



GARY RAMAGE/NCA NEWSWIRE

Competition winners Ella Rigney, from South Australia, and Randall Mumbulla, from NSW, at Parliament House in Canberra on Monday

Winning visions for a future Indigenous prime minister

Randall Mumbulla is set on teaching primary school once he graduates university and has no aspirations to be a politician – even after walking the halls of parliament in Canberra.

But when he got the chance to rub shoulders with Anthony Albanese on the back of winning a writing competition, the Prime Minister had other thoughts. “If you’re training to be a primary school teacher, you’d make a good Speaker of the house,” he quipped.

Minister for Indigenous Australians Linda Burney, who said she had been a primary school teacher long before Mr Mumbulla was born, told him he “never knew” where he



would end up.

Mr Mumbulla, born and raised in Narooma, won the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation competition on what his vision for the future would be as Australia’s first Indigenous prime minister, alongside South Australian Ella Rigney.

The two university students, both 22, spent the day in parliament on the 15-year anniversary of Kevin Rudd’s apology. In his essay, Mr Mumbulla said he would see the curriculum changed to include more Aboriginal culture and

history. “If I was prime minister, I would make it compulsory for Aboriginal history and culture to be taught in every primary school by Aboriginal people,” he wrote.

“This way children would be taught whilst they are young. Children aren’t born racist. If they are educated and taught about inclusion and our culture, they won’t grow up being racist or prejudiced against others.”

Ms Rigney – who is tossing up becoming a doctor or paramedic – said if she were prime minister, she would ensure “every First Nations child believed that secondary and tertiary education is an option for them”.

“From my experience as an educated Aboriginal woman, not enough mob know about the opportunities and scholarships on offer,” she said.

Ms Rigney said she would also seek to improve child protection services, with seven of her siblings in out of home care. When asked if she believed the Indigenous voice to parliament would help address such issues, she said “only time will tell how good it really is”.

Mr Mumbulla said he wanted to see more detail on the voice. “I’m just sceptical,” he said. “I hear conversations and perceptions some people have. It’s a very good idea, I do believe that. If there’s more detail around it ... then I can definitely support it.”

The competition was launched in May 2013 after a Newspoll survey found two-thirds of Australians didn’t believe they would see an Indigenous prime minister in their lifetime.

SARAH ISON