

# ConocoPhillips Science Experience empowers Northern Territory students

TEXT: Sophie Port  
IMAGE: Kate Freestone



*Sophie Port- Onsite Reporter for the 2016 CDU ConocoPhillips Science Experience*

The three-day ConocoPhillips Science Experience takes place every year at Charles Darwin University (CDU) and gives secondary students a taste of the many scientific career pathways that CDU has to offer. With the support of the National sponsor ConocoPhillips and other local sponsors, the event enables 100 students from across the Top End to travel to the Casuarina Campus to partake in the science experience.

The students toured the campus visiting the many different science departments to complete a diverse range of activities related to each one. In medical science they closely studied the human ear, for environmental science, students searched for life in the simplest environments, such as leaf litter and pond water. Pharmacy offered a unique activity where students were required to follow the prescription order and pack prescribed medication using skittles. The students also fed barramundi at aquaculture, did an oil spill challenge in engineering and performed a computerized surgery in Flinders medical Centre. Students were also lucky enough to travel to the LNG Plant which is something that only people such as the Prime Minister, ConocoPhillips workers and dignitaries can experience. It is an activity that is beneficial for students who are interested in pursuing a career in mining. This broad range of learning activities gave the students an opportunity to explore their passions and find what interests them.

National Director Jacque Bellars stated that the event hosted by CDU could potentially influence the students to change their educational pathway or help them discover their passions.

*'This experience will hopefully plant the seed for their future'*

"As young Territorians, this experience will hopefully plant the seed for their future and ignite the flame inside of them allowing them to see what career pathway they might want to take after finishing high school," Ms. Bellars said.

For some students, they have no knowledge about the functionality of a university, what they want to do after high school and what career pathway they want to take. It can place a lot of pressure on the students, leaving them unmotivated to study. This event aims to broaden their horizons and initiate the desire to learn. Not only does the experience educate students but it empowers them. For some, it may completely change their attitude towards learning and education, putting them on the pathway to success. In my opinion it gets students enthusiastic as well as interested in the topic which initiates a desire to study something that fascinates them.

Having a change of attitude and perspective about the diverse opportunities given to students is so important because it can excite and motivate them to achieve their dreams. The secondary students are at the age where they need to start choosing classes related to their chosen career opportunity. This event sheds some light on what classes they need to take which hugely benefits their learning. The time is now for students to find their passions and ambitions.

Being my first time attending this event, I did not really know what to expect or what I would witness. It is evident that Charles Darwin University wants to promote the diverse career opportunities for the future scientists of our generation. They have expressed and presented that studying through their university is fulfilling for all young territory students and there are plenty of employment opportunities. CDU wants to inspire and educate students while still have time to make the educational changes necessary. •



*Students enjoying the Aquaculture activity at the ConocoPhillips Science Experience*