



Strength through education. Muru Rudolph outside WAYS at Bondi Beach; Muru is their first student to sit the HSC. Picture: John Appleyard

Muru in class of his own

First WAYS Secondary student to sit the HSC says school has transformed his life

Megan Drapalski

THE first student from WAYS Secondary to sit the HSC is paving the way to a better future.

Muru Rudolph, 17, started at the Bondi alternative education school in Year 10 with one goal: to make it to 17 and be able to leave school.

Two-and-a-half years later, Muru's goals have shifted astronomically and his mindset and life views have moved with them.

The Year 12 student has grown from a once

troublemaking teen to a role model for younger students and a young man with a very bright future.

"When I first came here (to WAYS) I struggled with my self-confidence, I had none whatsoever," he said.

"They gave me the tools to look at myself in a different light, so I took a step back when I was in Year 11 and said I could follow my own path, which was going in a bad direction, or I could follow the path WAYS had set out for me and better myself," Muru said.

Muru will sit his first HSC exam tomorrow – the first of two English exams – and the nerves have set in.

Not just because the HSC is the last big stepping stone on the way to his dreams of becoming an engineer, but because Muru is the very first WAYS Secondary student to sit them and he said he wanted to set the bar as high as possible for the students who would follow in his footsteps.

And there will be many. Next year, four youths will sit their HSC and the year

after there will be 14, most of whom were inspired to continue their studies by Muru's determination.

School principal and WAYS general manager Dr Terri Said said Muru had been an inspiration to the younger students and was the reason many had decided to stay in school.

"He spoke to them about the value of putting a longer term goal first instead of dropping out," Dr Said said.

"Muru has grown into the role of a leader, especially over the last six months, and

a lot of the kids have seen how hard he's fought to be here.

"Not just the distance (Muru lives in Quakers Hill and commutes each day), but he's been here in mind and body every day and pushed through a lot of issues. He's the definition of intelligence now in every way."

Muru hopes to be accepted into construction management at Western Sydney University in March next year and then to study construction engineering.