



Former student Ashoor Khan presents Sancia Ridgeway with the Dame Marie Bashir Peace Award.

JANINE WATSON

PROUD young Gumbaynggirr woman Sancia Ridgeway has been recognised for her contributions to harmony and social justice within her school and the wider community.

From Sawtell, Sancia has been boarding at The Armidale School (TAS) since year 10 and was recently awarded a Dame Marie Bashir Peace Award. She is currently in her final year of school.

The awards, named in honour of former NSW Governor Dame Professor Marie Bashir, recognise women who have made an outstanding contribution to harmony and those who have fostered harmonious relationships and shown persistence and courage in the field of peace and harmony within the wider society.

She is a school prefect and member of the Student Representative Council. As an Indigenous student leader she has worked to foster positive and harmonious relationships.

In 2018 she was a national winner in the 'What Matters' Writing Competition. "My 'What Matters' entry, called Totem, wasn't only for myself and my family but to educate others on the importance of culture and what traditional Aboriginal culture looks like now, during modern times," Sancia said.

"My intention was to create harmony between Indigenous and Non Indigenous people and also allow Non-Indigenous people a glimpse of traditional culture, which I feel isn't shown or taught enough in the media and in schools."

As a result of the competition win she was asked to contribute to the Reach Out Australia website contributing several stories.

In 2019 she was the lead performer in a traditional Aboriginal women's dance at the International Conference of Round Square schools in India in 2019.

Head of School Alan Jones congratulated Sancia on her latest achievement.

"She has done much within and beyond the school community to raise awareness of human rights and social justice issues while also working on strategies to help close the gap."

Sancia is one of a number of students whose time at TAS has been made possible by a partnership with the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation.