

Pursuing her goals

ELIZABETH Roberts may only be 17, but she has a good head on her shoulders and maturity beyond her years.

A vice-captain at Chatham High School, she is an impressive role model for her peers, with her determination and ability to set and achieve her goals.

Last month she was invited by Greater Taree City Council's youth development officer Bree Dennis to be a guest speaker at Taree's International Women's Day celebrations.

Elizabeth, or Lizzie as she is known, covered the topic of women's equity and how it has changed so much over the generations.

"I approached my grandmother, my mother and friends and went through the differences between the three generations," she said of her research.

Her final conclusion was that women do have more equity these days - they can make decisions, education is offered at school and there is no discrimination (in school education).

Elizabeth met Bree through her role on the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC - which she has been part of since year eight), which convenes regularly with council and organises Youth Week activities, Live and Loud and Battle of the Bands.

She has enjoyed her involvement. "I like knowing there's some kids pushing issues to the council."

Some of the big issues young people are facing these days are alcohol ("It's a big issue I think. Even the numbers are dropping at school socials because it's not a party scene") and the lack of activities for youth in the community.

Elizabeth has taken on many

leadership roles.

"I've always loved being on the SRC (student representative council) and I was lucky enough to go to Sydney last year for the National Young Leaders Day conference. It was a really good experience".

Held at the convention centre she heard many well known people speak, listing comedian Ahn Do and the then NSW premier Kristina Keneally, as her favourites.

She also attended last year's YAPA (Youth Action and Policy Association NSW) youth conference in Sydney.

"I really liked it for the people you meet and the experience you get from it," she said.

"I'd definitely like to encourage people at school to take up opportunities such as the SRC and YAC and get involved while the opportunity is there.

"I was lucky to fall into it all. I was close to last year's captain Emily Wood and she became my role model."

Elizabeth has been on the Chatham High SRC since year seven. Among the SRC responsibilities is organising school socials and activities.

"Our Foundation Week is a big hit".

'With the SRC and YAC people don't know what they can do and get involved in. You don't realise what sort of opportunities get opened.'



Role model: Elizabeth Roberts is an advocate for how successful goal setting can be.

This is organised by the senior leaders either in term two or three during the school year.

"Over five days we raise money for a different charity. We try and do a few local and a few international," she said.

Outside of school she works casually at McDonald's Taree and up until recently (she's now concentrating on her HSC studies) was working three or four shifts a week.

"I love it. There's lots of little teams to get on. I'm a crew trainer, on the safety team, drive-through team, café team and party team."

When she first started work there in early 2008 she set herself goals and has been lucky enough to achieve three of them.

"I aimed to become a crew trainer and achieved that in 2009, and last year received the owner-operator award and the crew trainer of the year title."

Craig and Amanda Evans, who own and operate McDonald's Taree, have helped her organise work experience in HR and PR at the McDonalds head office in the upcoming school holidays.

"I don't know what to expect. I'm nervous but really excited."

She hopes the experience will "open up some doors and if not give me a better insight into (the business)".

Next year Elizabeth aims to attend university to study business and communications, with the hope of going into some sort of

management position.

"Work is so inspiring...it's such a great place to work and you learn so much."

Except for a term at a Sydney boarding school, Elizabeth has grown up and been educated in the Manning.

She said returning home to Chatham High School was a good move because of the subject selection but also the chance to keep involved in her leadership roles.

Elizabeth really believes in goal setting.

"I find it helps me achieve things so much better when I set goals and have an idea of what I want."