

Case Study: Education/Indigenous Cultures

Aboriginal Education Program

Scitech, Perth

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Culturally appropriate science education for Indigenous communities in remote areas



Scitech visits the Wanarn Ngaanyatjarra School. Photo: Scitech.

Scitech's Aboriginal Education Program (AEP) has been internationally recognised at the **Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) awards** in Columbus, Ohio for its unique education delivery to students and teachers. The Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Awards are presented annually to ASTC members in recognition of exceptional programs that not only enhance the performance of the institutions, but also significantly advance the mission of science-technology centres and museums.

Scitech's AEP beat 12 other international entries to win the **Leading Edge Award for Visitor Experience** (large centre) in recognition of its delivery of science outreach to the most remote communities of Western Australia. Scitech developed the AEP as there was a clear need for more culturally-relevant science programs, but a lack of resources was preventing them from serving the specific needs of the remote Indigenous Aboriginal communities. Since its inception in 2007, the AEP has addressed these challenges of access and equity by visiting every remote community every two years with a comprehensive suite of engaging science activities and

resources for children, parents, and teachers that recognise the communities' unique Aboriginal culture and language.

The AEP was also the focus of a recent study by Edith Cowan University which concluded that the program is having a positive impact on addressing the educational needs of young indigenous students. The research has not only highlighted the value of the AEP in engaging indigenous students and their teachers in science, but has also encouraged indigenous students to use science as a way of thinking to build success in their future lives. The AEP is supported by the WA Government, BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto and Woodside.

A short video about the program can be seen at Scitech's youtube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1CXjFE4NII&feature=youtu.be>