

## **GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL STEM AWARDS**

*Statement by Minister for Science*

**MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Science)** [2.03 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I stand today to highlight the 2017 Governor's School STEM Awards and the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics education.

Yesterday afternoon, I attended the 2017 Governor's School STEM Awards presentation ceremony at Government House. The awards were established in 2015 and recognise Western Australian schools that demonstrate excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics leadership and teaching. The initiative is supported by Her Excellency the Governor Kerry Sanderson, AC, and is delivered by the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation. A committee comprising STEM education professionals supports the delivery of the initiative, as do the eminent judges who volunteer their time to assist the program.

I would like to congratulate this year's award recipients, which were announced yesterday. Penrhos College won both the primary and secondary school categories and received the leadership excellence award. Brookman Primary School was the primary school runner-up and recipient of a meritorious leadership award, and Warwick Senior High School was the secondary school runner-up and recipient of a meritorious leadership award. The award recipients beat a strong field of finalists, all of which demonstrated great achievements in STEM education at their schools. I congratulate the five schools that were finalists in the award, with a special mention to Hampton Senior High School, which is in my electorate.

STEM skills are vital to the future of work, which is changing rapidly due to automation and globalisation. We know that 75 per cent of the fastest-growing occupations require STEM skills, including problem solving and critical thinking, and STEM skills will play an important role across all occupations. Statistics show that Western Australian students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to be enrolled in STEM subjects. Participation in STEM subjects should not be determined by your postcode. It should also not be determined by your gender. Only six per cent of year 12 girls in Australia study physics or advanced mathematics, and only 16 per cent of STEM-qualified people in Australia are female. I have asked the STEM Advisory Panel, chaired by WA's Chief Scientist, Peter Klinken, to consider these issues in developing the state STEM strategy. The strategy will build the state's STEM skills to meet the needs of Western Australia's future workforce to capitalise on the emerging innovation economy. The Governor's School STEM Awards and many other programs across the state contribute to enhancing STEM participation, and I congratulate all those involved.