

KENDENUP PRIMARY SCHOOL

Statement

HON MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM (Agricultural) [5.16 pm]: Since the early 1980s until entering the Legislative Council, my professional career largely focused on regional, rural and remote education and training, initially, as a tutor and course writer with the Isolated Students Matriculation Scheme, and then as a teacher-administrator at what was Mount Barker Senior High School. I covered much of Western Australia gaining a deep understanding of and respect for the students and families I worked with. From Cocos to Kununurra, Augusta, Esperance and the state's eastern borders, I came to the realisation that despite the many difficulties faced by students and educators, adversity seemed to bring out the best in so many.

As a regional member of the Legislative Council I am delighted to report this evening on an outstanding success story involving primary school students from Kendenup Primary School in the state's great southern—Jayden Williams, team captain; James Gray; Alex Bolton, Ethan Palfrey, Sebastian Gavinsson, Izaak Bateman and Kye Thill earned the right to represent Western Australia in Melbourne in November at the national schools chess championships. After much coaching, fund-raising and local community support, the team headed to Melbourne for the national titles hoping to improve on their ninth ranking of the year before. To their great credit, they finished national runner-up. What an excellent effort from a small but dedicated group of students from a very special school.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the dedication and support provided by coaches Mrs Heather Fergie and Mr Bill Sandilands, the entire school community, especially parents, and the Mt Barker branch of Bendigo Bank, which has sponsored the cost of flights to the national competition in the past two years.

Having played a small role in helping the chess players get to Melbourne and back, I can only hope that their recent successes encourage more students at Kendenup Primary School and similar schools across the state to set goals and work harder for the many rewards life has to offer.