SCHOOLGIRL Isabella Rositano was considering giving up her dream of becoming a filmmaker — until a chance meeting with Academy Award-winning actor Geoffrey Rush in Hawaii last year.

She was on holiday with her family when she bumped into the star while he was shooting the fourth installment of the Pirates of the Caribbean franchise.

“It was great. He spoke to me for at least 15 minutes and he introduced me to some of the crew,” Isabella, 15, says.

“I was considering maybe not continuing with filmmaking but when I met him I knew it was what I wanted to do.”

The Year 10 Pembroke School student is South Australia’s only finalist in the world’s largest short film festival for kids, Tropfest Jr. The “hybrid short film and music video” is one of 14 finalists in the prestigious competition, which is now in its fourth year.

“It’s very exciting. I was very surprised when I found out I was a finalist,” Isabella says.

She wrote and directed the film which features a man who has been cleaning his pool during an Adelaide heatwave, with unexpected results.

While Isabella has made short films before, this was her first using this particular type of editing system. “I had to watch ‘how to edit’ videos on the internet just to work out how to use the program,” she says. “It wasn’t easy but it came up very well.”

Prizes for the winner include a digital video camera and a filmmaking experience at the ABC.

Isabella will fly to Sydney for the final on February 20.