

If they were prime minister: the gap stops here

 **AIEF**
AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

EXCLUSIVE

ROSIE LEWIS

Wyatt Cook-Revell does not want to be a prime minister for indigenous affairs, he wants to become the first Aboriginal prime minister for Australian affairs.

The Ipswich Grammar School student is keen to pursue a career in politics and will move one step closer to making his mark on public policy when he meets Malcolm Turnbull at Parliament House in Canberra today.

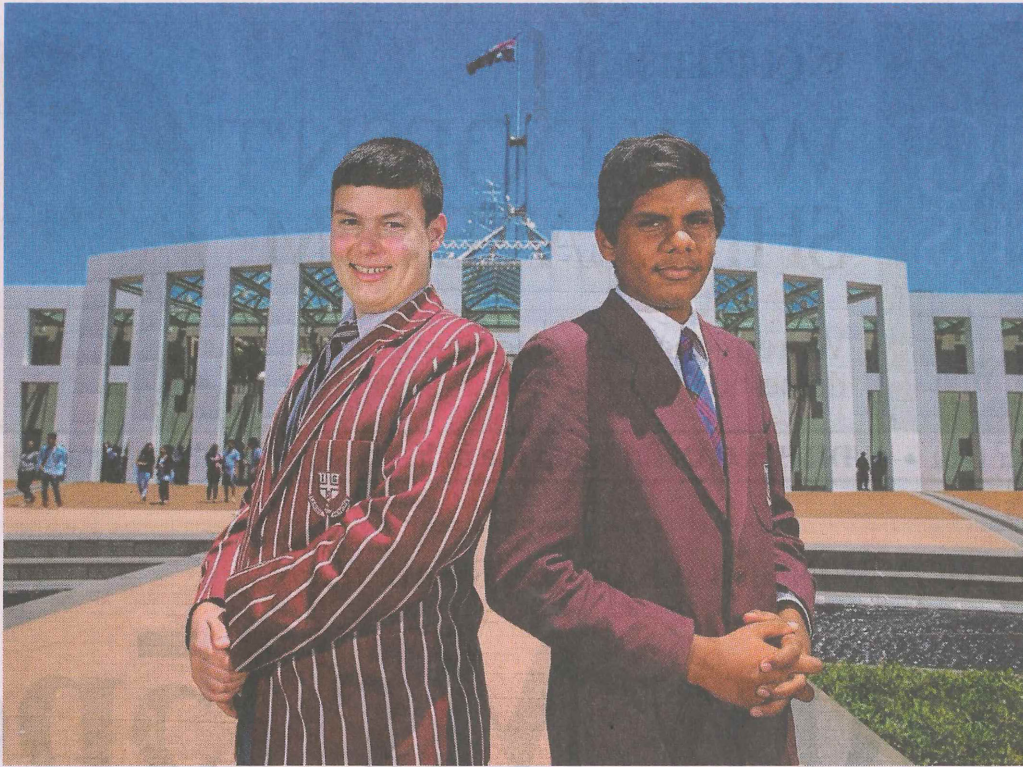
Top of his agenda for the prime ministerial meeting is a pledge to boost the number of indigenous MPs across federal and state parliaments and a push to ensure indigenous history and languages are taught in Australian schools.

"We see a lack of indigenous representation in parliaments right around Australia and that's concerning in itself," Wyatt, 16, told *The Australian*.

"It's important that when they talk about things like closing the gap the best people to help close that gap are indigenous people because they actually know what's going on.

"We need a commitment or something to increase indigenous representation in parliament."

The meeting with the Prime Minister is a prize for Wyatt and 17-year-old Matthew McDonald, from Scotch College in Perth,



RAY STRANGE

Queenslander Wyatt Cook-Revell, left, and West Australian Matthew McDonald

who are the joint winners of the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation's competition, "If I were Prime Minister".

Between them, the teens have an ambitious list of promises if they were to win the top job, including sending Australian troops to the nation's remote indigenous communities to help them gain self-sufficiency, improving education and safety for Aboriginal children and legalising gay marriage.

Matthew, from Geraldton in Western Australia, is more interested in becoming an automotive

mechanic than a politician, and as an avid Fremantle Dockers fan he is keen to find out Mr Turnbull's favourite AFL team.

Having met Tony Abbott this year, he entered the competition on the off chance he would get to meet "big dog" Mr Turnbull, and he wants to learn about the struggles experienced by politicians and their determination to work in public life.

Wyatt, from Gatton in the Lockyer Valley, is keen for Mr Turnbull to listen to his and Matthew's suggestions. "Maybe they

might ask us a question ... and we might answer. Most of them do too much talking," he said.

It is the second year the AIEF has run the "If I were Prime Minister" competition, a bid to encourage students who receive the program's scholarships to dream big after a Newspoll survey in 2013 found two-thirds of Australians did not believe they would see an indigenous prime minister in their lifetime.

Both Matthew and Wyatt hope the Newspoll finding won't prove to be the case.