

## Global student thinkers tackle food and water crisis at World School Forum in Brisbane



World School forum delegates at Mt Coot-tha.

*Some of the world's brightest student from 21 nations met for two weeks at St Paul's School to solve the world's food and water issues*

**H**eld in October, the annual World School forum brings together young minds for a fortnight of creative problem-solving for the most common problems facing our world.

The 2017 event was attended by four principals, 18 teachers and 64 students who discussed solutions to a looming crisis – global water scarcity.

The school's principal, Dr Paul Browning, said the forum is an opportunity for students and school heads to work collaboratively on solving important global problems.

"Because St Paul's School is very focused on developing students' thinking skills, we have introduced all of the other schools to the design thinking process, which leads students through problems in order to develop solutions," he said.

Students identified five key themes and pitched their solutions to corporate and academic experts including Matt Brooks, QUT's STEM leader, Mark Middleton, Executive Director of Horizon Agribusiness and Samantha Willcocks, a futurist at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

St Paul's School head of design learning, Tim Osborne, said that by the end of the conference, the students – who had been put into 10 'multinational design teams' – had created a number of innovative solutions.

"One group developed an app to help communities track their food and water usage in order to ensure the sustainability of their resources," he said.

"We told all students that their solution had to be something they were able to successfully implement back in their home country, whether that might be in Finland, China, Russia or the United States."

Osborne said this made students realise that they had to empathise with the issues facing one another's countries and collaborate in order to make their solution work.

"While schools are raising awareness about environmental issues, such as the importance of conservation, issues like these sometimes fly under the radar", he said.