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Scitech's Aboriginal Education Program Tours the Pilbara

During May, Scitech toured the Aboriginal Education Program (AEP) to remote community schools in the Pilbara region, delivering culturally relevant science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) workshops to years K-12, and professional development workshops for teachers and Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers.

With a focus on Biology, workshops drew on students' knowledge of local flora and fauna to explore curriculum linked topics such as animal adaptations, life cycles and the features of living things. Students' hunted for different coloured 'prey' to learn about the benefits of camouflage, isolated leaves from the sun and air to learn about respiration and photosynthesis, and grew a plant to explore life cycles.

Professional development workshops for teachers and education officers were based on the theme 'Decoding the Technologies Curriculum'. Participants were shown basic coding and provided with a series of resources to build confidence to teach the Technologies curriculum in the classroom.

Ms Deb Banning, Chief Executive Officer, Scitech said, "We are immensely proud of the work we do with remote community's right across Western Australia. In partnership with the community, we increase awareness of the importance and relevance of STEM for Aboriginal students and build the capacity of educators to teach STEM subjects. Australian Indigenous students continue to be underrepresented in STEM fields. One of Scitech's strategic focus areas is to drive targeted STEM engagement with deeper reach across Western Australia – and increasing the ability for everyone to develop critical STEM skills – especially in regional and remote Aboriginal communities."

Three Scitech presenters travelled 4,167km to the farthest reaches of the Pilbara region, which covers an area of over 502,000km². Starting in Strelly Remote Community and finishing in Kiwirrkurra, which is considered to be Australia's most remote community, they visited 10 schools, delivering 30 student workshops and 8 professional development sessions for teachers and education officers.

Schools visited were Strelly Community School (Strelly and Warralong Campuses), Marble Bar Primary School, Yandeyarra Remote Community School, Jigalong Remote Community School, Parnngurr Remote Community School, Nullagine Primary School, Rawa Community School (Punmu and Kunawarrtji Campuses) and Ngaanyatjarra Lands School (Kiwirrkurra Campus).

Scitech's innovative Aboriginal Education Program has been developed with a cultural awareness of the peoples and landscapes of Western Australia's regional and remote Aboriginal communities. Workshops are specifically designed to cater to the learning style and needs of Aboriginal students, while encouraging the involvement of the wider community.

Schools can also hire an AEP DIY Science Kit each school term. These kits are a fully self-contained classroom science resources that provide teachers with all the equipment and information needed to run engaging and relevant hands-on science lessons in-between tours.

The Aboriginal Education Program is made possible through Scitech's long standing partnerships with BHP, Rio Tinto and Chevron Australia.