



WHAT IS TOM?

Tournament of Minds (TOM) is an Australian educational program developed especially, but not exclusively, for talented and creative students across all sectors of primary and secondary school education. It provides a dynamic approach to learning, whilst developing students' enthusiasm for experimentation, problem finding and problem-solving.

Students are formed into vertically grouped team structures at Primary and Secondary levels, and undertake one of the four discipline groups: **STEM; The Arts; Language Literature;** and **Social Sciences**. The team members work together for six weeks - without assistance from teachers, parents or peers - to develop a creative way to communicate their solution to a panel of judges and an audience, working within pre-determined parameters, complex criteria and the deadline of Tournament Day. The teams must also participate in an unseen **Spontaneous Challenge®** on the day.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Tournament of Minds' aim is to enhance the potential of our youth by developing diverse skills, enterprise, time management, and the discipline to work collaboratively within a challenging and competitive environment.

TOM is dedicated to increasing the chances of success that, as a society, we capture and grow the gifts and talents of as many students as possible. We believe that the first requirement for achieving such an outcome is that we value, reward and celebrate intellectual excellence, creativity and originality. The second requirement is the recognition that this is a team endeavour - the enormous challenges facing our world require us to learn how to work in teams.

Therefore, we promote a team activity that thrives on overcoming challenges and values creativity, originality, diversity, respect and encouragement in addressing challenges across the spectrum of science, technology, arts and humanities.

The Tournament of Minds' objectives are:

- To promote the stimulation of real, open-ended challenges;
- To develop creative problem-solving approaches and techniques;
- To foster cooperative learning and teamwork;
- To promote knowledge and appreciation of self and others;
- To encourage experimentation and risk-taking;
- To expand and reward creative and divergent thinking;
- To stimulate a spirit of inquiry and a love of learning;
- To develop enterprise; and
- To celebrate excellence.

BACKGROUND

Tournament of Minds was launched in Victoria in 1986 by The Hon. Justice Michael Kirby. It was an initiative of the Victorian Association for Gifted and Talented Children and in its first year 290 children participated.

Since its inception, TOM has grown at an exceptional rate. It now operates in all Australian states and territories, and continues to strengthen overseas in New Zealand, Hong Kong, Thailand, India, Cambodia and Indonesia.

Success has largely come about because TOM has responded to the need for

challenging, team-oriented and exciting educational experiences which engage the creative minds of students. It has developed and maintained high-quality curriculum materials and a well-organised administrative structure.

TOM is regarded as a significant program by all State and Catholic Education Departments and by the Independent School System. The *2012 Victorian Inquiry into the Education of Gifted and Talented Students* listed TOM as a key competition for gifted and talented students in the state.

Tournament of Minds is a not-for-profit organisation run by a voluntary committee. It is held annually and is conducted in three stages:

- Regional Tournaments
- State Final Tournament
- Australasian Pacific Final (October)
- Check your TOM branch site for regional and state dates (late August/early September)

KEY INFORMATION

- School registration costs \$220 and the fee for each nominated team is \$50.
- The TOM website and portal at www.tom.edu.au is the key facility by which your school communicates with TOM. It allows you to register your school; nominate the team's chosen challenge and team members' names; access resources such as manuals, forms and practice challenges; register for workshops; submit Challenge clarifications; access participation certificates; provide feedback; and ask questions.
- Primary teams are usually Year 4 to Year 6 students and Secondary teams are made up of Year 7 to Year 10 students. Teams require exactly seven team members, with no more than four from any one year level. In addition, Secondary teams must have two Year 7 students. *See table below for divisions.
- The same team members must do both the Long Term and Spontaneous Challenges. No substitution of team members is allowed.
- Each team must be assigned a facilitator, who is usually a teacher or parent, although some schools use Year 11 and Year 12 students.
- Many schools use term 2 to train the students. This may include sessions on: team-building; learning and practising creative thinking and drama skills; practising lots of Spontaneous Challenges; and discussing the Long Term Challenge structure, scoring and rules.
- TOM uses a code of conduct that requires students to undertake the program fairly and respectfully. It is called "The Spirit of TOM".
- It is a fundamental element of TOM that the solution must come from the ideas of the team members. Team facilitators, other teachers, friends or family cannot help the team with solution ideas, but may assist in teaching any skills that they may need.



BENEFITS TO YOUR SCHOOL

TOM offers schools a low cost, novel and exciting program suitable for all your students - with the real world benefits of working in teams; effective problem solving; and creative thinking.

Tournament of Minds synchronizes perfectly with the AUS Curriculum, in addition to our core Challenge areas of STEM, language literature and social sciences:

Physical, Personal and Social Learning

Civics and Citizenship

- Civic knowledge and understanding
- Community engagement

Interpersonal Development

- Building social relationships
- Working in teams

Personal Learning

- The individual learner
- Managing personal learning

Interdisciplinary Learning

Communication

- Listening, viewing and responding
- Presenting

Design, Creativity and Technology

- Investigating and designing
- Producing
- Analysing and evaluating

Information and Communications Technology

- ICT for visual thinking
- ICT for creating
- ICT for communicating

Thinking Processes

- Reasoning, processing and inquiry
- Creativity
- Reflection, evaluation and metacognition

TOM provides a rare opportunity for students with a passion for learning and problem-solving to demonstrate their creative skills and talents in an exciting, vibrant and public way.



Quick Guide

Schools

RESOURCES

TOM provides a range of resources, materials and workshops to assist schools to run the program and train your teams. Registered schools receive an Instruction Manual, the Challenges and numerous downloadable materials to help teams through the process. In addition there are resources for purchase, including past Challenges on USB and the *Resources for Team Facilitators* handbook. Workshops and student incursions support our program and are particularly useful for teachers and students who are new to TOM. Order, cost and registration details for resources and workshops are available on our website.

IF YOU NEED HELP...

If you need an Info Pack or have questions regarding the program, please contact the relevant state director.

TEAM DIVISIONS...

Both divisions receive the same Challenges.

Tournament of Minds has two divisions. These are dependent on Branch systems. The division entered is determined by the grade level of the oldest team member. Please see the table below for your state, territory or country.

Division 1

Division 2

ACT	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NSW	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NT	T	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
QLD	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SA	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
TAS	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
VIC	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
WA	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NZ	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Please note: Teams from other countries need to contact the Director of their country to clarify which division is applicable.