



## MR GEORGE PANTAZIS

### MARBLE BAR PRIMARY SCHOOL, WESTERN AUSTRALIA 2022 PRIME MINISTER'S PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Mr George Pantazis is the STEM Coordinator at Marble Bar Primary School, where he leads an integrated STEM program combining western pedagogy with First Nations culture and knowledge. Mr Pantazis discovered a passion for teaching late in his career, retraining as a teacher after being inspired by his wife's teaching career and a passion for First Nations science.

He implemented the CSIRO's Two-way Science learning program at Marble Bar Primary School, allowing his students to become the teachers and share their knowledge of First Nations science. The students use technology including 3D printing, virtual reality (VR) and drone aviation to showcase First Nations science and art.

Mr Pantazis also collaborates with local Elders, industry and organisations to deliver the integrated STEM program that respects and celebrates First Nations culture.

After discovering the local Nyamal language was spoken by fewer than 10 people, Mr Pantazis consulted with the local community to integrate the language into the school's STEM program.

Thanks to Mr Pantazis' efforts, the critically endangered language is now being shared with the world through a VR gallery of Australian flora and fauna.

Mr Pantazis also worked with students to create the only copyrighted digital First Nations seasonal calendar in Western Australia, depicting the seasons of the East Pilbara region.

His use of VR and local First Nations knowledge has also allowed the culture, songs and Dreamtime stories of the region to be shared with international audiences through a range of initiatives, including the Virtual Teacher Development Centre.

Mr Pantazis' innovative teaching methods have led to Marble Bar Primary School being recognised as a state leader for culturally responsive STEM education.

His approach to two-way teaching has also led him to develop additional STEM competencies to enhance his teaching of the Australian Curriculum, which have been shared with schools in Western Australia including Scotch College and Christ Church Grammar School.

Other schools in Western Australia, including independent schools Halls Creek and Tjuntjuntjara, are collaborating with Mr Pantazis to implement his integrated STEM programs.

Mr Pantazis' goal is to make STEM accessible and engaging for all students, and is focused on providing pathways into STEM for First Nations students.

## Career highlights

- 2022 Innovating Government Initiative of the Year, INCITE Awards – to Marble Bar Primary School (for Marble Bar Virtual World)
- 2022 Chevron Australia Science Engagement Initiative of the Year, WA Premier’s Science Awards – to Marble Bar Primary School (for Marble Bar Virtual World)
- 2022 Victorian Government Inspiration Award, iAwards, Australian Information Industry Association – to Marble Bar Primary School (for Marble Bar Virtual World)
- 2022 Certificate of Merit for the National Government Public Sector Award, iAwards, Australian Information Industry Association – to Marble Bar Primary School (for Marble Bar Virtual World)
- 2021 Meritorious Leadership Award (Runner-Up), WA Governor’s School STEM Awards – to Marble Bar Primary School
- 2021 Recipient of the Indigenous STEM Teacher Award, CSIRO Indigenous STEM Awards