



Public speaking champion Jessica D'Souza.

Jessica finds her own voice

Jessica D'Souza

I'M a naturally shy person, so public speaking gives me the opportunity to come out of my shell and be confident in myself and my abilities.

I also love the fact that it gives me a medium to express my opinion on topics I'm passionate about.

I'm really excited about interacting with people from all across the world.

I'm viewing this trip (to the World Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championships in Canada next month) as a learning experience as well as a competition, and I know that whether I place or not, I'll be coming back with new skills I can use in my speaking.

I will be travelling to Toronto, Canada, leaving Sydney on April 10.

I've never been to Canada before so I'm very excited to experience it for the first time. I heard that it can get very cold though, so I've been stocking up on jumpers for the past few weeks.

I've never won a public speaking competition before — hopefully I can change this in Canada. However, I have placed in several public



speaking competitions, including second place at the Parramatta Diocesan Voice of Youth Cluster Finals (when I was in Year 6), second place in Rostrum Voice of Youth, Parramatta Eisteddfod and Speakfest competitions (AIDPSC's junior competition) when I was in Year 9 and third place in So-roptimist and AIDPSC (after-dinner category) when I was in Year 10.

I've been doing public speaking since I was four years old, so about 13 years.

I think that OLMC really encourages girls to be women of agency and express their opinions through public speaking.

Jessica D'Souza is an Our Lady of Mercy College Year 11 student who is heading to the World Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championships in Canada next month.

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