



**Welcome to the first edition of the In2science newsletter for 2009.** It looks like being a very busy year for In2science and science in general. This year is the International Year of Astronomy which will hopefully encourage everyone to gaze at the stars. Global warming and sustainability issues are in the news on a daily basis and Science will play an important part in addressing these issues. Through placing enthusiastic and motivated young scientists and mathematicians as role models, In2science hopes to continue helping school students have a better understanding of what Science is all about. In2science also supports teacher to engage their students by providing additional classroom support and current knowledge.

We have an extremely keen bunch of university students wanting to inspire the next generation. We have trained many new Mentors ready for semester one. Training ensures the Mentors understand their role and what they can achieve in the classroom. Much of the training focuses on building a rapport with students and how to support them in their learning. Many Mentors go above and beyond expectations, organising presentations in the classes and organising visits etc. Mentors receive training packs and have access to resources to help them interact at the schools. A big thank you goes to all those past and



*Mentor training at the University of Melbourne*

current Mentors for their help during the training sessions; your help and advice was highly valued by the new Mentors to the program. These new Mentors have expressed a diverse range of outcomes they want to achieve from their upcoming placements. Here are a few examples:

*"I want to have fun and share my knowledge"*

*"Great experience for both career and life. Engaging work outside of Uni"*

*"Increase my communication skills"*

*"Satisfaction from helping others"*

*"Better communication skills and a feel for being a science teacher"*

Unfortunately not all those who applied were able to be placed in schools this semester. Once again, geographical location and the matching of timetables prevented some students being placed. Also some schools could only accommodate one or two Mentors due to teacher commitments. As a result we already have 48 Mentors waiting for semester 2 placements.

Placements officially got underway last week (though many Mentors had already started). We have over **90 Peer Mentors** placed in **40 of our 42** schools – our highest number yet. All Class Teachers have been sent information about maximising the benefits of having Mentors in their lessons. We actively encourage the teachers to look for opportunities to enhance learning in the classroom by allow the Mentors to interact in various different ways. Many teachers are looking to gain extra support for practical activities, discussions, groupwork and projects. Having a Mentor in the class is an ideal opportunity to try something new.

It is important that the students understand why the Mentor is there and that the teacher and Mentor establish lines of **communication** so they both gain from the experience.

**New schools** joining In2science this semester are:

**Eaglehawk SC, Bendigo  
Epping SC  
Greensborough SC**

**Ringwood SC  
Wantirna SC**

**Placement Dates:**

From the week of 16 March to the week of 1 June (excluding the two Easter weeks).

We welcome them all and hope that both teachers and students will benefit from having the support of Peer Mentors in science and Mathematics classes.



**Congratulations** go to **Soula Bennett** from Northcote HS who won the **BHP Billiton Science Teacher of the Year** award for 2009. Soula is Head of Middle Years at Northcote, current President of STAV, In2science Board member and Link Teacher. She is passionate in her teaching and enthusiasm for science and is a worthy winner. It is always exciting to share the successes of people associated with In2science.

Our funding partners continue to be the **Department of Education and Early Childhood Development** and the **George Alexander Foundation**. Without their generous support In2science would not be able to continue. We look forward to continuing our partnership in 2009.

**In2science evaluation** - Semester one 2009 will see the **Centre for the Study of Higher Education** conduct an external evaluation of the In2science program. Schools and Mentors may be contacted during the placements to seek their participation.

## Happenings at the end of 2008

### In2nanotech Roadshow

In November we visited northern Victoria with the Nanotechnology roadshow. Kindly funded by Nanotechnology Victoria Ltd, the roadshow completed its third year. The following schools hosted the roadshow which received excellent feedback from students and teachers alike:

**Shepparton High School, McGuire College, Numurkah Secondary College, Rochester Secondary College, Echuca College, Cohuna College and Kerang Technical High School**

Running workstations eight times a day is tiring. This coupled with all the travelling makes for a busy week. Many thanks to Mentors Dan, Rebecca, Leigh and Emma for giving up their time to participate in the roadshows.



*Students at Echuca College investigate iGlass's switchable glass*

These roadshows are a great way for **In2science** to access more regional areas of Victoria which would otherwise not have access to the mentoring program.



The In2nanotech roadshows will run in 2009 and 2010 thanks to continued funding from NanoVentures Australia. We look forward to visiting new areas of Victoria this year.

### In2science Day

Wednesday 3 December saw 60 Year 9 students and their teachers participate in the very first On-Campus event as part of the In2science program. Hosted by the **University of Melbourne**, the day offered students a range of science activities, the opportunity to engage with our Mentors and to see a Uni campus in action.



*Audience participation at the Physics show*

Students participated in a range of activities including practical classes in Genetics and Chemistry. Some students learnt more about a day in the life of a Marine Biologist while others investigated fossil identification techniques. After lunch students were entertained by the Physics Show which had many students actively involved and encouraged everyone to reflect upon the importance of physics in our everyday lives.

Given the success of this program we will run it again in 2009, to be scheduled for 2 December. We look forward to hosting another group of enthusiastic potential scientists in 2009.

Date for your diary:

**In2science Day for Y9**  
**Wednesday 2 December 2009**  
**The University of Melbourne**

**Awards for long service to In2science** – those Mentors completing three or more placements for the program receive letters of commendation for their efforts from their respective Dean. The student's achieving this during semester two '08 were:

**La Trobe University**

Vita Cottone, BSc  
Bonita Wright, Bachelor of Conservation  
Biology and Ecology  
Alisha Taylor, BSc/B Science Education

**The University of Melbourne**

Victoria Murphy, BA/BSc

**In2science prizes**

Prizes will again be available for participants in the program this semester. Here are a couple of the things on offer but more will be awarded at the end of the semester as they become available. Prizes will be drawn out of a hat or awarded based on an application (if applicable):

Prize	Donated by:
<p><b>An interactive talk</b> at the winning school about Free Radical Chemistry, biotechnology research (with examples of Centre research) and chemistry careers for Yr11 and Yr12 Chemistry students. Hopefully this may be scheduled near a practical class so that the Centre researcher can interact with students during the practical. Timing of this is flexible to fit in with school. <a href="#">School to be drawn from hat.</a></p>	<p><b>ARC Centre of Excellence for Free Radical Chemistry and Biotechnology,</b> School of Chemistry, Bio21 Molecular Science and Biotechnology Institute</p>
<p><b>Half a day placement within the Bio21 Centre laboratories</b> for four Yr 11 Chemistry students (teacher's presence optional). The students will do chemistry lab exercises with the Centre postdocs/ PhD students. Timing of this flexible in negotiation with the school (school holidays an option). <a href="#">School to be drawn from hat - Students to be selected on merit and enthusiasm by the winning school</a></p>	<p><b>ARC Centre of Excellence for Free Radical Chemistry and Biotechnology,</b> School of Chemistry, Bio21 Molecular Science and Biotechnology Institute</p>
<p><b>The Weather Makers: How Man Is Changing the Climate and What It Means for Life on Earth.</b> Signed copies by Tim Flannery 2x Mentors</p>	<p><b>In2science</b></p>
<p><b>Science motivation pencils</b> pack of 25 2x teachers</p>	<p><b>In2science</b></p>

**Information for Schools**

Many thanks for all your hard work in organising the placements. All teachers hosting a Peer Mentor should have received a letter and booklet on [maximising the benefits of having a Mentor](#) in the class. Do contact us if they have not received one. It is important that teachers read through this to gain the most from the opportunity of having a Mentor.

Teachers should have spoken to their classes about the role of the Mentor as this really helps them understand why the Mentors are there. Hopefully teachers have also shared their expectations with the Mentor and vice versa so everyone is working towards common goals.

Do contact us if there is anything you would like support with in schools, where staffing and resources allow, the universities are keen to help. The Mentors can be an excellent link between the university and the school so do talk to them if you have any ideas.

**National Science Week**  
**August 15 – 23**  
**Theme: Astronomy: Science Without Limits**

If there are any issues or concerns during the placement it is important that schools let the program coordinators know straight away so we can help resolve them. Occasionally some issues have only come to light in the evaluations which is often too late.

## Information for Mentors

For many of you this will be your first placement and we hope that, despite a few nerves at the start, you settle into your school quickly. The first few weeks are always the most difficult as you get to know the students and them you. Remember what you learnt at training and try to be as proactive in the class as you can. If you are unsure of anything then do talk to the class teacher or contact the **In2science** coordinators who are only too happy to help and offer advice.

Make sure you talk with the teacher about what you would like to accomplish from the placement so they can support you in achieving your goals. They too may have outcomes they wish to achieve and it is only by working together that these can be realised. Try to learn a few names and don't be put off by students not wanting help initially, as they get to know you they will become more receptive.

Talk to the teacher if you want to take anything in to show the students. Feel free to ask for support from **In2science** if you want to organise any visits etc. Most of all don't be frightened of pushing your 'comfort zone' and do have fun.

## In2science blog

We have a blog for Mentors to share their experiences and support each other. To be able to post on it you will need to **contact John** to get a password and ID. Have a look and we hope you use it. The focus is on sharing your experiences and seeking possible support for ideas in the classroom.

Access the blog through the Mentor's page of the **In2science** website or [go direct](#).

## Websites to try

Here are a few sites that may be of interest:

<http://undsci.berkeley.edu/>

Funded by the National Science Foundation in the USA this site has a great section called '*Understanding science 101*' which may give you some ideas about how science works – a great site to browse around.

<http://www.thenakedscientists.com/> \

A range of podcasts and presentations on a wide range of aspects of science based upon a BBC radio show.

<http://www.schoolscience.co.uk>

This is a great site in the UK with lots of resources for both teachers and students on a diverse range of science areas. Check out the '*kit pot*' for freebies.

<http://www.microbiologyonline.org.uk/>

useful for those teaching about microbes, health and disease

**John McDonald**  
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