



Media Release

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NBN Co's STEMpreneur initiative to teach tech to tomorrow's business leaders

NBN Co today launched its annual STEM program, this year focusing on helping young Australian students develop a combination of STEM and entrepreneurial skills through its **nbn™** 'STEMpreneur' initiative.

The **nbn™** STEMpreneur initiative has been designed to help young Australian students prepare for this new world of work.

From Cairns in the Far North to Alice Springs in the Red Centre, eight schools across the country will participate in the twelve week virtual learning initiative designed to give students an understanding of how technology can help them develop STEM and entrepreneurial skills, critical for the future work force.

Delivered in partnership with the Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN), the initiative will kick off today in Hobart with a workshop and briefing for students on how to apply STEM and entrepreneurial skills to develop a new idea for a social enterprise which will benefit the local community.

AlphaBeta research commissioned by NBN Co into the future of education and jobs has found that STEM and entrepreneurial skills are highly sought-after capabilities by employers and by 2030, three in four Australians will spend more time using STEM and entrepreneurial skills in the workforce¹.



The world of work is changing with high-touch and high-skill jobs growth on the rise while lower-skill, routine jobs are declining. The research found that digital economy jobs, in particular, are growing 10 percentage points faster than all other jobs and by 2030 more than 90 per cent of Australia's workforce will be either using, configuring or building digital technology at work¹.

Kathrine Dyer, Chief Network Deployment Officer at NBN Co said:

"We see the **nbn™** STEMpreneur initiative as an innovative and exciting way to equip students with STEM and entrepreneurial skills by leveraging technology and opening up a world of online learning opportunities.

"Digital infrastructure is becoming more critical to both learning and career opportunities for Australians. Access to fast broadband is driving growth in Australian entrepreneurship and is forecast to create 31,000 jobs by 2021, including 19,000 in regional Australia¹.



“We are committed to help open up opportunities for today’s and the future’s business leaders to stay local, no matter where they live, to take their goods and services to Australia and the world.”

Allegra Spender, Chief Executive Officer at ABCN said:

“Entrepreneurialism is a vital mindset for the next generation. Whether these young people will start their own businesses or work in established organisations, having the skills and mindset to come up with innovative ideas, and persevere to bring them to reality creates enormous opportunity for them. Technology and broader STEM skills will be critical for the future workforce, so we are very excited to put these elements together.

Technology is also creating the opportunity to augment and change offline learning with online tools and approaches, and it is great to be partnering with nbn at the forefront of this.”

Robotics expert and STEMpreneur ambassador Marita Cheng said:

“Technology is the future of business and I am an advocate for young Australians who are curious and driven to solve real-world business challenges creatively, through innovation.

I believe age and background should not be a barrier to entrepreneurialism. Young people from all over the country, from Hobart to Alice Springs and even Cairns where I grew up, are destined to be inventors and business leaders with the power to generate real and positive change.”

Following a workshop tour by NBN Co and ABCN, each team will have two months to develop their idea. The program will culminate in an opportunity to pitch their business concept to a panel of industry experts who will determine the winning idea. The judging panel will include NBN Co Chief Network Deployment Officer, Kathrine Dyer; ABCN CEO, Allegra Spender and robotics expert, Marita Cheng. The winning school will receive a STEM-themed tech prize pack.

The participating schools in the STEMpreneur initiative are:

- Para Hills Primary School, Adelaide, SA
- Islington Public School, Newcastle, NSW
- Bowen Road Primary, Hobart, TAS
- Larapinta Primary School, Alice Springs, NT
- Parramatta State School, Cairns, QLD
- Victoria Park State School, Mackay, QLD
- Parkwood Primary School, Perth, WA
- Canadian Lead Primary, Ballarat, VIC

For more information about the STEMpreneur initiative, check out our **nbn™** blog page designed to educate parents and students on the importance of STEM and entrepreneurial skills, and access to fast broadband for the jobs of the future.

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Resources

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Notes to editors

- 1. NBN Co Connecting Australia 2019: Digital Technology Transforming Education Report.
- STEM is defined as Science, Maths and Advanced Technology skills.
- Entrepreneurial skills include Communications, Interpersonal, Problem Solving and Judgment / critical thinking.
- A 'high-skill' job describes roles that typically require a high degree of educational attainment (bachelor's degree or higher). 'High-touch' job describes roles that require a high level of interpersonal contact.
- Routine jobs are defined as jobs that are more manual and require a lower-level of skill. This includes Admin Professionals, Sales, Technicians & Trades, Machinery Operators, Labourers.
- Digital economy jobs are defined according to the ABS classification of ICT jobs on a 6 digit level. This includes ICT Trainers, ICT Sales Professionals, Graphic and Web Designers and Illustrators, Electronics Engineers, ICT Business and Systems Analysts, Multimedia Specialists and Web Developers, Software and Applications Programmers, Database and Systems Administrators and ICT Security Specialists, Computer Network Professionals, Telecommunications Engineering Professionals, Electronic Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians, ICT Support Technicians, Telecommunications Technical Specialists, Electronics Trades Workers, Telecommunications Trades Workers, ICT Sales Assistants, Other Miscellaneous Labourers, ICT and Telecommunications Technicians, ICT Network and Support Professionals, and ICT Professionals.