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Empowering futures – application open for 2027 Peninsula Developmental Road Scholarship

- The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is marking 10 years of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the Peninsula Developmental Road Scholarships.
- Applications are now open for the 2027 Peninsula Developmental Road Scholarship round.
- Four secondary scholarships, valued at \$2250 each, and two tertiary scholarships, valued at \$40,000 each, are available.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads is celebrating a decade of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through educational scholarships with applications now open for the 2027 Peninsula Developmental Road Scholarships.

Since 2017, the program has awarded 48 scholarships, providing students with financial support, educational opportunities, and the resources needed to achieve their goals and contribute to their communities.

The 2027 scholarships are offered as part of the Peninsula Developmental Road (PDR) Indigenous Land Use Agreement for Cape York Region Package (CYRP) Stage 2.

From 1 April 2026, applications are open for four secondary scholarships valued at \$2,250 each, and two tertiary scholarships valued at \$40,000 each.

CYRP Stage 2 program of works will upgrade critical infrastructure on the Cape York Peninsula including the PDR and a number of community access roads.

The scholarships recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary and secondary students who are making a meaningful contribution to their community.

The PDR scholarship program is open to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with a connection to country around the PDR, regardless of their current place of residence.

2026 PDR Tertiary Scholarship recipient Jarom Mairu said the scholarship had allowed him to focus fully on his studies and his family.

At 25, Jarom is a mature-age student and father balancing a full-time Bachelor of Education with two jobs and supporting his family.

“The scholarship has given me the clarity to really enjoy my studies and trust that the rewards will come,” Mr Mairu said.

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An AFL Cape York House tutor and descendant of the Thaynakwithi mob, Mr Mairu said he hoped his journey would inspire other Indigenous young people to pursue further education.

“I’ve always wanted to go to university — my mum was a university graduate and that sparked my interest,” he said.

“The scholarship has given me the clarity to just go and enjoy my studies, enjoy the process and the rewards will come.

“Having the extra support is really crucial to me.”

2026 PDR Tertiary Scholarship recipient Ilyaree Snider said the scholarship had helped ease the financial pressures of moving away from home to study.

A former Cooktown State School captain, Ms Snider is living away from home for the first time after relocating to Cairns to study a Bachelor of Law at James Cook University.

“The scholarship has really helped with the cost of textbooks and other study expenses,” Ms Snider said.

“It’s especially important if you want to pursue higher education after school.”

Ms Snider encouraged other Indigenous young people to apply, saying their background and culture were strengths.

“Coming from a remote community, your tradition, your background and your culture are all strengths,” she said.

“Just go ahead and apply.”

Acting Regional Director, North Queensland Region, Brendan Clancy said the Peninsula Developmental Road scholarships empowered young people to pursue their dreams.

“This program is about more than financial support—it’s about recognising the incredible potential of Indigenous students connected to the Cape York region and supporting young people with the resources needed to succeed in school and beyond,” Mr Clancy said.

“The Peninsula Developmental Road Scholarships are part of the Queensland Government’s broader commitment to the Cape York Region Package, which not only invests in critical infrastructure but also in the future of the region’s young people.

“I encourage all eligible students to apply and take advantage of this opportunity to build a brighter future for themselves and their communities.”

Applications for the Peninsula Developmental Road Scholarships close 14 August 2026.

For more information contact pdrs Scholarships@tmr.qld.gov.au or visit www.tmr.qld.gov.au/peninsuladevelopmentalroadscholarships

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