



This year our STEM Electives class have been practising tirelessly on performing successfully at the South East First Lego League (FLL). FLL is about building robots and competing with them. The robotics competition itself is only part of the story though. In addition to how well their robots complete their missions, the teams are also judged on the design of their robot, the team's research project and how well they interact with, and support each other, to solve their challenges.

Each year the FLL has a different "theme" for the teams to identify a real-world problem and devise a solution for it. This year the theme was "Into Orbit". This was a popular topic for our team as it allowed them to learn about any aspect they chose on the human exploration of space. Our team chose to research how we would send humans to Mars and what type of habitat they would need to survive in alien conditions for periods of up to two years.

In addition to doing research on Mars during the year, our team, which consists of: Gavin Millard, Luke Bald, Hannah Lamb, Brooklyn Jones, Merrick Miller, Zeb Chant, Naite Whitehead, Angus Millard and Jack Kain learnt how to programme Lego robots to solve challenges. Importantly they also learnt how to help and support each other to solve a range of problems.

After many design and programming modifications, in an effort to get our robots to behave themselves, our team finally got to compete at the local FLL competition held at the Main Corner in Mt Gambier on Monday 19/11/18. Our first task at the competition was for our Research Team to present their solution for a safe and suitable habitat for our Martian explorers. The judges were very impressed with our presentation, so we were off to a very good start.

Next we had to show how 'clever' our robot could be. Despite being very compliant on the practise table our robot got a bad case of nerves during the first competition round and decided it would not perform a very simple task which it had always completed perfectly! Not to worry, our programming team efficiently dealt with the problem and managed to calm the robot's nerves (not to mention their teacher's nerves) and compelled the robot to perform better at the final round.

During all the competition events a team of FLL judges were "quietly" observing the team's interactions to see how well they supported each other. Our students caught some positive attention from these judges and, along with strong performances in the research and robotics competitions, we were successful enough to win a spot in the State Finals being held in Adelaide on the 24th November.

So, after many months of programming and researching and learning how to be a cohesive team, our students were very pleased to achieve success and are now keen to be involved in the South Australian State Finals. Well done to all of the team and thank you for the support from our team mascot, Tracy Bald.

Our school is very proud of your achievements.

Oh, and we even won our first First Lego League Trophy for the design of our robot!



