

MEDIA RELEASE

Best of the west: students show maths counts everywhere

17 June 2016: The solutions of Australia's winning teams in the International Mathematical Modeling Challenge (IM²C) show that mathematical thinking is all around us.

Coordinated in Australia by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), IM²C is a mathematical modelling competition for teams of up to four students from secondary schools around the world that seeks to develop and enhance students' ability to visualise, understand and apply mathematics in the development of an original mathematical model to solve a common problem.

The problem set for the 2016 Challenge asked students to investigate how the organisers of an athletics competition could minimise their financial risk as they consider offering incentives to attract top-level competitors.

Australia's best two solutions, by teams from Perth Modern School and Trinity College, also in Perth, received Meritorious Awards, the second highest award category, in the international component of the competition against solutions from a pool of 40 teams from 23 participating countries, judged by the IM²C international panel this month.

The two Perth teams were among 24 Australian teams that unpacked the given IM²C problem over five consecutive days in order to hypothesise, test, and develop a working solution, before preparing and submitting a report on their solution to the Australian judging panel.

Ross Turner, project director for IM²C at ACER, commended the Perth Modern School and Trinity College teams for their international achievement, and the mathematical modelling work by all 14 Australian teams that submitted entries to the national phase of the competition.

"Mathematical modelling helps students to see the usefulness of mathematics," Mr Turner said. "It can help to build a bridge across what is often a yawning chasm between the mathematical work students typically do in school and the ways in which mathematics can be used to deal with important challenges in different real-world contexts.

"Mathematical modelling is used in many walks of life to employ mathematical tools and knowledge to describe and analyse situations in the real world.

"While many in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields conduct their work by developing and using mathematical models, mathematical modelling is not something that only high-powered STEM professionals do.

"Many everyday applications of mathematics undertaken by all of us, every day, from revising a recipe so it can feed more people to figuring out a more efficient route to work, are instances of mathematical modelling in action."

Australia's outstanding IM²C team members are Alan Cheng, Virinchi Rallabhandi, Alex Rohl and Daniel Ho from Perth Modern School, and Samuel Carbone, Kayvan Gharbi, Farruh Mavlonov and Trong Nguyen from Trinity College, Perth.

Other award-winning school teams in the national phase of the IM²C were from Canberra Grammar School; Coomera Anglican College, Qld; Glen Waverley Secondary College, Melbourne; Manea Senior College, Bunbury, WA; Mildura Senior College, Vic; Ormiston College, Brisbane; Somerville House, Brisbane; and St Ursula's College, Toowoomba, Qld.

Registrations for the 2017 IM²C are now open. For more information, visit www.immchallenge.org.au

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