



# Intercollegiate Debating 2010

*Stephen Whittington*

## **Organisation of the Grades**

I acted as the overall intercollegiate convenor for the first time. I was assisted by Sebastian Templeton (Senior Premier A), Udayan Mukherjee (Senior Premier B), Jane Dewar (Senior Certificate), Kathy Ryan (Junior Premier), and David Dewar (Junior Certificate). Christopher Bishop also provided considerable amounts of advice and help throughout the year, and also took over Junior Certificate when David Dewar left the country.

I also oversaw the organisation of the Stockley Cup and Dunsheath Plate public speaking competitions and Impromptu Cup debating competition. Thank you to Udayan Mukherjee and Jenna Raebuern who helped with the organisational work for Impromptu Cup and ensured the competition was a success. Thank you to Sarah Wilson and Daniel Wilson who judged the Stockley Cup and Dunsheath Plates competitions.

## **Entries into the Grades**

Each grade had the following number of teams:

- Premier A: 16 teams (17 teams in 2009, 14 in 2008).
- Premier B: 19 teams (22 teams in 2009, 21 in 2008).
- Senior Certificate: 48 (47 teams in 2009, 50 in 2008).
- Junior Premier: 18 (18 teams in 2009, 21 in 2008).
- Junior Certificate: 54 (44 teams in 2009, 50 in 2008).

Fluctuations appear to have largely stabilised, and there has been an increase in Junior Certificate entries. Overall 155 teams entered – an increase of seven from 2009.

## **Changes from 2009**

There were not substantial changes made to the operation of the grades this year. We added an octo-final to the Junior Certificate grade. The rationale for this was: first, the number of entries was large, and quarter finals would have only seen about 15 per cent of teams break; and secondly, that it was important to provide the opportunity for younger debaters to debate more.

We continued with the policy of charging an affiliation fee of \$10. The intention behind this was to make schools feel like they had a stake in the Union. In addition, it acts to reduce the marginal cost of entering a further team (in comparison to increases fees across the grades).

### **Adjudication and Coaching**

Adjudicators for the Premier A and B grades are supplied by the Victoria University of Wellington Debating Society. Sponsorship and grade entry fees allow a small stipend (currently \$10 per debate) to be paid to them at the end of the year.

Adjudicators for the other three grades are school teachers and senior students. At the start of the year an adjudication workshop was run by Christopher Bishop at Turnbull House, with fairly good turnout of senior students and teachers. There are occasionally complaints about the quality of the adjudication at the Junior Certificate, Junior Premier, and Senior Certificate levels. This year three draws were awarded at the conclusion of a debate. It is frustrating that those who most need to attend the adjudication workshop seem least likely to do so.

A week later a workshop on coaching was delivered by Clodagh O'Connor-McKenna, the then coach of the New Zealand Schools' Debating Team. This workshop was well attended and received excellent feedback.

Christopher Bishop suggested last year that there may be room for the Union to look at "licensing" skilled adjudicators and coaches who could go to schools and deliver workshops in exchange for a fee. Clodagh delivered a workshop at Samuel Marsden next year. Perhaps a list should be drafted for next year for those available and qualified to do such workshops.

### **Winning schools and individuals**

Congratulations to the following schools which won each of the grades below:

- Premier A – Sacred Heart College (with Scots College as Runners-up)
- Premier B – Chilton St James School (with Tawa College as Runners-up)
- Senior Certificate – Wellington East Girls' College (with Wellington Girls' College as Runners-up)
- Junior Premier – Sacred Heart College (with Hutt International Boys' School as Runners-up)
- Junior Certificate – Paraparaumu College (with St Patrick's College (Wellington) as Runners-up)

The Impromptu Cup senior competition was won by Wellington College, which also picked up the Evening Post Cup for the junior competition.

The Stockley Cup prepared speech competition was won by Duncan McLachlan from Wellington College, with Daniel Gendall also from Wellington College winning the Dunsheath Plate for the junior section.

### **Conclusion and the future**

Intercollegiate debating in Wellington continues to thrive and prosper. Team numbers across all the grades and overall have remained constant for many years now. Wellington debaters

continue to excel at national and international level. Indeed, the National Schools' Debating Championships Grand Final this year was won by a Wellington team. One Wellington debater was named in the NZ Schools' Debating Team. Our continued strong presence at this level reflects the strength of the intercollegiate competition organised by the WSU.

The challenge for the WSU is to maintain the excellent competitions that exist now and improve them. Looking at some of the issues raised from the survey, things to be looked at for the future include:

- Licensing of adjudicators and coaches qualified to give workshops and seminars in schools (and encouragement of schools to take these up);
- Provision of "demonstration debate" videos for schools (perhaps online?);
- Provision of more debating opportunities (a junior regionals and a Senior BP Competition?);
- Difficulty of finding quality adjudicators.

It was a pleasure to serve as intercollegiate debating convenor in 2010. I would like to thank Christopher Bishop in particular, who has provided a considerable amount of advice and help throughout the year, as well as taking over the difficult job of organising Junior Certificate in David's absence.

**Stephen Whittington**

Intercollegiate Convenor 2010