

## Scholars' vow: We will be astonishing



SARAH VOGLER

Leaving family, community and country to study in the city was not easy for indigenous teens Jamika Shillingsworth and Kobe See Kee.

There were tears and struggles.

But yesterday, as they stood among the 2016 cohort of Australian indigenous Education Foundation scholarship graduates, they declared the sacrifice worth it and vowed to use their education and opportunities to inspire and give back to those at home.

"We are going to achieve something astonishing," 18-year-old Kobe said. "As a group we will prove to people that we are going to do something great."

Kobe moved from Thursday Island in the Torres Strait to Cairns to board at St Augustine's College after securing an AIEF scholarship in 2011. He is preparing to graduate from high school and study nursing and midwifery and take those skills home.

"It gave me my independence," he said. "I matured a lot more living away from my parents and I got to know myself a lot better. In the long run I would like to go home ... to give back to my community."

Jamika also has vowed to return to her home, in Charleville, armed with a law degree from Bond University, thanks to her opportunities from Ipswich Girls Grammar and the AIEF. The 17-year-old received an AIEF scholarship in Year 11. Without it, she



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### Kobe and Jamika yesterday at Government House

said, she probably would not be graduating. "I was staring down the end of a tunnel that seemed to have no light," Jamika said.

Her mother suggested boarding school. Her grandfather, indigenous leader and former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission deputy chairman "Sugar" Ray Robinson, added some extra inspiration and convinced Jamika to aim high and pursue a law career.

"I'm not just doing this for myself. I am doing this for my family, my community and my people," Jamika said. "Once I finish my law degree, I will go back to Charleville to advise indigenous youth and women and families in need in rural and remote areas.

"My grandfather inspired me ... He grew up in a tin shack with dirt floors. He did a lot of things for our people."

Jamika and Kobe were two of 40 teens from Queensland and the Northern Territory who received graduation certificates from Queensland Governor Paul de Jersey yesterday.