

Students aid child, chase alleged armed robber

Brave mates step up



Students Leroy Kelly and Eshton Williamson were awarded the District Officer's Certificate of Appreciation by Acting Inspector Gary Hunter. Picture: Brendan Radke

**TOBY VUE
AND BRENDAN RADKE**

TWO high school students have been recognised for their bravery and going "beyond the call of duty" after they helped a child who was allegedly threatened with a screwdriver and forced to hand over some personal items.

On October 7, year 12 St Augustine's College students Leroy Kelly and Eshton Williamson disregarded their own safety to intervene in an alleged armed robbery in Cairns.

Police allege a boy, 11, was armed with a screwdriver and threatened to stab a 12-year-old while demanding his shoes about 3.15pm at Cairns Central shopping centre.

After seeing the alleged offending and checking the welfare of the alleged victim, Leroy and Eshton pursued the alleged offender on foot before he was apprehended and the shoes were recovered.

The next day detectives arrested an 11-year-old boy in the CBD and he was charged with one count of robbery whilst armed with an offensive instrument. He was to appear in the Cairns Children's Court.

On Monday, during a college assembly, both students were presented with a District Officer's Certificate of Appreciation to recognise their courage, empathy and prompt intervention, which ultimately helped police to identify and

arrest the suspect.

Eshton said he and Leroy were told about the alleged robbery and "took off on foot" and that he was "just ready to take on the task".

"I wasn't scared," he said.

"(The award) feels good, it feels wonderful, it's my first time getting it," he said.

Leroy said he felt sorry for the child getting his property, including shoes, taken.

"We started running down the street and we found him at Grafton (Street)," he said. "I'm really grateful for the award. I didn't know we were going to get an award at the assembly."

Leroy said the youngster thanked him and Eshton for their efforts.

Leroy said he and Eshton had been "mates since year 7".

Cairns Police Acting Inspector Gary Hunter praised the two students, saying they were gentlemen who had shown courage, compassion and drive.

"The compassion you showed is a demonstration of your thoughtfulness towards others" he said as he presented the awards.

"These awards are not given out lightly.

"On behalf of the Queensland Police district, I'd like to thank you for your kindness and bravery.

"Without your maturity and initiative, there's a fairly high chance this crime would have been unsolved."