

Internship an invaluable way to gain insight

■ Robert Dougherty

Reversing the traditional trip to Perth for university study, metropolitan engineering and physics student Jerone Downie has journeyed to the Pilbara to gain a first-hand insight into the region's social issues.

The University of Western Australia student undertook an internship at the Youth Involvement Council to assist youth workers working with vulnerable young people in Hedland.

Jerone got a look at YIC programs such as the drop-in centre, recreational and educational activities and Fresh Start Cafe and Catering, which prepares older youth for work, as well as crisis and transitional accommodation for young people.

"I invested as much energy, preparation and active involvement as possible and realised I am more than capable of making a meaningful contribution to society by instigating positive change — all I need is sufficient motivation and will," he said.

"It was an invaluable opportunity to enter and contribute to a facet of society that seemed unreachable and gain an understanding of it."

Jerone is one of more than 540 stu-



Perth engineering and physics student Jerone Downie with YIC staff and children during his internship.

dents to have undertaken a McCusker Centre for Citizenship internship, contributing almost 57,000 hours in service to the community since 2016.

"Students use their critical analysis skills, and I find this very useful in terms of gaining honest feedback from clever people who bring 'fresh eyes' to the organisation and our operations," VIC chief executive Vicki-Tree Stephens said.

"Jerone is a very motivated young man who really gained a lot from his experience with us and in our final meeting when he shared his insights with me I was proud that we could assist."

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