

Media Release

Friday, 25 August 2017

Embracing a whole new world

What: NEDC2017 - National Economic Development Conference

When: 10-12 October 2017

Where: Ballarat, Victoria

Who: Urban Futurist Stephen Yarwood

Legal firms without lawyers, medical practices without doctors and office buildings created in 24 hours by 3D printers – far-fetched propositions consigned to the distant future – not according to Urban Futurist Stephen Yarwood.

In fact Mr Yarwood, who describes himself as a technological inevitablist, says change through technology is inevitable. “We have only touched the tip of the iceberg and I am not sure that we understand how quickly change is coming.”

“We already know that computers can provide a legal opinion to 90% accuracy; lawyers have an accuracy rate of 75%. At present medical advice can only be provided by a doctor. Given our escalating obesity and heart disease epidemics surely we have to rethink this and find a more effective way to make our society happier and healthier.”

An international consultant on the relationships between technology, infrastructure, society and quality urbanism, Mr Yarwood is a key note speaker at the National Economic Development Conference to be held in Ballarat, Victoria, in October.

At the conference, which will explore the themes ‘Productivity and Its Importance to Prosperity’ and ‘Bold and Brave - risk taking and tackling new initiatives in innovative and revolutionary ways’, Mr Yarwood will challenge attendees to consider the move from smart homes to smart streets to smart cities, the relationship between these and how cities will work into the future.

A former Lord Mayor of Adelaide, an international consultant and well-known and highly respected urban planner, Mr Yarwood is excited about the role technology will play in the cities of tomorrow.

“I am fascinated by the disruptions that are coming and what our cities will look like in years to come,” he said. “Technology is coming and with it a changing economy that will offer different opportunities and constraints. The onus is on Local Government and entrepreneurs to embrace the changes and the new economies and to take a creative approach to regulating and empowering the changes.”

City of Ballarat CEO Justine Linley said with speakers of the calibre of Mr Yarwood, the 10th annual NEDC will inspire attendees to be innovative, embracing, exploiting and adaptive when facing the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

“The speakers at the conference will challenge and enlighten delegates.”

Economic Development Australia chair Mark Holdsworth said the conference would focus on topics that were important to business and to the future of Australia and would provide a great learning experience.

For more information about NEDC2017 and to register, visit www.nedc2017.com.au

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