

SPEECH BY
HER HONOUR THE HONOURABLE VICKI O'HALLORAN AO
ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
A Reception for the National Science Youth Forum
Government House
Thursday 4 November 2021

Good evening everyone and welcome to Government House.

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters that surround us, the Larrakia People, I pay my respects to Larrakia elders past, present, and importantly, emerging. I also acknowledge all First Nations people here this evening.

My husband Craig and I are so pleased to be able to host this reception once again after having it postponed last year.

We are here tonight to recognise the achievements of the remarkable young Territorians who have been selected to participate in the National Youth Science Forum in 2022.

An incredible program that has provided an opportunity for young minds to unite and flourish for more than 35 years, by inspiring and supporting students to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Recognising that it is our young people who will define the future of STEM industries.

This year, two inspiring young Territorians have been selected to participate in the National Youth Science Forum. Both of whom, I have heard referred to as ‘the top crop of science students in Australia’ and both of whom are already making a difference in their communities through their community involvement.

Grace Ray from Haileybury Rendall School and Upani Muthumala from Darwin High School – and I congratulate you both on your wonderful achievements.

While the global pandemic has put a hold on travel, and how this program and many others have traditionally been delivered - it has also shone a spotlight on the vital need for STEM industries in our modern world.

We have watched scientists work tirelessly to develop vaccines, followed the advanced data tracking and contact tracing technologies used to monitor the virus, and embraced the various means in which we have available to us to communicate and stay connected – be in our personal relationships, businesses or studies.

I understand, this year’s National Youth Science Forum program will be delivered via a hybrid model incorporating online learning, collaboration and debate, as well as smaller in-person sessions.

All of this stems from STEM!

And let’s face it - The need for programs such as this that seek to inspire and encourage participants to pursue STEM careers in Australia is only going to increase.

The importance of laying the path for young people to further study and build their careers in STEM industries has never been more relevant.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Rotary for their continued support of our local students who apply for, and participate in the National Youth Science Forum each year and for encouraging them to pursue their passion in science to become our future decision makers.

And also to the program's alumni, who return as Student Staff Leaders and volunteer their time to ensure the program continues.

These alumni, who were once students like you, had a passion for science and have gone on to be leading thinkers and innovators in their fields.

Their continued support and involvement of this program is a testament to its value and the places it can take you, and I look forward to hearing more about this from alumni Professor James Smith shortly.

Grace and Upani - I wish you all the best at the National Youth Science Forum in 2022.

You will be challenged, you will learn new things, and you will make new friends.

Be inspired, be bold and enjoy this incredible opportunity, and I look forward to hearing all about it next year!

It is now my pleasure to invite Professor Prathapan Sabaratham to the lectern.

Go well, and thank you.