

Rio Tinto-backed Future Minds Accelerator selects 14 EdTech startups to provide school students with 21st century skills for jobs of the future



SYDNEY (29 April 2020) – The Rio Tinto-backed [Future Minds Accelerator](#) has been redesigned to run remotely so a first round of 14 start-up enterprises can access the education technology programme and immediately help students with the challenges posed by COVID-19 restrictions.

The 14 startups have been selected to receive funding and support under the Future Minds Accelerator, which is designed to help provide school-age students with the skills needed for jobs of the future by backing entrepreneurs with fresh ideas in the sector.

The launch of the programme, which helps startups scale their reach and impact on the Australian education system, comes as COVID-19 drives unprecedented demand for education innovation.

The Future Minds Accelerator is a collaboration between Rio Tinto, BlueChilli, and Amazon Web Services (AWS) and is part of a AUD \$10 million investment in the EdTech sector by Rio Tinto over four years.

The accelerator programme's independent [Advisory Council](#) of education and business experts, chaired by David Gonski AC, selected the 14 startups to support students, teachers, parents, and tutors and prepare young Australians for the jobs of the future. The Advisory Council also took into account

challenges faced by students from lower-income, remote or indigenous communities.

In light of COVID-19 restrictions, the Future Minds Accelerator has been rapidly redesigned to run remotely, ensuring it can help Australian school students, teachers, parents and tutors through the challenges of the current pandemic.

David Gonski said “I was enormously impressed by the diversity and excellence of the submissions we reviewed and I am confident that the Accelerator Program will assist the 14 start-ups that we have chosen to make a significant difference in the areas in which they are focused.”

Rio Tinto Iron Ore chief executive Chris Salisbury said “COVID-19 and the measures in place to stop its spread have underlined both the importance and potential of technological innovation in educating young learners.

“With the right support, the EdTech sector can take the necessary steps to set the foundation for a better future education system, enabled by technology, after the pandemic has passed.”

Each startup will receive a AUD \$50,000 grant from Rio Tinto, access to a high-calibre independent Advisory Council of business, education, and innovation leaders, training and mentoring from experienced entrepreneurs through BlueChilli and up to USD \$100,000 in AWS Activate Credits to help them scale using cloud technology.

BlueChilli program director Filipa C. Araújo said “At a time where the challenges posed by COVID-19 seem to multiply on a daily basis, this phenomenal cohort of startups have been working as hard and as fast as they can to ensure that they are able to offer schools, teachers, parents, and students the solutions they need, at the time they need them the most.”

The 14 startups selected to join the Future Minds Accelerator are:

BOP Industries – Workshops, classes, and other resources designed for K-12 age students, focused on STEM, entrepreneurship, business, innovation, and developing 21st century skills.

Buzzy Games – Live online coaching and software to make collaborative and creative thinking second nature in K-8 students, through online game design, coding and play .

Catembe – Interactive and immersive games to improve education outcomes for online lectures, classes, and webinars.

Champion Life Education – Improving health, fitness, and mental wellbeing in children through an online platform.

Digital Technologies Institute – Simplifies core computer science concepts, such as processor building and AI for primary and secondary students and teachers.

Edoome – Social learning platform that gives K-12 teachers a friendly, secure and time-saving way to connect, collaborate, and share with students.

Experimentary – An online platform that helps primary school teachers and parents engage students with hands-on science through online videos and student activities aligned with curriculum requirements.

Future Amp – An online career education platform with interactive skills training, virtual work experience, and a global and local industry mentor video library designed to equip high school and tertiary students for the future world of work.

Gheorg – A machine-learning and AI enabled virtual psychologist that helps 7 to 12 year-old children with anxiety, using games-based therapy .

imagineerMe – Training program for teachers to see more possibilities in every discipline from science to art and effectively pass on vital 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration.

Inventorium – An online system that transforms the learning experience for disengaged kids, allowing them to achieve education outcomes and qualifications on their own terms.

Need a Tutor – Live online tutoring for students in remote and rural locations to improve education standards and life outcomes.

Vortals – A software platform that allows students to design, create, and publish augmented and mixed reality projects while developing critical future skills.

Young Change Agents - Teaches social entrepreneurial skills to 10 to 18 year olds to help them see problems as opportunities, develop critical and creative thinking skills, and empower them to believe they have what it takes to be leaders and change the world.

To be up to date with the Future Minds Accelerator news and opportunities to join their virtual activities with schools, students and parents, register [here](#).

About the Future Minds Accelerator Advisory Council

The independent Advisory Council has 23 members, with a wide-range of experience across education, technology, business and policy. It will provide strategic guidance to the Future Minds Accelerator project team and broader engagement across the companies - Rio Tinto, BlueChilli and Amazon Web Services. The Council includes school principals, teachers, departmental representatives, independent schools representatives, education entrepreneurs and digital transformation experts. Individuals on the Advisory Council include former Federal Education and Training Secretary Lisa Paul AO, Chief Scientist of Western Australia, Professor Peter Klinken AC, Indigenous education expert Dr Christine Evans and well-known maths teacher Eddie Woo. Rio Tinto Iron Ore chief executive Chris Salisbury will be Rio Tinto's representative on the council. The members are being announced every week till 23 March on www.futuremindsaccelerator.com/about.

About Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto has committed to invest AUD \$10 million in a four-year national programme, targeted at school-age learners, that aims to fast-track the

development of skills needed for the digital future. As the primary affiliate of the Future Minds Accelerator, Rio Tinto knows first-hand the capabilities and skills needed in the workers of the future. Being on the forefront of a traditional industry that has successfully navigated massive change, Rio Tinto also understands the importance of innovation. The company is committed to investing in people – in startups that can solve future challenges, in communities that embrace change, in schools and administrators, and in students of all ages across Australia. The Future Minds Accelerator complements the AUD \$14 million Rio Tinto already invests in education programmes each year with universities, schools, governments and the not-for-profit sector to help meet growing demand for new and emerging skills.

About BlueChilli

BlueChilli Technology is the leading tech accelerator in Australia. For eight years, BlueChilli has worked with thousands of entrepreneurs across Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asia and supported over 140 startups to build their technology companies. Working with Rio Tinto and Amazon Web Services, BlueChilli aims to address the future of work and the looming skills revolution for businesses of the future. By evaluating challenges facing Australia in the future and sourcing startups with innovations that can impact our country, BlueChilli will support startups with a five-month programme to accelerate commercial success and create social change.