



Rostrum Voice of Youth

1975 – 2024

*Celebrating 50 years of secondary
school speaking excellence*



Rostrum Voice of Youth 1975 – 2024

Thank you

to all the Rostrum volunteers who have enabled thousands of young people to have their voices heard through the Rostrum Voice of Youth program over the past 50 years.

Thank you to the contributors:

Anthony Ackroyd, Nick Ewbank (ACT), Justin Wong (NSW), Bernie Ketter, Meg Olsson QLD), Michael Lutt, Gabriela Proc (SA), Jenny Fraser (TAS).

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Anthony Ackroyd - The first senior winner of Rostrum Voice of Youth writes...



It came down to one point. I remember that. The judges announced this to the audience before reading out the senior winner of the inaugural Rostrum Voice of Youth, 1975.

Then I heard my name.

Being on the right side of that crucial point was a life-changing event for a shy young man from Hobart's poorest and toughest suburb. It was a watershed moment that launched me on a journey that has always had at its heart the love of performance and writing and a deep appreciation for the power of articulate expression.

Learning how to craft a message, not just with words but with passion, became a skill that shaped my personal and professional paths. I now pass that skill on to other people as a public speaking coach.

My Rostrum experience was such a turning point for me I even use a slide featuring my Voice of Youth trophy in my current keynote deliveries. That trophy is on a shelf, near me in my office as I write this. It's a trophy that reminds me of what's possible, the extraordinary results we can all create by making our voices heard and the difference that can make to our own lives and the lives of others.

Anthony is the first of thousands of young people's lives that have been changed as a result of their

participation in Rostrum Voice of Youth. He is now an International comedian.

The junior winner in 1975 was Fiona Tilley from Belconnen High School in the ACT. Fiona was featured in the 2021 Belconnen High School newsletter Term 2 Week 5 School newsletter as part of the BHS Alumni Research Project. Fiona graduated from Belconnen High School in 1975. Upon the completion of her Arts/Law degree at the ANU she moved to New York and worked at JP Morgan where she rose to be Vice President of Corporate Finance. She found the Gurham Jewellery Company in New York. The three things Fiona attributes her academic and professional success to are: 'Never give up'; 'Find opportunity in adversity' and 'Know your why - what motivates you.'

Anthony and Fiona have both gone on to receive international recognition in their chosen fields of endeavour and we are delighted that they are our first winners of RVOY.



History of Rostrum Voice of Youth

Rostrum Voice of Youth began in 1975 with several zones having their own competitions prior to then. In 1971 Freeman Tom Trebilco, a Rostrum member from the ACT, asked Rostrum Dais to support a secondary schools competition called the Festival of Oratory.

It had 88 participants in 1972. A national competition was proposed by Kep Enderby in 1973 and Raja Ratnam took it to the ARC (Australian Rostrum Council) in 1974 where Freeman Ian Olsson from Queensland seconded the motion. With Kep Enderby's support the Commonwealth Government contributed \$1750 for the competition and Rostrum Voice of Youth's first National Final was held in April in Canberra in 1975. The competition grew to become Australia's premier public speaking competition for secondary students and is conducted in accordance with rules and procedures approved by the ARC.

The state and territory winners compete each year for the Kep Enderby Shield at the National Final which is held in a different state capital or in Canberra. Justice Kep Enderby presented the shields in 1975 for the competition when he was Member of Parliament for the Australian Capital Territory and Federal Attorney-General. The National Final has been conducted in all zones across Australia. The first winners were Fiona Tilley from Belconnen High School in the ACT in the Junior section and Anthony Ackroyd from St Virgils' College, Hobart, Tasmania in the senior section.

There was no official National Final in 1989 due to lack of funding. A competition was conducted in Hamilton, Victoria organised by Speaker David Bernard, the Victorian Zone Coordinator to which Q'ld, Tas, SA and Vic attended at their own expense.



WA did not participate from 1993 to 1999. Chris Maxwell coordinated the 2000 and 2001 programs. Juliet Park coordinated the competition from 2002-2008 and 2009-2018. Juliet convened the 2018 National Final in WA and that was the final year of the WA competition.

In 2020 due to COVID restrictions Tasmania was the only zone to hold a competition and in 2021 the National Final, scheduled to be held in Adelaide, was held via zoom using the recordings from the Zone Finals. Queensland did not rejoin the competition after COVID. From 2022 SA/NT, NSW/ACT, TAS and VIC continue to conduct their Zone competitions taking it in turns to host the National Final. Tasmania was the host zone for 50th year of the competition with the National Final being held at The Farrall Centre at The Friends' School. Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania hosted a Reception at Government House on the Friday and made the presentations at the National Final on July 27th 2024.

Access to the RVOY Honour Roll that lists the participants and winners from 1975 onwards
www.rostrum.com.au/resources/rvoy-honour-roll-1975-onwards/

Photos from 2024 competition

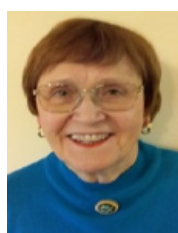
Government house reception and senior / junior winners
Katherine Morrison and Aojin Chen



Rostrum volunteers who have ensured the continuation of RVOY

National Coordinators 1998 – 2024

The role of the National Coordinator is to liaise with ARC, the State Coordinators and the National Convenor, to provide the topics and to oversee the success of the whole competition.



Gabriela Proc (SA)
1998 – 2002



Greg McKay (NSW)
2003 – 2007



Juliet Park (WA)
2008 – 2010



Nick Ewbank (ACT)
2011, 2013



Helen Bills (SA)
2014



Meg Olsson (QLD)
2018 – 2019



Jenny Fraser (TAS)
2012, 2015–17,
2020–24

Thank you to the 35 National Final Convenors

1975-6 Tom Trebilco

1977 Richard Smillie

1978-80 John White

1981 Mac Blackwood*

1982, 1987 Lyn Paul

1983 Stan Ralph

1984 Lois Worcester

1985 David Price*

1986 Gabriela Proc*

1988 Glin Major

1990 Barry Redshaw

1992 Helen Hutchinson*

1993 Vene Tomlinson

1994 Carmel Devenish

1995, 2013 Nick Ewbank*

1996 Dennis Kassimatis

1997 Maurice Whybrow

1998 Bob Swinton

1999 Peter Edwards*

2000 Jean Hudson

2001 Allan Mcculloch

2002, 2015 Greg McKay*

2003 Kim Counsell

2004, 2011, 2018 Juliet Park*

2005 Malcolm Grant*

2006 Maureen Bourke*

2007 Neil Spalding

2008 John De Ravin*

2009 John Podger*

2010 Bill Smith*

2012, 2019, 2024 Jenny Fraser*

2014 Helen Bills*

2016, 2023 Kylie Campbell*

2017 Meg Olsson*

2021 Einer Herringe*

2022 Geoff Burgess*

* Photo next page

Rostrum volunteers who have ensured the continuation of RVOY

Photos of some of the National Final Convenors

The role of the National Convenor is coordinate the National Final weekend.



Mac Blackwood



David Price



Gabriela Proc



Helen Hutchinson



Peter Edwards



Greg McKay



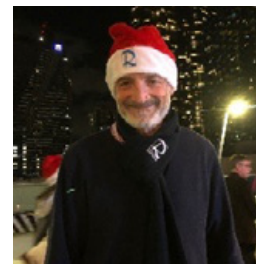
Juliet Park



Malcolm Grant



Maureen Bourke



John De Ravin



John Podger



Bill Smith



Helen Bills



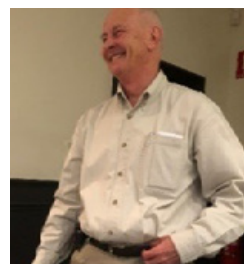
Kylie Campbell & Meg Olsson



Kylie Campbell, Jenny Fraser & Nick Ewbank



Einer Herringe



Geoff Burgess

RVOY Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

ACT members like to believe that the ACT Zone was the progenitor of the Voice of Youth. Whatever the truth of that claim, ACT certainly had a local competition going by 1972.

It is known for sure the Kep Enderby, an ACT representative in the House of Representatives, and a member of Rostrum, was instrumental in getting the national competition 'up and running'.

ACT Zone has run a Voice of Youth Competition almost continuously since the early 1970s, with a lapse in the late 2010s.

We also run the Primary Schools Speaking Competition for younger students, which is still going strong, 52 years young.

My memories of RVoY go back to 1992 (approximately four months after I joined Rostrum), when I was first roped in to adjudicate.

At one stage, we coordinated with NSW, and took students from Goulburn southwards to the Riverina from about 2015 until about 2018, even having a student from Wodonga (Victoria) as our representative in the National Final on one occasion.

In the 2020s, we were in turn subsumed by NSW as a regional heat within their competition.

Speaking as an ACT adjudicator, ACT Coordinator, National Final Coordinator and (Acting) National Coordinator and National Final adjudicator on multiple occasions, I'd say VoY is a lot like the rest of Rostrum – you get out what you put in.

I've made many friends over the years and have taken

great joy in working with the students both locally and at the National Final Weekend (which is usually a blast! I still reckon 2013 was close to best!).

I've been to three State Government Houses, plus the Governor General's residence in Canberra (twice with RVoY), murder rooms, jetboats and the like (I missed the helicopter ride in Perth!) – many things that a staid person like me wouldn't normally have got a chance to do!

As well as the students, and the benefits they get out of the competition, we should never forget the efforts of so many volunteers – many, reliable returners, year after year, who not only saw the students grow and achieve, but who also get to practise their organisational, speaking and adjudicating skills!

There are more of those Rostrum members than I can mention here, but shout out to ACT Zone Coordinators I've known: Fmn Glin Major, Spr Sue Searson, Sr Roger Nicholls, Spr Ari Vennonen, Fmn Jim Fulton, Fmn Neil Spalding and Fmn Jane Shelling.

Nick Ewbank

RVOY Australian Capital Territory (ACT)



Michelle Lee, 2014
National Final Adelaide



Sam Beattie (top) from the ACT & Tyson Leung
SA 2013 National Final, Canberra



ACT winners 2014



Sam Parkinson (left) representing ACT National Final 2014, Adelaide



Coordinators Kylie Campbell, Juliet Park and Nick Ewbank, 2013



National Finalists Legislative Assembly Building, Canberra 2013

New South Wales (NSW)

Rostrum Australia's Voice of Youth empowers secondary school students across the country to articulate ideas authentically and positively. The Rostrum Voice of Youth (RVOY) public speaking competition exemplifies these objectives, fostering community engagement through practical expression of youthful perspectives.

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Whilst RVOY is a caring and supportive platform for the competitors, it is no walk in the park. Each year, thousands of students from all over NSW and ACT

commence their RVOY journey by participating in public speaking trials on campus for the honour of representing their school.

And RVOY NSW is going from strength to strength. In 2024, more than 400 of the finest public speakers from schools across NSW and ACT entered the RVOY contest. And for their exceptional service, a number of our stalwart volunteers were honoured at the 2024 NSW & ACT State Final, especially those who have, for decades, given part of their youth to nurture the Rostrum Voice of Youth.

Standing on the shoulders of giants such as Freeman John White, Freeman Penelope Phillips, and Freeman Greg McKay, the Rostrum Voice of Youth now looks to its youth to carry the torch into the future. RVOY NSW welcomes the next chapter with optimism and excitement. Here's to another 50 years of empowering young voices, one speech at a time.

Rostrum Voice of Youth NSW is proudly sponsored by Easts, the Rotary Club of Northbridge, and ivyO.



TESTIMONIALS

2005 - 2010

Justin Wong

2024 RVOY Convenor for NSW & ACT, and Former State Finalist

(now CEO of ivyO, a tech-driven educational consulting firm with activities across Asia-Pacific)

The skills I've developed through the Rostrum Voice of Youth have served me well, whether in pursuing academics at Wharton, starting my career, or pitching a multimillion-dollar deal for my start-up. In my journey as a tech entrepreneur, the communication and leadership skills I developed at Rostrum have been invaluable. The confidence I gained from public speaking has allowed me to pitch ideas effectively to investors and clients. I am pleased to be able to give back to the Rostrum Voice of Youth as the 2024 Convenor and Webmaster for NSW & ACT.

2003 - 2005

Olivia Bible

Junior Winner

(now in funds management)

Every career path involves salesmanship, whether it's advocating for yourself within your organisation or presenting your company to clients. Mastering public speaking is crucial, and the Rostrum Voice of Youth competition excels in teaching the skills needed to captivate an audience and persuade without aggression. Beyond these skills, the competition cultivates enduring friendships that can last a lifetime.

2022 - 2023

Jasmine Withford

Senior Winner

(now studying a Bachelor of Biomedicine with entry into a Doctor of Medicine at The University of Melbourne)

I have never been a particularly loud individual – growing up, I would always prefer to reach for a pen than to use my voice. However, the Rostrum Voice of Youth Competition taught me that the written words have the capacity to be far more powerful when spoken with control, intention and passion. The combined act of crafting speeches laced with a desire to share thoughts on topics which compiled memories, research and humour, with the expression of these concepts using my voice in the RVOY Competition is what I owe to instilling me with confidence and giving me with a love for public speaking.

RVOY New South Wales (NSW)



The competition was officially launched in Queensland as “Rostrum Voice of Youth” on 20 July 1974 during the 51st Anniversary Dinner of the founding of Rostrum in Manchester England in 1923. Voice of Youth held its first heats in Queensland in 1975.

To help finance the 1976 competition state final held in Cairns, an art union was organised by Freeman Ian Olsson. This raised in excess of \$1,200. The final part of the Cairns centenary celebrations. This final was broadcast live by NR Radio 4AM, with Channel 9 televising the presentation of prizes in colour. The final was held in the Cairns Civic Centre. It was this year that a grant was approved by the Queensland Government for \$2,900 to help conduct the 1977 competition. This grew to \$3,000 the following year and \$10,000 in 2010 which was the final year of the grant.

Other sponsors over the years included Ansett

Airlines who agreed to fly the contestants to the national final free of charge, The Courier-Mail, Ten Queensland, Independent Schools Queensland, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, Sebel, Red hat Asia pacific Pty Ltd, the Speech and Drama Teachers Association and the Brisbane City Council. Sponsorships allowed Queensland Rostrum to invite all school in the State to participate in the competition. Wherever there was interest, members were able to travel to schools to conduct heats including western Queensland towns of Roma, Quilpie, Charleville and Biloela, with expenses met by sponsorships.

The State finals were held in the State Parliamentary Annexe in for a number of years between 2002 and 2014 until shifting to St Joseph’s College, Gregory Terrace.



TESTIMONIALS

2008 Taylor Bunnag – Queensland Senior winner

*(now Lawyer and Councillor,
Sunshine Coast Council)*

I competed in Rostrum Voice of Youth in 2007 and 2008. My involvement in this competition in my early years provided me the opportunity to develop lifelong oratory skills. The most important lessons that I took from my experience, structuring your arguments and connecting with the audience, have been crucial in almost every aspect of my professional life as a lawyer and now as an elected representative.

1984 Joanne Keune – National Senior winner; 1980 – Queensland Junior winner *(now lawyer/communication coach)*

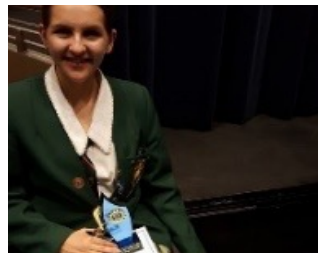
I believe I would speak on behalf of every single high school student who had the opportunity to compete in a Rostrum heat, but especially a State or National Final - Rostrum changed my life. It took me from being a middle class teenage kid to being the first in my family to go to university. Rostrum made me want to be a lawyer - I did. It was very daunting as a kid travelling from the regions to the Capital to deliver my speeches. Rostrum supported, guided and coached us as young people with skills - I'm sure all of us have used for the rest of our lives. On behalf of all of us - I say "Thank You".



2005, 2006, 2007 – Jack McGovern – National Junior winner

(now actor)

As an actor working for various theatre and film companies around Australia, using my voice is something I do quite a lot. Sometimes a little too much if you ask many of the people with whom I share rehearsal rooms. (That's a joke...I hope.) Rostrum was a key ingredient in me finding a confidence in that voice that goes well beyond merely being able to talk in front of a crowd. Voice of Youth was a massive part of my teenage years and working with the best public speaking coach in Australia (my dad, Tony - forgive my bias), I found so many ways to use my voice in creative and interesting ways to explore and share ideas about which I was and am passionate. Perhaps more than anything else, Rostrum taught me how to read and audience and engage with them in response to their collective energy, and not the other way around. These skills are ones I continue to use in so many aspects of my life and will always be immensely grateful to VOY and the people involved who gave me guidance along the way.



TESTIMONIALS

2017 - Chantal Duffy – National Junior winner and 2019 – National Senior winner

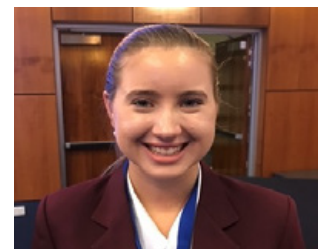
(Now in final year of a Bachelor of Advanced Finance and Economics (Hons.) at UQ and after graduation, will work as a Management Consultant in Sydney)

The Voice of Youth program instilled in me a strength of voice and a clarity of thought that has carried into my early 20s. The Rostrum Way, which balances intellectual and emotional appeal, has been an invaluable framework for presenting in many aspects of my professional and academic life. Through researching and writing speeches, I learnt about a wide range of topics, developing a strong 'intellectual metabolism'—the ability to draw from diverse sources to deliver engaging and digestible messages.

The short notice rounds were particularly effective in developing the skills of quick thinking, sound argumentation, and confident speaking. These skills that I honed at ages 14 to 16, supported by feedback from judges at each round, have helped me secure and succeed in recent internships at investment banks, venture capital firms, and management consultancies.

I am very grateful for the support, encouragement, and mentorship of the tireless VOY volunteers. Beyond the experience I gained, my success with Rostrum also supported me in many applications for prizes and scholarships during my high school education.

I am deeply grateful for my Rostrum experience and wish all the participants in this year's final the best of luck.



The Voice of Youth Competition was first held in 1978 and was organized by Wayne Groom. Stan produced the first resource, 'Notes on Speaking' which was made available to other zones. This was later update by Patrick Bourke.

Freeman Gabriela Proc co-ordinated many of the competitions during the 1980s including the 1986 National Final in Adelaide. During those years individual clubs organised the heats and semi-finals which were held over several weekends at different schools.

For many years during the 1990s Freeman Patrick and Freeman Maureen Bourke worked tirelessly promoting Voice of Youth, travelling far and wide in regional areas to conduct workshops. They were able to arrange for the State Finals to be held in Parliament House and this has continued since then.

In the 2000s Roger and Helen Bills co-ordinated the

competition for many years. During this period an organizing committee took over the running of heats and semi-finals with volunteers from all clubs assisting on the day.

In 2017 the competition was expanded to include entrants from the Northern Territory whose heats are now held by video link, with the winners flying to Adelaide for the semi-finals.

In the South East the Bendigo Bank has strongly supported the competition and for the past decade regional heats have also held in Mount Gambier.



TESTIMONIALS

1978 Mitch Byrne

SA Junior winner

(Now a Clinical and Forensic Psychologist and Academic at three Universities)

As a young and impassioned teenager I was aware that my audience (and judges) may hold different opinions to mine. I learned the value of supporting my message with facts while retaining my youthful energy.

The feedback I received that night from the judge remained with me into adulthood: enthusiasm is important but without data, you are just another person with an opinion.

1999 Brendan Lim-National Junior winner

(Now a Barrister at the New South Wales Bar)

I was a Year 10 student in 1999, when I participated in the Rostrum Voice of Youth. I have fond memories of the experience. I met a very supportive community of peers and teachers, each of whom taught me something different about effective communication. Our profession maintains a centuries-old tradition of oral advocacy and argument to assist an independent judiciary to resolve disputes and uphold the rule of law. It is but one example of the far-reaching role that public speaking plays in our society. I am grateful to Rostrum for the early opportunity to develop this vital skill.

2001-2003 Matthew Clayfield

SA Senior winner

(Now a journalist, critic and screenwriter)

Rostrum Voice of Youth was one the great highlights of my teenage years. I never won the thing—I was pipped at the post not once, but twice, always by a bigger nerd—but going and participating in Nationals was always a song. Here's the secret they never tell you: you will meet people from all over the country who will remain friends for the rest of your life: Joel Meares, Rocky Kim, Rob Clark, Christopher Waterhouse. It's not about the speaking. It's about the people, and learning that you're not alone at the very bottom of the end of the world.



RVOY South Australia (SA)



There have been eight Tasmanian Coordinators: Mac Blackwood (1975-1980), Ray Brown (1981) Malcolm Grant (1982-84, 1985, 2008), Neville Crocombe (1983-4), Helen Hutchinson (1990-95), Peter Edwards (1996-7) and Jenny Fraser (2006-2024) with John Hayton sharing the role in 2021-2023.

The coordinators have been ably assisted in the regions by members like Fran Cox, Trevor Colquhoun, Arthus Hamilton, John Owens, Tess McDonagh, Rod Fraser and John Hayton.

The following members have been National Convenors: Mac Blackwood (1981) Helen Hutchinson (1992), Peter Edwards, (1999) Malcolm Grant (2005) and Jenny Fraser (2012, 2019 and 2024). Jenny Fraser has also been the National Coordinator for 9 years in 2012, 2015-7 and 2020-24.

Thank you to our sponsors over the years:
Permanent Building Society, Teachers Credit Union,

Commonwealth Bank, Birchalls, Pitt and Sherry, Vos Constructions, RACT and the Rotary Club of Hobart, Burnie and Tamar Sunrise.

Tasmanian students have enjoyed great success over the past 50 years. There have been seven National Senior winners and four National Junior winners. Four senior students have placed second and four senior students have placed third. Six junior finalists have placed second and five have gained third place.

In 1975 Anthony Ackroyd (St Virgils College) was the first national senior winner and 49 years later in 2023 Kuba Meikle (Launceston College) was the senior winner.

Our Rostrum Alumni include an international comedian (Anthony Ackroyd); US correspondent for the Seven Network, Australia (Tim Lester); Radio presenter in Hobart, London and Sydney and now Reverend Christopher Waterhouse at St James, Sydney; a Speech Pathologist (Kate Fraser); a Barrister (Eliza Forsyth) and many more who have gone on to lead interesting and productive lives.



TESTIMONIALS

Tim Lester (National Senior winner 1978)

I look back on Rostrum Voice of Youth as highly valuable, formative and fun. It encouraged me to see communications as a strength and to seek out a career that would build on the speaking skills and confidence it had helped establish. Of all the activities of my school years, none more directly relates to my work in the decades since, than the public speaking and debating I was encouraged to do. Voice of Youth was a memorable part of this.

Eliza Forsyth (Junior 2003, Junior 2004 2nd, Senior 2005 3rd ,Senior 2007)

Rostrum Voice of Youth sparked my love of public speaking and developed skills that I still use today. Having reflected on it, I suspect that the first Voice of Youth competition I entered in 2003 in Launceston, Tasmania changed the course I would take in my life and in my career. I'm so grateful to Rostrum for the opportunities afforded to me and for the friendships I made throughout the years. Rostrum Voice of Youth is such a special program and it is a wonderful achievement to be celebrating 50 years!





Thanks Malcolm Grant and all the volunteers who enable the voices of our youth to be heard.

Victoria first participated in Rostrum Voice of Youth in 1977 and there have been numerous coordinators over those years including the likes of Bob Swinton and John Podger.

Since 2012 Kylie Campbell has been the coordinator for Victoria and is increasing the number of students who are able to compete each year. Kylie and her volunteers travel around the state each weekend to ensure as many regional students can compete as possible.



TESTIMONIALS

2014-2017 - Laura Benney - National Finalist
(now a Secondary School Teacher)

Participating in Rostrum Voice of Youth is one of my most treasured memories. So much of my growth throughout my adolescence - in confidence and social awareness - can be credited to my participation in the competition. I can still remember the first time I won first prize at the regional final of Voice of Youth. I'd practised so much and my family had given me lots of encouragement, but I never truly realised that I could produce a speech that moved people or made them think until that moment. It was an incredible boost to my self-belief. I realised that my voice could be powerful. As my confidence in public speaking grew, I was lucky enough to participate in a number of Rostrum Voice of Youth National Finals over the years. In fact, travelling to Adelaide for my first interstate public speaking competition was also my first time on a plane! Travelling around Australia completely broadened my horizons and the friendships I formed with my fellow competitors from all over the country encouraged me to strive to be the best version of myself. Rostrum Voice of Youth gave me the opportunity to deepen my passion for social justice and the confidence to trust my opinions and use my voice to express them. Similarly, the coaching and caring support I received from Rostrum's members helped me to realise the power and art of speech-making. After secondary school, I trained to become a teacher. Of course, the first extracurricular activity I took charge of in my new career was the debating and public speaking club! Now, I look forward to coaching my students in Rostrum Voice of Youth every year and giving them the opportunity to enjoy this fantastic competition for themselves (as well as catch up with my friends from Rostrum, who were such a big part of my growing up!).

TESTIMONIALS

2022 - Pranav Khullar - National Finalist

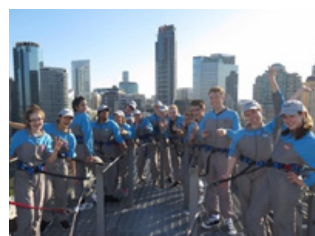
After moving to Australia during the pandemic and starting Year 8, I was on the lookout for activities or extra curriculums. Particularly those which would challenge my comfort zone. I was already part of the local soccer club and learning the piano, but I wanted to try something more. My English teacher at school informed me about Rostrum's Voice of Youth competition. Until then, I had never taken part in public speaking anywhere. Whether it was school presentations or assemblies - I had that all too common phobia of standing in front of people and speaking to them. But after a bit of thought, and some persuasion from my teacher, I decided to participate. Since then, taking part in Rostrum's competitions, and becoming a member of the Rostrum community has helped me build my confidence in public speaking. Additionally, I also started volunteering in organising the annual competition which has allowed me to see 'behind the scenes'. In conclusion, Rostrum Voice of Youth provides students with a platform through which we can share ideas, strengthen and consolidate our oration, and build valuable skills for the future. All thanks to Rostrum.

2024 - Sia Khullar - National Finalist

I was introduced to Rostrum when my brother first participated in Voice of Youth few years ago. At that time, I was too young to compete. The following year my brother and I joined Rostrum. Thus, starting my incredible journey of learning how to speak effectively. Sometimes faltering, sometimes hesitating but always getting back up, that is what Rostrum teaches you. I persevered and participated in my first ever public speaking competition, the Voice of Youth in 2023. I also started volunteering in organising it along with my brother. The whole experience, I have to say, is extremely enriching. I have met some amazing people and made a few friends as well. Plus, the variety of knowledge, one gets from listening to speeches is precious in itself. I hope to continue my journey with Rostrum and Voice of Youth well into the future.



RVOY Victoria (VIC)



RVOY Western Australia (WA)

There have been ten State RVOY Coordinators in the history of the WA competition:

David Johnson (1977-78), Neil Scott (1980-81), David Gore (1982), David Price (1983-84), Allan Arrowsmith (1985), Graham Longworth (1986-7), Ian Pittaway (1988), Chris Maxwell (2000-1), Juliet Park (2002-8), Janine Malligan (2009), Juliet Park (2010-2018).

Western Australia did not participate from 1989 -1999 and has not participated since Juliet Park stepped down in 2018.

David Price convened the 1985 National Final and Juliet Park convened three National Finals in 2004, 2011 and 2018. She was also National Coordinator in 2008-10.



RVOY National Final Snapshots



Over the past 50 years, thousands of Rostrum members across Australia have devoted countless hours of service to ensure the success of the Rostrum Voice of Youth program.

Rostrum members utilise their skills of chairmanship and adjudication and provide constructive feedback so that young people can develop their communication skills. All this is provided in a supportive environment, so participants have the chance to develop their confidence. Success is evident when participants return year after year to showcase their developing skills.

As one of the volunteers, what is it that has kept me involved for the past 25 years? This year I will be attending my 21st National Final. As a teacher I encouraged my students to take part. Ten of my students participated in the National Finals with three winning the National title, including our daughter, Kate (2002). But it's more than winning that is important. I remember the young boy who entered who found writing a challenge, so he told me what to write on his prompt cards in the SN section, to give him the confidence he needed to have his voice heard. I remember a young girl who lost everything in a house fire. Her teacher sought a replacement participation RVOY certificate so that her student could remember that important step of speaking in public for the first time. For those involved, RVOY is a partnership. It's the whole household that becomes involved and I will be forever grateful to my husband Rod who has been there every step of the way.

From the testimonies received, it is evident that the investment of Rostrum members' time and effort is richly rewarded.

When Oscar Tiernan (Tasmania) spoke at the function

to present Senator Askew with a copy of the Rostrum Anthology he said:

In primary school and grade 7 I had avoided public speaking. When I joined the Rostrum competitions I was at a difficult point in my life, where I lacked confidence in my appearance and voice as well as in what I wanted to say. For a long time in early High School, I believed that nobody cared to hear my voice and opinion. This lack of confidence came through in school classes where I would avoid speaking.

However, when I competed in Rostrum, I realised this was not the case. I learned that my voice mattered, and that people would listen.

In Sydney 2022 Oscar was the runner up in the senior section of the National Final.

Rostrum Voice of Youth is certainly a team effort. Yes, coordinators and convenors make it happen but without the timekeepers, chaperones, chairman, adjudicators, tellers, short notice coordinators, managers of the registration system, treasurers and the workers behind the scenes, RVOY could not happen. We are grateful for the wonderful support of teachers and parents, the schools and sponsors who have ensured the success of the Rostrum Voice of Youth program for the past fifty years. I have been honoured to have shared that journey for half of that time and thank those Rostrum members who had the vision in the early 70s to create such a wonderful opportunity for our young people.

Freeman Jenny Fraser OAM
(National Coordinator 2024)



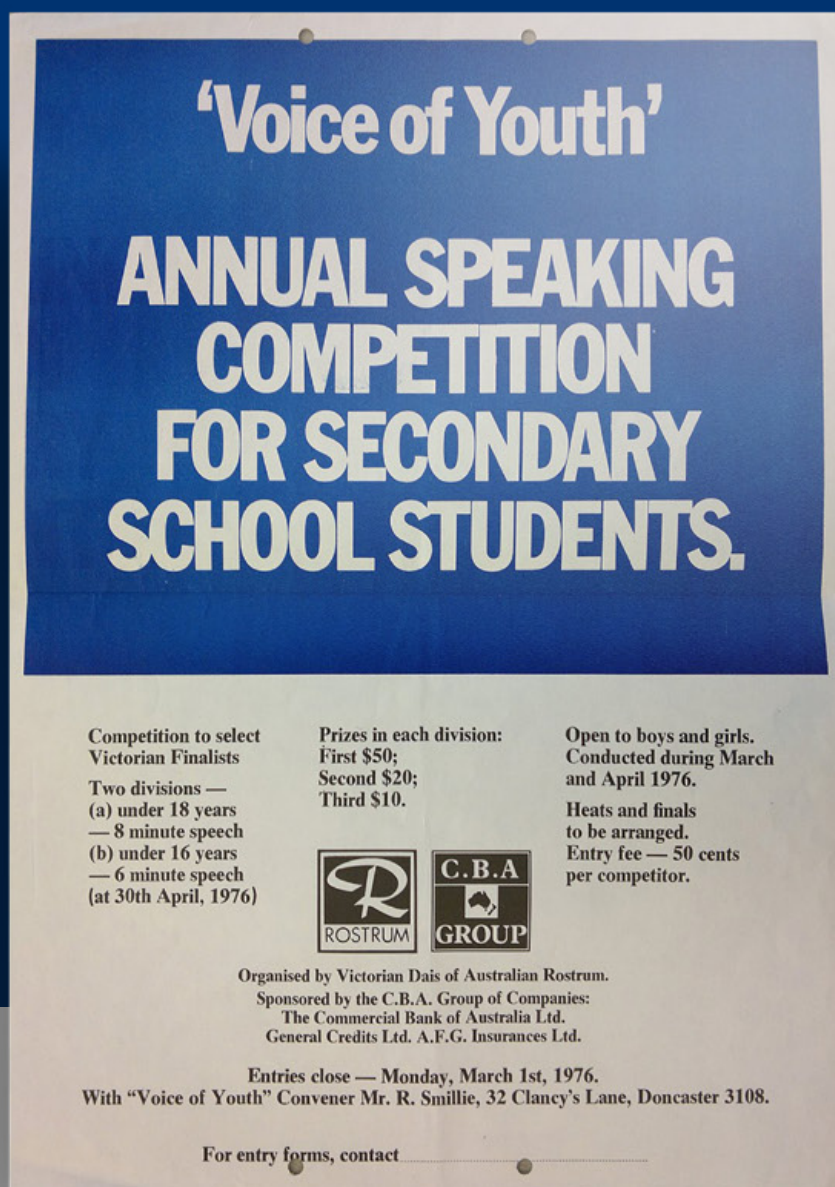
Take up the Challenge!

Rostrum Voice of Youth provides an excellent opportunity for secondary school students to gain experience and confidence in expressing their views and communicating a message.

Become a Volunteer

Rostrum Voice of Youth requires volunteers to ensure the competition days run successfully and as smoothly as possible. Volunteers are needed to chair heats, keep time, adjudicate and marshal and monitor competitors. We can't continue to run this fantastic event without the support of our members, so please contact your local club and register your interest to be involved in Rostrum Voice of Youth.

Learn more at www.rostrum.com.au



'Voice of Youth'

**ANNUAL SPEAKING
COMPETITION
FOR SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS.**

Competition to select
Victorian Finalists

Two divisions —
(a) under 18 years
— 8 minute speech
(b) under 16 years
— 6 minute speech
(at 30th April, 1976)

Prizes in each division:
First \$50;
Second \$20;
Third \$10.

Open to boys and girls.
Conducted during March
and April 1976.

Heats and finals
to be arranged.
Entry fee — 50 cents
per competitor.

Organised by Victorian Dais of Australian Rostrum.
Sponsored by the C.B.A. Group of Companies:
The Commercial Bank of Australia Ltd.
General Credits Ltd. A.F.G. Insurances Ltd.

Entries close — Monday, March 1st, 1976.
With "Voice of Youth" Convener Mr. R. Smillie, 32 Clancy's Lane, Doncaster 3108.

For entry forms, contact _____



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find your voice

www.rostrum.com.au