



Science, Technology and Education News from Australia, March 2018

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1. Science and Technology Developments

What mining means to Australians: a national survey

Mining in Australia is not only a significant contributor to Australia's economy, it is also the biggest export earner today. A national survey conducted by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) of 8,020 citizens reveals interesting insights into what mining means to Australians. The survey covers the perceived benefits and negative impacts of the industry, as well as views on fairness, confidence in governance and trust. The results aim to add a new perspective to conversations about how mining takes place in Australia.

Click [here](#) for the article and [here](#) for the full report.

Renewable energy out-generated brown coal and gas over summer

Renewable energy produced more electricity than brown coal over the summer for the first time, as well as out-generating gas turbines for a third year running, new analysis shows. Power produced from wind, hydro, solar and biofuels totalled 9880 gigawatt hours (a gigawatt hour is 1000 megawatt hours) over the summer, 8 per cent greater than the output from brown coal power stations and 40 per cent greater than gas generation, Green Energy Markets' February *Renewable Energy Index* says.

Click [here](#) to read the article.



Look, no lithium! First rechargeable proton battery created

Scientists have created the world's first rechargeable proton battery, a crucial step towards cheaper and more environmentally-friendly energy storage. While the battery is just a small-scale prototype, it has the potential to be competitive with currently available lithium-ion batteries. The rechargeable battery, created by researchers at RMIT University in Melbourne, uses carbon and water instead of lithium. The lead researcher Professor John Andrews said that as the world moved towards renewables, there would be a significant need for storage technologies that relied on cheap and abundant materials.

Click [here](#) to read the full article.

2. Education and Science Policy

Switzerland @ the World Science Festival Brisbane 2018

Brisbane hosted from 21 to 25 March the World Science Festival Brisbane 2018, an annual event for the general public to be inspired by and engage with science. Brisbane is the only city in the Asia Pacific region to host the World Science Festival as part of an exclusive agreement until 2021 between Queensland Museum and the World Science Festival New York. For the first time since the festival's inception in Brisbane in 2016, Switzerland was represented in the official programme with the participation of Mrs Muriel Richard who heads the CleanSpace One project at the Space Engineering Center (eSpace) of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL). Richard took part to panels on space junk and the future of space exploration, during which she could highlight EPFL's engagement to address the space debris challenge and raise awareness on that particular issue. Her presence in Australia was also an opportunity for the Swiss Embassy to stimulate scientific cooperation between EPFL and Australian institutions with the facilitation of side visits and meetings in Canberra and Brisbane.

Click [here](#) for more information on EPFL's CleanSpace One project and [here](#) for more information about the World Science Festival Brisbane.

Apprenticeships continue their downward slide

There's been another steep fall in the number of people doing apprenticeships - although the government claims there are positive signs in the details. At the end of September, there were 291,925 apprentices in training, 5.6 per cent fewer than at the same time in 2016. Trade apprenticeship commencements were down by 3.2 per cent year on year and non-trade commencements down by 5.2 per cent.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

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