

**Question on Notice
No. 708
Asked on 12 May 2005**

MS STONE asked the Minister for State Development and Innovation (MR McGRADY) —

QUESTION:

What is the Government doing to encourage young people to become more involved in science and perhaps consider a career in science?

ANSWER:

The Government, through the Department of State Development and Innovation and Education Queensland, has a number of initiatives aimed at encouraging young people to take an interest in and consider a career in science. Three such initiatives being progressed through the Department of State Development and Innovation, which target Queensland's young people aged seven to 17 years and beyond, include Science on Saturday, the BioBus and the Smart State University Internships. The Queensland Government was also a proud supporter of the QUT Smart Train this year, providing \$200,000 to support the train's journey throughout the State. More information about the Smart Train can be found at web site: <http://www.train.qut.edu.au/>.

Science on Saturday

- Science on Saturday is a fun, hands on science program for 7-14 year olds. It is designed to stimulate children's imagination and curiosity and hopefully lead to a life long interest in science. The program also aims to show children and their families how science impacts on the lives of all Queenslanders.
- Following a successful pilot program in 2004, the Department of State Development and Innovation contracted the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation to deliver the program for another three years from 2005 to 2007, at a cost of \$136,000 per year. In an evaluation of the program conducted last year, both children and their parents rated the program eight and nine out of 10 for fun and educational experiences.
- The program is delivered in 24 communities around Queensland, and offers more than 5,500 children the opportunity to experience hands-on science each year. The program runs for six consecutive Saturdays in each location. This year, the topics covered over six weeks are Forensic Science (The Blue Rose Murder), Flight, Circuit Science, Gene Busters, Rockhounds and Slip! Slop! Slap! Science.
- There have been two phases of the program delivered this year:
 - Phase 1, from 12 February – 19 March, saw Science on Saturday delivered in Indooroopilly, Roma, Toowoomba, Yeppoon, Townsville and Strathpine.
 - In Phase 2, from 30 April – 4 June, sees the program head to Beaudesert, Miles, Millmerran, Rockhampton, Camooweal and Manly.

- Two more phases of the program will be delivered in 2005.
 - In phase 3, from 23 July – 27 August, Science on Saturday will go to Ipswich, Dalby, Duaringa, Cloncurry, the Sunshine Coast and Innisfail.
 - In phase 4, from 15 October – 19 November, the program will be delivered in Redlands, Stanthorpe, Weipa, Normanton, Thuringowa and Tully.

The BioBus

- The BioBus is a travelling biotechnology exhibition which was officially launched by the Honourable Peter Beattie MP, Premier and Minister for Trade, the Honourable Anna Bligh MP, Minister for Education and the Arts and myself on 11 May 2005. This project is an initiative of the Department of State Development and Innovation in collaboration with Education Queensland and is being delivered by the Queensland Museum.
- The BioBus exhibition is designed to show Queensland students aged 15–17 years and communities, the uses of biotechnology in our everyday lives. It also aims to encourage more young Queenslanders to develop an interest in science, particularly biotechnology.
- Over the next two years, the BioBus will visit more than 80 locations in rural and regional Queensland. It is expected that approximately 300 students per week will visit the BioBus, and six to 12 teachers per week will receive professional development training in the field of biotechnology. The BioBus will be on show at the Brisbane Exhibition in August. In total, it is anticipated that approximately 23,000 people will visit the BioBus exhibition during its two years of operation.

The Smart State University Internships

- The Department of State Development and Innovation is also initiating a three-year \$1.05 million Smart State University Internships program which will provide science, technology and engineering undergraduate students with relevant industry experience and help them develop workplace ready skills when they graduate. This program will help develop better linkages between universities and business, and expose students to a broader range of career options.
- It is anticipated that the first round of the program will be released in October this year.