Expanding the Link between Boot and Book

The Northern Territory Government will expand the successful program that uses Aussie Rules to engage Indigenous youth in education.

The Chief Minister Paul Henderson said Clontarf academies will be established at Dripstone Middle School and Tennant Creek High School in the next couple of months under the Smart Territory initiative.

“Clontarf is an amazing learning institution that has tapped into the kids’ natural prowess at Aussie Rules, giving them an education and a future,” Mr Henderson said.

“One of this Government’s priorities is ensuring our kids have access to, and remain engaged in, education.

“The existing Clontarf academies cover seven Territory schools, and have delivered impressive outcomes with improvements in school attendance, retention and student behaviour. Last year the program delivered an impressive overall attendance rate of more than 80%. Last year at Centralian Senior Secondary College, the number of students in Year 9 who went on to Year 10 was 100%.

“Before moving to the Clontarf academies, many of the kids were either not attending school regularly or had abandoned the education system altogether.

“Education is the key to success, and Clontarf is really helping to Close the Gap for Indigenous boys.

“I’m especially proud to see the progress of the Clontarf expansion as part of this Government’s Smart Territory strategy – an initiative outlined only last month.”

Mr Henderson said two new Clontarf academies will operate from Dripstone Middle School and Tennant Creek High School from Term 4 this year.

The Tennant Creek Clontarf will become part of a new sports science centre, being built as part of the Federal Government’s Building the Education Revolution initiative.

Clontarf teams from Alice Springs, Top End, Katherine, Halls Creek, Kununurra and Broome are competing at their annual football carnival in Katherine today. More than 250 students are hoping to be a part of the grand final this afternoon, with Alice Springs hoping to defend the title.

The first Territory Clontarf academy was established in 2007 in Alice Springs. The boys are counselled, trained and mentored in discipline, behaviour, health, life skills and self-esteem. They are also provided with high quality coaching and specialist physical conditioning.

In return, they must attend school regularly, apply themselves to their study and embrace the academy’s requirements for behaviour and self-discipline.

Media contact: Geoff Fraser 0407 360256