



Department of
Education and Training

Media Statement

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State colours for students on ANZAC tour

Eastern suburbs students are one step closer to a life-changing tour to the Western Front, after receiving their official black and gold Premier's ANZAC Student Tour uniforms from Education Minister Liz Constable.

Chelsea Moran and Kathryn Wilson, both of Ballajura, and Beechboro resident Marissa Barbaro are 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."

Kathryn Wilson, a Year 12 student at Ballajura Community College, has twice been selected as a State semi-finalist in the Rostrum Voice of Youth Speaking Competition and is a member of her school's Senior Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble.

"I think experiencing ANZAC Day in an area where Australians have fought will be the experience of a lifetime," Kathryn, who is a passionate history student, said.

Kathryn's great-great-uncle, Sergeant Christopher Veitch from the 11th Battalion, was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal whilst defending an area called Ostrich Avenue during the Bullecourt campaign. He was also present at the landing of Gallipoli.

Chelsea Moran is in Year 9, also at Ballajura Community College, and excels at English, Italian, society and environment, and media.

“I’m really interested in the historical background of the ANZAC spirit and its place in Australian culture and our sense of identity,” she said.

“I think Menin Gate is going to be amazing and I can’t wait to look at all the battlefields.”

Chelsea hopes to pay respect to her three great uncles, Hubert, Sydney, and Albert Walton, who fought as part of the Third Pioneer Battalion in different regiments.

Marissa Barbaro, a year 12 student at Mount Lawley Senior High School, has studied Italian and French as part of the school’s Gifted and Talented Education languages program. She has also represented WA Athletics in Kuala Lumpur.

“I think the tour will be a great experience both historically and culturally,” she said.

“It’s one thing to read about these battlefields in history books, but another to go there and see it firsthand.”

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 their place on the tour, the girls had to complete 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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