

CHINESE BRIDGE COMPETITION — CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE

Statement by Member for Riverton

Hansard 20 May 2010

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [12.25 pm]: On Saturday, 8 May, I had the pleasure of opening the ninth Chinese Bridge competition for university students in Australia. This competition held at the Confucius Institute at the University of Western Australia brings together university students from around Australia to test their command of Mandarin and their knowledge of Chinese culture and geography.

The competitors must be non-native Mandarin speakers and under the age of 30 years. The top three contestants receive a fully funded trip to China to compete in the grand finals against 700 university students from around the world. More than 50 000 students have competed in this highly popular competition since it started in 2002. The finals draw an audience of more than 10 million viewers on Chinese television.

The number of competitors in Australia is low because of the small number of students studying Chinese in our schools and universities. However, numbers are growing and competitions like this one help to encourage greater participation. Western Australia was very well represented. Of the 12 finalists, seven were from Western Australia.

In fact, the top two competitors, Andrew Chubb and Thomas Williams, were from UWA. Georgina Day from the University of Adelaide came third. The Confucius Institute at UWA is a joint venture between UWA and the Office of Chinese Language Council International in Beijing.

Its aim is to strengthen links between China and Western Australia, especially in the areas of Chinese language training and cross-cultural awareness. I wish Andrew Chubb, Thomas Williams and Georgina Day every success for the competition in China and congratulate the Confucius Institute.