Wollongong showcasing its expertise in ICT

Information and Communication Technology Illawarra (ICTI) president Dr Michael Lawler wants Wollongong to be recognised as a Centre of Excellence for ICT.

The ICTI Board pictured (from left): Michelle Chart - Facilitator (University of Wollongong), Justin Urbanski (CommScope), Vicki Grossman - Vice-president (CSC), Michael Lawler - President (Selera), Andrew Stephenson (Daley & Co), Dona D'Amico (Trade & Investment NSW, Ex-Offico) and Chris Savage (Pillar).

He says the city has the credentials, with a vibrant ICT sector featuring large and small, multinational and local companies working on global projects and the University of Wollongong (UOW) being Australia's biggest producer of ICT graduates with around 1000 graduating each year.

The NSW Government's decision to locate one of its two new super data centres – the $150 million Metronode facility – in Wollongong and the rollout of the National Broadband Network in the city in 2013 only adds to the compelling case.

Now, Dr Lawler says, ICTI needs to get out and "sell" the region and make sure more of those UOW graduates can be employed locally.

Dr Lawler knows Wollongong's other specialist ICT companies are also doing highly innovative work for national and international clients, and feels the time has come for ICTI to raise the city's ICT profile.

ICTI is an association of the region's ICT companies and people working in ICT services for other companies in fields such as superannuation, finance, health, general insurance and travel.

It is supported by NSW Trade & Investment, UOW and Wollongong City Council, who see the cluster playing a key strategic role in helping to attract business and developing the local economy into one increasingly driven by knowledge based industries.

"ICTI has gone past the strategic planning stage, and we now need to execute the vision of having the region recognised as a Centre of Excellence in ICT," Dr Lawler said. "We need to draw attention to the region and highlight the great work that is happening here in ICT. We also need to keep working with our stakeholders to support our smaller local companies and help them grow, while attracting larger players to the region.

"The NBN and the Metronode data centre are both important developments for the region's image. We are fortunate to have a University that produces the highest number of ICT graduates in the country. So it is important that we work to develop our industry and make sure more of those people can be employed here after they graduate."

Dr Lawler said the Advantage Wollongong stand had been the first regional organisation to take a stand at Australia's biggest business technology expo, CEBIT, in Sydney in May 2012. A stand at CEBIT would now be an annual priority so that the region could showcase its expertise and adoption of cutting-edge technologies and practices including Cloud Computing and the Agile approach to software development and problem-solving.

ICTI has strong links with UOW through student development, research and commercialisation projects, and holds regular networking functions and business development workshops on key ICT-related issues that impact on all businesses.

For more information on ICTI go to: www.icti.org.au

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