



Media Release

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Questacon–Samsung partnership to build Smart Skills

Questacon – The National Science and Technology Centre and Samsung Electronics Australia have today announced the launch of a technology partnership to support Australia’s future inventors, technologists and entrepreneurs.

The three-year technology partnership will see Samsung technology used to provide STEM-themed learning opportunities for young people via the *Questacon Smart Skills* in-school programme for students and *Questacon Smart Skills* Teacher Workshops.

Participating students around Australia will have the opportunity to learn how to harness the incredible power of smartphones and tablets to innovate, design and experiment.

“Most people only use a fraction of the capability of the technology they’re holding in their hands because they simply don’t realise the power of these everyday tools. This programme will open doors to new learning and experiences,” Questacon’s Director of Science and Learning, Stuart Kohlhagen, said.

“The *Questacon Smart Skills* programme will show young students how to unlock the potential of their smartphones or tablets to design, prototype, control and test model cars, rockets and bridges in our workshops.

“It will also show students that, despite today’s emphasis on constant success; failure and applying the lessons learned is an important part of innovation.”

Smart Skills is Questacon’s newest national touring programme. It delivers interactive, in-school workshops in regional and metropolitan areas. Workshops expose students to the process of innovation using the steps of designing, prototyping, and testing, using Samsung technology products.

Philip Newton, Vice President - Chief Marketing Officer at Samsung Electronics Australia said programmes such as *Smart Skills* have the potential to inspire life-long interest in technology and importantly, encourage young people to consider pursuing a career in that area.

“At Samsung, we believe that all young Australians should have access to diverse, quality learning experiences and that we can help enable this through our technology,” said Newton.

“Our CSR programs in Australia work to complement traditional classroom activities, helping to provide strong foundations in areas like STEM and foster new skills and learning opportunities for young Australians.

“Samsung’s technology partnership with Questacon will give more young people the opportunity to use technology as a tool for problem solving and creative learning. It’s our hope that as a result of this partnership, Samsung and Questacon will help inspire and motivate the next generation of Australian technology creators.”

Questacon’s Director of Science and Learning, Stuart Kohlhagen says while involving students in the workshops was important, workshops showing teachers how to incorporate technology into their teaching using the *Smart Skills* programme concepts was even more important.

“Teachers can multiply the benefits of the learning opportunities because they will be able to take the concepts away to run their own programmes encouraging their current and future students to explore the properties of materials and technologies, and to apply this knowledge in new ways,” Dr Kohlhagen said.

“*Smart Skills* has been developed with the Government’s agenda to boost the study of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in mind. It’s about building on the foundation skills to get students solving problems and thinking creatively to develop and refine their ideas.

“Since it began in March this year it’s already inspired and motivated over 2500 students in regional Tasmania and NSW’s Illawarra and South Coast to become technology creators rather than just technology consumers.

“We want them to think about continuing with study in science, maths, design, technology and engineering.

“This partnership with Samsung is a great example of how the Australian Government and the private sector can work together to reach young people in more areas, and to support teachers to continue these interactive, design-thinking activities inside, and outside, the classroom.

Questacon Smart Skills is part of the broader *Questacon Smart Skills Initiative*, supported by The Ian Potter Foundation and the Department of Industry and Science.

The programme will visit Victoria’s Goldfields region next month.

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