

## YEAR 12 DEBATING CSDA GRAND FINAL

Last Friday Ms Sumner presented the Year 12 Debating CSDA Grand Final winners to the school assembly. Her comments can be found below:

*"I had the pleasure of coaching "the dream team" as they are known when they were in Year 8 and Year 9. Even at such a young age, these boys excelled and stood out against students from other schools in their debates: they displayed broad general knowledge, worked together as a team to encourage each other and challenge each other with critical thinking skills, they spoke with sophistication and oozed confidence with their charming manner.*

*But debating is very different to a lot of other extra-curricular activities. It's not black and white like either getting a goal or missing it. Sometimes, as a debater, or even a member of the audience, you can be so certain that 1 team has won the debate, but the adjudicator can make the opposite decision to what you were expecting. It's totally subjective and therefore absolutely heartbreaking at times.*

*In Year 8, these debaters sailed through to the quarter finals only to be told at the last minute that they were to debate in the elimination round against the "Wild Card Entry" of OLMC Parramatta. Despite their sophisticated argument, they did not win that night in what seemed like an incredibly unfair adjudication, but the boys were gentlemen and took it on the chin. Then last year, again, the boys were undefeated when they were in Year 11. This time, they made it all the way through to the grand final, only to be pipped at the post by losing in a split adjudication with 1 vote going to St Pius and 2 votes going to the opposition. They were so close, yet again.*

*I am convinced that it is these defeats that only made them stronger as a team. It made them even more determined to win this year and to ensure that their line of arguments were watertight and that they took every opportunity to rebut the opposition, leaving no question in the adjudicator's mind that they had won the debate. This year, they finally achieved their goal of winning in the grand final.*

*Josiah, our first speaker, is known for setting the tone for our team with his charming manner and clear introductions. His voice was once described by a teammate as being "like chocolate".*

*Ryan, our 2<sup>nd</sup> speaker, was exemplary at analysing the topic in detail and rebutting the other team, giving depth, expansion and relevant examples. And finally Keenan, our 3<sup>rd</sup> speaker, closed the deal. He attacked the opposition's arguments with strong rebuttals and drove home their points with vigour and zeal. He has a habit for speaking far beyond the 8 minute time limit, which only displays his passion for debating and determination to convince the adjudicator.*

*Their success is owed not just to these three boys. Credit must also go to their peers who have trained with them throughout the years and their various coaches, including Pius old boy James Camilleri who coached them to victory this year.*

*I have no doubt that these young men will continue to excel in life beyond the gates of St Pius and that the skills that they have built in their debating training will stand them in good stead in their careers, be it in the courtroom, the boardroom, or if Keenan realises his dream, as the future Prime Minister of Australia.*

*They have the intellect, the depth of knowledge, the critical analysis, the smooth manner and the gift of the gab. They are the 2016 CSDA Year 12 Champions and we are so proud of them. Congratulations boys!"*

Ms S Sumner