**Plain English Speaking Award - 40th Anniversary documentary**

**Mary-Rose McLaren:** And I'm just going to take a very short amount of your time to say two things. One is that I know that 1977 to you is more than a lifetime ago. Okay, it's possibly more than your parents’ lifetime ago but it goes really fast and in 40 years’ time you will be the people who made the decisions that made the world you live in.

But what happens from now is what matters, and that is what's in your control. So, take that responsibility and really make something of it.

My name is Mary Rose McLaren, and I was Mary Rose Morgan so in 1977. I was the first winner of the Plain English Award. It was a state final it came into existence and a celebration for the Queen's Silver Jubilee and Prince Charles came to the final.

**Jason Ronald:** The Premier at the time or probably about that time Sir Rupert Hamer who was then Dick Hamer put out a report wanting plain English from government departments. And that's where the idea came from and the Australia-Britain Society took up the challenge to come up with a speaking competition and there were discussions for many months with people like Commander Michael Parker, Jeffrey Norris, Martin Clemens and other members of that committee at the time discussing what could be best thing to do and they came up with the Plain English Speaking Award and then got the full support of the education department in Victoria at the highest level and then it went forward from there.

**Adele Burke:** The single greatest threat to humanity is the millions of children being born each day into poverty enslaved by illiteracy and numeracy, malnutrition and limited health care.

**Matisse Reed:** Knowledge is power, but the real power comes from knowledge that opens our minds and enables us to understand our own humanity.

**Terry Kenos:** Having a Plain English Speaking Award emphasizes the power of the language itself. We're not looking for an Oscar performance from an actor. I think those skills are something quite different. We're really looking for the plain use of the word is in there I guess the very intention of the language to convey a message.

**Mary-Rose McLaren:** And there are some times when we encourage kids to perhaps not use plain English you know a lot of the subjects they use have a particular vocabulary or and you can get very embroiled in that as you go through life where you start to talk in jargon, and you leave behind a big proportion of the population?

**Ellie Jamonts:** For my style of speaking a Plain English Speaking Award is casual and it's natural, and it's fun and it's simple and it's not over-complicated so for me I think it let me just be myself and be really natural and that's an amazing advantage that it has.

**Luke Macronas:** There is this understanding that you have to use your own words and at first, for speakers and performers that's horrifying because I think people think public speaking is so much about you know putting on a persona and performing and plain English speaking is all about letting yourself be seen letting yourself be heard and that's a challenge.

And I think that's what makes the Plain English Speaking Award so enduring and such an important competition.

**Esther Nixon:** Planned obsolescence has paved the way for having hidden agendas in almost all areas of business and profit is now increasingly made at the price of lives.

**Fergus Dale:** We should be embracing our regional communities. They represent the literal and figurative heart of the Australian continent and within them some of the greatest cases of human compassion and empowerment I have ever witnessed.

Yeah it's incredible to have this opportunity to speak about things especially when it really, it shows that you've really influenced people if people say 'oh I never thought about something like that'. I feel like just really cool or some inspiring people just gravitated towards this competition and I've met some interesting people and just discovered things that I didn't really think about before.

**Adele Burke:** What's really set this trip apart was the opportunity you've had to do other things, to explore Melbourne and to meet all the other candidates and that's really what's been the highlight for me, the opportunity to meet six other really amazing, passionate, like- minded people from across Australia.

**Aditi Tamhanker:** Today we did a workshop with Isabel Crawford who was the international winner, which is crazy. It was like meeting a celebrity. So when we found out about each other speeches, and how we prepare for impromptus and stuff that was really interesting.

**Esther Nixon:** I thought that I just had one speaking style. I didn't really know that, I didn't really know that I would discover myself through public speaking. I thought yep you know it's just a speech and that would be it, but I feel like the more I do it and the more I perform you know I keep finding myself, and I understand that I have a voice through public speaking.

**Matisse Reed:** I love the opportunity to be able to speak on whatever topic you want and especially, like obviously in the prepared speech, and it's really great because it gives you an opportunity to show your plain English and just your ability to appeal to a crowd of I suppose everyday people.

**Matthew Shaw:** All the nerves and all the excitement all plays into it but really, it'll be fun. It'll be fun. So that's what's pushing me now, and we'll see how that goes and hopefully or I'm here with a lot of great competition, so there's no real way to determine the outcome but it'll be fun.

**Ellie Jamonts:** I think young people having a platform to speak their minds and not to a set topic but to be able to tell us what they find really interesting and what they care about is incredibly valuable I mean just having that time to be able to really think about what they want to say and to structure it and to analyse it and to research it and then to present it just gives it so much more weight than writing an essay, or you know delivering a speech in class.

**Brenton Cambell:** As an English teacher myself I know that creative and critical thinking is something that is wanted in the industry. It's wanted in the world at this point in time and the Plain English Speaking Award encourages that because not only do you have the prepared speaking opportunity where you can prepare and articulate your point of view.

You've got the impromptu opportunity then as well to think on your feet about a set topic, but you've also then got that public interview and it's the interview for me that I think, to me, that makes this such a brilliant competition because you're sharing with an audience who you are and your ideologies on elements of our world.

**Tom Ballard:** I think another great thing for the award is just teaching you to think well. You know clear thinking is really, to me vital, and a great skill to have in your toolbox. I think there's a lot of sloppy thinking sometimes and clearly setting out a logical argument in a speech or taking people on a journey in a clear methodical way and bringing the audience with you that's a really key skill that you definitely picked up while doing this award. Putting together your speech, watching other people's speeches you realise that if you lose people, if you sort of disappear down a bit of a rabbit hole and haven't brought people with you, your speech isn't going to work.

**Aditi Tamhanker:** All our heartbreak, all our trials and tribulations and all our glory as a race are surely more than just a roll of the dice.

**Matthew Shaw:** Let me be clear what I saw was not a hatred for the West. It was not a goal to force their faith onto me and to relentlessly punish those who did not obey.

**Lloyd Cameron:** Over the years the award has grown enormously. The numbers in New South Wales have hovered between two to three hundred over that time and other states and territories have come on board.

A breakthrough came in 2013 when a student from Wollongong in New South Wales won the national then went on to win in London so that was a wonderful achievement.

**Isabel Crawford:** You know an Australian hadn't won that tournament for decades and I've known quite a few people who had who were older than me in New South Wales who had been to that competition and they were such amazing public speakers to me. I thought you know they're not winning there's just, there's no point in making that my focus when I go over there. And so I didn't so I went there just to give a speech about issues that I cared about.

**Luke Macaronas:** I think the best public speeches are the ones that show their audience something new and that share part of yourself with that audience and in that way it is a kind of art because you bare your soul, and you bare your ideas, and you go out on a limb and share yourself, and that's a risk because you don't know if it will work out every time, but when it does that's so rewarding and so meaningful.

**Michael Fullilove:** A simple speech with a good idea that is articulated in plain English, in simple words laid one after another has the ability to cut through the noise and to penetrate people's defences and to open their minds.

**Gideon Haigh:** It is about communication, it is about you're not necessarily attempting to solve all the world's problems, but you are hoping to reach certain individuals in an audience and leave them with something to take away something to reflect on, even if they might disagree with it, but maybe something that they haven't thought before.

**Luke Macaronas:** And in putting those words together you will discover more about yourself and you will help people to understand this world differently. That is why speaking is so important is because you can change the way people see the world.

**Emily Kim:** We continue to brush aside issues connected to periods because there is so little proper conversation about it and thus intensify a vicious cycle of disregarding and forgetting.

**Judith Graley MP:** And the winner of the 2017 Plain English Speaking Award is Emily Kim from North Sydney Girls High School in New South Wales.

**Rick Forster:** It's a wonderful competition and as such they get so much poise and they have to work so hard to actually achieve their candidacy and when they meet the other candidates it is just such a valuable thing for them all.

**Isabel Crawford:** The best part about that is meeting people who are so different from you and have had such different backgrounds and experiences but who you can click with over a kind of shared desire for the same broad things in the world.

**Peter Hartcher:** Some of whom by the way I ended up meeting in my later career as a political journalist. They turned up as federal members of parliament and senators.

**Emily Kim:** Once you enter this little universe, our little nerdy public speaking community you never want to leave because everyone is so supportive. As you've seen today you hear so many interesting ideas and thoughts from some of the most talented and articulate people in the world. So I really really really want to thank them for becoming some of the fastest friends I've ever made.

I want to thank all of the sponsors who make this competition possible because to know that there are still people out there who genuinely believe that the art of public speaking is important to young people. It is really really heartening for those of us who have you know dedicated a lot of our lives and effort to it. So I really want to thank everyone who's ever been involved in this ever, and I'm very excited to see where public speaking will take me next.

**Julie Sattler:** The Australia-Britain Society obviously is very proud to be involved in this. I mean at state level we provide sponsorship. The national level is you know very heavily involved with sponsorship of the whole weekend as well as the final and you know and very proud to do that, it's something that we value and want to continue.

But it's great to see the reaction of the participants and their families and these schools. You know that's a great reward to see the results.

**Text:** In memory of Andrew Hilton 1947-2017.

**Text:** Past Secretary/Treasurer and Trustee of the Australia-Britain Society Foundation and past Victorian President of the Australia-Britain Society

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