

STEM 4 IN MILDURA

On October 10 - 11, eighteen Year 9 students from St Joseph's College Mildura attended the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) 4 Sunraysia program at SuniTAFE. The two days consisted of an industry site visit followed by a problem solving task with students from other schools in Sunraysia including Irymple Secondary College, Merbein P-10, Chaffey Secondary College, Trinity Lutheran College and Red Cliffs Secondary College.

Our first day consisted of us splitting into six groups mixed with students from each school. Each group was given an industry to visit and learn about. Industries included Zilzie Wines, Mildura Private Hospital, Hauslers, ALTA, SuniTAFE Smart Farm and GTS Freight. Each group visited their designated industry to learn about how they work in relation to STEM and at the end of the visit, a problem was given to each group in reference to their companies. At the end of the first day, we watched an amazing presentation from a former St Joseph's College student Sean M Elliott. He discussed how his career changed and how his new job as a science presenter is what he always dreamed of. At the end of his presentation he demonstrated his Tesla coil and how it can create music via electricity striking the air.

With the new information we had learnt, we approached the next day eager to solve our new problems. Each group was assigned a room, where we came together with the help of other staff, to create an idea that would solve our problem and benefit our chosen industry. We were able to efficiently work in teams and eventually developed our ideas, which would later be presented in front of all the attendees. Each group began to practise their presentations, as the most well organized and applicable pitch was judged and awarded towards the end of the day. When all groups were ready to give their presentations they made their way down to the auditorium. Once each of the groups had finished their pitch, it was decided by the judges that the winning group was Mildura Private Hospital, and each group member received a prize, which was a small robot.

The experience was a great insight into STEM and how STEM applies to a wide range of different industries and businesses. The two days were not without challenges, but working within a diverse team taught us how we could share and collaborate our ideas to solve the problem. Overall, the STEM 4 Sunraysia was an interesting and fun experience for all and we would definitely encourage the Year 9s next year to participate. We would all like to thank the teachers that went with us and supported us with ideas as well as SuniTAFE for hosting the event.

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