

9 February 2016

## South Australia's high achieving students honoured at the SACE Merit Ceremony

Top Year 12 students from across the State are converging on Government House today (Tuesday 9 February) to be honoured for academic excellence and celebrate the qualities they have developed to succeed in community life, citizenship and work.

For the first time, proceedings in the Governor's Marquee – featuring speeches, the Governor's Commendations, and presentations to students receiving two or more Merits – are being streamed live.

Friends, family members, schools and other community members can view the live stream at [sace.sa.edu.au/meritlive](http://sace.sa.edu.au/meritlive) from 10am.

SACE Board Chief Executive, Dr Neil McGoran, said the event was an opportunity to publicly recognise the outstanding achievements of students that completed their SACE Stage 2 (Year 12) subjects in 2015, and to share the experience with their families and peers.

A record 920 students will be receiving certificates for achieving a total of 1232 'A+ with Merit' grades – defined as being "exceptional achievement", as one of the top 1-2% of students in each subject. This compares with 874 students and 1173 subject merits for the previous year.

"These results are cause for all of us to be proud and confident about the future of our State, and the prospects of our young people. They have been achieved through not only the hard work and dedication of students, but also the support provided by families, schools and teachers in helping them achieve their personal goals," Dr McGoran said.

"Looking beyond the figures, it is important to note the value of the SACE and the impact it has on young people's lives. When students achieve their SACE they are not just securing an ATAR and tertiary entrance result, they are acquiring an internationally-recognised qualification that equips them with skills in critical and creative thinking, ICT capabilities, and ethical and intercultural understanding.

"The SACE is an asset to all young people, no matter the pathway they choose – whether it be further study, training, the workplace, or a combination of these pursuits," he said.

Dr McGoran said this year's Merit Ceremony marked an important milestone as it celebrated the achievements of the fifth group of students to successfully complete the updated SACE, introduced in 2011. Since that time, more than 68,000 students have successfully completed the improved certificate.

"Through the SACE, both excellence and equity have been enhanced, with more students achieving merits, more going on to tertiary studies, and historic rises in achievement among disadvantaged groups."

As part of the event, the Tennyson Medal for the top English Studies student is being awarded, the Governor of South Australia Commendation – Aboriginal Student SACE Award is being presented to the highest overall Aboriginal achiever, and the Governor of South Australia Commendation – Excellence in Modified SACE Award recipient is being celebrated.

Students with the highest overall SACE achievement are being presented with the Governor of South Australia Commendation by His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AO.

Guest presenters include Oscar-winning filmmaker Tony Clark; South Australian Scientist of the Year and Director, National Centre for Groundwater Research and Training, Flinders University, Professor Craig Simmons; and Dr Julian O'Shea, Director, Engineers Without Borders Australia.

**Media Contact:** Daniel Dew, SACE Board of South Australia  
(08) 8372 7571 / 0448 671 050 or email: [daniel@laceboard.sa.gov.au](mailto:daniel@laceboard.sa.gov.au)