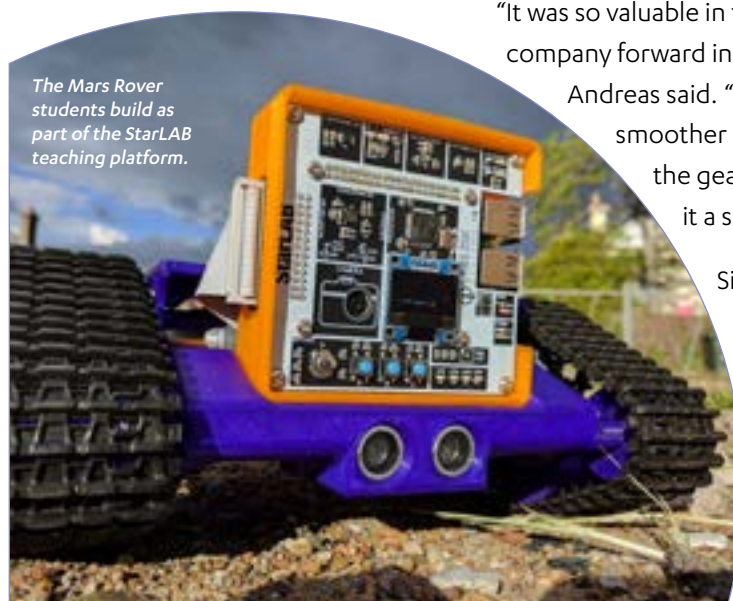


Obelisk Systems: Inspiring students' passion for the world of STEM

Maitland-based startup, Obelisk Systems, is 'reaching for the stars' with a school learning system helping students to understand science and technology through the wonders of space exploration.

Obelisk Systems' StarLAB is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) teaching platform that challenges year 9 and 10 students to use hardware, coding and robotics skills to build a Mars Rover vehicle and then program it to navigate a synthetic Martian terrain.

Founded in early 2016 by Andreas Antoniadis and friends Lewis Quill, Levi Weitenberg and Luke Hackworth, Obelisk Systems was established out of a need the four saw while working in the space technology sector.



The Mars Rover students build as part of the StarLAB teaching platform.

"We saw that the industry, and a whole bunch of similar current and emerging industries, were very slow moving; there wasn't enough technically-trained and adaptive staff," Andreas said.

"There wasn't the school-level training that was able to not only get the kids skilled, but also inspired to go into these (STEM) fields."

The need for investment: Obelisk meets Jobs for NSW

The startup set about designing a solution and found a helping financial hand from Jobs for NSW, which provided a Minimum Viable Product grant of \$15,000 allowing for the purchase of some of the technology needed to help launch StarLAB, including circuit prototypes and assembly tools.

"It was so valuable in taking our company forward in those early days," Andreas said. "It made things a lot smoother and we got a lot of the gears moving to make it a success."

Since July 2016, the platform has been

adopted by more than 50 schools in NSW, the ACT and Queensland, with the team focused on continuing to expand their footprint and refining the product.

"The feedback has been amazing," Andreas said. "The kids are really jumping in, they're getting excited, they're learning how to code, they're getting their little Mars Rover moving around the classroom."

"Teachers too can feel confident in delivering STEM education that's actually industry-relevant and provides kids with the skills they need to come out of the classroom and dive into current and emerging industries that are really changing the way we work."

The sky is the limit

Obelisk Systems has grown to a team of five and celebrated its selection as one of 12 NSW startups chosen by the NSW Government to exhibit at the CeBIT Australia 2017 conference, the largest and longest-running business technology event in the Asia Pacific.

Andreas says the remainder of 2017 will be busy for Obelisk, as the startup works to make StarLAB accessible to younger students and introduces the inaugural Mars Rover Challenge, where schools will be invited to pit their Rovers – and their coding skills – against other schools in an online competition.