

Schools Handbook 2019



Brisbane Girls
Debating Association

About

The Brisbane Girls Debating Association Incorporated (BGDA) provides training and competitive opportunities to high school aged girls across the wider Brisbane area. Formed in 2010 by a small number of Brisbane schools in recognition of the disparity between opportunities for male and

female debaters at the time, the BGDA was proud to expand to schools across Brisbane in 2012. Since incorporating in 2014, the BGDA has continued to grow- seeing students continuously improve and celebrating significant achievements of participants such as being selected for the Queensland and Australian Debating Teams.

Why Join The BGDA?

The BGDA Competition aims to improve students' debating, public speaking, analytical thinking, teamwork and time management skills. If a student participates in the BGDA from Years 10 – 12 she will have completed a minimum of 15 more debates than would otherwise be available.

Since the inception of the BGDA, many girls that participate in the competition have gone on to trial and become successful members of the Queensland State Debating Team and various University teams.

This extra experience allows for further practice and implementation of new strategies and skills that the student receives in adjudicator and/or coaching feedback.

The competition is also incredibly valuable for students who are new to debating and public speaking, and want to learn and develop their skills in a friendly, supportive, and engaging environment.



"I felt that the emphasis of the BGDA competition was about learning and improving as debaters ... What I found was an extremely well-run and high quality competition, which gave high school girls the chance to debate about everything from feminism to international relations."

- Antonia Bellas
Queensland State Team 2013

What do we do?

1. Monday afternoon competition

Our competition for students in grades 10-12 involves a free training session, 5 preliminary debates and a Grand Final. Students benefit from the additional practice, valuable feedback, and short-preparation format.

3. Development Division

For the first time, in 2019 the BGDA will welcome students in grade 9 to participate in 3 short-preparation debates. Students who are older and are new to debating may also be allowed to register at the discretion of the Executive. This format does not include a Grand Final and instead focuses on extending upon basic debating skills to prepare for the senior years. Students will benefit from training, short-preparation practice, and a sense of community.

5. In-school training

Upon request, the BGDA can come to your school and provide a tailored training session or seminar to your students. Popular topics include: rebuttal, case preparation, manner, principled argumentation, improving general knowledge, and structure. To find out more, please get in touch with us at president.bgda@gmail.com.

2. One-day competitions

Once again the BGDA will run our Development Day (Sunday 10th February), a one-day mini competition in which students will complete three short-preparation debates. Students register individually and will be placed into teams throughout the day, giving students the chance to meet like-minded students from other girls and work with students across different year levels. Aimed at kick-starting the 2019 season, Development Day is a great opportunity for students intending to trial for the State Debating Team to hone their skills are a break from debating over the holidays. We strongly encourage all students to attend, even those who are newer to debating. Registration is free and includes three meals, expert adjudication, and a fun day of debating!

The BGDA is also aiming to run a one-day competition targeted at students outside of the Brisbane-metropolitan area in term 2, with more details to come!

4. Promoting our values

The BGDA aims to convey to all girls that debating is a space in which they are welcome and can thrive. Beyond enjoying the competitive and collegial aspects of high school debating, the BGDA believes that the critical thinking, creative, and argumentative skills that debating develops empower women to succeed in their chosen field and to stand up for themselves and others. We also produce training materials and content which promotes the involvement of girls in debating.

Benefits Of The BGDA Model

Optimised Format

1. Additional practice

All students in our grades 10-12 Monday competition will have the opportunity to participate in at least 5 debates, with our Development Day also offering an additional 3 debates. Practice makes perfect and our participants' success is testament to the benefits of additional debating opportunities. Whether BGDA is used to supplement participation in other competitions or as your primary debating experience, by participating in up to 9 debates across semester one students thrive and make real progress.

2. Tackle challenges in a supportive environment

The BGDA believe that when girls are supported and mentored they can do great things. Our competition offers a format that challenges students beyond what they would normally practice, with extended speech times and POIs for grade 10-12 students and the grade 12 competition including Reply Speeches. However, bracket-folding, which pairs teams of similar ability against each other, and our Development Division, aim to ensure that participants can enjoy a positive and empowering environment in which all girls can achieve their best.

3. Thoughtful schedules

High school is a busy time for everyone so the BGDA have tried to craft a schedule which provides minimum interference, aiming to avoid holding debates during busy assessment periods and weeks where debates are already occurring. Early start times and flexible re-scheduling also make the BGDA a great choice.

4. Valuable coaching and feedback

Our adjudicators are dedicated and highly experienced, with most having competed in national and international competitions. Extended adjudications by trained adjudicators provide in-depth and targeted feedback in a workshop-style format to help students understand their path to improvement. Further, the free training sessions before every round and additional training resources provide valuable tips for improvement and allow students to ask questions.

5. Accessible format

All debates are conducted in a short-preparation format, which gives students the opportunity to develop their teamwork and critical thinking skills. The short-prep format allows for the skill-level of the debaters themselves to be tested, rather than their coaches. As our interesting and challenges topics are tackled in a single hour of preparation time, teams may choose not to meet regularly, making this the perfect competition for busy senior students.

2019 Competition

Registration

The competition is open to all individuals who identify as female in Years 10 - 12 in the wider Brisbane area. Teams from co-educational schools are welcomed provided that they only enter female-identifying students. The Development Division is open to grade 9 students and other beginners, [who must be approved by the Executive](#).

Registrations are now open and close 5pm Friday February 15th. [Please register here](#).

If you are from a school that cannot create a full team or have extra debaters that cannot create an extra team, the BGDA may be able to arrange for partici-

pants to debate with girls from other schools. If this is the case, please contact our [Schools' Officer, Sarah Cameron](#), for further details.

The cost for registration will be \$110 per team for the 2019 Competition. Registration for the Development Division will be \$80 per team, or \$30 if individual registration is permitted.

However, if as a student or as a school this fee presents a significant financial burden, please do not hesitate in apply for either partial or whole fee waivers. See [our website for further details](#).

Round Dates

All rounds are held on Monday afternoons throughout Terms 1 and 2. The dates for the 2019 competition are as follows:

Development Day: Sunday February 10th
Round 1: February 18th
Round 2: March 4th
Round 3: April 1st
Round 4: April 29th
Round 5: May 13th
Grand Final: May 27th

Time

The schedule for each preliminary round will be:

3:50PM - Optional training session
4:30PM - Topic released and preparation time begins
5:30PM - Debate begins
6:30PM - Adjudication begins
7:00PM - Conclusion of debate

Location

All debates will be located in the G block of Brisbane Girls Grammar School (Gregory Terrace, Spring Hill).



Recognition For High Achievement

1. The Best Speaker in each year level of the preliminary rounds is recognised on the Finals Night and will receive an award and a cash prize;
2. In 2019 we are introducing a BGDA Spirit award which will recognise students who have demonstrated passion for debating, commitment to improvement, and community contribution;
2. Teams are fairly and transparently selected for the Finals per our [Qualification Policy](#);
3. Winning teams will receive a trophy and a cash prize for each team member.

See our website for our [Awards Policies](#).



Contact

If you are interested in participating in the BGDA or have any further enquires please do not hesitate to contact the Schools' Officer or the President.

President
Emily Leggett
Email: president.bgda@gmail.com

Schools' Officer
Sarah Cameron
Email: schools.bgda@gmail.com

Website

Our website contains all the relevant information on topics such as the competition rules, criteria for 'Best Speaker' awards, sponsorship and more. The topic and draw details will be regularly updated throughout the 2018 competition.

www.bgda.org.au

Facebook

The BGDA also have a Facebook page that students, teachers and parents may 'Like' to receive relevant information and notices (all of which will also be available on the website).

www.facebook.com/thebgda

Past BGDA Participants

Here is what some of our other past girls have said:

"I cannot thank the BGDA enough for all the extra debating practice and good quality feedback they provided me with. Their continuous help and support improved my debating so much."

- Katie Cockburn, Secretary of the BGDA 2014-2015, President 2017-2018, Queensland State Squad 2013, BGDA Participant 2012-13

"The BGDA Competition is an incredibly important and necessary tournament. By offering young women the opportunity to increase our debating experience, it allows us to compete on a local, national and international stage. Personally, I found the in-depth and engaging feedback we received after each debate to be an amazing tool in improving my debating."

- Jane Carroll, Australian National Debating Team 2014, Queensland State Debating Team 2013-14, BGDA Participant 2013-14