

**Adversity sparks his warrior spirit**

TORRES Strait islander Marcus Pedro has been to hell and back. And he is using his experiences to inspire others.

As a child growing up on Moa Island, Mr Pedro said he had no self-confidence, was bullied and had poor literacy skills. "I used racism as an excuse for failing courses or not lasting at a job, I'd just quit," he said.

Mr Pedro said he did not believe in himself and failed at school. He said his friends would say he was someone who was "never going to be anybody" and "never going to go anywhere". But from living on the streets of Brisbane to becoming an inspirational speaker, Mr Pedro has now had a book published about his life journey - *Three Warriors Within*, by Nell Arnold.

Mr Pedro will bring his Warrior Program to Cairns in August in a bid to empower young men and women to achieve their dreams. "The three warriors are brave for self confidence, gentle for self control and humble for self respect," he said.

Mr Pedro had a variety of careers which included fibreglasser, assistant engineer, railway labourer, driver, security guard, started an all male dance group called Hot Chocolate, DJ and a constable in the Queensland Police Service. He was among the first indigenous students to graduate from justice studies from Johnstone TAFE College at Innisfail in the 1990s.

Mr Pedro, who is on a tour through Queensland schools, will be active during NAIDOC WEEK from July 5-12. The national theme for this year's celebrations is Honouring our Elders, Nurturing our Youth.

**Carenda Jenkin**