Set goals, take action, Widders tells Aboriginal students

Make choices that have a positive effect on others, set goals and work to achieve them, and value education – former NRL player Dean Widders provided plenty of wisdom and inspiration at The Armidale School’s inaugural Aboriginal students dinner, one of two events held at the school to mark NAIDOC Week.

The school’s Aboriginal students, joined by school friends, family members, other guests from the local Aboriginal community and TAS staff, enjoyed each other’s company and soaked in the words from Mr Widders, an Armidale local and now an NRL welfare and education officer, whose brother Bailey is a student at the school.

“Always think about how your decisions affect others down the line, especially if opportunities may not be there for others because of your actions,” he said.

Mr Widders, who was scouted by Arthur Beetson in 1997 and played NRL Premier League for the Roosters before signing with the Parramatta Eels and later the South Sydney Rabbitohs, chose to talk not so much about his playing career, but rather the importance of having choices, “like the 22 Indigenous players in the NRL that are studying at uni on the side”.

“Don’t ever think that just because you are good at sport you can make a sporting career. If it happens, it can be over very quickly, so study as hard as you can,” he said.

“Set goals, and then you have two choices – you can something about it, by working harder, listening in class, doing more study, which will build confidence, a sense of achievement, and pride. Or you can do nothing – which usually means you find excuses, judge people, go into denial.”

He urged the boys to think about life like a boomerang: “What you throw out there, comes back to you – so throw out positive boomerangs because they will all come back and help you.” he said.

This morning, boys and girls from Minimbah Primary School joined TAS for a special NAIDOC Week assembly (NAIDOC Week itself, 6-13 July, falling during the school holidays). In preparation, the boys worked with from the Gomeroi Dancers to create four traditional and modern dances, including one based on this year’s NAIDOC theme - Serving Country: Centenary & Beyond, honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have fought in defence of country.

ENDS
Photos:
(1) Jayden Ranby (Moree), Callum Morris (Walcha), Samuel Jackson-Bolton (Lightning Ridge), Blake Harradine (Narrabri), Percy Duncan (Moree), Brett Kelly-Wirth Casino and (front) Edward Pitt (Armidale) perform at the TAS NAIDOC Assembly this morning.
(2) Former NRL player Dean Widders (centre), pictured with his mother Susan, brother Bailey and Bailey’s schoolmate guest Hugh Worsley, at the TAS Aboriginal Students Dinner last night.

For more information on this release contact Tim Hughes on 0409 662 420