

MEDIA RELEASE

**Minister for Community Services
Minister for Women
The Hon. Linda Burney MP**



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JAMES STEPS UP TO A CAREER IN DEFENCE

Despite having had a bumpy start to life, Lennox Head resident James Budden shows remarkable direction, maturity and commitment.

While many boys his age are happy just hanging out, working the odd part time job while they decide what to do with their life, James, who spent most of his childhood and teenage years in care, is busy preparing for independence and a serious career in the army.

After passing a series of gruelling interviews and tests over a 12 month period, James has been accepted into the Australian Defence Forces.

He attended an official swearing-in ceremony in Brisbane this week.

“This is a big achievement for any young man, and James deserves to be acknowledged and congratulated for his perseverance and hard work in reaching his goal,” said Minister for Community Services Linda Burney.

“Growing up in care can be disruptive and very difficult. Getting used to a new family, home, school and unfamiliar environment is not easy, and many young people who have grown up in care find it particularly challenging keeping up with their peers.

“But James is a true role model, and has shown that with focus, motivation and support from those around him, dreams can come true.”

James, who was School Captain of Ballina High last year, first became interested in joining the Australian Defence Force when a promoter addressed students at his school.

“I thought a career in Defence sounded so interesting – it seemed like a whole different life where you could get out of your comfort zone and do something really different,” he said.

With a special interest in technology, James has selected electronic warfare as his specialty field, which involves ‘disrupting communications, setting up communication networks, controlling the battlefield and analysing documents’.

After being sworn-in on Monday, James will now attend a demanding 80 day training course in Kapooka, outside Wagga Wagga.

“I’m really looking forward to the experience; I know they really test you, and I want to see how far I can go,” James said.

Community Services caseworker, Eric Hall, says everyone who comes into contact with James knows just how much of a ‘gentleman’ he really is.

“It’s clear that James is a very caring person with exceptional leadership qualities, and has had the benefit of a very supportive carer who has taken a real interest in his educational needs,” Eric said.

“He’s also had ongoing contact with his many brothers and sisters during his time in care, which I think has had a positive influence on him.”

James is modest about his time in care saying, “I adjusted, and treated it as normal, every day life ...and when you find a good placement, you’ve got to stick to it!”

He cites both his carer and Eric as his main supports in pursuing his dream to enlist in the army.

“Eric really encouraged me to do something for myself, and every time I needed to go to Brisbane for an interview he came with me.”

“I wish James all the best as he embarks on this new adventure, and look forward to hearing about all his future achievements – there are sure to be many,” Ms Burney said.

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