

Brenton raises the bar as first Indigenous Boarding Captain

Growing up in Broome as a young Aboriginal boy, you aren't gifted much. At least I certainly wasn't. As a kid, I remember cutting holes in the back of a crate so that I could play basketball because we couldn't afford a basketball hoop. There were days when I didn't bother going to school. I'd stay home and think that it was cool to be wagging school.

It wasn't until I moved away from my parents to stay with my grandma that I had to pull my head in. It's not pleasant having an old lady slap you with her thong at 7am yelling "get up, you've got school to go to, boy".

Looking back on it now, staying with my grandma was probably the best decision I have ever made. She's been such an important person to me and has pushed me to go further in life. My grandma has supported me in becoming a proud Yawuru and Nyual Nyual man. She puts a smile on my face when I think of her. However, she is going through a tough time at the moment, and now it's my time to support her.

This year during Boarding Week we hosted Ag Day; a celebration of our hometowns and regional Western Australia. I'd like to thank everyone for the way you conducted yourselves during the day. A huge shout out must go to the Boarder's Council for planning and ensuring the day ran smoothly.

It's not easy waking up at 5:30am to set up and start a roast. Thank you to all boarders who helped make and serve food or collect money. I would like to thank George and Rory Purser's parents for kindly donating two lambs for us to use in our lamb and gravy rolls. Thanks to the catering staff for their help, too.

The Boarding Week theme for this year was "seize the opportunity, excel as one". This relates to me in many different aspects.

I have been given great opportunities. It is a privilege and honour to go to school and board at Scotch, let alone being named the first Indigenous Captain of Boarding.



There have certainly been tough times boarding in Perth, such as homesickness, different food and putting up with Mr Mecham's puns.

I am fortunate to wake up every day knowing there's going to be food on the table and when I go to sleep I have a bed to lay on and a blanket to put over me. I know many boys from Broome who don't have access to what I do at Scotch. I know they would love to have the same opportunities as I do, particularly the sporting ones. Therefore, I will never take this for granted.

I have four months left at Scotch and am currently applying for a heavy diesel apprenticeship at BHP. Being a role model and a leader carries a lot of challenges and expectations. You're expected to always be doing the right thing.

I have enjoyed the challenge of leading the boarding house in a year of significant change in the operational structure. It was daunting to lead these changes as Captain of Boarding because it could've either gone really well or really badly. Luckily, I believe the system we have now is an improvement on the system we had before.

One of the key advantages is an improved connection within the house, especially between younger and older boys. I'm really proud of this development.

All of our Year 12 and Year 11 boarders have done a great job at looking after the younger boys in the Senior House and developing pride in our Clans, whilst still recognising that we all one big boarding community. I'm also proud of the Year 12 boarders who've regularly visited the Middle School Boarding House this year to help the younger boys with their prep and to be there for a chat.

With the threat of COVID-19 hanging over us, it has been a rollercoaster of a year. The Boarding Houses have been open, shut and during the ANZAC Day weekend, we were locked down in boarding.

I think the staff have handled these situations well and I want to say thanks to Mrs Richmond and the Health Centre for looking after us, as well as Mr Owenell, Mr Mellor, Mr Hales and Mr Mecham and our House Mothers.

Going forward, I urge everyone to aim higher. Just because you've got early entry into university or have an apprenticeship offer, that doesn't mean you can slow down now whilst the finish line is in sight.

I'd like to leave you with a quote from basketballer Michael Jordan: "you miss 100% of the shots you don't take".

– Brenton Macauley, Captain of Boarding at Scotch College, Perth

Brenton presented this speech at Senior School Assembly on Friday 18 June during Boarding Week. Ag Day was held on Thursday 17 June.