



The Hon. Adrian Piccoli MP
Minister for Education

The Hon Greg Pearce MLC
Committee Chair
Legislative Council Standing Committee
on State Development
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

MT16/553

Dear Mr Pearce *Greg*

I write in response to your letter of 12 May 2016 regarding the Standing Committee on State Development's inquiry into economic development in Aboriginal communities.

The information that you have requested for the Standing Committee's consideration regarding the Clontarf Foundation and related matters is attached.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Piccoli MP
Minister for Education

26 MAY 2016

NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NSW Government support for the Clontarf Foundation

The Clontarf Foundation is contracted by the NSW Department of Education to provide an intensive case management and mentoring program for Aboriginal male students in Years 7 to 12. Through its work, Clontarf aims to provide a school-engagement mechanism for 'at-risk' Aboriginal male students who would otherwise not attend school or have low school attendance. Sport, and particularly football, is used by Clontarf to encourage students and families to participate in the broader academic, social and emotional development elements of the initiative. Its primary budget allocations support staffing, camps, sporting and cultural activities.

Schools on existing contracts are known as Phase One and Two Academies. There are 11 schools in this group with 651 students participating. The end date for these existing contracts is 31 December 2016. Discussions between the Department and Clontarf about the future contracts for Phase One and Two schools have commenced.

Through a Phase Three agreement, the Department aims to ensure that up to an additional 1,000 Aboriginal male students in Years 7 to 12 are participating in 2016 and 2017. Phase Three schools have been identified in negotiation with Department officers and school principals.

For 2016, the Department will fund \$1.366 million for schools in Phase One and Two. A total of up to \$5 million (excluding GST) over two years has been allocated by the Department for Phase Three schools. This funding allocation is based on Clontarf's formula of one-third from the participating State or Territory, one-third from the Commonwealth Government and one-third from philanthropic sources, totalling a combined figure of \$7,500.00 per student. The maximum Department contribution will be \$2,500 per student, with 50% of the cost per student per year (\$1,250) being met directly by participating schools and the remaining amount funded through the Department's Aboriginal Education and Communities Directorate.

In addition to funding, Clontarf receives additional support directly from the school to which it provides its services. This includes the provision of a work room or building, promotion about Clontarf through the school newsletter and/or website, providing support for student behaviour management and allocating Clontarf staff adequate time within the school timetable for program delivery.

Local Schools, Local Decisions and Clontarf

Local Schools, Local Decisions is the NSW Government's education reform that gives NSW public schools more authority to make local decisions about how best to meet the needs of their students. This means giving schools greater autonomy to make contextualised, local decisions about how to best use money according to student and school need.

Consequently, schools will engage with Clontarf and commit school funds if they identify a need to do so.

Indigenous Girls and Young Women

The Department recognises the need for effective and relevant programs that support Aboriginal female students to grow and develop as strong leaders in their Communities. Under the Local Schools, Local Decisions reform, schools develop and deliver programs locally to support the learning and engagement outcomes of Aboriginal students.

One of the programs that targets Aboriginal girls in Years 7 to 10 is the *SistaSpeak* program. *SistaSpeak* is a Department initiative, which entails a 6 week interactive program designed to support Aboriginal girls in education, career development and self-esteem whilst building their sense of identity and culture. *SistaSpeak* facilitator training is provided by specialised Aboriginal teaching staff and delivered in schools across New South Wales.

Some schools throughout New South Wales offer female specific programs for Aboriginal students that are supported locally through school funds. At Coonamble High School, for example, where Clontarf is offered for boys, the school operates a girls program, the *Coonamble Girls Academy*.

Girls Academy, an initiative of Role Models and Leaders Australia, run 16 High School-based academies in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and New South Wales, and is in discussions with the Tamworth Opportunity Hub and Peel High School to develop a new academy in Tamworth. The program focus is on achieving measurable outcomes in school attendance, academic and personal achievement, Year 12 Graduation rates and facilitated post school transition planning. Academy Rooms in each school provide sanctuary for girls to connect with each other, to learn and prosper in a safe and nurturing environment. The Program employs Aboriginal women as role models and mentors:

More information can be found at <http://www.girlsacademy.com.au/>

The Smith Family runs Girls at the Centre in the Northern Territory, and commenced a program at Mt Austin High School in Wagga Wagga in 2016. Mt Austin High also have a Clontarf Academy.

Evaluations or Reviews of Clontarf

The Department is currently conducting a formal review of Clontarf's work within 11 NSW public schools.

The evaluation will examine the establishment of Clontarf Academies to determine how they have been implemented, which aspects are working well and areas for improvement (process evaluation), as well as identify whether the program improves educational and criminal justice outcomes (outcome evaluation). A cost-effectiveness evaluation will also examine value for money.

A draft final report is due to be completed by October 2016.

The Department is aware of an evaluation currently being undertaken by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.