

She's apples, as Canberra Grammar students attract attention

Emily Baker
Education Reporter

Half of the Australian students who received a scholarship to attend Apple's annual Worldwide Developer Conference live in Canberra – and they all go to the same school.

Five Canberra Grammar students left the ACT this week for San Jose in the heart of the Silicon Valley to meet and learn from more than 1000 Apple engineers.

Year 9 student Zack Noyes, year 10 students Jack Carey and Marcus Gellel and year 11 students Joseph Fergusson and George Dan will join Canberra Grammar digital innovation head Matthew Purcell for the June 5 to 9 conference.

The boys wowed judges by creating interactive apps that gave information about themselves.

Mr Purcell paid tribute to the hard work of the students, each of whom has participated in Code Cadets since year 7, a voluntary after-school coding program.

"It was a fair bit of work for them and some fairly stressful afternoons in the school doing debugging on them but they did it be-



Canberra Grammar students Jack Carey, year 10, Zack Noyes, year 9, Joseph Fergusson, year 11, Marcus Gellel, year 10, and George Dan, year 11, who have won Apple scholarships. Photo: ROHAN THOMSON

cause they enjoy doing it so I don't really think they saw it as a drag to do it," Mr Pucell said.

"They also all learnt new things

so they used technologies and frameworks that they've never used before because they wanted to challenge themselves and do

something they'd never done and something new and something that impressed the judges."

Zack, who wants to one day work

in coding, said he hoped to learn about new technologies at the conference.

"At WWDC, Apple usually announces new technologies that could be introduced," he said.

"I hope to be able to learn more about these technologies by talking to people who have been part of creating them. I also want to learn more about technologies that I have already used."

The conference, to be held at McEnergy Convention Centre near Apple's new headquarters, will represent Mr Purcell's eighth.

He said: "I think what's really special about WWDC is the people that you meet there and also being able to talk with the engineers from Apple who have built the technologies that you're using.

"[Say] you've been using a technology for the past year or two years and you have these questions about how it works or how to make your code better and all these problems, the ability to actually go and track down and speak to the person who wrote that is just invaluable because they wrote it and you can't get much more of an authoritative source on it than that."

Security Spy agency warns of increase in ransomware threats

Immigration slow on cyber reform

Doug Dingwall

The Immigration Department has admitted it has set no deadline to make crucial IT security reforms protecting against cyber attack, despite a damning audit report.

Chief Information Officer Randall Brugeaud said on Friday the department could not say when it would adopt all four cyber security measures required to defend it from threats, after missing a 2016 deadline to make the changes.

The admission came as Australia's electronic spy agency warned a parliamentary inquiry into cyber security of a "vast increase" in ransomware threats similar to the "WannaCry" attack that hit Britain's hospital system in May.

Mr Brugeaud blamed the Immigration Department's merger with the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service in 2015

for the delay, saying it had complicated efforts to reform its security.

"That became a far more complex environment spanning a far greater number of business lines. So as a consequence of what is quite a significant machinery of government change, we still have maintained a positive trajectory, maintained critical business services, but it has adjusted the time it will take," he said.

The Immigration Department told the inquiry hearing in Canberra it had applied restrictions on desktop applications and would improve other parts of its cyber security after a March report from the national auditor found it was vulnerable to attack.

Before merging with Immigration, the ACBPS missed a July 2014 deadline to adopt four top IT security strategies, which spy agency the Australian Signals Directorate

says prevent 85 per cent of cyber intrusions.

Despite promising in 2014 to implement them by 2016, Immigration had adopted only one of the strategies.

Immigration first assistant secretary Cheryl-anne Moy told the inquiry that it had also not prepared for any further disruption to its cyber security reforms posed by its possible move into a super-size US-style "Homeland Security" department.

The Tax Office, which the auditor-general also found was vulnerable to cyber threats, expected to follow the "Top Four" security measures by November.

Acting auditor-general Rona Mellor said all departments it had probed for cyber security had been affected by change and were still required to maintain security.

"These are mandatory require-

ments to protect the information that these organisations hold.

"While there are reasons for pace, the responsibility is still there within the framework, within the regulation to deliver cyber secure environments," she said.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's adviser on cyber security, Alastair MacGibbon, said the "Top Four" measures were hard to implement and required agility from departments.

"It comes down to a question of culture and making sure that when there is a machinery of government change, that you recognise every time you do that, there are consequences in terms of the way computer systems operate," Mr MacGibbon said.

"There's no excuse for non-compliance but there's understanding that these things take time."

Australian Signals Directorate head of cyber and information security, Clive Lines, said there were "vast" increases in ransomware threats similar to the WannaCry attack, and state-sponsored cyber threats had grown.

The Attorney-General's Department told the inquiry that some agencies did not return a survey that it sent out to identify those with vulnerabilities in cyber security, and it could not compel any to complete them.

Mr Brugeaud said the Immigration Department had patched the security of its internet gateway following the WannaCry attack, and had already updated its anti-virus measures.

But Ms Mellor said gateway security was not enough and that the "Top Four" measures Immigration had not fully met would protect against 85 per cent of threats.

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