



## Media Release

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### Young innovators unleash their imaginations in Newcastle

High school students from the Hunter Valley and Newcastle region are set to unleash their ideas and creativity at the *Questacon Invention Convention* during the April school holidays.

Delivered with the support of IP Australia, the *Invention Convention* is a free three-day programme for students aged 14 – 18. Developed by Questacon – The National Science and Technology Centre, the *Invention Convention* gives students a practical insight into innovation and entrepreneurship.

Two local mentors, Dr Kim Van Netten a chemical engineer from the University of Newcastle and Andreas Antoniadis and Lewis Quill from Obelisk Systems, will lead participants in prototyping unique solutions to real-world problems using existing and emerging technology.

Questacon’s Innovation Co-ordinator, Sarah Simmonds said, “A major feature of the *Invention Convention* is the mentoring programme.

Local industry experts will mentor participants and share valuable knowledge and experiences, to give students an insight into the world of innovation, design and technology,” said Ms Simmonds.

Participants will create prototypes and develop new designs and ideas, working with high-tech equipment like modular electronics and robotics as well as tools and simple materials. The workshops include activities focused on innovation, prototyping, and communication.

“Students don’t need to have ever prototyped an idea before, they just need to have loads of enthusiasm, a willingness to learn and recognise their own potential,” said Ms Simmonds.

At the end of the *Invention Convention*, students will combine their ideas and present them to mentors, fellow participants and their families, enabling them to share the knowledge and skills gained from the programme.

The *Invention Convention* is part of the \$14.5 million *Questacon Smart Skills Initiative* funded by the Australian Government in partnership with Principal Partner, The Ian Potter Foundation.

Building on the *Questacon Smart Skills* in-school workshops, the *Invention Convention* takes participants deeper into the process of innovation, and offers a significant skill development pathway. *Questacon Smart Skills*, supported by Technology Partner Samsung, recently toured the Hunter Valley and Newcastle region, and delivered 110 workshops to 2568 secondary school students.

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