

Young engineers

HUNDREDS of primary and high school students from across the Manning, Great Lakes and Gloucester areas took part in the MidCoast Science and Engineering Challenge held at the Taree racecourse.

Over the four days of competition, three discovery days were held for years 5 to 6 students from 17 primary schools from Taree, Forster, Tuncurry, Nabiac, Bulahdelah, Old Bar, Gloucester, Barrington, Wingham, Cundletown, Coopernook, Lansdowne and Upper Lansdowne.

Day one winners were Manning Valley Anglican College, day two winners were Bulahdelah Central School and day three winners were a combined team from Coopernook, Lansdowne and Upper Lansdowne.

Over the three discovery days there were just on 300 students on each day.

During that time four bridge building teams managed to get the top score by getting all the 'gold' over their bridge - Barrington, Taree West, Tinonee and the combined team of Coopernook, Lansdowne and Upper Lansdowne.

The discovery days were enjoyed by all with the Rotary Club of Taree North supplying a barbecue lunch for all who attended.

Day four was the challenge for the high schools of the area, with teams from Taree, Forster, St Clare's, Chatham, Wingham and Gloucester competing for the honour of representing the MidCoast at the Northern NSW finals in Newcastle in August.

The winning team was Taree High.

Committee chairman John Walton said the challenge was an initiative of the University of Newcastle to try and address the shortage of both scientists and engineers, both nationally and worldwide.

"From a pilot program 11 years ago with 300 students from one high school with minimal sponsorship and a few Rotary volunteers, we now are catering for some 20,000 students a year and 200 plus sponsors and 500 plus Rotarians and volunteers."

John also thanked major sponsor MidCoast Water, Taree Wingham Race Club, AGL Gloucester and the Rotary clubs of Zone 4 (Taree, Taree North, Taree on Manning, Tuncurry Forster, Great Lakes, Forster on Wallis, Wingham and Gloucester).

Next year will be the 10th year since the challenge started in Taree, an opportunity to celebrate the fact that the MidCoast challenge has grown from 300 students to this year's 1100 students and growing with the support of sponsors.



Raysheem Clark and Lucas Bramble from Chatham High.