



MEDIA RELEASE

21 August 2023

National Science Week puts the fizz into modern physics

Students in remote Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe were given a rare insight into the mysteries of the universe when the award-winning Einstein-First and Quantum Girls programs visited schools across the district as part of National Science Week.

The innovative program aims to build strong science experiences in the classroom by turning students on to STEM careers and halting the growing shortage of skills in Australia's workforce, particularly underrepresentation of women and a lack of qualified people in the regions.

Developed by science educators from The University of Western Australia and Australian National University, the program is headed by renowned physicist Professor David Blair, who conducted workshops for local students and teachers.

If you've ever wondered why lightning is three times hotter than the sun, why wavy merino wool keeps you warmer, and why the Eiffel Tower is taller in summer than winter, it's time to brush up on your physics which is the study of how things move, and the forces that make them move – from tiny atoms to whole galaxies.

As well as giving you the edge at your next quiz night, modern physics is the basis for quantum computing and many of the medical and scientific breakthroughs that are creating the jobs of the future.

Regional newcomer and future employer International Graphite is investing early in its STEM workforce and has funded science programs in the Great Southern for the next three years. The company will be one of the first in Australia to produce graphite for batteries in electric vehicles and clean energy technologies, and is working to develop a graphite mine at Springdale, near Hopetoun, and processing facilities at Collie.

Managing Director and CEO Andrew Worland said competition for STEM skills was growing in the resources industry and access to skilled people in regional areas would be vital if Australia wanted to achieve its goal of being a critical minerals superpower.

"We are proud to be bringing this amazing Science Week experience to local schools and helping to establish strong opportunities for young people to build a great future without having to leave our regional communities."

The roadshow kicked off in Katanning, before heading to Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun, and on to Esperance and Kalgoorlie.

This was a perfect opportunity for students to build their confidence in tackling modern science so more students choose to take up STEM careers.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Marie Howarth – 0412 111 962

mhowarth@ig6.com.au