



ANNUAL REVIEW

Eastern Innovation **2025**



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Supporting
founders
since 1999

About us

Eastern Innovation is a not-for-profit innovation and business centre based in Mulgrave, Melbourne.

We provide flexible workspaces, facilities, and a supportive business environment for entrepreneurs, founders and business owners. Our centre brings together a diverse mix of organisations, creating a place where businesses can work, connect and grow in the Monash precinct.

Beyond physical workspace, Eastern Innovation delivers events, programs and opportunities designed to strengthen business capability and foster collaboration. These include founder and small business networking events, Pitch Night, and the Empowering Women Entrepreneurs program.

Our purpose is to provide the knowledge, spaces and networks that empower entrepreneurs to innovate, collaborate, and grow, supporting sustainable business success.

2025 at a glance

A snapshot of the year and our growing business community.

11 events hosted

250 tenants and virtual clients

1200 total community members

Our values



Innovation

The heartbeat of our community.

We exist to provide an environment where ideas are born, collaboratively nurtured, and transformed into innovative products and services that leave a lasting impact.

We encourage our community to push boundaries, adapt quickly, and pioneer the solutions of tomorrow.



Collaboration

Together we thrive.

You are never alone in your business journey at EI. We know just how crucial collaboration is to ignite entrepreneurial growth, fuel innovation and ultimately drive business success.

This is why, 'together we thrive' is not a just statement; it is our promise to you.



Growth

Your sustained success is our priority.

We provide the environment and knowledge needed for your business' enduring and sustainable growth.

We are committed to nurturing the potential within our community and purposefully fostering an environment where each individual can thrive.

Vision

Eastern Innovation's vision is to be Victoria's leading innovation hub, where entrepreneurs and businesses come together to develop ideas, accelerate growth, and create a sustainable and impactful future for the wider community.



Mission

Our mission is to provide the knowledge, spaces and networks that empower entrepreneurs to innovate, collaborate and grow. We do this through flexible workspaces, programs, events, and partnerships that strengthen capability and connect people to opportunity.

01 Purpose

Create opportunities and an environment that enable entrepreneurs to innovate, collaborate and grow sustainably.

02 Impact

Inspire and enable individuals and organisations to achieve their goals through innovation, collaboration and practical support.

03 Our focus

Support businesses with space, programs, events and connections that accelerate sustainable success.

04 Who we support

Entrepreneurs, founders, startups and growing organisations across Monash and beyond, onsite and virtually.

Message from the CEO

It is my pleasure to present the 2025 Annual Report for Eastern Innovation. This year marks a significant milestone as we transition from the foundation phase of our 2024–2028 Strategic Plan into a period of focused growth.

We have achieved 90% occupancy across our innovation centre, demonstrating strong market confidence and continued demand for our workspace offerings. Our digital systems have been enhanced through the implementation of CRM and SharePoint automation, improving efficiency, data management, and client engagement.

Our programs have also achieved strong market validation. The Entrepreneur Exchange brought together more than 400 entrepreneurs and small business owners, attracting strong sponsorship support and delivering measurable value to participants. The Empowering Women Entrepreneurs program engaged over 200 women, providing skills, networks, and confidence to accelerate their business growth.

As we move into the growth phase, our priorities are to scale proven programs, expand our sponsorship and strategic partnerships, and deepen our engagement with the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem.

I extend my sincere thanks to our partners, including the City of Monash, Sharrock Pitman Legal, and the Monash Precinct Network for their continued collaboration and commitment. I would also like to acknowledge our dedicated team, whose expertise and passion continue to drive our success, and our community of innovators and entrepreneurs who inspire everything we do.

Eastern Innovation remains steadfast in its mission to empower entrepreneurs to start, grow, and thrive. Together, we will continue to build a vibrant and resilient ecosystem that fuels innovation and economic growth.

Warm regards,

Allira Cundy

Chief Executive Officer



2025 Client Snapshot

Andrew Marmont

Tee30Golf
Founder

2025 Pitch Night
Participant



In early 2025, Andrew Marmont decided to throw his hat in the ring and express interest in Eastern Innovation's Pitch Night. Before he knew it, he was up on stage, pitching Tee30Golf – short golfing sessions built around community connections and strong relationships.

After delivering his six-minute pitch, Andrew was approached by two representatives from Bendigo Bank, Blackburn South – the then-branch manager and community engagement manager – who were interested in Andrew's work. Fast forward to now, and Andrew's grant from Bendigo Bank Blackburn South is going towards a number of golf sessions in early 2026. Reflecting on his experience, Andrew credits Eastern Innovation's community as an accelerator and driver of his business' growth.

"I think to me, being here, having someone support you early in the journey, investing in your success and actually interested is huge."

"I think it's a real shot in the arm, even if you're a confident person."

Andrew Marmont continues to be a familiar face in Eastern Innovation's community, and can often be found in the coworking space.

Pictured: Andrew delivering his pitch at Eastern Innovation's 2025 Pitch Night.





Storm Rise

Gilded Poppy Makery
Owner

2025 EWE Participant

2025 Client Snapshot

Gilded Poppy Makery owner Storm Rise says that the most beneficial thing a new business owner can do is to start exploring local programs.

Raised in New Zealand and later living in the United States for 11 years, Storm opened her Boronia-based jewellery studio in 2020 – just two weeks before Melbourne’s first COVID-19 lockdown.

After attending several of Eastern Innovation’s Entrepreneur Exchange networking nights, Storm applied for and was selected for Eastern Innovation’s pilot women-led program, the Empowering Women Entrepreneurs (EWE) program.

“I had no idea that these programs were out there, so once I started looking...I realised that this was the resource that I needed.”

Reflecting on her experience and business journey, Storm says it’s vital for businesses to connect with their local community and look into nearby events and programs.

“Take advantage of the things that are in the area and with local councils, because you don’t know what you don’t know.”



Pictured: Storm Rise shaping a copper ring at her jewellery studio.

2025 Client Snapshot

Nathan and
Trent Torkar

SolidGPS
Co-founders

Former pitchers and
hot-deskers



When Nathan and Trent Torkar started thinking about motorcycle theft in 2018, they weren't planning to build a hardware company. They just wanted to protect Trent's bike.

The brothers decided to build their own, simplified GPS tracker. What began as a solution to a personal problem evolved into a structured operation, with momentum building year on year. Six years on, SolidGPS has grown into a fully operational business with its own factory and six local employees, and, as the brothers note, "a lot of happy customers." Before launching SolidGPS, Trent worked onsite at Eastern Innovation and helped organise entrepreneurial meetups in Melbourne's south-east.

"At the time, there wasn't much happening in the south-east," he said.

"Eastern Innovation was the only place really focused on encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation."

Nathan also hot-desked at Eastern Innovation during SolidGPS's early days, attending events and staying connected in the startup community. Community, Nathan says, played a critical role.

"Not many people are entrepreneurs. All my old friends were working nine-to-five or at uni. When your business isn't successful yet, you just seem crazy."

"Having a community of people doing the same thing helps a lot."

Pictured: Packaged and ready to go: SolidGPS' product stacked for shipping.



2025 Partner Snapshot

Our partners and supporters play a vital role in strengthening the Eastern Innovation ecosystem.

Their collaboration helps create meaningful programs, events, and opportunities for entrepreneurs, startups and growing businesses across the Monash precinct.



City of Monash



Sharrock Pitman Legal



Monash Women's Business Network



Monash Precinct Network



Kuberman Technology



Standout On Purpose



Bendigo Bank



Infostatus



Monash Tech School

Our Clients

Product developers



Our Clients

Service providers

24⁷
DIGITAL
WeAreWeb.

A1
TESTING
TAGGING

Amit Aggarwal
Life Beyond Numbers

apt
architecture pty ltd

BCRC
DURABILITY CONSULTANTS

CERTEX
Certification
Excellence

CJ Management
(VIC) Pty Ltd

COOPER^{IP}

ETA *EduTrain
Australia*

expertize
SANJAY SUBRAMANIAM

GLOBAL
IMMIGRATION
CONSULTING

GravElex

inSITE

IBD
INSURANCE BY DESIGN

Mulgrave
Physiotherapy

α

Our Programs and Events

Our programs and events are designed to do one thing: help entrepreneurs and business owners move forward. Whether someone is at the early idea stage, building traction, or scaling an established business, our goal is to provide practical support, meaningful connections, and opportunities that strengthen business capability and confidence.



Throughout 2025, we continued to deliver a program calendar that brought our community together through founder networking, knowledge sharing, mentorship, and business showcases. These events not only supported individual business growth, but also strengthened the wider entrepreneurial ecosystem across the Monash precinct.

Key events and programs in 2025



Entrepreneur Exchange Business Networking

A founder networking event designed to spark connection, knowledge sharing and practical business discussion.



Eastern Innovation's Pitch Night

A showcase event where entrepreneurs pitch their ideas, build confidence, and connect with the wider community.



Empowering Women Entrepreneurs (EWE) Program

EWE is a program supporting women in business through connection, learning and leadership development.

EI Pitch Night

EI Pitch Night is one of Eastern Innovation's key showcase events, providing founders with the opportunity to pitch their business ideas to a supportive audience. Pitchers strengthen their presentation skills, refine their messaging, and gain valuable feedback and connections.



Pitch Night Participants 2025



Melissa - MenuClub

A concept that will help people plan and simplify where to eat.



Hilary - AlertPaw

A solution focused on improving safety and support for pets and their owners.



Andrew - Tee30Golf

A golf-focused business bringing a fresh approach to training and performance.

Entrepreneur Exchange



Entrepreneur Exchange (EE) is a founder-led networking and knowledge-sharing series bringing business owners together to connect, learn and collaborate.

The event series is designed to turn casual conversations into valuable relationships that lead to opportunities for collaboration, referrals and long-term growth.

In 2025, EE continued to be a key point of connection for the EI community. Each session created space for open discussion, practical insight and peer-to-peer support, helping founders feel less isolated and more confident in their next steps.

Sessions covered real-world topics relevant to early-stage and growing businesses, including business planning, operations, customer growth, marketing strategy, funding pathways and a founder mindset. More importantly, the program encouraged honest conversation about challenges, wins, and the journey.



6 sessions delivered
400 total attendees
50+ attendees per session

Featured EE Sessions

Tina Manolitsas kicked off 2025 delivering a business planning workshop. Participants left with clarity on their vision for the next 90 days in their business.

"I liked the fact that the presentation was an interactive workshop, and used an example from daily life for ease of understanding."



Susan Su delivered a presentation reminding the EE community to look at their lead to sales journey. Often as entrepreneurs, we think marketing is the key problem solver. However, if the lead to sales process is not working - marketing won't fix it.

"Good networking and a first class presentation by Susan which was clear, concise, authoritative and cut straight to the point. Susan really knows her stuff."

Ben Lai explored how introverted founders can build strong businesses by using their strengths and networking in a way that feels authentic.

"Great opportunity to meet a wide selection of businesses, make some great contacts and be privy to a good workshop. Great bang-for-buck!"



Empowering Women Entrepreneurs Program



Empowering Women Entrepreneurs (EWE) is a program supporting women in business through connection, capability-building and community.

EWE celebrates women-led entrepreneurship and reflects Eastern Innovation's commitment to building opportunity, connection and sustainable growth.

In 2025, EWE provided a supportive space for women founders and business owners to strengthen confidence, develop practical skills, and grow meaningful networks.

The program brought 15 participants together to learn from experienced speakers, share challenges, and gain insight into the realities of running and scaling a business.

EWE focuses on practical topics and real-world learning, while also recognising the importance of peer support. Participants benefit from being surrounded by other women on similar journeys, building relationships that continue well beyond the program.



- 3 Workshops delivered**
- 100% Growth in business**
- 100% Positive feedback**
- 97% Participants supported**

**EWE 2025
at a glance**

Featured Participants

Hana Shapira, Officiency – Bookkeeper, BAS Agent and Financial Literacy Coach

With a background in software engineering and years of bookkeeping experience, Hana helps business owners simplify their finances and feel confident in managing them. Through tailored bookkeeping services, BAS lodgements and accounting software training, she empowers small business owners to stay compliant, confident, and in control. By turning confusion into clarity, Hana takes the stress out of bookkeeping so business owners can focus on what they do best - running and growing their business.



Chase Business Solutions, Anushka Massey

Anushka Massey is the founder of Chase Business Solutions, established in 2024 to help Australian businesses adopt AI and automation in ways that create lasting value. With a background in Engineering and a Master's in Business, she blends technical expertise with strategic vision to build scalable, future-ready systems that elevate performance. Anushka is passionate about empowering business leaders with intelligent technology, helping them spend less time on operations, reclaim their time, and drive long term growth.

Cush'n Soft, Sarita Jeeris-Rajan

Sarita Jeeris-Rajan is the Director of Cush'n Soft, a local manufacturing company creating premium padded toilet seats and bathroom comfort solutions that enhance accessibility and wellbeing. She has led Cush'n Soft's expansion across Australia and is now focused on driving growth through direct, impactful marketing that builds genuine customer connections and strengthens brand visibility.



Start Up, Invest, & Grow in Monash



The inaugural Start Up, Invest and Grow in Monash program (SIGM) successfully concluded in May 2025, bringing together the region's business community for knowledge-sharing and networking.

The program was co-sponsored by Monash Precinct Network, with Eastern Innovation Business Centre hosting four events. Key contributors included government departments, industry leaders, innovation hubs, and expert panellists who provided invaluable insights to support business growth and connection in the Monash region.

The program covered critical business topics including startup funding, tender acquisition, digital marketing, AI integration, bio-led ventures, and female-led business empowerment. Participants also toured world-class Monash facilities.



SIGM 2025 at a glance

600	Businesses attended
30	Speakers
11	Workshops
7	Locations

Program & Event Highlights



Key Achievements

In 2025, we strengthened our community through a full calendar of programs and events, supporting founders and businesses across the Monash precinct. We continued to grow engagement, build partnerships, and create meaningful opportunities for connection and business development.

01

Program Launch

Launched official programs at Eastern Innovation since Covid-19, starting with the launch of EWE.

02

Branding

Finalised the Eastern Innovation brand refresh, and brand awareness building partnership with Standout On Purpose.

03

EE Expansion

Developed Entrepreneur Exchange into an ongoing bi-monthly event series.

04

SIGM Partners

EI partnered with Monash Council and Monash Precinct Network to bring SIGM to the wider ecosystem.

05

Full House

Our centre has been filled with exciting new clients, with our centre being at 90% capacity.

06

Community

Our quarterly community teas and Christmas lunch have strengthened relations within the EI community.

Growth Achievements

750

Total event attendees

70

New clients

10,000+

Check-ins to the centre

895

Total LinkedIn followers

250+

Meeting Room & Event
Space bookings

5

New partnerships
formed

The Team

Eastern Innovation's impact in 2025 was made possible through the dedication of our Board of Directors and the commitment of our team. We extend our sincere thanks to all board members for their leadership, governance and ongoing support, with the end of 2025 marking a new board election and a period of transition into 2026. We also acknowledge and thank our outgoing Chairman, Darrell Mahoney, for his dedication and support to EI over the past 10 years. We welcome Tina Manolitsas to the position of Chairperson, supported by Sunil Jadwani as Vice Chair, and Mariella Smids as Secretary.

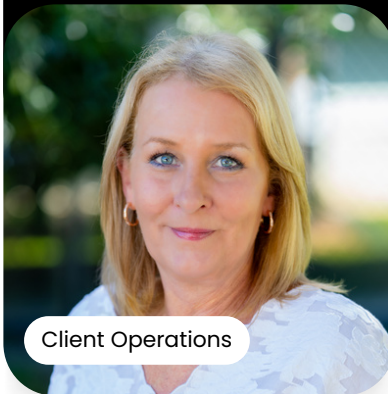
Within the EI team, we said goodbye to Liz Small and Elena Rufenacht, and welcomed Saloni Kochhar to lead programs, Eric Stone to support marketing and communications, and Alex Munro to provide event support. We also recognise Lisa MacGregor stepping into an expanded role to manage the client operations and office management, strengthening our operations and community support moving into 2026.

Allira Cundy



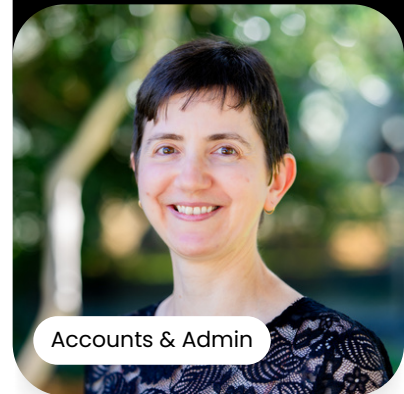
CEO

Lisa Macgregor



Client Operations

Henriette Basic



Accounts & Admin

Eric Stone



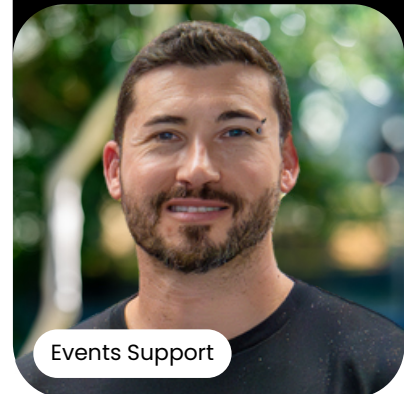
Marketing & Comms

Saloni Kochhar



Programs

Alex Munro



Events Support


The Board

Tina Manolitsas



Chairperson

Sunil Jadwani



Vice Chair

Mariella Smids



Secretary

Dr Jeff Chamberlain




Treasurer

Cr Rebecca Paterson




Board Member

Tanya Scicluna



Board Member

Cr Brian Little




Board Member

Richard Buchta



Board Member

Darrell Mahoney



Board Member



Looking Ahead Into 2026

Strengthening our community and programs

As we move into 2026, Eastern Innovation remains focused on supporting entrepreneurs and business owners through connection, capability-building and opportunity. We will continue delivering a strong calendar of programs and events that bring founders together, provide practical learning, and create space for collaboration. Entrepreneur Exchange, EI Pitch Night and Empowering Women Entrepreneurs will remain key parts of our program offering, alongside new sessions and speakers designed to meet the evolving needs of our community.

Building partnerships and creating opportunities

In 2026, we will continue to strengthen partnerships across government, education and industry to expand support for businesses across the Monash precinct and beyond. These collaborations are vital to enabling innovation, creating pathways for growth, and connecting entrepreneurs to the right networks, knowledge, and opportunities. We look forward to another year of strong engagement and continued momentum across the Eastern Innovation community.



Thank You

Eastern Innovation would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who supported our community throughout 2025.

To our clients, both onsite and virtual, thank you for choosing Eastern Innovation as the place to work, connect and grow. Your ambition, resilience and willingness to share knowledge are what make the EI community strong.

To our partners and supporters, thank you for your ongoing collaboration and commitment to entrepreneurship and innovation. Your contribution helps enable the programs, events and opportunities that support founders and business owners across the Monash precinct and beyond.

To our speakers, facilitators and mentors, thank you for generously sharing your time, experience and guidance. Your input brings practical value to every session and strengthens the impact of what we do.

We are proud of what we achieved in 2025 and look forward to continuing this journey with you in 2026.

Contact Us

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Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm