

Our Community

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LEVITATE: Associate Professor Andrew Greentree demonstrated levitation during his display to students at Port Lincoln High School.



PRESENTATION: Dr Arun Dass spoke to students about why he became a scientist.



BLOW UP: Student Nick Williams assisted Associate Professor Andrew Greentree during one of the demonstrations.

Scientists learn, share

RESEARCHERS from the new Centre of Excellence for Nanoscale Biophotonics visited Port Lincoln last week for their annual retreat and to share some knowledge with local students.

Following the launch of the new centre at the University of Adelaide, 85 members and their international partners met in Port Lincoln for a retreat and conference.

International guests included researchers from China, UK, USA and Canada.

The centre's chief operating officer Dr Cathy Nicholson, who is originally from Port Lincoln, said the conference provided a great opportunity for researchers and centre staff to network on new projects.

"We have chemists, physicists and biologists working in the same project, and we're all learning to speak the same language," she said.

After the conference four of the centre's researchers visited Port Lincoln High School Year 8 and 9 students to talk about their fields of study and do demonstrations.

"We think science is very important in people's education," she said.

"If we can inspire two children to get into science, then we've done our job."

Dr Nicholson talked to the students about growing up in Port Lincoln, her career and the centre.

Theoretical physicist and chief investigator, Associate

Professor Andrew Greentree did a demonstration on how air works using experiments including ball levitation and a cannon which shot a ping pong ball quicker than the speed of sound.

Dr Arun Dass of Macquarie University talked to the students about cellular surface sugars and their interaction with other cells, while research associate Vicky Staikopoulos talked about some of the technology being used with nanocrystals to test if they are toxic to living organisms.

Dr Nicholson said the students asked a lot of questions.

"The students were very engaged, and asked very good questions," she said.

"They showed great promise."

Tumby Bay garden project continues to grow

THE SCION Skills Centre group in Tumby Bay is starting to put together what it believes will be a picturesque addition to the grounds.

The centre was approached to participate in a community project with a garden project being selected.

Business and finance manager Julie Fischer said the team involved got into the project with many elements coming together.

"The project has extended to wicking gardens, cement work, paving, painting, water works and tidying of the block," she said.

The centre received garden materials and plants through local businesses to put the garden together.

Some plants have already been planted in raised garden beds, but the garden is expected to get

bigger.

Four lower gardens will be planted with vegetables, including chillis, tomatoes, cucumbers, corn and beetroot, with shallots to be planted with petunias for instant colour.

Plants to be featured in the garden will include templetonias, hebes, veronicas, coprosmas and woolly bush, with the vision of succulents to be interspersed into a rockery.

A machinery meander will also be installed, with a path leading to pieces of vintage machinery and garden art, lined with seating and attractive plants.

Program facilitator Christine Charlton said the garden would become a place for people of all ages to enjoy.

"It will be a gathering place for people of all ages and we're

looking at putting in a wetland as well," she said.

"We're fortunate our area contains the possibility for a wetland where original paper barks are still flourishing."

There are plenty of other additions planned for the garden, including a small maze made up of old man salt bush and living pictures of succulents to be strategically mounted throughout the garden.

Ms Fischer said the group was looking forward to showcasing the work that had already been done sometime before Christmas.

"The pride of those working on the project has inspired us to extend this project to the new year," she said.

"It will be ongoing, only with community support."



GROWING: Christine Charlton and Julie Fischer with some of the plants already growing at the SCION Skills Centre garden in Tumby Bay.

Reception
speak

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in each Tuesday's Times

