



Media Statement

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Port Hedland student blazing a trail to the Western Front

Port Hedland school student Claire McLaughlin took another step closer to the First World War's historic Western Front recently when she received her official ANZAC Student Tour blazer from Premier Alan Carpenter.

Claire, a Year 12 student at Hedland Senior High School, is one of 12 students selected to travel with Mr Carpenter to France and Belgium this month as part of the Premier's ANZAC Student Tour 2008.

Mr Carpenter said the students will be walking in the footsteps of the ANZACs, paying tribute to those who served or were killed or injured on the battlefields of the Western Front.

"More than 48,000 young Australians, not much older than the students selected for this tour, lost their lives on the battlefields of France and Belgium," Mr Carpenter said.

"The students chosen to take part in the tour have demonstrated an interest in Australia's role at the Western Front and are all outstanding representatives of young Western Australia.

"With a passion for gymnastics and an interest in soccer and touch rugby, Claire has often represented her school and community in the sporting arena, so it is wonderful she now has an opportunity to represent her community on such an important tour."

Claire is a dedicated student who said she is keen to experience first-hand the places that have contributed to Australia's cultural identity.

"I'm most looking forward to attending the battlegrounds and getting a grasp of what it would have felt like for those soldiers to be there," she said.

"You can read textbooks as much as you like but standing there on the battlegrounds is now as close as you can get to those soldiers' experiences."

Mr Carpenter said the tour has special significance in 2008 as the students will join him at the Dawn Service on April 25 at the French village of Villiers-Bretonneux to mark the 90th anniversary of the town's liberation from German occupation.

"This tour is part of the State Government's commitment to raising the profile of ANZAC Day in the lives of all Western Australians, remembering the sacrifices of our forebears.

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Photo attached. Claire is available for interviews.