

MERREDIN COLLEGE

Statement by Member for Central Wheatbelt

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [12.51 pm]: During the winter recess I visited Merredin College to meet with students, teachers and support staff. Thank you principal Jarrad Ritchie and deputy principal Matt Baltovich for hosting me while I was at the school. Thank you also to the students who prepared lunch, those who performed their dance production for upcoming NAIDOC celebrations and those who shared their art with me during the visit.

In June, I received a letter from Arabella Sutherland, one of the students in the year 8 humanities and social science class. Her class was doing a school project on the quality of education in rural areas like Merredin and surrounding towns. To quote Arabella, “Our group believes that everybody, no matter where they live, deserve a quality education.” She went on to explain very eloquently that investing more money in rural schools would give students in rural areas a better education and therefore attract and retain more students, which would then provide a greater choice of subjects and teachers qualified to teach in their fields of expertise.

I congratulate all the students for their questions and willingness to engage in how they can influence and drive change for their community, our state and our nation.

Arabella, your letter was outstanding, and I commend you for your passion to improve education in regional communities.

I committed to Arabella and her class that I would continue to advocate for better funding and support for education in rural and regional Western Australia, and I look forward to working with them to make that case to the Minister for Education and Training and the state government.