

Connecting educators and engagement professionals

Best Practice Engagement: Recommendation 6



The review on Best Practice Principles for Community Science Engagement Programs identified seven recommendations for effective and impactful community science programs.

Formal, school-based learning of science is crucial, and connecting educators with STEM engagement professionals can enrich and extend this learning by creating an **informal and 'third space'**. This recommendation is about how community science engagement programs can connect curriculum-based learning with students' own lived experiences, community contexts and local cultures.

Formal school education provides the foundation for STEM learning, but students often gain deeper understanding when classroom learning is connected to real-world experiences.



Image: Flying Scientists visit to Charleville with the Queensland Chief Scientist, 2024



Image: Flying Scientists visit to Dalby, 2025

Connecting community science engagement programs with formal, classroom-based, education settings represents a clear example of collaborative advantage, where mutual access to resources and expertise not only strengthens each partner's capabilities but also results in the creation of new value together – namely, enriched learning experiences and improved outcomes for students. These benefits also extend to teachers, schools, the broader community and the community STEM engagement program itself.



Case study: Queensland Flying Scientists

Community STEM engagement programs can complement school-based science education by creating opportunities for students to interact with researchers, industry professionals and local communities, helping them see the relevance of STEM in everyday life. The Queensland [Flying Scientists program](#) is one example of this approach.

Delivered through a partnership between the Queensland Chief Scientist and Wonder of Science, the program brings researchers and Young Science Ambassadors to regional and rural Queensland communities for school visits, hands-on activities and public engagement events.

When students engage with scientists working on issues relevant to their region, STEM becomes more meaningful, relatable and inspiring. By connecting students directly with scientists, the program extends learning beyond the classroom and links curriculum content with real-world research and innovation.

The Wonder of Science team (pictured during an ABC interview in Cairns, 2019) coordinates the Flying Scientists program as part of a larger, schools-based initiative. This includes long-term research projects and teacher professional development across Queensland since 2012.

The Flying Scientists program, established in 2016, has reached more than 90,000 Queenslanders, connecting them with scientists and fostering STEM curiosity, capability and inspiration across the state. These **partnerships between educators and STEM engagement professionals** enrich learning, broaden aspirations and help young people see themselves as active participants in STEM in the future.



For further detail about *Best Practice Principles for Community Science Engagement Programs*, read the full report, which includes case studies and other resources, at www.chiefscientist.qld.gov.au.

