

Philosophy news

In addition to the weekly Philosophy Club, Meriden students also have the opportunity to participate in several Philosophy competitions and events throughout the year, building skills in critical, creative and collaborative thinking and active listening.

Sydney Philosothon

This interschool event is held each year and hosted by Newington College in conjunction with the NSW Philosophy in Schools Association.

This year we entered a team of eight students from across Years 8 to 11, consisting of Ila Bains, Anjali Popuri, Olivia Kim, Jasmine Yang, Alice Feng, Katherine Kljajic, Mila Ke and Cynthia Yu. Students participated in three Community of Inquiry discussions, exploring the topics of whether it is ever reasonable to exclude people and whether we have an obligation to 'de-extinct' animals.

The third discussion was based on a live presentation by Dr Mark Colyvan from the University of Sydney and centred around the concept of realism and anti-realism. Students were challenged to form their own philosophical questions based on his talk. In these discussion circles, it is up to the students to lead the discussion, ensuring that they agree and disagree with each other respectfully, justify their opinions, build on each other's arguments and demonstrate intellectual humility, including the ability to admit that they have changed their mind over the course of the discussion.

Congratulations to all team members who engaged thoughtfully and respectfully in their conversations, and thank you to Ms Stella He for attending the event and acting as a facilitator on the night. A special congratulations goes to the Meriden team which was awarded third place overall. This is a wonderful achievement and testament to the dedication of the whole team.



The 2025 Philosothon team

NSW Philosophy in Schools Essay Competition

Congratulations to Ila Bains, Year 11, who was awarded first place in the NSW Philosophy in Schools Essay Competition, and to Olivia Kim, Year 10, who was awarded third place.

Ila's achievement marks the second year in a row that she has been awarded a place in this competition, coming third last year.

This year also marks the seventh consecutive year that Meriden students have placed in the top three in this rigorous competition.

Organised in collaboration with the Royal Society of NSW Southern Highlands, the state-wide competition challenges students in Years 10 to 12 to tackle complex philosophical questions. This year, students were asked to compose a philosophical argument in response to the title, Navigating Truth in an Era of Misinformation: Epistemic Responsibilities of the Digital Age.



Olivia and Ila at the Philosophy in Schools Essay Competition awards

The judges commented that both essays were based on extensive research, expressed their ideas with clarity and explored a variety of ideas and perspectives to form their own conclusions.

We commend Ila and Olivia on their essays, which displayed a high level of critical and creative thinking.

Junior Philosophy Competition

In Term 2 we also ran the Meriden Junior Philosophy competition on the theme of Reality. Students had to respond to a prompt that explored the nature of reality by writing a philosophical dialogue, creating a cartoon strip or writing a discussion piece.

Questions included:

- What is the true nature of reality?
- Is the world the same for everyone?
- Can we trust our senses?
- Is reality a product of our perceptions?

Congratulations to the winners of this competition.

- First prize: Tracy Hu (Year 8)
- Second prize: Grace Yan (Year 7)
- Third prize: Louise Parent-Moutia (Year 7)
- Highly commended: Irene Zhang (Year 7) and Allison Chang (Year 7)

All students are welcome to join the Philosophy Club, which meets on a Monday lunchtime in EN15, to engage in the variety of discussions and activities.

Ms Priscilla Curran

Dean of Lateral Learning