

School captain Ayden is further developing his leadership skills

By KEIRA JENKINS

KAMILAROI student Ayden Miners has been elected school captain at Lismore's Rivers Secondary College, Kadina High Campus, on the NSW far north coast.

The 17-year-old said he was proud of his achievements, as was his mum, Teena.

"I'm pretty proud, and happy," he told the *Koori Mail*.

"Mum is really proud too. She cried. I wanted to try out for school captain because I was already developing my leadership skills.

"This was the next step for me. I think this experience will help me mature as I go into the adult world."

And when Ayden gets to the adult world, and finishes his schooling at the end of this year, he wants to hone his creative talent and make a career out of it.

"I'm an artist so I'm really interested in design," he said.

"I don't do art at school but I have done subjects where I've got to design pieces of furniture and things like that. Mostly I do my art outside of school."

But while he is at school, Ayden said he wants to continue to be a role model for the younger students, especially other Indigenous students.

"I just want them to know that I'm there for them," he said.

"I want to encourage the younger students to look at the courses we've got here and pick the ones that they're really interested in.

"If you give school a go, if you really listen, you might find that you're actually really interested."

Ayden said he understands what some kids are going through when they're not engaged at school, because he's been there himself.

"When I started high school I didn't really take it seriously," he said.

"More engaged"

"But when I got into my senior years I decided I had to get more engaged. I felt like I wasn't a naturally bright kid, though.

"I decided if I was going to make my education count I'd have to work hard and put a lot of time and effort in."

Now, in Year 12, Ayden is glad he put in the extra effort, but said it's important not to "stress too much" about marks and scores.

"There's no point in stressing," he said. "Exams are not everything. I try my hardest and when I get the marks back, if I'm not happy with them I can look at where I can do better next time."

Rivers Secondary College Kadina High Campus captain Ayden Miners.



A lasting contribution

PHILANTHROPIST Laurie Cowled is passionate about providing quality education for Indigenous students, and has a lasting contribution to make.

While UTS has fostered Indigenous opportunities and learning spaces such as the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, she has been supporting the education of a number of indigenous UTS students for several years through an endowment matched by the university.

Ms Cowled's passion for providing better futures for students continues, however, and now she is ensuring Indigenous UTS students will continue to receive her support beyond her own lifetime.

Ms Cowled has included in her will a bequest that builds on the endowment to educate at least one indigenous female UTS student a year, every year, in perpetuity. Her vision is "to help in the long-term improvement of the lives of the First Australians".

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Philanthropist Laurie Cowled with UTS student Ellie Slade. "Two per cent of the population gets a pretty rough deal and I'd to like to help to equal that out," Ms Slade said.

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"I think that educating young women is the right way to go."

Ms Cowled's personal interest and research into Indigenous education has convinced her that women,

as the primary influencers of children, provide the strongest ways to spreading the impact of education

to the next generation.

The choice to partner with UTS came after a friend told her "how well UTS looks after Indigenous students".

Ms Cowled says "she convinced me that UTS is the place that I should try and achieve my aims".

For Ms Cowled, supporting disadvantaged students is a joyful, rewarding experience which has so far paid off.

"A number of my students have achieved quite a lot thanks to their education at (UTS)," she said.

A country girl from Cootamundra (NSW), Ms Cowled has also helped to establish a foundation there that provides financial support to regional and rural students who want to pursue tertiary education.

Ms Cowled says she enjoys the connections she has made with students.

"They help me to feel very much part of the younger part of Australia," she said.

"Here I am getting quite on in years and yet I have a connection with the younger people. And I feel that's very worthwhile."