

**ROSTRUM VOICE OF YOUTH 2024 NATIONAL FINALS
AFTERNOON TEA
REMARKS DELIVERED BY
EMERITUS PROFESSOR DON CHALMERS AO
ON BEHALF OF
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC,
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA,
FRIDAY 26 JULY 2024, DRAWING ROOM, GOVERNMENT HOUSE**

Good afternoon and a very warm welcome to Government House to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Rostrum Australia Voice of Youth competition and the 2024 National Finals. It's wonderful to see so many of you here, representing Rostrum Clubs from across Australia.

Her Excellency, my wife, apologises that she is unable to join you today due to illness, but she hopes to be well for your Final Awards tomorrow.

May I begin by paying my respects to the Muwinina people upon whose land we gather. I acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community as ongoing custodians of country and recognise their enduring culture and deep connection to land, sea, and waters.

Rostrum, as we all know, has a distinguished history that began in Australia in 1930 with the establishment of the first Rostrum club in Sydney. With around 1000 members across Australia,¹ Rostrum has played a crucial role of promoting effective communication and public speaking².

Today, we acknowledge one of Rostrum's most significant initiatives — the Voice of Youth competition. This competition is not only about public speaking; it's also about giving our youth opportunities to develop and express their views and ideas³.

¹ <https://www.rostrum.com.au/about-rostrum/>

² Correspondence Jenny Fraser/Paula Chatwood 21 July 2024

³ Ibid.

The benefits of participating in this Voice of Youth competition are many. For our young people, it's an opportunity to gain experience and confidence in public speaking. The format of this competition includes both prepared and short notice speeches. This will challenge students to think on their feet and to articulate thoughts clearly and persuasively⁴. These communication skills will serve you well in any field you choose to pursue.

The competition will also encourage critical thinking and creativity. You will engage with various topics, learn to research, analyse, and present arguments. You will gain an understanding of the issues that challenge our society.

May I extend my thanks to the many volunteers who work tirelessly each year to make this competition possible. Your dedication and commitment are behind its success. The hours spent organising the heats and finals across our States make a difference to the lives of many young Australians.

The eight students participating in the National Final tomorrow, represent New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory: congratulations to you all on reaching this stage. Regardless of the final outcome, you have all demonstrated exceptional skill and poise in public speaking. Her Excellency and I are very much looking forward to tomorrow's finals.

In closing, may I acknowledge that these 2024 finals mark the significant milestone of 50 years of Voice of Youth competitions. Her Excellency wishes you all the very best for tomorrow's finals.

Thank you.

Paula ...

[DOS thanks Professor Chalmers and invites Jenny Blain, National Rostrum President, to present Professor Chalmers with Rostrum Anthology.]

⁴ <https://www.rostrum.com.au/voy/information-for-all-students/>