Media Release

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Questacon calling all code breakers for Centenary challenge

Questacon has today sounded the call to all amateur sleuths and code breakers with the official launch of its newest outdoor exhibit, NKRYPT.

Senator Kate Lundy, Senator for the ACT, unveiled the exhibit and tweeted her own coded message that was created with the exhibit's Enigma-like coding machine.

'This is a fascinating exhibit that gives us an insight into the intriguing world of ciphers and codes,' Senator Lundy said, 'One of the NKRYPT codes relates to the Centenary of Canberra, and Questacon is offering a prize to the first person to solve the challenge.'

'This exhibit will provide a lasting memento of the Centenary of Canberra at Questacon; one that shows us that tenacity and problem-solving skills are valuable attributes for success today, just as they were to Canberra's founders a century ago,' Senator Lundy said.

NKRYPT incorporates the ancient science of cryptography, presenting an intriguing addition to the six interactive sculptural exhibits already installed in the Questacon forecourt.

NKRYPT contains a series of codes and ciphers laser cut into eight stainless steel poles. The challenges are separate but interlinked, with each solution providing clues to solving others.

Questacon Director Professor Graham Durant AM said, "NKRYPT's range of codes differ in their difficulty, so there's something for all ages. We expect some of these codes will be quickly broken; others may take longer – or perhaps remain unsolved. The key to unlocking the final code will emerge from the solutions to all the other codes."

'We encourage everyone to come and have a go at breaking the NKRYPT codes. The codes were created without using complex mathematics or powerful computers, and therefore can be solved without them,' said Professor Durant.

Code-making and code-breaking has existed since Roman times, and in today's digital age is a sophisticated science integral to the privacy and security of information.

Coded messages have played an important role throughout history, from encoded messages tattooed on the heads of slaves in ancient Greece, to the famous Enigma cipher machines used during World War II, and today's internet encryption technology.

The NKRYPT exhibit is supported by Mr Eddie Kutner and Mr Leon Kempler, and is located in the Humanities and Science Campus within the Parliamentary Zone.

Full details of the Centenary Code Challenge are available on the Questacon website at *www.questacon.edu.au*.

Questacon Media contact: Annie Harris, Senior Communications Advisor - Media, 0439 399 912.

Ministerial Media Contact: David Brown, 0417 173 256.