

Minister awards Tennyson Medal to SA's top English student

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Year 12 graduate Emily Schultz is the latest recipient of a South Australian tradition dating back to 1901, having won the Tennyson Medal as the top student for English Literary Studies in the SACE graduating class of 2017.

The Minister for Education, the Hon. Susan Close presented Emily with the prestigious accolade at today's SACE Merit Ceremony, held at Government House.

Now in its 30th year, the ceremony also saw 920 students awarded with 1196 subject merits for outstanding achievement in SACE Stage 2 subjects.

The Tennyson Medal began in 1901 when the former Governor of South Australia, Lord Tennyson, established the award to encourage the study of English literature. The medal is awarded to the student who achieves the highest mark in English Literary Studies

The long list of recipients includes the late John Bannon AO, 39th Premier of South Australia, who was awarded the medal in 1961.

Emily, 18, achieved two SACE subject Merits in English Literary Studies and Drama.

"I thoroughly enjoyed English Literary Studies because it allowed me to expand my writing abilities and skills in both creating and analysing texts to a more sophisticated level," Emily said.

"My SACE experience has been thoroughly positive, and throughout my SACE studies I had the opportunity to explore a range of different subjects, which allowed me to discover my academic interests, strengths and weaknesses.

"This helped me to develop a better understanding of the areas I wanted to pursue both in Year 12 and beyond."

Emily, who this year is studying a Bachelor of Advanced Health and Medical Science degree, majoring in Neuroscience at the University of Adelaide, had this advice for the SACE class of 2018.

"Set goals that are ambitious, but achievable; you know yourself and your abilities well enough to know how far you can push yourself," she said.

"Most importantly, despite all of the stress and worry that comes with Year 12, always think to yourself that you will be finished in a year and you won't be studying forever, so push yourself while you can and make the most of the opportunity."

SACE Board of South Australia's Chief Executive Professor Martin Westwell congratulated the academic achievements of the class of 2017.

"I commend all of the students who have completed their SACE, it is no easy feat and takes perseverance and determination to succeed," Prof Westwell said.

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“More than 98,000 students have successfully completed this SACE qualification since the updated SACE was introduced in 2011, a qualification that is more rigorous than the previous certificate.

“Through this SACE, both excellence and equity have improved; more students are achieving merits, many more students are going on to tertiary study, and historic rises in achievement have been recorded among disadvantaged groups.

“Every SACE completer has a valuable qualification for life that will help them to open up new doors to exciting opportunities in the future.”

As part of the Merit Ceremony, His Excellency the Hon. Hieu Van Le AC, the Governor of South Australia, presented the following awards:

- Governor of South Australia Commendation Excellence Award for outstanding overall achievement in the SACE (27 recipients in 2017)
- Governor of South Australia Commendation – Aboriginal Student SACE Excellence Award for the Aboriginal student with the highest overall achievement in the SACE
- Governor of South Australia Commendation – Excellence in Modified SACE Award for the student with an identified intellectual disability who demonstrates outstanding achievement exclusively through SACE modified subjects.

Subject merits are awarded to students who gain an overall subject grade of A+ and demonstrate exceptional achievement in that subject.