

clontarffoundation

the QUARTERLY

April 2022



clontarf
foundation



Clontarf Reaches 10,000 Boys!



**Alumni and Community
Celebrated at QLD
Parliament House**

**Canberra Criminology
For Hunter Culbong**





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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 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 programme.

Each Clontarf academy, formed in partnership with the local school, 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 better life outcomes.

Through a diverse mix of activities, the full-time, local Clontarf staff mentor and counsel students while the school caters for the educational needs of each student.



Gerard with boys from Wilsonton Academy (Toowoomba, QLD) and Murgon Academy (QLD) and Garth Hamilton MP at the an NRL match in March.

Message from the CEO

Welcome to the first Quarterly for 2022 and what a start to the year it has been! I'm very proud to announce that for the first time in our 22 year history, we've reached 10,000 boys enrolled in Clontarf - an incredible achievement for all involved.



Before our annual participant census was run in early March, we were very optimistic about reaching this historic milestone after hearing reports from our academies that the boys were very enthusiastic about returning to school to see their friends, participate in activities and get on with their education.

This has been reflected in our enrolment across the board with all jurisdictions meeting or exceeding enrolment forecasts. I want to congratulate our staff for making their academies such inviting and attractive places to be. The boys have returned in droves because they trust our men, enjoy the suite of activities they provide and understand the value of having a well-rounded education.

As foreshadowed in the previous edition of the Quarterly, we opened two new academies in Term 1, located at Kent Street Senior High School in Perth, WA and James Fallon High School in Albury, NSW. Both academies have hit the ground running, with 33 and 50 boys enrolled respectively. These numbers will grow as the academies become entrenched in the schools and local communities, and I look forward to providing you with an update on their progress in future editions of the Quarterly.

While the pandemic continues to impact the country, the easing of many restrictions has enabled our academies to return to more traditional programmes of activity. During Term 1, our academies enjoyed Year 12 leadership camps, Year 7 induction camps, cricket carnivals, super training sessions, employment visits and inter-academy games, just to name a few. It was as busy and vibrant a first quarter as I can remember and

it sets the foundation for what is sure to be a very successful year for the boys enrolled.

Additionally, the easing of restrictions has provided me and other senior Clontarf staff with the ability to travel interstate and visit our academies and stakeholders once again. I was able to visit several schools across the eastern seaboard during the term, and after a two-year hiatus, it was particularly humbling to speak with our staff, meet our boys and alumni, and provide a face-to-face update to our partners, supporters and community members. Most notably was my attendance at an event at QLD Parliament House hosted by Minister for Education the Hon. Grace Grace and several members of parliament. Attendees heard from alumni and members of the public on the impact the programme had had on them and their local communities since Clontarf commenced in the state in 2015. I look forward to being able to attend many more events like this in Queensland and abroad throughout the year.

Thank you again for keeping up to date on all things Clontarf and I'll speak with you again at the end of what will undoubtedly be a very busy Term 2.

- Gerard Neesham, CEO





Clontarf boys and alumni were joined by members of parliament, education department staff, Traditional Owners, families and Clontarf partners for a special celebration event in March.

Clontarf and Community Celebrated at Queensland Parliament House

Over 180 attendees filled the halls of Queensland Parliament House in late March to celebrate the journey of Clontarf in the state since the opening of its inaugural academy in 2015.

The dinner event was attended by Clontarf alumni and academy members, their families, Traditional Owners, government ministers and members, education department staff and senior members of several Clontarf corporate partners.

Clontarf CEO Gerard Neesham, who addressed the audience on the night, said he was humbled by the turnout and the incredible stories that were shared.

"It was an exceptionally moving experience to hear from so many people who've been positively impacted by our programme," Gerard said.

"While Clontarf has been in the state for only seven years, we've already seen over 1,000 boys complete Year 12 while enrolled in a Clontarf academy. We've also seen a significant number of these young men

successfully transition into employment or further study, and the purpose of this event was to celebrate their achievements and showcase them as the future leaders of their communities."

Clontarf opened its first academies in Queensland in 2015 after being invited by then Governor-General Dame Quentin Bryce and the local Aboriginal community of Cherbourg. Since that time, the Foundation's operations in the state have grown to 24 academies with an enrolment of 2,600 boys in the first term of 2022.

Clontarf hopes to continue to grow within Queensland with significant demand coming from schools and Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities.

The Foundation would like to thank all who

attended the event for supporting Clontarf and its academy members. In particular, the Foundation would like to thank Minister for Education the Hon. Grace Grace, Speaker the Hon. Curtis Pitt and Member for Thuringowa Aaron Harper for making the event possible.



Chifley Senior Academy Alumnus Cuts His Teeth at Tech Giant Google

Since graduating from Chifley Senior Academy (Mount Druitt, NSW) in 2016, Jay Moy has made a name for himself with tech giant and Clontarf partner, Google.

After trialling a Sports Science degree, Jay decided the path wasn't for him, so he reached out to Clontarf's Greater Sydney Employment Officer, Luke Swain to discuss other opportunities.

After seeing a list of Clontarf's partners, Jay decided to apply for a 12-week summer internship with Google. His application was successful and he was appointed to a team working on digital marketing solutions for technology and telecommunications companies. Jay explained that his team looked into what was driving consumers during the pandemic and how Google could assist companies using digital advertising.

Aside from the work that ignited Jay's passion for marketing and business, Jay couldn't speak

highly enough of the great work culture embedded in Google, which he said focused on caring for employee wellbeing by providing meals and access to sleeping pods, and flexibility around working hours. Even when he had to work from home for the majority of his internship, he noted that Google emphasised 'bringing the office to you' through various weekly chats and other initiatives to prevent him and his team from feeling isolated.

Aside from the abundance of food and coffee provided, Jay said he missed the sports aspect of his job the most when pandemic restrictions prohibited Googlers from working at the office.

The internship spurred his passion for marketing and he is currently in his final year of a Business

degree at Western Sydney University with the hopes of one day being able to secure a graduate position at the tech company.

Thank you, Google, for providing such a wonderful opportunity!



Clontarf Reaches 10,000 Boys!

The Foundation is proud to announce that it has surpassed 10,000 enrolments for the first time in its history!

Despite the spectre of COVID-19 remaining, students were excited to see their friends again and returned to their Clontarf academies in droves when schools reopened in early February.

The Foundation's official census was held on 4 March and in total, 10,481 young men including 935 Year 12s were enrolled across 138 academies. These numbers were up from December 2021's final enrolment of 9,290 boys and 731 Year 12s.

Clontarf Foundation CEO Gerard Neesham said he was thrilled to see so many boys around the country ready to embrace the new school year with Clontarf.

"Our goal was to reach 10,500 boys in 2022 so to meet that target in Term 1 is a fantastic achievement," he said.

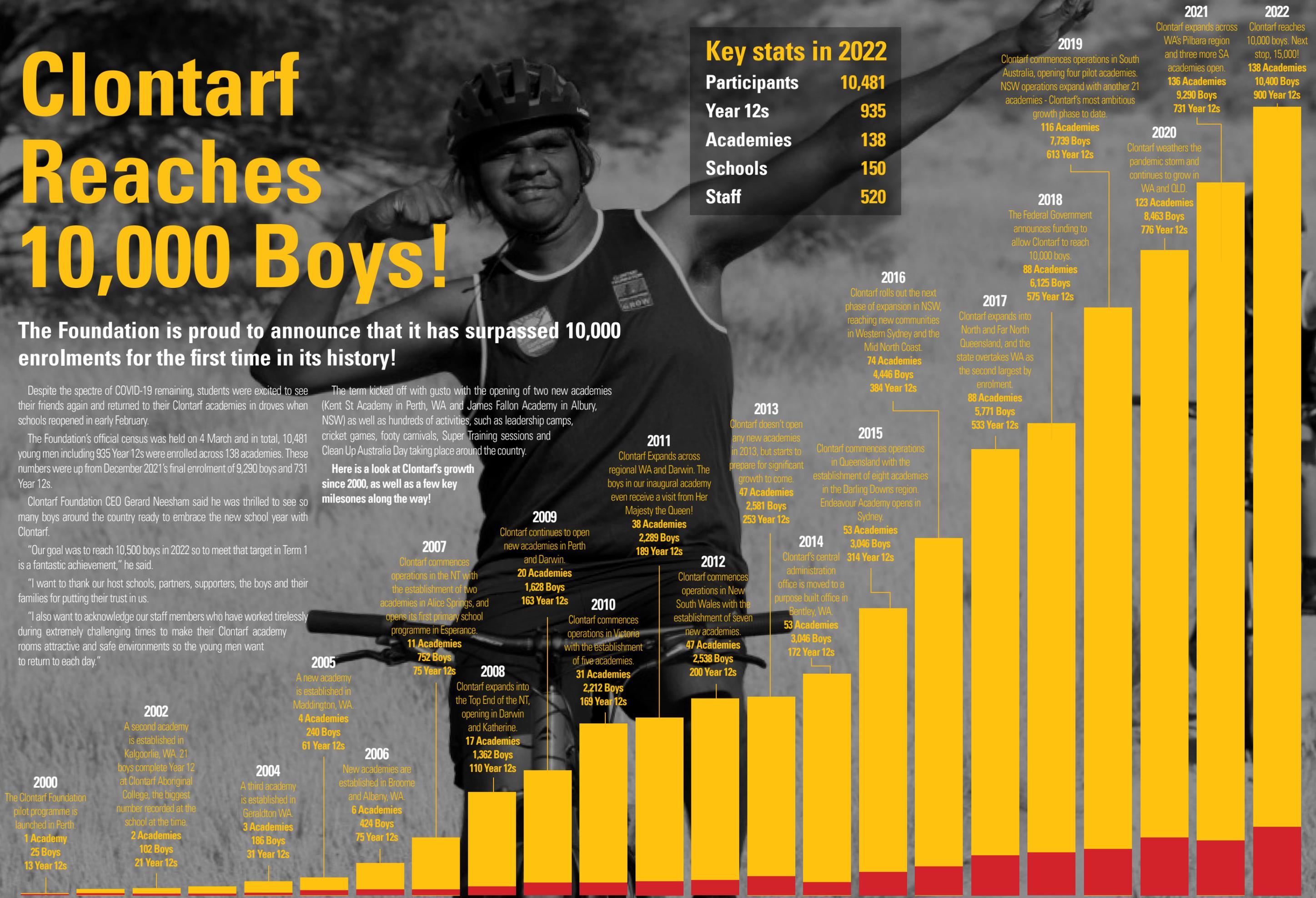
"I want to thank our host schools, partners, supporters, the boys and their families for putting their trust in us.

"I also want to acknowledge our staff members who have worked tirelessly during extremely challenging times to make their Clontarf academy rooms attractive and safe environments so the young men want to return to each day."

The term kicked off with gusto with the opening of two new academies (Kent St Academy in Perth, WA and James Fallon Academy in Albury, NSW) as well as hundreds of activities, such as leadership camps, cricket games, footy carnivals, Super Training sessions and Clean Up Australia Day taking place around the country.

Here is a look at Clontarf's growth since 2000, as well as a few key milestones along the way!

Key stats in 2022		
Participants		10,481
Year 12s		935
Academies		138
Schools		150
Staff		520





Australian
National
University

Hunter Culbong (Gilmore Academy, Kwinana, WA) is studying his Honours degree at the Australian National University (ANU) in 2022.

Criminology in Canberra a Dream Come True for Hunter Culbong

Drawn to tertiary studies by his desire to serve the community, Hunter Culbong found himself making an unexpected sea change midway through his university undergraduate studies.

The Gilmore Academy (Kwinana, WA) alumnus was tossing up the idea of becoming a police officer after graduating from school in 2017, and the appeal of studying criminology drew him to a bridging course at Murdoch University in early 2018. After completing the semester-long course, Hunter commenced his Bachelor of Criminology in Semester 2.

In early 2019, a new opportunity presented itself to Hunter in the form of an invitation by Clontarf Employment Officer Dan Delaney to participate in a visit to the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra in July. Hunter sensed a chance to elevate his studies and he agreed to join a group of fellow Clontarf alumni on the trip.

After an illuminating visit to the Tjabal Centre at ANU and a tour of the impressive campus, he decided to move to Canberra, and in February 2020, he officially transferred his studies to ANU.

"My family was both surprised and very proud of me being accepted into the ANU, but they also weren't entirely convinced that I would follow through and go ahead with it, but I did," Hunter said.

"I had to balance leaving home and the comfort of my family and friends for a move to a place where I knew no one, against the valuable opportunity to study at a prestigious university like ANU, which is renowned for its research programme and would probably lead to better future career and job opportunities."

His move to the country's capital wasn't smooth sailing, however, with the COVID-19 pandemic hitting Australia's shores the following month. Despite the interruption, Hunter remained positive and made the most of his situation.

"The last couple of years have been a great adventure. First and foremost, I've had a chance to

learn and study something I'm passionate about.

"There's also been the fun social dimension to my Canberra uni experience, like having meals in the hall, meeting and making new friends from around Australia, and exploring the city."

After spending seven months of the last two years in lockdown due to the pandemic, Hunter completed his undergraduate studies in 2021, and in 2022, he commenced his Honours degree.

In addition to studying, he's working part-time as an intern at the Federal Department of Education and is part of a team that manages higher education grants for disadvantaged groups.

Hunter said his time at Gilmore Academy and the exposure he had to his Clontarf mentors had encouraged him to move out of his comfort zone and try new things.

"You never know what you're going to get out of being involved in something, but invariably there's at least one valuable piece of information or experience to take away from it."

While Hunter has fond memories of some of the special Clontarf activities he participated in, such as the Goldfields Cup football carnival camp in Kalgoorlie or his Year 12 trip to Sydney, it was the little things that had a bigger impact on him.

"Honestly it wasn't one memory or thing in particular that I valued most. It was more the bigger picture and feeling like I was part of a larger group – a bunch of men and boys I could trust and rely on, and this is linked to hundreds of small memories formed over several years.

"Having access to a safe and fun place like the academy room also made school more enjoyable and knowing that Clontarf staff were there to help

me when needed just seemed to make it feel easier. I could see how the Clontarf programme helped other boys at school in bigger ways than this, but for me, it was the small things that were consistently reinforced and could be relied upon over an extended period throughout my high school journey.

"Since finishing school, I have always stayed in touch with Clontarf and maintained a relationship with the staff at the academy and regional and central offices. Being invested in the programme and retaining this link with Clontarf helped open the door to the ANU initially, and from there it didn't take much for me to walk through that door on my own two feet and seize the opportunity."

Always wanting to give back, Hunter had some sage advice for current boys enrolled in Clontarf around the country.

"Clontarf is there to support you, so just reach out and ask for help when you need it, there's nothing bad that can come from it. Also, don't be afraid about being aspirational. It's good to dream big and avoid setting unnecessary restrictions on what you can achieve if you want something and are willing to apply yourself."



Hunter graduated from Year 12 while enrolled at Gilmore Academy in 2017.



Clontarf boys from across the Perth metro area were joined by Minister Paul Papalia during a driver education and awareness day in March.

Perth Seniors Driving Leadership

In early March, 40 of the Clontarf Foundation's Perth metropolitan Year 12 boys were treated to a driver education and awareness day at the Driver Risk Management facility near Perth Airport.

They were joined by Minister for Police; Road Safety; Defence Industry; and Veterans Issues, the Hon. Paul Papalia CSC MLA who spoke with the boys about the importance of having a driver's licence and about making good decisions while on the road and before getting in a vehicle.

The day consisted of three rotations with the first including a presentation from road accident survivor, Koonah Ruru. Koonah spoke openly and honestly about how he became a quadriplegic as a young man due to some poor choices that ultimately led him to being in a vehicle with a drunk driver who crashed and caused his lifelong injury.

The second rotation had the boys test their driving skills against each other during a series of driving simulations. While it was a fun activity that saw the boys enter into some healthy competition, it also demonstrated how dangerous unsafe driving can be.

The final rotation saw the young men strap the seatbelts on and hit the track in vehicles under

the guidance of the Driver Risk Management instructors. The instructors put the boys through their paces as they faced several challenging scenarios.

Cecil Andrews Academy member Michael Brockman said that his favourite part of the day was experiencing high speed braking and learning how brakes work. He also acknowledged Clontarf partner, the Road Safety Commission for providing valuable funding which allowed senior Clontarf boys to access professional driving lessons and pay for their Ls/P's tests.

"Many of the Cecil Andrew Academy boys are currently taking professional lessons thanks to the Road Safety Commission," he said. "The safety day, combined with these lessons are great ways to build our confidence, knowledge and skills for when we finally get our P's."

The Foundation would like to thank Minister Papalia and the Road Safety Commission for their support.



Staff Profile: Dave Friebe

Having helped many young people find apprenticeships and traineeships across the Top End of the Northern Territory prior to joining Clontarf, Dave Friebe was the ideal candidate to set up and run the Taminmin Academy (Humpty Doo, NT) when it opened in early 2021.



"A lot of the young men I worked with to find employment pathways were part of Clontarf in their respective schools, so I could clearly see the support they were getting through the programme," Dave said.

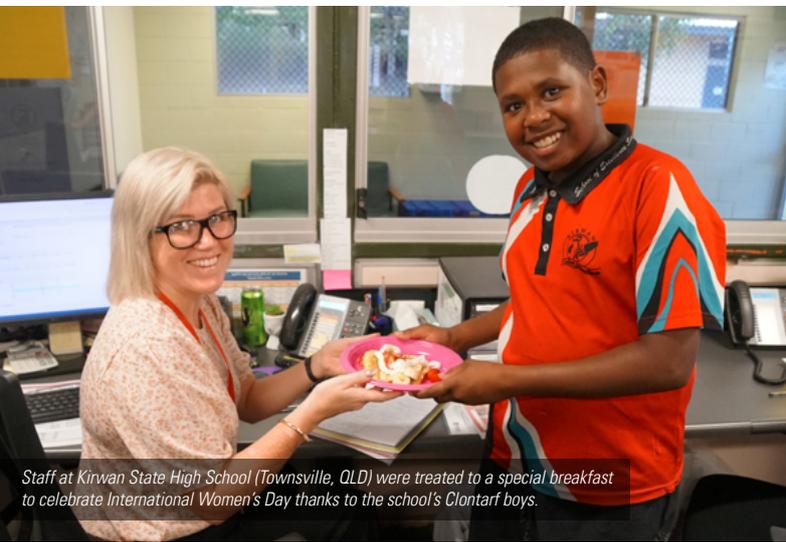
He started his Clontarf journey as an Employment Officer based in Darwin in 2015 before taking up the role of Academy Director at Katherine Academy. After demonstrating a strong passion to develop the boys under his charge, Dave was offered the role of inaugural Academy Director at Taminmin.

The academy proved so popular when it opened its doors that it didn't have enough room to cater for all the new members, but this didn't deter Dave and his team from getting straight into the swing of things.

"We found the best way to engage the boys was to be around them during the breaks out in the schoolyard," he said. "The added benefit of being so visible was that we were able to speak with teachers and other students about Clontarf, and in doing so, built the foundation for strong relationships with the school staff and students."

"We are lucky to work with some terrific young men, and while we support the boys through some lows, getting to celebrate all the highs with them is a real privilege. Seeing them grow and develop is a daily highlight."

Outside of Clontarf, Dave spends his time with his fiancé Sarah and son Harry. He also thoroughly enjoys fly fishing, camping, cooking over coals and getting in the garden - all perfect skills at Clontarf!



Staff at Kirwan State High School (Townsville, QLD) were treated to a special breakfast to celebrate International Women's Day thanks to the school's Clontarf boys.



Kirwan Celebrates International Women's Day

Kirwan Academy (Townsville, QLD) hosted a special breakfast for school staff to celebrate International Women's Day in early March.

The activity was designed to recognise and celebrate the many women who do incredible work within the school and the broader Townsville community.

The boys got organised by holding an afternoon bakeoff the day prior to the event. They spent several hours preparing enough mixture for 60 pancakes, all made from a secret recipe.

The young men arrived at school early the next day to set up tables with pink tablecloths and balloons, fry the pancakes and serve fresh strawberries, bananas, whipped cream and maple syrup as accompaniments.

Needless to say, the staff who attended were delighted with the spread and enjoyed sharing catching up with the boys. For teachers and

staff who were unable to make it to breakfast, academy members made special deliveries to their classrooms or offices.

Kirwan Academy Director Jermaine Packer said the activity was a great way to bring the academy boys and their teachers closer together.

"We received some really positive feedback from staff members who thanked the boys for making the effort," Jermaine said.

"It was a really positive activity for the boys to participate in, and not only did they get to learn a few new tricks in the kitchen, but they also learned the importance of giving back to those in the community who work tirelessly to support them in their education and wellbeing."

Thank you for your support

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

- Ampol
- APA Group
- Yancoal Australia
- SA Water
- Tutt Bryant
- The Phillips Foundation
- Thiess
- Hitachi Construction Machinery (Australia)
- Swinburne University of Technology
- Santos
- Clough Foundation
- NSW Community Road Safety Grants
- Lycopodium
- CITIC Pacific Mining, Sino Iron Ore Project
- AIG Australia
- NSW Minerals Council
- Sulzer Australia
- Ingot Hotel
- Freight Lines Group
- Wren Oil
- Skill Hire
- BGIS
- Pon Australia
- Bellevue Gold
- Steelstruct
- Ashirwad Foundation
- Monford Group
- Shaw and Partners Foundation
- Industry Tattoo Supply
- United Forklift and Access Solutions

Boys Kick Off Year at Victorian Clontarf Cup

After facing two years of event cancellations and postponements due to the pandemic, the Clontarf boys from Victoria were champing at the bit to hit the footy field for the annual Clontarf Cup carnival in Melbourne in April.

Boys from Bairnsdale, Mildura, Robinvale, Swan Hill and Warrnambool academies all headed to the state's capital for an AFLX-styled round robin carnival which saw teams clash across junior and senior divisions.

While the boys enjoyed the chance to test their skills against their peers over the course of several highly contested and entertaining matches, each player displayed excellent sportsmanship and all games were played in the typical 'Clontarf spirit.'

In the day leading up to the carnival, the boys enjoyed dinner with representatives from several Clontarf partners and heard from special guests Chad Wingard from Hawthorn Football Club and Bairnsdale Academy alumnus Richard Harrison. Both provided invaluable advice to the young men

and will hold them in good stead for the rest of the year.

Clontarf would like to thank all attendees, particularly Swinburne University for providing refreshments during the day and Fulton Hogan for putting on a very popular barbecue lunch.



Donations & Workplace Giving

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

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

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