

# Keypads tally cut and thrust of Aboriginal students' debate

**T**welve Aboriginal debating teams assembled at the NSW Parliament's Legislative Council on 17th August to debate six matters of public importance in an event-appropriate "Government v Opposition" style debate:

- 1 That anybody can lead the Aboriginal people
- 2 That intervention is needed for Aboriginal people to adjust to today's society
- 3 That government policies assist in closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities
- 4 That remote Aboriginal communities are the key to closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people
- 5 That we need Aboriginal figureheads to inspire the Aboriginal population to achieve higher
- 6 That there is enough media coverage of Aboriginal achievements.

Using handheld TurningPoint Keypads, the opinions of the audience were recorded before each proposition was debated and again after, and the results displayed as bar charts.

The topic that caused the biggest upset was: "That anybody can lead the Aboriginal people". Before the debate 55 per cent opposed the statement. But after debaters made the point that politicians such as Gough Whitlam and Kevin Rudd had taken a stand in support of Aboriginal causes and that, also due to political stereotypes being more frequently broken, leadership could spring from many sources. The result was that the Government line was supported by 56 per cent – a complete turnaround from the pre-debate score of 28 per cent.

The Aboriginal Debate, which is now in its sixth year, was organised by the Sydney Region Aboriginal Education Team of the NSW Department of Education and Training in conjunction with the Parliament House Education Section.

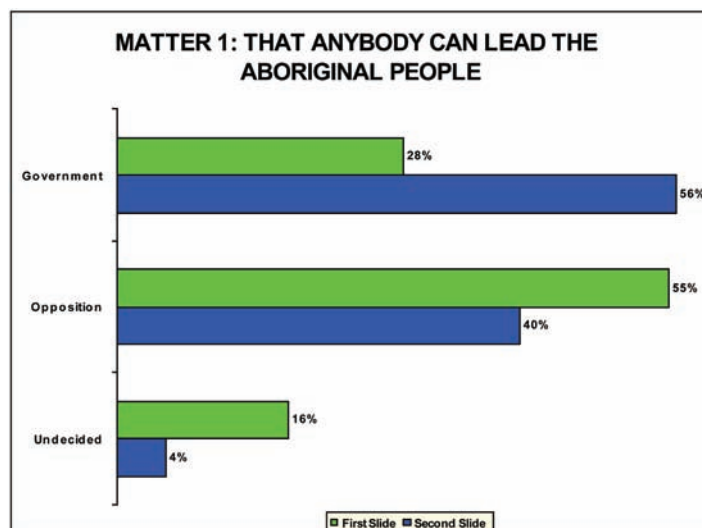
Schools involved this year were Dulwich Hill High School of Visual Arts and Design, Endeavour Sports High School, Port Hacking High School, Matraville Sports High School, Rose Bay Secondary College, Sydney Secondary College Balmain, Blackwattle Bay and Leichhardt Campuses, Alexandria Park Community School, Gynea Technology High School, Dulwich Hill High School of Visual Arts and Design, Georges River College Penshurst Girls Campus, Newtown High School of Performing Arts and South Sydney High School.

Keypad Interactive supplied the TurningPoint Student Response System and Keypads. CEO, Joe Nigem, said that he was impressed by the tough line of some of the arguments and the power of the debaters to swing opinions. This year, the company, in conjunction with the NSW Department of Education and Training Sydney Region Aboriginal Education Unit, will host four events for Aboriginal students at its Solution and Training Centre located in Homebush, Sydney.

- ◆ A day of professional learning in ICT for regional Aboriginal staff
- ◆ A robotics workshop for Aboriginal students in Years 9 and 10



*Drama in the House. TurningPoint Student Response System and Keypads were used to record audience votes*



*The power of persuasion demonstrated. Before debate and after votes on the proposition: That anybody can lead the Aboriginal people*

- ◆ Workplace experience for Aboriginal students in Year 10
- ◆ Traineeship for an Aboriginal student who displays strong interest and aptitude in the use of technology for learning.

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