

Australian - International Model Solar Challenge



Engineering excellence driven by model Solar Boats and Cars

Compiled by Tracey King

With a Mandatory Renewable Energy Target of 20 per cent set by the Federal and State Governments, now is the time to start educating our children about the potential of renewable energy.

Colin Frost, representative of our major sponsor, Engineers Australia said "the Solar Model Challenge is great way for young people to be innovative about alternative ways to generate energy. By exposing young people to this kind of challenge, they will be encouraged to develop a more sustainable approach to energy use. Over the weekend we have seen some fantastic work across engineering disciplines including feasibility, planning, design, operations and maintenance. We are very encouraged by the level of participation and hope that many of this year's students continue to work in this field."

The Solar Boat race is reasonably new to the program. This year there was some very hot competition, in particular the skills displayed by the Queensland team. Queensland Academy was the victor in the seniors boat race, with Thabeban State School from Queensland taking out the junior boat division. Ben from Queensland Academy said "the opportunity to participate was a great learning experience. I put the win down to superior design of the boat's hull, including choice of materials and general aerodynamics of the craft. I would like to study for a career in the aeronautics field."

The Solar Car Challenge was as always hotly contended and there was some incredibly action packed moments as schools competed to demonstrate their engineering prowess in building and designing a vehicle for speed and consistency of power driven by the sun. This year's winner from Moorebank High School New South Wales was well recognised by all competitors for the quality of their vehicle 'Stealth', which took out the championship. The Moorebank team said "We don't want to give away too much about our design. Our car was sponsored by Broens Engineering, using superior technology for gears and wheels and stabilising the axel component with stainless steel to reduce bumpiness."

Through the hands-on process of designing model solar cars and boats and experimenting with materials and construction techniques, students develop a sound understanding of fundamental scientific and engineering concepts for generating energy.

For more information contact:

Mr. Paul Wellington
Chairman AIMSC
Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
Monash University
Wellington Road
Clayton Victoria 3800
Australia

Email: Paul.Wellington@eng.monash.edu.au