



Australian Government  
Department of Industry,  
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## Media Release

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### Teachers + scientists = a formula to engage students in STEM subjects

Fifty science teachers and ten scientists have been brought together this week as part of a program to help boost the teaching of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects across Australia.

The STEM X Academy is a five-day professional learning program based in Canberra which provides science teachers the tools and expertise to convert cutting edge science research into activities and ideas to use in the classroom.

The program developed in partnership by Questacon – The National Science and Technology Centre and the Australian Science Teachers Association (ASTA) aims to support the growing national focus on STEM education.

Students will benefit from direct connections made between the national science curriculum and real world application of STEM, making STEM skills relevant to students.

“There has been significant discussion recently of Australia’s need to develop students and teachers in STEM in order to meet the needs of the 21st century Australian economy,” Questacon Director of Science and Learning Dr Stuart Kohlhagen said.

“STEM X’s innovative program will provide teachers with new ways to deliver science lessons, giving them the tools to develop their own ideas; it will precipitate real change in the attendees.”

Participants have been selected from across Australia, with some teachers coming from rural and remote schools where teacher professional development is difficult to access.

Experienced teachers Ken Silburn and Sarah Chapman, respectively the 2015 and 2013 Prime Minister’s Excellence in Science Teaching Secondary Schools Awards winners, will attend mixing with the other teachers and demonstrating the networking potential of the program.

“The Australian Science Teachers Association sees the provision of high quality professional learning as an essential ingredient to the continued development of teachers,” ASTA CEO Vic Dobos said.

“The fact that this inaugural STEM X Academy held in the middle of the summer holidays received nearly 250 applications for only 50 places demonstrates not only the high regard for Questacon and ASTA programs but also the willingness of teachers to give up their time to improve their practice.”

The teachers will undertake field trips to research organisations including Geoscience Australia, Mount Stromlo Observatory, CSIRO Discovery Centre and the Australian Institute of Sport, showcasing Canberra’s science and technology expertise.

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