

clontarffoundation

# the QUARTERLY

October 2024



clontarf  
foundation



**Vincentia Academy  
Welcomes Home  
Olympic Heroes**

**Boys Immerse  
Themselves  
in MinRes**







clontarf  
foundation

# the QUARTERLY

October 2024

## FEATURE

Job Expo Week Opens Doors..... 5

## HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome Home Olympic Heroes..... 3

Celebrating the Ross Kelly Cup..... 3

Marcellus Hones His Skills..... 6

Boys Immersed in MinRes..... 6

Clontarf 101 - Engagement Camps..... 7

Staff Profile - Christian Philpot..... 7

STEM-Powered Day of Exploration..... 8

Seniors Navigate Road Safety..... 8

## About us

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

Using the passion that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys have for football allows the Foundation to attract the boys to school. But it is not a sporting program.

Each Clontarf academy, formed in partnership with the local school and community, is focused on encouraging behavioural change, developing positive attitudes, assisting students to complete school and secure employment.

Fundamental to this, is the development of values, skills and abilities that will help the boys to achieve positive life outcomes.

Since commencing with 25 participants in 2000, the Clontarf approach has proven to be very successful, not only in attracting young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men to school and retaining them, but also in having them embrace more disciplined, purposeful and healthy lifestyles.



Gerard and Clontarf academy members/staff celebrate the signing of a new partnership with Darwin Ports.

## Message From the CEO

*Welcome to the latest Quarterly for 2024. The third term of the year is always a whirlwind of furious activity here at Clontarf, with carnivals, forums, camps and Clontarf Experiences all in full swing.*



**The term kicked off with a visit from Federal Education Minister Hon. Jason Clare MP who dropped in to Palmerston 7-9 Academy, just outside of Darwin in the NT. The visit was a chance for the Minister to learn more about the program and how it was assisting young men to transition through primary and secondary school, and finally into employment.**

Minister Clare was joined by the Member for Solomon, Luke Gosling OAM MP and the pair met current students from Driver Primary Academy, Palmerston 7-9 Academy and alumni from Palmerston 10-12 Academy. Both showed a keen interest in the activities of the academies, and were impressed with the important role Clontarf plays in creating a sense of belonging in the school and across the Clontarf network. I thank Minister Clare and Mr Gosling for their visit and ongoing support.

The ever-popular Clontarf Experiences were in full swing during Term 3, offering participants the chance to experience the day-to-day life of Clontarf academy members in their home communities. From morning pick-ups and training, to academy room engagement and in-class support, and afterschool activities and

dinner under the stars - Clontarf Experiences are authentic 'snapshots' of the lives of the boys in the program.

I had the opportunity to participate on the Bourke-Brewarrina Experience in the Central West of NSW and during the four day trip, I was reminded of how important these executive immersions are in highlighting the challenges faced by young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, as well as the tremendous opportunities before them. The men and women from our corporate partners who attended were incredibly engaged, and they showed genuine enthusiasm when interacting with the young men. I want to thank all those who participated in the Experiences.

Looking ahead to Term 4, we're set to open several more new academies in schools in New South Wales, including Muswellbrook, North Lakes and The Entrance. This will take the total number of new academies opened during the year to 10 - inching us ever closer to our target of 12,500 boys in 2025.

Thank you and I'll speak with you again at the end of the year.

- Gerard Neesham OAM, CEO







Vincentia Academy (NSW) boys, Clontarf staff and Prime Minister Hon Anthony Albanese MP welcome home Australia's Olympic Heroes at a special event in Sydney hosted by Qantas.

## Vincentia Academy Boys Welcome Home Australia's Olympic Heroes

**Nine boys from the Vincentia Clontarf Academy had the unique opportunity to meet some Australian sporting heroes during the Qantas Olympic Welcome Home Ceremony in August.**

The event, held at the Qantas Jet Base Hangar in Sydney, celebrated the triumphant return of Australia's Olympic team.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese MP, Opposition Leader Peter Dutton MP and Qantas CEO Vanessa Hudson were among the many dignitaries in attendance, along with a host of Olympic athletes, including the swim team, the Fox sisters, Matt Wearn, Matt Denny, Saya Sakikabara and several gold medal-winning skaters.

As community partners with Qantas, the Clontarf Foundation was extended an invitation,

allowing the Vincentia Academy to not only attend the ceremony but also make a camp out of the experience. The boys were thrilled to interact with the Olympians, posing for photos, holding Olympic medals and even capturing a special moment with Prime Minister Albanese. A standout highlight of the day was watching Jess Mauboy perform live, adding to the unforgettable experience.

The event provided a memorable platform for the young men from Vincentia to connect with some of Australia's most celebrated athletes, leaving them inspired and motivated.



## Celebrating Sport, Spirit and Commitment at the Ross Kelly Cup

**The annual Ross Kelly Cup, Clontarf's largest event, was held in September in Tuggerah, NSW and brought together 750 Year 9 and 10 boys from across the state for a thrilling rugby league carnival.**

This event has grown exponentially since its inception in 2013 when it featured just 100 boys. Today, the Ross Kelly Cup stands as a significant highlight of the Clontarf calendar, embodying the values of commitment, sportsmanship and teamwork that Clontarf works to instil in its participants.

The 2024 carnival saw 41 teams from various Clontarf academies come together for a two-day carnival, with over 100 games of rugby league played in true Clontarf spirit. The energy on the field was palpable as boys from different regions competed with enthusiasm, showcasing their skills and determination.

Mount Austin Academy (Wagga Wagga) triumphed in the grand final, defeating Dubbo South Academy 20-0 in a hard-fought match, while the much-anticipated representative game between Fresh Water and Salt Water academies

brought the carnival to a close. Fresh Water claimed victory for the second consecutive year, cementing their place as the reigning champions.

Beyond the action on the field, the Ross Kelly Cup serves a deeper purpose.

"This event is a way to encourage boys to strive at school and rewards those who remain committed throughout the year," said Craig Brierty, Clontarf Foundation Deputy CEO.

"It's not just about rugby league - it's about building character, celebrating achievement and strengthening the bond between Clontarf academy members."

In addition to the 750 boys who participated, more than 30 partner organisations were actively involved, offering support by manning BBQs and cheering on the boys, further demonstrating the importance of community and corporate partnerships in Clontarf's mission.





# Employment Expo Week Opens Doors



Entering the workforce can seem like a daunting challenge. One of Clontarf's goals is to bridge this gap by providing hands-on experience that builds both confidence and essential skills. A key part of this effort in Clontarf's Victorian academies is the 'Expo Week' initiative, which places senior academy members into real world work environments. These weeks of immersive employment training play a pivotal role in shaping the futures of our young men, fostering the confidence they need to pursue their career goals.

## Melbourne Work Experience Week: A Gateway to New Futures

This year's Melbourne Work Experience Week once again delivered exceptional opportunities for senior Victorian academy members, opening doors to employment they may have never imagined. With 15 academy members from Bairnsdale, Mildura and Swan Hill participating, the week provided a unique chance to explore the bustling capital of Victoria, offering experiences and insights far beyond what their hometowns can offer.

## Building Confidence in the Heart of Melbourne

The week officially kicked off with an opening night dinner on the Yarra River, where academy members and a host of Clontarf partners came together. This dinner was an invaluable opportunity for the boys to begin building relationships with their hosts before work

placements commenced on Tuesday morning.

Tuesday started with an early wake-up call as the boys and their academy mentors navigated Melbourne's streets, getting to grips with the tram network and the city's layout, a first for many of the boys. Learning to move around the city independently was an essential part of the experience. The boys also honed vital life skills, such as cooking, with Cajun Chicken Pasta winning the title of the best dish - a testament to their newfound culinary prowess!

## Diverse Work Placements: From Construction to Corporate

The academy members engaged in a diverse range of work experiences, from painting the MCG with Programmed to building roads with Fulton Hogan, and working in the corporate offices of Reece. Each placement provided the boys with invaluable hands on experience and a real understanding of potential career paths.

The week culminated in presentations where the boys shared their key learnings and aspirations with the partners - an exercise in public speaking that pushed them beyond their comfort zones and equipped them with a new level of confidence.





## Exciting Highlights: AFL360 and Navy Inspiration

The week wasn't all about work. On Wednesday night, the boys were welcomed into Fox Footy to watch a live recording of AFL360, where they met AFL and media stars like Jordan Lewis, Jack Riewoldt and David King. The excitement of meeting these sports heroes added a memorable element to their Melbourne experience. On the final day, the group toured HMAS Cerberus, the Navy's training facility for new recruits - a visit that sparked curiosity among some of the academy members.

## Lifelong Skills and Personal Growth

Beyond work experience, these weeks are designed to cultivate personal growth. Each day in Melbourne required the boys to navigate unfamiliar environments, meet new people and face challenges they had never encountered before. These experiences - whether it was managing their time to catch public transport, cooking meals or presenting to senior professionals - helped them build confidence and independence.

One academy member reflected on how the week changed his outlook: "I never thought I'd be able to find my way around a big city like Melbourne or speak in front of a crowd, but now I know I can."

This sense of achievement is a crucial part of what the Clontarf program aims to instil in its young men, equipping them with skills that extend beyond their working lives.

## Gratitude to Our Partners

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of Clontarf's partners. A special thanks goes out to Brian and Virginia McNamee Foundation, ComfortDelGro, Clublinks, Coates, CPB Contractors, Fox Sports, Fulton Hogan, Programmed, Reece Group, the Royal Australian Navy, Thales Australia and TGI Sport - whose commitment to the program made this experience truly unforgettable.

Their contributions not only provided work opportunities but helped these young men gain insights and memories that will stay with them for a lifetime.

## Expanding the Program Nationwide

The success of Melbourne Work Experience Week has shown the immense value that these immersive experiences provide to Clontarf academy members. The program not only offers real world employment opportunities but fosters critical life skills and builds the confidence needed for long term success. The question now is how to replicate this in other cities and major towns across the country.

Clontarf's General Manager for Employment, Marcus Harrold, believes the program's model is scalable and adaptable to a wide variety of settings:

"We've seen firsthand how impactful these weeks are for the boys. There's no reason why we can't implement similar initiatives in other states, tailoring them to local industries and job markets.

"Whether it's Perth, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Darwin or regional centres, the same principles apply - placing our boys in real work environments, building their skills and expanding their horizons."



***"The value of these Expo weeks can't be overstated. They allow the boys to see the diversity of job opportunities available, while developing critical life skills like communication, teamwork and independence. Most importantly, it helps them envision a future they might not have considered before."***

*- Marcus Harrold, Clontarf Foundation General Manager for Employment*







Over 30 Clontarf academy members from across Perth and Kalgoorlie immersed themselves in the day-to-day operations of Clontarf partner, Mineral Resources.

## Marcellus Hones His Skills



**Marcellus Ah Kit (above, centre), a proud graduate of Tennant Creek Academy in the Northern Territory, has forged a remarkable path since completing his studies in 2010.**

His journey, marked by hard work, dedication and the support of the Clontarf network, has seen him rise to prominence in the culinary world.

After graduation, Marcellus explored opportunities in WA before embarking on a Chef Apprenticeship with Voyages at Uluru in the NT, a move facilitated through his connection with Clontarf. It was here that he honed his skills at the prestigious Arnguli restaurant in Yulara, one of the most acclaimed dining establishments in the NT. His talent and commitment contributed to the restaurant's success, culminating in Arnguli winning the Golden Plate at the NT Hospitality Awards in 2019. That same year, Marcellus was honoured as Apprentice of the Year by Charles Darwin University, a recognition he would again receive two years later at the NT Hospitality Awards in 2021.

Eager for a new challenge, Marcellus set his sights on Wollongong, NSW. The Clontarf team facilitated introductions that led to Marcellus securing a position as a chef with Collegians in Wollongong.

Marcellus's journey is a shining example of how the Clontarf network continues to support its graduates long after they leave the academy, helping them achieve their dreams and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

## Boys Immerse Themselves in MinRes

**Clontarf academy members from across Western Australia recently took part in an immersive, hands-on experience at the Mineral Resources (MinRes) headquarters, gaining valuable insights into the mining industry.**

Over 30 students from Belmont, Yule Brook, Kiara, Fremantle, Cecil Andrews, Kent Street and Kalgoorlie-Boulder Academies participated in the event. The Year 10, 11 and 12 students were introduced to a range of employment opportunities at MinRes before diving into an interactive session at the company's SimCity training center in Osborne Park. Here, they took control of state-of-the-art mining equipment simulators, providing a realistic glimpse into the day-to-day operations of a mine site.

MinRes General Manager of Health and Wellbeing, Jon Haines conducted a professional coaching session for the boys. The session emphasised goal setting and the importance of constructive feedback, key skills for success in any career.

Chris Harris, MinRes Head of Mental Health, addressed the students on the importance of mental wellbeing, highlighting how nutrition, exercise and sleep contribute to maintaining a healthy mind. The day continued with engaging physical activities, including boxing and functional fitness

sessions at the MinRes gym, followed by lunch at the company's in-house restaurant.

This immersion day was part of a broader partnership between MinRes and the Clontarf Foundation, announced in 2023. The partnership supports the expansion of Clontarf's national program and seeks to create meaningful employment pathways for Clontarf graduates within MinRes.

Clontarf Foundation CEO Gerard Neesham, expressed his enthusiasm for the collaboration, stating, "Our partnership with MinRes offers incredible opportunities for our young men to gain real-world skills and insights. These experiences are crucial in helping them build confidence and aspire to successful futures."

Chris Ellison, Managing Director of MinRes, shared similar sentiments, noting, "The team at MinRes relished the opportunity to witness firsthand how Clontarf is empowering young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men to reach their full potential. As a proud partner, I'm excited about the possibilities we can achieve together."







## Clontarf 101 - Engagement Camps

**Camps have been an integral part of the Clontarf method ever since the original Perth group were offered a footy trip to Mullewa and Geraldton if they could put their best foot forward for a term at school.**

Incentivising academic engagement and achievement is only part of the story, though.

Clontarf aims to cultivate positive habits in academy members that will serve them both on their journey through schooling and into their lives as workers, fathers and leaders. This kind of work requires a strong connection and ultimate trust. Camps are one of the ways in which academy staff and the young men they work with build those bonds.

Every member of a Clontarf academy gets access to a camp every term. For juniors, this might be an overnighter in a town not far from home, strongly focused on fun, connection and celebration. Towards middle school years, elements such as worksite visits and community volunteering will be added. Senior camps will include partner visits where public speaking and corporate networking begin to bridge the divide between school and pathways into employment or further studies and training.

Camps can sometimes revolve around

regional events that congregate multiple academies, reinforcing a sense of connection between participants from multiple academies and encouraging them to grow their social network.

Most often, groups will stay at an academy local to the town they are visiting, or roll out a swag if they are not staying out bush. Academy staff look to build new experiences into the itinerary that might open windows on fresh horizons or just bring joy and great memories to their group.

These experiences form the bedrock of the relationship between academy staff and academy members, opening a space of honesty and candidness that mentor and mentee can converse in safely.

No camp goes ahead without the express approval of the executive of our partner schools and the final say-so of parents and guardians.

We will see you on the road somewhere this term – make sure you come over and say hello!



## Staff - Christian Philpot



**Christian Philpot (above, centre) has been with the Clontarf Foundation since May 2017, starting as an Operations Officer at Bentley Park Academy in Cairns, QLD.**

He later served as Director at Dalby Academy before moving to Weipa in 2021 to help open the Western Cape Academy. Now, as he prepares to return to Cairns as a Regional Support Officer, Christian reflects on his journey.

"The role of Academy Director at Western Cape has been incredibly rewarding," Christian says. "I'm responsible for ensuring our Year 5-12 boys achieve their best, with support from a fantastic team and community."

A key part of his job is coordinating quarterly presentations to the WCCCA board, keeping Traditional Owner groups informed.

Christian's motivation comes from watching boys grow into men, though he acknowledges the unpredictable nature of the role. "Every day is different, but with the support of the academy team, we handle challenges together."

Before joining Clontarf, Christian held various roles, including working for Cairns Regional Council, personal training and managing a hotel. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his partner Chantel, their blue staffy Willow, and pursuing outdoor activities like fishing and camping.





Chifley Senior Academy members experience a Careers with STEM day at the Sydney headquarters of Clontarf partner, Google.

## STEM-Powered Day of Exploration

**Early in Term 3, Chifley Senior Academy (Mount Druitt, NSW) had the extraordinary opportunity to visit Google's Sydney headquarters for a "Careers with STEM" day.**

This event was especially significant for students passionate about pursuing careers in STEM fields, including artificial intelligence, robotics and science.

The day began with an inspiring panel discussion featuring six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander speakers, each sharing their unique journeys from school to their current roles at prestigious organisations like NASA, Google and CSIRO. Their stories of perseverance, innovation and success resonated deeply with the students, showcasing the diverse opportunities available within STEM.

Following the panel, the boys enjoyed a delightful buffet lunch, offering them the chance to network and discuss what they had learned with peers and panellists in

yearning circles. A highlight of this time was meeting Bayleigh Dee, a Chifley Senior alumnus from the class of 2017, who shared his journey from school to working in banking while completing his Bachelor's Degree in Technology (Gaming).

The day concluded with an exciting tour of the Google workspace, where the boys experienced firsthand the unique perks of working at Google, including their very own all-you-can-eat candy shop. This immersive tour allowed the academy members to see the innovative environment that promotes creativity and excellence.

It was a day that opened doors, sparked imaginations and reinforced the limitless possibilities available to those who pursue their passions in science and technology.

## Seniors Navigate Road Safety in Perth

**Late in August, senior members from several Perth-based Clontarf academies gathered for a day focused on road safety and responsible driving.**

The event was a joint effort between the Clontarf Foundation and the Road Safety Commission, aimed at equipping young drivers with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the roads safely.

Academy members tested their driving abilities on a network of high-spec driving simulators, racing each other in a fun yet educational environment. The simulators provided a safe space for the boys to experience various driving scenarios and understand the potential hazards they might face on the road.

Following the simulators, the participants moved on to supervised driver training on a specialised outdoor track. Under the

guidance of professional instructors, the boys honed their driving skills, learning how to handle their vehicles in different conditions and situations.

A key highlight of the day was an impactful road safety talk, which addressed the risks and consequences of unsafe driving.



## Thank you for your support

**Clontarf would like to acknowledge the following organisations for their recent commitment to support the Foundation:**

- AIG Australia
- Arc Infrastructure
- AURIGA
- BAE Systems
- Bank of Queensland
- Bant Street Foundation
- BESIX Watpac
- BGIS
- Brian and Virginia McNamee Foundation
- Cleary Bros
- Clough Foundation
- Dalara Foundation
- Emmerson Resources
- Evans Family Foundation
- Freight Lines Group
- FuelFix
- Glencore Coal Assets Australia
- Goodman Foundation
- Mitsui & Co (Australia) Ltd
- MM Electrical & Data Suppliers
- New Town Toyota
- Northern Iron
- Patrick Terminals
- Reece Group
- Sealink Travel Group
- Serco
- Stadiacorp Facility Services
- TransGrid
- UBS
- United Forklift and Access Solutions
- Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia
- W&K Property Trust
- Wright Prospecting
- Yeperenye Shopping Centre

### Donations & Workplace Giving

There are a significant number of individuals who support the Clontarf Foundation through donations and workplace giving programs.

We are very appreciative and thank you for your ongoing support. If you would like to donate directly please [follow this link](#)

### Clontarf Foundation Central Office

McKay Street,  
Bentley WA 6102  
Ph (08) 9356 2500

[contact@clontarffoundation.com.au](mailto:contact@clontarffoundation.com.au)  
[www.clontarf.org.au](http://www.clontarf.org.au)



clontarf  
foundation