

More information

Susan Hoerlein

Public Affairs & Communications Specialist

p (08) 9215 0733

m 0422 553 343

e susan.hoerlein@scitech.org.au

Learning STEM Over the Airwaves

On Friday 2 August, Scitech shared its unique style of STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) engagement with primary aged students living remotely and in isolated areas of the Kimberley region through the School of the Air.

Working from the School of the Air studio in Derby, Scitech presenters conducted two Biology workshops with 32 students, from years K – 3 (5-8 years old) and years 4 - 6 (9-12 years old), spread across an area of 450,000 square kilometres.

Kalien Selby, Acting Scitech Chief Executive Officer, said “Scitech’s mission is to increase awareness, interest, capability and participation by all Western Australians in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Working with organisations such as the School of the Air enables us to reach even the most isolated students. This is vitally important to ensure that everyone receives the same opportunities to be upskilled in STEM and to be equipped with the knowledge and skills required for the future workforce.”

“With 75% of the fastest growing occupations now requiring STEM skills and knowledge*, and 65% of children entering primary school today expected to take up jobs that do not yet exist**, it is imperative that we ensure all children have the chance to be part of the STEM-literate workforce that is required to continue to strengthen our State’s economic and social future.”

Materials were posted to each child in the lead up to the online workshop. Students used icons that represented raising their hands, laughing and applauding to interact with the class, while the presenter directed participants and their contributions to the discussion, to create a classroom-like environment.

Students in the K – 3 group learnt how and why animals use camouflage and how to use their senses to investigate water holding crystals.

The year 4 – 6 group learnt about taxonomy - the science of classification, especially of organisms - and investigated using dichotomous keys to classify animals according to their features.

Scitech’s School of the Air Biology Workshop is an adaption of the Primary Science Show that Scitech tours to regional primary schools throughout the year. It was adapted specifically to suit communication without face-to-face interaction, but with the aim of encouraging the students to relate their lesson to their surrounding environment and home.

* PwC, A Smart Move 2015

** Government of Western Australia, Future Jobs, Future Skills, 2019