

2023 Year in Review



Year in Review Session - Questions and Answers

1. What is your very favourite activity this year? And Why? (Sent in by Susi and Jade)

Corey:

[Answer from Video]

Scott (Chief Operating Officer)

Chance to get to Kalkaringi School (8 hours south of Darwin) to spend 3 days there working with the students as part of our Science Week activities.

Tom (Head of Programs)

Opportunity to work with the students at Induna (The school for the student at Acmena Juvenile Justice Centre in Grafton) to create a science experiment that we can share with other students in juvenile justice centres across Australia. And the impact is making - we have had one young person who has not participated in school while at Acmena (never come to classes as it's not compulsory), and has turned up to be part of the work we are doing.

Mel (Head of Marketing and Operations):

Deadly Junior Scientists awards is always a favourite of mine. I love reading about all the amazing STEM experiences and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners in classrooms across Australia. It is important to celebrate their passion and purpose today so they continue to be inspired and engaged and become the deadly scientists of tomorrow.

2. What is your biggest learning experience/mistake of 2023 (Sent in by Annie)

Corey:

[Answer from Video]

Scott (Chief Operating Officer)

Need to back ourselves more and take a few more risks. We have delayed the start of a few programs till we have got 100% of the funding in place; in 2024 like to start programs when we have the majority of funding in place and back ourselves to find the rest of the funding.

Tom (Head of Programs):

Literacy and accessibility are the biggest issues that we encountered this year. Accessibility into communities both with personnel but also resources. This is due to events like fires and floods, but also accessibility of getting resources into the community. For example, the weight of parcels is sometimes too big to fit on mail planes.

Generally, education and engagement programs come with worksheets that students are asked to complete during in-class exercises. The level of literacy and STEM literacy amongst students we work with has made

some activities involving worksheets more difficult. Therefore, we have had to look at alternative ways to have students record the outcomes of their activities.

Mel (Head of Marketing and Operations):

This year we commenced planning for events and known program milestones much better than we have previously. These days, with so many competing priorities and many wonderful opportunities it is more important than ever to plan, prepare, deliver, execute and review. Then immediately set in motion improvements for the next event, opportunity, etc. Documenting processes which work and keeping notes of those tried in the past are one of the most important tools for us as a decentralised (remote working) team.

3. How is the School of the Month Program going? (Sent in by Carrie)

The School of the Month program expanded in 2023. We received some additional funding this year which enabled us to expand the number of monthly awards. And the size of the award increased to a \$1,000 voucher from our friends at Modern Teaching Aids and additional resources supplied by Questacon.

Schools were able to replace current STEM equipment and/ or buy new resources to assist in their teaching efforts. The feedback we have received from the Schools who have won the awards has been great. It has really given the students a lift.

As a result of this impact, we are looking to expand the Program further in 2024 to enable us to encourage more teachers and students on their STEM journey.

4. What partnership opportunities are coming up in WA in 2024? (Sent in by Imogen)

We have worked with a large number of schools in WA in 2023, particularly via our DeadlyLearners and our Resources program.

Like all states, we are planning to ramp up our interactions with WA students and their schools in 2024.

We have some WA based organisations who are looking to partner with us, but are always willing to talk to any organisations about partnering with us. We can work with organisations who want to fund Australia wide initiatives, and also those who wish their funding to be focused on WA based initiatives.

If you would like to be involved, please contact us at partnerships@deadlyscience.org.au

5. What does success look like in 2024? (Sent in by Emma)

We talked a little bit about what success looks like in 2024 in the presentation but specifically:

- Working with more schools - our next target is to work with 1,000 schools.
- And at the same time develop deeper relationships with these schools. We want to have schools request multiple DeadlyLearner sessions, we want to get out to more schools face to face with our

DeadlySTEM in Schools visits. And we want to expand our Pathways activities to give more students face to face opportunities to see what STEM careers are available.

- Expand our range of culturally appropriate Teacher Guides to enable teachers to gain confidence in teaching students in this area.
- Expand our advocacy activities at Federal Government and State Government level. We provided a submission to the recent Federal Government Diversity in STEM review.
- Working on developing deeper relationships with State Education departments to attempt to start influencing the curriculum to get increased culturally inclusive STEM learnings included.
- Finally we need to spend more time and resources tracking the impact of our programs. We need to understand how our programs are making an impact, and amongst which cohort(s) of students.

6. What aspirations do you have for First Nations communities moving forward? (Sent in by Lauren)

- Building the base of the pyramid
 - More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in primary school think STEM is fun, and come to school when they know STEM activities are going to be taught.
 - More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students understand their career options in STEM, and as a result select STEM subjects (even if it is just one) when given the choice.
- Governments recognise the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge (generally and in STEM) and the importance of passing this knowledge on to the younger generations.
- And I want to see our Indigenous STEM experts held in the same esteem by students and adults in Indigenous and Non-Indigenous communities, as Indigenous sports stars and music artists.

7. Corey - what keeps you motivated year after year on this journey of yours? (Sent in by Lynne)

The team and I are motivated by seeing the impact that DeadlyScience has with students, whether they are high school students that get exposed to new STEM career options, or primary school students that want to show their Mum what they learnt while looking under a microscope.

We love getting messages from teachers and their students (and sometimes community representatives) as to the impact our activities have had on them. We particularly love stories of students who have started attending school more regularly, driven by the resources we have provided to the school, or in anticipation of one of our learning sessions

And we love the photos that often accompany these messages. This is what keeps us going when things get tough.

8. How can organisations build relationships with Aboriginal groups? (Sent in by Meri)

The best place for organisation to start their engagement journey is to reach out to their local Aboriginal Land Councils, or Indigenous groups working in community where they operate. The key for organisations and individuals within them to building these relationships is to listen to the Indigenous groups, challenge your thinking and be open to change.

9. How can I build my cultural competency and improve my knowledge about working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples? (Sent in by Meri)

This is a question we often get asked. At a personal level the best place to start in building your cultural competency is to read books by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors. In addition, explore your favourite podcast platform to search for Indigenous content providers.

Next is to engage with local Indigenous events. There are a number of events held during Reconciliation Week, and NAIDOC Week, but also at other times during the year. Your local council usually has a list of these events.

Finally, you could look for opportunities to engage with local Elders and/or young people. Volunteering is a great place to start.

10. What is a good way to start the conversation about First Nation Science in a corporate industry?

There are a few ways to start this conversation depending on the size of the organisation and the industry. Large organisations often have a role within the Community Engagement (or similar) area that is responsible for Indigenous engagement. This team is often a great place to start.

If the organisation has a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Committee, then talking to one of the RAP Committee members is recommended. Members can provide you with guidance as to the organisation's priorities within their RAP and where science (and the work of DeadlyScience) could fit in.

At an industry level the best place to start is cross organisation forums. These forums might be looking at addressing specific issues - i.e. how to increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the industry, how to better engage local communities in the planning phase of a development.

For example, we are working with an organisation in the construction industry as to how to generate a larger pipeline of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into the construction industry.

If you want to discuss in more detail, please get in touch with us at admin@deadlyscience.org.au

11. Have you got or thought of having DeadlyScience excursions/incursions on offer? This could be a way of gaining funds for future projects.

Thanks for the suggestion. We appreciate any ideas as to how we might grow. We will talk about it at our next strategy discussion.