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26 NEWS

Launch pad to attract talent

New graduate scheme for tech firms

Andrew Hough

South Australian businesses will gain access to the state's best and brightest young talent as part of a landmark taxpayer graduate scheme.

The \$1.25m state government pilot program, called The Alternative, will offer graduates multiple placements in the "fastest moving sectors", particularly advanced manufacturing, officials said.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet-managed scheme will allow graduates six-month rotations with three firms specialising in industries such as technology, cyber, defence, space, mining and energy.

Graduates, who will be vetted and managed by private sector recruiters, will have access to professional development, networking events, mentoring and career coaching.

A job is not guaranteed at the end of the scheme, but officials said firms were desperate for talented youngsters and a permanent role could be offered at any time during a placement.



Graduates Luke Furlan, Talha Ismail and Anisa Cadd.

Businesses must pay an undisclosed fee to the government, which will help fund salaries and entitlements.

Participants must have obtained a minimum diploma-level qualification in the past two years or be in their final year of study. All graduates must be eligible to work in Australia and undertake background checks.

Premier Peter Malinauskas said there were "incredible opportunities coming our way", particularly in hi-tech industries. He said the scheme would especially help small businesses struggling to find time, money or expertise to recruit.

"We know we're competing with the rest of Australia and the world for suitable workers

to meet our needs," he said. "This will give people the chance to build relationships and get an early taste of what opportunities are on offer."

Thebarton-based hi-tech education business Lumination will be a participant.

Lumination chief executive officer Ed Carlson, 28, from Adelaide's west, said it was an "excellent opportunity" for workers to stay in SA rather than heading interstate or overseas. "I think it's a fantastic initiative for the state," he said.

Software engineer, Talha Ismail, 25, of Fullarton, works full-time after joining the business from university in June last year. "(It) gave me the opportunity to kickstart my career," he said.

Ambitious eyes on the prize

Anna Vlach

For artists like Nadia Hernandez the Ramsay Art Prize is an opportunity to put themselves out there - in more ways than one.

The 35-year-old, of Melbourne, is among 27 finalists in the prestigious contemporary Australian art competition for under 40s.

With an acquisitive prize of \$100,000, it is run by the Art Gallery of South Australia and funded by the James and Diana Ramsay Foundation.

Ms Hernandez's entry is a three-part installation inspired by her mum Delia's philosophy that we are the "sensible owners of our happiness".

She said the competition - open to artists working in any medium - was life-changing and not just because of the exposure or monetary prize, which allows the winner to further pursue their passion.

"It is amazing to be able to enter work that is more experimental and ambitious," she said. "It encourages artists to push their practice further."

The finalists's works will be on display at the AGSA from May 27 until August 27. Announced on May 26, the winning work will join its permanent collection.



Nadia Hernandez is a finalist for the national Ramsay Art Prize, which is open to artists under 40. Picture: Supplied by AGSA