



Young people descend on Canberra this week to create the future they'd like to see; The 21st Annual ABC Heywire Regional Youth Summit kicks off on Sunday

Across regional Australia 52 young people have a life-changing week ahead of them, as they get ready to make their way to Canberra for the 21st annual Heywire Regional Youth Summit on Sunday. Throughout the week they will work together on developing exciting new solutions to improve the lives of young people in regional Australia.

Travelling from places like Borroloola in NT, Naracoorte in SA and Pambula in NSW, these young people paint a diverse picture of Australia and are proof that the future is bright, loud and proud. This year's cohort of Heywire winners tackled a range of topics like the impact of drought on Sea Lake in Victoria; what it was like campaigning for marriage equality in Ulverstone, Tasmania; starting a fish farm in Buttah Windee, WA and that's only scraping the surface.

Heywire's Youth Summit gives regional-Australian's the opportunity to build on their own experiences and create the change they'd like to see in their communities. They'll be mentored through a week of skills-building workshops and given the unique opportunity to share their ideas with Members of Parliament, Senators, community leaders – and have their stories told on the ABC.

The Director of ABC Regional and Local, Judith Whelan, says *"It is incredibly inspiring to see young people sharing their stories and shaping the conversations at the centre of their local communities. Every year Heywire's competition winners go on to do exciting and important things for regional Australia and I can't wait to hear about the ideas that come out of this year's Summit."*

In addition to the winners, Heywire will announce 2019's Trailblazers later this week. Heywire Trailblazers are outstanding young leaders who are already driving positive change in their regional and rural communities – more details to be announced soon.

Find a full list of Heywire competition winners below. Photos and interviews are available upon request.

For more information, please contact:

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Karlira Kelly	Borroloola, NT	A long walk through my ancestors' country connects me with them
Anthony Nish	Elliot, NT	A road trip to Alice Springs to follow my dream to be a music producer
Hayden Di Bella	Ingham, Qld	Farming sweet potatoes in sugar country
Jessica Spoor	Jambin, Qld	The trust I share with my horses is special
Max Alpin	Kowrowa, Qld	I love spearfishing with my family in the Barron River
Grace Vipen	Mackay, Qld	Volunteering in aged care has taught me about inequality
Tamica Bradey	Cloncurry, Qld	Moving to Cloncurry and learning about careers in mining
Saul Beatty	Carrara, Qld	I wore a back brace for two years to treat scoliosis
Charline Marom	Toowoomba, Qld	My mother is my hero
Chelsea Meulders	Naracoorte, SA	I wish more girls would join country fire cadets
Aidyn Loveday	Wellington, SA	You don't have to be a genius, just willing to help others out
Megan Stephens	Cummins, SA	How good humour helped me embrace my heritage
Biftu Reggasa	Hobart, Tas	I want to be a lawyer to fight injustice
Sam Watson	Ulverstone, Tas	Coming out in small town Tasmania
Emily Kunz	Geelong, Vic	I'm determined to make good choices after a tough start in life
Kate Beranic	Macedon, Vic	Overcoming an eating disorder, I now understand I'm not just a body
Gabriel Reyes	Stratford, Vic	Dancing is what I love and it's not only for girls
Lauren Paynter	Nyah, Vic	Saving our local community swimming pool
Claudia Cox	Sea Lake, Vic	Fighting on through the devastating impact of the drought
Brianna Merema	Broome, WA	Nineteen eye operations to be able to see the world
Kurt Richards	Cunderdin, WA	Proud to say shearing is my career
Alex Rajagopalan	Bruce Rock, WA	I have pectus excavatum, and yes I am embarrassed by it
Ebony Williams	Pemberton, WA	Caring for wildlife is not just a passion, it's my career
Kritsana Phuseekhio	Christmas Island	Moving to Christmas Island - do they even have 4G?
Raymond Binsiar	Meekatharra, WA	My dad is growing fish in the outback to help keep my family together
Kassidy Fuller	Bullfinch, WA	Banning live export affects us the farmers
Janaya Hennessy	Nowra, NSW	Now out of foster care, I'm learning who I really am
Elka Devney	Moree, NSW	Trading a big city school for the warmth of a campfire under the stars
Marla Barosa	Ellangowan, NSW	Moving to Australia, no more pork and rice for dinner!
Jess Kelly	Griffith, NSW	Isolation and ignorance can make life with Type 1 Diabetes a lonely one
Jackie Bayley	Dubbo, NSW	Surviving a suicide attempt and going on to help others
Maddison Barr	Pambula, NSW	The challenges and advantages of being a girl with autism in rural Australia
Nakita Jager	Clarence Town, NSW	My dad has dementia, but I'll be there for him
Chloe Parker	Speers Point, NSW	"Midget" that word makes my skin crawl
Naomi Cobcroft	Bonner, ACT	Growing and healing after mental illness