

## **INQUIRY INTO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

**Organisation:** Clontarf Foundation

**Date received:** 19/02/2016

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Partially Confidential

# STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT

## NSW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

### Inquiry into economic development in Aboriginal communities

#### SUBMISSION



#### 1.0 Introduction

This submission was prepared by the Clontarf Foundation at the request of the New South Wales Legislative Council Standing Committee on State Development which is presently conducting an inquiry into economic development in Aboriginal communities.

The Terms of Reference for the Inquiry are:

1. That the Committee inquire into and report on strategies to support economic development in Aboriginal communities in New South Wales including but not limited to:
  - a) options for sustainability and capacity building in NSW Aboriginal communities into the future, utilising existing community networks and structures
  - b) leveraging economic development support, including provided by the Commonwealth Government and the private sector
  - c) establishment and sustainability of Aboriginal owned enterprises.
2. That the Committee report by 30 September 2016.

Specifically, this submission provides:

- Commentary on previous attempts to stimulate economic development and increase employment in Aboriginal communities and the impact that the “work readiness” or otherwise of local Aboriginal populations had on their success
- A brief outline of the Clontarf Foundation’s mission, operating methods, the premise upon which its work is based and how this work improves “work readiness” and as a consequence, is complementary to (and supportive of) the objectives of the Inquiry
- A description of the scope of the Foundation’s current operations in NSW
- Details of the results currently being achieved in both NSW and the rest of Australia
- An estimate of the unsatisfied demand for the Clontarf programme across NSW, the level of investment required to satisfy this demand and the likely impacts (economic and other) in the event that it can be satisfied.
- Ways in which the NSW government can foster and accelerate Clontarf’s growth in New South Wales

#### 2.0 The Employment Conundrum

In 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) resolved, by 2018, to halve the “Gap” between Indigenous and non Indigenous employment. In pursuit of this aim, governments and private enterprise alike continue to launch numerous initiatives designed to stimulate economic activity and/or create jobs for Aboriginal people (i.e. to stimulate the **demand** side of the employment equation).

Such initiatives include, but are not limited to –

- Support of (and participation in) the Australian Employment Covenant
- When undertaking large projects, requiring contractors to employ specified percentages of Aboriginal workers
- Offering subsidies to companies that employ Aboriginal workers
- Setting quotas for Aboriginal employment and giving preference to Aboriginal people when filling jobs
- Letting contracts to recruitment companies to find jobs for Aboriginal people
- Giving preference to contractors with majority Aboriginal ownership



- Providing financial support for Aboriginal groups or individuals to start businesses
- Relocating existing industries and/or activities (or promoting the establishment of new industries) that could cater for an Aboriginal workforce.

Despite the good intentions and best endeavours of all involved, most of these initiatives fail and the few that don't, fall short of expectations. Consequently, the "employment gap" between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal Australians, (irrespective of whether this is measured in terms of "employment", "unemployment" or "participation") is now significantly wider than it was in 2008.<sup>1</sup>

What are the reasons for this?

**Firstly**, a shortage of "work ready" Aboriginal people, (i.e. inadequate **supply**.) As can be seen by analysing the results achieved by the Australian Employment Covenant, more "Aboriginal jobs" have already been created than there are people suitably equipped to occupy them.

A very high proportion of the pool of Aboriginal unemployed is not "work ready." The "long term unemployed" (Aboriginal or otherwise) tend to;

- Lack motivation and/or have negative attitudes to employment
- Lack the support networks needed to sustain them in employment particularly when they first become employed
- Come from families where unemployment is endemic and therefore they do not expect to work
- Lack the life skills needed to keep a job (punctuality, reliability, social skills etc)
- Lack self confidence in the work environment
- Have inadequate levels of literacy and numeracy

The above has particular relevance to Aboriginal Australians because a disproportionate number of them are "long term unemployed".

**Secondly**, at the same time as inadequate progress is being made on placing unemployed Aboriginal people into jobs, a disproportionate number of the young Aboriginal people leaving school are not "work ready". Hence the size of the "unemployable" pool continues to grow.

Figures published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics<sup>2</sup> suggest that approximately 25,000 young Aboriginal people finish school each year. Although estimates vary widely, it is generally held that

- More than half of these leave before completing Year 12
- Up to a quarter leave before or upon completing Year 10
- While at school most will have attended no more than 60 percent of the time

Even after allowing for the possibility of variations between regions and states, given that about 31 percent of Australia's Aboriginal people live in NSW, the above has significant implications for both New South Wales and this inquiry.

## *2.1 Relevance to the Standing Committee's Deliberations*

While in no way seeking to preempt the findings and recommendations of the Standing Committee, given the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry, it would be highly unlikely (and even inappropriate) for options similar to those listed in 2.0 above, not to be considered.

If this is accepted, it follows that in order to maximise the beneficial impact of its recommendations, the Inquiry should also address the 'supply side' issues listed in 2.0 viz:

<sup>1</sup> Reports of COAG Reform Council – "Indigenous Reform"

<sup>2</sup> ABS – estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians – August 2013



- The disproportionate number of unemployed Aboriginal people who are not “work ready”
- The large and growing numbers of young Aboriginal people who when leaving school are not “work ready” and who therefore add to the pool of long term unemployed.

The Clontarf Foundation works full time with Aboriginal boys in schools. Its programme has long term, measurable, positive impacts on four of the main “gap areas”

- Education
- Employment
- Criminal offending
- Health.

In particular, in the case of school leavers, the programme addresses the supply side issues identified in 2.0 above and delivers “work ready” Year 12 school leavers into the workforce and for this reason its work is of relevance to the Inquiry.

### **3.0 Clontarf Foundation – Overview**

The Clontarf Foundation is an unlisted public company limited by guarantee that operates as a charitable “not for profit”. Its stated purpose is “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”.

The Foundation opened its first academy for 25 Aboriginal boys in February 2000 on the campus of the Clontarf Aboriginal College at Waterford, in the Perth metropolitan area. Since then it has been highly successful in attracting Aboriginal boys back to school, keeping them there and when they graduate, in finding them jobs and helping them stay employed. As a result of its success the Foundation’s operations have grown. As of February 2016, Clontarf:

- caters for 4,210 participants in 68 schools across four states and the Northern Territory,
- employs 222 people
- has a budgeted annual expenditure of \$33 million

At present in New South Wales, the Foundation has:

- 843 participants in 12 schools
- 40 full time employees
- budgeted annual expenditure of \$5.4 million

Appendix 1 contains a list of New South Wales schools in which Clontarf operates an Academy together with the number of Academy members involved in each.

#### ***3.1 Basic Operating Principle***

Aboriginal boys commence disengaging from school at 8 years of age. More than half fail to complete Year 12. Very, very few complete tertiary education. Clontarf believes that inadequate education coupled with a lack of appropriate life skills, creates and then drives a cycle of disadvantage,

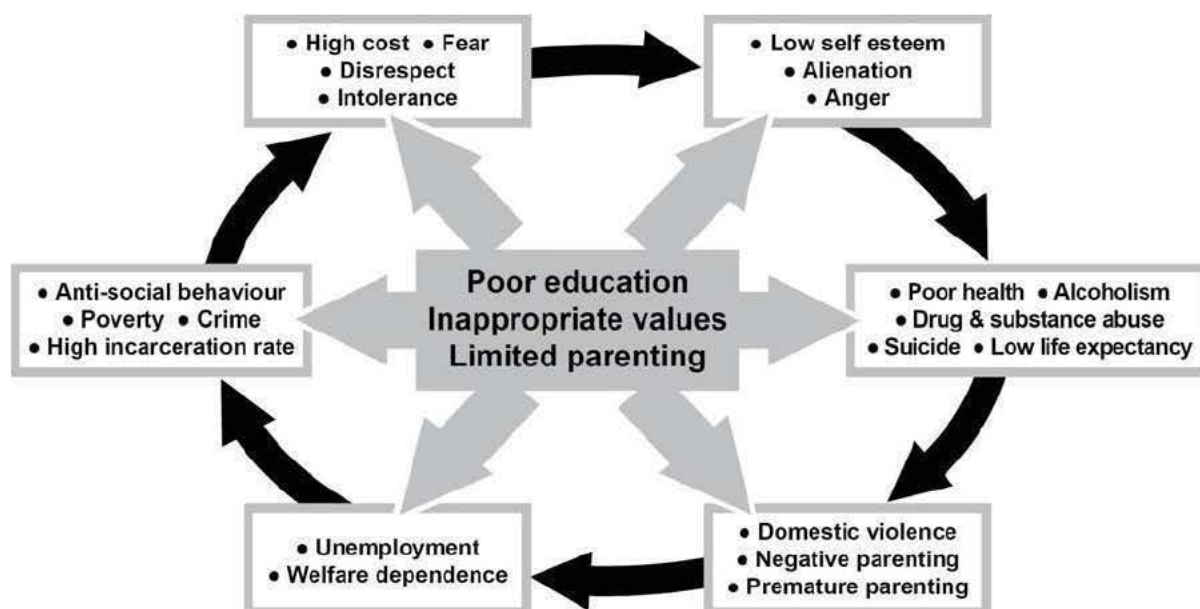


Fig. 1. The Cycle of Disadvantage

The cycle in turn plays a significant part in the creation of the so called “Gap” in life outcomes between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal Australians.

### 3.2 Operating Method

For most Aboriginal boys football (Rugby League in NSW and Queensland and Australian Rules elsewhere) is more religion than sport. Clontarf uses the passion its boys have for their respective brands of football to attract them back to school and (initially) to improve their attendance. Clontarf, in partnership with schools:

- Establishes football Academies in schools
- Staffs academies with full time, highly functional, suitably trained men (including former teachers, social workers, NRL/AFL footballers) to capture the boys’ attention, gain their respect and trust, and then work with them full time to improve behaviour and change attitudes to education, employment, health, offending and life in general
- Builds into the boys an expectation that they will get a job, involves them with private sector partners who are potential employers, conducts workplace visits, assists partner organisations with their Aboriginal recruitment processes, helps boys to prepare resumes and to get health cards, bank accounts, tax file numbers, drivers’ licences and other necessary tools
- After they graduate, places boys into meaningful jobs or further education and then continues to support them as needed until they become comfortable in their new situations

In addition to improving attendance at school and hence academic outcomes, the programme is designed to produce young men who have the motivation, self confidence and life skills needed to get jobs and keep them.

### 3.3 Why the Clontarf Programme Works

The Clontarf programme works

- Firstly because of the intensity of the intervention  
Academies are staffed in the ratio of approximately one full time Clontarf employee per 25 boys.



Clontarf's men work with the boys up to 50 hours per week, 40 weeks per year for 5 years.  
Clontarf's men live in the communities in which they work.  
Clontarf stays with the boys after they leave school for as long as necessary.

- Secondly because of the quality of the men who work for it

Most people acquire life skills by copying their parents.

Many of Clontarf's boys do not have functional male role models in their lives.

Boys involved with the Clontarf programme form strong lasting relationships with Clontarf's men, model themselves on them and thence modify their values and improve their behaviour.

- Thirdly because boys in the programme attend school voluntarily as opposed to being coerced to attend

Consequently, they are much better behaved, eminently more "teachable" and more amenable to changing their behaviour and attitudes than they otherwise would be had they been forced to go back to school.

**Although Clontarf uses football to attract Aboriginal boys to school its programme is neither about football nor about producing footballers. Clontarf's programme is a relatively sophisticated behavioural change programme that is more about mental health than it is about football.**

#### **4.0 Results**

Wherever possible, Clontarf measures its results. This section presents results obtained in:

- Education – measured in terms of percentage attendance, percentage retention and number of Year 12 completions
- Employment – measured in terms of the percentage and number of boys engaged (and remaining engaged) in employment or further education

for both Australia as a whole and New South Wales specifically.

Results are also provided for Australia as a whole for health and reductions in criminal offending and incarceration. These results are obtained from studies into:

- The economic and other impacts of Clontarf Academies conducted by ACIL Allen Consulting<sup>3</sup>
- Prevalence of offending by Clontarf alumni compared to non Clontarf alumni carried out by Professor Anna Ferrante of Curtin University<sup>4</sup>

Copies of both these reports can be provided to the Standing Committee if required.

Studies have not been carried out specifically for New South Wales however there is ample evidence to suggest that NSW results are consistent with those obtained for Australia as a whole.

When assessing NSW results, due consideration should be given to the fact that a number of Academies are new and hence both the numbers graduating from Year 12 and the numbers placed in employment will increase substantially until Academies reach maturity (generally about 5 years after establishment).

Finally, not all outcomes lend themselves to formal measurement. Appendix 2 contains a series of letters received from parents, principals, teachers and others with experience of the "intangible benefits" delivered by the NSW programme.

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<sup>3</sup> Impact of the Clontarf Programme – ACIL Allen Consulting – August 2014

<sup>4</sup> Assessment of offending by participants of the Clontarf Foundation Programme –Ferrante and Hendrie – December 2013



#### 4.1 Results – Education

##### All Academies

• Total number of participants (February 2016)	4210
• Total number of schools	68
• Growth relative to December 2015	11%
• Percentage of students with attendances greater than 80%	61%
• Year on year retention	90%
• Number of Year 12 completions (2015)	314
• Forecast number of Year 12 completions (2016)	414

##### New South Wales

• Total number of participants (February 2016)	843
• Total number of schools	12
• Growth relative to December 2015	14%
• Percentage of students with attendances greater than 80%	68%
• Year on year retention	94%
• Number of Year 12 completions (2015)	43
• Forecast number of Year 12 completions (2016)	88

#### 4.2 Results – Employment

##### All Academies

• Number of Year 12 leavers placed (2014 graduates)	146
• Percentage Year 12 leavers placed (2014 graduates)	85%
• Number of alumni placed	83
• Longitudinal results: <u>In 2002</u> , 16 boys completed Year 12. Currently, 14 are fully employed. <u>In 2009</u> , 114 boys completed Year 12. Currently, 89 (78%) are fully employed and 14 are being supported to look for work.	

##### New South Wales

• Number of Year 12 leavers placed (2014 graduates)	21
• Percentage Year 12 leavers placed (2014 graduates)	95%

#### 4.3 Results - Health

Aboriginal men seek medical help infrequently and then usually after their condition has reached the chronic stage. In contrast to this, every Clontarf participant receives an annual health check and accordingly, in the future, is more likely to seek medical help when he or his family need it.

In a recent study of Clontarf outcomes, ACIL Allen Consultants estimated that Clontarf participants are 13% less likely to experience a chronic health condition by the time they reach 64 than they would have been had they not taken part in the Clontarf programme.

#### 4.4 Results – Offending

The Clontarf programme also has a dramatic effect on crime rates. Curtin University criminologist, Professor Anna Ferrante, found in an independent study that by the age of 24, Aboriginal boys who haven't been in the Clontarf programme offend at 3 times the rate of those who have been involved in it.

Moreover, of the Clontarf boys who did offend, they did so 2.6 years later and were half as likely to reoffend than those who hadn't been part of the Clontarf programme.

#### *4.5 Results – Economic Benefits*

In their impact study, economic consultants, ACIL Allen<sup>iii</sup>, established that Clontarf not only delivers significant benefits to participants, but benefits the community as well. Compared with his 'non Clontarf' equivalent, a Clontarf participant will, over his working life:

- Pay \$51,000 more income tax
- Receive \$74,000 less in welfare payments
- Require \$55,000 less treatment under the health system
- Avoid \$114,000 in costs associated with offending and imprisonment.

The consultants also established that:

- every dollar invested in maintaining a boy in the programme returns \$8.13 over his working life.
- Allowing for the "time value of money" by discounting future cash flows at 7% per annum, each dollar invested in Clontarf generates an instantaneous return of \$2.17.

Under the Clontarf funding model, State Governments contribute one third of the costs needed to keep a boy in the Clontarf programme, yet receive 57% of the benefits that result from having him involved. Hence from a State Government perspective the case for supporting Clontarf is even more compelling.

#### *4.6 Other Benefits*

In helping to address the cycle of disadvantage Clontarf also has a positive impact on domestic violence and creates safer environments for Aboriginal children – both items feature among Premier Baird's priorities.

### **5.0 Potential for Growth in New South Wales**

It is estimated<sup>5</sup> that 208,000 Aboriginal people live in New South Wales.

Further, as a "rule of thumb" (derived from experience elsewhere), a local population of 3000 Aboriginal people generates the need for one Clontarf Academy catering for 70 participants.

It follows that under Clontarf's current operating model, in total, New South Wales needs 70 Academies catering for up to 5,000 boys. In other words Clontarf's New South Wales operation has the potential to be as big as its entire Australian operation is today!

Currently, in New South Wales, Clontarf operates 12 Academies catering for 843 boys. In addition it has the funding needed to:

- Between now and the end of June this year, open Academies catering for another 400 participants in Singleton, Orange, Broken Hill and Mount Druitt.
- Between June and December of this year, open 5 or 6 other new Academies catering for another 400 boys. (The locations for these are in the process of being agreed.)
- In the first quarter of 2017, open a further 3 Academies catering for 200 boys.

Hence, by the end of April 2017, just over one third of the demand for Clontarf Academies within New South Wales will have been satisfied.

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<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics – ABS 3238.0.55.001



The Foundation has the confirmed Federal funding component needed to open Academies catering for an additional 1,500 boys and is contracted to do this before June 2018. Whether or not some or all of these will be in New South Wales depends upon whether or not:

- the New South Wales Government is willing to fund one third of the cost of each new Academy; and
- Clontarf is able to arrange a matching amount from the private sector.

Currently it costs approximately \$7,500 per year (on average) to keep a boy in the programme. One third of this is sourced from the Federal Government, one third from the appropriate State or Territory Government and one third is raised from the private sector. At the end of the current expansion phase the annual cost of keeping 1,843 boys in the programme will be \$14 million with the New South Wales Government's annual contribution being \$4.7 million.

Should the demand for Academies in New South Wales ever be satisfied in full, the corresponding annual costs (in today's dollars) would increase to \$39 million and \$13 million respectively.

## **6.0 Benefits**

Given the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, the benefit of greatest relevance to the Standing Committee is the impact that Clontarf has in the area of Aboriginal employment.

After it has been opened for 5 years, a typical Clontarf Academy of 100 boys delivers 17 boys per year out of Year 12 into the workforce. This year, 88 'work ready' boys from Clontarf's 12 existing Academies are expected to complete Year 12. Over the next 5 years – as all existing and planned academies reach maturity and assuming no additional Academies beyond these are opened – the number of NSW boys completing Year 12 each year and entering the workforce will grow year on year until it reaches 320. In the event that the projected demand for Academies were to be completely satisfied, the number graduating each year, ready and wanting to work, would increase to 850.

Clearly the employment outcomes capable of being achieved by Clontarf's programme are consistent with (and should be part of) the NSW Government's endeavours to promote economic development within Aboriginal communities. As previously indicated (see fig.1 and section 4.0 above) significant social and financial impacts accrue in other areas of government as well:

- Police and Prisons – reduced rates of offending, re-offending and imprisonment
- Health and Mental Health – reduced dependence on the health system, lower youth suicide rates, lower rates of drug, alcohol and substance abuse
- Family and Community Services – lower dependence on welfare and welfare support, reduced incidences of child abuse and domestic violence.

Indeed it seems anomalous, that the Department of Education, together with the principals of individual schools, put up all of the State Government money needed by Clontarf, while the areas listed above (including those concerned with Aboriginal economic development) derive most of the resultant benefits.

## **7.0 Funding Considerations**

Given the impact that the availability or otherwise of a "work ready" workforce has on the ability to stimulate economic development in Aboriginal communities, it follows that the Standing Committee's objectives would best be served if the total demand for Clontarf Academies (70) is satisfied in the shortest practicable time.

For all intents and purposes, the rate at which Clontarf rolls out new Academies in New South Wales is determined by the availability of funding. As stated in this submission previously, Clontarf obtains one third of its money from the Federal Government, one third of its money from the New South Wales Government and raises one third from the private sector. The ways in which the New South



Wales Government can best assist to stimulate the funds flowing to Clontarf from each of these sources is set out below.

### *7.1 Federal Government Component*

The Federal Government is already committed to fund their one third of the costs needed to add another 1500 boys beyond the number that the New South Wales government has agreed to fund. We have also been advised unofficially by senior members of the Government that should a State or Territory decide to increase their funding commitment by an amount greater than this, the Federal Government would match the amount in question. Hence, a decision by New South Wales to increase its funding commitment by more than the amount needed to fund 1500 additional boys would enable Clontarf to obtain additional Federal funding.

### *7.2 New South Wales Government Component*

Clearly the amount that the New South Wales Government chooses to commit to funding Clontarf is totally within its own control.

Under the existing method of funding, the Department of Education (along with the schools hosting Academies) provide one hundred percent of the New South Wales Government contribution – which at maximum expansion would be an annual amount, in today's dollars, of \$13 million.

Although we have no knowledge of the matter, it is possible that the Department of Education may find it impossible (or failing that unacceptable) to contribute the full amount. Should this turn out to be the case, the Government may choose to have the additional contribution come from the entities that currently don't contribute towards funding Clontarf in New South Wales yet reap the lion's share of the savings delivered by it (see 6.0 above). As occurs in all other States and the Northern Territory (which all fund Clontarf on a "whole of government" basis), all funds would be directed through (and continue to be managed by) the Department of Education.

### *7.3 Private Sector Component*

In the first instance

- the Premier and Leader of the Opposition
- Ministers and Shadow Ministers
- Members representing electorates with large numbers of Aboriginal constituents

might continue to make public the fact that Clontarf and its work enjoys strong bipartisan political support and further, for all to apply their best endeavours towards encouraging the private sector organisations over which they have influence, to provide financial support to Clontarf.

Secondly, when calling tenders for large State Government infrastructure projects and the like, it is standard practice to specify a mandatory minimum Aboriginal component for the project workforce.

Given the scarcity of "work ready" Aboriginal people prevalent to certain locations, contractors frequently have difficulty in honouring the intention of the requirement and either:

- Are unable to comply with the requirement;
- Pay "lip service" to the requirement by initially employing inappropriate people who soon leave the job and are not replaced; or
- Put up with a high labour turnover and the associated increase in cost (which in the majority of instances finishes up being born the client).



In situations where they can prove that it is either impossible or not sensible to meet a mandatory employment quota, Clontarf believes that contractors should be able to “contract out” of the mandatory quota by diverting an equivalent amount of money to an organisation with a proven track record such as that possessed by Clontarf. This provision, properly framed, would avoid the present situation where, in many instances:

- High costs are incurred;
- Negative attitudes towards Aboriginal employment are created within organisations best equipped to employ Aboriginal people; and
- The positive contribution to the advancement of Aboriginal economic development is minimal or zero.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

In recognition of the fact that in many locations there are already more jobs for Aboriginal people than there are “work ready” Aboriginal people to fill them; and further that a disproportionately high proportion of young Aboriginal people are leaving school without being “work ready”,

- **That in its deliberations, the Standing Committee gives equal consideration to the development of a “work ready” Aboriginal workforce as it does to the creation of jobs for Aboriginal people.**

Given the Clontarf Foundation’s proven capability in the field of Aboriginal employment along with its ability in the near term to deliver 285 “work ready” young Aboriginal men per year into the workforce

- **That the manner in which Clontarf’s work not only enhances economic development, but also complements other initiatives designed to operate in this arena, be covered in the Standing Committee’s recommendations.**

Academy: Total NSW	
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Census as at: 12/02/2016

[illegible]



December 2015

## Support letter from Parent

Hi it's Melissa,

I'm Ben Smith's mother. I would like to thank you and your staff for all your support and commitment that your program has given to my son. Your staff and yourself need a big clap on the back for all that you do for the kids at school.

This year has been a tough one for our family we have been through a lot but with the positive role models you men are it has driven Ben to achieve results that every young boy dreams of. Plus the programs you have offered have opened Ben's opportunity and approach to his life ahead of him.

I believe Ben has the world at his feet because of this program. He has done and been places that he wouldn't have been able to go to and had life experiences that will direct him to achieve to the best of his ability and he believes that anything is achievable if you give it a go.

As a result Ben is vice-captain for 2016 and very proud. I think myself he is a role model to younger Aboriginal boys and shows that you put the hard yards in you get the best results. Ben will tell you himself he's not the best football player but as long as you have a go and don't give up you will still see in yourself that every day you learn something new that helps you in life.

Ben has people around him to cope with the situation of his home life. Sometimes he would have lack of sleep because of domestic and mental abuse he would witness and look at your program as a safe place he could be himself a young boy not to be worrying about what was happening at home.

It's given him directions that he needed to feel comfortable and have positive support. I can't thank you for all the effort you have given and gone out of your way to support my family. Without you guys I can't give to Ben as a mother the positive role models you men are. The male staff figures now in Ben's life have given him a different approach on what is needed in a young man.

I could write so much more plus also out of school the support your staff had given him I thank you from my heart. It has helped our family so much I have a younger boy that talks about the program asking Ben will I be able to do all this when I'm in high school.

Thank you and I can't wait to see what's on offer next year. One last thing I would like to mention. I had the chance to send Ben away on a full scholarship private school next year and he refused to go because of your staff and the program. Now that means I get to see my man everyday grow and become a young man. I know his education is no worries because he has it all at his feet because of you I can't thank you enough. Thank you and looking forward working with you guys again next year.

Melissa

\*names have been changed with parents approval

10<sup>th</sup> December 2015

NSW Minister for Education – Adrian Piccoli  
Office@piccoli.minister.nsw.gov.au

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs  
enquiries@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Director Public Schools – Rythe Dufty

Dear All,

I would like to explain that I am a mum of four amazing sons who are all at different stages within their school years, from year 10, year 9 and two in year 3. I also am a full time working mum in a Government Department and am well aware of the intake & processing required on the receipt of complaints and compliments for services and people. As usual in our busy lives, we are often quick to complain but forget to take the time to note a job well done or on an example of great dedication and therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to do just that. I am not a person that feels the need to write a letter at the drop of a hat, if at all, but felt compelled to do so at this time, so that these people get the recognition in which they truly deserve.

I would like to take this opportunity to point out that these 3 highly dedicated individuals, all from Oxley High School, have been an absolute asset to the Education Department, and they are:

- ▶ Brenden Petterson, Clontarf Manager
- ▶ Simon Bartlett-Taylor, Principal &
- ▶ Mark Baldwin, Deputy Principal

All of these people have demonstrated that they are dedicated Leaders of the Oxley High School community and I find immense pleasure in telling you that I have been extremely satisfied as a parent with their manner and guidance in regards to my children's education.

Leadership to children is often a stressful and thankless task, therefore I extend my heart felt thank you for the way in which Brenden, Simon and Mark have conducted themselves with myself and my children in both the past and just recently in a not so pleasant experience in which I felt extremely supported within.

I felt it was important for you to all know what highly dedicated, experienced and compassionate employees that you have.

Yours sincerely

██████████, ██████████ NSW ██████████  
██████████





# Dubbo South Public School

Fitzroy Street

Dubbo

Principal: Ms Sharon Murray  
Deputy Principal: Miss Neva Pengilly

Telephone: 6882 2529

Fax: 6882 4196

Email: [dubbosouth-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:dubbosouth-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au)

4<sup>th</sup> February 2016

To Whom It May Concern

On behalf of the staff and students of Dubbo South Public School I am writing to acknowledge the positive contribution the Clontarf staff have made to our school.

Staff from Dubbo South Public School working with the Clontarf group, values the collegiality and flexibility of the group with our students.

The Clontarf group have supported and worked with a group of boys each week developing trust, pride and high expectations with the group. It has been great to see the positive impact Clontarf have had on the boys – attendance and application to school have improved.

The students in the group from Dubbo South Public School enjoyed visiting the Academy on the South College site. The staff at Clontarf were very skilled, professional and liaised well with myself across the 2 sites.

I would like to thank the members of the Clontarf Academy for their ongoing support and proactive involvement with our students at Dubbo South Public School. Something I look forward to nurturing and continuing further in the future.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Murray  
Principal

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to support the outstanding Clontarf Academy program that is operating at Armidale High School, Armidale. Health WISE (previously New England Medicare Local Aboriginal Health Services ) has been involved in the program with the boys, James Russell (director) and Bruce Dennison for a number of years.

Our organisation employs Aboriginal Health Workers, Community Support Workers, Close the Gap Liaisons & Registered Nurses.

The team have been involved in various health programs with culturally appropriate health checks and screening for the boys, as well as referrals to specialists and allied health providers, providing the best possible care and wellbeing for the boys. We have also given advice on such things as Smoking, Alcohol, Nutrition, Sexual Health, Kidney Health, Chronic Disease and Exercise. James has been very proactive in making appointments for the boys for Eye screening, Hearing screening and any other screening that is appropriate for that particular age group. Our team has also given the boys presentations on social and emotional wellbeing issues such as grief and loss. We have provided one on one support where needed as well.

We have a close relationship with the Academy and that is mostly due to the fantastic working relationship that our team have with James and Bruce. They motivate the boys to look after themselves and take things seriously, but do it in a way that the boys respond well to. They have great rapport with the boys that are part of the Academy and this was evident at the Awards Ceremony this year. The boys spoke eloquently and with the utmost respect to the audience and to James and Bruce.

I believe it is a fantastic, worthwhile, nurturing program that is working well at Armidale High under James' leadership.

We look forward to continuing to work with James, Bruce and the boys that are part of the Academy in 2016 and beyond. It is an exciting program to be part of.

Kind Regards

Tanya Scales  
Health Access Manager & School Education Officer- Armidale  
HealthWISE New England North West





## **INVERELL HIGH SCHOOL**

70 – 92 BRAE STREET, INVERELL 2360  
PHONE (02) 6722 3777 - FAX (02) 6722 5829  
WEB - [www.inverell-h.schools.nsw.edu.au](http://www.inverell-h.schools.nsw.edu.au)

Principal: Ms Penny Colley  
Deputy Principal: Mr Wayne Fowke

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Dear Chris and Clontarf

I am writing this letter to congratulate you on the Clontarf program you have run over the last two plus years at Inverell High School.

I have been a teacher for 20 years, working as a PD/H/PE teacher and a Career Adviser for the past 8 years. Over this time I have seen many programs and suggestions to improve indigenous education, retention and employment. This is the best program I have seen and been involved in and has made real difference to our students and our school.

I have seen many boys make almost complete changes in their personalities, to become positive, happy and contributing citizens of the school. The program centres around true education "the development of the person" and often qualities that cannot be measured, but only observed.

From a Careers and employment point of view the fact that 30 plus teenage boys get up at 6am to attend training throughout the year twice a year is amazing, let alone all the other benefits of attendance, improved school work, self-esteem, communication and people skills.

Thanks again for the contribution you have made to our boys and school. I have no hesitation in recommending this program to any school or Department of Education officials.

Peter Dal Santo  
Inverell High  
Career Adviser

23/6/14



## MOUNT AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL

*Opportunity, Innovation and Student Success*

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015

### Mount Austin Clontarf Academy 2014

The Mount Austin Clontarf Academy has achieved a range of outcomes since operations commenced in July 2014.

The overall attendance rate of the Academy members improved by 3.2% from Semester 1 to Semester 2. The percentage of Aboriginal boys enrolled at the school has increased by 2% over the same time frame. The numbers of boys attending the early morning fitness sessions increased from 22 to the mid-40s by the end of November with community members also attending from Police, CSU and the wider Aboriginal community. Non-cognitive outcomes observed by staff are the improvement of social skills and physical presentation of the boys indicating an increased level of self-esteem and confidence in communicating successfully with adults. Clontarf boys' interaction within the community at a variety of events has been keenly observed as showing pride representing the school, the Academy and their cultural heritage. The inaugural Mount Austin Clontarf Awards night was a great display of the shift in the Academy boys' attitudes with 2 seniors compering the evening with confidence. The extent of support from parents and carers in the boys' success was evident on the night. The Clontarf officers have developed a wonderful rapport with the boys' families and are invaluable in supporting the school with these pivotal relationships. The Clontarf organisation as a whole has given the boys opportunities to develop links across the state with boys from similar backgrounds in sporting carnivals and visits to a wide range of organisations to experience post school options.

Susan Lockwood

Principal





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Wednesday February 11, 2015

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Since its inception in July 2014, the Clontarf Academy at Delroy Campus has been highly successful at increasing the attendance rates of some of our most at risk Aboriginal boys. There have been some real success stories with one boy in Year 10 increasing his attendance from virtually nil to only missing one week in the two terms that Clontarf was at Delroy. He won the Academy Member of the Year award in 2014 and he is now enrolled at the Senior Campus Academy in year 11.

There seems to be a genuine sense of pride in the members of the Academy and one of the most noticeable changes has been the attitude of the boys to the wider staff at the school. Their manners have improved and numerous staff members have commented on the behavioural changes.

The opportunities which the boys have been exposed to is amazing and without their involvement with Clontarf a majority of these students would never have experienced these different environments and activities.

The Clontarf staff have developed strong relationships with the boys and with different areas within the school community. They have worked closely with student support staff and together they have attained very positive results.

With Clontarf entering its third term at Delroy this year, we have high hopes of its continued success and look forward to the development of the boys involved.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Macleod  
Principal 2015  
Dubbo College Delroy Campus



## **Dubbo College South Campus**

*"A Successful, Innovative and Caring Education for your Child"*

### **Letter of support for our Clontarf Academy**

To Whom It may Concern,

On behalf of the staff and students of Dubbo College South Campus, and especially our male Aboriginal students, I am writing to you to acknowledge the positive contribution our Clontarf staff have made to Dubbo College.

All staff at South Campus value the collegiality of the Clontarf staff, their willingness to be involved in the life of the College, their participation in the professional programs that the College provides for staff and especially the support and guidance Clontarf staff provide for our students.

While the Clontarf staff work mainly with male students they have made a significant impact that has been felt across the whole Campus. They have brought a renewed sense of pride and high expectations for all of the students they support. It has been especially pleasing to see a significant improvement in attendance for targeted students.

The students of Dubbo College South Campus benefit greatly from the presence of the Clontarf Academy on site in our school. The Academy is a place where students love to go. The individual support and the programs that are provided encourage our students to be active and healthy, and to engage in the learning opportunities of the College. This is a direct result of the high quality and skills of the staff and the programs they have in place.

Dubbo College has been enriched with the arrival of the Clontarf Academy and we sincerely thank all in the Clontarf Foundation for their contribution to South Campus in particular and look forward to the continued development of the Academy.

Yours sincerely,

Darryl Thompson, Principal

5 February 2015