

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **BHP BILLITON FOUNDATION PLEDGES A\$28.8 MILLION TO CSIRO STEM PROJECT FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS**

BHP Billiton Chief Executive Officer, Mr Andrew Mackenzie, today helped launch a new A\$28.8 million CSIRO education program aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The program, funded through the BHP Billiton Foundation, aims to increase interest and achievement amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Mr Mackenzie launched the program in Canberra, accompanied by the Minister for Industry, Hon Ian Macfarlane MP and the Chief Executive of CSIRO, Dr Megan Clark.

Mr Mackenzie said the program would build on the CSIRO's 30 year track record of improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and BHP Billiton's 33 year partnership with CSIRO through its support of the Science and Engineering Awards.

"Through the BHP Billiton Foundation, BHP Billiton is delighted to partner with CSIRO in the promotion of pathways that aim to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in STEM related professions," he said.

"BHP Billiton believes that providing opportunities in STEM education is a powerful way to support the professional aspirations and career opportunities of a generation of young Aboriginal Australians.

"This latest long-term partnership commitment between CSIRO and BHP Billiton is aligned not only to the Foundation's focus on STEM education but also the company's commitment to provide tangible opportunities that support Aboriginal peoples with education, training, employment and business development.

"We hope the program encourages more Aboriginal students to consider a rewarding career in the STEM disciplines, which will go some way to further closing the gap and recognising the important contribution Aboriginal Australians make to the economy."

CSIRO designed the five-year program, with six integrated elements, building on already successful education programs. The program will use hands-on, inquiry based learning approaches and reward and recognition for student achievement.

The BHP Billiton Foundation was established by BHP Billiton as part of its community investment program.

A key focus area for the Foundation is Education: promoting improved economic

independence by supporting activities that increase graduation rates and employability of marginalised and disadvantaged groups; increased profile, interest and uptake of STEM amongst primary, secondary and tertiary students; and the application and deployment of new science and engineering technologies.

Further information on BHP Billiton can be found at: [www.bhpbilliton.com](http://www.bhpbilliton.com).

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