ABC celebrates Melbourne's best young storytellers

Today the ABC, together VicHealth, has announced the young winners of the 2021 Takeover Melbourne storytelling competition, showcasing the brightest young storytellers from across the city.

Hundreds of young Melburnians leaped at the chance to share their experiences and passions, with twenty-nine winners selected to have their stories featured on the ABC.

Now in its second year, the Takeover Melbourne initiative is run by the ABC with major partner VicHealth and support from City of Melbourne and the Centre for Multicultural Youth.

This year's stories range from finding the confidence to raise your hand at school, to raising your voice for neurodiverse young people everywhere. From learning to connect with your culture, to connecting with the ones you love through a screen because of COVID-19. From budding astronomers, to musicians, athletes and Rubik's Cube champions; the 29 stories show a diverse and multicultural Melbourne.

Helen, 16, from West Melbourne, was teased at school for bringing Pâté in Bánh Mì for lunch. She shared a story about reconnecting with Vietnamese culture and rediscovering her childhood love of Bánh Mì.

"Becoming a winner has given me a lot more confidence," she said." Young people have a whole new and different perspective, and I think it's important for both other young people and older people to hear what we have to say."

"I would like to thank all of the inspiring young people for sharing their stories as part of Takeover Melbourne in 2021. At VicHealth, we are committed to providing more young people with safe spaces to share their thoughts and ideas, through initiatives such as Takeover and our Future Healthy initiative," states Dr Sandro Demaio, CEO of VicHealth.

Lord Mayor of Melbourne Sally Capp congratulated the Takeover Melbourne winners. "It's been incredibly inspiring reading the words of these courageous young storytellers. The future is in the hands of our young people, and initiatives like Takeover Melbourne prove that we can expect big things from the next generation."

Director of ABC Regional and Local, Judith Whelan, welcomed the return of the program in its second year. "We heard from so many articulate and community-minded young people in the first year of Takeover Melbourne, all of whom had a fresh and collaborative approach to helping make their communities better. I'm looking forward to hearing the inspiring stories from this year's participants."

The Takeover Melbourne winners will be showcased across the ABC, so keep an eye out for their stories on ABC Radio Melbourne and on the News stream via the ABC Listen app throughout November and December. They will also be celebrated at a gala event in early 2022.

To see the full list of Takeover Melbourne winners and hear their stories visit: abc.net.au/takeover

Takeover Melbourne is made possible with support from major partner VicHealth and their Future Healthy initiative, and additional support from the Centre for Multicultural Youth, and the 32 local councils of Greater Melbourne, facilitated by City of Melbourne.

For more information or to interview a Takeover Melbourne winner, please get in touch. Photos of all winners are also available by request.

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2021 Takeover Melbourne Winners		
Inner Metro		
Mahi	Fitzroy	Seeing a girl of colour receiving one of the highest ATARs in the state inspired me to change schools.
Pen	Port Phillip	My mum's work means I only get to see her every couple of months.
Helen	Melbourne	I stopped eating Banh Mi after kids at school teased me, but now I embrace my culture.
Inner South East		
Nathan	Brighton	My dad is ex-military and an ex-boxer – his treatment for my eczema was unorthodox.
Josh	Ashburton	Competitive rubik cubing has changed my life.
Maria	Murrumbeena	I want high schools to start taking neurodiversity seriously.
Thanyatorn (Foon)	South Yarra (Stonnington)	Culture and belief helped me embrace moving from Thailand to Australia
Western		
Hung Vy	St Albans	I've realised that fishing with my dad was never just about catching fish.
Ivy	Seabrooke	Swimming has taught me to take pride in my achievements.
Zara	Burnside Heights	The first time I wore a hijab.
Sean	Essendon West	In 2019, I faced the toughest challenge of my life – a year without cricket.
Logan	Truganina	I teach Samoan fire dancing to people all over the world.
Northern		
Savannah	Eltham	I was the first person in my Taekwondo club to earn my Black Belt over Zoom.
Amalia	Reservoir	Finding out I have Aspergers showed me that I'm not alone.
Bill	Craigieburn	At school I was put with the misbehaving kids. Actually, I just have ADD.

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Dubhessa	Brunswick East	Celtic music has helped me connect with my granddad in Ireland.
Fieke	Diamond Creek	Finding my voice through environmental advocacy.
Rudra	South Morang	I believe we live in a golden age of astronomy.
Louis	Wandong	Autism doesn't have just one face. The things that make me different are who I am.
Eastern		
Vignesha	Wantirna South	I can sing 38 national anthems (so far).
Shania	Nunawarding	I've never forgotten the time a schoolmate made fun of my tiffin.
Ella	Burwood	Spending time on a farm in the country helped me connect with my neighbours during lockdown.
Southern		
Nyarath	Endeavor Hills	I was scared to share my poetry because English isn't my first language. But poetry has given me a voice.
Mac	Frankston	Coming to terms with a visible disability encouraged me to also embrace my queerness.
Rabiha	Dandenong North	I learned English at Dandenong Library.
Rosie	Glen Waverley	Informed care helped me deal with mental illness and recover from trauma.
Amy	Clarinda	Ever since I was six years old, I have always dreamed of working in the film industry.
Jasper	Mount Martha	Grief is an overwhelming feeling. Not everyone can stand back up on their own.
Outer Metropolitan		
Sarah	Healesville	Without Worowa, I'd still be trapped between both sides of who I'm meant to be