

Harangue

The Debaters Association of Victoria's Magazine for Students

In this issue...

Topics: the amazing birth process

Round 1 review: where you went right and wrong

Win fame and fortune: the quiz

Meet a real adjudicator: how rare!

... and much more!

State Team Update

The Victorian State Team has been selected. These debaters will represent Victoria at the National Schools Debating Championships in Sydney later this year:

- Kellymaree Butler (Mac.Robertson Girls' High School)
- Minh-Quan Nguyen (Scotch College)
- Chris Bisset (Brighton Grammar School)
- Ben Needleman (Bialik College)
- Allan Quanchi (Scotch College)
- Bebe D'Souza (Mac.Robertson Girls' High School)

Coach: Tim Jeffrie

Assistant coach: Amit Golder

Dude, Where's My Draw?

Teething problems with our new website mean that draws are currently only available for the next round, and are in the news section instead of on the draws page. We hope to have these technical issues resolved soon, and appreciate your patience in the meantime.

Dear students,

I hope you enjoyed debating in round one. As well as striving to win, of course, I hope you're all listening carefully to the feedback adjudicators give you, and (regardless of whether you won or lost) working out how to improve in your next debate. Round two promises to be an exciting round, with debates ranging from violent environmentalists to taxes on video games.

In this issue of Harangue, you'll find a review of last round's debates with tips to help you improve, a peek into the workings of the DAV, and as always, a chance to win big with the Harangue Quiz.

Next month, we'll take a look at how the Schools Competition works, and chat with some of the DAV's employees.

If there are any topics that you'd like to see covered in Harangue, please let us know: debater@netspace.net.au.

Good luck with your debates!

Michael Ciesielski
Publications editor

Visit the DAV's website:
<http://www.dav.com.au>

You'll find:

- Future issues of *Harangue*
- Team ladders for each region
- The draw for each round
- The Resource Guide which will help you prepare for each topic
- Training articles
- and much, much more!

Daddy, where do my topics come from?

By **Chris Hibbard**, Vice-President (Schools)

Every debater will have encountered a topic they love and a topic they hate. The rest will fall somewhere in the middle.

The DAV tries to give the broadest possible range of topics across different grades, rounds and regions. This means there will always be a balance of types of topics, subjects of topics the level of skill that is required.

For this reason there is a careful process in coming up with topics. The things we look for are whether the topic is interesting, challenging, accessible, fun and topical (boom boom). Every topic will be a combination of these things. Topics also have to have two clear sides. This is not just in the sense that “*that Robert Mugabe is actually quite nice*” has a negative side – however unconvincing it might be – but in the sense that there need to be strong arguments on either side of the topic.

Topics also have to be clear in what they mean. This is the bit that relies as much on debaters as it does on us. Although we try to make topics as simple as possible, if you give your topic a stupid or self-serving definition because you think you’re being clever, you will only destroy the debate for everyone. For example, the A grade topic for Round 1 was “*That the government should pay compensation to the Stolen Generations*”. A lot of affirmative teams defined compensation as any money or services or programs that the government ever gives to Aborigines. This is clearly unreasonable – not only is it not what the topic is about, it also makes things extraordinarily unfair for the negative team. So make sure that you remember a debate must always have two sides,

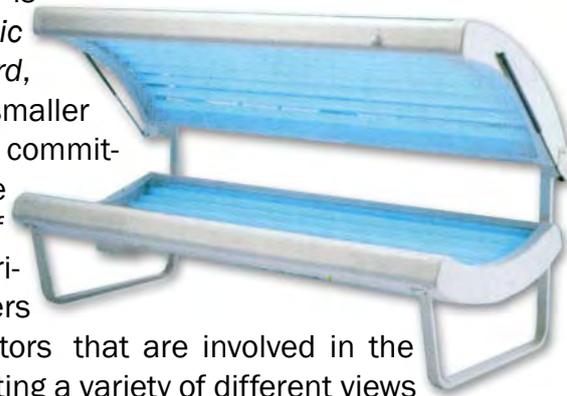


and you are not going to impress the adjudicator by defining the negative side out of the debate.

Anyway, back to the process we have for deciding topics. We have a series of committees who have different jobs in the system. The first committee

(‘*The Topic Advisory Committee*’) comes up with a list of a hundred or so topics to consider. These ideas come from the committee members’ debating experience, current issues or, most importantly, suggestions we get from debaters and teachers. So if you do think of a good topic and would like to debate it, please email it to us – debater@netspace.net.au! We’d love to have more topics next year that are actually suggested by debaters.

Once this list is created, the next committee kicks in. This is called the *Topic Selection Board*, and is much smaller than the first committee. It is made up of some of the most experienced debaters



and adjudicators that are involved in the DAV, representing a variety of different views of debating and areas of the DAV community. It is at this stage that the topics are refined down to the ones we use for the schools competition. This is usually done at a meeting that goes for an epic amount of time – usually long into the night. At the end we have a shortlist of the topics we want to run in the schools competition for that year.

At this point yet another committee gets involved. This is the *Schools Advisory Board*, and is made up of a number of teachers and parents who look at the shortlist of topics and give their opinions. They offer opinions about whether topics are too hard, too easy, unsuitable for certain year levels or just not particularly interesting. These opinions are invaluable for deciding on topics for certain year levels. Encourage your teachers to get involved on this committee if you don’t like some of the topics at the moment!

Once all the members of the Schools Advisory Board give their opinions, we finally work out what the topics will actually be for the year. And voila, we have a competition!

Meet a real adjudicator!

Laura Bellamy has been adjudicating the Schools Competition for over three years.

Hello, Laura.

Hi.

Tell me about yourself.

I'm Laura. I'm an adjudicator.

Why do you adjudicate?

I started because of the promise of getting paid. Since starting, I found that I really enjoy being able to listen to different students around the state, providing them with feedback and watching them improve.

What's the funniest thing you've ever seen in a debate?

In a debate about burning the flag, a boy in Williamstown dropped his pants to reveal Australian flag boxer shorts.

I've also had people start singing in a debate - most recently, someone singing *I am Australian* in the stolen generation debate.

What were you like as a debater in high school?

Terrible. I was over-prepared and read my whole speech. I spent far too much time thinking about using exactly the right word, rather than the issues in the debate.

What are you like as a debater at Uni?

Hopefully better.

Do you think adjudicating has made you a better debater?

Absolutely - it's really interesting to see people make the same mistakes that I have, and also to watch people do well - I try to emulate that.

How do people react when you tell them you're an adjudicator?

I usually feel really nerdy telling them that, but then everyone has a story about the one time they debated and how it changed their life.

What do you do when you're not adjudicating?

I study Law, Media, and French at the University of Melbourne, which means that I will be at Uni for the rest of my life. I also debate and breed frogs.



Win with the Harangue Quiz!

Send your answers to these nine questions to the DAV office by the end of round 2. The best and/or most correct entry will win a \$20 iTunes Music Card! Thanks to Amit Golder, assistant Victorian State Team Coach, for compiling the questions.

Send your answers to debater@netspace.net.au by May 15th.

1. Australia has recently opened its first underground carbon storage facility. Where is it? What is the technical term for underground carbon capture? Briefly, how does it work?
2. Sir Rod Eddington recently released a report of key importance to Victoria's future. What does the report say?
3. The Victorian government recently unveiled plans to build two new schools. What is controversial about them? Where will they be built?
4. Name two prominent feminist authors. Extra credit for explaining what they believe.
5. What was the governing organisation for Indigenous people? Who was its Chairman? With what was it replaced?
6. Name the two rival factions in the Palestinian Authority. Which controls Gaza, and which the West Bank?
7. Backstreet Boys or 5ive? Explain your answer.
8. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has announced plans to campaign for Australia's inclusion in the UN Security Council. Who are the five permanent members of the Security Council? Which nations argue that they deserve a permanent seat on the Council?
9. Why is Grammy-nominated rapper Remy Ma in jail? Who is she going to marry in jail?

Round 1 Review

That the Government should pay compensation to the Stolen Generations.

The definition and model were very important in this debate. Some affirmative teams defined compensation too broadly, and others too narrowly; some teams were too vague and others too specific. There wasn't one particular definition that adjudicators were expecting, but the key to setting up the debate for the affirmative was to advocate a compensation scheme which was directly linked to the harm suffered by members of the stolen generations, and defined compensation in a practical, reasonable way.

It was excellent to see the hard work that most teams put into researching this debate. However, the greatest challenge for some teams was relating the harms suffered by indigenous people, and the stolen generation, to the specific proposal of compensation. A common problem was speakers simply giving examples of problems that indigenous people face without talking about the compensation scheme and how it might help those problems. —J.B.

That we should lift the international ban on commercial whaling.

A clear reading of the topic, and an understanding of the current whaling situation were very important in this debate. Affirmative teams performed strongly in this topic, with cases ranging from “there is no demand for whale meat or products, so lifting the ban would allow the free market to eliminate whaling” to “whales are no different from any other animal we kill for food”.

Tip: Remember that the same standards of logic and relevance as your prepared arguments apply to your rebuttal as well. Rebutting the idea that *harpooning is cruel and inhumane* by talking about *how cruel factory farming methods for cows and pigs are* isn't really an effective rebuttal — it's more an argument for not harpooning whales *and* not using cruel farming methods on cows and pigs. Instead, try thinking about whether the issue is important. Are there other ways to kill whales? Could such things be developed? Would commercial whaling then be okay? —M.C.

That governments should not fund the Arts.

Affirmative teams mostly took either one of two approaches to this topic: “the Arts are a good thing, but they can do better without government funding” or “the Arts are bad/pointless/unimportant, so the government shouldn't fund them”. Teams who took the first approach usually fared better, as rebuttal to the bad/pointless/unimportant case was both predictable and easy.

Tip: Avoiding a *hung* case is quite important (this is where some negative teams fell down). Remember that each speaker's arguments must relate to the whole topic. A team split such as:

1st speaker: Why the Arts are good.
2nd: Why Arts can't survive without gov't funding.

is problematic: the first speaker's arguments don't relate to the topic until the second speaker's arguments have been heard, so the first speaker's speech is basically irrelevant. —M.C.

That we should ban solariums.

This topic led to many interesting debates. Affirmative teams generally did well when they explained clearly what the problem was (people dying) and why a ban specifically was the best way to fix that, but were less persuasive when they simply gave reasons why solariums could be dangerous. Negative teams were able to run a strong line by talking about personal autonomy — our freedom to make our own decisions.

Tip: Bringing context to a debate can be very important when setting up a case. Many affirmative teams opened their case by spending a lot of time on a single high profile skin cancer death. Speaking instead about the overall number of skin cancer deaths and how that number compares to other causes of death is much more persuasive — rather than calling for a ban because of one person's actions, you are showing the large extent of the problem, a proper cause for alarm and drastic action (...like a ban!) —M.C.

Acknowledgements

Harangue thanks: Chris Hibbard, Amit Golder, Jonathan Benney, Laura Bellamy, Jennifer Duke, the Executive, and the Staff.

Harangue is published by the **Debaters Association of Victoria**
6/87-89 Flemington Road, North Melbourne
t: 9348 9477 f: 9348 9466 e: debater@netspace.net.au