Record number of schools to compete in statewide challenge

A record number of schools from across the state are gearing up for this year’s Tasmanian Science and Engineering Challenge.

Kicking off in Hobart tomorrow, the annual competition has received 52 entries throughout Tasmania, heralding it the biggest challenge to date.

“We have had to add a second heat in Burnie due to unprecedented demand from the region,” Tasmanian State Coordinator Susie Haley said.

The Science and Engineering Challenge is a nationwide outreach program aimed at changing students’ perceptions of science and engineering.

“Through the challenge students from grades nine and 10 experience aspects of these disciplines which they would not usually see in their school environment,” Mrs Haley said.

The series will be held this year in:

- **Hobart**: Wednesday, 29 March - Friday 31 March. University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay campus, Activities Centre (24 schools competing)
- **Launceston**: Monday 3 April - Tuesday 4 April, University’s Newnham Campus (15 schools competing)
- **Burnie**: Thursday 6 April - Friday 7 April, Marist Regional College (14 schools competing).

“Students will have to be innovative and creative as well as being focused on their own tasks,” Mrs Haley said.

“The hands-on, competitive nature of the challenge provides an experience that cannot be easily duplicated in the classroom.

“By participating in the challenge, students see that science and engineering involves creativity, innovation, problem solving and team work.
“The event continues to get better each year, with some new challenges set for the students this year.”

The challenge is designed to address the skills shortage in science and engineering by inspiring young people to study mathematics, physics and chemistry (the enabling sciences) in years 11 and 12.

The top eight teams will compete in the state final in April.

“This year, more than 2,000 hours will be given by volunteers to ensure the challenge is a success,” Mrs Haley said.

“There are more than 25 volunteers assisting on each day of the competition.”

The Tasmanian Science and Engineering Challenge is supported by the University of Tasmania, Rotary Clubs of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government, and presented by The University of Newcastle.

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