



Department of  
Education and Training

## *Media Statement*

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3/3/09

### **State colours for students on ANZAC tour**

Morawa District High School student Mathew King is one step closer to a life-changing tour to the Western Front, after receiving his official black and gold Premier's ANZAC Student Tour uniform from Education Minister Liz Constable.

The Year 10 student is part of a group of 12 secondary students from across Western Australia who will be travelling to France and Belgium this April, in what has become a popular history education program in the State.

Dr Constable said the students would pay tribute to the 18,000 soldiers who died at the Western Front, but whose remains have never been found.

"One of the many historic sites the tour group will visit will be Fromelles, where a mass grave of previously missing British and Australian soldiers has recently been found and will soon be recovered," Dr Constable said.

"The Western Front forms a crucial part of Australian history. It contributed greatly to the ANZAC legend and has significant links to many Western Australian families.

"As occurred during the Gallipoli campaign, Australia was to experience more loss of human life on the Western Front. However, the Australian experience on the Western Front also helped change the course of the war and shape our nation.

"The place names of Western Front battles, such as Fromelles, Pozieres and Villers Bretonneux, have now become as important in commemoration as they were in conflict.

"The students on the Premier's ANZAC Student Tour will have an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of the 313,000 Australian soldiers who fought at the front."

Dr Constable said Mathew, a student councillor at Morawa DHS, was an excellent student who had won highest achiever awards in English, society and environment, and drama. He also won the fairest and best award at his Morawa hockey club.

"I love Australian history and the chance to travel overseas and study first hand was too good to be true," he said.

"To stand where Australian soldiers once stood and recognise the significant impact Australians had at the Western Front will be amazing."

Mathew's great-great grandfather's brother, Joe Thompson, survived his service at the Western Front as a soldier.

In addition to meeting the Minister last Tuesday, the 2009 Premier's ANZAC Student Tour participants and the Department of Education and Training Director General Sharyn O'Neill

attended morning tea with the WA Governor Dr Ken Michael AC, which was followed by lunch with RSL representatives at ANZAC House.

To secure his place on the tour, Mathew completed a 1,000 word essay about the importance of ANZAC Day commemorations. Finalists then presented a five-minute speech on the topic and were interviewed by a panel of judges.

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