



Songwriter with a heart of gold

BETHANY TYLER

A LITTLE man with a big voice and even bigger heart will represent the state in a national songwriting workshop. Highton's Tom Meadows, 11, (pictured) won his spot on the Music Count Us In writer's board after he penned a track called *Deep in the Blue* to help him cope with the death of his nan.

Next month he'll fly to Sydney on an all-expenses-paid trip, where he and three other students from Western Australia and Queensland will write the 2016 song for the Music Australia initiative.

Under the guidance of mentor Jay Laga'aia, the four entries will be blended into one track that will be performed at the same time by more than 560,000 students at a series of concerts in different states.

"I couldn't believe it when I got the phone call, I was actually speechless," he said.

"Music is definitely what I want to do when I'm older. I'm not really

sure how far I'm going to get, but I'll give it a shot."

The Bellaire Primary School captain was encouraged by his music teacher to enter the song, which was also used by the Alannah and Madeline Foundation to help educate schools on bullying.

"I basically wrote the song to help kids who are going through a hard time at school or work, and also about my nan, and anti-bullying and violence," Tom said.

"I started fiddling around with the guitar first, once I got the chords right I tried to get the lyrics right. It took me a while, but I got there."

This year marks MCUI's 10th anniversary.

Tom's parents Kate and Darren Meadows said their hardworking son was the only one in their family with a musical streak.

"I think he can really see that link between his music and helping others," Ms Meadows said. "He really loves charity and has got a huge thing about helping people. He's just a quiet little achiever."



Picture: MIKE DUGDALE