



# the QUARTERLY



October 2010

Welcome to the October edition of our Clontarf Quarterly newsletter.



Sanderson Middle School (NT) Principal Jodie Green with Sanderson Academy students

Katherine's Senior School Captain

Top End Employment Forum

The importance of a football program

News from the Victoria

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## Working with Schools

The partnership between the Clontarf Foundation and the Education Departments in each State and Territory is a vital ingredient to the success of our Clontarf Academies. Working together allows the development of a school environment that is welcoming and supportive of Indigenous students.

Indigenous students can often feel alienated within the school and this makes it very difficult for them to engage in education. The Clontarf Foundation believes that it is this disengagement from education which drives the cycle of disadvantage for many Indigenous people.

Significantly, Clontarf is recognised as an education program that is focused on the development and well-being of the whole person and is more than just about football.

To enable us to operate efficiently and achieve the best outcome for the students, it is vital that the school and Clontarf have a shared understanding of the purpose of our programs.

By using a range of extra-curricular activities to provide opportunities where students can do well, develop confidence and self-esteem, and feel a sense of belonging, Clontarf Academies can create an environment which enables at-risk and disengaged students to access the education program in the school.

Clontarf staff are not the school teachers or parents; they act as a 'third party' in the boys' lives by providing a non-judgemental, significant adult role model for the boys who voluntarily participate in the Academies. It is this relationship which enables us to influence, guide and support participants.

Academy staff also have strong relationships with the boys' families. This can provide an added dimension to identifying and addressing the needs of each student. Our staff can provide guidance and direction to the students and teachers due to their knowledge of the student's personal circumstances.

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clontarf foundation



from opening page

In the Northern Territory, school Principal, Jodie Green, recognises the role our program plays.

“The Sanderson Football Academy is a successful feature of the Sanderson Middle School Community and serves to improve the educational and social outcomes of the boys involved in the program. For us the program is more than the boys playing football, it is about a partnership that provides wrap-around support aimed at improving attendance and engagement,” said Ms Green.

School and Academy staff often approach issues and students from different levels, directions and perspectives enabling a more holistic approach to addressing student needs.

At Sanderson, Ms Green acknowledges the different approaches and says that to effectively support the boys she understands that they need to work together. She says that the relationships that the Clontarf staff have with the boys operates on a different level to the teaching staff and as such they can “reach” the boys in different ways.

“We also understand that our roles are quite different but complimentary. The Clontarf staff are often the bridge between home and school for some of our families. They advocate for the boys and provide opportunities outside of the classroom for success.”

During the development of new Academies we spend considerable time, working with Principals and teachers to ensure the awareness and understanding of our approach and how we operate in each school.

At Mildura Senior College in Victoria, Clontarf opened a new Academy at the start of 2010. School Principal, Dennis Norton, is already seeing the benefit of the role that Clontarf staff provide.

“The work of the two mentors has been remarkable. They have developed an excellent relationship with the boys and have become strong advocates for these boys in a range of forums. The seamless manner in which they have integrated into the school program and support team is outstanding,” said Mr Norton.

In every Academy, Clontarf continues to work in partnership with school staff to ensure that the needs of each student are met. Clontarf aims to improve the education, self-esteem, discipline, life skills and employment prospects for young Aboriginal men.

## Meeting Student Needs

Many of the students who enter Clontarf Academies are highly at risk of not achieving their educational potential. Often this is due to the very low attendance rates of students at school which has led to particularly low literacy and numeracy levels.

In the past this has meant that these students have become alienated from school and disengaged. In order to address their individual needs, we have worked closely with the school and Education Departments to identify the best way to deliver education programs that will increase the attendance, participation and achievement of educational outcomes for these students.

One very successful Clontarf strategy has been the development of “off-grid” programs or discrete classes where Academy students work in a dedicated classroom environment. This environment is rich in pastoral care, provides extra support, is safe and comfortable for the student, and allows them to progress at their own rate.

The discrete Clontarf classes provide greater flexibility for the class to undertake activities as a group and benefit from having dedicated teachers for the program. Links to TAFE courses, development of employment related skills, and the opportunity to prepare for the transition to employment have been specific outcomes of this approach.

Discrete classes in our WA Academies at Geraldton, Albany and Gilmore College have been particularly successful.

### From Sanderson Middle School...

*Clontarf staff Andrew Wills (pictured below) and Scott Appleton, in partnership with one of the school's male teachers and two bilingual officers established a Boys Leadership Group that focused on breaking down some of the cultural barriers that existed between some of the boys.*



*Sanderson has approximately 34 different cultural groups represented across the school and this high level of diversity can sometimes lead to misunderstandings and conflict.*

*The Leadership program has been highly successful in addressing some of these issues and has attracted the attention of ABC Stateline and SBS Living Black.*



*The program developed out of Clontarf Academy staff and teaching and support staff identifying a problem and working together to solve it.*

*This is just one example of the productive and effective relationships that exist between the Academy staff and school teaching and support staff.*



# Katherine's Senior School Captain

As the weather warms up and third term holidays arrive, Katherine Football Academy senior Natthanyel Hunter could be forgiven for looking for a week off to rest up.

However that is not in Natthanyel's nature and as such, he and a group of students from Katherine High School in the Northern Territory will be on a cultural tour of New Zealand as part of their NTCET studies for 2010.

The group, including fellow Clontarf members Laurie Barrett, Silas Purcell and Keelan Fejo have been planning the trip, fundraising and learning about the local culture for around 12 months.

No doubt Natthanyel will learn plenty from the journey, which will prove to be another highlight in a remarkable year for the young man, who was voted captain of Katherine High School for 2010.

In his nomination speech, Natthanyel expressed his pride in being a member of Katherine High School and the Katherine Football Academy (KFA) and spoke of his desire to "represent the students as captain, as a proud Indigenous young man".

Natthanyel has been an enthusiastic member of the KFA since the program's doors first opened at the beginning of 2008 and the Academy staff have watched with pride as he has developed into the individual deemed worthy of leading the student body in his final year.

'Fatty' as he is universally known, has maintained consistently high attendance at school, has not missed an opportunity to join in a camp or take a key position in the backline of an Academy game and has generally looked for every opportunity to get the most out of what the KFA and the high school has to offer.

On a recent visit to the Academy by one of the Clontarf Foundation's new sponsors, Natthanyel spent the entire time talking about his experiences with the Academy and even found time to tee himself up an interview for a job when he finishes school.

Along with his fellow Year 12 KFA members, Natthanyel has volunteered his time after school finishes for the seniors, midway through term four, to help mentor the younger students and plan for the Academy's awards night and senior camp to Sydney.

The future is bright for Natthanyel and his trailblazing path as captain of Katherine High School has already shown the younger members of Katherine Football Academy that they can aim higher as they progress through secondary school.



Natthanyel Hunter listens to instruction while representing Katherine High School's senior football team

In early September, Centralian Academy students from Centralian Secondary College in Alice Springs took to the streets to march against violence in Central Australia.



Over 150 Indigenous and non Indigenous males of all ages from the Alice Springs area and surrounding communities marched across the CBD finishing at the Council Law courts.

The message was simple: Stop the violence in the community and violence of any nature will not be condoned. The boys were very proud to be involved in the event and were pleased to see the community come together for a significant issue that relates to many people in Central Australia.

Central Regional Manager Brad Puls said, "It is so important our Clontarf boys participate in local events like this because firstly, they believe in the cause, and secondly, the broader community sees the leadership qualities of the young men in our programs."



## Top End Employment Forum

The Clontarf Foundation held its first Northern Territory Employment Forum at the Holiday Inn Esplanade in Darwin on September 16.

Over 30 Year 12 representatives from Palmerston, Casuarina, Katherine, Gunbalanya and Jabiru Academies attended the Top End forum to discuss employment opportunities with 11 different participating organisations.

The event allows companies to meet the boys and graduates to meet employers through a series of 10-minute briefings with small groups. It is important to expose the boys to a wide range of potential jobs and industries to maximise the chance of a successful transition from school to the workplace.

A similar forum was first held in Perth in 2008 and is now an important event in the Clontarf Foundation calendar as the number of 2010 graduates approaches 200 and is estimated to be around 400 in 2011.

To meet the increased demand, forums were held in Broome and Geraldton in Term 3, and are planned for Alice Springs and Perth later this year. Perth will host 80 WA graduates from metropolitan and regional Academies in October as part of the three-day 'Leaving for Work Camp'.

The forums are organised by Clontarf Foundation Employment Officers and Academy staff with local community involvement. The personal relationship between Clontarf staff, graduates and employers is fundamental in achieving a positive employment outcome. Currently, 75% of all Clontarf Foundation graduates are in full-time employment or training.



At the Top End event, two former Clontarf graduates opened the forum and gave the attendees an insight into the requirements and expectations in the employment world and the continuing mentoring assistance they have received from Clontarf staff.

Shaun Wilson, a former Centralian Secondary College student, spoke about studying at University to become a teacher and Hayden May, a Palmerston High School graduate, shared his experiences about working in the NT Government with the Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

Following the discussion sessions it was evident that many positive relationships developed between the students and the representatives from the various organisations. Hopefully we will see all of our boys employed next year after their experiences at the forum.



## Setting the Example

Godfrey Curley is a young man with a plan. Well, two plans actually. His first plan is to get drafted in to the AFL and if that doesn't come through, he will head to the mines.

Godfrey, from WA town Mullewa, attended Geraldton's Midwest Academy for five years. He believes Clontarf made things at school much easier for him in an environment he may have otherwise found difficult. In Godfrey's words: "Clontarf has set me up for the future."

Through the Academy, Godfrey did school based training at WesTrac and was set up with an interview with the same company after he finished school. Godfrey was then offered an apprenticeship as a Heavy Duty Diesel Mechanic in Perth.

Godfrey is boarding in Perth, with other regional WA Clontarf graduates, and this year he has successfully balanced work and football, playing in East Fremantle's WAFL colts premiership team.



*Godfrey Curley working for Westrac in Perth*

His apprenticeship will take three and a half years to complete and Godfrey has embraced day to day tasks such as assembling machinery, cleaning engines, getting his hands dirty and attending theory workshops.

With a level head, Godfrey knows that if he doesn't achieve his dream of getting drafted into the AFL then his future is still safe. "If I don't get drafted I will go back to Geraldton and work with WesTrac before heading out to the mines to make some good money," he stated.

With another WA mining boom on the horizon and the increasing need for qualified tradesman in his field, Godfrey's future certainly does look bright and we wish him all the best.



## Your Questions Answered

### Why is the football program important?

The football program provides the vehicle to attract the boys to a Clontarf Academy and plays a major role in improving school attendance, retention and facilitating positive behavioural change.

The many values, disciplines and life skills learnt through involvement in team sport provide the boys with a tremendous grounding for achievement in a school and working environment.

The elements of the football program include training sessions, friendly games, school competitions, Clontarf Foundation carnivals, participation in community football and a talking point in the Academy room.

Academy staff fill the role as coach and become a valuable, non-judgemental and non-authoritative figure in the life of the boys. As a unique relationship evolves, the mentoring process is enhanced and personal growth and development occurs.

Clontarf uses the existing passion many of our students, their families and the local community have for football. As Clontarf expands its program into NSW and QLD the boys passion for rugby league will be used to attract them to new Academies.

In first term, training sessions are held before school where the boys establish a routine of getting up early, training, having a shower and eating breakfast before the school day commences. Academy staff providing transport is critical for the boys attendance.

Improved physical conditioning, nutrition and learning new skills are some of the health benefits our participants experience, boosting their self esteem and confidence.

When the boys earn the right to play in games, representing the Academy or school comes with plenty of pride and satisfaction. In school tournaments, Clontarf staff and students join other school members for a common cause.

The social interaction and experiences of playing games against other Academies, private schools, in carnivals, association teams is part of the magic a Clontarf football program delivers and keeps the boys coming back.



*Tennant Creek Academy students celebrate a goal at the Northern Carnival in Kununurra, WA*

### The Football Carnival...

- To participate each player must demonstrate regular school and training attendance, good behaviour and commitment to the Clontarf program after an extended period of time.
- The boys learn many life skills when away from home from riding in the bus to eating at restaurants in a new town or even interstate.
- The trip includes educational visits to local sites and attractions.
- School teachers accompany the touring party which strengthens relationships.
- Participants play in many shortened games of football against other Academies from different regions in Australia, encouraging positive social interaction.
- The 'Clontarf Spirit' overrides all during the carnival ensuring games are played fairly and in good nature.
- The boys have plenty of fun, enjoy themselves immensely and develop a strong sense of pride by representing their Academy.
- The camps come at little or no cost to the boys and their families.

***This year, over 700 games of football have been played under the Clontarf Foundation banner including 9 carnivals, 6 after-school leagues and 15 school competitions.***



## Thank you

Clontarf would like to acknowledge our new partners and the ongoing contributions from those who have recently renewed their commitment to support the Foundation.

- Caltex Australia
- Leighton Contractors
- Barmingo
- Australian Premium Iron
- Lavan Legal
- Kleenheat Gas
- Western Power
- Richardson Foundation
- ABN Foundation

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Robinvale Academy students with director Jarrod Chipperfield

## Attendance soars in Victoria

Term 3 was a busy time in Victoria, with Robinvale Academy now in full swing and lots of activity to ensure our newest Clontarf members feel part of the team in Victoria.

After three school terms, we have been thrilled to see the level of engagement of the boys in the programs across the State. Average school attendance rates for our boys are well over 80%. This is a striking result when compared to the attendance of the students in the past two years, prior to Clontarf programs commencing.

Attendance levels for many of the students who are now tracking at 80 or 90% were as low as 40% over the past two years for many of our students.

It was a very exciting end to Term 3 in Victoria with a small group of students from each Academy travelling to Melbourne on the last day of term. The senior students from Clontarf Aboriginal College in Perth were in town for their major camp presenting a valuable opportunity.

The first meeting was over lunch near the Melbourne Zoo and it was a very relaxed event. The boys from Mildura and Robinvale enjoyed a stretch after an early start and a six-hour drive, while the others relaxed and got to know each other.

Next it was off to Arden Street in North Melbourne, where teams were selected and a terrific game of football was played. The boys from the East and the West showed pace, talent and good humour as they got into the game.

After a quick bite for dinner we headed to the MCG for the preliminary final between Collingwood and Geelong. With 95,000 fans and a number of Pies and Cats fans amongst the boys, it was a wonderful event and the boys enjoyed every minute.

It was a great way to end the term and the boys are looking forward to and heading off on their major camps after exams are over. The Year 7 & 8 students are heading to Wilsons Promontory, Year 9 & 10 students are visiting Adelaide and the senior students are visiting Darwin.

The boys have embraced the program and have also shown their all-round sporting talents on the basketball court and table-tennis table in friendly competitions with Mildura and Swan Hill Academies.

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## about us

The Clontarf Foundation exists to improve the education, discipline, self esteem, life skills and employment prospects of young Aboriginal men and by doing so, equip them to participate more meaningfully in society.

These outcomes are achieved through the medium of football. Academies are formed in association with selected schools and colleges. Each Academy's football program attracts young Aboriginal men to school and helps to retain them.

As well as coordinating the football program, Academy staff mentor and counsel Academy members on a range of behavioural and lifestyle issues while the school caters for their specific educational needs.

## clontarf snapshot

States	WA, NT, VIC
Schools	37
Participants	2212
Staff	113

(September 2010)