



THE
**BRISBANE
DIALOGUES**

Dialogues @ School **Second Series** Program Guide

AN INITIATIVE OF THE BRISBANE DIALOGUES

"The aim of argument, or of discussion, should not be victory, but progress."

- Joseph Joubert

French Enlightenment/Romantic writer

"I've come to believe, given the plethora of difficult issues which confront us as a nation, as a people, our greatest problem is that we cannot debate any of them rationally and calmly, without emotion, without hatred ... you won't get good public policy out of a bad, or a truncated, or a silenced discussion..."

- Hon John Anderson AC

Former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia



FOLLOWING THE BREAKOUT SUCCESS OF THE INAUGURAL ROUND LAST YEAR, IN 13 SCHOOLS FROM SYDNEY TO TOWNSVILLE, THE PROGRAM IS BEING EXPANDED ACROSS AUSTRALIA IN 2023/24.



WHY DIALOGUES @ SCHOOL?

PURPOSE

Increasing polarisation and uncivil discourse are undermining social cohesion, prosperity and wellbeing. The Dialogues @ School program aims to stimulate better discussions - genuine dialogue - in schools across the nation and beyond. By helping students, teachers, parents and broader school communities to have productive discussions, we stand a greater chance of finding points of agreement with one another and ultimately improving public discourse, policy and outcomes.

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

Some of the benefits are helping students to think independently, reason socially, seek solutions positively, disagree better and feel they have “a voice”. There is a longer list of benefits here.

BENEFITS FOR SCHOOLS

Advantages for schools include: providing a unique, quality opportunity for students || developing a healthy school culture of respectful dialogue || showcasing student and staff talent || fostering a stronger school community. Here is a long list of principals' and teachers' own stated motivations for participation in the inaugural round and here are some testimonials from teachers and moderators in the inaugural round.





PROGRAM SUMMARY

- A significant civic and pedagogic initiative of The Brisbane Dialogues to engender civil discourse and “social reasoning” in schools
- A single annual, *non-competitive* discussion event - a dialogue, not a debate - arranged by schools (singly or in pairs) with guidance and support from The Brisbane Dialogues
- The topic for 2023/24 is **COULD AI IMPROVE EDUCATION FOR ALL?**
- Schools choose their own time, date, place and scale of event - anything from a lunch discussion, to a combined class to a major school-wide community occasion
- Panels consist of 3-5 students, targeted at Year 11, but can be from any year
- Adult moderators sourced from staff or school communities (or by The Brisbane Dialogues, on a best efforts basis, as a last resort)
- The Brisbane Dialogues provides briefing materials on the topic and how to run and moderate a school dialogue
- Schools *must* provide one or more of: a high-quality AV or audio recording, transcript or a detailed summary of the discussion, for inclusion in the report mentioned following
- The Brisbane Dialogues produces a highlights reel and a written a report on “the voice of youth” on the topic for presentation to parliaments by nominated students (optional for each school)
- “Through-the-year” resources and activities (also optional) are in development (online reference, resources and training || Dialogues Club package || Youth Ambassador Program)
- No cost to participate
- Wealthier schools are encouraged to [sponsor the program](#) financially to further increase its reach



BRISBANE DIALOGUES

The Brisbane Dialogues (TBD) was founded in Brisbane in late 2019 by a group of friends concerned about polarisation and deterioration of public (and private) discourse. We also saw a need and opportunity to establish a truly independent public forum for discussion of big ideas and issues, contributing significantly to national discussions. It remains Australia's only dedicated "civil discourse organisation".

TBD is a wholly independent, neutral, intergenerational, volunteer-based, not-for-profit association to stimulate across-the-aisle discussions about big ideas and issues. We are determinedly non-partisan and non-aligned and aspire to being non-parochial and inclusive. Our mission is to demonstrate what better discussions look like, and help others turn one-way talks, one-sided panels and adversarial arguments into genuine dialogues.

WE CONDUCT LARGER PUBLIC EVENTS (BIG DIALOGUES), A SERIES OF PRIVATE ONES (FIRST TUESDAY CLUB) AND VARIOUS OTHERS, SUCH AS DIALOGUES @ SCHOOL, IN COLLABORATION WITH LIKE-MINDED ORGANISATIONS.

WWW.BRISBANEDIALOGUES.ORG



PROGRAM TIMELINE

**PROGRAM GUIDE
DIALOGUES @ SCHOOL**

SEP-OCT
SUBSEQUENTLY
OCT-MAY
MAY - JUNE
MID 2024

Schools invited to participate

Participating schools selected and advised and briefing packs sent

Schools organise time slots, venues, technical services, MC/moderators, student panellists, local marketing/invitations - supported by TBD as required.

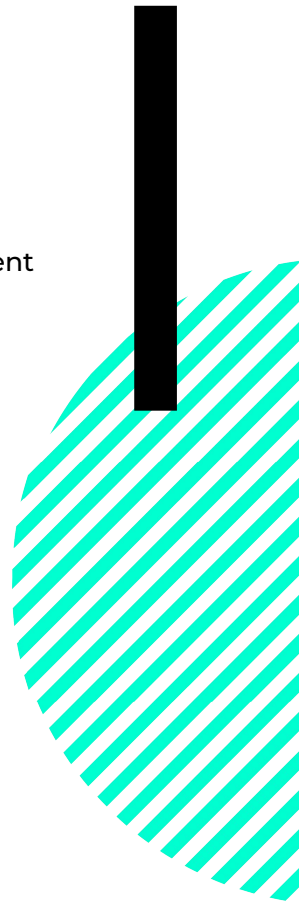
Dialogue events held

Recordings and/or transcripts or discussion summaries submitted

TBD volunteers review and create highlights video and report on The Voice of Youth on the topic

Post-event publicity and presentation to parliament(s)

Pre-launch of 2025 program





DIALOGUE TOPIC: Could AI Improve Education For All?

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been developing steadily and quietly for a long time. The explosive launch of ChatGPT, its successors and competitors since November last year has now made their potential impact on education - and humanity at large - front of mind for many.

The genie is out of the bottle - everyone now needs to work out how to take advantage of the resulting opportunities and manage or offset the complications and risks presented by AI. Many students and schools are understandably grappling with the immediate implications for assignments and assessment, but AI will affect students' whole lives, certainly working lives, possibly more than any other single factor.

In the words of Brian Schmidt, Nobel Laureate and vice-chancellor of ANU: "You're either going to be replaced by ChatGPT-like things or you're going to use them to be more productive." (The Australian, 12 Apr 23).

There is much to be discussed! See below for a sample of relevant questions or issues. A more detailed brief will be provided to participating schools to set the scene for the dialogues and start students researching and thinking about the issues raised by AI for education in the wider social context.

How will, or could, AI:

- change the way we teach and learn?
- affect the role of teachers and teacher-student relationships?
- help students learn more effectively?
- make education more accessible and affordable?
- improve - or worsen - equity and inclusion in education?
- change the nature and purpose of education, for better or worse?

The overarching purpose of the topic is to stimulate students to think wider and deeper together about AI and hopefully come to some agreement about what needs to be done individually and collectively to ensure net benefits, especially to those at risk of losing out.



REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOLS

Schools need to organise the following for their dialogue:

- a time and date in the school calendar, allowing for at least an hour, preferably more, to include introductions and audience participation by way of Q&A's
- a venue with appropriate technical capabilities (preferably sound, lighting, AV recording), as congenial as possible for a dialogue, preferably of a suitable size for the audience
- 3-5 student speakers
- adult moderator (but see below)
- an MC (typically a student or teacher; could be the adult moderator)
- the audience
- overall management and coordination (before the event and on the day), with a nominated responsible person to liaise with TBD and any external moderator

AUDIOVISUAL RECORDING

High quality recording of the dialogues is a key component of the program, so that the “report on the voice of youth” on the topic and highlights reel can be produced. Schools may edit footage before sending it. Audio-only recordings are acceptable, but your school will not be included in the highlights reel.

Transcripts or summaries of the discussion written by students are very welcome. *One or other of these must be provided as an absolute minimum for participation, if no recording is provided.*

AUDIENCE - ADVERTISING/MARKETING

It is entirely up to individual schools whether they choose to make it a smaller internal event or a larger school community one, or something in between.

However, schools are encouraged to take the opportunity to showcase student talent and school culture and invite a wider audience, as several schools did, to great effect, in the inaugural round.

The event can be marketed through the usual school communication channels, including school newsletters, emails to parents, printed and digital posters etc. TBD will provide a comprehensive suite of marketing templates.



PANELLISTS AND PANEL BALANCING

It's up to individual schools to choose the best likely student speakers as they see fit. A suggestion is to request that students nominate themselves by submitting a brief e.g. 100 word summary of their thoughts on the topic to the teacher(s) organising the dialogue. The teacher should then use their judgement to choose students who are likely to:

- embody the spirit of dialogue by engaging with their peers respectfully and honestly
- seek commonality as opposed to division on these topics, even if they cannot agree on everything
- be representative of conflicting or diverse opinions on the topic

MODERATOR

An experienced adult moderator is generally key. This is ideally a community leader from outside the school with a good background in managing difficult discussions (e.g. academic, politician, journalist, lawyer or other professional, practising or retired). See **list of last year's moderators** for examples.

Alternatively, the moderator could be a teacher or executive from the school, or possibly even an outstanding senior student. TBD will help and advise as necessary and use best efforts to source a moderator as an absolute last resort.

MC

A host is needed to introduce the speakers, explain Dialogues @ School briefly, mention the "The Brisbane Rule" (see last page) and set the scene generally. The MC would ideally be a student, perhaps from the drama and arts side who is not participating in the dialogue itself, or it could be a teacher or the moderator.

OVERALL COORDINATION (BEFORE AND ON THE DAY)

The school supervisors of the Dialogues @ Schools program are expected to organise each of the required items before the dialogue. On the day, they will be responsible for ensuring the dialogue runs smoothly.



REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS

Students participating in the Dialogues @ School program are expected to complete some background research and preparation on the topic, starting with the brief to be provided by TBD (see below). Students should be prepared to bring to the dialogue:

- facts about ChatGPT and similar apps as well as about AI more generally
- an awareness of a variety of opinions on the topic and related issues
- their own opinions based on their own research and experience

In preparing for the dialogue, it is important that students understand that they are not seeking to prove that their opinion is superior to others, as is the case in a debate format. **It is a dialogue not a debate.** Instead students should aim to form their own opinions and then engage in dialogue with others to explore differences, certainly, but crucially find points of agreement on which to build solutions.



SUPPORT FROM THE BRISBANE DIALOGUES

- TBD will provide a more detailed guide on event management - ***How To Run A School Dialogue***. The guide will include further advice on marketing the event, sourcing a moderator and/or MC, AV recording, preparing speakers and event coordination.
- There will be a separate ***Guide for Moderators***. As mentioned above, if schools have genuine difficulty sourcing a moderator, we will use our best efforts to find one.
- We will be using social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter), email lists and possibly mainstream media to promote the program generally. We will make our marketing channels available to schools wishing to market their individual events to the wider community.
- While each school is responsible for running their respective events, we will advise and support you as much as we possibly can, on all aspects - curatorial, technical, organisational or marketing. If you need support, please don't hesitate to reach out.

SUPPORTERS





POST-EVENT

After TBD has received the recordings (and/or transcripts and notes of highlights) from participating schools, we will review and distil their content into a highlights video and a report to be presented to one or more parliaments as “The Voice of Youth” on the topic.

Participating schools will be referenced in the white paper however the identities of participating students and teachers will not be referenced.

NEXT STEPS

Schools wishing to participate now need to:

- communicate their intention to us
- secure a time and date in the school calendar
- obtain any internal approvals needed
- book the venue

If you have further questions about the program, don't hesitate to contact us:

RAPHAEL WIXTED

PROGRAM MANAGER, Dialogues @ School

0431 909 083 | schools@brisbanedialogues.org

MURRAY HANCOCK

CONVENOR, The Brisbane Dialogues

0415 429 723 | info@brisbanedialogues.org

THE BRISBANE RULE

“ All participants agree to listen carefully, speak respectfully and concentrate on the content of discussions, not on characters - before, during and afterwards, online and offline. ”