



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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### **TasNetworks, UTAS and AWS unite students to solve Tasmania's energy future challenges**

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Fifty of Tasmania's brightest emerging technology minds have come together with TasNetworks, the University of Tasmania (UTAS) and Amazon Web Services (AWS) to launch the inaugural Open Innovation Hackathon.

Launched by the Honourable Madeleine Ogilvie, Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy, the Hackathon brings together industry, academia and technology leaders to foster innovation, build Tasmania's future digital workforce, and create pathways into the state's growing energy and technology sectors.

Hosted at 'The Forest', the University's newly opened inner-city hub, the event will run for three days.

The Hackathon builds on TasNetworks' internal Think Tank program held earlier this year, where employees from across the business pitched ideas and operational challenges directly to senior leadership.

Seven problem statements were selected to progress to the Hackathon, with students now tasked with developing prototype solutions using cloud and emerging technology tools.

The challenge areas span a range of real-world operational and environmental topics, including network data modelling, customer design processes, asset identification, and more.

TasNetworks' incoming Interim Chief Executive Officer Renée Anderson said the strong turnout and enthusiasm shown during today's launch highlighted the value of collaboration between industry, education and technology partners.

"Tasmania's energy network is changing rapidly, and technology will play an increasingly important role in how we plan, operate and deliver for customers," Ms Anderson said.

“Today’s launch showcased the incredible talent and energy coming through Tasmania’s ICT sector, and it was fantastic to see students already engaging deeply with these real-world challenges.”

“The Hackathon is about building capability here in Tasmania, creating stronger pathways between education and industry, and giving students hands-on experience solving problems that matter.”

Students will work in teams across the three-day event before presenting their solutions to a judging panel comprising representatives from TasNetworks, UTAS and AWS on Wednesday afternoon (27 May).

Solutions will be assessed against a range of criteria including problem understanding, critical thinking, teamwork, architecture design, technical ambition, feasibility and presentation.

Professor Nicole Herbert, Head of the University of Tasmania’s School of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), said experiences like this were critical to preparing students for the workforce.

“Hackathons like this help students turn STEM learning into real capability. They have to understand the problem, work as a team, make smart technical decisions and build something that can work in the real world,” Professor Herbert said.

Professor Herbert said strong partnerships between universities and industry were essential to building Tasmania’s future STEM workforce, creating clearer pathways from study into employment.

“When students can apply their skills to genuine industry problems, it builds confidence and capability and helps ensure Tasmania has the talent it needs to support emerging industries like energy and technology.”

The winning team will be awarded paid internship opportunities with TasNetworks, alongside additional prizes including gift-vouchers provided by AWS.

Several of the challenge statements explored during the Hackathon are also expected to progress into future UTAS capstone projects across Semester 2 2026 and Semester 1 2027.

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Released by Maddy Valentine, Campaigns & Strategic Communications Specialist  
0472 673 929 / [media@tasnetworks.com.au](mailto:media@tasnetworks.com.au)