

Question on Notice

No. 1631

Asked on 14 September 2016

MR WHITING ASKED THE MINISTER FOR INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY AND MINISTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS (HON L ENOCH)—

Will the Minister advise how the STEM.IAM program will build the education opportunities for students in the Murrumba Electorate who identify as indigenous?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

Many educational opportunities are not readily available to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Few talented young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across Queensland attend university, and even less participate in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) courses.

Advance Queensland and STEM.IAM aim to support these young people so they have the opportunity to participate in Queensland's knowledge-based economy and jobs of the future.

STEM.IAM was conceived by Birri Gubba man Wayne Denning, the managing Director of award-winning creative agency Carbon Media and one of our inaugural Advance Queensland Digital Champions. Wayne was motivated by the work of Ngarrindjer man, David Unaipon, an Aboriginal engineer, inventor, author and activist who appears on our \$50 note.

STEM.IAM aims to increase the number of students pursuing STEM at university through a coordinated program of activities to increase STEM engagement for students from grades 5 to 12.

The program is being delivered by a number of partners and will build on existing activities, momentum and connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Advance Queensland is proud to be a foundation sponsor for STEM.IAM. The Advance Queensland program will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through fun and engaging coding and robotics workshops, community-led coding clubs, and student participation in state and national coding and robotics competitions. The program will also deliver professional development training for teachers, librarians and volunteers; and scholarships in ICT at universities.

Students involved in the Department of Education and Training's Solid Pathways program will participate in STEM workshops at their camps and be encouraged to participate in coding and robotics competitions like the FIRST Lego League regional competition being held at Grace Lutheran College on Sunday 13 November.

Councils will be able to apply for grants administered by the State Library of Queensland to deliver coding and robotics activities through Indigenous Knowledge Centres or public libraries. These grants will support projects delivered in collaboration with schools and community groups.

Young students and their families in Murrumba, and other communities, should talk with their teachers, schools, libraries and community groups to find out how to get involved in activities that are available both locally and across Queensland.

I look forward to seeing a range of initiatives like STEM.IAM, which are targeted at helping to close the literacy and numeracy gap, and ensuring young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have the skills to actively contribute to and benefit from the positive social and economic opportunities of a knowledge-based economy of the future.