

Bush Bots back from Sydney

By **PUBLICITY OFFICER**

The Wee Waa Bush Bots have returned from doing battle in Sydney at the FIRST Robotics Championships.

The first time rookies representing the local high school did exceptionally well, coming in an impressive 14 from a field of 46.

One of the team mentors, teacher Steve Druce said the experience had been nothing short of awesome with the team of eight students excelling to be selected by a highly experienced team from Tasmania to form an alliance with themselves and the team from Ivanhoe, NSW.

Mr Druce said "It was an intense four days with all teams living up to firsts moto of 'gracious professionalism' which saw teams working together to help each other with repairs and programming, only to head out and compete against one another."

In fact it was this attribute that team members Noah Platt and Doug Anderson said really stood out for them.

"To see how you can compete against each other, but help each other when you have a breakdown or hit a stumbling block. The level of cooperation was amazing and it really taught me something," said Noah.

Mr Druce said that day one was set aside for practice matches and be-

cause the Bush Bot team was ahead of the pack with their robot ready by late morning.

"We were able to participate in six practice matches," he said.

"When another team wasn't ready, we could fill their slot. This practice was invaluable as each person on the team had a critical role to play and they got to refine what they were doing."

Day two moved on to qualification matches, with each team playing 10 games.

After each match teams were ranked. During these matches all of the teams were observing each other, working out what two teams they wanted to form an alliance.

"Each alliance has three teams and you need to find teams that are not only very good, but whose robots have the capability to perform movements that complimented your robots," said Mr Druce.

"The Bush Bots robot's specialisation was breaking defences as well as shooting goals. Ours was the only rookie team with this dual capability. This was how we formed our alliance with Ivanhoe and Remotely Challenged from Tasmania."

The team arrived home last Sunday, exhausted but elated.

The level of concentration the competition required was quite

incredible.

Team member Cait Downes said one of the highlights of the experience for her was how well the team had worked together under pressure.

"It shows you what you can do," she said.

Another fellow Bush Bot Montana Jones said: "The last three months has been pretty incredible."

"From just a large box of components arriving, we designed and created a robot, learnt how to operate it then took it to Sydney and competed with the best."

"Learning to do something so different to anything you've done before was fantastic. It's been fascinating and really enjoyable. We have a great team."

When asked where to from here, it spurred a unanimous response of 'next year will be bigger and better and so will our robot.'

Mr Druce said that the team spent most of the trip home strategising and coming up with ideas to build on this year's achievements.

The school is hosting a lunch next week on behalf of the team to thank the many local companies and groups who had helped contribute towards making the Bush Bots participation in the FIRST challenge possible.

More photos of the trip next week



BUSH BOTS: Team mentor Steve Druce, Abby Downes, Charles Young, Jordan Morrison, front, team mentor Mrs Sharon