

Leadership runs in the family

ANYBODY who knows Taree's Hazard brothers, knows they are all gifted sportsmen but they are also great leaders, both on and off the sporting field.

Youngest brother Jake, who is 11, continued what is now a family tradition at the start of the year when he was elected school captain of Manning Gardens Public School, following both older brothers Ashley, 17 and 16 year old Christian.

The family moved to the area from Queensland in 2004, and eldest boy Ashley promptly became a positive role model, being elected as school captain the following year, while Christian was also chosen by his peers and teachers in 2006.

The trio said they were proud to have been school captains at the school that has given so much back to them.

"It was a great school to go to," says Christian.

"The teachers were really good and they look out for everyone."

Mum Karen says the boys were all quite shy and that

their terms as school captain helped them gain self confidence, improve their public speaking abilities and has taught them to be able to strike up conversation with anyone, no matter what age or background.

"They can all start a conversation with anyone," she says.

"It was good for them to have that responsibility when they were younger because it sets a platform for them as they get older."

Oldest brother Ashley agrees, adding that it taught him to respect his teachers and become a positive role model for the other students, something he has taken with him to high school.

Both Ashley and Christian went on to Chatham High School and Jake will begin year 7 there next year, although he's a little bit sad to leave Manning Gardens.

"It's a good school, everyone's really nice and helpful," he says.

Jake's two older brothers unfortunately won't be at Chatham when he gets there as both will head off at the

end of the year to further their rugby league careers.

Ashley is moving to Brisbane to play for the Northern Devils under 18 squad (a feeder club for the Brisbane Broncos) in the Mal Meninga Cup, while Christian is heading south on a scholarship to Scotts College in Sydney, funded through a contract that he will take up with South Sydney Rabbitohs.

And Jake is again hoping to follow his younger brothers, this time into a rugby league career.

But no matter where their careers take them, the three said they'll always remember their time at Manning Gardens and the strong teacher/student relationships they formed there.

The boys continue to go back and speak with their old teachers, as well as conduct talks at assemblies about respect, the importance of school and taking responsibility for actions - all qualities they learnt as school captains.



Promising sportsmen and leaders, Ashley, Christian and Jake Hazard.