

WORLD SCIENCE FESTIVAL BRISBANE

MEDIA RELEASE

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Queenslanders break records at World Science Festival Brisbane

Records were smashed at the World Science Festival Brisbane, with massive crowds entertained by performances, lectures, debates, demonstrations, displays and hands-on activities during eleven days of science-filled fun across five Queensland locations.

Almost 180,000 people flocked to Brisbane's South Bank to hear from top scientists, innovators and thinkers who showcased the latest science breakthroughs that are changing our understanding of the world.

Professor Suzanne Miller, CEO and Director of the Queensland Museum Network and the driving force behind the World Science Festival Brisbane, said this year's success surpassed all expectations.

"We ramped up the number of events on offer, we added two additional regional programs to the festival calendar, and we supercharged our *Street Science!* program," Professor Miller said

"The Queensland Museum's *Let's Talk* speaker series saw hundreds of people learn more about the conservation of turtles, coral and crocodiles, and about the techniques our curators use to preserve specimens in our collection.

"A record-breaking 90,000 people roamed the museum over five days, interacting with experts who were performing live taxidermy and getting up close and personal with some of Brisbane's resident spiders," she said.

Professor Miller said more than 8,000 people visited the purpose built Hatchery at Queensland Museum, seeing turtles emerge from their eggs, loggerhead hatchlings swimming in tanks and experiencing close encounters of the jelly fish kind.

"*Street Science!* was another stand-out success, enticing more than 60,000 visitors to brave the heat and try their hands coding robots, daytime star gazing, bouncy ball making, firing carbon dioxide rockets and enjoying free explosive shows and demonstrations."

More than 7,000 regional Queenslanders learned more about the scientific breakthroughs shaping the agriculture industry, Australian palaeontology discoveries, the taxonomy of local spider species and the hidden world of minerals at the Festival's regional programs in Gladstone, Toowoomba and Chinchilla.

The Festival Lab again hosted thousands of science enthusiasts who enjoyed the quirky and fun side of science with *Science Gets Social* and the *Brain Food Breakfast* series, using maths and science to save the earth and unravel some of the mysteries of the brain.

“With science critical to our future, it is vital that we engage young people, encouraging them to develop enthusiasm and appreciation for science, and recognise the incredible career opportunities science, technology, engineering and maths can offer,” Professor Miller said.

Theoretical physicist and World Science Festival co-founder, Professor Brian Greene, said he was impressed by the quality of the Brisbane festival and the incredible support from Australian audiences.

“This year has proved to be another great success — inspiring visitors to think more about the science in all aspects of our lives, from managing our natural resources, to examining the future of astronomy or celebrating the synergies between art and science.

“I watched proudly as leading scientists, researchers, philosophers, artists, authors and inventors engaged people with their scientific research, and encouraged them to question our place in the universe and recognise the vital role of science in addressing critical global challenges.”

World Science Festival Brisbane guest curator and Provost of The University of Queensland, Professor Aidan Byrne, said the second annual festival, generously supported by the Queensland Government and 34 partners, featured events and activities from Brisbane, west to Toowoomba and Chinchilla and north to Gladstone.

“This unique and educational event was again the perfect platform to highlight the enormous impact of science, and the thought leaders whose work will take us into the future,” Professor Byrne said.

“I offer my sincere thanks to everyone involved in the delivery of World Science Festival Brisbane, who helped us bring science out of the labs and into the streets where it could be appreciated by all.”

Queensland Museum has exclusive rights to present the annual festival in the Asia-Pacific region until 2021. The World Science Festival Brisbane will return to our shores from 21 – 25 March 2018.

Lord Mayor Graham Quirk said the World Science Festival Brisbane had once again demonstrated that as Australia’s New World City, Brisbane was the perfect destination to showcase science and innovation to the world.

“Brisbane is home to leading research and innovation institutions and has a strong reputation for delivering ground-breaking technology, some of which was highlighted at the festival,” Cr Quirk said.

“Council is proud to support this outstanding event, which further cements our presence on the world stage as a leading science and technology hub.

“The World Science Festival Brisbane attracts thousands of visitors to the city and demonstrates the importance and wonder of science to the young and the young at heart.”

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