

Curious minds to confident learners

Ashleigh Harrington, *Australian Museum, Australia*

Science engagement is more than revealing what incredible futures lie in science; it's about building the confidence of visitors to engage with science, ultimately becoming more scientifically literate and informed. For content that can be difficult to get people to engage with, like science, interactive and immersive experiences are central to sparking curiosity and provoking conversations – all while showing off your content!

Run annually, The Australian Museum's Science Festival was designed to address the declining interest in STEAM subjects and scientific literacy levels and approaches STEAM in an active and integrated learning space, allowing student to find out about the latest innovations, career opportunities and research developments from leading sectors of the community. The immersive and hands-on nature of the event enables students to interact in a multitude of ways with the content, with student-led discovery and investigative problem-solving central to the experience.

Over the many years that the event has been running evaluation data has provided evidence of a definite increase in confidence and interest in STEM areas after attending the Science Festival, often due to the nature of interaction the students experience on site. The teams evaluation process has provided details of the extent to which attitudes and values of science are effectively impacted by such STEM education events.