



Graduation for Cape students

THE Cape York Institute's Higher Expectations Program reached a significant milestone last week with its first group of students graduating from Year 12.

Currently, only six per cent of students from Cape York complete Year 12.

The Higher Expectations Program was established in 2005 to enable the region's top indigenous students to attend Queensland's leading boarding schools.

It is funded by the Macquarie Group Foundation.

Having completed Year 12 at Lourdes Hill College and Rockhampton Girls Grammar School this year, Higher Expectations graduates Ramana Walker, Marijke Bassani, Margaret Bond and Valencia Gilbert all plan to continue to tertiary education.

Last year's sole graduate, Leona Yunkaporta, is now working for Rio Tinto in Brisbane.

National Indigenous Education Development officer John Wenitong said Higher Expectations had provided a setting in

which the Cape's indigenous students could excel.

"The students have had to overcome many cultural and educational hurdles along the way but the program is structured in such a way to ensure they have support from their families, communities, schools and the program staff," he said.

"As a result, the Higher Expectations program has an almost 100 per cent retention rate, which also shows the commitment the students are prepared to make to their education when they are given the opportunity."

Head of the **Macquarie Group Foundation** Julie White said the four graduating students were great ambassadors for the program.

Eight Year 11 students in the program will spend two weeks in Japan next month as part of a student exchange program funded by the Japanese Government.

Higher Expectations student Sakirrah Turpin has already been selected as next year's boarder captain at Clayfield College.



Valencia Gilbert, Ramana Walker, Margaret Bond and Marijke Bassani have all graduated through the Cape York Institute Higher Expectation Program