

MEDIA RELEASE

Australian STEM Video Game Challenge

30 May 2014: The inaugural Australian STEM Video Game Challenge opens for registrations on 1 June. The Challenge invites school students to design, build and submit an original educational video game.

The science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines are among the most critical for success in the 21st-century workforce. Given that these disciplines are increasingly digital, networked and rapidly changing, but also that Australian students are becoming less engaged and falling significantly behind the rest of the world in terms of STEM learning, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) through the ACER Foundation has inaugurated the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge to increase interest and participation by all students across the nation.

Victorian Minister for Innovation Louise Asher welcomed the initiative, saying “Australia’s Inaugural STEM Video Game Challenge is an exciting opportunity to motivate young Australians to increase their interest and participation in STEM, by tapping into their natural passion for playing and making video games.

“Developing a video game involves creativity, innovation and collaboration, and can introduce students to the idea of a future career, using their skills in this global industry worth more than \$70 billion,” Ms Asher said.

Ron Curry, Interactive Games and Entertainment Association (IGEA) Chief Executive and a member of the ACER Foundation reference group for the Challenge, said the IGEA and its members were excited by the opportunities the STEM Video Game Challenge present to students. “Instead of being passive users of video games, the Challenge offers students the chance to engage and create, and to experience learning in a way that is interactive, stimulating and meaningful.”

Leon Sterling, Pro Vice Chancellor (Digital Frontiers) at Swinburne University and also a member of the reference group, said industry and universities were looking for creative ways to encourage students to engage in STEM courses. “We believe that the STEM Video Game Challenge has great potential, and follows success from a similar competition in the United States,” he said.

The Australian STEM Video Game Challenge is open to students in Years 5 to 8 and 9 to 12, but particularly girls and students from low socioeconomic areas who are typically underrepresented in STEM fields. Students can register and find a wealth of resources for, including tutorials and how-to videos, along with multimedia and written instructions from the producers of game development software, at www.stemgames.org.au

Further materials for media about the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge are available at www.acer.edu.au/stem-media

Ron Curry, Leon Sterling and Grantly Mailes (Victorian Chief Technology Advocate) are available for comment on Monday 2 June. To schedule an interview or for further enquiries, contact ACER Corporate Communications Manager, Steve Holden.

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