

THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

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High school students to study science

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, and Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation, Richard Marles, today welcomed progress on a \$2 million project to encourage students to study the sciences in senior secondary years.

The Science and Technology Education Leveraging Relevance (STELR) project has been developed by the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering and the first stage was launched today by Parliamentary Secretary Marles at a professional learning seminar for secondary teachers in Melbourne.

“The aim of this project is to get more students interested in learning about science. It will see teachers extend and develop skills in inquiry-based teaching, with particular focus on renewable energy,” Mr Marles said.

STELR is being piloted in 185 schools nationally that have been selected in consultation with state and territory education authorities.

Students will participate in a six-to-10 week module using a hands-on learning approach.

“Classroom activities will cover concepts such as global warming, climate change, greenhouse effects, renewable energy resources, energy forms, transformations and conservation,” Mr Marles said.

“Teaching science through the context of renewable energy will encourage students to consider further study and careers in science and engineering. This will help to address skill shortages in technological careers and trades,” he said.

The Australian Government has invested more than \$570 million over the four years from 2008–09 in specific science and maths education initiatives. This includes reduced student contributions for those studying maths, science and statistics units at university and HECS-HELP remissions for graduates who go on to work in related fields.

In addition, the Government is advancing science and maths education in schools through other substantial investment and initiatives including:

- Australia’s first National Curriculum which was launched today
- the Smarter School National Partnerships
- Digital Education Revolution
- Digital Architecture Initiatives
- Science and Language Centres for high schools as part of the Government’s Building the Education Revolution.

Corporate sponsorship has also been provided for the STELR project with Rio Tinto funding \$150 000 (plus travel sponsorship of up to \$40 000), and Orica providing \$150 000.

More information about the Australian Government’s education initiatives and a list of the 185 schools participating in STELR can be found at

www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/Pages/ScienceTechnologyMathematics.aspx

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