



PUBLIC SPEAKING – THE TRIALS AND THE TRIBULATIONS

Lions Youth of the Year was first mentioned in 1968 as a speaking contest for boys so they could develop as ambassadors for Australia. There were four volunteers and the winner, Lynnsay Fryer, went onto try his luck at Surfers Paradise. In the following year students tried their hand at 'Youth Speaks for Australia' sponsored by the Jaycees. In 1970 Apex sponsored the competition which many contestants described as 'nerve-wracking... but worthwhile'.

In the late 70s Lions Youth of the Year was back on the agenda with students speaking on drugs, national service, the painting 'Blue Poles' and the 'Life Be In It' campaign (remember Norm). In 1984 'two quivering Year 11 students', Chris McIntyre and Sandra Mundt, took part in the Jaycees' competition and after presenting a six minute prepared speech and a 3 minute impromptu speech on 'the family unit is weakening', Sandra went on to compete at Channel 10/4/5a in the finals. Chris was able to win the Lions Youth of the Year in Year 12. One of the early winners of the Regional Final of Lions Youth of the Year was Vivien Gordon.

Students also participated in the Rostrum Voice of Youth and in 1993 Matthew Luhrs competed at the Gold Coast in the Regional Finals. In the late 1990s record numbers of students took to entering in the Lions Youth of the Year- each year 7 or 8 students recognised an opportunity to hone their public speaking skills and in 2001 another winner, Amanda Elsdon, progressed to the Regional final.

The National Bank has been a great supporter of the competition taken on and run by many Lions members some of whom have also been teachers at the school – Lindsay Proudlock and James Evans. The Pittsworth Bowls Club has provided the venue and a delicious meal in recent years with the Uniting Church Hall called into service prior to that.

The topics chosen by the students for their prepared speeches have reflected the times from national service in the 70s, interest rates in the 80s, racism in our community in the 90s, teens and mobile phones in the noughties and in the last decade personal growth has featured. The impromptu speaking topics are always a source of consternation as students wring their hands and wait their turn for the topic and Mr Evans' joke (not sure which is worse).

Our winner was Kirby O'Shea in 2017 and Alysia Cooper won the Public Speaking aspect for this year.