



Department of
Education and Training

Media Statement

3/3/09

State colours for students on ANZAC tour

Santa Maria College student Caris Negri, from Bruce Rock, is one step closer to a life-changing tour to the Western Front, after receiving his/her official Premier's ANZAC Student Tour uniform from Education Minister Liz Constable.

The Year 12 student is one 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, 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 Caris Negri was a gifted student having won the Year 11 Accounting award for her school as well as representing Santa Maria College in tennis, netball, softball and mock trials.

"I think the Anzac spirit is still really prevalent in today's society, so I want to go and see where our Nation's defining spirit came from," Caris said.

"I come from a country town, Bruce Rock, and am looking forward to getting out and seeing the world. I'm most excited about retracing the steps of the ANZAC soldiers and absorbing the true spirit of the sacred place.

"History is my favourite subject at school so it is very exciting to visit a place that directly impacted the course of world events."

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Caris will be keeping in mind her own Great Grandfather, Joseph Baker who served with the 11th Battalion in both Gallipoli and at the Western Front. She also has relatives who fought in World War Two.

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 her place on the tour, Caris 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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