Melbourne 'Hacktivists' Solve Real World Problems
In Time for World Environment Day

Volunteer programmers and designers invited to join as Random Hacks of Kindness returns to Melbourne June 1-2

At Random Hacks of Kindness (RHoK) coming up the weekend of 1-2 June, Melbourne volunteer technologists will join a global community of 'hacktivists' to solve real-world problems with practical technology solutions. Programmers, designers and other volunteers can learn more and register to participate at www.rhokmelbourne.org*.*

23 May 2013 – On June 1 and 2, Melbourne will join 32 other cities around the world in Random Hacks of Kindness (RHoK) – a two-day, global hackathon aimed at developing practical technology solutions for natural disasters and similar community challenges.

Founded in 2009 by Google, NASA, the World Bank, Yahoo! and Microsoft in response to natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the Boxing Day tsunami, RHoK has since been embraced by volunteer techies and community experts around the world – with each city defining and addressing local issues for that community.

Melbourne issues to be tackled at the June RHoK will include how to engage teenagers in bushfire preparedness, how to help Melbourne farmers and other local food producers connect more directly with consumers, and how to create a 'social giving' platform that incents Melbourne businesses,

charities and individuals to support each other. Melbourne participants will include staff from DiUS Computing, Infosys, MYOB, Readify and many other organisations and individuals.

"Melbourne has one of the most vibrant RHoK communities in the world," said RHoK Melbourne chairperson Simone Esler. "There are a lot of local and global hackathons around today, but too often they lose momentum after the hackathon weekend. RHoK Melbourne is unique in sustaining certain projects between events -- we call these our RHoK 'n Roll projects."

Two Melbourne RHoK 'n Roll projects have been refined and are being finalised in time for World Environment Day, which falls on 5 June:

- **Resilience,** which got its start in the June 2012 RHoK, is a mobile application for iPhone and Android that makes it easy for community members to report, find, and together resolve non-life-threatening issues following a natural disaster;

- The **Realtime Bushfire Information Dashboard** was incubated at the December 2012 RHoK in response to a request from the Warrandyte Community Association. Residents in that high risk bushfire area will get access to real-time information in a single web portal. The portal combines official sources (such as fire alerts) as well as crowd-sourced information from the community via Twitter in order to help residents make potentially lifesaving decisions.

The Melbourne event will be held at Swinburne University on June 1 and 2. Volunteer programmers, designers and project managers are invited to register in advance at www.rhokmelbourne.org and to follow the group's tweets at #RHoKmelbourne.

Quotes:

- "RHoK Melbourne is a great example of how ICT is transforming the way we work, communicate, collaborate and connect with our communities and each other and we are excited to support it," said **Suzanne Campbell**, CEO of the Australian Information Industry Association. "It is fantastic to see this program driving innovation to create stronger and more cohesive communities and we are very pleased to endorse this event."

- "We chose to join RHoK because we wanted to give back to the communities in which we live," said **Daryl Wilding-McBride**, Chief Technology Officer, DiUS Computing. "Unexpectedly, we have also found value in the RHoK community itself. We have found opportunities to connect with like-minded people with varied skills and from diverse organisations. Sometimes those organisations are competitors in the commercial world, but with RHoK we are brought together to solve common problems."

- "Infosys has been participating in RHoK Melbourne since its inception," said **Jackie Korhonen**, Australia & New Zealand Country Head for Infosys, a global company with Australian headquarters in Melbourne. "I salute all the people who work so hard throughout the week, and still find the time to donate their time and technology talents to build real solutions that can save lives in our community."

- "We are really excited to sponsor the Random Hacks of Kindness hackathon. It's a great cause to support as Melbourne has a thriving community of programmers, designers and techies," said **Keran McKenzie**, Developer Evangelist at MYOB. "We can't wait to nurture and collaborate with them to see the innovations, and what practical technology solutions we all come up with to help solve some real world-problems."

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