

University insight gained

Budding scientist from Benalla P-12 College have gotten a glimpse into their future, attending the fifth annual Biomedical Sciences Day at Melbourne University's Parkville campus.

Students Edward, Ebony, Ruby, Dakotah and their teacher Joanne Martin had a rare opportunity to experience life as a biomedical scientist at the event presented by the School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Melbourne, and the Gene Technology Access Centre (GTAC).

Professor Matthew Watt, head of the University's Department of Physiology, encouraged the students to think about the science behind what creates, sustains and threatens people's lives in Australia — and beyond.

He shared his journey to biomedical academia including his laboratory's ground-breaking research into the parthenogenesis of fatty liver disease and diabetes.

Prof Watt discussed some of the revolutionary work under way at the School and GTAC, including biological processes, how and why researchers now have a better understanding of human health, 3D printing to replace bones, genomics and new tools for cancer treatments, and new vaccines to combat disease.

Students worked alongside researchers in the GTAC laboratories to photograph specimens using light, fluorescence and scanning electron microscopes.

They have entered their images into the university's Under the Microscope competition.

A behind-the-scenes look at the university's Harry Brookes Allen Museum of Anatomy and Pathology uncovered real tissue specimens and historical anatomical models.

While a tour of the Virtual Reality Learning Studio let students experience how cutting-edge digital technology is used to study the human body.

Benalla student Ebony has a strong interest in anatomy.

"I would love to study here one day," she said following the visit.

Right: Benalla students and future scientists visited University of Melbourne's Parkville campus recently.



Environment focus at forum

The fifth annual Science Forum met with success last month as attendees embraced the theme "Connecting People with Nature".

Held at Mokoan Hub & Cafe at Winton Wetlands, the forum covered how people can reconnect with the environment through natural solutions.

It aimed to encourage people to preserve and appreciate the natural environment.

"The forum demonstrated the positive links between people's health and their

connection to nature," Winton Wetland management committee chair Dennis O'Brien said.

"We coupled this with programming speakers that complemented our commitment to environmental sustainability and restoration efforts that are fundamental to the success of this project, and other national and international renewal projects."

The forum provided a platform for scientists, teachers, academics and restoration ecologists to provide insights and reflections on their con-

nection to the natural environment.

Winton Wetlands restoration scientist Lance Lloyd said the forum gave all attendees the opportunities to network and share knowledge about human impacts on the environment.

"Millions of rural people around the world spend every working day connected to nature and they know that their lives and work depend directly on the natural environment continuing to provide water and fertile soil.

"These people are among the first to suffer when ecosystems are altered, whether through climate change, pollution or over-exploitation of resource," Mr Lloyd said.

"By working with nature and being connected to natural areas we can reduce our health by lowering stress, having cleaner air and water and restored environments.

"Volunteers, school children and the general public can contribute to the restoration efforts at Winton Wetlands and also reap these health benefits."

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