

PRESS RELEASE

First projects lodged in Xstrata-funded program to help kids develop a love of science

Mount Isa, 19 September 2012

Year six to nine students from a range of North Queensland schools today turned in their 'Wonder of Science' projects at a special presentation event in Townsville.

The program is administered by the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) and is focused on increasing greater participation in science and technology to address the long term skills shortage for science and engineering-based professions in Queensland.

Xstrata Copper is a sponsor of the program; contributing \$100,000 over three years (2012-14) to enable the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering to deliver the program across Queensland.

Steve de Kruijff, Chief Operating Officer Xstrata Copper North Queensland, said the first year of the partnership focused on schools in rural, remote and indigenous communities.

"The Wonder of Science program is aimed at boosting interest and enthusiasm for science and technology amongst Queensland school students to hopefully inspire a love of science," said Mr de Kruijff.

"It is also hoped that this program will encourage other regions to develop and establish their own similar programs and provide a platform for linking schools, industry and universities."

The program involves students undertaking research projects over an eight week period based on the participating school's existing science curriculum.

Each year level is supplied with a project task, which must be theoretically and experimentally researched to arrive at a presentable solution.

David Sutton, Project Manager, Wonder of Science, said the program was also designed to assist teachers in developing their professional capabilities in science technology.

"Statistics show that students are losing interest in science at an early age, and unfortunately this disinterest comes at a time when demand for scientists, mathematicians, and engineers is at its greatest," said Mr Sutton.

"There is also a disturbing trend of decreasing science participation in Australian secondary schools. We believe that the 'Wonders of Science' program will have a significant impact on improving the situation."

Good Shepherd Catholic School in Mount Isa is one of 17 schools in the north Queensland region who participated in the program.

The curriculum unit for Year 8 this term was on energy, and the students used the project to demonstrate their knowledge of the different forms of energy.

Xstrata Mount Isa Mines' Superintendent for Energy Management, Nigel Harpley, provided assistance to the project through the role of Industry Ambassador, providing specific knowledge in the energy field to assist students to complete their task to design a Rube Goldberg machine and make it pop a balloon.

Mr de Kruijff said funding for this partnership is being provided through our Xstrata Community Program North Queensland, which has provided almost \$25 million to communities across North Queensland since it was established in 2005.

“We look forward to working with the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering over the next three years in delivering this important program,” he said.

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Notes to editors

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Founded in 2002 and headquartered in Switzerland, we operate in over 20 countries and employ over 70,000 people at more than 100 operations and projects around the world. We work in a responsible and sustainable way, with an entrepreneurial spirit and dynamic approach. For more information, visit www.xstrata.com

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Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE)

The Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) is one of the four learned academies in Australia. Its aim is to recognise and promote the achievements of Australian scientists, engineers and technologists. Each year ATSE recognises eminent scientists through the Clunies-Ross Awards. In 2010 the four Australian scientists who invented Wi-Fi were among those recognised.

As part of the Clunies-Ross Awards each year, school students are invited to take part in the Extreme Science Experience. This year more than 250 students and teachers took part in ESE with hands-on activities to excite the students about science and technology. In 2010 the Clunies-Ross Awards and ESE were held in Brisbane. Both events generated considerable interest and enthusiasm amongst teachers and students who attended.

Subsequent to the event the Qld chapter of ATSE decided to develop a program that would continue to promote enthusiasm for science amongst school students on an annual basis, rather than wait for the Clunies-Ross Awards to be held in Brisbane every three years. The Wonder of Science is the result.