

## STEM Strategy a Vital Boost for WA's Future

Scitech welcomes the State Government of Western Australia's STEM Strategy and is excited to participate in the Strategy to see the State's workforce upskilled with STEM skills to embrace a technological future; increase the participation of under-represented and disadvantaged groups; and to increase the community's recognition of the importance of STEM skills.

Ms Deb Hancock, Chief Executive Officer, Scitech said, "more than ever before, we have to work together to do our very best to ensure that every West Australian has the opportunity to develop STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) skills. 75% of the fastest growing jobs require STEM skills, so we are delighted to see that the Government has released the State STEM Strategy to address this critical driver of economic and social development."

Ms Hancock continued, "As a key participant of the State's STEM Strategy, Scitech will respond with an increased level of STEM engagement and reach, by building on our strong reputation for quality STEM education and engagement, established over the past 30 years."

The State Governments' STEM Strategy sees Scitech play a leading role in developing a healthy STEM culture for Western Australians. Plans for a new science centre are progressing, and with it will come a reshaping and deepening of how Scitech works to engage with all Western Australians.

Building on the foundations of our Statewide and Professional Learning programs, Scitech will become a strategic conduit between industry and schools, facilitating activity that meets the needs of students, parents, teachers and employees by bringing 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills into the curriculum in innovative and exciting ways.

New programs targeting the needs of under-represented demographics will be influenced by the success Scitech already achieves in these areas, such as the highly acclaimed Aboriginal Education Program in the Pilbara, our Girls-only CSIRO Lab workshops and the Schools Access Program enabling schools from low socioeconomic areas to visit Scitech for free.

Other speciality areas Scitech will take the lead include coding, robotics and mathematics, building on highly successful existing workshops and community initiatives for teachers and students. Teacher professional development programs are also a focus, enhancing what Scitech already offers, which includes support for government initiatives such as state-of-the-art Primary Science Lab's and Digital Technologies curriculum.

Scitech's work targeting specific developmental stages and demographics will also flourish, enriching events from early childhood through to secondary school career fairs and links to university research. Plans are in the pipeline to target the youth demographic, ages 13 – 17, in non-traditional ways outside of the school environment.

From toddlers to teachers to industry leaders, Scitech has an impressive reputation for connecting Western Australians with STEM at all stages of their lives. The State Government of Western Australia's STEM Strategy has not only endorsed this, but given an exciting and welcome boost to deepen our role as a vital STEM catalyser for WA, now and into the future.