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Jael Wena to light up the stage for Australia at the Junior Eurovision Song Contest 2018

The ABC champions Australian children and we are thrilled to announce that the incredibly talented Jael Wena will represent Australia at the **Junior Eurovision Song Contest 2018 (JESC)**, with ABC ME broadcasting the spectacular event for the second year. Following on from the breakthrough success of Isabella Clarke in 2017, who placed third with her song *Speak Up*, the competition is on and once again Australia will be going for *gold!*

To be held on Sunday 25 November at the Minsk Arena, Belarus, ABC ME will broadcast all the incredible performances of the 16th JESC competition during a very special family television event on **Monday November 26 at 6pm**.

12-year-old Jael who was born and raised in Melbourne, began singing and wrote her first song at the age of four, and by the time she was nine she was already recording in her dad's studio. Interested in a wide range of music genres, including pop, hip hop, contemporary and gospel music – Jael won the top award at the Fast Track Talent Showcase for three years running and aims to inspire others through her positive uplifting music and attitude.

"When I found out I was selected to represent Australia at the **Junior Eurovision Song Contest** I couldn't believe it. I knew that I had been put forward, but I was hoping and praying every night when I went to bed that it would be me. When we got the news I just fell down on the floor laughing and crying. I am just so happy and excited to be representing my country and I am going to try my hardest to make my country proud," said Jael Wena.

"Jael personifies everything we were looking for in this year's Australian representative. She has an extraordinary voice, lashings of charisma, and an impressive stage presence. We believe Jael will take the competition by storm and whatever happens make Australia proud," said Libbie Doherty, Acting Head of ABC Children's Television. "We are also excited to see what Blink TV will bring to this remarkable spectacle for our ABC ME audience."

Director of Blink TV and Australia's Head of Delegation for Eurovision, Paul Clarke said: "When we first heard Jael's voice it literally stopped the office - how can someone so young have such a brilliant and mature voice? That happens a lot with the greats, and Jael is definitely capable of really great things. We can't wait to find the perfect song for her and create a brilliant staging to accompany her huge talent. Go team Jael!"

Joining Jael in Minsk will be ABC ME's host, Grace Koh, who will share exciting daily updates as the competition unfolds. On Monday 26 November, Grace will be joined by Pip Rasmussen and Lawrence Gunatilaka for the ABC ME broadcast.

The first **JESC** took place in Copenhagen in 2003 and this year 20 countries will send their most talented 9 to 14-year-old performers to compete for the coveted title. This will be the highest number of participating countries in the events history. #LightUp! is the creative theme of this year's event with its artwork celebrating the artistic potential and creative drive of the young Junior Eurovision participants who no doubt be turning the stage into something magical, like a sky full of stars.

ABC ME, the ABC ME app and ABC iview will broadcast the JESC 2018 on Monday 26 November at 6.00pm.

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