

CADET OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Statement by Minister for Youth

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park — Minister for Youth) [12.21 pm]: Recently, I had the great pleasure of attending the RSLWA Cadet of the Year Awards. The awards ceremony on 31 January at ANZAC House was a very auspicious occasion. I joined cadets, their families, cadet unit leaders, defence force leaders and veterans, my ministerial colleague Hon Paul Papalia and two former Premiers. Thank you, member.

The event included the presentation of Australia Day medallions, individual proficiency awards and the “Spirit of ANZAC” Cadet of the Year Award across three Australian Defence Force streams: the Air Force, the Army and the Navy. The event also recognised excellence in other specialty streams like the Police Rangers and Surf Life Saving Cadets. Winners in each cadet stream will travel to Canberra to participate in ANZAC Day commemorations in April this year as well as tours of the Australian War Memorial, Royal Military College Duntroon and Parliament House.

The Cook government is incredibly proud of the Cadets WA Youth Development Program, which has operated for over 25 years. Over 9 200 young people participate in the cadets program through 186 cadet units throughout our great state. These units involve around 1 100 volunteer instructors. The program enhances the wellbeing of young Western Australians by developing a sense of community service and civic responsibility and enhancing their job readiness. We know the program is a valuable resource for many schools to assist them with student engagement, behaviour and attendance, with the greatest impact being on students and schools in lower socio-economic areas and regional and remote communities. These are some of the reasons why in our first budget in 2017 our state Labor government invested more than \$700 000 to fill a budget shortfall left by the Liberal–National government and why we built on that commitment in subsequent budgets including a \$2.2 million funding boost for Cadets WA in 2022–23.

I was honoured to speak with cadets during the awards ceremony and hear how our cadet programs have positively impacted their lives. Congratulations to the winners, including Pyper, who lives in the member for Darling Range’s electorate and of whom the member is very proud. A special thank you to both RSLWA for graciously hosting the event and to all the cadet unit leaders who volunteer countless hours and their endless expertise for the development of our cadets.

These awards showcased some of our amazing young Western Australian people. I know members in this place will join me in acknowledging their fantastic achievements and recognising our impressive Cadets WA Youth Development Program.