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Media Release

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Questacon Smart Skills Initiative touches down in Newcastle

The first stop in *Questacon's Smart Skills* tour kicks off at Newcastle High School 6 March.

Developed by Questacon – The National Science and Technology Centre, *Smart Skills* is a free programme that travels regional Australia delivering in-school inquiry-based workshops creating an awareness of technology, engineering and design-thinking amongst young Australians.

Smart Skills engages students and their teachers in the process of innovation through Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM).

Smart Skills is supported by Technology Partner, Samsung Electronics Australia. Samsung Technology has been integrated into Questacon's wind tunnel workshop, providing an opportunity for teachers and students to learn how to harness the power of smartphones and tablets to innovate, design and experiment.

Samsung Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Tess Ariotti said, "As Australia's employment landscape continues to evolve, skills in STEM are becoming increasingly relevant across all industries and future career pathways."

"Through our partnership with Questacon, we want to promote practical STEM education experiences which help students explore design-thinking and challenge them with a variety of problem-solving activities," said Ms Ariotti.

Smart Skills will visit 35 schools in the Hunter and Central Coast region of New South Wales throughout March delivering curriculum-linked STEM education approaches.

Smart Skills innovation mentor Alison McGregor said, "Using interactive and challenging workshops, students will gain hands-on knowledge, techniques, connections and confidence to prototype, test and refine their ideas using simple materials, mixed with Samsung's digital technology to test their prototypes."

"Teachers experience their students' journey and gain models and resources they can use in their own classroom to support students in pursuing ideas."

"*Smart Skills* allows participants to use their creativity, imagination, critical thinking and design skills all delivered at their school by Questacon," said Ms McGregor.

Questacon Smart Skills is a major component of the \$14.5 million *Questacon Smart Skills Initiative* jointly funded by the Australian Government and The Ian Potter Foundation.

For information about Questacon Smart Skills visit: www.questacon.edu.au

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