar by the company and is expected to create more than a dozen local jobs within two years.

Minister for Innovation and Skills David Pisoni says the grant will support the roll-out of Makers Empire's MakeShop project, which aims to advance their technology and begin pilot programs in more Australian and international schools.

"COVID-19 has posed a challenge to all levels of business, so it is great to see an innovative South Australian startup navigating these conditions and working to grow its suite of products for domestic and export markets" Minister Pisoni said.

"The Research, Commercialisation and Startup Fund provides vital seed funding to enable more businesses—like Makers Empire—to commercialise their great ideas, employ local workers and cement South Australia's reputation as a place of innovation and excellence in hi-tech and education.

"The \$17.5 million allocated from the RCSF has leveraged \$350 million in funding from industry and government.

"The Marshall Government has developed a nurturing environment for startup businesses creating exciting new jobs in cutting edge technologies."

Minister for Education John Gardner says the Makers Empire's MakeShop project is good news for

South Australian students, helping to advance manufacturing, design and STEM knowledge in our schools.

“Makers Empire has already rolled out their software to almost 2 million students in 1000 schools around the world,” Minister Gardner said.

“The MakeShop project will enhance existing technology and give primary-aged students access to higher quality 3D printing, allowing them to design and print metal items such as jewellery, key rings and other objects.

“This enhanced level of sophistication will ensure that the 3D printers that are in our schools can be used as a valuable education tool bringing students ideas to life.”

Makers Empire CEO Jon Soong says COVID-19 caused significant disruption to the education sector, challenging his staff to support teachers and families adapting to hybrid models of learning.

“However, COVID-19 also created new opportunities for us—we designed a range of remote learning resources including COVID-19 related challenges and a free Learning at Home course,” Mr Soong said.

“The RCSF funding will help us test the market potential for MakeShop, which builds on our existing products to offer high-quality 3D prints to schools and parents.

“Funding will be used to develop the parent/consumer market and refine user experience, as well as test production within Australia, as currently the big 3D print bureaus are all overseas.

“We are grateful for this grant, and to the SA Department for Education for partnering with us over the last five years, helping us to refine and improve our products for schools.”

## **Contacts**

Greg Charter  
0434 791 627  
mailto: greg.charter@sa.gov.au