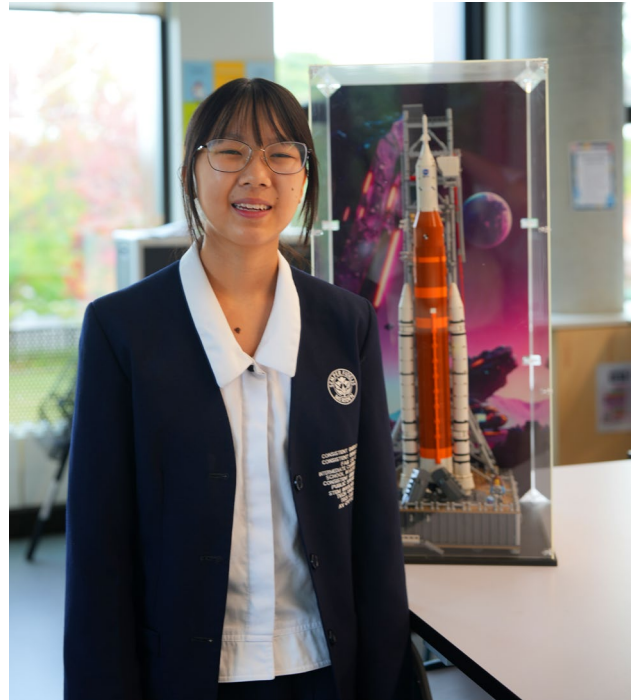


Reaching for the Stars: Our First IAAC Student Ambassador

Kate Nguyen in year 10 has a deep interest in STEM and space, and has successfully completed the finals of the International Astrophysics and Astronomy Competition (IAAC) since its inception at Meriden in 2024. This year she has been selected as an Ambassador for the IAAC to represent Meriden in the competition.

The IAAC is a prestigious global competition that challenges students to apply high-level scientific thinking to real problems in astronomy and astrophysics and is open to high school and university students.

Becoming an ambassador for the competition recognises Kate's commitment to curiosity, academic excellence, and leadership in STEM. Being an IAAC Ambassador is a significant honour, reflecting both scientific ability and a willingness to encourage others to engage with challenging, real-world science, at a time where there is growing interest in humans travelling and living beyond Earth.



As an IAAC Ambassador, Kate is advocating for space science, inspiring peers, and representing a worldwide community of young scientists with a shared passion for the universe. Kate did a stellar job of promoting the IAAC at Meriden last term. She started a subcommittee in FabLab, she took students around to put up posters, she presented to FabLab and Tech Club, and she wrote emails to FabLab and our 300+ strong STEMgineers. Kate spoke to FabLab and the year 8 STEMship Enterprise elective students about the Artemis II mission and Katherine Bennell-Pegg, Australia's First Astronaut and Australian of the Year. As a result, we have a record 29 students from year 7 to year 12 enter the IAAC qualification round over the holidays.

Kate took the initiative to complete the rigorous application process to be an IAAC Ambassador, and she has taken on her leadership position with enthusiasm and passion for STEM. Kate is a fantastic role model to her fellow students in a world where young women are seeing more how they can contribute to space exploration and industry. We are thrilled to see our students connecting with international scientific opportunities and contributing to a global conversation about space, research, and discovery.

Kate has plans to bring our first telescope to Meriden and continue building more opportunities for our school to become part of the growing space community. We cannot wait to see where her journey into space takes her.

Mrs Alexandra Phillips

Coordinator of Learning Link – Innovation