

Driven Mallee women inspire students at STEM Idols 2022

LAST Friday the Northern Mallee LLEN organised the 'STEM Idols' event which was held at the Mildura Sporting Precinct. The breakfast event was catered to for 80 Year 9 girls from various secondary schools in Sunraysia with the objective of promoting science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and commonly known as STEM.

The guest speakers were seven remarkable women working in different STEM-related fields across various industries in our region. The speakers shared information about their career journeys, their job role, and how their work relates to STEM.

The girls also received valuable information on a variety of career pathways available to them as technology and automation are rapidly transforming fields such as agriculture, viticulture, horticulture, healthcare, civil infrastructure and town planning.

The MC for the event was Janet Pietsch, former principal and science teacher at



INSPIRING OTHERS: Left to right are guest speakers Anne Mansell, Dr Zelmari Coetzee, Sonia Chhusyabaga (front), Janet Pietsch, Dr Alison Walker, Rebecca Wells and Vanessa Hall.

Irymple Secondary College.

Northern Mallee LLEN executive officer, Rod Martin said: "The goal of the STEM Idols event is to develop confidence in the Year 9 girls to take up STEM-related studies and careers.

"Platforms like STEM Idols bring the students and Industry Professionals together so students can dispel miscon-

ceptions about careers related to these fields."

This was exemplified by Dr Zelmari Coetzee who explained how agriculture is not about using a shovel and driving tractors around – the now tractors drive themselves, the plants water themselves and drones are used to monitor the growth of plants and identify issues such as soil

moisture, plant diseases, etc.

"We need to prepare future workforce who can understand and run these technologies," Mr Martin added.

"I wish to thank all industry speakers, schools, and students for participating in the STEM Idols and Janet Pietsch and Northern Mallee LLEN staff for facilitating the day's event."