

COMMUNITIES — ACHIEVER AWARDS

Statement by Minister for Child Protection

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Child Protection) [12.30 pm]: On 25 July 2023, it was my great pleasure to attend the 2023 Achiever Awards. The Achiever Awards celebrate young Western Australians aged between 15 and 25 who are or have been in out-of-home care and who have overcome significant barriers to pursue further education, training or volunteering.

The awards were so inspiring. They were a true celebration of achievement in many forms and in the face of significant adversity. The Member for Nedlands joined me, the finalists, their families and friends, and staff from the Department of Communities and sector organisations to recognise the hard work and success of these young people. Education is so important in creating a positive future for young people who might have had challenging beginnings in life. As a former teacher, I found it fantastic to hear of the different pathways some of the young people are pursuing, such as engineering, science, social work and hairdressing.

This year, 42 young people were announced as winners in the university achiever award, the registered training achiever award, and the apprenticeship or traineeship achiever award. Each winner received financial support to assist with their studies, and a trophy and a certificate to acknowledge their efforts. In addition, two young people were awarded the community spirit award for showing leadership and making a positive impact on their community through volunteering. Ordinarily, I would shout these young people's names from the rooftops or at least read them into *Hansard*; however, some are still children in care.

These awards also honour the important contributions of foster carers, extended families and caseworkers in supporting young people to achieve their goals. The excellence in education and training award recognises Department of Communities staff for their outstanding commitment to further education and training outcomes in child protection. This year, the joint award winners were Care Team Five, based in the Midland child protection office, which has demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting young people leaving the care of the CEO to reach their full potential, and Eugenia Leslie-George, an education officer from the West Kimberley district and a respected Aboriginal woman who practises with a cultural lens and ensures each child feels culturally safe in the school environment.

I am so proud to be part of a government that is committed to achieving better outcomes for young people and celebrating their successes. To the 2023 Achiever Award winners, I again say, "Congratulations! You are amazing!"