

Education Minister Anna Bligh
Science Education Ambassador and Taskforce

Mr Speaker, in August this year I ~~announced~~ ^{launched this} a comprehensive plan to revitalise science education in our schools.



It's an ambitious plan but a necessary one to ensure Queensland remains at the cutting edge of scientific discovery and innovation.

But a plan is only as good as the people driving it.

That's why I foreshadowed the appointment of Queensland's first Science Education Ambassador and a high-level taskforce to turn the ideas and strategies in this document into action.

I'm delighted today to announce that prominent Australian scientist and educator Peter Fensham has accepted my invitation to become Queensland's inaugural Science Education Ambassador.

Professor Fensham - who recently moved to Queensland from Melbourne - is a recognised world expert on science education.

His credentials are extensive.

Professor Fensham became the first Professor of Science Education in Australia when he was appointed to Monash University in 1967 and held this position until 1992. He is a Member of the Order of Australia.

He is also a member of the Science Expert Group on the OECD/PISA project – an international assessment program which measures the performance of 15 year-olds in reading, mathematics and scientific literacy *in more than 30 countries.*

Professor Fensham has also taught and carried out research at universities here and overseas, including Melbourne, Monash, Stanford, London and Leeds.

He is highly regarded in the scientific community, both nationally and internationally, and is passionate about opening students' eyes to the wonder of science.

I thank Professor Fensham for taking on this role.

Mr Speaker, Queensland is lucky to have some of the most inquiring scientific minds on our doorstep.

To capitalise on this talent pool I have appointed prominent Queensland scientist Professor Ian Lowe to head the taskforce.

Professor Lowe is an Emeritus Professor at Griffith University and previously headed the university's School of Science.

In 2000 he received a Premier's Millennium Award for Excellence in Science and the Prime Minister's Environmental Award for Outstanding Individual Achievement.

Professors Fensham and Lowe and 23 other professionals drawn from the education, industry and research sectors will make up the taskforce overseeing our science reforms.

Mr Speaker, the taskforce is a fine blend of youth and experience.

Members of the taskforce include:

Dr Joe Baker, Queensland's Chief Scientist
Professor John Mattick from the Institute for Molecular Bioscience
Carol Mayne owner of DNA Evidence
Professor Mark von Itzstein from the Institute of Glycomics and
Scott Hocknull, 2002 Young Australian of the Year.

Taskforce members will be appointed for three years.

Mr Speaker, I'm confident Professors ^{Education} Fensham and Lowe and the taskforce members will give science a shot in the arm in Queensland and further ignite student interest in this important field of study.