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Media Release:

Upper Hunter students enjoying SMART science shows

The University of Newcastle's inspirational SMART (Science, Maths and Real Technology) program is touring Upper Hunter schools this month, delivering fun and interactive SMART Science Shows, thanks to its long-term partners, Yancoal Australia's Mount Thorley Warkworth and Ashton Coal mine operations.

The show's theme this year is "The Science of Space". The students are exploring engineering, science and maths with interactive sessions involving a:

- Plasma globe - finding out what stars are made of and seeing plasma switch on a light bulb;
- Thermal camera - discovering the unseen waves of energy emitted from our bodies; and
- Outer Space Volcano - watching an explosive chemical reaction (like Elephant's Toothpaste).

Over 400 local budding scientists from Denman Public School, Muswellbrook South Public School, Murrurundi Public School and Mount Pleasant Public School are having a fantastic time at the highly interactive and engaging shows.

The science shows are designed to captivate and educate primary school students, blending excitement with education in a way that resonates with young learners. Each show aims to be visually stimulating and interactive, incorporating live demonstrations, audience participation, and captivating explanations that make complex scientific concepts accessible and memorable.

The SMART team's approach is aligned with the K-6 Science and Technology syllabus (NSW), ensuring that its content not only entertains but also complements the curriculum.

Megan Walker, SMART Program Team Leader, University of Newcastle recognises that the passion for STEM starts at an early age.

"We want to make science accessible, fun, and relevant so the SMART program continues to play a pivotal role in nurturing the next generation of scientists, engineers, and innovators.

"Our partnership with Yancoal enables us to connect with Upper Hunter schools, offering them the opportunity to take part in activities like our SMART Shows and the Science and Engineering Challenge.

"We are committed to delivering high-quality, interactive science education that gives students the opportunity to explore, understand, and fall in love with the wonders of science," said Megan.

SMART is one of the longest running outreach programs delivered by the University of Newcastle's College of Engineering, Science and Environment, alongside the Science and Engineering Challenge. SMART offers a variety of programs aimed at inspiring students to explore future careers in science and engineering.

Mount Thorley Warkworth General Manager Cris Shadbolt was proud to help fund this incredible program for another year.

"The SMART science shows provide primary school students in our region a fantastic opportunity to get involved in science, mathematics, and real technology related activities in a meaningful and hands on way.

"Getting students excited about STEM at a young age, can help open their minds to a career in mining and engineering.

"The shows were well received, and we are looking forward to helping it reach more Upper Hunter schools next year," said Cris.

For more information, please visit: www.newcastle.edu.au/smart

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