

media release

Australian Broadcasting Corporation



2018 Winners



2018 ABC HEYWIRE WINNERS ANNOUNCED

20 years of showcasing regional Australia's best young storytellers.

Thirty-eight regional young Australians were announced as the winners of the ABC's Heywire storytelling competition today.

Over 20 years Heywire has become an increasingly powerful place for regional and rural people, aged 16 – 22, to share their stories, and make a difference in their communities.

This year, almost 700 people entered, and the winners were chosen for “telling it like it is” about life in their part of the country.

The winners paint a diverse picture of Australia. Their stories range from fleeing a war in the DRC and finding a home in Mount Gambier; to describing the hectic pace of harvest time on the family farm; to rebuilding the Dingo Fence in the outback; and growing up LGBT+ in the country.

There was also a record number of Indigenous winners this year, who shared stories of pride in culture, and overcoming challenges to find success.

Muriel Hunter, from Broken Hill, said “When I won I was kind of surprised and happy at the same time”.

Her winning story was about her journey to become a nurse after struggling in school.

“If you put in the hard work, you get rewarded. If you do your best, good things will come your way,” she said.

Winners are told earlier in the year about their success so they can work with ABC Heywire to professionally produce their stories. This content then reaches millions of people through ABC Radio, TV and digital platforms, giving audiences an incredible insight in to life in regional and rural areas.

Director of ABC Regional, Fiona Reynolds congratulated the competition winners on their stories.

“The stories told by this year’s winners are powerful, courageous and diverse,” she said.

“We are very proud to share them with audiences across the country through the ABC. Regional Australia is in good hands with young people as passionate and articulate as these.”

Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, and Acting Minister for Regional Development, Darren Chester also applauded the successful entrants.

“Heywire is a fantastic initiative that the Federal Government is very proud to support.

“It is such a unique opportunity for our young people in rural and regional areas to start conversations about what is happening in their communities, and what affects them and their friends.

“I look forward to meeting these impressive winners in Canberra and hear first-hand about their experiences, and ideas to make their communities even stronger.”

In February, the winners will attend the Heywire Regional Youth Summit in Canberra. During the week-long summit, the winners will meet with Members of Parliament and community leaders, to develop ideas to strengthen their communities.

The full list of Heywire winners and their stories are here:

2018 HEYWIRE STORYTELLING COMPETITION WINNERS

ACT

Helen Odoemena, Canberra - [I loved my childhood in Nigeria, but Australia is where I grew up](#)

NSW

Michael James, Huskisson - [White skin and red hair doesn't mean I'm not a proud Aboriginal](#)

Brianna Martin, Bunyah - [I didn't find out I was Aboriginal until I was ten years old](#)

Emma Murray, Armidale - [I moved to Armidale to become a dressage rider](#)

Ajay Williams, Casino - [Step up man, you're a representative of an ancient culture](#)

Lucy Scott, Temora - [My family come together once a year for salami day](#)

Amelia Judson, Bogan Gate - [You learn a lot about people working as a rural dentist](#)

Jessica McWilliam, Dubbo - [Rebuilding after losing my brother and my dad to suicide](#)

Carlie Stolzenhein, Lochiel - [Moving out to the farm saved me](#)

Jarrold Sansom, Medowie - [Growing up on the family farm, I felt invincible](#)

Muriel Hunter, Broken Hill - [Becoming a nurse to help my community after a tough start](#)

NT

Noah Hayes, Darwin - [Army cadets taught me that to lead, you need to follow first](#)

Tiara Douglas, Titjikala - [Making new friends from all over the country](#)

QLD

Leshae Beck, Biloela - [Shattering misconceptions as a young female diesel fitter](#)

Latresha Maka, Dauan Island - [I want to be a nurse and bring healthcare to my island](#)

Meghan Venter, Mackay - [I've learnt that every challenge in life holds a lesson](#)

Angela Elliott, Gin Gin - [Going on the hay run to support farmers in Yaraka](#)

Zurack Dempsey, Cloncurry - [Finding a passion for hairdressing got me back on track](#)

Claire Jackson, Yaraka - [Loving my new home on a remote station in the outback](#)

SA

Chaneline Kakule, Mount Gambier - [Arriving here, we have finally stopped running from war](#)

Cheyenne McKay, Karoonda - [I'm proud of the work my family does to feed Australia](#)

Taylah Smith, Mintaro - [My family rebuild the outback Dingo Fence to keep pests out](#)

Mitchell Barnes, Cummins - [After Dad's death the community came together to support us](#)

TAS

Mohammad Nazari, Hobart - [I was born a refugee but my dream is to be an architect](#)

Kobi Bell, King Island - [Skateboarding down Hospital Hill on King Island](#)

VIC

Zanna Palmer, Geelong - [Boarding school made me question my Indigenous identity](#)

Jock Finlay, Bendigo - [The weird feeling of knowing I have someone else's kidney](#)

Kudamba Abaas, Morwell - [People think all Sudanese are tall but in my family, I am a smurf](#)

Teagan Menhenett, Arcadia - [Inside my mind as I confront my eating disorder](#)

Julia Payne, Colignan - [My generation are well prepared to be farmers](#)

Nia Harrison, Horsham - [I'm not deaf but I might be soon and I'm not worried at all](#)

WA

Dillon Louvel, Broome - [We trek through the mangroves on a turtle hunt](#)

Darlah Killer, Looma - [What the Kimberly AFL women's league means to me](#)

Liam Graham, Moora - [It's just me and Dad so we stick together](#)

Cohen Augustson, Albany - [Growing up LGBT+ in the country](#)

Hamish Austin, Manjimup - [Anxiety: the challenge I've kept hidden for my whole life](#)

Brady Collett, Christmas Island - [Spearfishing for massive tuna on Christmas Island](#)

Jarrold Darlow, Condingup - [In a small rural town, sporting teams are a real community](#)

Heywire is supported by the Australian Government through: The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development; the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources; the Department of Health; and AgriFutures Australia.