

### Learning clears path to a life on the beat



Delwyn Wunungmurra back home in Arnhem Land after graduating from Sydney's Scots College

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Sometimes, life hands you a lucky break. At other times you have to make that luck yourself. Delwyn Wunungmurra had a bit of both on his way to joining the police and becoming a role model for his community.

Mr Wunungmurra, now 20, was already a bright kid at school when the parents of a youngster attending Sydney's elite Scots College came to work in his home community of Gapuwiyak, about 530km east of Darwin, and saw his potential. They helped him gain a scholarship from the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation, and he started at Scots in Year 9 in 2013. "The first year was a bit tough, being far away from family and in a big city," he says.

Mr Wunungmurra was fortunate to receive mentoring from an older boy, Angus Crichton, who now plays rugby league for the South Sydney Rabbitohs.

"He showed me how school works," Mr Wunungmurra says. "By the second year, I had found my feet. My English improved, I started getting better grades."

Mr Wunungmurra powered through the rest of his schooling and graduated in 2016. "I felt good when I graduated, but I missed the school and the boys," he says. "I was proud to graduate ... there are really only a handful of people from my community who have finished Year 12."

He could have continued his education but decided to return to Arnhem Land. "I wanted to go back to the community to be a good role model to the others, and to be close to my family," he said.

He was working as a driver when a local police officer spied another opportunity. "The remote sergeant gave me an application to become an Aboriginal liaison officer," he says. "I filled it out and joined the police force last year."

"I'm the middleman working with my community, working on negotiating between the police and my community," he says.

"I want to work a year as an ALO and then become an Aboriginal community police officer."

Mr Wunungmurra says the AIEF scholarship helped him a lot. The second-eldest of six, he hopes his siblings will seek out a better education but is not stopping there. "I have a nephew I can be a good role model for," he says. "He's only three years old."