

Cooktown student shines while studying from afar

By SAMUEL DAVIS

TIES, single-breasted jackets and dress shoes might be normal attire at private school – but for Cooktown’s Arthur Roughsey, it took some getting used to.

Boarding at Ipswich Grammar School, more than two thousand kilometres from home, was a huge change.

“I guess it was life changing. I was pretty small, in a different environment. It was quite the experience,” Arthur, now 18, says.

“Following rules, finding new friends and being homesick was hard. It was terrible the first two weeks. I didn’t think I’d make it to Grade 12.

“I had a couple of cousins with me (when I got here) but they all went back home.”

Some long conversations with mum helped ease his nerves though and soon Arthur came out of his shell.

“Yeah, I guess my mum pushed me to stay and help me change my ways,” Arthur says.

“Then the boys started greeting me and showed me what it’s like listening to teachers and being a good friend and having dinners together.”

Earlier this month, Arthur joined 75 other graduates from across Australia

at the Sydney Opera House.

The group are all part of the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation, a body that provides scholarships to families who choose to enrol their children in boarding schools.

Andrew Penfold, the foundation’s executive director, said many of the students faced significant challenges just to finish Year 12.

“We are very proud of all this year’s scholarship graduates,” he said.

“We can’t wait to see the paths they blaze, and hear more strong, educated, powerful and deadly Indigenous voices.”

Next year Arthur plans to move to Cairns and study at TAFE.

“I really want to become a diesel fitter,” he says.

The experiences he gained living away from home will serve him well as he enters the workforce.

“Adapting to a different lifestyle made me change the way I look at the world,” Arthur says.

“It made me more social and independent. It changed me in many ways. It was a great opportunity to come to a big school like this.

“Mum and nan just kept pushing me to go to bigger places.”



Arthur Roughsey from Cooktown is now in Year 12 at Ipswich Grammar School.