

**MEDIA STATEMENT**

4 April 2025

**Education and Aspirations paved with PDR Indigenous Scholarships**

- The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has announced the 2025 recipients of its Peninsula Developmental Road Indigenous Scholarship Program with one tertiary and four secondary scholarships being awarded.
- The scholarships are part of the Cape York Region Package (CYRP) Stage 2 and are open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with a traditional or historical connection to the Peninsula Developmental Road (PDR).
- The CYRP Stage 2 is a \$323.12 million program of works to upgrade critical infrastructure on the Cape York Peninsula including the PDR and a number of community access roads, jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments on an 80:20 basis.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has announced the 2025 recipients of its Peninsula Developmental Road Indigenous Education Scholarship Program.

Five young inspiring people from grade 10 to tertiary were awarded the scholarships to support them in achieving their educational aspirations, with four secondary scholarships and one tertiary scholarship awarded.

The tertiary scholarship is worth \$40,000 with four secondary scholarships worth \$2,250.

The scholarships are part of the Cape York Region Package (CYRP) Stage 2 and are open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with a traditional or historical connection to the Peninsula Developmental Road (PDR).

Since the scholarship program's inception in 2017, there have been 43 scholarships awarded.

Awarded the tertiary scholarship is descendent of the Northern Peninsula Area, Ngailu Thompson, who is currently studying a Bachelor of Construction Management and Quantity Surveying at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane.

An impressive young individual, Ngailu plans to return to his community and open a construction company incorporating traditional knowledge into the construction environment.

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Applications for the 2026 PDR Scholarships program are now open.

For more information contact [pdrs Scholarships@tmr.qld.gov.au](mailto:pdrs Scholarships@tmr.qld.gov.au) or visit:  
<https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/about-us/employment-and-careers/entry-pathways-program/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-early-career-programs/>

### **Quotes attributable to the Far North District Director Darryl Jones:**

"The scholarship program is an integral part of our commitment to the Traditional Owners of Cape York to provide employment, training and education opportunities under the CYRP Stage 2 Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA).

"What it does is it's investing in the future of young people from Cape York and with connections to Cape York through education scholarships.

"The calibre of scholarship recipients this year has been exceptional with young people pursuing careers as varied as nursing through to aerospace engineering and construction.

"I am proud to say the Cape York Region Package project is delivering significant social, economic and environmental benefits to the communities of Cape York.

"The PDR Scholarships program is about ensuring we leave a lasting legacy that improves quality of life for Cape York communities by providing employment, training and education opportunities."

### **Third party quotes**

#### **Quotes attributable to PDR Tertiary scholarship recipient Ngailu Thompson:**

"Education is important to me, it's been embedded in me since I was young"

"I grew up with a single Mum and I have watched her do a full uni degree while she was doing fulltime work.

"I've seen my grandmother go through and be the first person in our family to complete uni and become a teacher.

"Education is absolutely important to me because it teaches you how to lead.

"When I finish uni, I eventually want to start my own business and go back to the Torres Strait and NPA area and supply jobs and cater for those people up there.

"The scholarship will help me immensely, I have a single mum, I'm living away from home.

"It will definitely help with my HECS debt, it will help with me getting a job, saving and getting my life rolling after uni."

"We need more educated Indigenous leaders in the communities, so we can ultimately help our people and help ourselves because if we don't do it, no one's going to do it for us.

“Be fierce, go and do what you want to do, don’t let anything hold you back, and most definitely learn from your mistakes.”

**Quotes attributable to PDR Tertiary scholarship recipient Ngailu Thompson’s mother Kaylene Ball**

“Ngailu is my eldest child, he has three younger brothers at home.

“He is such a role model to them, he’s an inspiration to us at home and I don’t think he realises how much of an impact he plays in his own family.

“Education has played a very central core for us and we have lived a very disciplined life, a very structured life, a very routine life and I’ve done that in the sense that my boys are skilled enough.

“Having knowledge means power for them and they can understand and better do things and they know what they want in life and with that having Ngailu leading the way for them.

“We’ve seen many setbacks from him (Ngailu) along the way and with that having education as the driving force for us it’s been a matter of how he decides to let fallbacks play out.

“Instead of using them as falls, he’s used them as learning curves and it’s built his character and we’ve seen him get up time and time again.

“First Nations families should consider applying because we need more of our younger ones in leadership roles.

“For us it means Ngailu can go back and give back to the community.

“When it comes to future engineering designs or constructions designs, Ngailu’s able to keep in mind his people and our culture, our land, our waters and our elders and bring that all together.”

**ENDS**

Media contact – TMR Media – (07) 3066 7060