

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Faculty of Science

Science and Engineering Regional Challenge Tuesday 7th July 2009

Background

The Science and Engineering Challenge, or the Challenge as it is better known, is an outreach program conducted by the University of Newcastle and run at different venues all around Australia. UNSW started with a Super Challenge (State Final) in 2007 and has continued with Regional Challenges since. Each day of the event involves up to 300 students engaging in a number of fun and exciting activities in science, technology and engineering. The aim of the Challenge is to encourage junior students to study science at higher (HSC) level. The Challenge is sponsored by Rotary and Engineers Australia.

Event Day

This year UNSW ran the event at the Roundhouse on Tuesday July 7th from 8.30 am to 3.30 pm. The bump-in, briefing and setting up was carried out on the previous afternoon, Monday July 6th.

There were about 260 Year 9 and 10 students in taking part in the 8 activities chosen by the University for this year.

Eight (8) High Schools with 8 teams each with their supervising teachers arrived on campus by 9.00 am and after a short welcome the activities started slightly early this year. The schools attending were :

- St Pauls Catholic College, Greystanes
- North Sydney Boys School
- St John Bosco College
- James Meehan High School
- Liverpool Girls High School
- Tempe High School
- Sydney Technical High School (Boys)
- Canterbury Boys High School (ASPIRE)

An ASPIRE school was also invited to participate in this year's event.

There were six (6) half day and two (2) full day activities. Teams allocated the half day activities did one activity in the morning and another in the afternoon. Points were awarded for each activity and announced at regular intervals.

Each activity was supervised by trained event assistants from the University and volunteers from different Rotary districts, YSA and Taylor Thompson Whitting Consulting Engineers. The Challenge Team leader and event assistant from the University of Newcastle emceed and kept scores of each activity. Members of the Rotary Districts judged the final bridge-testing activity.

A Teachers' Meeting was held from 9.40 am to 10.15 am to update them on the new activities been looked for next year.

The eight (8) activities were as follows :

1. Back to the future : time travel
2. Confounding Communications : intelligence radio signals
3. Cracking Cronies : code cracking to catch hackers
4. Eco-Habitech : hi-tech sustainable housing for the future
5. ElectraCITY : designing a new power network
6. Gold Fever : building a bridge to carry heavy loads of gold across
7. Job Juggle : getting CDs of 6 new artists on the shelves within a limited timeframe
8. The Dish : building a receiver to quickly detect and decode the signals from the stars

The overall winner was Tempe High School. The winner's and participation trophies were presented by Associate Professor Roger Read, Senior Associate Dean in the Faculty of Science.

The Southern NSW Super Challenge (State Finals) will be held at Macquarie University on 30th and 31st July. The lower-scoring winners and highest scoring second-placed schools will compete in the Super Challenge 'Plate' on Thursday 30 July. The highest scoring winners will compete against each other in the Super Challenge 'Cup' on Friday 31 July. In addition, the six highest scoring second-placed schools will also be invited to compete in the Super Challenge Plate.

Winners from the Super Challenge series will compete against each other at the Grand Challenge (National Finals) on Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 October 2009 in Bendigo, Victoria.

Prem L Kumar
Event Coordinator
Faculty of Science, UNSW

20th July 2009