

Media Release

For immediate release

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The Young Women Leaders in Artificial Intelligence Program Launched

The “Young Women Leaders in Artificial Intelligence (AI) Program” was launched today, providing a structured, year-long program for 75 talented Australian women to advance their careers in AI. The program was created by IntelliHQ, a not-for-profit organisation committed to the establishment and support of an innovation hub for AI and machine learning (ML) technologies, and is supported by technology advisory firm, KJR, and Amazon Web Services (AWS), the world’s most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud platform. The program was announced during the keynote of the AWS Canberra Public Sector Summit.

The Young Women Leaders in AI program is specifically designed to promote representation of women in AI. It is based on the premise that a diverse range of talent working in the design and development of AI technology will help ensure applications and algorithms reflect a more balanced view of society, in a technology that has the potential to completely change the way people and organisations interact.

The program, which has secured funding from the Australian Federal Government’s Women in STEM and Entrepreneurship (WISE) program, will be built around an annual leadership camp, and provide successful applicants with ongoing mentorship, local events and a pool of scholarship opportunities to support career advancement. The initiative includes an online education campaign highlighting issues in AI gender bias, and featuring some of the brightest minds working in cutting-edge organisations in the field of AI.

Ashley Howden, CEO of KJR said: “AI is enabling rapid transformation of technology and automation and is poised deliver a seismic shift to industry in all its functions. At its greatest success, AI will fundamentally enhance the sophistication of the human condition. But, there is great risk to the viability of such advancements with a severe lack of women engineering and constructing AI, which could result in an inherent and exclusionary gender bias in AI judgment processes.”

“The Young Women Leaders in AI program will address the issues arising from gender inequity in the technology industry, and foster spokespeople and social diversity in AI for the future.”

Director of IntelliHQ Kelvin Ross said: “As an employer, it’s important to recognise that the future of successful AI is largely dependent on the contribution and involvement of women in our industry. Through the program we are incentivising their career development and bringing forward social diversity and equality in AI. It’s truly an exciting, and important opportunity to shift the direction of AI.”

Celeste de Mezieres, Griffith University electronic and biomedical engineering student said: “The field of engineering is rapidly evolving to integrate AI and machine learning algorithms into standard

practice. One aspect that these systems struggle to emulate is emotional intelligence (EI) and as research indicates, this is an area that women often excel in.”¹

“It’s these kinds of programs that serve as platform to launch bright and engaged women into the AI industry.”

The Young Women Leaders program centres on an annual, six-day leadership camp, commencing in April 2019 on the Gold Coast, which will bring together up to 75 young women with passion for AI. The Leadership camp graduates will undergo a year-long ambassador program to secure local leadership roles in AI with continued mentoring on a national scale. The program is open to participants in all Australian states and territories, and successful applicants will be offered a sponsored place at the camp. Associated industry sponsors are invited to fund a scholarship to financially incentivise young women to pursue AI careers, and to provide female mentorship.

In addition, AWS will provide a range of support vehicles for the program, including AWS Cloud class-based training, access to the AWS Educate and Academy programs, AWS Activate support, and AWS Job Fair participation.

AWS Australia and New Zealand head of Training and Certification, Stefan Jansen, said; “AWS is excited to contribute to the creation of this industry-relevant program, and support its focus on promoting diversity of thought in the growing fields of AI and ML. The Young Women Leaders in AI is a great example of how organisations in the technology industry can play a proactive role in helping create opportunities for women in careers like AI, which can be applied to a wide range of industries.”

A three-day Design Workshop will begin on the Gold Coast in late September this year, followed by the official program commencement in early 2019. More information is available on <http://womeninai.com.au/>

For further information, please contact:

Justin Kirkwood
Kirkwoods Corporate Relations
0411 251 324
justin@kirkwoods.com.au

About intelliHQ

IntelliHQ is a not-for-profit organisation committed to the establishment and support of an innovation hub to promote research, investment and commercialisation of next generation technologies within Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning concentrated within the health sector.

About KJR

KJR is a technology-focused strategic advisory firm, that delivers. Founded in 1997 as the uncertainty of Y2K loomed worldwide, KJR remains in the trenches over 20 years later. With over 100 consultants working to advise, deliver and enable technology advancement in organisations across Australia, KJR is on a mission to think further for its clients.

¹ From “The Future of AI Will Be Female”, Rebecca Quartz, 10 January 2018, <https://qz.com/1175985/the-future-of-ai-will-be-female/>