Debating in 2013 by Max Van Veenandal

The debating rounds have come to an end and Brighton Secondary College has performed really well through the five rounds of the season. This year, we had more teams than ever before with nine teams in total. A number of Year 7s and 8s competed for the first time and managed to win a couple of debates against some formidable opponents in Year 9s from surrounding schools. Whilst, we didn't win every round, we were never beaten by much and it showed us that Brighton Secondary College could take it up to any private school from the area. The best performing BSC team for the year was the D Level team 5 consisting of Diana Grinberg, Thomas Reyment & myself - Yeh!

A number of students were awarded the best speaker, even when we were not the winning team – hats off to Amy Lynn and Sarah Farnsworth (pictured with fellow debaters) for that recognition! Some of the topics certainly were challenging and the senior debaters were often working under extreme pressure to come up with speeches in the rounds that had secret topics. Senior teams were given an hour to come up with their arguments without any access to the internet or phones.

Some of the topics debated across the levels included - That we should legalise all performance enhancing drugs in sport; That we should abolish special ‘youth’ wages; That we should ban academic streaming in schools; That feminism is irrelevant to young women today; That we should abolish all forms of incarceration for people under the age of 18.

The year started well with some training from a former student, Declan Dodson, who is also an adjudicator for the Debating Association. These sessions helped us understand some of the techniques and strategies and helped build our confidence, especially for us younger debaters. Debating at Brighton Grammar at night was rather hectic, but we were given lots of supports by the debating team teachers with a special thanks to Mr Noonan, Mr Nash, Ms Weiler, Ms Radas, Ms Long and Ms Flessa. We were also given heaps of encouragement by the senior debaters like Alyse and Amy, as well plenty of lollies to keep the sugar levels up.

At the moment, we have been helping local Primary Schools prepare for the upcoming debating competition on the 22nd August which is being run by Brighton Secondary. This week we visited a number of local school and helped their teams work out their arguments. Three weeks ago, we had over 400 students come here from all over the region to listen to a presentation by Alyse Cochrane and Amy Lynn, followed by a debate on ‘that school should start in the afternoon’. There were lots of laughs and they left with plenty of ideas to work on.

Overall, I am glad to have joined debating this year and I am sure it will continue to help my writing in English and other subjects, but especially for persuasive writing or simply put together an argument for something I might want for my birthday. Anyway, I encourage other students to join debating as it gets you thinking about topics you might not have considered, and helps you to realise all the techniques you can use to convince some one of something.

Renee Spiridis Wins Gold!

17 year old Brighton Secondary College student Renee Spiridis (pictured right with the red helmet) won the Gold Medal in the senior category of the Victorian Championships for Taekwondo during her last school holiday break. On Sunday 30 June 2013, at the Darebin Community Sports Stadium, after a long and gruelling fight Renee turned around to win. Her motto - to never give up. The next step for Renee from here is to prepare for the Australian National championships. Renee has represented Victoria on a National and International level for a number of years. Renee hopes to be able to compete at the 2016 Olympic games in Rio de Janeiro. We can all get behind and support Renee and our Australian Taekwondo competitors by signing this online petition: http://www.communityrun.org/petitions/more-funding-for-taekwondo

Brighton Secondary College New Science Wing!
Bayside Leader

Brighton taekwondo star hits the big time

JON ANDREWS  BAYSIDE LEADER  AUGUST 28, 2013 12:00AM

SHE might be small, but she sure packs a mighty kick.

Brighton’s Renee Spiridis has just taken out a gold medal at a state taekwondo championships.

The 17-year-old is hoping the win, among her many other achievements, will kickstart a campaign to get to the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

She started the martial art as an eight-year-old after a suggestion from her mother that it would be a good fitness tool.

"I tried it, loved it," Renee said.

"I like the fitness, discipline and confidence involved.

"I think flexibility and head-kicking are my main strengths."

Renee also represented Australia at an international competition last year in Egypt, represented Oceania in Queensland and won an international fight in Las Vegas.

She will take part in the nationals in September, and is optimistic about her success.

“One day I hope to go to the Olympics, hopefully to Rio, but if not maybe another one further down the line,” she said.