

#APOLOGY

Heal Our Past Build Our Future 2008-2018
a Healing Foundation project



Elijah Douglas



Growing up in the remote community of Doomadgee in north-west Queensland hasn't stopped 20-year-old Elijah Douglas notching up an impressive list of national and international achievements.

He's been awarded NAIDOC Young Person of the Year, travelled to Gallipoli as part of the Premier's ANZAC Prize, was Indigenous captain at boarding school, took part in the National Indigenous Youth Parliament in Canberra, nominated as a Queensland Young Australian of the Year and went to the UN in New York as part of an Australian delegation for the 13th session on Indigenous issues.

He's also worked at the local radio station and he's an advisor to the Healing Foundation's national youth advisory group.

This year, the aspiring actor and director is moving to Brisbane to embark on a new challenge with the Aboriginal Centre for Performing Arts.

Elijah is also writing a book about his Aboriginal culture which he would like to see made into a film.

The idea for the book came from the struggles he's seen in his community. He says Elders are finding it hard to pass on culture and tradition to the young ones. He also believes the wrong information is being shown in the media.

"Our culture is fading away but we need to hold onto it. This book will help do that," Elijah says.

Elijah speaks his local Ganggalidda language and English fluently, and is learning Waanyii and Garawa. He's passionate about preserving Indigenous languages.

As for the future, he wants to see greater equality for all Australians.

"Coming from a remote community, I think there needs to be better unity. There's not a lot of equality at the moment. That's got to change.

"There are a lot of mental health issues, bullying is a big problem, and there's no support. People need to help each other, especially in the small communities."

He says he's been lucky to grow up with great people around him including his parents, grandparents and extended family. He now mentors a group of younger Doomadgee boys known as the Dirriwalda boys.

"I help to look after them and guide them. I teach them about culture and show them how to be a good person. I love the Dirriwalda boys very much."

