

Games – All divisions

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Educators have agreed that playing games is an excellent way to keep students engaged and improve their understanding. At the Games Judging Day at Wesley College, we saw numerous examples of students having fun playing games of their own devising which also helped them learn about science. Students enjoyed setting up their games and playing them with the science teachers who were the judges. We were also pleased to welcome student teachers from Melbourne University, who were mentored by the practising teachers. The judges used a rubric which closely followed the guidelines listed in the Science Talent Search Handbook.

This year 114 entries were judged, of which 37 were awarded bursaries. It is pleasing to see that teachers are making time available in the crowded curriculum for students to pursue very worthwhile projects such as STS.

The best entries were those that not only contained good science, but showed evidence that research was used to develop the game around finding solutions to real issues.

Although students entering the Games section are not obliged to follow the theme for the year, the topic of Drones, Droids and Robots was embraced enthusiastically by the students, especially at Primary levels, with games such as Battle of the Drones, Robot Challenge and Mission Dronactica. Students also showed concerns about conservation issues. Other popular topics included bushfires, floods, earthquakes and especially tsunamis. Escaping from danger makes a very exciting game. Tasks that promoted problem solving were highly regarded whereas “luck” squares in board games and recall of trivial facts did not score well. Overall, the judges were very impressed with the creativity shown by students to produce eye-catching and innovative games which were original and fun to play.

All this was made possible by the generosity of many science teachers who encouraged their students to enter the Science Talent Search, guided their research of the science ideas and inspired them to express their creativity in many different ways. Many of these teachers also gave hours of their free time to judge the entries. We thank the parents for supporting their sons and daughters in preparing their entries, bringing them to the venue and sharing with them the experiences of the day.

We also thank the students who put so much work into completing their entries and brought them to be judged. They have achieved much learning about science and shared their learning with the players of the games and with the judges.