



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local students excited by science and engineering

29 July 2026 - The University of Newcastle's award-winning annual National Science and Engineering Challenge is running this week in Muswellbrook (28 – 30 July).

The event features two Primary School Discovery Days and one High School Day, thanks to a partnership with Yancoal Australia.

The National Science and Engineering Challenge event days target High School students in years 9 and 10 and has proven to have an impact on increasing the participation rates in the enabling sciences and mathematics. Discovery Days target years 5 and 6 Primary School students.

Over the three days, the program provides a fun, hands-on STEM competition, educating over 750 students from schools across the region.

The Year 5 and 6 students experience active challenges, a science show, and strong guidance from high school mentors. The Year 9 and 10 students compete against other schools in activities such as building bionic hands, bridges, or designing first nations fish traps.

Yancoal's Mount Thorley Warkworth and Ashton Coal Mine are joint sponsors of the University's National Science and Engineering Challenge, a proud partnership that has been in place since 2002. Yancoal Australia is the longest serving sponsor of the National Science and Engineering Challenge.

Mount Thorley Warkworth General Manager Cris Shadbolt acknowledged the positive impact the challenge has on Upper Hunter students.

"As a miner, we recognise the need for a strong STEM education and this program does an excellent job at inspiring and educating the next generation of mining innovators into our industry.

"The challenge encourages students to collaborate and solve real-world challenges, making science and engineering fun," said Cris.

The Rotary Club of Muswellbrook has been integral to the success of the event as the main body responsible for the organisation of the event. The partnership between Rotary, Yancoal Australia and the University of Newcastle has been the key to the longevity of the event in the Upper Hunter.

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