

The learning options are endless ... virtually

Need a Tutor

STEM-focused schools use the latest technology and an innovative curriculum.

Research such as that reported in *The New Work Smarts* by the Foundation for Young Australians suggests that new ways of learning and innovative collaborations and partnerships are necessary to prepare our children effectively for the future.

After analysing more than 20 billion hours of work, completed by 12 million Australian workers across 400 occupations, the research predicted - among other eye-opening statistics - that by 2030 Australians will spend more than 77 per cent more time using STEM in jobs. The figure might astound some, but an increasing number of schools and families are already amplifying STEM-based applications across various facets of learning.

Yarra Ranges Tech School was the first STEM-focused school developed by the state government as part of its \$128 million commitment to build 10 tech schools across the state. The aim is to "use leading-edge technology, discovery and innovation to deliver the advanced education and training that Victorian school students will need to flourish in the rapidly changing global economy," states the Department of Education and Training website. Yarra Ranges Tech School opened its doors in April this year, with others expected to be operational by the end of 2018.

The tech schools are funded by the state government, hosted on TAFE or university



Students at Mount Alexander College thrive with the range of STEM choices available.

campuses, supported by local industry bodies and attended by students from nearby schools in Years 7-10. Learning programs are relevant to local industries.

Other tools in the pedagogical tool-kit that facilitate learning and engagement are innovative curriculums, robotics and virtual and augmented reality, and e-learning functionalities, which allow 24/7 access to learning. Need a Tutor chief executive officer Bronwyn Covi will says online live tutoring suits families who are trying to juggle numerous extracurricular activities or who are concerned with safety.

"Personal details aren't shared, so it's a secure way of bringing a stranger into your home. It's also beneficial to be able to moni-

or what's happening in the session," she explains. For a number of years, Mount Alexander College (MAC) in Flemington has offered a

diverse STEM-based curriculum that students love, but in 2016 the secondary school decided to re-imagine the school experience, allowing students to be empowered and take control of their own learning. At MAC, students are grouped according to their passion and stage of learning, rather than age. Principal Wayne Haworth says the new vision of allowing the student to "Take Control" of their own learning is changing the culture of the school because "when students are passionate and engaged, we enable learning to go to a whole new level. Each

child is engaged in the session," she explains. For a number of years, Mount Alexander College (MAC) in Flemington has offered a diverse STEM-based curriculum that students love, but in 2016 the secondary school decided to re-imagine the school experience, allowing students to be empowered and take control of their own learning. At MAC, students are grouped according to their passion and stage of learning, rather than age. Principal Wayne Haworth says the new vision of allowing the student to "Take Control" of their own learning is changing the culture of the school because "when students are passionate and engaged, we enable learning to go to a whole new level. Each

student has a personalised, tailor-made learning program, proposed by students but developed in conjunction with their parents and the school.

'When students are passionate and engaged, we enable learning to go to a whole new level.'
Wayne Haworth

More than 100 subject choices are available to students from Coding and Mobile Apps, Drones, Virtual and Augmented Reality, Vogue Fashion to Marine Biology. Enabling students to be empowered and Take Control allows each student to connect much more strongly with their learning. With this approach nobody is held back and nobody is left behind."

MAC collaborates with Templestowe College, Bundoora Secondary College and Beechworth Secondary College.

"There are similarities and differences in our programs and curriculum opportunities, but we all use the same philosophy of empowering our students to "Take Control" of their own learning," says Haworth.

"Recently, at a combined curriculum day we shared our passion for the Take Control model in order to inspire young people to be at their best.

"The success of any organisation is about teamwork and the success of this curriculum model is not only about our school, it's about a network and system wide leadership and ensuring that every student can experience success."