

> Siemens and Cadel Evans saddle up for school STEM contest

Sep 09, 2015

Siemens Australia and champion cyclist Cadel Evans have hailed the success of nation-wide video competition challenging secondary school students to employ the skills needed to ensure Australia's future.

Over 100 entries were received in the Siemens FutuRide competition from schools across the nation, with the winning schools set to take home four FutuRide power generating bikes each, as part of the more than \$100,000 in prizes on offer.

The overall winner was Methodist Ladies College in Western Australia with their entry 'Tap into the Future'. They will receive a visit from 2011 Tour De France winner, Cadel Evans, along with the FutuRide power generating bikes.



To win, students were asked to create a short video that answered the question - "what kind of future will you power?"

Cadel said he hoped the contest had inspired teachers and students to engage in STEM subjects.

"I want Australian kids to have as much passion for science, technology, engineering and math as what they have for sport.

"Australia has shown the world time and time again that in sport we punch above our weight. It's time to do this in skills and knowledge as well," said Cadel.

The competition was backed by leading technology bodies the Australian Advanced Manufacturing Council (AAMC), Engineers Australia and National Science Week.

John Pollaers, AAMC Chairman and head of the Federal Government Industry and Skills Committee welcomed the Siemens initiative.

"There is a growing need to raise our STEM skills in Australia - across the board," Mr Pollaers said. "This requires a new way of thinking. When kids think of these subjects they don't have enough industry context, such as what jobs will it lead to? Why should they care?"

"Siemens' idea of bringing to life the significant technological advances occurring in the world through this practical schools engagement program is to be highly commended. The shift to a more globalised world, combined with disruptive emerging technologies - the far-reaching impacts of the cyber world meeting the physical world - pose enormous global opportunities.

"The world is moving fast, adopting new technologies and creating new industries. Australia's enduring prosperity depends in large part on the next generation's skill in adapting to these new challenges," Mr Pollaers said. "We need to make sure they are fully equipped."

Siemens CEO Jeff Connolly said the concept of the competition came from the idea that teachers were continually looking for new ways to provide experiential learning opportunities.

"These electricity generating bikes help stimulate the student's imagination. It helps demonstrate what they're learning can be put into practice.

"While kids are steadily dropping away from STEM subjects because they don't consider them exciting, the irony is these same kids are naturally embedded into the applications of these subjects in their everyday lives. They just don't make the connection between the two.

"How many times do adults rely on our teenage kids to teach us how to use the smart phone, how to download an app, record a program on Foxtel or remove a virus from the home computer?", Connolly said.

"The most powerful tool required for Australia to participate in the exciting global supply chain, the big global projects, is actually the human brain - and that's where Australia can excel and can show the world that we are an important participant in the future," Connolly said.

Engineers Australia CEO Stephen Durkin said the need to stimulate interest in STEM subjects was vital for Australia.

"Now is the time we need to influence future generations of Australian school children to plan for a career that transforms our country to a high-tech, high-value economy."

"We need events like this to raise the awareness for students to understand 'why' they are doing what they're doing. I believe that if students can make the connection between the subjects they study and the skills needed in industry for the jobs they want then they're far more likely to want to take up STEM subjects. "We all know that it's one thing to tell someone something but it's another to show them something and then ultimately to get them to experience something. The bikes are one way we can assist this to happen by providing an experience where students can use their imaginations to do something electrifying," he said.

About the FutuRide competition

Siemens will supply over 70 FutuRide power generating bikes valued at more than \$100,000 to schools across Australia. Each winning school will receive four bikes, allowing teachers to demonstrate the use of energy in a real-life practical application. Teachers will also have access to interactive learning tools, which promote STEM in a fun and innovative way.

The overall winner was Methodist Ladies College in Western Australia with their entry 'Tap into the Future'. In addition to the power generating bikes, they will also receive a visit from 2011 Tour De France winner, Cadel Evans.

The contest ran from June 23 to August 7 with winners announced during National Science Week.

The full list of winners can be found here: www.futuride.com.au

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