Brilliant minds give team state title

At the annual State Tournament of Minds finals held at Griffith University, Brisbane recently, Good Shepherd College students jumped off the planet and into a galaxy of creativity. Their ability to find solutions to complex problems not only earned them honours and entrance to the national competition, it also made a great impression on the judges.

Head of science, Martin Polkinghorn, who has coached competing teams since 1996, said the judging panel were “blown away” by work quality.

The school sent four teams and results included the Applied Technology team winning honours and the Maths Engineering team gaining the Queensland title for the third consecutive year.

The team goes to the Australasian Pacific Finals of Tournament of Minds in Darwin where they will be defending the title against teams from all states and territories, plus Hong Kong, Singapore and New Zealand.

This talented group is seeking sponsorship to assist with the costs associated with the venture and would appreciate any community support. Please contact Good Shepherd College on 5455 6600 if you can help.

Tournament of Minds is a competition designed to encourage students to think outside the square.

Team coach Martin Polkinghorn described the student’s challenge and their response:

“The three-hour problem was called Unilateral Disarmament and the setting was many centuries into the future, when, as a consequence of over-use of technological gadgetry, humans had evolved to the point where only one arm was strong and useful.

The engineering component of the problem required students to design and create a tool that could be used to remove three objects (an eraser, a biro and a ping-pong ball) through three small windows that had been cut out of the top of an A4-sized box.

Of course these objects just represented a whole gamut of creative possibilities.

The designed tool had to be operated by the fingers of only one hand from outside the box and had to made from paper, rubber bands, plasticine, paddles, pops and cotton.

The fastest time recorded was 68 seconds until the Good Shepherd team performed.

The audience was astonished and was heard to gasp when the gadget designed removed all three items in fewer than 10 seconds in one movement.

The dramatic component of the solution also had the judges very impressed with the team electing for song and dance as additional styles.”