MEDIA RELEASE

Students learn by making video games

1 November 2014: Winning games in the inaugural Australian STEM Video Game Challenge, announced at 10.30am, Saturday 1 November, at PAX in Melbourne, show that students learn from creating games, as much as from playing[1] them.

Coordinated by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and supported by PwC and government, universities, corporate partners and game developers, the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge aims to increase interest and participation in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines by inviting school students to create an original educational video game.

The challenge addresses the growing disengagement[2] of students from STEM learning – particularly girls and those from disadvantaged backgrounds – at a time when the STEM disciplines are among the most critical for success in the 21st-century workforce.

More than 550 students from across Australia registered for the 2014 Australian STEM Video Game Challenge, a quarter of them girls.

ACER Foundation Director Deirdre Jackson said the aim is to encourage students to engage with STEM by creating, rather than simply playing, video games.

"The impressive and challenging gaming experiences designed and developed by our winners today show that students can be much more than consumers of video games," Ms Jackson said. "The Australian STEM Video Game Challenge provides students with a real-world opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge in STEM, programming and game making to create games that are interactive, stimulating and meaningful."

Winners in the 2014 Australian STEM Video Game Challenge will be announced at an award ceremony hosted by Tripod's Scott Edgar following a panel discussion on video games in education with British-based Siobhan Reddy from Media Molecule, Dr Jeffrey Brand from Bond University and education technologist Bronwyn Stuckey at 10.30am, Saturday 1 November, at PAX at the Dropbear Theatre, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

A selection of winning games will be playable at the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge stand in the PAX expo hall. PAX, one of the largest video gaming events in the world, runs from 31 October to 2 November.

Winners in the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge

Years 5 to 8 individual – Matthew Crawford, Wynn Vale Primary School, Adelaide, for *Angle Rebound*

Years 5 to 8 group – Daniel Thomas, Kye Opie, Triyan Jha and Jeremy Pearson-Lemme, Hale School, Perth, for *Physics Run*

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[1] According to the *Interactive Australia 2007* report by Jeffrey Brand for the Interactive Entertainment Association of Australia, 73 per cent of parents in game households say game play helps their children learn about technology, 68 per cent say game play helps them to learn maths and 64 per cent say game play helps them learn how to plan.

[2] See, for example, Anlezark, A., Lim, P., Semo, R. & Nguyen, N. (2008). From STEM to leaf: where are Australia's science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) students heading? available at http://trove.nla.gov.au, and Rowan-Kenyon, H., Swan, A. & Creager, M. (2012). Social cognitive factors, support and engagement: Early adolescents' math interests as precursors to choice of career. The Career Development Quarterly. 60(1): 2-15.

Years 9 to 12 individual – Mark Signorelli, Immanuel College, Adelaide, for *Cubes and Dimensions*

Years 9 to 12 group – Tessa Donaldson and Rhys Donaldson, All Souls St Gabriels School, Charters Towers, for *Evolution Maze*

Years 9 to 12 individual advanced – Jack Shayne, Bentley Park College, Cairns, for *Jack's Bricks*

Years 9 to 12 group advanced – Liam McLachlan and Josh Caratelli, Elwood College, Melbourne, for *Smog Game*

PwC People's Choice contenders – Jack Shayne, Bentley Park College, Cairns; Liam McLachlan and Josh Caratelli, Elwood College, Melbourne; Brandon Schulte, Mundubbera State School, Mundubbera QLD; and John Dillon, AB Paterson College, Gold Coast.

The winning students, and Dr Jeffrey Brand and Bronwyn Stuckey, will be available for interview after the award ceremony.

Watch or download winning entries:

Angle Rebound; *Physics Run*; *Cubes and Dimensions*; *Evolution Maze*; *Jack's Bricks*; *Smog Game*.

Download all winning entries.

Registrations for the 2015 Australian STEM Video Game Challenge open in April 2015. For more information, visit < www.stemgames.org.au >

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