

23 April 2018

Education Council releases STEM Industry-School Partnerships report

The Chair of the Education Council, the Hon. Minister John Gardner MP, has welcomed the contribution of Australian industry to boosting STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) programs in schools. In releasing the final report from the STEM Partnerships Forum, titled *Optimising STEM Industry-School Partnerships: Inspiring Australia's Next Generation*, the Minister highlighted the importance of STEM skills in solving front-line, real-world problems.

“Business needs skills, students need careers, and Australia needs industries that are primed for the future,” Minister Gardner said.

“We need to ensure that Australian students are focussed on attaining the high levels of maths and science skills and knowledge that are necessary to fully participate in the modern workforce and in society,” said Minister Gardner.

Australia's Chief Scientist Dr Alan Finkel, who chaired the STEM Forum, presented the report to the Education Council meeting in Adelaide on 13 April.

“STEM education that is relevant and high quality is key to Australia's future. We know this as parents; industry knows it too, and wants to help. This report is about making the most of these partnerships to best benefit schools, students and industry,” Dr Finkel said.

The report collects the lessons of high-quality partnership programs, including industry-sponsored competitions, classroom equipment kits, problem-solving challenges and teacher professional development. It is the result of 12 months of work that included extensive national consultations with over 150 people attending meetings, and the receipt of 53 written submissions.

“This report encourages more businesses to help schools bring science to life for every student. It will also be an important input into discussions of national education reforms,” Minister Gardner said.

On behalf of the Education Council, Minister Gardner thanked Dr Finkel for his leadership in chairing the STEM Forum.

The report is available at www.educationcouncil.edu.au

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