

School Curriculum and Standards Authority

Exhibitions and Awards Ceremony for 2019

Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia

Wednesday, 19th February 2020

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Whadjuk Noongar people – and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Welcome to the beautiful and historic Government House Ballroom for this important Award presentation ceremony.

For 121 years, this Ballroom has been the scene of many grand occasions in our State including balls for visiting royalty and investiture ceremonies. Many prestigious awards, honours and decorations have been presented in this room, and our newly graduated Year 12 students will soon join this tradition of excellence.

It is a privilege to address you all and to celebrate the hard work and determination of our students tonight. You have been through the hardest year you will ever experience in education. You have withstood the stress. It is a privilege to be among you.

This ceremony is a chance for the State to acknowledge our student's outstanding achievements at secondary school, as they transition into university or further training, onwards to make their own mark on the world.

In December, I hosted the media call for the *2019 Beazley Medal* with the Honourable Sue Ellery [Minister for Education and Training] here at the House. The Minister will speak more about our deserving medal recipients shortly. The Beazley Medals are named after my father who was Minister for Education in the Whitlam government during which time he carried out important reforms in the education field, such as abolishing university fees and introducing needs-based funding.

But the medal stems not from that but from the work he did enquiring, ground up, into the WA education system. He used to tell me he returned to his young adulthood. He started teaching, taking over a one-teacher primary school in Arthur River. He rode his bike down and slept on the floor of the schoolroom for a month. Whilst he did the enquiry he visited accommodation, challenged places and did it all again. The inquiry led to great changes. It is a privilege now to be able to advocate education within the community and our system to the rest of the world. Important in all of this is to ensure our students are equipped with the tools needed for the new global renaissance of creativity and design or the fourth industrial revolution. Much revolves around discussion of STEM capabilities in our students.

It's great to hear of STEM learning initiatives growing in WA, including a state-of-the-art STEM facility which commenced construction just last week at Mount Lawley Senior High School and the Southern Hemisphere's first autonomous technology training facility which will open in Collie later this year.

But STEM needs the arts. I am in favour really of STEAM. History, arts and culture are critical for content and community. Critical for learning the sociology of the structures that new industry creates. Vital for learning how to collaborate in groups. And finally, simply, for civilisation.

A WA Business News article this week referenced the success of the STEAM program at Melville Senior High School. Their history students used creative and technical problem solving skills to construct a medieval village in the video game *Minecraft*, and were, “...*tasked to create a society with a political and judicial system to go with it.*” An innovative example of combining STEM skills with the arts, and indicative of why they won the high school category of last year’s Governor’s School STEM Awards.

To our students – you are in the box seat to take advantage of the many exciting industry developments now occurring within the scope of WA’s unique strengths. You have bright futures ahead and are true examples of the intelligent young minds we are lucky to have. Bit of self-interest here. We on the platform and your parents are very dependent on you meeting the challenges to life and prosperity so we can enjoy a comfortable, if ill-deserved, old age.

Tonight we acknowledge and celebrate your hard work; your commitment to excellence; and your determination to achieve your goals.

Many of you will commence further education or training at the tertiary level over the coming weeks, and some of you will choose other paths in life. Whatever you do, I know you will succeed given the level of character, talent and tenacity that has brought you here tonight.

To the teachers and families, we give you heartfelt thanks for the supporting and coaching role you have played in these young people’s lives.

Congratulations to all students receiving an award tonight.

Thankyou.