

Girls compete at Australasian Philosothon

The Australasian Philosothon is a competition that draws together the top schools in Philosophy across Australia and New Zealand for two days of robust philosophical discussions. Meriden once again qualified for this event after placing third in the New South Wales Philosothon.

Seventeen schools came together over Zoom on the 19 and 20 August to participate in Community of Inquiry discussions. Students were judged on the quality of their contributions, their ability to actively listen to others and build on an argument, as well as their ability to agree and disagree in a respectful manner. Unlike a debate, a Philosothon does not aim to seek a definitive answer to a question or to prove right from wrong, but rather to show collaborative progress in moving a discussion forward.



Meriden's Australasian Philosothon Team: Anjali Kailasanathan, Jasmine Ye, Jenna Aylett, Jacinta Rees and Ila Bains

Team Meriden participated in extensive training this term to prepare them for the questions asked and to learn more about the philosophical concepts such as metaphysics, epistemology and ethics that underpin them.

The questions discussed were:

- Should artificial reefs be viewed as environmental saviours or do they give false hope?
- Does automating art broaden the potential for human creativity or does it hinder it?
- What is the big deal about Australia Day? Should we save the date, change it or cancel it altogether?
- Is time travel possible? What are the implications if it were possible?

In addition, students had the opportunity to hear from philosophers from Australia and New Zealand who shared with participants how the study of philosophy has shaped their lives and careers. Students heard about their current projects, including Lucia Carvalho Neco, a PhD candidate from the University of Western Australia, who spoke about her thesis "Smarty Plants" which explores what we can learn about knowledge from the study of plants.

Congratulations to the Meriden team of Jenna Aylett (Year 9), Ila Bains (Year 8), Anjali Kailasanathan (Year 10), Jacinta Rees (Year 11) and Jasmine Ye (Year 11). Each member of the team displayed a high level of academic rigour, as well as intellectual humility and a collaborative and collegial spirit.

Overall, the team was awarded sixth place which is an excellent result in this competition and testament to the combined efforts of each girl. We also received the following top five individual places in the following age divisions:

- Anjali Kailasanathan: Second Place, Year 10 Division
- Jenna Aylett: Equal Fifth place, Year 9 Division
- Ila Bains: Fifth Place, Year 8 Division

Schools were ranked on their Critical, Creative and Collaborative Thinking and Team Meriden placed fourth in Critical Thinking, equal fifth in Collaborative Thinking and seventh in Creative Thinking.

It has been a pleasure to work with the team over the past term in preparation for this event and I congratulate the students on the depth of thinking they have displayed as they grappled with challenging philosophical concepts, as well as their perseverance in competing online. They can be proud of these results.

Ms Priscilla Curran
Dean of Lateral Learning