

OUR GRADUATES

Through unwavering dedication, resilience and hard work, our graduating students have tackled their studies to lay a strong foundation for their futures. Guided by the education and transitions team, these young people have shown strength and commitment through the successes and challenges along the road while remaining committed to their culture, identity and purpose.

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2023.

We wish you all the very best for your future endeavours.

Angela Stocks

EDUCATION FACILITATOR, NRL COWBOYS HOUSE



Ruhkoa Ahmat-Nona



Samjoe Baragud



Kylorren
Beetham-Kepa



Steph Bob



Kelly Dalton



Kairon Hudson



Isaiah Kepa



Wyatt Lourigan



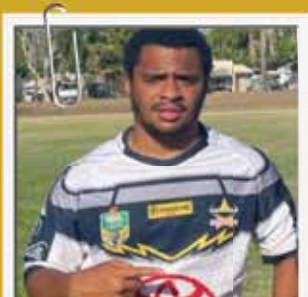
Leland Michael



Shontay Mick



Coralie Mundraby



Bobby Naawi



Desharnthie Nona



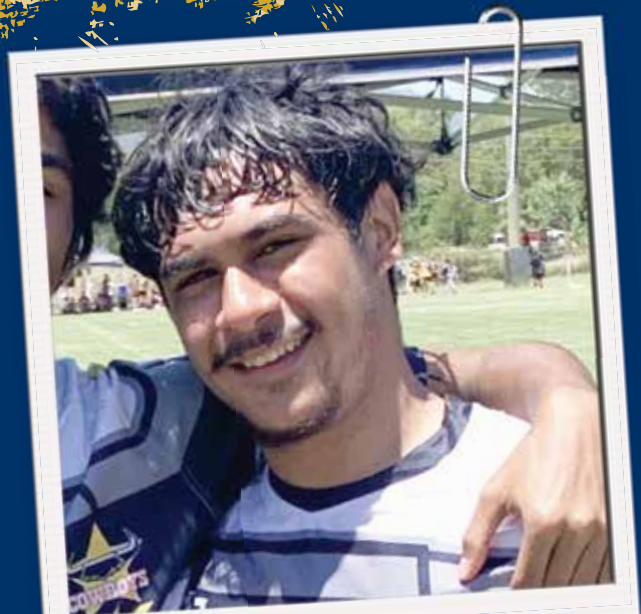
Cooper Pearson



Connor Rogers



Ariel Tapim-Wailu



Ruhkoa Ahmat-Nona

Charismatic Ruhkoa is certainly known to enjoy a laugh around campus with both staff and students. A respectful, driven and hard-working young man, the Badu Island teen shows absolute commitment to his studies through Tec-NQ, seemingly always on work experience placement. Because of this work ethic and infectious personality, Ruhkoa has already been offered job opportunities.

In his final year at NRL Cowboys House, Ruhkoa moved one step closer to achieving his dream of becoming an electrician after signing up for his school-based apprenticeship with All Air Electric and is set to commence a full-time apprenticeship with All Air after graduation.

Ruhkoa has played rugby league and rugby union during his time at the House and is often seen enjoying a laugh and socialising with his mates. Coming out of his shell at the leadership camp, Ruhkoa was the leader of the toad hunters! Said to have taken the position very seriously, he even tried to convince everyone around the fire to eat them!

With his positivity towards life, his cheeky demeanour and a very happy personality, we're sure Ruhkoa will be just fine with whatever pathway he takes after graduation.



Samjoe Baragud

Samjoe is an educator's dream, known to always submit his work on time – if not early! The Yam Island teen, son of Sammy and Jessie Baragud, is fondly remembered as one who always completes his work to the highest standard and never has to be reminded of the due date for his assessments.

Defined as a quiet, reliable and mature young man, the Pimlico State High School student is always willing to lend a hand to someone in need and can often be found socialising with his peers.

Following high school, Samjoe has shown an interest in pursuing a career as an electrician or diesel fitter.



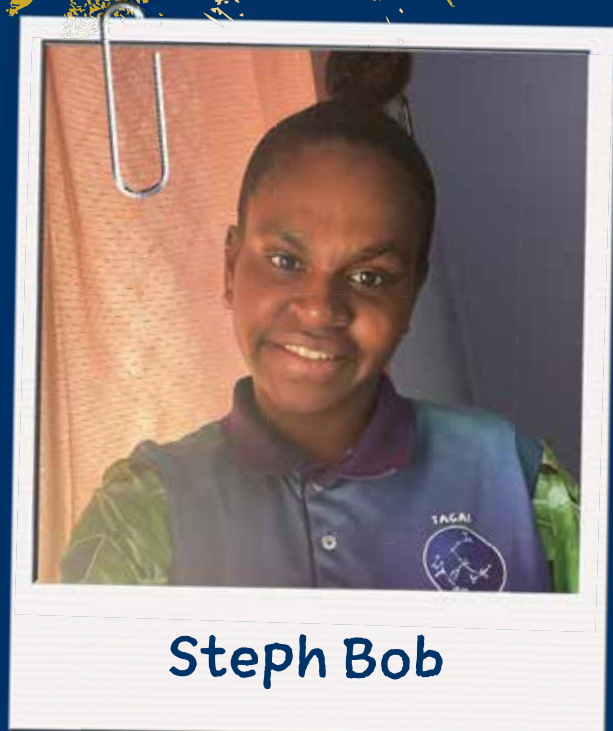
**Kylorren
Beetham-Kepa**

NRL Cowboys House staff admit every day is a lucky dip with Kylie! An incredibly bright young lady, Kylie is a go-getter who will let you know very quickly how she feels.

From Yam Island in the Torres Strait, the St Margaret Mary's College student is hoping to pursue a career in nursing, majoring in midwifery at James Cook University post-high school. With a very kind and caring nature, especially towards the younger House students, Kylie's fierce determination and hard work are sure to set her on the right path.

Already chasing her dream, Kylie attended the Mater Health Adventure during the July school holidays where she gained new experiences including holding a placenta from twins. This work experience built on the work placement she completed at Rosslea Medical Centre in 2022. In addition to this, Kylie has also completed a Certificate II in Hospitality, which saw her undertake many different roles in the St Margaret Mary's College café.

While in year 11, Kylie was also recognised alongside fellow House students for their high achievements in Townsville Catholic Education's First Peoples Emerging Leaders program. The accolade recognised Kylie's high attendance, academic improvement and growth in confidence to engage in school and the wider community – skills she will carry for life!



Steph Bob

Kind, compassionate and with a smile that can light up any room, Steph is an extremely kind and compassionate young lady with a big heart who is fiercely protective of her family and friends. From Warraber Island, and daughter to Winifred Mauga and Stephen Bob, the Queensland Pathways State College student's personality is sure to be a perfect fit for her hopes to pursue a career in aged care.

Off to a good start, Steph has undertaken work experience at Blue Care's Shalom Elders Village during term 2 of her final year at the House.

She has extended her experience and confidence through employment at the House as a kitchen assistant, and in education and transition administration.



Kelly Dalton

A quiet achiever who likes to keep to herself, Kelly flies under the radar at NRL Cowboys House. From Normanton, Kelly came out of her shell at the House leadership camp and showed just how funny she is! Although shy, she is very direct and will let staff know how she feels.

Culturally strong, the Queensland Pathways State College student has been engaged in her employment in Cultural Walking – overseeing excavation on traditional land and finding artefacts – on her family's land.

Kelly has also expressed interest in working at rural and remote airports following high school.



Kairon Hudson

A quiet, confident and well-mannered young man, Weipa's Kairon has left an indelible mark on everyone at NRL Cowboys House.

Active and athletic, Kairon is still choosing his career path with thoughts of joining the Australian Defence Force or becoming a diesel fitter. That will, of course, take a back seat if his beliefs that he will one day become an Olympic champion come true!

Kairon has emerged as one of Queensland's fastest runners, holding the Pimlico State High School record for 800m, 200m and 100m as well as high jump, triple jump and long jump. He has represented the district for all these events and been chosen for North Queensland trials on multiple occasions. With a love of rugby union, rugby league and AFL, he's a sporty individual who is often found shadow boxing in his spare time. Fitness won't ever be a problem!

With Kairon progressing well towards his QCE, we know that his determination to do his best will mean he will be just fine in whatever he chooses to do.

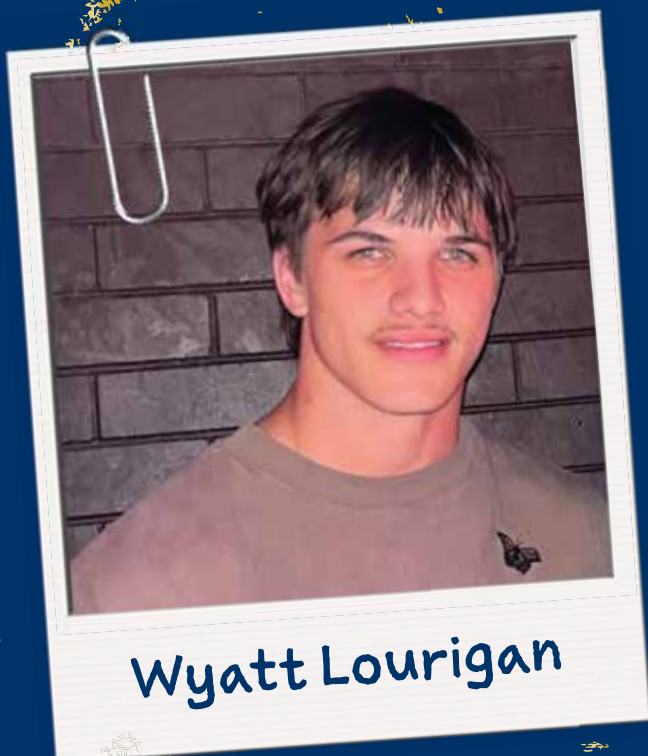


Shy but confident, Isaiah is a young man who shows a deep commitment to planning for his future. The Yam Island teen, son of Raina and Harold Kepa, Isaiah is often seen around the House simply throwing a footy around and having a laugh with his mates – but despite his relaxed nature, Isaiah has spent his final years at the House finding his place and creating a future for himself.

Isaiah has worked hard to complete all the work required to attain his QCE while simultaneously working hard in his work experience placements. Studying through Tec-NQ, Isaiah has been working with employers with real opportunities and potential to offer him a position should it be the right fit.

A bit of a joker, Isaiah made House staff laugh at the rugby union at Queensland Country Bank Stadium, when he ruined Bruce's big moment in the spotlight! Bruce was super excited when the ball came to him in the crowd and he tried to catch it, only for Isaiah to knock it from his grasp as he went up for it. It certainly led to plenty of banter amongst the boys at the game.

With aspirations of taking on an apprenticeship in plumbing post high school, Isaiah has set the foundations for his success, taking on a full-time paid apprenticeship with Tropic Roofing and Plumbing in his final year at the House. With his confidence, commitment and hard work, we're sure Isaiah will find the right pathway to success after graduation.



Confident, respectful and independent, Wyatt is an athletically gifted young man who is pursuing his dream of playing for club and country in rugby league.

The Mossman student plays front row for his school, Ignatius Park College, and has already signed a development contract with the North Queensland Toyota Cowboys commencing post high school. Known by staff to have a good command over his future, Wyatt is working very hard to complete his QCE to open the door to follow his dreams.

Outside of his sporting pursuits, Wyatt has shown interest in gaining an apprenticeship in refrigeration and air conditioning.



Leland Michael

The 2023 NRL Cowboys House Boys' Boarding Captain, Leland has become a leader among the boys at NRL Cowboys House with his quiet and gentle nature.

The Kirwan State High School student from Cooktown, son of Bradley and Charlotte Michael, carries himself with a thoughtful and considered demeanour. Whilst he may not be the loudest voice in the room, his presence has a serene and calming aura that makes others around him feel at ease – the perfect temperament around younger students. With aspirations of heading to university after high school to become a fully qualified nurse, Leland has taken steps towards that pathway having attended James Cook University's Winter School in 2023.

Leland has shown leadership and maturity many times at the House, hosting official events throughout the year as boarding captain. He has displayed many of the same skills outside of the House and carried the voices of his peers while speaking at the Townsville First Nation Youth Council launch. Leland worked on his speech with his fellow House students to ensure topics close to them were heard.

Holding down a part-time job at Nando's Fairfield in his final year, Leland has made a strong impression on his employers, even designing, painting and donating cultural artwork to their head office and CEO. His work was designed to signify the connectedness between the House and his employer and showed significant gratitude for the opportunities given to him. Having seen how Leland carries himself, we just know he will succeed in whatever path he sets his mind to.



Shontay Mick

With a heart of gold, Shontay's incredible strength of spirit has shone through in her final years at NRL Cowboys House. From Doomadgee, and daughter to Shonae O'Keefe and Solomon Mick, Shontay's kindness radiates through her interactions with both staff and students. Those around her are inspired by her resilience in the face of life's challenges, with her friends and loved ones admiring her capacity for compassion and kindness.

Working hard at William Ross State High School, Shontay carried aspirations of working in hospitality, particularly as a café attendant, taking on work experience at Cowboys Leagues Club and Podium Café. Shontay was remembered by her work experience hosts as someone who was willing to work hard and try her hand at a range of new tasks, especially succeeding with coffee making.

Shontay brought tears to the eyes of many House staff and students towards the end of her year 12 studies as the first graduating student to celebrate her school formal. Many of the staff in attendance remarked on the young lady Shontay had become, with her growth from a shy student to confident young woman one of the greatest transformations the House has seen.

Thanks to her hard work and effort, Shontay has built a strong foundation for her future, and is sure to succeed in whatever she puts her mind to.



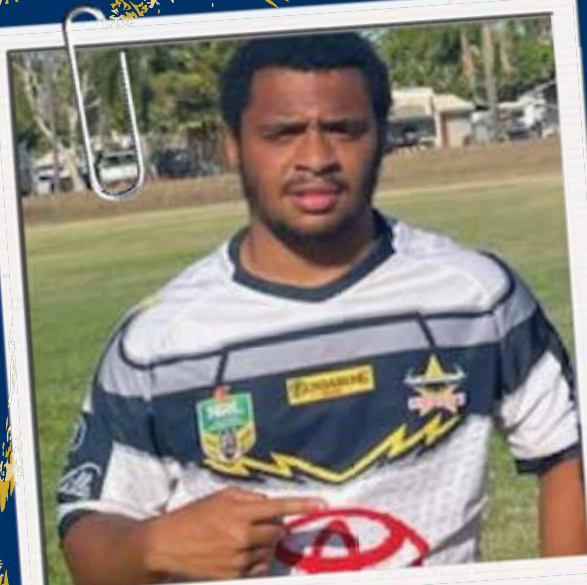
Coralie Mundraby

Articulate and driven, Coralie Mundraby knows exactly what she wants and is willing to do whatever it takes to make it. A very respectful and mature student, 'Coco' is an independent, strong and bright young lady, sure to make her parents Jacinta and Dwayen Sabo very proud.

From Normanton, the Queensland Pathways State College student has become a role model and leader for younger students at NRL Cowboys House and is often referred to as their "big sister". A House Boarding Leader, Coco doesn't shy away from responsibility in boarding and was employed by the House to assist in the kitchen, and education and transition administration. She also attended the Townsville City Council Youth Summit as an emerging leader.

Academically strong, Coco fast-tracked her graduation by completing more work than was required of her in her final year, receiving outstanding grades and feedback for her year 12 coursework. With a strong interest in working in the hospitality industry post high school, she is already taking proactive steps in the right direction, securing employment at the Weipa Golf Club.

As one who likes to laugh at her own jokes, Coco's bright and bubbly personality is sure to be missed by everyone at NRL Cowboys House, but with a strong foundation thanks to her hard work and perseverance, we are sure Coco will find success in her future endeavours!



Bobby Naawi

A bright, likeable, fun-loving young man, Bobby has a positive attitude and is often found socialising with his peers. From Moa Island, and son to Yunita Naawi and Justin David, the Pimlico State High student has progressed extremely well in his final year at school. Working towards his QCE, Bobby often spends plenty of time on his assignments to ensure they're submitted to the highest standard.

In his final year at NRL Cowboys House, Bobby spent a week of work experience with North Queensland civil infrastructure and plumbing business, GNM Group, getting a taste for one of his future career aspirations. Bobby was applauded for his effort during his time there and is now looking forward to landing a plumbing apprenticeship following graduation.

As part of his school's Structured Workplace Learning program for senior students, Bobby also completed a stint of work experience at Cowboys Leagues Club during year 11.

Not only succeeding academically, Bobby is also extremely talented on the athletics track, representing Pimlico State High School at the Townsville District Athletics Carnival in the 200m sprint and gaining selection in the school's 400m relay team.



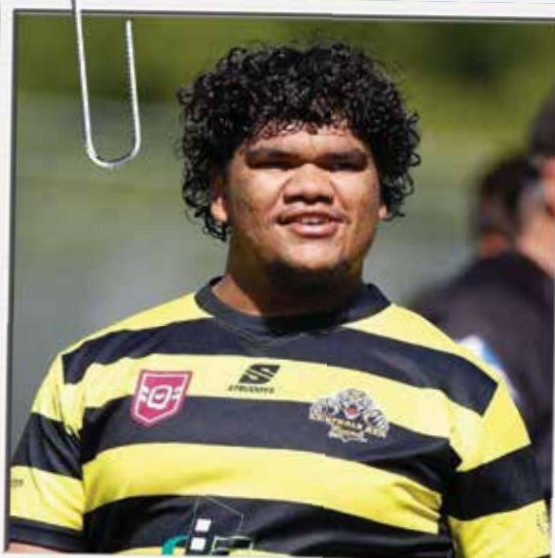
Desharnthie Nona

The 2023 NRL Cowboys House Girls' Boarding Captain, Desharnthie has shown leadership qualities beyond her years as a senior role model for younger students. From Warraber Island in the Torres Strait, she follows in her brother's footsteps, graduating a year after Haley to make mum Helga Nona very proud.

Sharnty, as she is affectionately known, is described by House staff as a fierce leader who is very outspoken and strives to get what she wants. This will set Sharnty in good stead as she follows a university pathway, planning to study nursing with a major in midwifery. She's already on the road to success having participated in the Mater Health Adventure in July and attended James Cook University's Winter School where she was exposed to the lifestyle of a university student, really enjoying the experience.

In her House leadership role, Desharnthie has been involved in leading many major events at the House as an MC, alongside boys' captain Leland. She was a familiar face hosting the 2023 NAIDOC Day celebrations, and also spoke at the National Sorry Day breakfast. She was also one of the very first to model this year's NRL Cowboys House polo on the day of its launch!

Sharnty certainly won't be remembered by those who know her for her poker face, said to be unable to hide her feelings because you can see it in her facial expressions. However, she is very, very funny, with her infectious laugh meaning you simply can't help but join in.



Cooper Pearson

With aspirations of becoming an Indigenous Ranger, Cooper Pearson has been working hard to pursue his career aspirations. Known for his laid-back demeanour and easy-going approach to life, the Yarrabah teen is known for taking each day as it comes, with a reputation for keeping calm under pressure and preferring to 'go with the flow'.

Studying hard at Kirwan State High School, Cooper has undertaken certificate courses in order to gain the knowledge and experience required for his future career as a ranger. While he has a firm backup plan to move into construction, we're sure that based on his teacher's feedback, he'll be just fine – they also describe him as an easy going, laid-back student who achieves exactly what he needs to.

Cooper had a taste of the alternative year 13 pathway after attending James Cook University's Winter School, enjoying the opportunity to live on campus and take part in academic lectures and team-building activities. On the last day he got to experience a mini version of what it's like graduating at a university level, making staff very proud!

Cooper also showed his talents on the football field, selected for Queensland in the Clontarf Foundation State of Origin game at Queensland Country Bank Stadium – due reward for working hard at school.



Connor Rogers

Another quiet achiever around NRL Cowboys House, Mornington Island's Connor Rogers is a very caring student with a strong work ethic. Culturally strong through her connection to both her home community and family, the Calvary Christian College student will be remembered as one who looks out for her fellow students.

Daughter to Selina Toby and Dwayne Rogers, Connor has an extremely strong connection to family and her home community. Connor is always prepared for study and school ensuring she completes everything she needs to succeed academically. With aspirations of getting into hairdressing or beauty therapy, Connor has taken a big step by completing work experience in the beauty therapy industry in her final year.

Connor is also athletically gifted and was chosen for the North Queensland Athletics Trials in her final year at the House. However, it was a far cry from when she gave staff a big laugh, climbing a tamarind tree but getting caught on a branch and left hanging when trying to get down – it was quite a sight!

Connor is also culturally strong and enjoys fishing when back home in community. Otherwise, she is content with simply spending time with her family. With the world at her feet, we just know Connor will put her work ethic and strengths to good use, building a bright future for herself.



Ariel Tapim-Wailu

Murray Island's Ariel will be fondly remembered as a kind, compassionate young lady whose smile lights up the room. An independent and diligent worker, Ariel is loved by students and staff at the House alike.

Daughter to Priscilla Wailu, Ariel attended St Margaret Mary's College where she undertook a Certificate II in Hospitality. Many of the staff at the House were fortunate to get to taste Ariel's cooking, with her chicken curry – a recipe from her Island home – one of the standouts. It wasn't the only taste of home that Ariel shared with staff and fellow students, taking part in cultural dance after really coming out of her shell at leadership camp.

While in year 11, Ariel received a high achievement in Townsville Catholic Education's First Peoples Emerging Leaders program alongside some of her fellow House and St Margaret Mary's College students. Ariel was recognised for her high attendance, improving academically and growing in confidence to engage more in her school and wider community – setting her in good stead for year 12.

Ariel is the second graduate from her family from the House, following in her brother Absalom's footsteps a year after his graduation. With career aspirations in aged care, we wish Ariel all the best knowing she only has to follow her heart to find success.