

MEDIA RELEASE

13th September 2018

Industry helping students solve problems of the future

On Monday, Years 8 mentors from Crookwell High School visited Year 5 students at Crookwell Public School to assist the students with their Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths (STEM) projects, as part of the STEM Industry School Partnership Program funded by the NSW Department of Education. Also joining in on the day were two industry representatives from Gullen Range Wind and Solar Farm, Isabel Nelson and Simon Zhao, and Project Officer at Regional Development Australia Southern Inland (RDASI), Camilla Staff.

Until the end of the year, RDASI will work closely with Crookwell High School, its feeder schools and the renewable energy sector to pilot a program that provides students with age appropriate STEM skills and pathways to STEM jobs.

Students are currently working in groups of 3-4 on projects that seek to solve a problem identified in the agriculture sector. To assist students with their projects, industry representatives from local wind farms will visit the classroom on a regular basis, as well as host students on site.

Monday's visit was the first industry visit organised as part of SISP, with the purpose for Gullen Range Wind Farm representatives to assist and support students in their STEM projects. Projects that the Year 5 students are working on are based around agricultural problems, that many of them have witnessed on their family farms.

STEM Teacher at Crookwell High School, Rebecca Dark, expressed her excitement at some of the innovative ideas the students are coming up with, including automated feeding, automatic gates and a robotic tussock weed sprayer.

"Their project ideas focus on saving time and money by automating agricultural based tasks. It was also encouraging to see Year 8 students mentoring the primary students. They are all really engaged with the project, and are developing their future focused skills."

Isabel Nelson from Gullen Range Wind Farm, who has a background in biological science, and Simon Zhao, an engineer, were excited to be able to assist the students and offer practical advice.

"It was great to use our industry experience to help the students brainstorm ideas for solving real-world agricultural problems. We enjoyed seeing the students' concepts evolve into very creative designs, some of which included solar panels and wind turbines", said Dr Nelson.

The students will have access to STELR solar and wind kits, robotics and drones to assist them in designing their solution.

Various other industry visits are currently being organized with the local primary schools and Crookwell High School, as well as excursions out to the wind farms, including the newly finished Crookwell 2 Wind Farm.

