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For immediate release

MEDIA RELEASE: CREATIVE CLUBHOUSE KIDS REPRESENT IN THE USA

The Youth Connections Clubhouse is proud to be representing Regional Australia at 'Teen Summit 2016' July 26-31 Boston University, Boston, USA.

Boston, USA is the home of The Clubhouse Network which for more than twenty years has established a worldwide community for creativity and achievement. More than 100 Clubhouses now operate globally of which Lismore's Youth Connections Clubhouse is one.

The Clubhouse is a free drop in centre for all young people aged 12-18 years which engages youth in technology, allowing opportunity to explore their own ideas, develop new skills, and build confidence in themselves through the use of technology.

Hosted by the International Clubhouse Network, Teen Summit is a biennial week-long event which brings together more than 250 members from each of the 100 Clubhouses worldwide. At Teen Summit youth leaders explore and propose solutions to social issues through the creative use of innovative, high-end technologies and the event provides opportunity for educational, career and personal growth.

"We are really excited to have this opportunity to attend our first biennial Teen Summit" says Lismore Youth Connections Clubhouse Coordinator, Dusty McOnie. "Tilly Jones (14yrs) and Ash Mabbot (18yrs) will be attending this year. They have really set the bar for achievement for all our members this year and we're proud to have them represent us in Boston", says Dusty.

The theme for **Teen Summit 2016 is: The Future is in Our Hands**, a youth leadership event where representatives from each Clubhouse meet in person, share ideas, and engage in cross-Clubhouse collaboration. The Summit is designed to encourage members to see their place in the greater Network and society at large, to begin to establish and work towards career and educational goals, and develop a greater understanding of cultures and youth experiences around the world.

The Clubhouse is on the lookout for local community support and investment. In the past year The Clubhouse has received \$8,000 through an AusPost Community Grant to purchase a fleet of new robotics kits, along with a \$6,000 Intel Corp Start-making Mini-Grant which paid for electronics and microprocessors like Arduino and Raspberry Pi's.

"We're going from strength to strength and it's an exciting time for our local youth as we continue to grow in expertise and gain valuable resources. Investing in The Clubhouse Program is not only investing your money locally, but it's investing in our youth and their future", says Dusty.

To donate to or support the Clubhouse, send an email to dusty.mconie@nrsdc.org.au



Northern Rivers Social Development Council (NRSDC) is a community-based not-for-profit organisation that promotes fairness and social inclusion in the Northern Rivers region of NSW.

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Interviews:

Ash, Tilly and Dusty are available for interview. Please contact Dusty McOnie on 0428 599 157 or dusty.mconie@nrsdc.org.au

Introducing Teen Summit 2016 Delegate: Ash Mabbott

“Hi I am 17 years old. I grew up in Lismore NSW Australia. I come to The Clubhouse because it is a great social venue and the perfect place to base all of my projects. The best thing about The Clubhouse is the awesome creative atmosphere and welcoming community. I would improve The Clubhouse through a few small changes, such as having more PC computers to work with.

I repaired my first laptop at 13yrs of age and built my first computer at 15. I started case modding (modifying) when I was 16 years. The first case mod was to fit a graphics card in a computer, which didn't actually let the case close, so I had to cut apart the side panel for it to fit, and it worked brilliantly, it didn't look great, but it worked. I also manage a Facebook group called Buy/Sell/Swap PC parts (AU) I joined the group at 1000 members, and today it has over 12,000 members.

Access to technology for young people provides necessary education and ability to explore their interests. Education in technology provides knowledge that is necessary to get a job, and will help young people to thrive in a technology centric society. Technology helps people who experience hardship by giving them cheap, and efficient sources of food and clean water, and by educating them so that they can improve their situation, and the situation for future generations. Technology can make our lives more interconnected, it makes everyday tasks easier, such as cooking, getting from A to B, and provides ways of communication to help us respond quickly to people in need, who are in an emergency, or need medical attention.

The worst thing about technology would be its destructive capabilities and its limits today. As it makes life easier it also makes living more complex. It can be a great and constructive thing, but the way it is used isn't always great, social media is often used for harassment, and devaluation of a person. Advancement in technology is sadly driven by warfare which destroys countless lives and undercuts a nation's progress to develop. This is a very big problem in the world today.

I see the most prominent social issue today being sexism, and everyone's approach to it. I am not so much of a visionary as to think of a solution, but egalitarianism is an avenue that can help both sides of the story. Mutual respect and regard for all people in the world, regardless of gender, race, age, sexuality or religion, is what I hope for. Young people need to be aware and learn how and why it's important to question the status quo, to become informed and discerning about the influence in their lives if we are to achieve a more equitable society." – Ash Mabbott

Introducing Teen Summit 2016 Delegate: Tilly Jones

"Hi, I am 14 years old. I grew up in Lismore NSW Australia. I come to the Clubhouse so I can learn more about technology and how I could use that knowledge with my music. Because I have cerebral palsy I may not be able to play all the instruments that I can now so perhaps I will be able to develop new ways for people with disabilities to play instruments.

The best thing about The Clubhouse is having people there who support and believe in you. They make you feel that anything is possible. Having more funding for equipment and space would be wonderful but the most important thing is to have Coordinators like Dusty and Mentors.

I think the best thing about technology is the potential it has and how we can use it to benefit everybody. Some of the worst things about technology is that people can become isolated and forget their humanity. Sometimes you have to turn it off and talk to somebody. Access to technology is so important for young people because it encourages our creative side and gives us endless opportunities.

Some of my interests are music, animation, photography and Photoshop. I really like to work on music projects and using the Makey-Makey to experiment with different inputs for music production. I was able to take part in creating an animation and music for our project for the autism month conference in 2015. For the past five years I have won many awards at the Lismore Musical Eisteddfod and the last four years I have won the Nellie Gaffney award for merit. This award is given at the judge's discretion for the student who has shown the most consistent effort throughout the Eisteddfod. I was shortlisted for the NSW Youth Advisory Council where I went to Sydney. Although I was not in the final selection I still learnt a great deal. I'm very privileged to be a part of the Care2Change group where we have the opportunity to voice our opinion and work towards improving conditions for young people in care. I was privileged to take part in a workshop with

internationally acclaimed flautist Jane Rutter. Ms Rutter asked could she have permission to transpose and perform one of my clarinet compositions. This year I attended SAE summer shorts program where I learnt more about music production.

I think being heard is a big issue with young people today, not enough young people are being given the opportunity to voice their opinions. I had the opportunity to write a letter to the Prime Minister, Malcom Turnbull, and report, in my opinion, his standard of work in his first 100 days of office. I've been fortunate enough to speak to the Australian Children's commissioner Megan Mitchell along with my cohorts from Care2Change. I have three disabled sisters and I do whatever I can to raise awareness in the community for their needs and other disabled people. I'm hoping in 3 years' time I will be entering my first year of tertiary studies for music. In 10 years ... Look out London, Paris and New York." – Tilly Jones.