

Report on the 2020 AAP Philosothon

Matthew Wills

The 10th Australasian Philosothon was conducted on the 29th and 30th September 2020 and there were several 'firsts' this year. The Australasian Association of Philosophy has supported the event for many years, but this was the first year that the AAP hosted the Australasian Philosothon. Also, for the first time ever a Philosothon was conducted online. The event was to be held at Wesley College in Victoria but with the arrival of COVID 19 and associated restrictions we faced the prospect of schools not being willing or able to travel. Thankfully, we decided early in March to move the event online.

While the event was not without its hurdles it was overall a resounding success. The fact that we ran the Australasian Philosothon online meant that we had more New Zealand schools and more regional schools involved. It also meant that schools in Victoria (a state in lockdown due to COVID restrictions), could still participate. (Take that COVID!)

A month prior, we ran a trial involving organising teachers and students from two of the 21 qualifying schools...and then later we ran a judges training session. This was important as it enabled us to iron out most potential problems. We then established online protocols for students, judges and facilitators. One important new initiative was the development of electronic scoresheets. Thereby, judges were able to simply submit their results online.

We ended up running the event on Zoom which worked well as all were sufficiently familiar with the format. We used "breakout rooms" for each philosophical COI (64 COIs in total) and ran the same AP program as previously but without speakers, games and other bells and whistles. We also employed someone to do the data entry and used email to report the results.

Here are the results for the 2020 AAP Philosothon.

Rank	Raw score	School
1	786	North Sydney Girls School NSW
2	724.5	Narrabundah College ACT / Telopea Park High School ACT
3	723.5	St. Andrew's Cathedral School NSW
4	720	St. Peters Girls School SA
5	714	Seymour College SA
6	703	Scotch College WA
7	701	Anglican Church Grammar School QLD
8	691.5	Loreto College (Ballarat) VIC
9	681	Mentone Grammar School VIC
10	655.5	Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar School NSW
11	650	St. Ignatius College SA
12	649.5	Merici College ACT

There are three schools from each of NSW and SA, with the remaining 6 from the ACT, Victoria, Queensland and WA. Note the tight competition between 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place, between 6th and 7th, and between 10th, 11th, and 12th places this year!

Here are the individual year level results....

1st	Belinda Shang	NSGHS NSW	14yrs	104
2nd	Annmary Chalakkal	LORETO VIC	14yrs	103.5
3rd	Alix Niyonsenga	TPS ACT	14yrs	103
1st	Harry Rae	CHURCHIE QLD	15yrs	102.5
2nd	Joseph Lewis	MARIST QLD	15yrs	98
3rd	Ruben Mc Swan	MGS VIC	15yrs	96.5
1st	Holly Walman-Craddock	SPGS SA	16yrs	103
2nd	Zali Slunjski	NSGHS NSW	16yrs	102
3rd	Ella Fleming	SACS NSW	16yrs	101.5
1st	Renee Nayager	NSGHS NSW	Open	109
2nd	Bronte de Zwart	SEYMOUR SA	Open	104
3rd	Silas Hansch-Maher	ST IGNATIUS SA	Open	102
MPP	Isabella Yaw	NSGHS NSW		
MPP	Emma Pool	SPGS SA		
Honorable	Michael Yates	OLMC WA		
Mention	Joshua Jacobs	OLMC WA		

The feedback we have received to date would indicate that while some students/teachers prefer face to face events a surprising number of people liked the online format for all sorts of reasons. Judges liked the fact that they could participate remotely and enjoyed some features of the online format. e.g. student names were obvious and accessible as they spoke.....and some students suggested they would not otherwise be able to participate where they faced imminent final exams. I have now handed over the running of this event to the AAP in the future, so I am a little relieved having run the event for the past 10 years.

Thanks to Professor Rob Wilson and Dr Kaz Bland for their wise and patient advice together with practical and willing assistance in the leadup and during the first online AAP Philosothon.

Matthew Wills- Philosothon Manager.