

Rio Tinto Innovation Festival takes students to another reality

More than 1,000 secondary students from across Perth descended on Scitech last week for Rio Tinto Innovation Festival, a special three-day event focussing on the emerging fields of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR).

Scitech brought together Perth's leaders in AR and VR under one roof with the aim of inspiring secondary students to pursue a career in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths).

"We wanted students to experience and learn about some of the tech they will inevitably be working with in the future," Scitech Science Programs Wrangler Serena O'Neil said.

Special guest exhibitors included Immersia VR, Stirfire Studios, Plant Energy Biology, Rio Tinto, Constructive Media, Frame VR, mini-U, North Metro TAFE, Curtin University, Murdoch University, the University of Western Australia, Edith Cowan University.

"Students got the chance to see how cutting-edge technology will change the way we make art, play video games, explore for mineral resources, design buildings and treat patients in a hospital. Exposing high school students to new ideas is important if Western Australia is going to remain an economic and social powerhouse in the future," Ms O'Neil said.

St Mark's Anglican Community School Head of Science Kelly Nebel said Innovation Festival was well organised with lots of leading edge exhibitors for students to interact with.

"Students were engaged and could learn using technology we don't have access to in the classroom. Events like Rio Tinto Innovation Festival help them to realise what study and career options are out there and how technology will play a large role in their future," Ms Nebel said.

There were interactive VR and AR experiences of all scales – guest speakers from Immersia VR, Stirfire Studios, and Sciosity; industry-based demonstrations by Rio Tinto, shows in the Scitech Planetarium; mini universes; a physical rollercoaster ride in a virtual world and more.

"To remain competitive in a rapidly changing world it is essential that our future leaders are truly innovative thinkers. Rio Tinto Innovation Festival is a catalyst for young people to develop the skills and thinking that will make them the innovative leaders of tomorrow." Rio Tinto General Manager Communities and Communications Linda Dawson said.

Rio Tinto Innovation Festival is an annual festival of ideas based in Rio Tinto Innovation Central at Scitech, an evolving showcase of STEM advancements from WA and further afield.

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More information

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