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Future STEM leaders revealed as Australia confronts critical science and technology skills gaps

As Australia faces growing demand for science, mathematics and technology expertise, 27 high-achieving students have been chosen to represent the nation at the 2026 International Science, Mathematics and Informatics Olympiads.

The Year 11 and 12 students, from high schools across New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, the ACT, South Australia and Queensland, were announced today at a ceremony attended by Australia's Chief Scientist Professor Tony Haymet at Australian Parliament House.

They will compete in five International Olympiads in July and August: Biology in Vilnius, Lithuania; chemistry in Tashkent, Uzbekistan; earth science in Turin, Italy; informatics in Tashkent, Uzbekistan; and mathematics in Shanghai, China. Students selected for a sixth Olympiad, physics, will not compete this year due to heightened travel warnings in the host city of Bucaramanga, Colombia.

Each student was selected following a rigorous national process of extension programs, enrichment activities and exams run by not-for-profit organisations the Australian Maths Trust (AMT) and Australian Science Innovations (ASI).

"Behind each student is a story: of family, of a spark of interest in their chosen field, of pursuing their passion, of dedicated educators supporting their growth, of countless hours of hard work. These students will play a key role in the future of science, mathematics and technology in Australia," AMT Board Chair Dr Geoff Shuetrim said.

"The Australian Government's *Ambitious Australia*[1] report makes it clear that our long-term prosperity will depend on a sustainable pipeline of mathematicians, software developers, AI researchers, scientists, engineers and innovators. That pipeline can only be built through education and long-term support for the people who excel in these fields."

The Australian Academy of Science's 2025 *Australia's Future: Science 2035*[2] report projects capability gaps in eight science areas expected to be increasingly important by 2035: agricultural science, AI, biotechnology, climate science, data science, epidemiology, geoscience and materials science.

[1] https://www.industry.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-03/ambitious-australia-strategic-examination-of-research-and-development-final-report.pdf
[2] https://science.org.au/sites/default/files/Publication/document/australian-science-australias-future-science-2035.pdf

"The 27 students selected to compete in the Olympiads are a reminder that Australia has extraordinary young scientific talent. The challenge is to ensure this talent is supported all the way through school, further study and into meaningful careers," ASI Chair Associate Professor Stella Clark AM said.

"If Australia wants to meet its ambitions in areas such as climate resilience, health, advanced technology and food security, we need to keep investing in education, pathways and opportunities to help young people see science, mathematics and informatics as fields where they can make a difference.

"Science and maths are central to how we understand the world, solve problems and improve everyday life. These disciplines are needed in business, on boards, in public policy and across every sector that depends on good decisions, evidence and innovation.

"Without sustained funding of education, training and pathways programs, as well as encouragement of young people who show early aptitude and interest, Australia risks losing the science and maths capability it will need in the decades ahead."

Among the talented cohort competing in this year's Olympiads are:

- Jayden Pan (Shore School, NSW) who won gold at last year's International Maths Olympiad and is looking to repeat the achievement.
- Isobel McAllister (Gippsland Grammar School, VIC), an alum of the Junior Science Olympiads program who is passionate about sustainability and will compete in the biology competition.
- Owen Zhai (Brisbane State High School, QLD), who earned gold for Australia at the 2024 International Junior Science Olympiad, and silver at the 2025 Asian Physics Olympiad, the 2025 International Physics Olympiad, and the 2026 Asian Physics Olympiad.
- Amber Li (Pymble Ladies' College, NSW) who has won three consecutive gold medals at the European Girls Maths Olympiad and an Honourable Mention at an International Maths Olympiad.

The Australian Science, Mathematics and Informatics Olympiads program is funded through the Inspiring Australia initiative, contributing to the Australian Government's vision to engage all Australians with science. The programs are also supported by major partners Citadel Securities and Jane Street, as well as the Australian National University, Optiver and the University of New South Wales.

2026 International Science, Mathematical and Informatics Olympiad teams

International Biology Olympiad, 12-19 July, Vilnius, Lithuania
Isobel McAllister, Gippsland Grammar School, VIC
Ethan Tay, Waverley Christian College, VIC
Cameron Wong, Scotch College Hawthorn, VIC
Tiffany Yi, Presbyterian Ladies' College Sydney, NSW

International Chemistry Olympiad, 10-19 July, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Chloe Jain, Rossmoyne Senior High School, WA
Daniel Lin, James Ruse Agricultural High School, NSW
Ishan Umranikar, Melbourne Grammar School, VIC
Dylan Win, Normanhurst Boys High School, NSW

International Earth Science Olympiad, 20-27 Aug, Turin, Italy
Hazel Chan, The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School, VIC
Stephanie Cheng, James Ruse Agricultural High School, NSW
Mali Hart, Bunbury Catholic College, WA
Yukai Yan, Sydney Church of England Grammar School, NSW

International Olympiad in Informatics, 9-16 Aug, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Matthew Lin, Scotch College, VIC
Philip Liu, Scotch College, VIC
Nathan Zhou, Knox Grammar School, NSW
Justin Goh, Christ Church Grammar School, WA

International Mathematics Olympiad, 10-21 July, Shanghai, China
Liam Celinski, North Sydney Boys High School, NSW
Jayden Pan, Shore School, NSW
Amber Li, Pymble Ladies' College, NSW
Kevin Tang, Glen Waverley Secondary College, VIC
Matthew Wang, Scotch College, VIC
Tao Wong, St Peter's College, SA

International Physics Olympiad, 4-12 Jul (not travelling)
Aditya Chauhan, Sydney Technical High School, NSW
Luke Hackett, Marist College Canberra, ACT
Yifan 'Evan' Liao, James Ruse Agricultural High School, NSW
Michael Tikhanov, John Monash Science School, VIC
Owen Zhai, Brisbane State High School, QLD

See full student details in program book.

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