



DEBATING THE FUTURE

Students at Pittsworth State High School have enjoyed public speaking in a number of forums since the school was established. There have been debating teams contesting local competitions in nearly each of those fifty years with some outstanding results. Many teachers have coached teams over successive years and have taken on the role of Coordinator which can be quite a daunting job.

The first team mentioned in the school magazine was comprised of Lynnsay Fryer, Kay Elsdon and Robert Harris and they were coached by Mr Brady. These students competed in the Apex Competition and debated against teams at Millmerran Convent and in Toowoomba. In 1970 the topic against Millmerran Convent was 'That Science is a Menace' and Pittsworth claimed victory on this occasion. Students spoke of '4 minutes of torture' in 1971 as Stephen Doyle, Kaye Warfield and Linda Hogg were beaten by St Saviour's Convent. Numbers swelled to four teams by 1976 and teams debated an interesting idea 'That only mugs work'.

By the 1980s teams were competing in a Round Robin format with four debates giving them a chance to hone their skills and the 1982 team of Monica Muller, Murray Briggs and Michelle Dodd, went to the State Finals. In 1991 the school entered the Queensland Debating Union competition for the first time and the junior team of Shannan James, Adam Henderson, Clare McKitrick and Andrew Wiemers were unlucky not to advance to the State Finals winning four of five debates. For some reason PSHS entered both QDU and the Apex competitions.

In 1996 the Year 10 team and the Senior B1 team made it to the State Final series in Brisbane and debating team photographs made it to the School magazine. In 1997 Pittsworth State High cracked the big time winning the Regional Championship with the team of Hollie Hintz, Sandy Stark, Casey James and Tanya Darr and coached by David Rogan.

In 2010 a group of devoted debaters graduated. Some members of this Year 12 team had been preparing debates for five years; M. Wheeldon, O. Murphy, N. Symes, S. Playford and J. D'Arcy. It's no surprise to know that a couple of these are now involved in law.

Since Mr Hawkins, Mr Rogan, Mrs Thorpe, Ms Wirth, Mr Burton left the school at various times and their tenure as Debating Coordinators, it has been difficult to field teams but we were up and running again in 2015 and last week the Year 10 team won their first debate.