

# Clontarf Foundation Expansion Measure

Final Report

Prepared for the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

8 February 2017

## Contents

<i>Section</i>	<i>Page</i>
Executive Summary	2
Introduction and Methodology	6
Aggregate Findings	12
Case Study: Cecil Andrews Academy, WA	35
Case Study: Girrawheen Academy, WA	46
Case Study: Swan View Academy, WA	57
Case Study: Endeavour Clontarf Academy, NSW	67
Case Study: Mount Austin Academy, NSW	75
Case Study: Dubbo College (Delroy Campus, South Campus and Senior Campus), NSW	83
Case Study: Dalby Academy, Qld	101
Case Study: Harristown Academy, Qld	109
Case Study: Toowoomba Academy, Qld	117
Case Study: Barambah Academy, Qld	124
Case Study: Warwick Academy, Qld	132
Case Study: Kingaroy Academy, Qld	135

# Executive Summary

## Background

Established in 2000, the Clontarf Foundation is an Australia-wide not-for-profit organisation that exists to improve the education, discipline, self-esteem, life skills and employment prospects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and equip them to participate more meaningfully in society.

In July 2013, the Clontarf Foundation received \$4.5 million from the Australian Government to accommodate an expansion of their existing school-based academies and establish new academies in other locations throughout Australia to deliver services to an additional 3,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys. The Australian Government then invested an additional \$13.2 million to further support the Clontarf Foundation expansion for the additional 3,000 student places in the 2014-15 Budget.

The combined figure of \$17.7 million represents the Australian Government contribution to the Foundation to support the additional 3,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys participating in the programme over the period 2014-2018. Through the expansion measure the Clontarf Foundation established fifteen new Academies in Perth, New South Wales, and in Queensland with a total enrolment target of 1010 students.

## Evaluation purpose

The purpose of the research is to evaluate the implementation of the expansion measure and the extent to which the expansion is contributing to the achievement of its objective to encourage positive outcomes for an additional 3,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys. Specifically, the key questions identified include:

1. *How well has the Clontarf Foundation implemented the expansion measure?*
  - a. *How does it vary by school or jurisdiction?*
2. *Have there been improvements in student outcomes or early signs of success since the start of the expansion measure?*
3. *Have there been any unintended consequences as a result of the expansion measure?*

## Findings

### **How well has the Clontarf Foundation implemented the expansion measure?**

The Clontarf Foundation employed its standard approach to the identification of potential Academy locations and the process of implementation. The implementation process involves numerous meetings with school staff, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and elders, local business and other stakeholders and, in some case studies in this review, commenced up to two years before the formal establishment of the Academy. Feedback provided by representatives from the Clontarf Foundation, as well as principals, staff, students and parents/carers, suggests that this implementation process was generally well received.

Key variations to the above processes include:

- a requirement for host schools in NSW to contribute 1/6 of the cost of the Academy (approximately \$1,250 per student annually) from the school's budget. No other jurisdictions require schools to contribute funding from their resource allocations.
- including students from years 4 to 6 at Cherbourg State School at the Barambah Academy. Clontarf is traditionally targeted at high school students. The principal driver for this difference in operating models is an understanding of the likely benefits of improving the educational preparedness of primary students prior to entering high school.
- That, apart from the early stages of the Academy's inception, the staff at Mount Austin High School had no prior experience in establishing an Academy or of working within a school system. While they were supported by a Regional Manager, Academy staff expressed a belief that having an experienced staff member would have aided the establishment of the Academy.

### **Have there been improvements in student outcomes or early signs of success since the start of the expansion measure?**

#### Enrolment and attendance

As at the end of 2015, 816 boys were enrolled in Expansion Academies, accounting for 81% of the overall target enrolment figure at maturity of each Academy. It is expected that each Academy will be operating at maturity within six years of establishment.

Approximately 65% of Academy students are attending school 80% of the time or greater. A further 21% are attending between 61% and 79% of the time and 14% attending 60% of the time or less. These attendance levels have remained relatively stable over 2015 despite increases in total enrolment numbers as new Academies commenced operations, meaning that more Academy students are attending school for longer periods.

#### Discipline

While suspension data, used as a proxy for discipline, shows an increase in suspension events between Terms 2 and 4 of 2015, accompanied by a significant increase in the number of days suspended, we are unable to determine to what extent this is a reflection of recidivism among a core student cohort. Consistent feedback provided by school and Academy staff indicates that overall, behavioural issues have subsided with Clontarf students.

Advice from the Clontarf Foundation suggests that in the early stages of an Academy's establishment it is not unusual to have a period of flux as boys across a broad range of behavioural and academic 'school readiness' are attracted to the Academy. This variability can contribute to spikes in behavioural and disciplinary issues at the school and result in increases in suspensions and exclusions. However, as the Academy 'beds down' and its values and expectations are normalised among the boys then behavioural issues subside.

#### Social outcomes

As a result of participating in the Clontarf Academy the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who responded to the survey reported:

- feeling proud of themselves
- feeling good about school

- feeling part of the Academy
- feeling more confident when talking with teachers and other adults
- improvements in self-discipline, through attending school more often and trying harder at school.

This self-reflection is supported by feedback from school leadership, staff, Academy staff and parents.

Clontarf students also reported improvements in broader life skills, including:

- improved healthy living, through playing sport and eating better food, and
- improved communication skills.

#### Employment prospects

The majority of boys who responded to the survey indicated that they felt positively about future employment prospects and many were thinking about different training and job opportunities. Many Expansion Academies have witnessed an increased retention into Year 12 and/or Academy students graduating from Year 12 for the first time.

#### **Have there been any unintended consequences as a result of the expansion measure?**

The most consistent consequence of the establishment of Expansion Academies was the growth in interest and expectations about similar programmes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls. In almost all case studies, feedback provided by interviewees expressed a desire for a similar type of programme to engage and retain girls at school.

#### *Factors that support the successful implementation of a Clontarf Academy*

##### Conducting an effective scoping and relationship building exercise prior to the establishment of an Academy

The Clontarf Foundation's prescribed approach to identifying and implementing new Academies has been refined and improved since the establishment of the Foundation. Most case studies show that this standardised approach has been pivotal for the successful implementation of the Expansion Academies.

It should be noted, however, that while the initial relationship building and establishment activities may build an awareness of the Academy among school staff as more than just a sports programme, an issue arises where host schools have a high turnover of school staff. In some case studies, newer school staff who were not present for the initial engagement process were introduced to the Academy programme in the context of its activities, such as excursions, rather than in relation to its overall design and purpose. It is possible that this initial lack of understanding may contribute to some teacher concerns about the purpose of the Academy and the balance between Academy activities and time in class.

These circumstances highlight the need for continued reinforcement of the principles and operating features of the Clontarf Model for school staff, students and the broader community.

**Recommendation 1: That the Clontarf Foundation develop communication strategies to reinforce the principles, operating protocols and benefits of Clontarf Academies that can be used with stakeholders throughout the life of an Academy.**

### Selecting the right Academy staff

A strong theme to emerge from the meta-analysis is the critical role played by Academy staff during the implementation phase. Almost all case studies articulate the importance of Academy staff being empathetic, non-judgemental advocates for Academy students.

Several case studies also highlight the importance of recruiting two new Academies staff who have prior experience of working and operating an Academy. By contrast, while supported by a Development Team and a Regional Manager with experience in running Academies, the Academy staff at Mount Austin had no prior experience working in an Academy themselves and reflected that the establishment process would have been smoother with the guidance of someone with prior experience. While the original Director of this Academy was an experienced teacher, they left the role early in the implementation of the Academy.

Other staff qualities that supported effective implementation included having a pre-existing connection to, or knowledge of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, which aided with networking and in establishing credibility.

A secondary issue that has arisen in NSW case studies has to do with Academy staff selection. In particular, some principals expressed a desire to have stronger input into the recruitment of Academy staff, particularly if the school is making a financial contribution to the Academy. While the Clontarf Foundation remains the primary employers of Academy staff, they agree that there is scope to provide early notice to key stakeholders of Academy staff skills and experiences, and changes to staffing.

Recommendation 2: That the Clontarf Foundation ensure that at least one staff member employed at an Academy during its implementation phase has relevant and current skills and experience in establishing an Academy.

Recommendation 3: That the Clontarf Foundation ensure key stakeholders are provided with advance notice of Academy staff, including skills and experience, and any changes to staffing.

### Strong school leadership that integrates the Academy into the host school

In almost all Expansion Academy case studies, it was reported that the leadership and advocacy of the school principal has been a key factor in getting the buy in from school staff and the broader community. In addition to promoting the establishment of the Academy during the scoping study phases, this support is continued during the implementation phase of the Academy.

In the one case study where there is a stronger distinction between school staff and Academy staff (Dalby Academy) this was done on the school's recommendation so that Academy staff would not be viewed as part of the 'system' by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and might therefore be more effective in their role. However, this approach risks missing out on some of the benefits fostered through cooperation described above.

Similarly, integrating Academy rooms into the school, such as at Girrawheen where the Academy rooms were located in the middle of the school, also provides a symbolic gesture of the value and importance of the Academy to the school. Invitations to other students and staff to enter the Academy rooms and join in activities can also contribute to breaking down barriers between Academy and school students and alleviate any residual resentment of the Academy programme among other school students.

Recommendation 4: That the Clontarf Foundation continue to emphasise the benefits of integrating Academy rooms and Academy staff within the operations of the host school during scoping processes.

# Introduction and Methodology

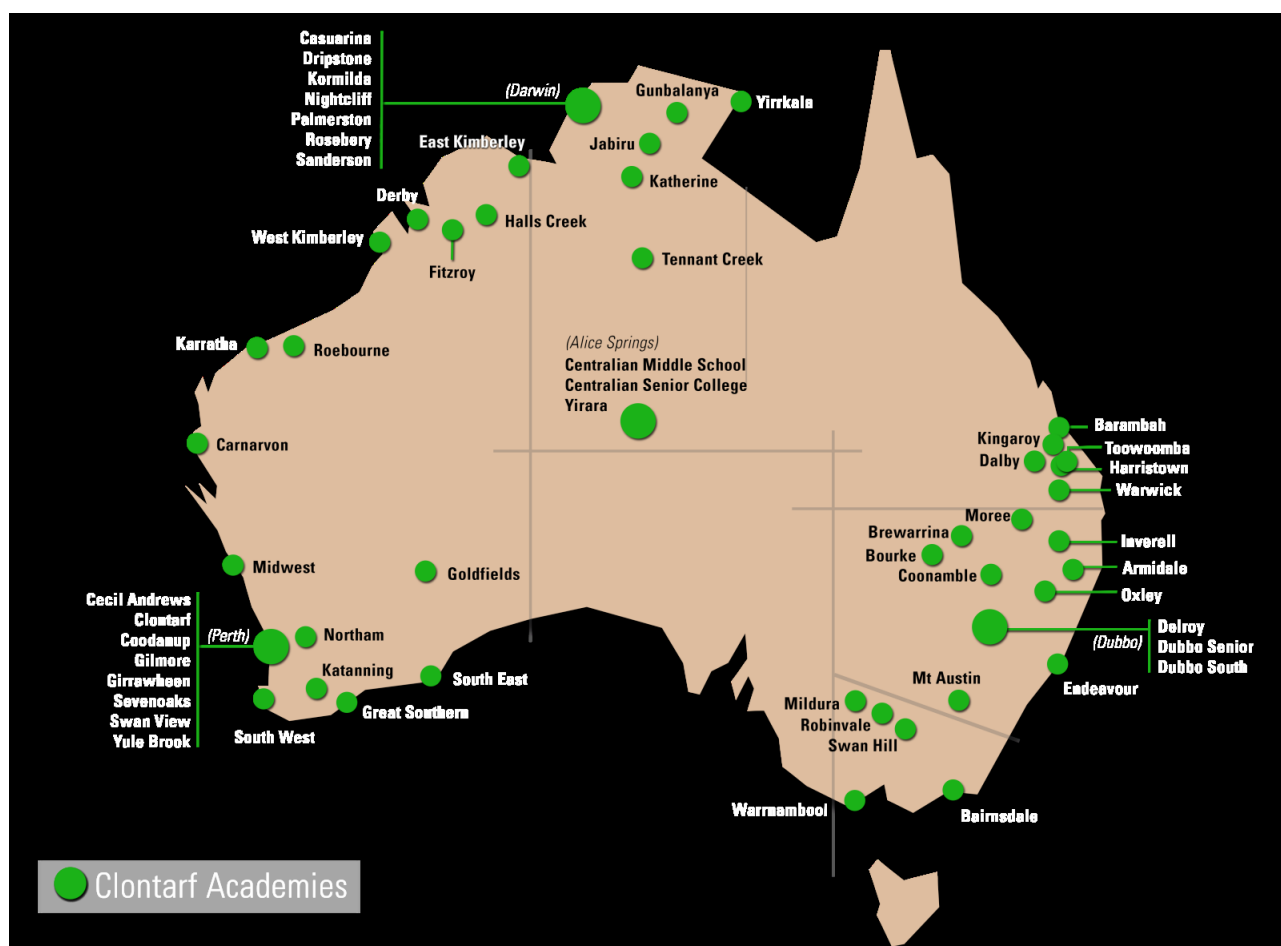
## Background

Synergistiq was contracted by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) to undertake the evaluation of the Clontarf Foundation – Expansion Measure.

Established in 2000, the Clontarf Foundation is an Australia-wide not-for-profit organisation that exists to improve the education, discipline, self-esteem, life skills and employment prospects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and equip them to participate more meaningfully in society.

In July 2015, the Clontarf Foundation reported that it was providing programmes for 3,726 boys in 61 Academies, hosted by 70 schools in 43 towns or cities across Western Australia (WA), Northern Territory (NT), Victoria, and New South Wales (NSW).

Figure 1: Location of Clontarf Academies at July 2015



The programmes are delivered through a network of Clontarf Academies, each of which operates in partnership with, but independent of, a school or college. In order to remain in the programme the boys must continue to fully participate at school and embrace the objectives of the Foundation. As well as delivering an education and sports programme and activities, the Clontarf Academy staff act as mentors and trainers who address many of the negative factors impacting on the lives of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men across their communities.

### *The Clontarf 'model'*

Since its establishment, the Clontarf Foundation has been honing its model of operation with a view to having a relatively consistent approach across all Academies. The generic model includes some of the following elements:

- A funding mix that is sourced in approximately equal thirds from Federal Government, State Government and from the private sector
- Developing individual MOUs with a host school that provides a class room or space for the Clontarf Academy
- Close and regular communication with students and family members
- Active participation in the school community
- Regular communication of programme activities and outcomes to the school principal and teaching staff
- Staff ratio of one staff member to 25 boys
- The Clontarf Director and Operations staff members for new Academies are drawn from existing Clontarf staff and local community members
- Staff recruitment is completed via 'word of mouth' and invitation
- Staff deliver multiple roles including facilitating programmes, mentoring and advocating for boys with their families, schools, communities and possibly employers
- Intensive programme support before and after school and on the weekend. For example Clontarf staff work with the boys for 50 hours per week, 40 weeks of the year from Years 7 to 12
- Clontarf students can access Clontarf and Academy staff for support after they leave school
- Sport, education, community and health programmes and activities are focused on the following pillars: education, leadership, employment, wellbeing and sport.

While all Clontarf Academies are designed and delivered using this generic model, each Academy Director has some flexibility to implement different activities depending on their site location; community; interest and identified need.

### *Expansion*

In July 2013, the Clontarf Foundation received \$4.5 million from the Australian Government to accommodate an expansion of their existing school-based sports academies and establish new academies in other locations throughout Australia to deliver services to an additional 3,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys. The Australian Government then invested an additional \$13.2 million to further support the Clontarf Foundation expansion for the additional 3,000 student places in the 2014-15 Budget.

The combined figure of \$17.7 million represents the Australian Government contribution to the Foundation to support the additional 3,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys participating in the programme over the period 2014-2018.



Through the expansion measure the Clontarf Foundation established a total of fifteen new Academies in Perth, New South Wales, and in Queensland with a combined enrolment target of 1010 students. Table 2 details the schools that are hosting the new academies.

**Table 2: Clontarf Expansion Measure – New Academies**

Host School	Location	Student Numbers (at Academy maturity)	Planned establishment period
Girrawheen Senior High School	Girrawheen, WA	50	January – June 2014
Cecil Andrews Senior High School	Armadale, WA	50	January – June 2014
Swan View Senior High School	Swan View, WA	50	January – June 2014
Mount Austin High School	Mount Austin, NSW	100	July – December 2014
Dubbo College (South Campus)	Dubbo, NSW	95	July – December 2014
Dubbo College (Delroy Campus)	Dubbo, NSW	85	July – December 2014
Dubbo College (Senior Campus)	Dubbo, NSW	70	January – June 2015
Endeavour Sports High School	Caringbah, NSW	50	January – June 2015
Barambah (includes Cherbourg State School and Murgon State High School)	Cherbourg and Murgon, QLD	90	July - December 2015
Toowoomba State High School (includes Mount Lofty and Wilsonton)	Toowoomba, QLD	100	July - December 2015
Harristown State High School	Harristown, QLD	100	July - December 2015
Dalby State High School	Dalby, QLD	70	July - December 2015
Warwick State High School	Warwick, QLD	60	July – December 2015
Kingaroy State High School	Kingaroy, QLD	40	July – December 2015

### *Purpose of the Evaluation*

The purpose of the research is to evaluate the implementation of the expansion measure and the extent to which the expansion is contributing to achievement of its objective to encourage positive outcomes for an additional 3,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys.

A key aspect of the research is to use both qualitative and quantitative approaches, including case studies and other analysis to inform on the success and progress of the implementation of the expansion and its initial impact on the students and other stakeholders involved.

This evaluation aims to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Clontarf expansion, and its impact on student outcomes. Specifically, the key questions identified include:

1. *How well has the Clontarf Foundation implemented the expansion measure?*
  - a. *How does it vary by school or jurisdiction?*
2. *Have there been improvements in student outcomes or early signs of success since the start of the expansion measure?*
3. *Have there been any unintended consequences as a result of the expansion measure?*

## Methodology

### *Evaluation framework*

To initiate the evaluation process, an Evaluation Framework was first developed in conjunction with representatives from the Clontarf Foundation. The Evaluation Framework includes the Programme Logic maps, evaluation questions, Interactive Framework, data sources, data collection methods and data analysis plan. This documentation was provided to State education departments in WA, NSW and QLD in order to gain approval to conduct research at the host schools.

### *Site visits*

As part of the methodology, site visits were conducted at the following expansion Academies:

- Cecil Andrews Academy (Cecil Andrews Senior High School, Western Australia)
- Girrawheen Academy (Girrawheen Senior High School, Western Australia)
- Swan View Academy (Swan View Senior High School, Western Australia)
- Endeavour Academy (Endeavour Sports High School, New South Wales)
- Mount Austin Academy (Mount Austin High School, New South Wales)
- Delroy Academy (Dubbo College – Delroy Campus, New South Wales)
- Dubbo Senior Academy (Dubbo College – Senior Campus, New South Wales)
- Dubbo South Academy (Dubbo College – South Campus, New South Wales)
- Dalby Academy (Dalby State High School, Queensland)
- Harristown Academy (Harristown State High School, Queensland)
- Toowoomba Academy (Toowoomba State High School – Mount Lofty and Wilsonton Campuses, Queensland)
- Barambah Academy (co-hosted by Murgon State High School and Cherbourg State School, Queensland)

Site visits were undertaken between October 2015 and April 2016. Interviews were conducted with available school staff, Academy staff, students, parents, community members, representatives from other agencies and government representatives. In addition, students at site visit locations were also invited to participate in a survey. This report presents quantitative and qualitative data on the implementation of the Academies at these site visit locations.

Site visits were not conducted at two Academies and, as such, only quantitative data was collected for the following Academies:

- Warwick Academy (Warwick State High School, Queensland)
- Kingaroy Academy (Kingaroy State High School, Queensland).

### *Case study report (June 2016)*

Analysis was undertaken of the qualitative and quantitative data collected at each site visit in order to develop case studies that document the implementation and early operations of the Academies visited and their influence on participating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys.

Case studies have been presented in a manner that directly responds to the key evaluation questions, namely:

- **Overview:** A brief discussion of the context within which the Academy has been established.
- **Implementation:** A discussion on the specific aspects of the implementation of the Academy that were unique to the particular Academy.
- **Outcomes:** A discussion on enrolment rates at the Academy; attendance levels; perceptions of engagement with school; early indications of academic performance; changes in discipline; changes in self-esteem; changes in life skills; and changes in employment prospects since attending the Academy. Note: Bearing in mind that the most established of these expansion Academies has been operating since 2014, and most for less than this period, most of the outcomes presented in this section are early indicators of the impact of the Academy.
- **Unexpected consequences:** A discussion of issues that arose during the implementation and early operation of the Academy that were not initially considered by some stakeholders who were interviewed.

A case study for each is presented in this report.

### *Aggregate report*

This report collates and aggregates the data collected for each expansion Academy and aggregates it in order to undertake a meta-analysis of the key issues associated with the implementation of the Academies and the overarching outcomes of the expansion measure on participating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys.

#### **A note on the data**

For this evaluation ethics approval was gained to collect quantitative data on Clontarf student outcomes from each participating jurisdiction. However, only data from WA distinguishes the attendance rates of Academy students from other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled at expansion Academy schools. Advice from NSW and Qld education authorities is that they are unable to distinguish between the school-based data of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are enrolled at a Clontarf Academy and those who are enrolled at the school, but who are not enrolled at the Academy. With this in mind, only the WA case studies (Cecil Andrews, Girrawheen and Swan Hill) provide comparative data on attendance levels of Academy students compared with non-Academy students. This comparative data should be viewed as indicative only, as any divergences in results between student cohorts cannot be solely attributed to attending or not attending the Clontarf Academy at the relevant school.

Data has also been collected from students who have participated in Clontarf Academies via survey. Over the course of site visits between 283 and 290 individual responses were provided to each survey question. It should be noted that as participation in the survey was based on an opt-in approach, there is a small risk

that this self-selection may result in a positive bias to the survey results as more engaged students may have felt more compelled to participate.

**Table 3: Survey Responses by Expansion Academy**

Academy	Survey Responses
Girrawheen	28
Cecil Andrews	12
Swan View	24
Mount Austin	34
Dubbo South	46
Delroy	16
Dubbo Senior	13
Endeavour	22
Barambah (includes Cherbourg State School and Murgon)	29
Toowoomba (includes Mount Lofty and Wilsonton Campuses of the Toowoomba State High School)	33
Harristown	21
Dalby	9

**Table 4: Survey Responses by Year at School**

Year at School	Survey Responses
Year 7	69
Year 8	51
Year 9	43
Year 10	47
Year 11	42
Year 12	29

## Aggregate Findings

Fifteen Clontarf Academies established throughout WA, NSW and QLD as part of the expansion measure are the subject of this review. The Academies established in WA, at Cecil Andrews, Girrawheen and Swan View Senior High Schools, commenced operations early in 2014. Girrawheen reported its first enrolments in Term 1, 2014 and Cecil Andrews and Swan View commenced enrolments in Term 2, 2014.

In NSW, the Academies at Delroy, Dubbo South and Mount Austin commenced in Term 3, 2014. The Academy at Dubbo College commenced from Term 1, 2015, whereas the Endeavour Academy started a term later from Term 2, 2015. Clontarf Academies in QLD launched more recently (from Term 3 of 2015).

## Academy Implementation Process

The Clontarf Foundation has a prescribed approach to the identification of potential Academy locations and the process of implementation (should the location be approved). This approach includes a multi-phased methodology based on the following principles:

- Ensuring the process will engage the whole community in opening and owning the new Academy
- Engaging the school, local government, politicians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and business in the process
- Raising adequate financial support before starting a new Academy.

The multi-phased approach incorporates:

### *Scoping*

A scoping exercise is carried out to establish whether or not Academies should be opened in a particular region. As part of the scoping review, discussions can be held with relevant school leadership to ascertain:

- The level of genuine commitment from the school to host an Academy
- It's capacity to host an Academy, including financial capacity and infrastructure (for the Academy room)
- The number of male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled and likely to enrol
- The nature of other programmes the school conducts and the potential implications of an Academy on these
- The level of local support
- The potential for private funding

Based on the evidence the scoping report details, amongst other things, the number of Academies required, their locations, costs and an implementation schedule. After final approval by the Board of the Foundation the report is used as the basis for further discussion with the various stakeholder groups.

### *Relationship Building*

Building relationships involves negotiating and reaching agreement with the education department, other government departments, school principals, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the business community and the wider community.

### *Establishing Academies*

During this stage service agreements are signed with schools, 'in-school' accommodation is confirmed, teachers are briefed and local fund raising commences. Meetings are also held with families of potential Academy members.

### *Recruitment and Training of Staff*

Academy staff are recruited locally as well as from elsewhere. The Clontarf Foundation relies on word of mouth and referrals for recruitment. Potential recruits are assessed by the General Manager of Development based on their skills, experience and qualifications. The Foundation then maintains lists of potential employees and a wide network of contacts. All new recruits undertake an extensive induction period involving a training course followed by two months practical training in operating an Academy. The Clontarf Foundation offers staff the option of transfers between its Academy locations. As a result, staff are a mixture of local recruits and staff that have transferred from other Clontarf Foundation locations.

### *Commissioning*

New Academy Directors and Academy staff are mentored by experienced operators until the Academy runs consistently with standard operating procedures. Commissioning usually takes three to six months. The region is then handed over to the Regional Manager for ongoing management.

### *Variations in implementation*

Interviews with Clontarf Foundation staff and a review of Scoping Study documentation suggests that the above processes for identifying and establishing Academies was implemented in a relatively consistent manner at Expansion Academy sites. Feedback from principals, school staff, students and parents at expansion sites indicate that the implementation process was generally well received.

A key variation to this was at NSW host school sites, where there is the requirement for host schools to contribute 1/6 of the cost of the Academy (Approximately \$1,250 per student) from the school's budget. As such, schools have to assess the benefits of the Clontarf model against the opportunity cost of channelling a large proportion of the school's funding allocation for Indigenous programmes under the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) on one select cohort. 'There is that constant tension between recognising the value of Clontarf and recognising that the RAM is supposed to support all Aboriginal children in school.'

In addition, due to the financial contribution from NSW schools, affected school principals spoke about having greater input into the selection of staff at the Academy. What appears to be driving this is not a desire to take over the recruitment of Academy staff, rather a need to know who is working in the Academy, their skills and experience and fit with the school. From one principal's perspective, 'as a school dealing with a lot of big issues, I need to know and have trust in my staff. To have term begin and three new staff walk through the gate who I had never met before was very challenging.'

This raises a broader issue around ongoing communication and reinforcement of the Clontarf model. In addition to ensuring school leadership are fully across the operations of the Academy, evidence from some case studies highlights the need to ensure school staff, particularly new staff who have joined after the initial implementation process, are made aware and understand the purpose and operating processes of Academies. This may ease tensions raised in some case studies about the balance between boys being out of school on Academy activities and in class.

A further variation to the standard Clontarf model occurred at the Barambah Academy, which includes students from Years 4 to 6 at Cherbourg State School. The key driver for this difference is an understanding of the likely benefits of improving the educational preparedness of primary students prior to

entering high school. Building informal connections with local ‘feeder’ primary schools is also a feature of the Cecil Andrews Academy.

One final variation to the implementation process occurred at Mount Austin High School in NSW. While supported by a Regional Manager and Development Team, the ongoing Academy staff had no prior experience in establishing an Academy or of working within a school system<sup>1</sup>. This situation is not consistent with the Clontarf model where the Clontarf Director and Operations staff members for new Academies are drawn from existing Clontarf staff and local community members.

‘When we started we had 3 blokes who had never been a part of Clontarf before, it would have been a big help if we had someone from another academy with that experience who could walk us through it and help that initial process. We were flying blind.’

### **Key Finding 1: Implementation**

The implementation process employed by the Clontarf Foundation for the Expansion Academies was largely consistent across all host school sites and has been generally well received by all stakeholders. Ensuring that all elements of the Clontarf model are adhered to, including the placement of experienced Clontarf staff in new Academies will strengthen this implementation approach. Providing early advice to school principals on Academy staff, their skills and experiences, and any changes to staffing will support effective operations and integration between the school and Academy.

## **Have there been improvements in student outcomes or early signs of success since the start of the expansion measure?**

### *Enrolments*

Each Expansion Academy has been allocated a unique target enrolment figure. This figure has been arrived at through the scoping studies conducted at each site to determine the feasibility of a Clontarf Academy. Target enrolment figures also take into account the established requirement to have 25 enrolments per Academy staff member and the need to have at least two staff members at each Academy due to the intensive nature of the role.

Target enrolment figures are expected to be reached at the maturity of the Academy, rather than immediately. This nuance takes into account the effort needed to embed the fledgling Academies into the school and community in the first few years, including establishing the Academy rooms and integrating the operations of the school and Academy. Time is also required to build an awareness of the Academy among the community and to promote the Academy to students in ‘feeder’ schools.

Advice from the Clontarf Foundation is that an Academy may take up to six years to reach maturity. This timeframe would allow students who are at Year 7 at the establishment of the Academy to progress through to Year 12, having spent their entire secondary schooling at the Academy and helping to establish

---

<sup>1</sup> The original Director was an experienced teacher, however left in term 2, 2015, less than a year after the Academy opened.

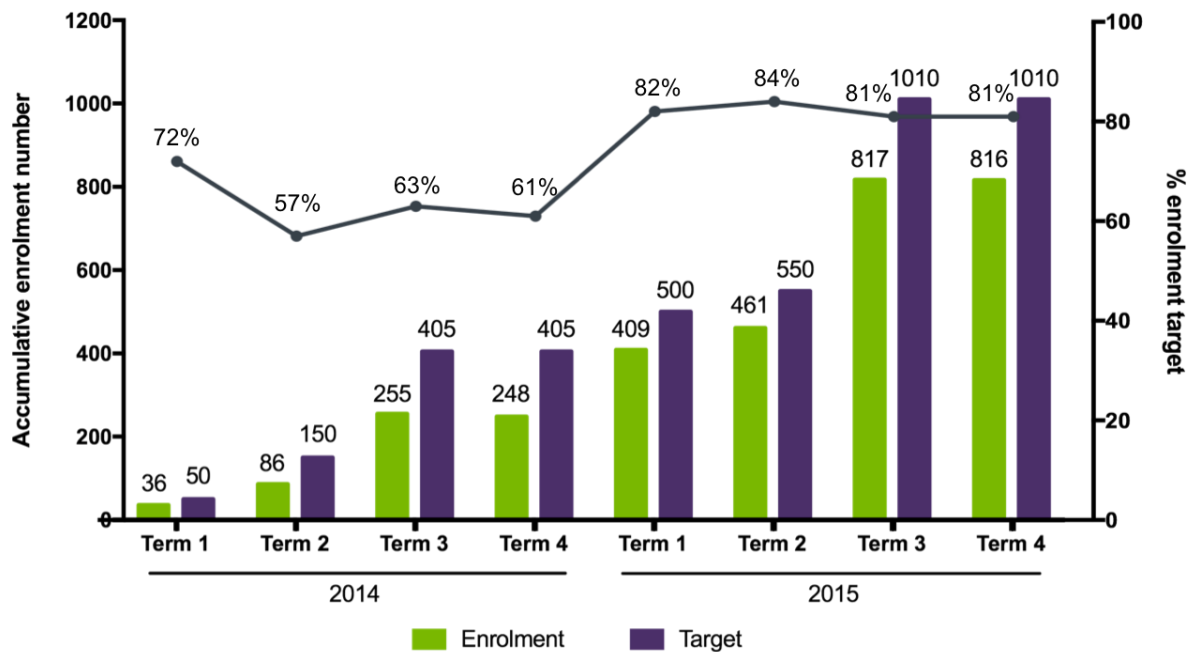
the ‘normalisation’ of Academy values and expectation to the students who flow into the Academy in subsequent years.

It is important to note that not all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled in a host school choose to enrol in the Academy. As such, enrolment rates for the school and the Academy may differ, with the Academy having a subset of school enrolments.

Expansion Academy Enrolments at the Aggregate Level

Student enrolments at each Expansion Academy were collated from individual Director’s reports. As shown in Figure 2, the green bars represent the total number of boys enrolled at Expansion Academies at the beginning of each school term, as compared to the agreed target enrolment number in the purple bar. As demonstrated by the dark grey line, Expansion Academies reached approximately 60% of the target enrolment in 2014 and had improved to 81% in 2015. The result suggests that, at the aggregate level, enrolments at Expansion Academies have progressed steadily between 2014 and 2015 and are well on their way to achieving target enrolments by maturity.

Figure 2: Clontarf Expansion Academy Enrolments (Aggregate)

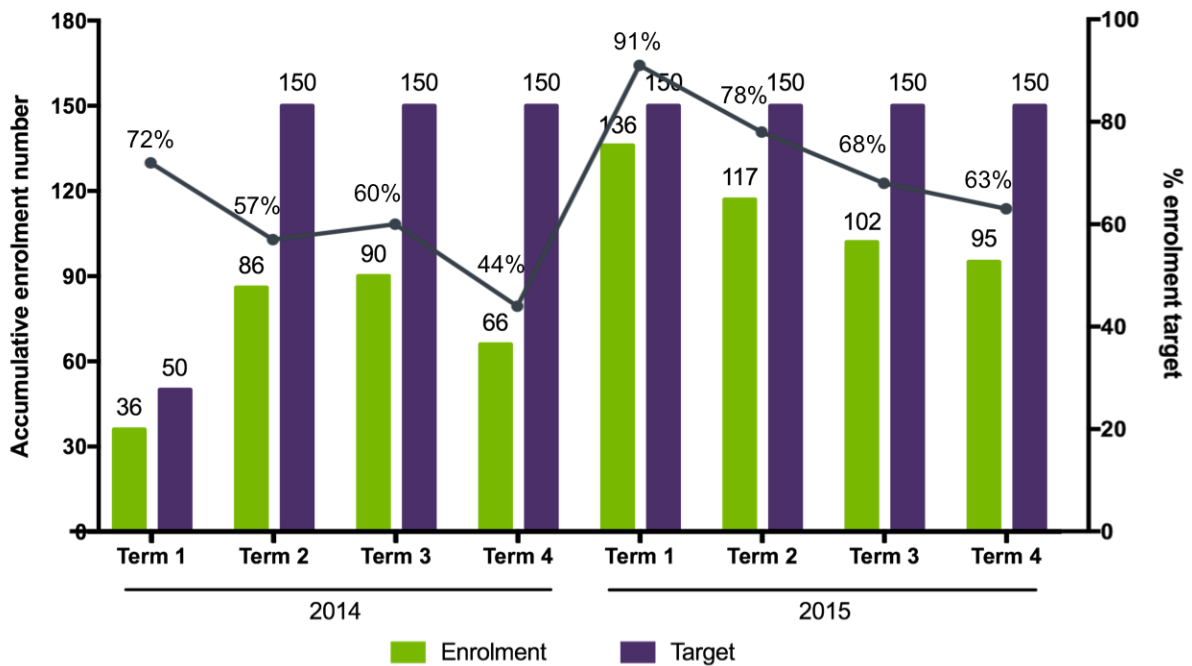


Expansion Academy Enrolments in WA

The enrolment patterns for Expansion Academies in WA are presented in Figure 3 below. As can be seen, the patterns suggests a relatively strong enrolment at the commencement of the year which gradually declines as the year progresses. Analysis of director’s reports suggests that this phenomenon could be explained by a combination of boys leaving Academies and relocating to different areas, as well as exclusions from the Academies due to low attendance or behavioural issues. However, as indicated with the dark grey line, the Expansion Academies in WA reached approximately 45% enrolment target at the end of 2014, which was increased to 60% at the end of 2015; indicating encouraging results in retaining students with the Academy.



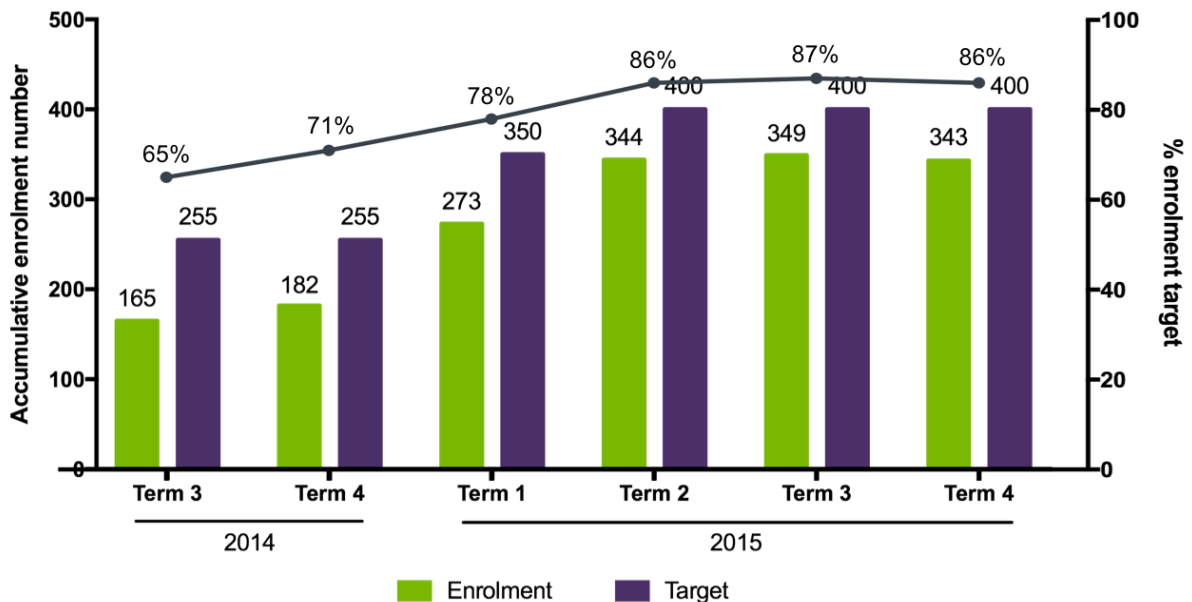
Figure 3: Clontarf Expansion Academy Enrolments (WA)



Expansion Academy Enrolments in NSW

As can be seen in Figure 4, the number of students enrolled at NSW Expansion Academies has stabilised over the second half of 2015 at approximately 85% of target enrolments, after commencing at 65% of target enrolments in Term 3, 2014. Unlike WA, the NSW experience does not show a trend decline in enrolments as the year progresses.

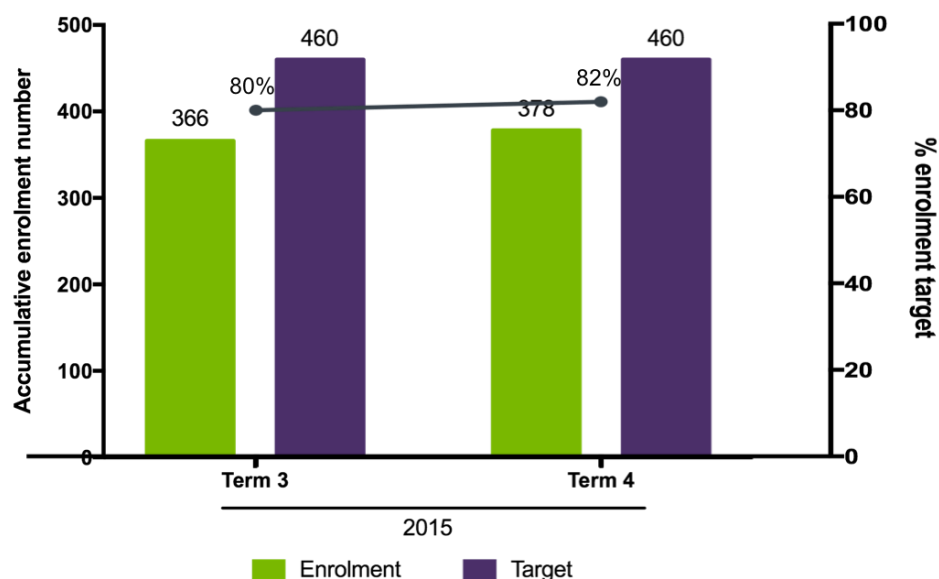
Figure 4: Clontarf Expansion Academy Enrolments (NSW)



### Expansion Academy Enrolments in Qld

The student enrolment record for Expansion Academies in QLD is shown in Figure 5. Based on the data from Terms 3 and 4 of 2015, it is clear that total student enrolments have been consistent over the school year at about 80% of the target enrolment. Once again, while the data set for QLD is small, it does not display the trend decline experienced in WA.

Figure 5: Clontarf Expansion Academy Enrolments (QLD)



### Attendance

Improving attendance at school is a key driver for Clontarf Academies. Academy staff undertake a range of activities to promote school attendance, including morning pick-ups from home and following up boys who are not at school. Other strategies include having healthy food available in the Academy rooms and providing boys with basic necessities such as the Clontarf shirt.

At interview, it was suggested that just getting boys to come to school more often can require a major effort from Academy staff. Several case studies highlight situations where the level of unpreparedness for secondary school by some boys, from an academic, social and/or an emotional aspect, can often lead to a shame that discourages boys from attending. In these situations the Academy can offer a safe, non-judgemental and encouraging environment for boys. The sport-related activities of the Academy also make school enjoyable, and participation at sporting events is dependent on satisfactory school attendance. The 'hook' here is to first make school welcoming and fun, with a view to improving academic outcomes once this foundation is established.

As an illustration of the above, when asked what the best features of the Clontarf Academy are, survey responses from Academy students overwhelmingly identified football aspects, including training, camps and other activities. In addition, access to food, friends and the staff were also rated highly.

It is noted, however, that in some case studies the balance between fun activities and academic advancement has been questioned by school staff.

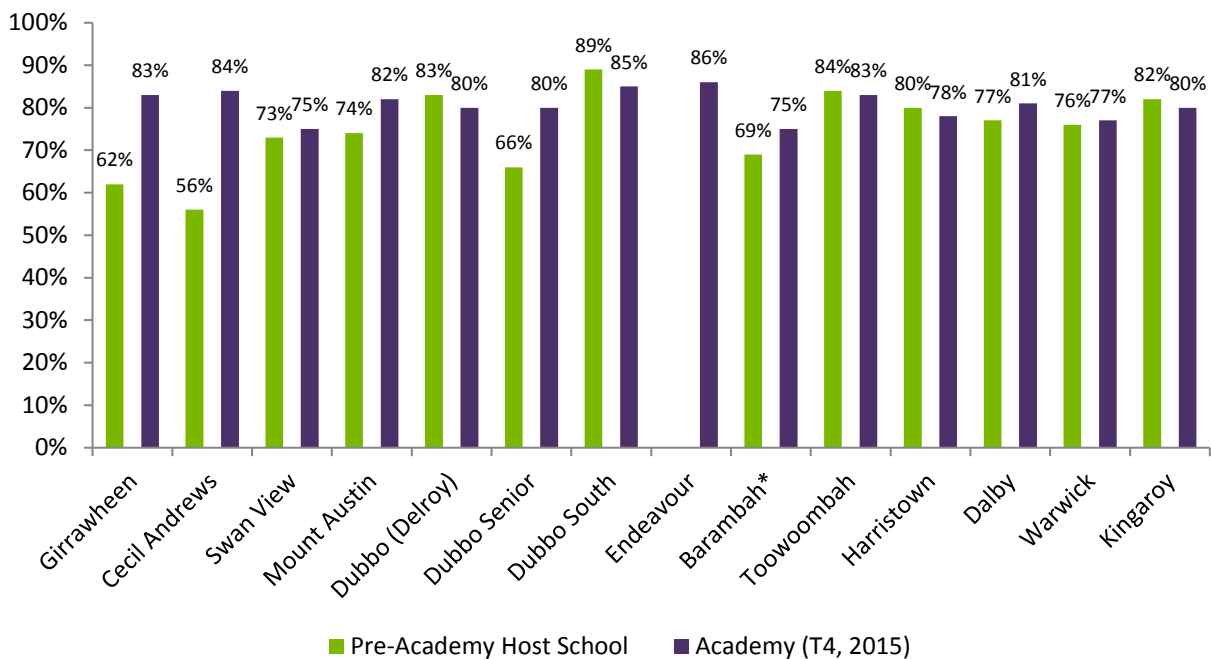
*There are six or seven kids still here who wouldn't have lasted a week in a normal school programme. The encouragement, support and structure of the programme helps them transition and gives them a reason to stay instead of running away.*

*[Clontarf] excursions need to be worked out in conjunction with school rather than being presented with a list at the beginning of the school year – more collaboration on time spent out of school.*

### Expansion Academy Attendance Rates at the Aggregate Level

As can be seen from Figure 6, in the majority of cases, the average attendance rates for boys enrolled at Academies (as at Term 4, 2015) is higher than the average attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males enrolled at host schools prior to the establishment of the Academy.

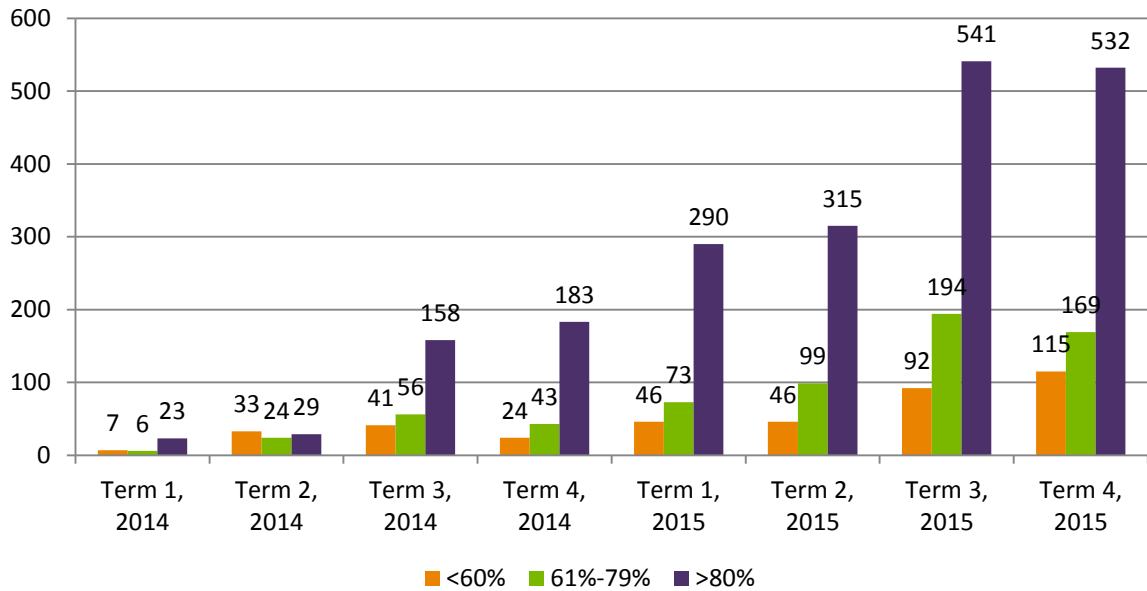
Figure 6: Average attendance rates: Pre-Academy Host School and Academy<sup>2</sup>



Student attendance rates throughout each school term from individual Academies were compiled. Boys with attendance rates less than 60% (orange bars), between 61% to 79% (green bars), or above 80% (purple bars) attendance rates are presented in Figure 7. As reported previously, the general increase of all three attendance categories is associated with the growing number of boys enrolled in aggregate at the Expansion Academies.

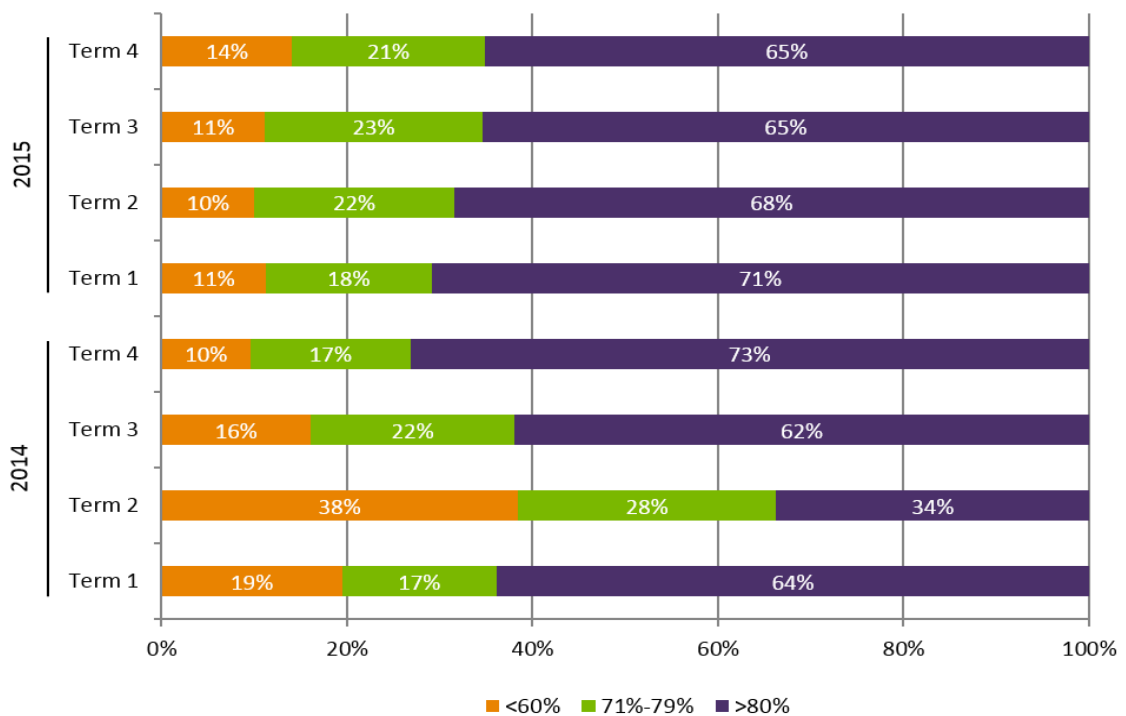
<sup>2</sup> Data for Endeavour SHS attendance rates prior to the establishment of the Academy was not available. Average attendance rates for Barambah prior to the establishment of the Academy is an average of attendance rates for Cherbourg and Murgon state schools.

Figure 7: Clontarf Expansion Academy Attendance Rates (Aggregate)



To view changes in attendance patterns over time, students within each attendance rate category were presented as a percentage of total enrolment in Figure 8. Since Expansion Academies have commenced operations (in WA at Term 1, 2014), between 62% and 73% of enrolled students have achieved more than 80% average attendance. The only outlier to this result is Term 2, 2014, and may be attributed to the early stages of establishment experienced at the Cecil Andrews Academy and documented in its case study.

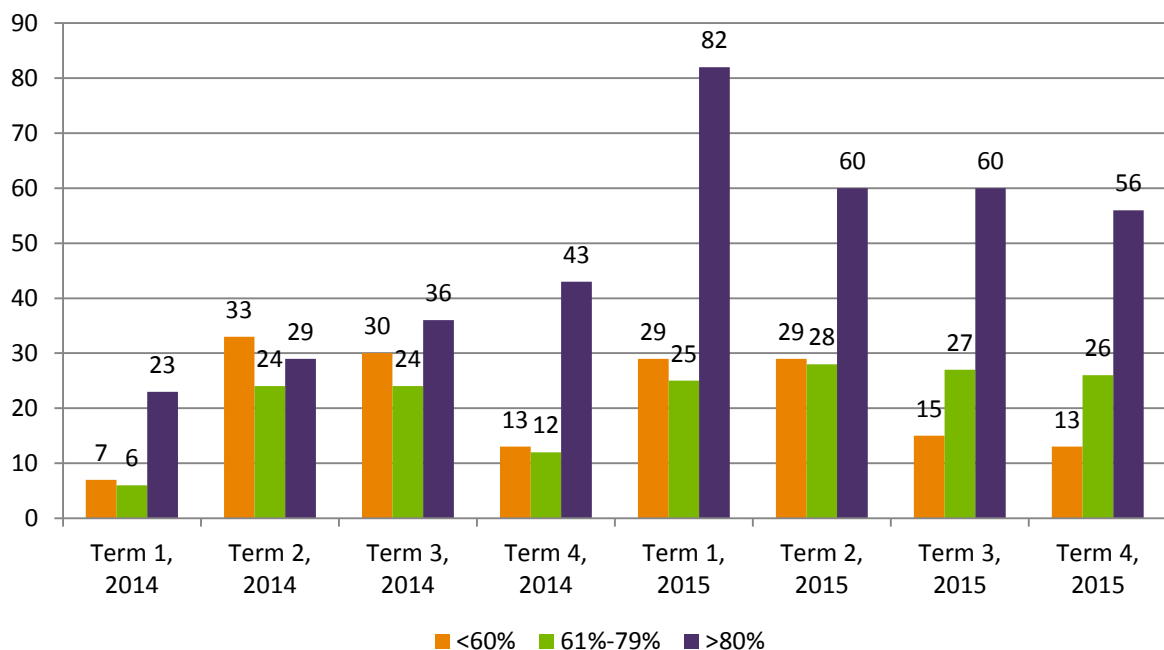
Figure 8: Clontarf Expansion Academy Attendance Rates, by Percentage (Aggregate)



### Expansion Academy Attendance Rates in WA

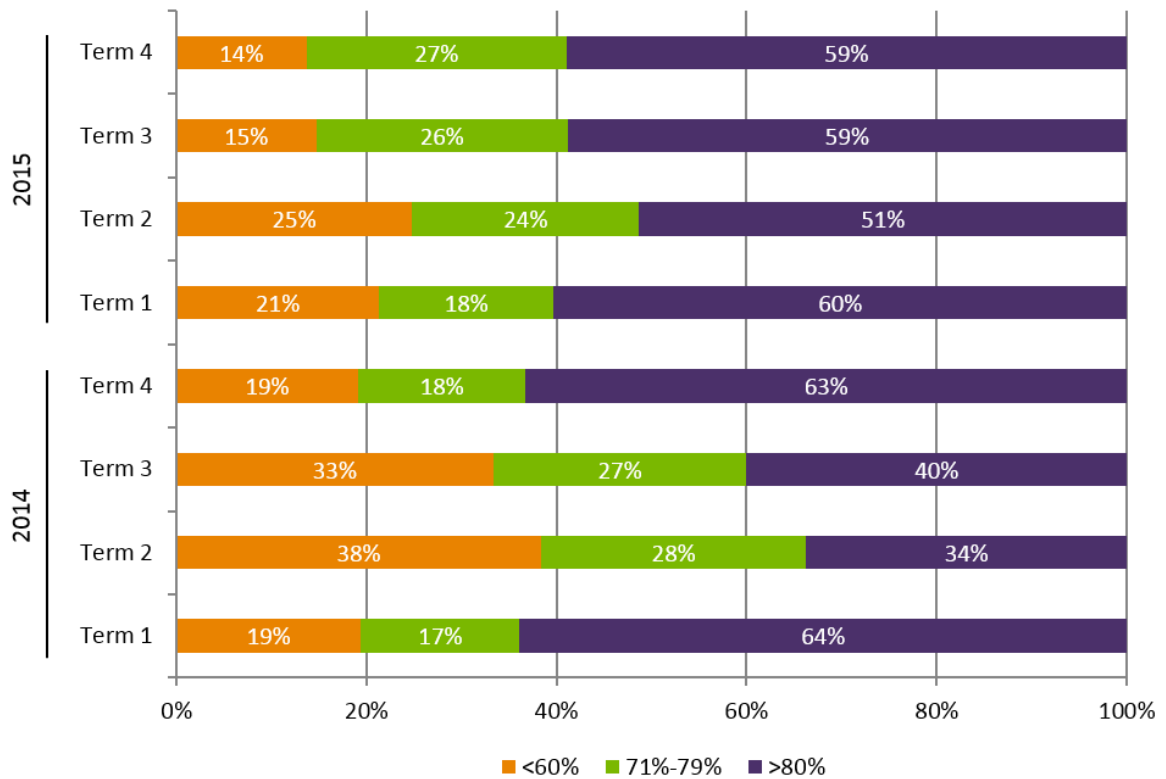
Overall Attendance rates for students enrolled at WA Expansion Academies between Term 1, 2014 to Term 4, 2015 are shown in Figure 9. A clear distinction can be seen between the results for 2014 and those for 2015, where attendance rates greater than 80% are becoming more prevalent. Individual case studies, particularly for the Cecil Andrews and, to some extent, Swan View Academies, detail the shift that occurred in attendance and general behaviour between 2014 and 2015 where some students who were less able to adapt to Academy values and expectations were subsequently excluded from the Academies until they are able to work within the Academy values.

Figure 9: Clontarf Expansion Academy Attendance Rates (WA)



As can be seen in Figure 10, most students at the WA Expansion Academies achieved over 80% attendance (51% to 64% in different school terms) with less than 20% of the students within the low attendance group (<60% average attendance). Once again, it is worth noting that the decrease in attendance in Term 2 to Term 3 in 2014 coincides with the time when the Cecil Andrews and Swan View Academies were established in WA and reflect the fluidity of the student cohort at those Academies at that time.

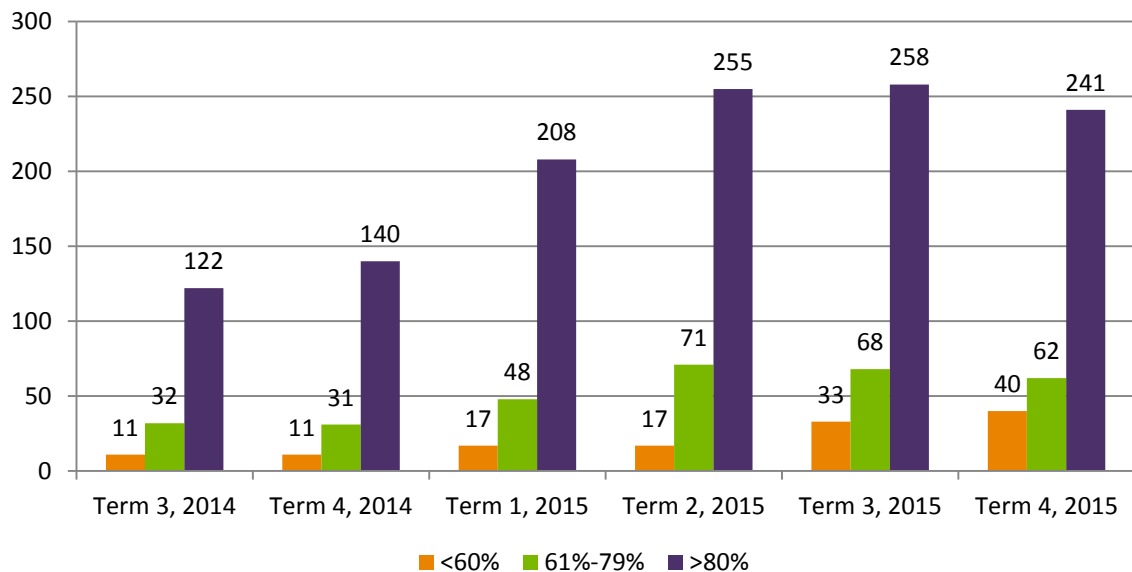
Figure 10: **Clontarf Expansion Academy Attendance Rates, by Percentage (WA)**



*Expansion Academy Attendance Rates in NSW*

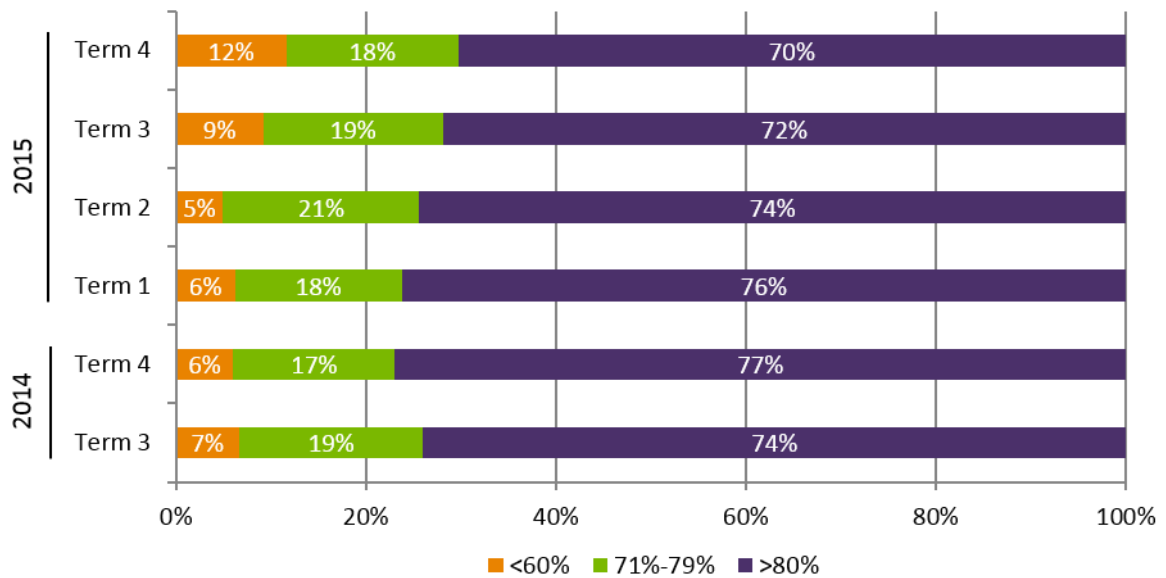
Attendance rates for expansion academies in NSW are presented in Figure 11. As can be seen, most students enrolled in Expansion Academies had an attendance rate of above 80%, with a small group of students achieving less than 60% attendance.

Figure 11: **Clontarf Expansion Academy Attendance Rates (NSW)**



When viewed as a percentage of total enrolments, Figure 12 shows that a significant proportion (above 70%) of students in NSW Expansion Academies are achieving the attendance rates of 80% and above. Encouragingly, this relatively high level of attendance has remained stable while actual enrolments have grown.

Figure 12: **Clontarf Expansion Academy Attendance Rates, by Percentage (NSW)**



### Expansion Academy Attendance Rates in Qld

As shown in Figure 13, the majority of the students enrolled in Expansion Academies in QLD showed a strong attendance rate of more than 80%, although a small proportion of the cohort indicates a less adequate attendance rate of less than 60%.

Figure 13: **Clontarf Expansion Academy Attendance Rates (QLD)**

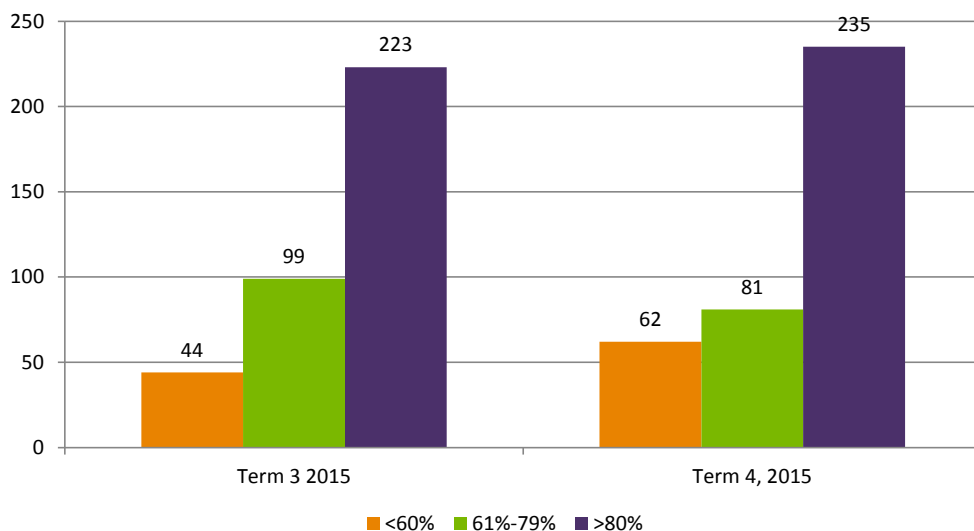
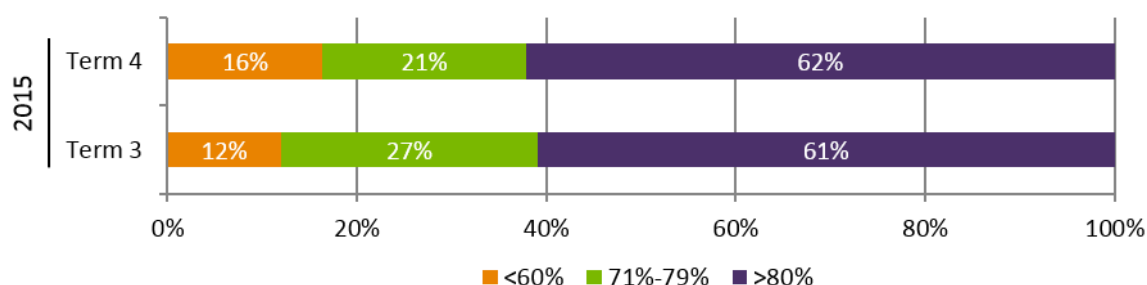


Figure 14 illustrates the percentage of students enrolled at QLD Expansion Academies in each attendance category. As can be seen, the attendance patterns are largely consistent between the two school terms.

Figure 14: **Clontarf Expansion Academy Attendance Rates, by Percentage (QLD)**



## Engagement

Interviewees at each site visit suggested that the presence of the Academy at the school had contributed to greater engagement in school by the boys. Examples of greater engagement at school included Clontarf boys attending after school homework clubs, paying more attention in class, having a greater sense of pride in their schoolwork and speaking in front of others. In some case studies, examples of how the Academy staff have fostered greater parental engagement with the school are also presented.

*Back at home I never went to school but here I feel good about myself coming every day and wanting to learn.*

*It gives us a reason to come to school, gives us a better time, and they can help us when we are struggling at school.*

## Discipline

At all site visits, school staff provided anecdotal feedback about improvements in behaviour and discipline among Academy boys. Many attributed this to the strong role modelling of Academy staff. Older boys at Academies also act as role models for the younger boys.

*You try and pull the younger boys in line. I was suspended myself. I don't want to have them go through it.*

Where behavioural and disciplinary issues still continued, feedback suggested that the severity of this behaviour was less and/or that it was restricted to a recidivism amongst boys with chronic behavioural issues.

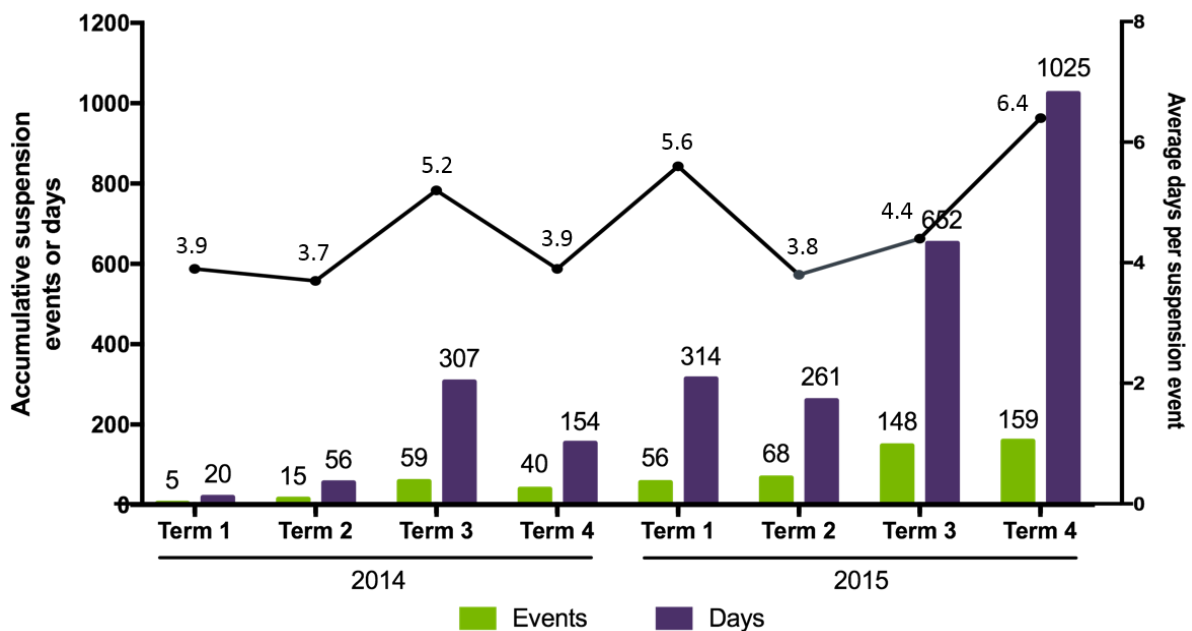
Suspension data was used as a proxy for discipline, however some caution needs to be used in interpreting the data. Firstly, the number of suspension events (or boys suspended) often tabulates the number of times the same students are suspended. Secondly, feedback provided at interview suggests that the number of days a person can be suspended for the same behaviour can increase if they are suspended for the behaviour a number of times. In this way, behaviour that warrants two days suspension on the first instance may attract 10 days suspension if the same student does it for the third time. These factors go some way to explaining the growth over the year in the number of days suspended in Figure 15.



### Expansion Academy Suspension Rates (Aggregate)

Student suspensions at each of the Expansion Academies were recorded in terms of both occurrence (events; green bars) and duration (days; purple bars) and presented in Figure 15. Despite the obvious trend of increase in both suspension events and duration, the aggregated data consisted of a different number of Academies (and students enrolled) involved at each term and should be distinguished from the averaged suspension record. For instance, there was one Academy at Term 1, 2015 as compared to fifteen Academies at Term 4, 2015. Average duration of each suspension has been indicated with the dark grey line, which shows a slight upward trend between 2014 and 2015. However as stated previously, suspension data does not distinguish between the number of individual boys suspended, nor the reasons for the increased number of suspension days accrued as the year progresses.

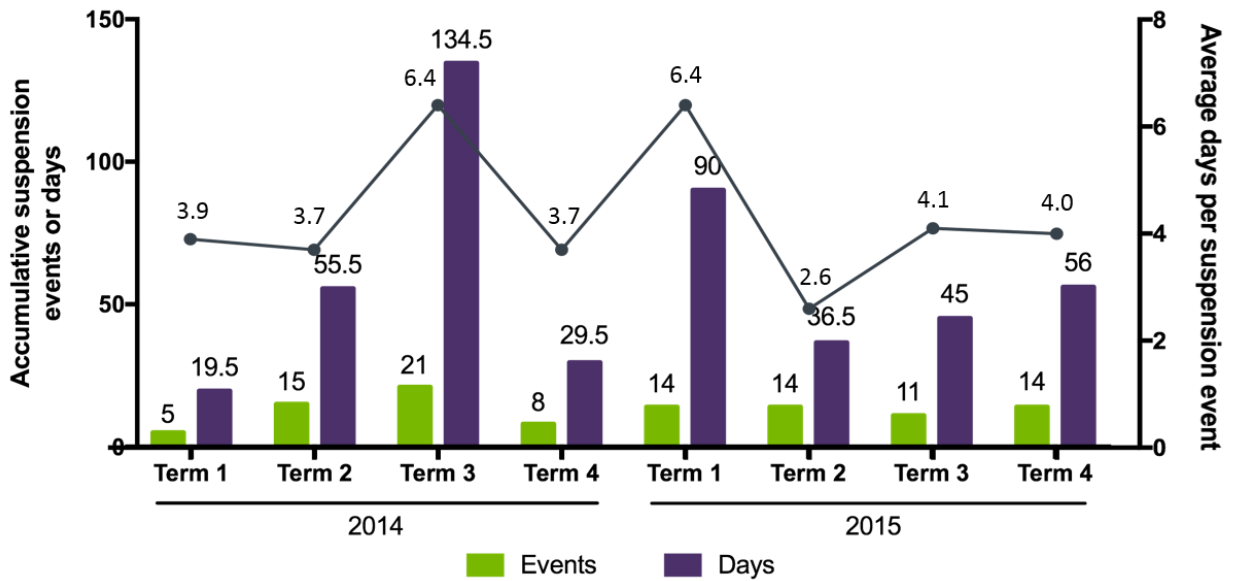
Figure 15: **Clontarf Expansion Academy Suspension Rates (Aggregate)**



### Expansion Academy Suspension Rates (WA)

Figure 16 illustrates the total suspension events from all Expansion Academies in WA; with total suspension events shown in green bars and number of days suspended shown in purple bars. As can be seen from the Figure, the volatility experienced from Term 2, 2014 to the beginning of Term 1, 2015 appears to stabilise somewhat in the latter half of 2015. The case studies for Cecil Andrews and Swan Hill Academies provide some background to the experiences of these Academies with disruptive students during this time.

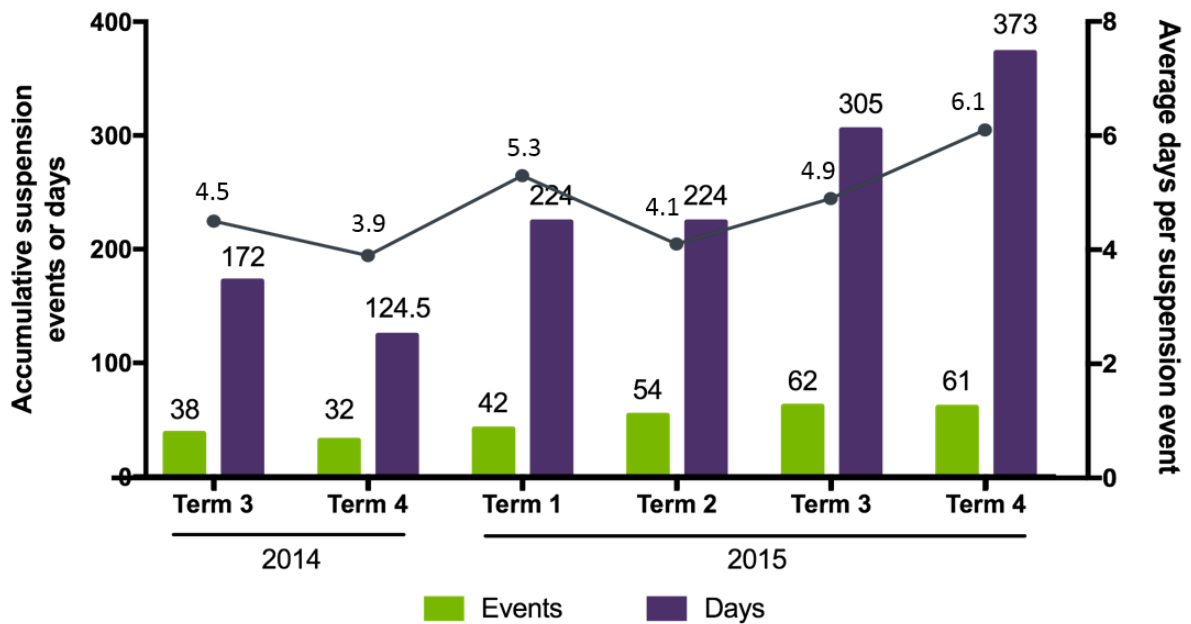
Figure 16: Clontarf Expansion Academy Suspension Rates (WA)



*Expansion Academy Suspension Rates (NSW)*

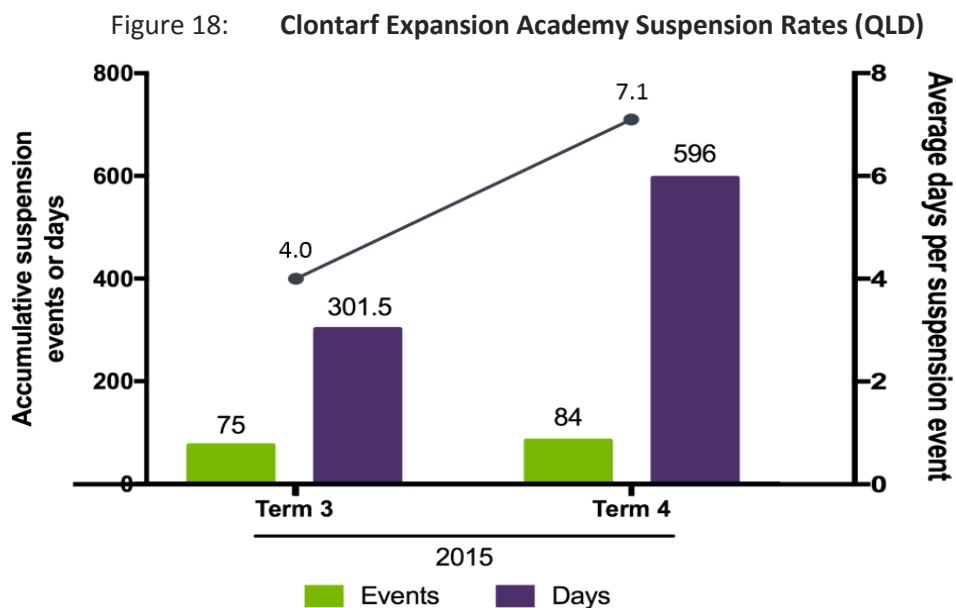
As can be seen in Figure 17, the number of suspension events remained relatively stable at NSW Expansion Academies whilst the number of days suspended has increased during 2015. The reasons for the increased severity of suspension days is uncertain, however as explained earlier recidivist events may incur greater penalties as the year progresses.

Figure 17: Clontarf Expansion Academy Suspension Rates (NSW)



### Expansion Academy Suspension Rates (Qld)

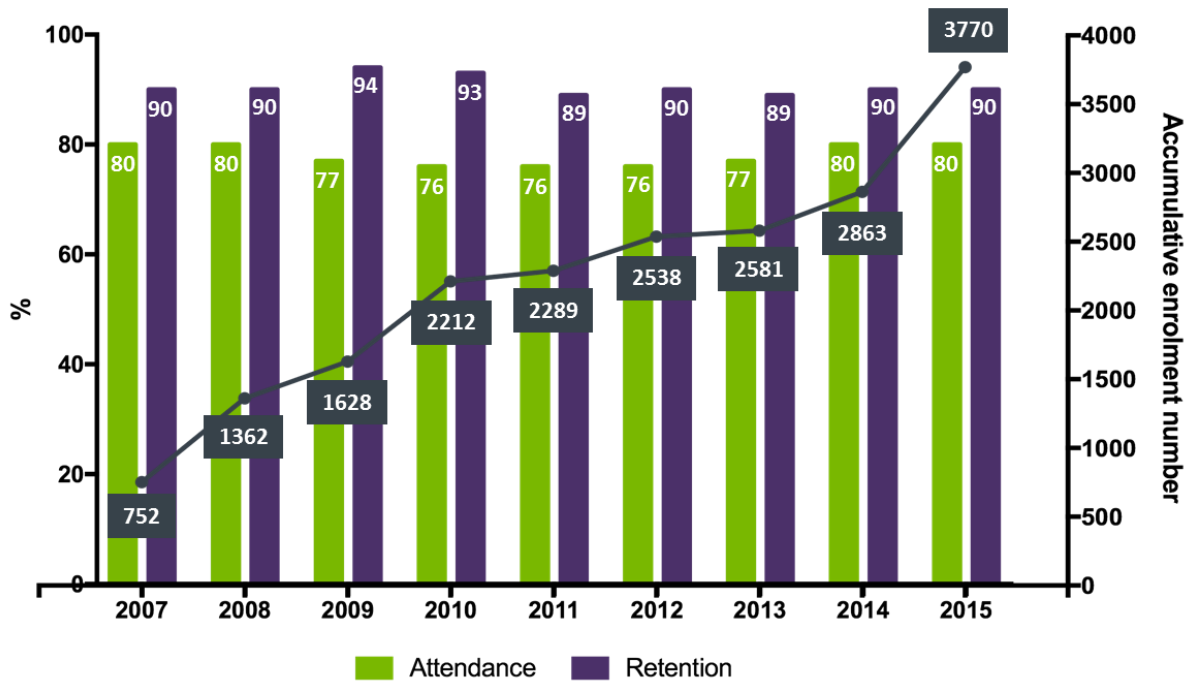
As can be seen in Figure 18, while the number of suspension events remained relatively consistent between Terms 3 and 4, 2015 at Qld Expansion Academies, the number of days suspended almost doubled. Caution should be exercised when attributing causal factors to the rise in suspension rates in Qld Academies as data was only available for two terms. However, several Clontarf Directors' reports point towards a small number of students with high rates of recidivism as a possible cause for the increase. As mentioned previously, repeat offences can cause greater penalties as the year progresses.



Some context is also useful with respect to the figures above as during the early stages of a new Academy's establishment it is not unusual to have a period of disruption as boys with a range of behavioural and academic 'school readiness' are attracted to the Academy. As witnessed in case study sites such as Cecil Andrews and Dalby, this can contribute to behavioural and disciplinary issues at the school and result in increases in suspensions and exclusions. However, as the Academy 'beds down' and its values and expectations are normalised among the boys then behavioural issues subside.

This 'bedding down' process can be most readily demonstrated through a longitudinal analysis of overall attendance and retention data for all Clontarf Academies combined over the period 2007 to 2015. As is shown in Figure 19, overall attendance rates during this period remained relatively stable at between 76% and 80% while retention in school is relatively stable at 90%. These rates are especially reassuring as they occur during a period of significant enrolment growth from 752 students in 2007 to 3,330 students in 2015.

Figure 19: Overall Clontarf Academy Attendance, Retention and Enrolments (2007-2015)



**Key Finding 2: Academic Outcomes**

While still early in their establishment the Academies are growing in enrolments and expect to reach their enrolment target by maturity of each Academy. In most cases, average attendance rates for Academy students are higher than those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at host schools prior to the establishment of the Academy.

Anecdotal evidence from staff at some host schools suggests that greater attendance levels will, in time, contribute to improved academic performance. Many case studies also point to the increased retention rate of students into Year 12 or those completing Year 12 as an early indicator of academic success.

At this early stage, however, many Academies are focused on making the school environment a welcoming and fun experience, with a view to building the academic focus over time. The trade-off between fun activities and an academic focus can sometimes cause tension with school staff who have students missing classes.

While behavioural issues do persist, we could not attribute to what extent the suspension data reflected recidivism among a core group of students or of a more widespread issue, however feedback from stakeholders suggest the severity of disciplinary issues has subsided.

## Self-esteem & Life skills

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at Expansion Academies that were the subject of site visits were invited to complete a survey seeking information on the influence of the Academy on a range of factors that contribute to self-esteem and broader life skills. Participating in the survey was optional.

While the boys who did complete the survey may have been those with generally favourable experiences of the Academy (and thereby risking self-selection bias to the results), overall between 283 and 290 individual responses were provided to each survey question.<sup>3</sup> Based on an overall enrolment number of 816 students as at Term 4, 2015, this provides a statistically reliable sample size with a 95% confidence level and a confidence interval of 4.7.

### Self-esteem

According to interviewees, a major outcome of Clontarf Academies is the impact it has on improving the self-esteem, confidence and pride among participating boys. In many ways, this can create a virtuous cycle that supports greater engagement and academic performance.

Common feedback from students is that the Academy was like a family and this belonging gave them confidence to face the world, take on challenges and aspire to better things. One school staff member noted the pride with which the boys wore their Academy shirts: 'You can see the difference in their bodies – how they stand proud – and they tell other kids: "hey that's not how we do it, bro".'

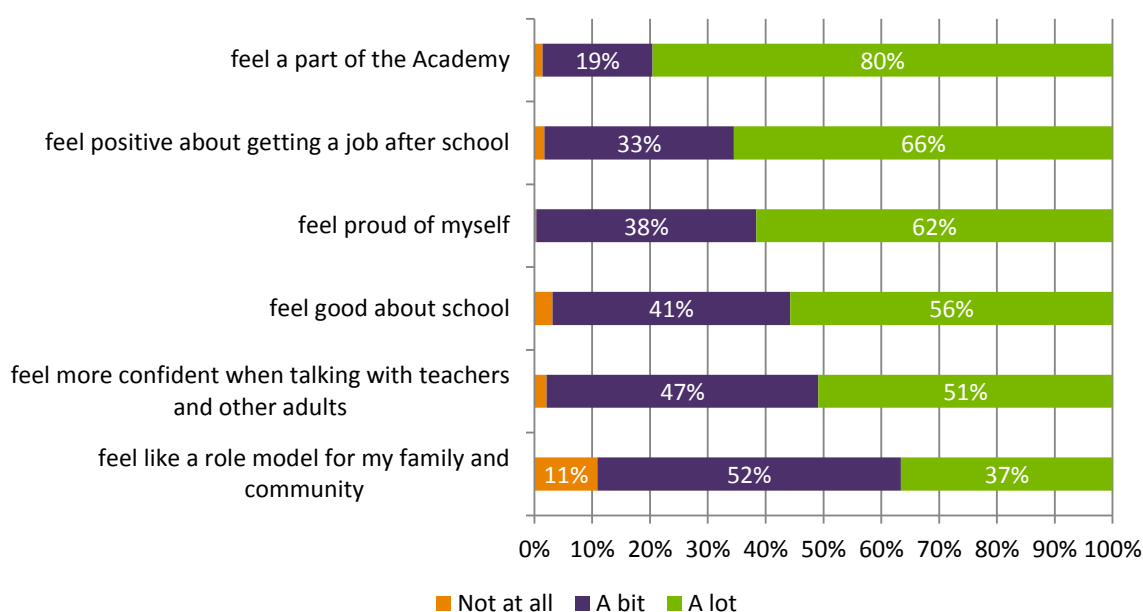
Overwhelming feedback from survey participants suggests that participating in the Expansion Academy made favourable contributions to their self-esteem. As can be seen from Figure 20, since attending the Academy:

- 99% of respondents felt part of the Academy (either a bit or a lot)
- 99% of respondents felt positively about getting a job after school (either a bit or a lot)
- 100% of respondents felt proud of themselves (either a bit or a lot)
- 97% of respondents felt good about school (either a bit or a lot)
- 98% of respondents felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults (either a bit or a lot)
- 89% of respondents felt like a role model for their family and community (either a bit or a lot).

---

<sup>3</sup> The variance in survey responses (283 - 290) is caused by individuals that did not answer all of the questions in their survey.

Figure 20: Since attending the Academy, I...(n=283-287)



Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.

*I have noticed out in the community with our boys in the Clontarf shirt that they are a lot more settled. People see the difference and it makes the boys feel part of something. They walk around with heads held high.*

*Seeing our boys standing up at assembly and speaking never, ever would have happened before Clontarf. I didn't expect such a quick turnaround in the boys.*

### Life skills

In addition to fostering a sense of pride and confidence, Academies also aim to instil some strategies and resilience to deal with broader issues. For instance, the Academies' attention to health is demonstrated by making boys attend health checks and healthy eating is also encouraged.

Academies also focus on building skills in self-discipline, teamwork, communication, time management and problem solving with an aim to encourage the boys to see themselves as leaders, not only of younger boys at the Academy, but also in the community.

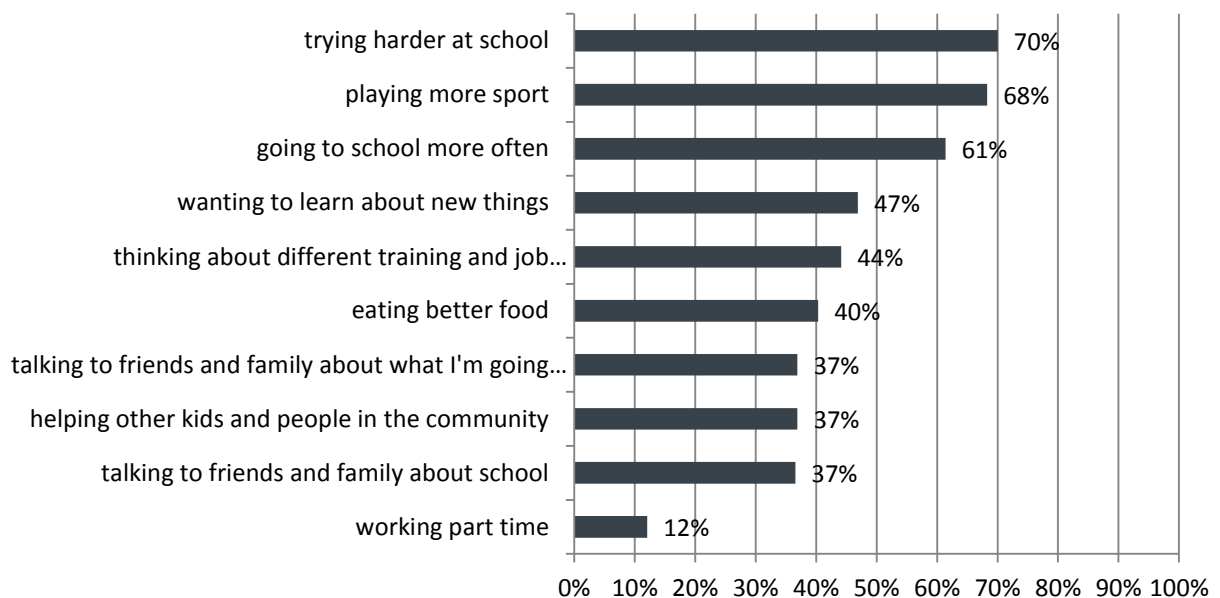
Parents commented on signs of their sons' increased pride in their own cultural identity, evidenced by more enthusiastic participation in events such as Indigenous dance performances, welcome-to-country ceremonies and public speaking.

Students who responded to the survey were asked to indicate whether the Academy had made any contribution to their life skills. As can be seen from Figure 21, since attending the Academy:

- 70% of survey respondents stated that they were trying harder at school
- 68% of survey respondents stated they were playing more sport
- 61% of survey respondents stated they were going to school more often
- 47% of survey respondents stated they were wanting to learn about new things

- 44% of survey respondents stated they were thinking about different training and job opportunities
- 40% of survey respondents stated they were eating better food
- 37% of survey respondents stated they were talking to friends and family about what they will do after school
- 37% of survey respondents stated that they were helping other kids and people in the community
- 37% of survey respondents stated they were talking to friends and family about school
- 12% of survey respondents said they were working part time.

Figure 21: **Since attending the Academy, I am...(n=290)**



*My boy talked about needing to wear a tie, and needing to wear a uniform, because he says he is a leader now.*

## Education and Employment Outcomes

Given the Academies are still in implementation stage, it is too early to attribute improvements in student educational outcomes to their participation in the Academy. Certainly, anecdotal evidence from staff at some host schools suggest improvements in attendance levels, which should contribute to improved academic performance. In some instances, basic literacy and numeracy skills have improved. Many case studies also point to the increased retention rate of students into Year 12 or those completing Year 12 as an early indicator of academic success.

With the goal to increase the students' employment prospects, the Academies have established common practices to enhance boys' employability:

- Site visits to workplaces where the students have shown interest in were arranged regularly; providing the students an opportunity to understand the work environment and the expected attitude at work. This also increased their exposure to potential employers, who were often supportive through providing traineeships, apprenticeship or part-time positions.

- Invited guest speakers of various backgrounds were scheduled routinely to allow more in-depth interaction with the students, where they were encouraged to communicate with these aspiring figures.
- Work experience placements were organised for senior students (Year 10 and 11) every year.
- Academy staff supported Resume and portfolio preparation by helping boys collect the necessary documents, including Tax File Numbers, birth certificates and Medicare. Some Academies also engaged banks to set up fee-free bank accounts for the senior students.
- Academy staff supported boys to achieve Certificate and other further studies. For example, students were encouraged to obtain the White Card in Dubbo Academy, which indicates their eligibility to work at construction sites.
- Public speaking in small and large groups was encouraged at Academies, such as students being given the opportunity to give guided tours for visitors of the Academy. These opportunities build confidence and communication skills. Some Academies provided the students with other challenges, such as preparation of slideshows and introducing the Clontarf Foundation at conferences, and speaking at whole school assemblies.
- Developing sense of community was promoted by creating opportunities for Clontarf boys to interact with students from primary schools, such as through various coaching activities. The experience was beneficial for enhancing social and interpersonal skills, but also to promote the development of leadership skills and belonging to the broader community.

While at this stage caution should be exercised in attributing any employment outcomes to the Expansion Academies, we can note from Figures 19 and 20 that:

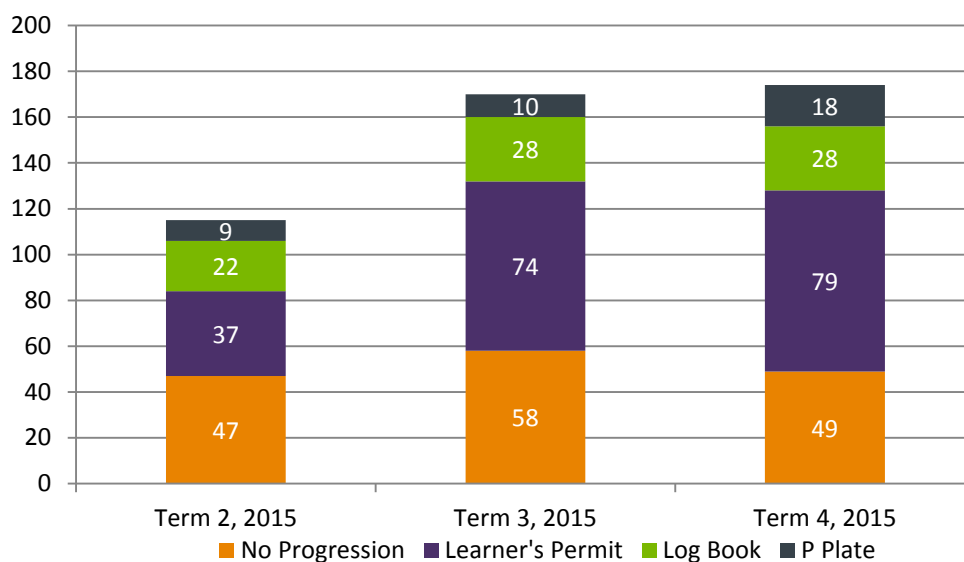
- 99% of respondents felt positively about getting a job after school (either a bit or a lot)
- 44% of survey respondents stated they were thinking about different training and job opportunities, and
- 37% of survey respondents stated they were talking to friends and family about what they will do after school.

### *Driver's Licence*

As part of the initiatives to improve the students' employability, senior boys at various Academies were encouraged to obtain a Driver's Licence once they had become eligible. As shown in Figure 22, with only three terms of data available from the Academies, the number of boys passing the Learner's Permit and starting a Log Book has increased. The number of students obtaining the P Plate successfully has also doubled from Term 2 to Term 4 in 2015. The result is encouraging to demonstrate the Academy's effort in helping and preparing the boys to leave the school.



Figure 22: **Driver's licence progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled with the Academy**



### Key Finding 3: Social and Employment Outcomes

Students who participated in this evaluation overwhelmingly attributed improvements in self-esteem, confidence and pride to their experience with the Academy. Students also reported improvements in broader life skills, including improved healthy living through playing sport and eating better food and improved communication skills. Students also indicated that since joining the Academy they felt like a role model for their family and community, and many stated that they were helping other kids and people in the community.

Feedback from school staff and parents provided many examples of boys demonstrating increased pride, leadership, including to younger boys at the Academy. This transference of accepted values and behaviours is particularly important during the early stages of an Academy's implementation in order to normalise the standards and behaviours expected by Academy staff.

Although it is also too early in the life of Expansion Academies to attribute any employment outcomes with certainty at this stage, the majority of students who responded to our survey indicated they felt positive about getting a job after school and were thinking about different training and job opportunities.

## Unexpected Consequences

The most consistent consequence of the establishment of Expansion Academies was the growth in interest and expectations about similar programmes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls. In almost all case studies, feedback provided by interviewees was a desire for a similar type of programme to engage and retain girls at school.

When consulted, the Clontarf Foundation indicated that their model is designed to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and they have no plans to broaden the scope of Clontarf for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls. It was also suggested that there are several existing successful programmes

aimed at engaging young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls in education. Some Expansion Academy host schools already have existing programmes targeted at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls, such as the Follow the Dream and FLOURISH at Swan View SHS and Magarra Malungan at Mount Austin.

Others include:

<b>CLONTARF LOCATION</b>	<b>GIRLS PROGRAMME</b>
Clontarf Aboriginal College	Role Models and Leaders Australia WA
North Albany High School	Rising Albany Yorgas funded by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land and Sea Council & First Quantum Mining
Carnarvon Community College	The Girls from Oz
Halls Creek District High School	Youth Engagement Program - Netball WA
Gilmore College	Wirrpanda Foundation 'Deadly Sista Girlz'
Geraldton Senior College	Shine
Broome Senior High School and St Marys College	Kimberley Girl
Centralian Middle School	Smith Family 'Girls at the Centre'
Barkley College	Stronger Sisters (School)
Robinvale College	Mallee Family Care 'Sister Girls'
Mildura Senior College	Koori Girls Academy (School)
Swan Hill College	State Government Dance Academy
Palmerston Senior College	PGA Role Models and Leaders Australia NT
Yirrkala School	Stars Foundation
Sanderson High School	Yilli-Rreung
Nightcliff Middle School	GEMS Programme

#### **Key Finding 4: Unexpected Outcomes**

Most case studies highlighted the need for a Clontarf-like experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls.

## Previous Research

As part of this evaluation, Synergistiq reviewed findings from previous evaluations, case studies and feasibility studies of the Clontarf Foundation and Academies completed from 2003 - 2014. The evaluations were completed by a range of external bodies including the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), the WA Department of Education and Training (WA DET), KPMG and ACIL ALLEN Consulting.

All the previous evaluations/reviews highlighted a number of positive outcomes arising from the work of the Clontarf Foundation Academies. A key successful outcome was in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' engagement with school. Specifically the evaluations reported that the Academies were successful in improving attendance rates; re-engaging and retaining young men who had disengaged from school; and improving graduation rates, including to Year 12, among the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who attended the Clontarf Academies (KPMG, 2011, p. 2).

*While the level of impact on students varies from school to school, all Clontarf schools in the evaluation report success in the form of improved engagement, attendance, in-school behaviour and academic outcomes. (ACER, 2011, p. 57).*

Previous reviews have also documented other successful outcomes including positive behaviours demonstrated across the school and community and a reduction in anti-social behaviours; improved literacy and numeracy; increased employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students post-graduation. In addition, the evaluations recorded that the students who wore the Clontarf uniform had an increased sense of pride.

Previous evaluations have also identified the key characteristics of effective Academies. These are consistent with the finding of this evaluation and include:

- Highly skilled, trained, experienced, culturally aware, dedicated and enthusiastic staff members
- Staff members who can build strong and trusted relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities
- Staff members who have high expectations of students
- Strong engagement with local communities during the implementation process
- Strong support from school leadership, parents and carers
- Strong and effective communication between all stakeholders including the Clontarf Foundation, school and community members
- Appropriate physical spaces including a designated Academy room
- Promotion of program as more than a sporting program (ACER, 2011, p. 95).

### Key Finding 5: Previous Research

While this evaluation focused specifically on the implementation phase of Clontarf Academies, our findings are broadly consistent with findings from previous evaluations into more established Clontarf Academies.

## Case Study: Cecil Andrews Academy, WA

### Overview

Clontarf's Cecil Andrews Academy is hosted by Cecil Andrews Senior High School in Seville Grove, WA, about 30km south-east of the Perth CBD and 3km west of the outer suburban centre of Armadale. The school has about 600 enrolled students from Years 7 to 12. It offers a specialist programme in the Australian Football League (AFL) as well as in the performing arts.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students comprise about 17% of enrolled students. This compares with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprising slightly less than 3% of the Armadale local government area (population about 62,300). The school participates in several programmes intended to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational outcomes, including AIME and Follow the Dream, along with having Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEOs) and an Indigenous Tutoring Achievement Scheme (ITAS) teacher.

For this case study, interviews were conducted with 14 key stakeholders including three students, during site visits in November 2015.

#### Key facts: Cecil Andrews Academy, WA

Academy commencement date: Term 2, 2014

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at February, 2014: 30

Target Academy enrolment number: 50

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 29

### Implementation

The challenges experienced over the establishment phase of the Cecil Andrews Academy highlight the sometimes difficult operational balancing act that must be found between the effort required to implement a successfully functioning programme and the even more intensive effort to live out the spirit of Clontarf's 'open door' ethos and mission to redirect boys away from the likely consequences of limited schooling and non-achievement. With limited resources, Academy staff must weigh the time and effort required to work with chronically disengaged students against the gains that might be made by investing energy in a greater number of boys with less intractable behavioural and attitudinal problems.

At Cecil Andrews Senior High, Academy staff began with a target cohort containing an extremely high number of boys with marginal connection to school. Of about 50 boys nominally enrolled at the school, it emerged that only about 20 were attending with any degree of regularity. With assistance from the school's AIEOs, Academy staff made contact with the majority of these boys prior to the commencement of the programme in Term 2, 2014, and all boys were placed on the Academy's enrolment list regardless of

school attendance or indications of interest in the programme. About half of the 37 boys 'recruited' by the Academy therefore represented hard cases of disaffection and non-engagement with the school system. As one Academy staff member explained: 'We never close the door on any kids, so you have to work with what comes.'

All stakeholders interviewed detailed the time and energy given by Academy staff over the first six months of operation to make progress with a dozen or so boys whose behaviour was described as ranging from absent and uninterested to uncooperative and disruptive, aggressive and combative, and in some cases both verbally and physically abusive.

Feedback suggests this work placed significant strain on the Academy staff's efforts to establish a functional culture within the wider group and diverted energy away from working with more responsive boys willing to 'get with the programme'. By the end of the Academy's first term of operation, with staff conscious of the lack of progress from their intensive efforts and detrimental effects on others in the programme, about 11 boys were advised their school non-attendance, lack of interest or disruptive behaviour made it impossible for them to be part of the Academy (though they would be welcomed back if they decided to respect its values and expectations).

In the programme's second term of operation (Term 3, 2014) a third Academy staff member was employed to assist with the intense efforts being made with boys. With the Academy's enrolment numbers already below the preferred threshold for viable programme delivery, it can be assumed this additional cost would have raised concerns about the Academy's sustainability according to standard Clontarf funding practices.

Further resources were provided by the school and state education department for a 'discrete' class to address the severe literacy and numeracy problems of a group of about 10 boys, who in many cases had missed large amounts of primary schooling. While some progress was made, this initiative 'collapsed' in Term 4, 2014 for a number of reasons including the teacher taking stress leave, low attendance and a number of physical or verbal altercations by the students with staff and other students. By the end of the term, six more boys were removed from the Academy list, with a number of others exiting due to moving out of the area.

The experience of the Academy's first year points to the limits of what can be reasonably expected from the resources deployed by the Clontarf model. As noted here and at other schools, in some cases success is more likely to be achieved through interventions at a far earlier age, before habitual patterns are entrenched and too much schooling is lost. 'These kids were almost too far gone, to be honest,' one Academy staff member said. 'We should have started a bit more slowly. I think we were a bit ambitious but we really didn't have a choice about it: these kids just came at us and we weren't ready for it.'

To address this problem, the Clontarf Foundation has begun working within local 'feeder' primary schools. Academy boys now participate in reading classes for children in Years 1 to 3 and run other activities for those in Years 5 and 6. These initiatives are not only a mechanism for primary-age children and their families to learn about the Clontarf programme and its values, and to have positive role models, but are contributing to leadership, communication and other skill development among Academy participants.

The major lesson learned from the Academy's first year of operation is the need, at least in a programme's implementation phase, to focus energy on boys who are attending school with some degree of consistency and who demonstrate an interest and willingness to participate in the Academy's activities and ethos. Time is needed to create the appropriate culture of respect, mutual support and aspiration for achievement. Once a solid foundation is built, more energy can be devoted to those with more deeply

entrenched disengagement issues, without such efforts being detrimental to the progress of the group as a whole.

The Academy's second year of operation appears to have been much smoother (and therefore less discussed by both interviewees and within this case-study). It would be remiss, however, not to point out that feedback also confirmed the many positives of the programme commonly identified as factors for implementation success. 'The boys have come a million miles,' said one teacher. 'There aren't many programmes like this. They have the right staff.'

It was noted that the Academy staff had worked hard to build relationships with the school's teaching and support staff, as well as with local welfare and support services, contributing to case management and interagency family meetings for Academy students. Across the board, interviewees remarked on the qualities of the Academy staff as role models and mentors – being committed, caring, consistent, reliable and honest but non-judgemental. 'We all need someone to go to who doesn't judge us,' remarked one parent.

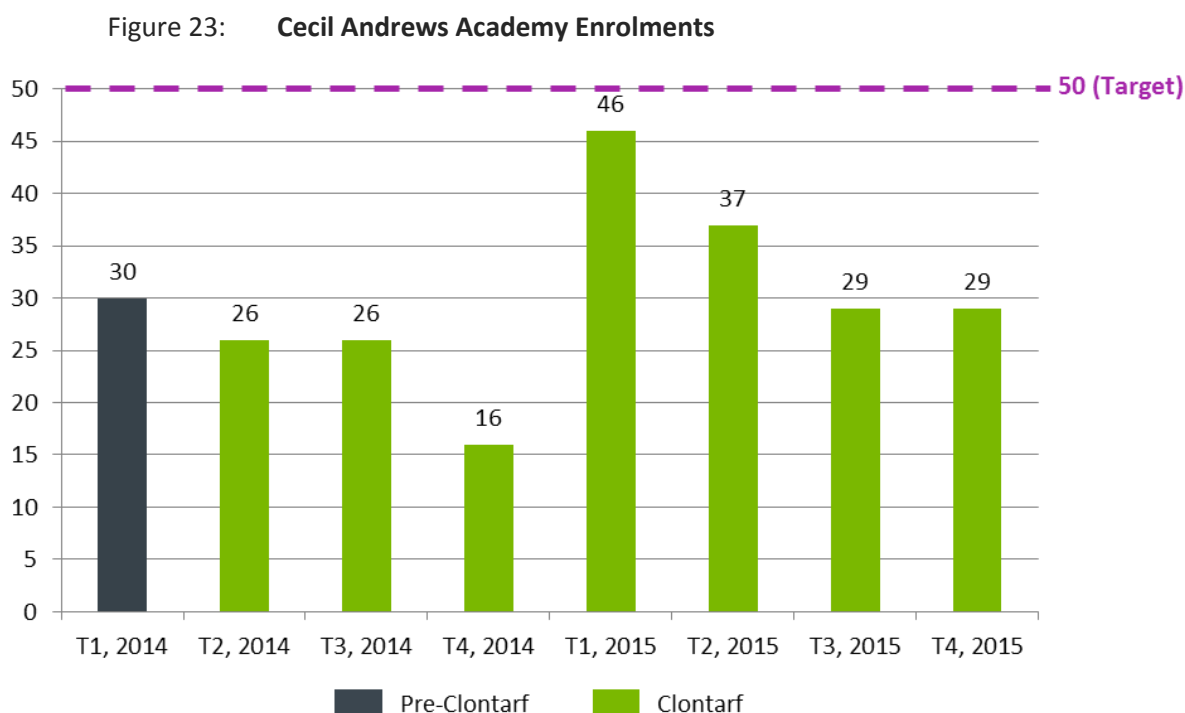
Feedback also suggested that the presence of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Academy staff member had been helpful, bringing cultural understanding and the right language for effective communication with both boys and their families. The Academy's relationship building had also brought greater family engagement with the school, with family members who would not normally 'pass through the school gates', attending sporting events or talking to teachers. Enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was increasing.

'I didn't think it would have such a dramatic impact in such a short period of time,' said one school staff member. 'I thought we would have more attendance and conflict issues. Now they are building 'what's the norm' for the Academy and it's getting higher and higher. The students are pushing each other to get better and better.'

## Outcomes

In assessing outcomes, consideration must be given to the effects of the two relatively distinct phases in the Academy's implementation, with the severe engagement challenges that dominated operations in 2014 somewhat less prevalent in 2015 (though still present, as Academy staff continued to work with boys they felt they might still be able to help). The high proportion of departure from the programme in 2014 (24 of the 40 boys enrolled through the year) cannot, for example, be equated to the effort or competence of the Academy staff.

Figure 23 shows the enrolments for Cecil Andrews between Term 2, 2014 and Term 4, 2015.



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

As already mentioned, enrolment numbers declined between Term 2 and Term 4, 2014, in part due to the removal of students from the Academy due to poor behaviour and lack of commitment to the programme. Academy reports commented that these removals were deemed necessary to set the good standards for the new boys enrolling in Term 1, 2015. The arrival of new boys in Term 1, 2015 caused a spike in enrolments. However, this was followed by a decrease in Academy enrolments between Term 1, 2015 and Term 3, 2015. Academy reports attributed this to some boys relocating to different town and school and further problems with some Academy boys failing to engage with activities despite efforts the Academy’s efforts. The Academy’s enrolment target under the Expansion Measure is 50 at maturity.

According to the Academy scoping report, in February 2014, prior to the establishment of the Academy, there were 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male enrolments at Cecil Andrews SHS.

It is worth noting the ‘perverse’ statistical outcomes that arise from admirable efforts to engage the most at-risk boys with severe school non-attendance or behavioural issues. Doing so is almost certainly likely to result in recording a number of less impressive quantitative outcomes. Conversely, as in this case, while the departure of those boys from school and the Academy would almost certainly be regarded by Academy staff as a disappointment, it is also likely to improve subsequent measured rates of indicators such as attendance and suspension.

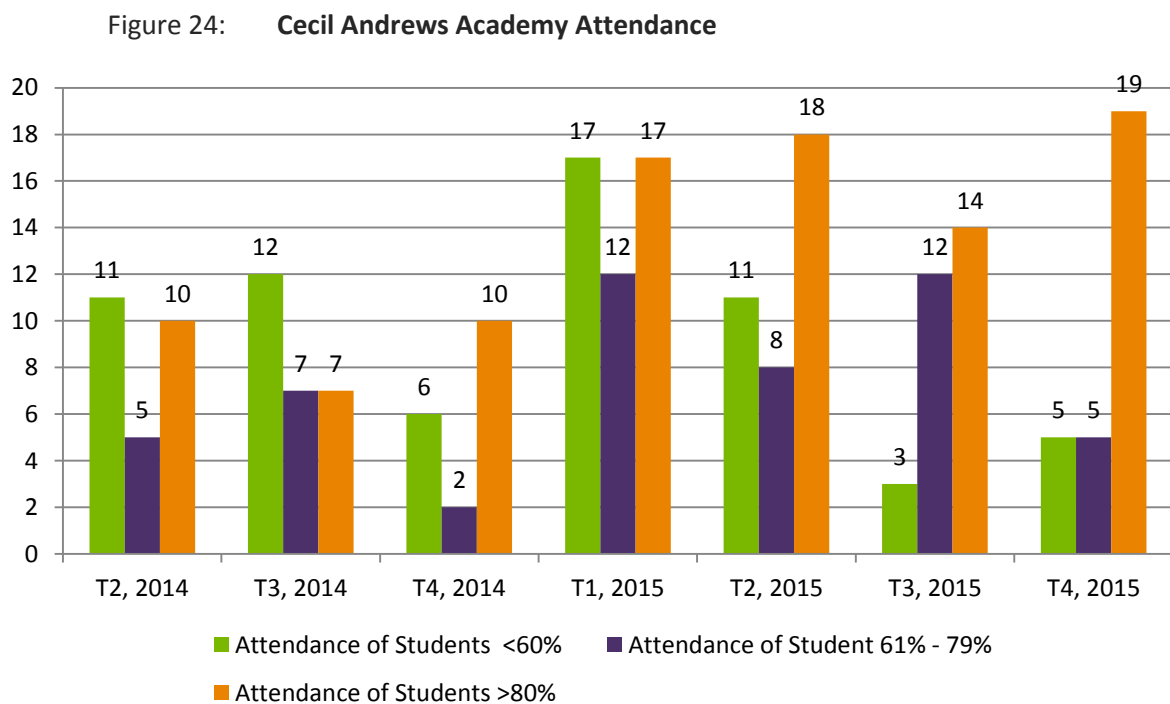
## Education

### Attendance

Interviewees indicated that Academy students has better attendance rate than those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled at the school but who were not enrolled at the Academy. School staff members reported increased attendance among the Year 11 and 12 cohorts over the course of 2014, and stable results with the Year 9 cohort, instead of the usual dramatic drop as the year progresses. A fall in attendance rates within the Year 10 cohort was attributed to other undisclosed reasons.

Many stakeholders commented on the positive influence of the Academy programme on the boys' attitude to going to school, as well as the efforts being made to pick up boys in the morning. 'If kids had to get themselves to school, they wouldn't get there,' said one school staff member. Another cited the case of a boy whose attendance rate had lifted from less than 30% to about 85%: 'If you walk into a classroom he's just there writing, doing his work.'

Figure 24 presents the attendance rates in Cecil Andrews from Term 1, 2014 till Term 4, 2015.



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

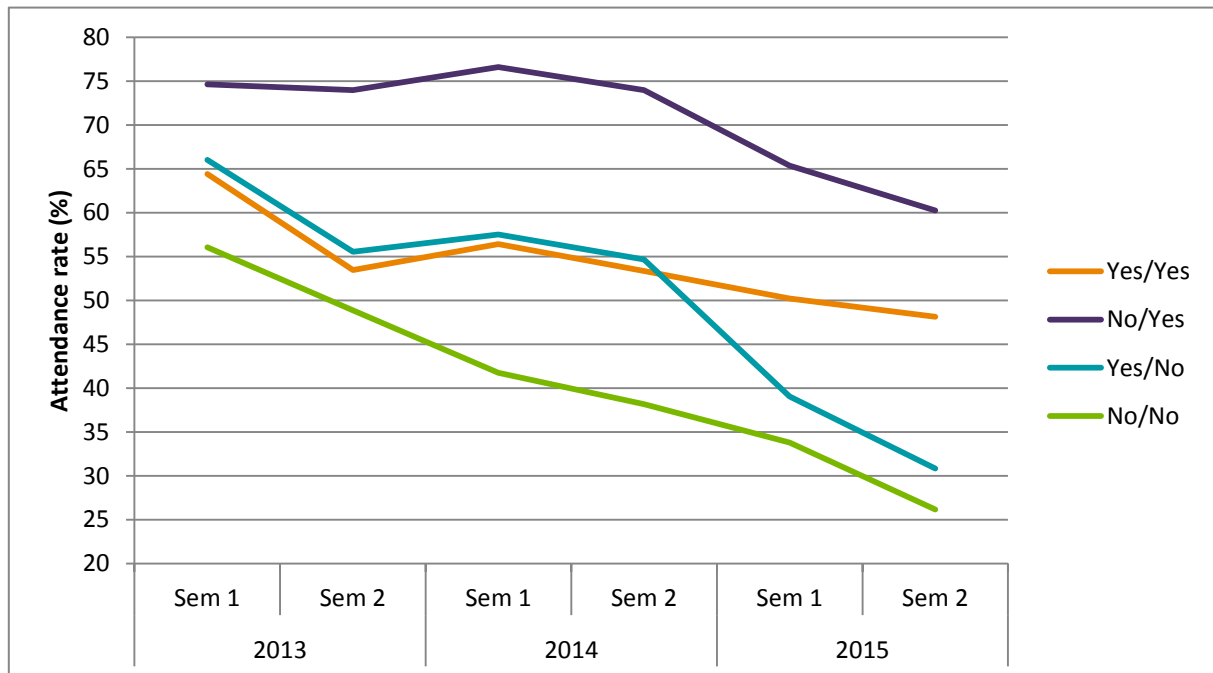
Between Term 2, 2014 and Term 4, 2014 the number of students in the highest attendance bracket remains at 10, however, the overall attendance drops from 26 to 18. This is likely a reflection of the drop in enrolments during that same period. There was significant improvement in attendance between Terms 1 and Term 4, 2015, though this might also be affected by enrolment rates. By Term 4, 2015, the average attendance rate for boys enrolled at the Academy was 84%. This data indicates a 28% increase in the average attendance since 2013, when the Clontarf scoping study reported a 56% average attendance rate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at Cecil Andrews. It should be noted that the scoping study data was for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys, while the Academy data is only for boys enrolled in Clontarf.



This general trend is only partly supported by the attendance data provided by WA Department of Education. Figure 25 provides the attendance rates of four cohorts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys who attended Cecil Andrews SHS in 2013 (prior to the establishment of the Academy) and who either enrolled in the Clontarf Academy in both 2014 and 2015 (orange line), enrolled in the Academy in 2014 and not in 2015 (blue line), did not enrol in the Academy in 2014 but did so in 2015 (purple line), or chose not to enrol in the academy at all (green line). The following trends emerge:

- Boys who attended the Academy in both years had, on average, a relative slight decline in average attendance rates overall.
- Boys who attended the Academy in 2014 and left in 2015 had relatively stable average attendance rates in 2014 which fell significantly in 2015.
- Boys who joined the Academy only in 2015 experienced a relative decline in average attendance rates over 2015, although from a relatively high base
- Boys who were enrolled at the Academy in 2015 had higher average attendance rates than those boys who were not, consistent with the feedback provided by stakeholders
- Boys who chose not to attend the Academy at all reported the lowest average attendance rates.
- Boys who joined the Academy in 2014 were not those boys who had the highest attendance rates prior to the establishment of the Academy in 2013.
- Average attendance rates in general are declining between 2013 and 2015.

Figure 25: **Cecil Andrews Attendance rates from 2013 to 2015, broken down by engagement with Clontarf in 2014 and 2015<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>4</sup> Variations in Clontarf data and WA DoE data may be due to timing of data collection.

Note: Yes/Yes = attended Clontarf Academy in 2014 and 2015; Yes/No = attended Clontarf Academy in 2014 only; No/Yes = attended Clontarf Academy in 2015 only; No/No = did not attend Clontarf Academy

### Engagement

School staff members, parents and students themselves indicated greater application to school work in class and at home. The support for academic achievement by Academy staff members was seen as an important contributing factor, with the Academy having a regular after-school homework club as well as providing more personal tutoring in specific subjects. Academy staff were also playing a powerful intermediary role with the school's teachers, both advocating for boys and enlisting teachers to provide out-of-class assistance with academic work.

### Academic achievement

While better school attendance and engagement by boys who have embraced the Clontarf programme can be expected to improve academic outcomes, feedback indicated it was too early to seek to quantify those improvements. Simply finding a solid benchmark was problematic, noted one teacher who referred to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with inconsistent attendance being too ashamed even to sit tests like NAPLAN. While outside Clontarf's scope, improving grades was an area needing work, another teacher agreed, but the key issue was that 'at least they are coming to school'. What needed to be emphasised was 'not about how much you get; it's about how far you have come'.

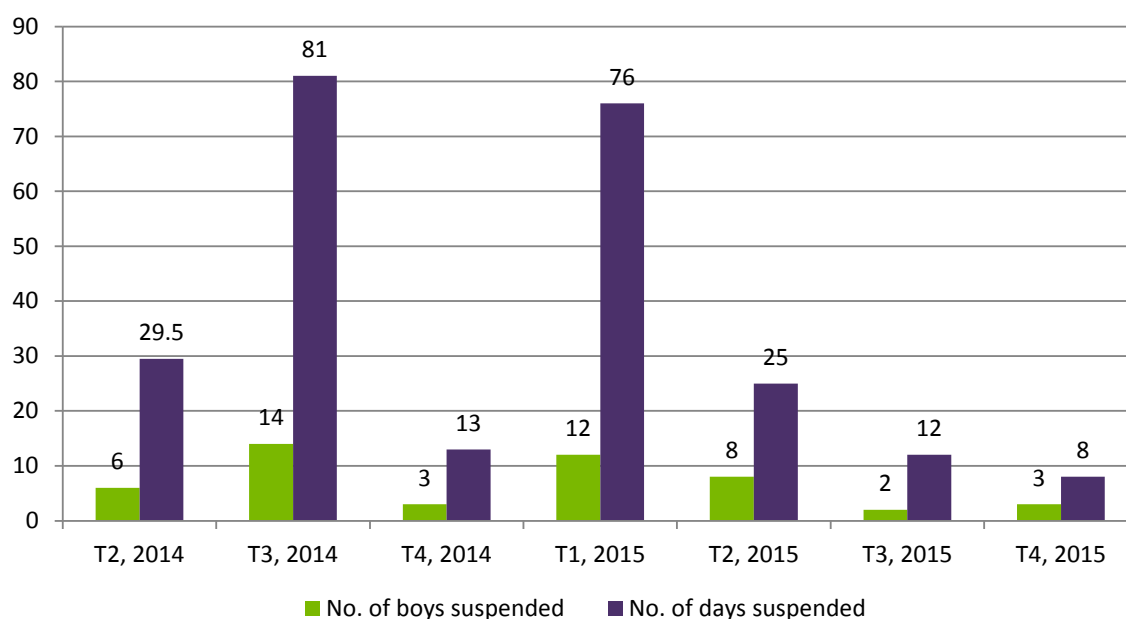
In terms of Year 12 completion numbers, three Academy students graduated in 2015 compared to one in 2014. Stakeholders, as well as the boys and their families, gave credit to the Clontarf programme for its help in this. It was suggested, however, that significantly shifting the baseline for retention and completion rates was unlikely to occur without primary-level interventions to ensure students reached high school with adequate literacy and numeracy skills.

### Discipline

Bearing in mind the behavioural and disciplinary issues mentioned in the discussion on implementation, feedback otherwise indicated generally less rude or disruptive behaviour among the Academy group. 'I've seen a huge improvement in the general behaviour of the kids,' said one interviewee. 'They used to be running around, smashing their plates in the sink, yelling, swearing, chaos. Now they're really settled, calm, considered and respectful.' One parent commented: 'I used to be called to the school every two to three weeks. I haven't had to come up to the school since Clontarf started.' While positive identification as an Academy member was seen as an important part of these changes, improvement was not just confined to school, with several mothers relating how their sons were now more respectful towards them at home.

Figure 26 maps the number of boys suspended against the number of days suspended between Term 2, 2014 and Term 4, 2015.

Figure 26: Cecil Andrews Academy Suspensions



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

As can be seen, there was an initial increase between Term 2 and Term 3 of 2014. The substantial reduction in both the number of boys and the number of days spent in suspension for Term 4, 2014 is attributed to a several boys with high suspension data no longer being on the Academy list at Cecil Andrews.

The spike in suspension data in Term 1, 2015 correlates to a spike in enrolments in the same period. However, data shows a substantial reduction in both the number of boys suspended and the number of days boys were suspended for between Term 1, 2015 and Term 4 of the same year. In Term 2, 2015, seven out of the 12 boys that were suspended in Term 1 remained on the list of the Academy. This suggests some improvement in the behaviour and engagement of students. This is reinforced by qualitative accounts in Academy reports that indicate suspensions in Term 2, 2015 were for minor offences such as swearing, instead of fighting and physical abuse as they were previously.

As reported by the Academy staff, 'overall our boys have gained a greater understanding about themselves and taken ownership and pride in the way they are seen and portrayed in the school environment by their peers and the staff.'

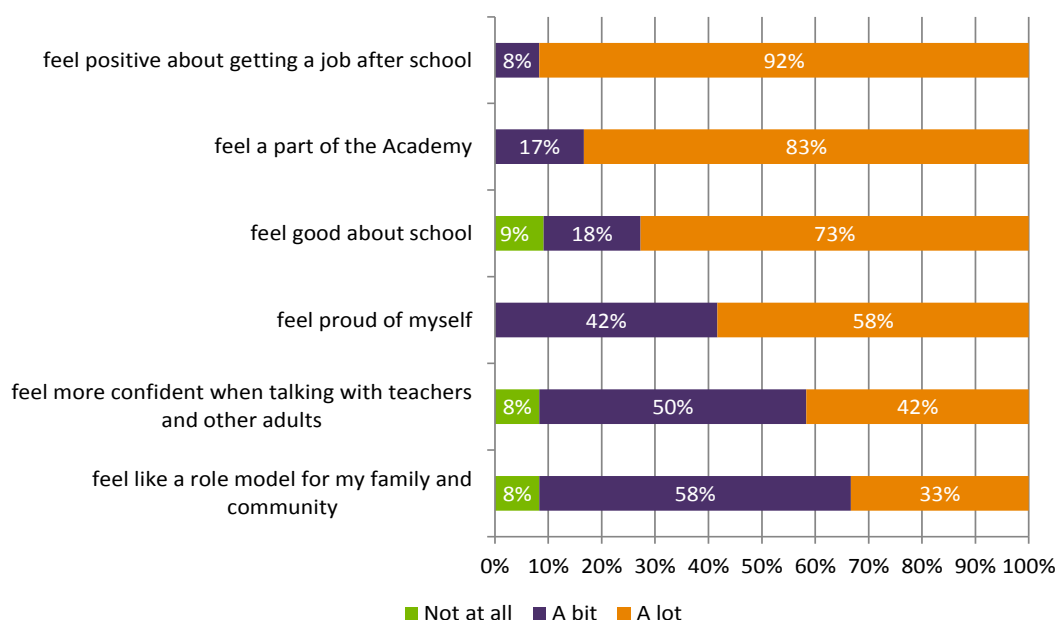
### Self-esteem

Feedback suggests that the Academy's contribution in fostering greater respect for others among the boys is strongly allied with a growth in respect for themselves. The students who contributed to the evaluation commented that their families were proud that they were attending school regularly and doing well in their classes and sporting activities. As one interviewee stated, their pride in his achievements helped him persevere with school work: 'They are proud of me. It makes me keep going.'

A key theme from interviews, including those with the boys themselves, was the role of Academy participation in overcoming insecurities and feelings of ‘shame’. It would appear that while many of these boys face the daunting challenges arising from family dysfunction and/or lack of parental support for their education, even more harbour deep insecurities about how they are judged for their Aboriginality. One student talked about the shame he felt when meeting strangers or doing activities in the public sphere, and that participating in the Academy had given him more confidence. This sentiment was echoed by a number of stakeholders.

Figure 27 shows feedback from a survey that identifies belonging, self-confidence and leadership in the boys who attend Cecil Andrews Academy.

Figure 27: **Since attending the Academy, I...(n=12)<sup>5</sup>**



**Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.**

As can be seen from Figure 27, since attending the Academy:

- 91% of respondents felt good about school
- 100% of respondents felt proud of themselves
- 92% of respondents felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults
- 91% of respondents felt like a role model for their family and community.

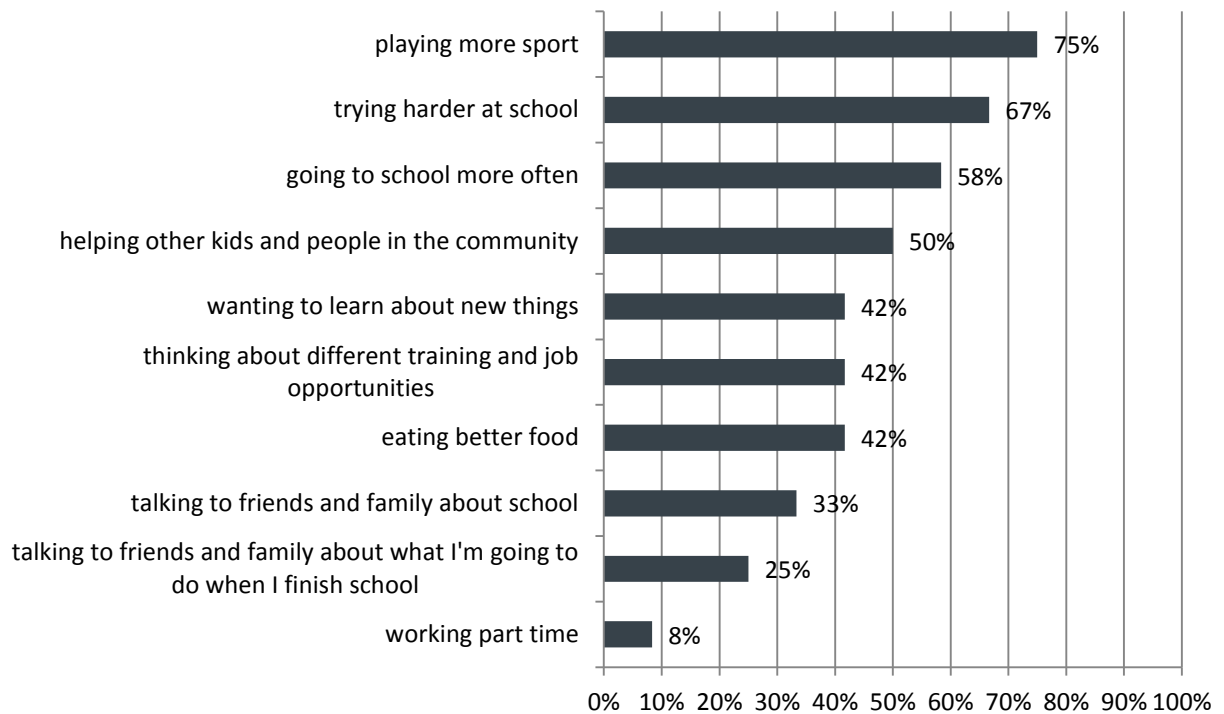
### Life skills

Students who responded to the survey were asked whether attending the Academy had contributed to improved life skills more generally. As can be seen from Figure 28, the majority of respondents (75%) indicated that they were playing more sport, which is to be expected at a Clontarf Academy. In addition:

<sup>5</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses. The responses for ‘I feel like a role model for my family and community’ total 99% due to a rounding error.

- 67% stated that they were trying harder at school
- 58% reported that they were going to school more often
- 50% stated that they were helping other kids and people in the community
- 42% stated they were wanting to learn about new things, eating better food and thinking about different training and job opportunities.

Figure 28: **Since attending the Academy, I am...(n=12)<sup>6</sup>**



Another important life skill is the ability to manage anger, of which there was some anecdotal evidence. As an example of this, one interviewee related an anecdote about one student's experience visiting 'one of the leafy green schools' to play sport. Among the spectators was a parent who sledged the boy with racist remarks - a situation he might previously have responded to 'with his fists'. The Academy staff member present at the game, however, talked it through with the student, who 'had the self-control to walk away and not make the situation worse.'

### Employment prospects

Given the small number of Academy graduates thus far, it is difficult to assess substantive improvements in employment prospects. However, of the three boys who graduated in 2015, one was doing a Certificate III vocational training course, another had an internship and the third had begun an apprenticeship. Interviewees highlighted this as a major positive achievement.

<sup>6</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

In addition, as can be seen in Figure 27, all students who responded to the survey indicated that since attending the Academy they felt more positive about getting a job after school. One respondent to the survey also indicated that he was working part time (refer to Figure 28).

## Unintended Consequences

As indicated by the discussion beginning this case study, the detrimental effect on the Academy's progress in the first six months as a result of seeking to engage with too many chronically disengaged boys can be considered a significant unintended consequence. The issue highlights a difficult moral calculus for Academy staff: how to weigh the needs of some against the needs of others. The Clontarf ethos is committed to taking on these challenges rather than engaging in the type of pragmatism that lets the hard cases slip through the cracks for 'the greater good'. Given finite resources, however, determining how to get the balance right may warrant further exploration.

A small number of stakeholders mentioned a small degree of resentment among non-Indigenous students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students getting favoured treatment but feedback did not indicate this was a major issue and diminished over time. The school's leadership made concerted efforts to ensure the Academy was seen as part of the school's fabric. Academy staff took part in school assemblies and other events, sought opportunities to engage all student such as running training sessions and sporting activities open to all, and welcomed all members of the school community into the Academy rooms. 'I don't think there is angst when Clontarf kids are behaving appropriately and doing stuff,' one teacher said. 'I don't hear much negative talk around the traps.'

As elsewhere, the benefits that have been seen to flow from the Academy has focused attention on lack of equal resourcing and support for Indigenous girls. The school has begun exploring how to establish a companion programme.

## Case Study: Girrawheen Academy, WA

### Overview

Clontarf's Girrawheen Academy is hosted by Girrawheen Senior High School in Girrawheen, WA, a suburb about 20 km north of Perth's CBD. In 2015 the school had an enrolment of approximately 500 students from Years 7 to 12, with its intake drawn mostly from the surrounding area including primary schools in the neighbouring suburbs of Koondoola and Marangaroo. The school's intake area contains a relatively high proportion of households on low incomes.

The school's student population is culturally diverse, reflecting the demographics of the area, with about 40% coming from homes where English is spoken as a second language; about 13% of students were born in Africa.

A further 13% of the student body (approximately 62 students) is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; this is higher than the composition of the wider community, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprising about 3% of the population in the local area and 1.5% of the local government area of Wanneroo in which the school falls.

As part of this case study, interviews were conducted with 19 key stakeholders including seven students, three parents, two Clontarf staff members, one school board member and seven school staff members during a site visit in November 2015.

#### Key facts: Girrawheen Academy, WA

Academy commencement date: Term 1, 2014

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at December, 2013: 21

Target Academy enrolment number: 50

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 32

### Implementation

The major issue raised by stakeholder representatives interviewed about the Academy implementation process at Girrawheen Senior High School was the question of why the school was chosen to host an Academy, given its relatively small target cohort compared with neighbouring high schools. The motivation for these questions was concern both about the viability of the Academy programme at Girrawheen and other boys missing out on the 'fantastic opportunity' of Academy participation.

In 2013, when Clontarf began its scoping study, 21 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys were enrolled at the school – a number that, on its own, suggests marginal viability for an Academy implementation. The scoping study cites staffing, departmental and school support as well as 'other factors' for the school's selection as a preferred location for an Academy.

It is likely a major consideration in the scoping process – which followed Clontarf's standard practice of consultation with the leadership and staff of the high school and neighbouring feeder primary schools, parents, representatives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and wider community stakeholders – was the presence of about 15 boys in the Girrawheen area travelling more than 35 km to

Yule Brook College in Perth's south-east (a trip taking about 40 minutes by car and more than 1.5 hours by public transport) to be part of the Clontarf Academy established there in 2006.

It was noted by a number of interviewees that the enrolment transfers from Yule Brook to Girrawheen with the Academy's commencement in February 2014 'made the transition easy', given those boys were already familiar with the Clontarf ethos, operation and expectations. It was suggested that a longer lead-in time to prepare the way for the new Academy could also have assisted in boosting recruitment numbers by influencing enrolment decisions prior to the Academy's commencement. As one student said: 'I didn't find out about Clontarf until Year 10. I wish I had come here in Year 8.'

Prior knowledge of the Clontarf programme certainly seems to have assisted in the engagement of prospective students and parents or guardians. One parent commented that her partner had attended an Academy and was therefore keen for his sons to participate in the programme. Other parents likewise reported having heard good things from 'uncles' and other elders who had either been personally involved in an Academy or who knew others who had.

Within the context of total enrolments at the Girrawheen school in recent years being in gradual decline (though there was an uptick in 2015), it was suggested that the problem of ensuring numbers for the long-term sustainability of the Academy could be addressed by opening the Academy to boys enrolled in neighbouring high schools. 'I think it is one of the best programmes you could ever have,' said one senior teacher. 'I just want it to grow.'

An important symbolic decision by the school leadership was the provision of Academy rooms at the centre of the school – a significant difference to the peripheral location of other recently established Academies in Perth. As noted by a number of interviewees, this decision has ensured the Academy has high visibility and signalled to the school community that it is valued and supported.

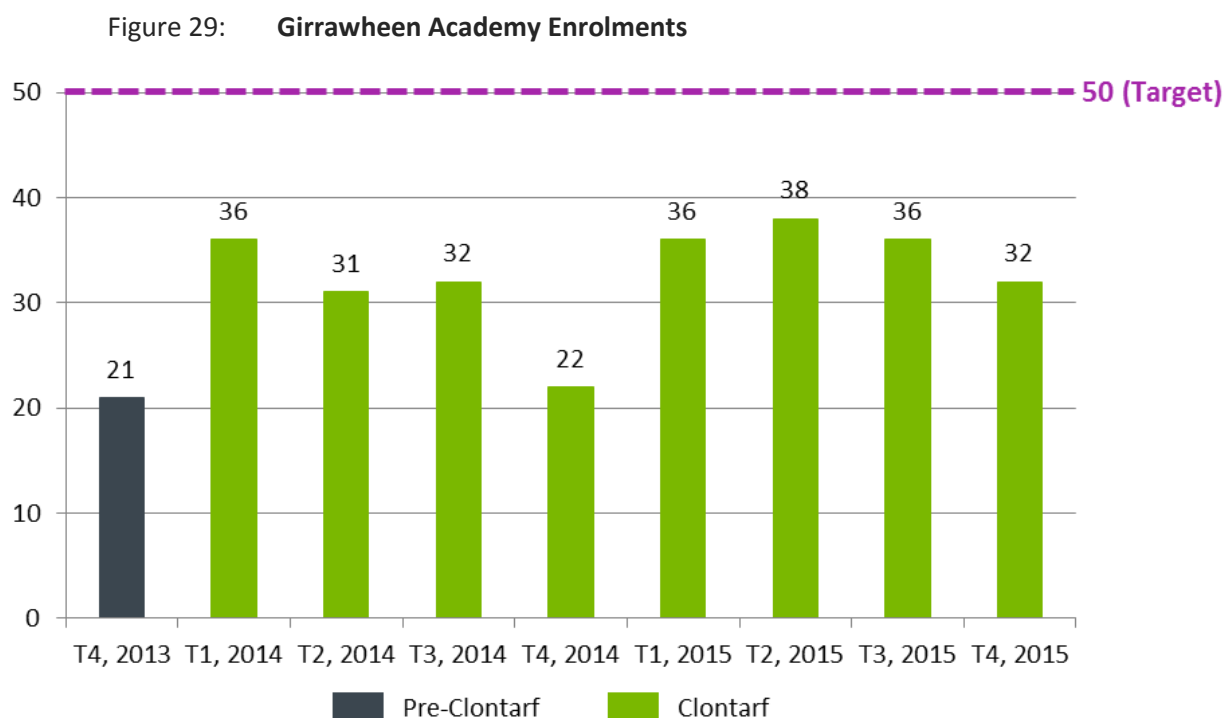
While feedback suggested there was room for improvement in engagement and understanding of the Clontarf programme among school staff, community members and parents, overall there was strong support for the Academy's establishment and presence in the school. School staff members commented positively on how quickly the Academy had integrated into the school – a very different outcome to previous experiences with external programmes implemented for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Academy staff members, who have attended weekly staff and senior leadership meetings, were credited for actively listening to, and addressing any questions or concerns raised by school staff.

As in other cases, Clontarf's staff selection is a key factor for success. Both Girrawheen Academy staff members had previous work experience with the Clontarf model, and one had lived and worked in the area, so had knowledge of the school context and local community. All interviewees commented positively on their professional and personal characteristics as mentors, role-models, intermediaries and advocates; and on their efforts to engage with the whole school community, such as providing sports coaching to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students alike.



## Outcomes

Figure 29 shows the enrolment numbers of boys in the Academy at Girrawheen between Term 1, 2014 and Term 4, 2015.



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

The graph shows that numbers at the beginning of 2014 and 2015 started with an initial spike, before a slight decrease by Term 4 of the corresponding year. The reductions in Term 4 in both years are due to students leaving the area or being removed from the programme for continued behavioural and attendance issues. The target for Girrawheen under the Expansion measure is 50 students at maturity.

According to the Academy scoping study, prior to the establishment of the Academy in December 2013 there were 21 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male enrolments at Girrawheen SHS.

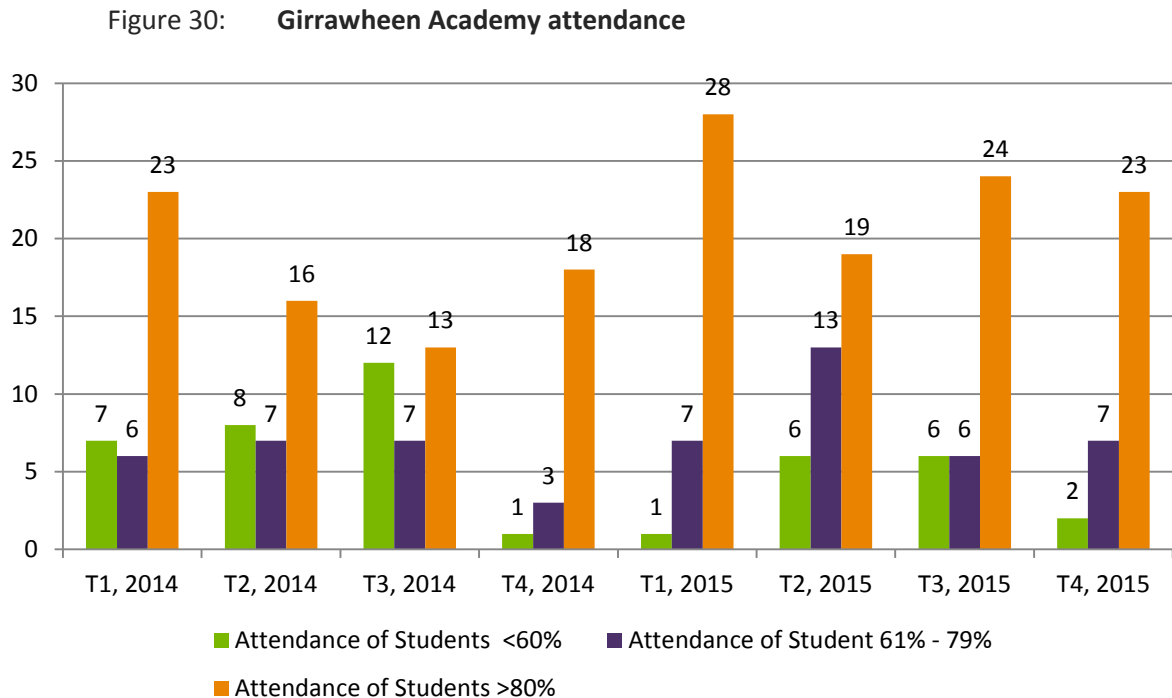
## Education

### Attendance

All interviewees indicated improved attendance rates as an outcome of the Academy's establishment, with the school's data pointing to attendance rates of 80% or more for most Academy participants. Several parents remarked on the Academy's role in alleviating school refusal. Like other Academies, a range of strategies can be credited with driving better outcomes: activities that make going to school more fun and interesting; tangible rewards and recognition for good attendance; personal mentorship and assistance; and the power of praise and general encouragement.

It was also noted that the Academy had contributed to a higher number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at the school, including some examples where boys had previously dropped out. 'No-one expected the outcomes for some of the specific students,' said one teacher.

The attendance of boys at the Academy in Girrawheen is displayed in Figure 30 from Term 1, 2014 to Term 4, 2015.



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

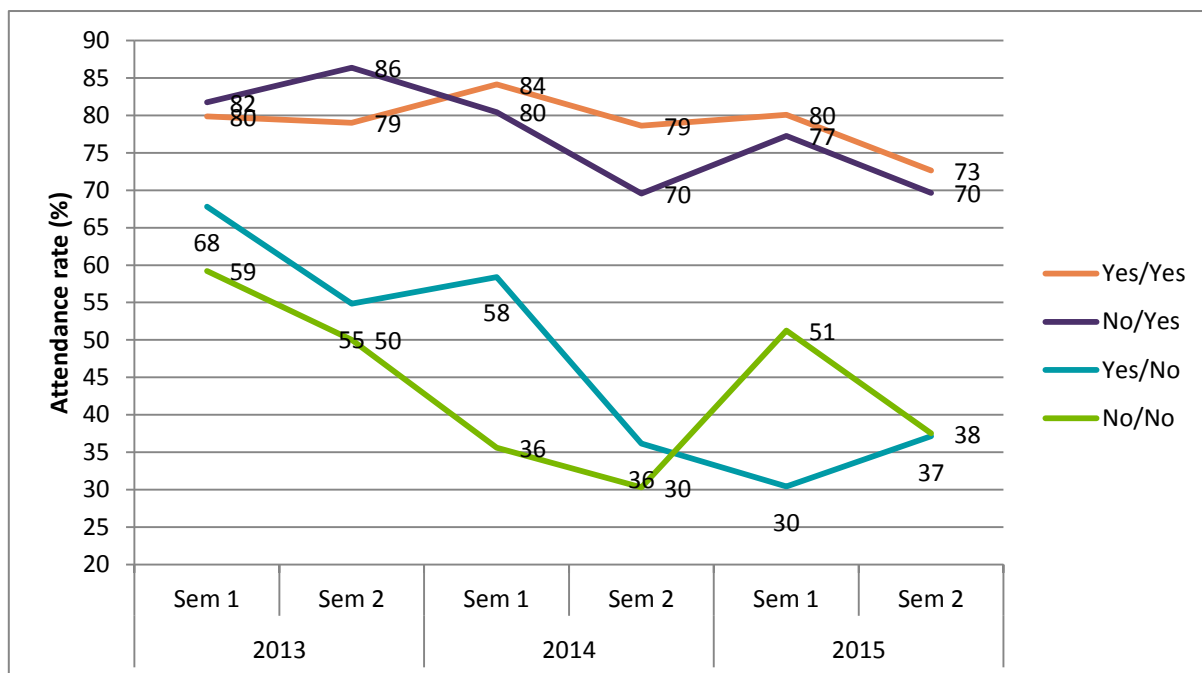
There are two main trends that can be seen in Figure 30. The first shows a steady decline in attendance rates between Term 1 and Term 3 of 2014. In this time those attending less than 60% of classes rose from 7 to 12 students, while those attending more than 80% decreased from 23 to 13. The improvements in Term 4, 2014 corresponded to reports of two boys at the Academy that managed to increase their attendance rates from 23% to 70% and 55% to 89%. However, another potential factor for the improvement in attendance in Term 4, 2015 is the removal of four boys from the Academy for poor behaviour and attendance. The second trend shows attendance rates increasing from Term 4, 2014 to Term 4, of 2015. During this time boys attending greater than 80% of classes rose to 23, while those attending less than 60% remained low at two. By the end of Term 4, 2015, the average attendance rate for boys at the Academy was 83%. Figures from the Academy scoping study indicate this is a 21% increase in average attendance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys compared to December 2013, before the Academy was established, when the average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Boys at Girrawheen was 62%.

This general trend is largely supported by the attendance data provided by WA Department of Education. Figure 31 provides the attendance rates of four cohorts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys who attended Girrawheen SHS in 2013 (prior to the establishment of the Academy) and who either enrolled in the Clontarf Academy in both 2014 and 2015 (orange line), enrolled in the Academy in 2014 and not in 2015 (blue line), did not enrol in the Academy in 2014 but did so in 2015 (purple line), or chose not to enrol in the academy at all (green line). The following trends emerge:

- Boys who attended the Academy in both years had, on average, a relative high and stable average attendance rate, which slightly declined in semester 2, 2015.

- Boys who attended the Academy in 2014 and left in 2015 had significant decline in average attendance rates during 2014. Average attendance rates a starting to improve by semester 2, 2015
- Boys who joined the Academy only in 2015 experienced a relatively stable average attendance rate over 2015, after a peak in semester 1, 2015. This is after a significant decline in average attendance rates over 2014, when they were not in the Academy
- Boys who were enrolled at the Academy in 2015 had higher average attendance rates than those boys who were not, consistent with the feedback provided by stakeholders
- Boys who chose not to attend the Academy at all reported the lowest average attendance rates, apart from a peak in semester 1, 2015 which is most likely aligned to the re-enrolment period in 2015.
- Like Cecil Andrews, the boys who joined the Academy in 2014 were a combination of boys with varying average attendance rates prior to the establishment of the Academy in 2013.
- Average attendance rates in general are declining between 2013 and 2015.

Figure 31: **Girrawheen Attendance rates from 2013 to 2015, broken down by engagement with Clontarf in 2014 and 2015<sup>7</sup>**



### Engagement

Teachers, parents and students all reported evidence of greater engagement with academic work, both in the classroom and at home. More interpersonal engagement with teachers and other students was also noted, including an increase in boys asking for help. One teacher commented on the benefit of boys not starting the day hungry.

<sup>7</sup> Variations in Clontarf data and WA DoE data may be due to timing of data collection.

Engagement with school work is often influenced by inadequate prior learning to cope with the curriculum level. A number of interviewees highlighted the problem of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys missing out on key parts of their primary school education and therefore entering high school with serious gaps in basic literacy and numeracy skills. As one teacher noted, ‘many Aboriginal high-school students can’t read’ and about half were below expected standards for their year level.

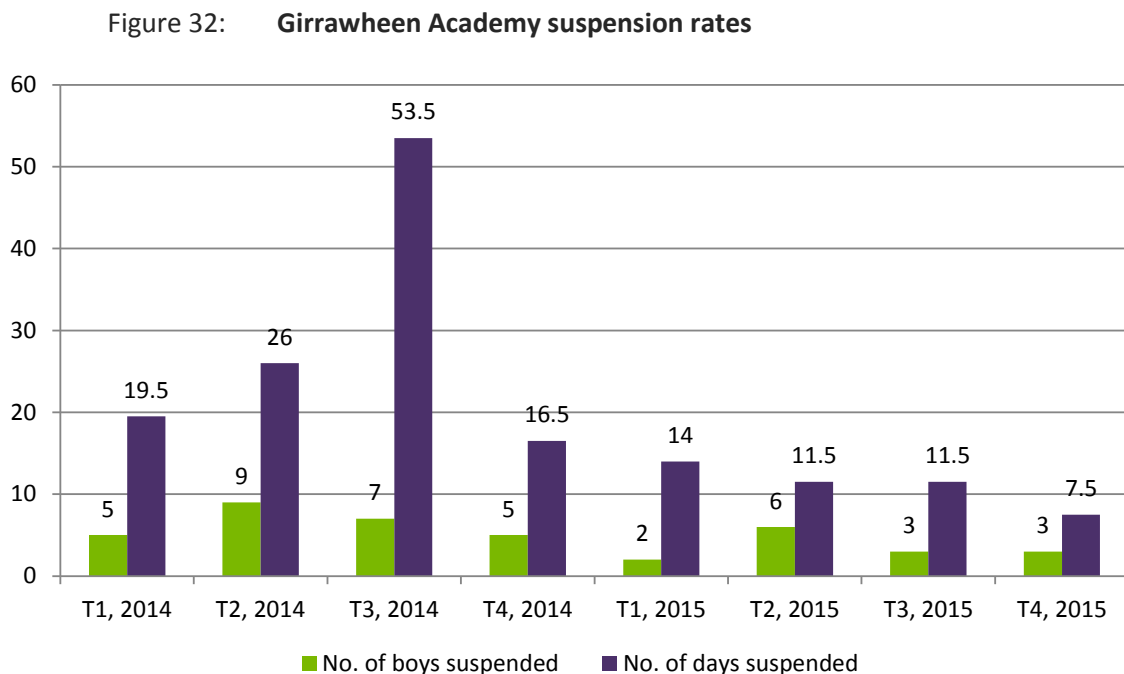
Overcoming the ‘shame’ that inhibits both attendance and engagement is a key milestone for the Academy programme, through creating a welcoming and non-judgemental environment and providing encouragement and assistance to boys in completing school work. While it falls within the schools area of responsibility, it was suggested that additional educational resources were needed to improve literacy and numeracy for the efforts of Academy staff members to realise better outcomes. Mention was made of the Follow the Dream inter-agency programme managed by the WA Department of Education, ‘but it’s for advanced kids – we need it for remedial kids.’

Academic Performance

Students and teachers all reported improved academic outcomes, particularly in relation to basic maths and literacy skills. School completion rates had also increased; in 2014, for the first time, four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys graduated from Year 12.

Discipline

Figure 32 shows the number of boys and the days they have been suspended since the introduction of the Academy at Girrawheen in Semester 1, 2014.



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

The data shows that overall the number of boys being suspended has remained relatively low, oscillating between two and nine boys a term. The spike in the number of days boys were suspended in Term 3, 2014 can be attributed to two boys that accounted for 40.5 days of suspension for threatening behaviour.

However, the number of suspension days declined steadily from Term 4, 2014 to Term 4, 2015. This encouraging data is reflected in the interviews undertaken with students and staff.

School staff members commented positively on the changes in personal attitude and behaviour of students attending the Academy. Teachers noted greater punctuality in getting to class, fewer 'behavioural issues' in class, greater evidence of boys taking responsibility for their actions and an overall perception that they were happier. The Academy had helped make school like home 'without the swearing, arguments, conflicts', said one teacher: 'They get to know better ways of talking and connecting to people.' Another teacher agreed: The boys are much more respectful and manage themselves better across the school.'

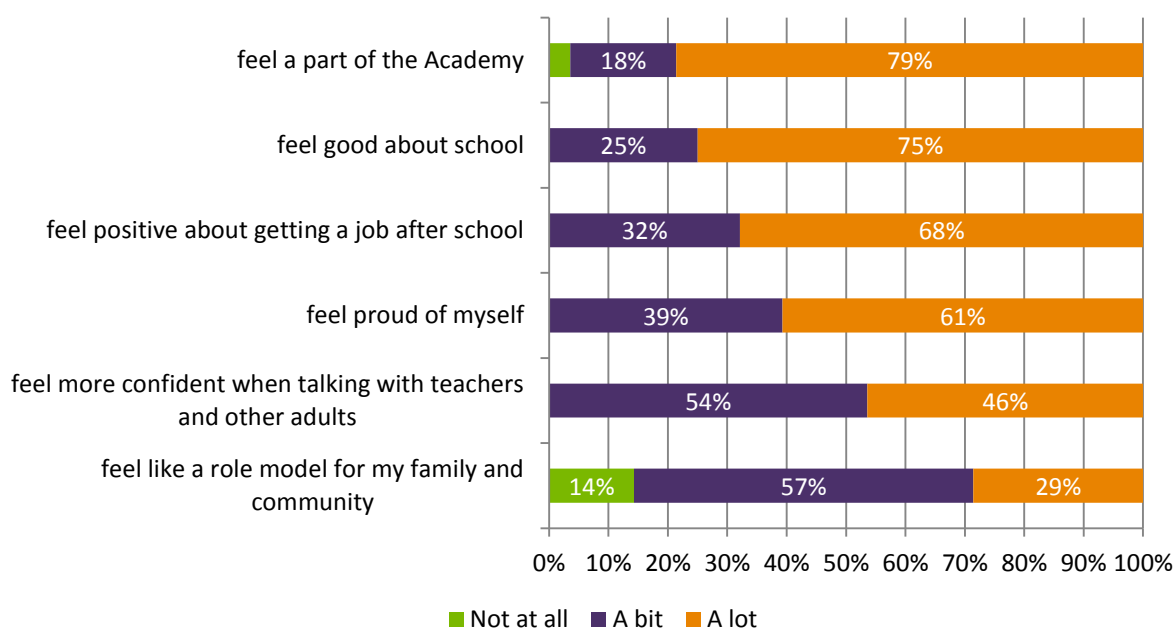
An important feature of the Clontarf programme's contribution to this outcome is the mediating role played by the Academy staff between the boys, their parents and the school. Parents reported confidence in Academy staff advocating for their sons within the school system and in keeping them informed about progress or problems. 'I can call them any time,' one parent related. 'It's easy to talk to them, at our level, at a black fellow level, no shame.'

### *Self-esteem*

Stakeholder feedback indicates the symbiotic relationship between better educational outcomes, greater self-esteem, pride and behaviour at school and home. As one teacher said, 'competence breeds confidence and it's transferrable', and it can also be noted that a key goal of the Clontarf ethos is to instil the self-confidence necessary to achieve other tangible outcomes.

Figure 33 shows feedback that boys at the Girrawheen Academy provided on belonging, self-confidence and leadership since attending the Academy. Twenty eight boys responded to this survey.

Figure 33: Since attending the Academy, I ....(n=28)<sup>8</sup>



**Note:** Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.

As can be seen from Figure 33, since attending the Academy:

- 100% of boys felt good about school
- 100% of boys felt positive about getting a job after school
- 100% of boys felt proud of themselves
- 100% of boys felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults
- 97% of boys felt a part of the Academy
- 86% of boys felt like a role model for their family and community

The boys interviewed highlighted that the Academy was ‘like a family’, in which they ‘helped each other out’, ‘encouraged each other’ and practised ‘teamwork’. Being ‘a part of something’ gave them confidence to face the world, take on challenges and aspire to better things. One school staff member noted the pride with which the boys wore their Academy shirts: ‘You can see the difference in their bodies – how they stand proud – and they tell other kids: “hey that’s not how we do it, bro”.’

Parents commented on signs of their sons’ increased pride in their own cultural identity, evidenced by more enthusiastic participation in events such as Indigenous dance performances, welcome-to-country ceremonies and public speaking.

### Life skills

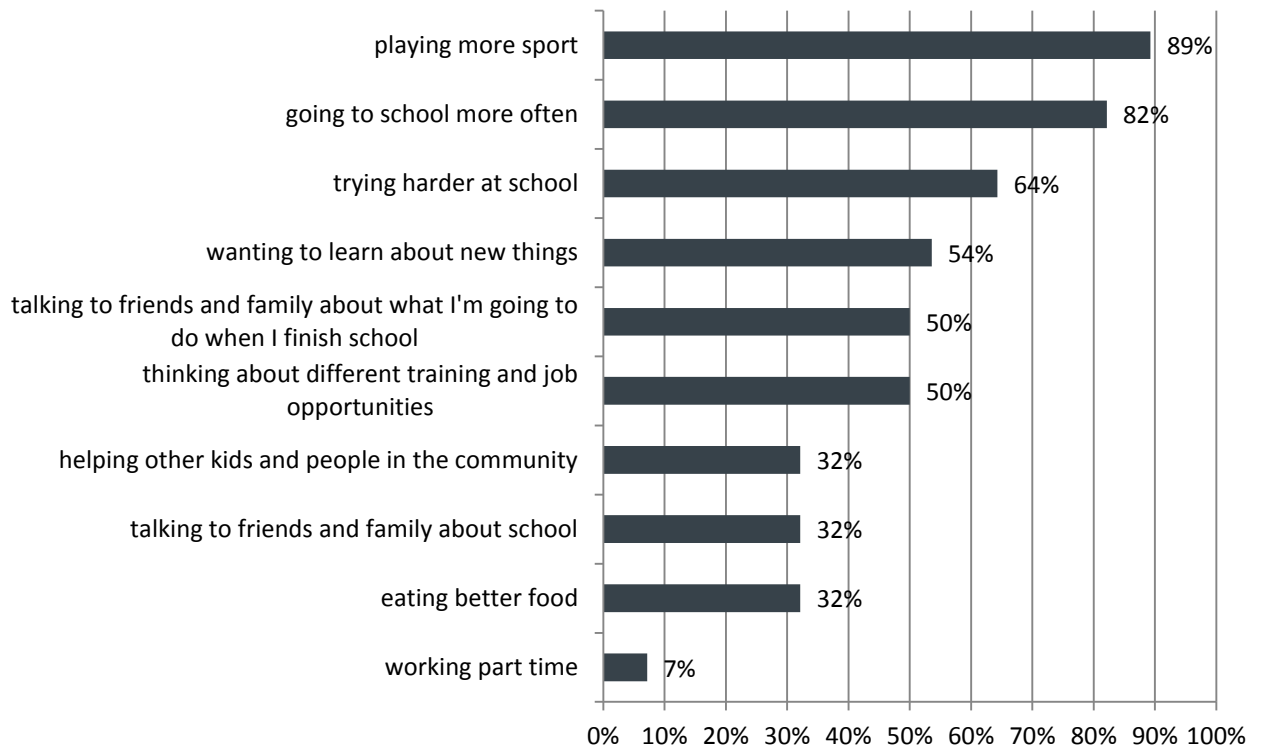
Self-discipline, teamwork, taking responsibility and working to achieve goals were among the important life skills that interviewees associated with participation in the Academy. One parent noted that if there were

<sup>8</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

any difficulties between the Clontarf boys, they would get together and resolve the problem among themselves: 'Biggest thing for Aboriginal kids – they learn to stick together.' Another said: 'They say they come as strangers and leave as brothers.'

Figure 34 presents the feedback from students who were asked to identify what life skills they learned through attending the Academy at Girrawheen.

Figure 34: **Since attending the Academy, I am...(n=28)<sup>9</sup>**



Engagement with school ranked highly, with 82% stating that they were going to school more often and a further 64% that they were trying harder at school.

In addition, approximately half of the respondents indicated that since becoming part of the Academy they wanted to learn new things, were thinking about different training and job opportunities, and talking to their friends and family about what they were going to do after they finished school.

Approximately one third of survey respondents stated that they were helping other kids and people in the community and eating better food since joining the Academy.

Particular emphasis emerged from stakeholder feedback about the degree to which the programme had encouraged boys to see themselves as leaders. The culture that had been developed, commented one Academy staff member, was that the senior boys led the way for the younger boys. Students also talked about their desire to be role models for others in the Academy, the school, their families and the wider community. Said one: 'Us older boys make sure the little guys are keeping it going the right way.'

<sup>9</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some response.

### *Employment prospects*

While the site visit did not elicit a great deal of substantive evidence of employment outcomes, with only a small numbers of graduates from the Girrawheen Academy so far, the anecdotal evidence of higher retention rates, academic performance and Year 12 completion rates points to better future job prospects among Academy participants. Several parents said their sons were the first in the family to graduate from high school and were hopeful they could now go on to succeed at whatever they chose to do.

Figure 33 shows strong agreement amongst respondents about the prospect of finding employment since attending the Academy at Girrawheen: 100% either felt a bit or a lot more confident about finding a job after school.

Figure 34 shows more varied results in terms of discussions of employment options after school. 50% of the boys who undertook the survey stated that they were talking to friends and family about what they are going to do when they finish school as well as thinking about different training and job opportunities.

Interviewees indicated positive feedback from employers about Academy students who had completed work placements, with one employer willing to offer a student a job, while other employers were actively requesting Academy students for work placements. These anecdotes suggest productive relationships are being built and that Clontarf's reputation is helping to open doors to employment opportunities – and as an Academy staff member noted: 'Our doors don't close when you finish Year 12.' Support is ongoing to ensure graduates are employed, in training or pursuing further education.

Challenging wider community stereotypes and overcoming barely acknowledged prejudices may also be almost as important as the Academy's role in helping individuals to achieve educational outcomes. Interviewees were enthusiastic about the way the Academy programme had enabled people in the wider community to see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and young men in a more positive light. 'It gives people an opportunity to see all these Aboriginal boys – how amazing they are, how respectful they are,' said one stakeholder. 'I think in the wider community they have a huge impact.'

### **Unintended Consequences**

As with other Academy implementations, the positive changes for boys at Girrawheen Senior High School focused attention on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls. All school staff members interviewed during the site visit expressed desire for a similar programme for females. It was noted, though, that the improved outcomes among boys due to the Academy appeared to have had some positive flow-on effects, with suggestions of increased attendance rates, engagement and enrolment among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls.

As might be expected, there was feedback of some initial resentment being expressed among non-Indigenous students about unfair benefits being given to the boys in Academy – including their own room with a pool table, and special activities including the opportunity to go on camps during term time. However, interviewees reported that these resentments softened over time and attitudes of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students towards the Academy became more positive. This change, it was suggested, was due to the active engagement of the Academy staff in school and sporting activities; an open invitation to come into the Academy room and share some of the resources; and the positive change in Academy boys being less disruptive in class and the school grounds.



Though not necessarily an ‘unintended’ consequence, it is worth noting that one distinctive aspect of the positive change in the culture at Girrawheen has been the significant decline in conflict between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the school’s roughly equal number of African students. Clontarf staff members have been proactive in bridging the cultural divide by organising basketball and football competitions between the two groups, as well as in making specific efforts to welcome African-born students and their parents into the Academy to share food, enjoy the facilities or just ‘hang out’. Parents, students and staff members noted fewer fights and more friendships. ‘Where I live the Indigenous fellows will fight with the African kids,’ one parent commented. ‘I never thought that I would see my boys mixing with African boys.’

## Case Study: Swan View Academy, WA

### Overview

The Swan View Academy is hosted by Swan View Senior High School in Swan View, WA, a suburb in the Perth Hills area about 25 km east of the CBD. The school has approximately 570 students from Years 7 to 12, with the first Year 7 cohort (as with other West Australian schools) joining the campus in 2015.

The school has, relative to the other Perth host schools examined, a lower proportion of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds (10%) and a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (20%). This compares to the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Swan View and surrounding suburbs ranging from 4% to 10%, and less than 3% for the Shire of Mundaring (population 36,500), the local government area in which the school is nominally situated.

Contributing to the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment may be its reputation in specialist programmes such as in basketball and performing arts, and its embrace of multiple initiatives to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including Follow The Dream (tuition and mentoring for high achievers), AIME (mentoring by university student volunteers) and FLOURISH (targeted at girls).

For this case study, interviews were conducted with 12 key stakeholders including five students, five school staff members and two Clontarf staff members during a site visit in November 2015.

#### Key facts: Swan View Academy, WA

Academy commencement date: Term 2, 2014

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at February, 2013: 44

Target Academy enrolment number: 50

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 34

### Implementation

Stakeholder feedback indicated smooth integration of the Swan View Academy into the life and culture of the school. School staff members said the implementation process was transparent and staff were kept well-informed, with information sessions and forums at which they were able to ask questions and raise any concerns. Academy staff members described 'fantastic support' and the building of very strong working relationships with the school's leadership, teaching and support staff, and with existing academic, sporting and support programmes. 'There's no separation between the school and the Academy,' said one Academy staff member. 'We are the Swan View Clontarf Academy; we aren't the Clontarf Academy at Swan View.'

While the school's principal, appointed at the beginning 2014, was not involved in the scoping and planning process from the outset, she was familiar with the Clontarf ethos from previous work placements at host schools and described herself as an active advocate and supporter of the programme, sending 'a very clear message that this is a really important programme for the school'.

Some initial reservations about the Academy establishment were acknowledged by several school staff members. There had been perceptions it was just a 'football programme' that might potentially impact negatively on existing programmes, both sporting and academic. There were fears the Academy might set lower standards for acceptable behaviour, sending mixed messages to participants and undermining the school's own disciplinary regime (such as withdrawing excursion privileges). There were concerns the Academy, with its own uniform, might create divisions within the student population. These misgivings, however, had been allayed. 'Now everyone can see the positives of the programme,' one teacher said, 'there's no hesitation.' Another teacher agreed: 'If Clontarf didn't play a game of football, the boys would still go there. It's not about football.'

Evidence cited demonstrating the Academy had integrated well with the school included the joint work between school teachers and students when outfitting the Academy rooms; standing invitations by Academy staff members for school staff (and other students) to join in activities; school staff coming to the Academy rooms; collaboration between Academy and support staff such as counsellors and psychologists; delivery of joint programmes including health checks; Academy staff attendance at weekly leadership and staff meetings along with other functions; and Academy staff's involvement in coaching school football teams. School staff interviewed expressed appreciation for the extra support provided by the Academy staff in classrooms and around the school grounds.

As with other case studies, interviewees highlighted the importance of Clontarf selecting staff who are competent, committed and credible. Swan View's Academy staff were overwhelmingly described in glowing terms: 'awesome'; 'nothing but respectful and inclusive'; 'doing a brilliant job'. It was noted they were direct in addressing issues or problem behaviour but in a manner that was 'consistent', 'positive', 'generous', 'non-judgemental' and 'non-authoritarian'. They were acknowledged for being strong advocates for the Academy students, who knew 'they are on their side'.

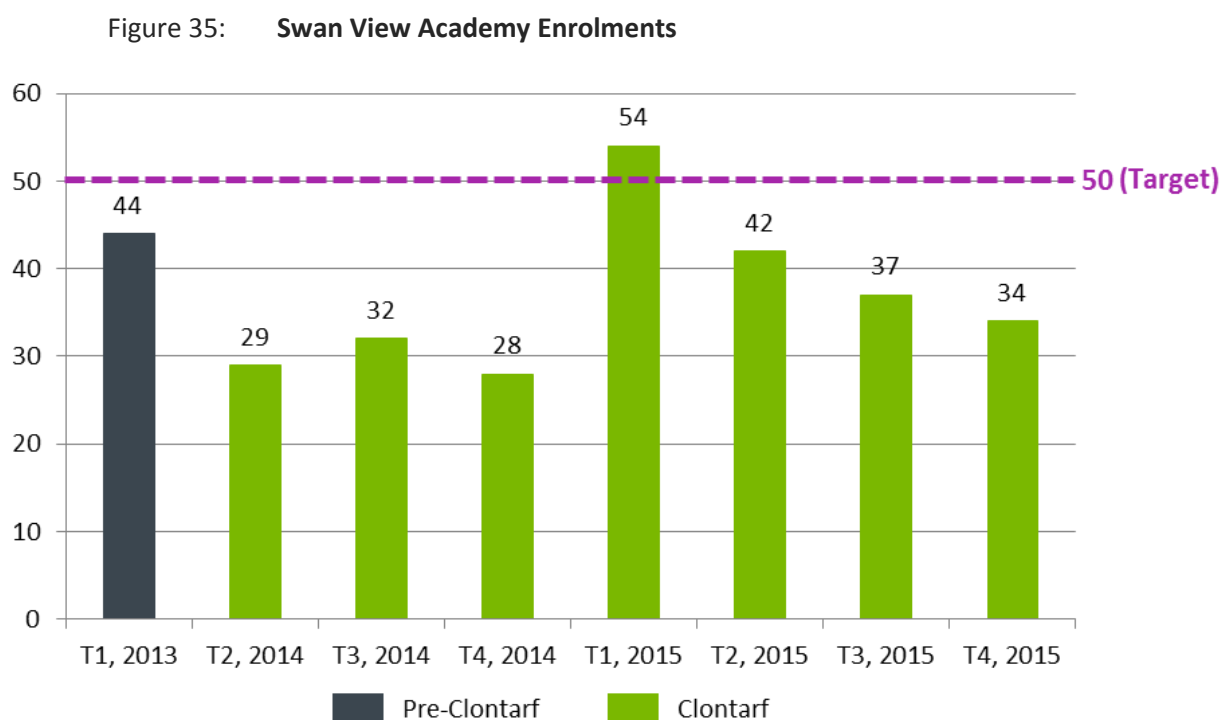
Some traction, however, may have been lost due to personnel changes mid-way through 2015, when both of the founding Academy staff members moved on within a relatively short time. As might be expected for a programme heavily dependent on forging bonds of trust, this change engendered disappointment and a degree of disjunction, with some repetition of effort required in building relationships with students, their families, school staff and other stakeholders.

To what extent the changeover has disrupted the Academy's progress is difficult to gauge. On the one hand, strong feelings were expressed about the new staff having 'big shoes to fill'. This was acknowledged by the Academy staff members themselves: they did not have the depth of experience of their predecessors, were not familiar with the local area, and did not have instant rapport with students and their families. 'It's taking time to establish who we are in the community', one of the Academy staff members said. 'Some question: Who is this white boy teaching my son?'

On the other hand, it was noted that the Clontarf brand was well-known and well-regarded within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. It had a reputation for having great staff and what one teacher involved in the school's Indigenous education programmes described as a well-articulated model with a 'sophisticated marketing strategy' for building effective relationships.

## Outcomes

Figure 35 presents the enrolment figures for boys at the Academy in Swan View from Term 2, 2014 to Term 4, 2015.



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

As shown in Figure 35, the Swan View Academy had 29 boys enrolled by the end of its first term of operation (Term 2, 2014) and finished the year with 28. In the first term of 2015, the number of boys in the programme rose to 54, with particularly strong enrolment from the school's new Year 7 cohort. At the end of Term 4, 2015 (during which the site visit occurred) 34 boys were enrolled in the programme. Exits from the programme over the year were due to a combination of boys moving out of the area, low Academy attendance, exclusionary behaviour and school refusals. The target for the Swan View Academy under the Expansion Measure is 50 students at maturity.

According to the Academy scoping study, in February 2013, prior to the establishment of the Academy, there were 44 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male enrolments in Swan View SHS.

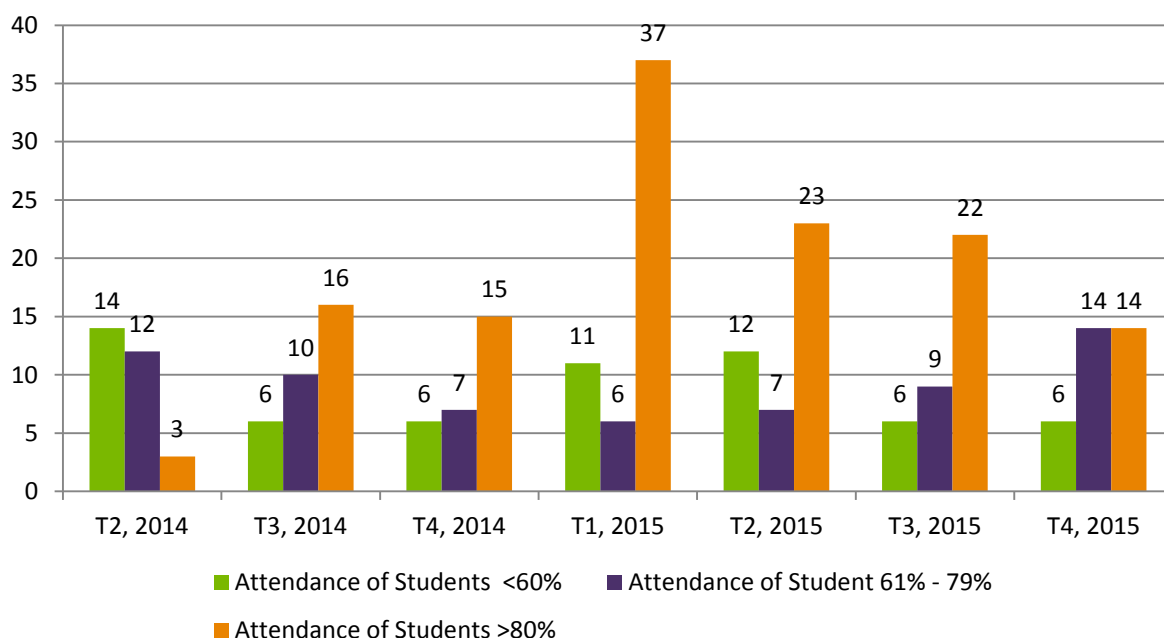
## Education

### Attendance

Figure 36 shows the attendance figures for boys at the Academy in Swan View from Term 2, 2014 to Term 4, 2015. It shows that attendance figures improved substantially from Term 2, 2014 to Term 1, 2015. However, there was a downward trend after Term 1, 2015. The trend downward is partially explained by a similar trend in enrolment numbers during that same period. Despite this, boys with an attendance rates between 61% and 79% grew while those attending 80% or more declined. By the end of Term 4, 2015 the average attendance rate for Academy boys was 75%.

It is worth noting that, according to the Academy scoping documentation, the average attendance rate for Indigenous males enrolled at Swan View SHS was 73% in Semester 1, 2013.

Figure 36: **Swan View Academy Attendance**



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

Several interviewees noted the challenges presented by a small number of boys with chronically low attendance and other behavioural issues. ‘I think you have to sacrifice some boys who don’t want to engage to focus on the boys who do want to be there; they are the ones you can save,’ commented one teacher. ‘Having to spend a lot of time and energy working with kids who are rampaging around throwing rocks is pulling them away from the boys who are doing the right thing.’ For Academy staff, though, this is a difficult judgement call.

That said, qualitative feedback was positive about the Academy programme’s general contribution to improved attendance. School staff credited the programme for its multidimensional approach – one that is not so much ‘carrots and sticks’ as ‘carrots, more carrots, or no carrots’.

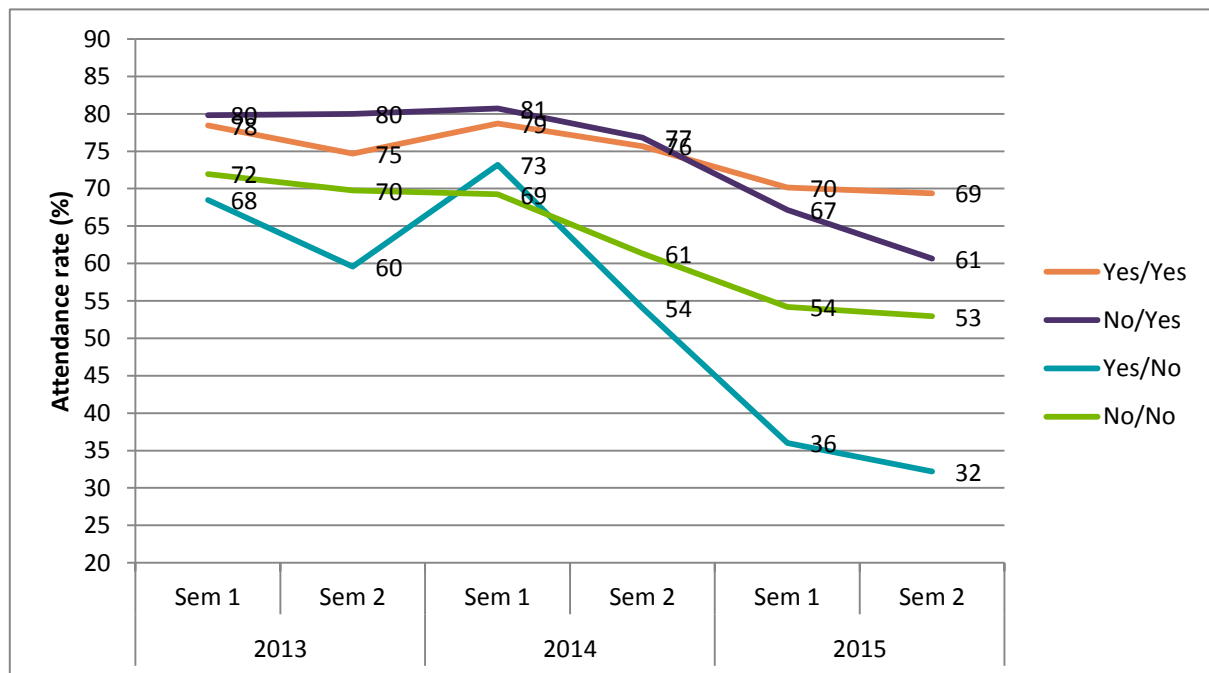
Along with the activities and incentives to motivate attendance (including tangible rewards and positive feedback), a number of interviewees cited the value of the more personal interventions: that Academy staff would follow up on any student absent from the morning roll call and offer to pick them up from home; the facilities offered in the Academy room to ensure every boy had clean clothes; and the efforts to make sure every boy ate breakfast and lunch. ‘None of those students are just naughty young men who don’t come to school,’ commented the principal. ‘It’s a broader issue for them at home’. Another teacher agreed: ‘We don’t know what is happening behind closed doors to help get the boys to class. I just wish we had the same for every kid in the school.’

This general trend is largely supported by the attendance data provided by WA Department of Education. Figure 37 provides the attendance rates of four cohorts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys who attended Girrawheen SHS in 2013 (prior to the establishment of the Academy) and who either enrolled in the Clontarf Academy in both 2014 and 2015 (orange line), enrolled in the Academy in 2014 and not in

2015 (blue line), did not enrol in the Academy in 2014 but did so in 2015 (purple line), or chose not to enrol in the academy at all (green line). The following trends emerge:

- Boys who attended the Academy in both years had, on average, a relative high average attendance rate. However, average attendance rates have declined over the 2014-2015 period
- Boys who attended the Academy in 2014 and left in 2015 had significant decline in average attendance rates during 2014. This is after a peak in attendance that occurred in semester 1, 2014, at the establishment of the Academy. Average attendance rates continued to decline in 2015
- Average attendance rates for boys who joined the Academy only in 2015 have declined over this period. This decline continues the trend from 2014, after a relatively stable period in 2013.
- Boys who were enrolled at the Academy in 2015 had higher average attendance rates than those boys who were not.
- Boys who chose not to attend the Academy at all displayed a general decline in average attendance rates between 2013 and 2015.
- Like the other WA Expansion Academy sites, the boys who joined the Academy in 2014 were a combination of boys with varying average attendance rates prior to the establishment of the Academy in 2013.
- Average attendance rates in general are declining between 2013 and 2015.

Figure 37: **Swan View Attendance rates from 2013 to 2015, broken down by engagement with Clontarf in 2014 and 2015<sup>10</sup>**



<sup>10</sup> Variations in Clontarf data and WA DoE data may be due to timing of data collection.

### Engagement

Numerous cases were cited of greater engagement by Academy boys within class and with school life more generally. Examples included a new willingness to speak in front of others, and active participation in school assemblies. Contrary to initial concerns the Academy might foster insularity within the school, there was a general perception of more open and friendlier interaction with teachers and other students, contributing to a better learning environment for all.

While improved engagement is closely linked to greater self-confidence, the Academy also appears to have provided useful opportunities for students and teachers to get to know each other in a less formal context. One teacher new to the school in 2015 described her early 'challenging' experiences with 'some of the Clontarf boys'. After joining in an Academy running challenge, she noticed 'a complete turnaround' in attitudes: From 'I don't want to do this work' to 'I'll do this work for you, I'm going to sit here and do this work for you'. I've seen the grades: One boy's grades have really improved. Another boy wouldn't even listen to anything I would say; now his grades have gone from E to almost a C.'

### Academic performance

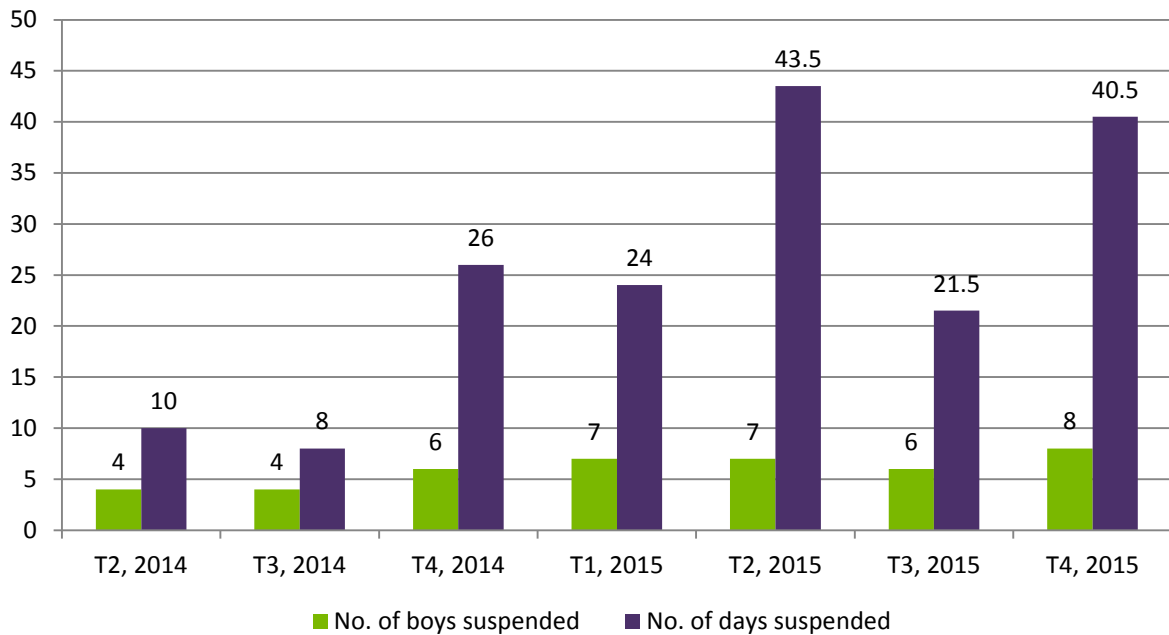
While students and teachers related similar anecdotes of improved grades to the one above, as well as perceptions of generally improving academic performance, there is merit in heeding the advice of the school principal that (as with other quantitative measures) it is still too early in the life of the Academy programme to look for or to want to claim major changes in outcomes; time must be allowed for additional data to be collected and assessed.

This sober approach applies even more so to the Academy's impact on retention and school completion rates. The number of Academy students who have successfully completed Year 12 illustrates the point: there were no Year 12 students at all in the programme in 2014 and five in 2015, with three graduating (while one left school mid-year to pursue a TAFE course). It is inappropriate to draw conclusions from such limited data given that the Academy has only been operating for 12 months.

### Discipline

Figure 38 shows suspension rates for students at Swan View from Term 2, 2014 to Term 4, 2015. The data shows that the number of boys being suspended remained relatively stable from Term 2, 2014 to Term 4, 2015. However, there has been a trending increase in the number of days suspended. These statistics show that relatively few people were responsible for the overall days of suspension and that the overall discipline of the cohort has been positive.

Figure 38: Swan View Academy Suspensions



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

Qualitative feedback is equally valid, and on this measure there was considerable feedback of noticeable improvements in behaviour. Teachers remarked on the difference seen in how Academy participants engaged with fellow students, teachers and other adults. The school principal related the transformation in one boy who had been ‘disengaged, a real lad, real naughty’ but was now on the student council: ‘He comes with me to primary schools and speaks to the students.’ Interviewees noted the Academy exhibited strong peer reinforcement of appropriate behaviour, with older boys taking on responsibility as role models. ‘There’s an expectation that you will behave in a particular way, and the kids are living up to that,’ said one teacher. Another teacher related how an older boy would admonish younger boys: ‘This isn’t the way we roll in Clontarf.’

### Self-esteem

All the students interviewed during the site visit described positive feelings from participating in the Academy programme, including ‘feeling like I belong here’ and having greater confidence about their ability to complete school work due to the support provided by Clontarf staff. ‘I was struggling before Clontarf came,’ related one student. ‘I was thinking of dropping out but they come and helped me and I thought: I can do this, I can stay.’ The Academy was routinely described as being ‘like one big family’, a band of ‘brothers’ in support and acceptance ensured ‘no-one is isolated’. Said one student: ‘I know what I do, no matter what I do, good or bad, they aren’t going to judge me.’ As a result students felt comfortable about turning to the Academy for help if there were problems at home or they didn’t have food.

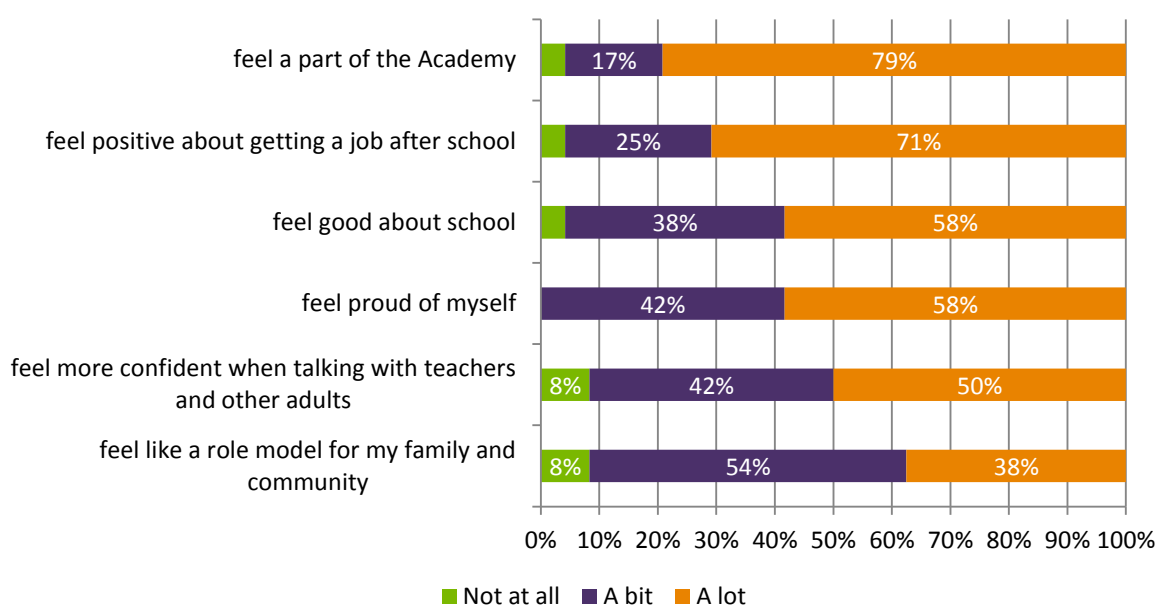
Evidence cited of greater self-esteem included the ‘palpable sense of pride’ when students wore their Clontarf t-shirts and a greater willingness to embrace their cultural identity through participating in events such as NAIDOC week. One teacher described a noticeable improvement in the demeanour and interactions within a class cohort over the course of 2015. Another noted that a Clontarf participant had become the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boy in memory willing to stand for election to the student council: ‘We’ve had girls, yes, but not boys – and he put his hand up!’



‘I wasn’t sure what Clontarf would be doing with the students but one of the things that I am really aware of is how shy our boys can be,’ noted one teacher. ‘Seeing our boys standing up at assembly and speaking never, ever would have happened before Clontarf.’ Another teacher concurred: ‘I didn’t expect such a quick turnaround in the boys.’

Figure 39 illustrates the responses from the boys at Swan View about their sense of belonging in the Academy, school as well as self-esteem and leadership qualities.

Figure 39: **Since joining the Academy, I...(n=24)<sup>11</sup>**



**Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.**

As can be seen from Figure 39, since attending the Academy:

- 96% of boys felt good about school
- 96% of boys felt positive about getting a job after school
- 100% of boys felt proud of themselves
- 92% of boys felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults
- 92% of boys felt like a role model for their family and community.

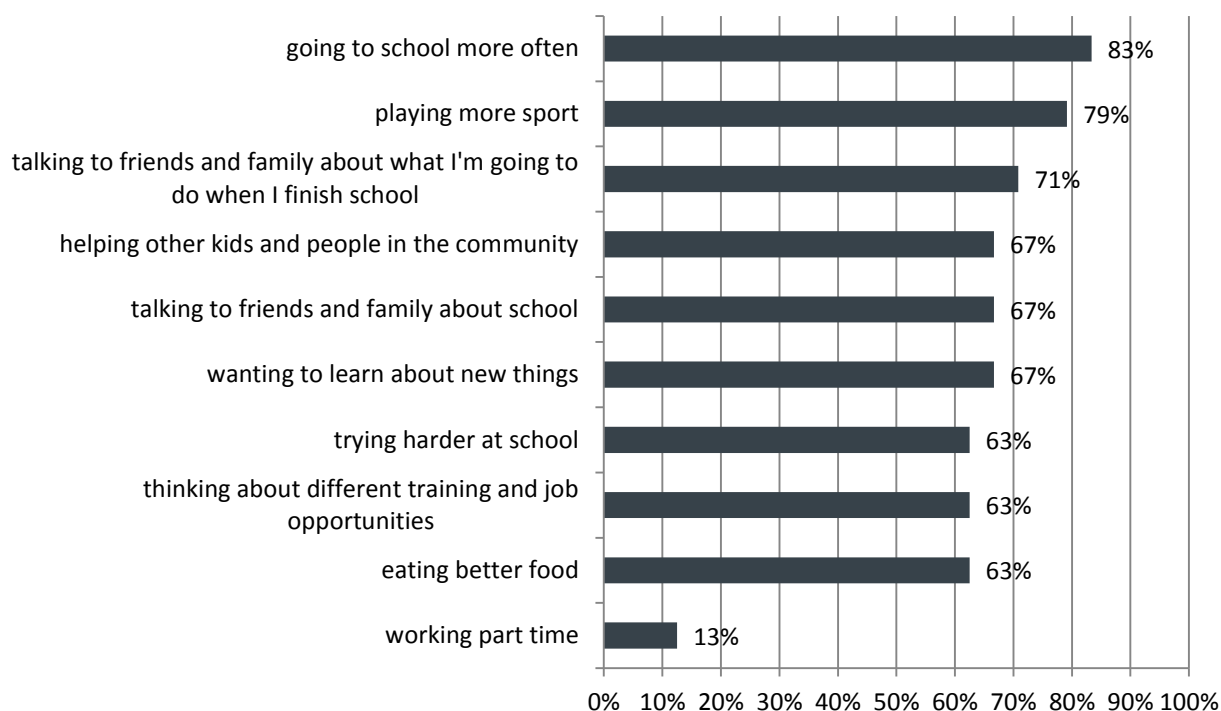
### Life skills

Greater self-confidence, self-awareness and self-discipline were three key attributes interviewees indicated the Academy had helped foster within themselves, as well as teamwork, caring for others and taking responsibility in their community. Among the Academy activities contributing to these outcomes, students highlighted participating in clean-ups and tree plantings, learning about different groups and organisations through off-site excursions and visiting community members including Indigenous elders.

<sup>11</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

Figure 40 illustrates how the boys at Swan View have felt their engagement with school, health and leadership qualities develop since attending the Academy.

Figure 40: **Since attending the Academy, I am...(n=24)<sup>12</sup>**



There was a high level of agreement in the boys about their engagement with school improving since attending the Academy. 83% identified that they were going to school more often, while 63% said they were trying harder at school. To a similar extent, 67% acknowledged that they were wanting to learn about new things since attending the Academy.

The data in Figure 40 shows that there has been strong agreement amongst students on their healthy living since attending the Academy. 79% stated that they were playing more sport, and a further 63% were eating better food.

To a similar extent there was agreement on the development of leadership qualities, with 67% of boys stating that they were helping other kids and people in the community since attending the Academy.

### *Employment prospects*

While the Swan View Academy's short period of establishment and low number of graduates makes it difficult to assess any substantive improvements in employment outcomes, positive feedback regarding the aforementioned outcomes indicate higher hopes for the future.

A number of students described the changes in their own aspirations for training, further study and employment after school. One student described how previously he was 'just sitting at home, doing

<sup>12</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some response.

nothing' but was now pursuing Certificate IV qualifications with a view to gaining a carpentry apprenticeship. Another aspired to higher education: 'Two years ago I wouldn't have thought of it – I was lazy and didn't want to come to school,' revealed one student. 'If I stay at school, stay on the right track, do my school work, I'll be able to go to uni.'

It was noted that the Academy staff's active efforts to build relationships and partnerships with potential employers had assisted some students in gaining part-time employment in the local area. Anecdotes included 'the first Clontarf kid to get a part-time job' (working at McDonald's) and a 2015 graduate doing a part-time paid traineeship at a hospital.

Figure 39 shows that there was a high level of optimism amongst the boys at Swan View when it came to employment prospects, 96% either feeling a bit or a lot positive about getting a job after school. Similar enthusiasm was displayed in Figure 40, where 71% stated they were talking to friends and family about what they are going to do when they finish school and 63% indicated they were thinking about different training and job. A further 13% were working part time since attending the Academy.

## Unintended consequences

As with other Academy implementations, the most significant 'unintended' consequence at Swan View has been to focus attention on the lack of similar resources and support for other students, whether as part of defined disadvantaged group or as individuals. Interviewees mentioned the need for similar resources for girls, non-Indigenous students, and younger boys: 'If you are having a conversation with family about a six-year-old,' the principal commented, 'that tells us that we need to get to the families earlier. How do we get the programme into the primary school?'

Concerns about gender inequity have to some extent been mitigated at Swan View SHS by the resources offered through the (co-educational) Follow the Dream programme and the FLOURISH programme specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls, though it was noted these programmes did not have the same level of resourcing as the Clontarf programme.

## Case Study: Endeavour Clontarf Academy, NSW

### Overview

The Endeavour Clontarf Academy is hosted by Endeavour Sports High School in Caringbah, NSW, a suburb within Sydney's 'Shire' region about 25 km south of the CBD and 5 km west of Cronulla.

The school has an enrolment of approximately 730 students from Years 7 to 12. One of seven designated sport high schools in NSW, it draws its student intake from a wide geographic area and has about twice as many boys as girls. More than half of all students participate in its targeted sports programme, covering 13 different sports as well as fitness and dance.

The school is committed to providing opportunities for Indigenous students, with the Kirinari Aboriginal Hostel in neighbouring Sylvania providing school-term accommodation for up to 30 boys from rural and regional areas (including Walgett, Kempsey, Lake Cargelligo and Moree). As at Term 1, 2015, the school had an enrolment of 46 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys.<sup>13</sup> The number of Indigenous students as a proportion of enrolled students (9%)<sup>14</sup> is significantly higher than other secondary schools in the area (which range from 0 to 3%).

The Shire of Sutherland is one of Sydney's least culturally diverse local government areas; less than 15% of households speak languages other than English and just 0.8% of the population (of about 211,000) is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

For this case study, interviews were conducted with 11 key stakeholders including students from Years 7 – 12; parents, school staff, community organisations and Academy staff during a site visit in March 2016.

#### Key facts: Endeavour Academy, NSW

Academy commencement date: Term 2, 2015

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion: 46 (Term 1, 2015)

Target Academy enrolment number: 50

Academy enrolment number Term 4, 2015: 53

### Implementation

While the Endeavour school's specialised sport programme and relatively large cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students would seem to make it an obvious candidate as an Academy host, it is these very factors that initially counted against the idea. In particular, there were concerns, according to school staff, that an Academy would reinforce community perceptions of Endeavour as a sports-only school with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students when the school was actively seeking to counter such perceptions and gain greater recognition for its academic programme.

---

<sup>13</sup> Data from the Department of Education and Training, NSW

<sup>14</sup> Myschool.edu.au

Two factors were identified as influencing the decision to implement an Academy: first, recognition of the school's student demographics and the opportunity to trial a programme that could potentially be life-changing; Second, and perhaps more importantly, knowledge that the Academy's inaugural director would be the person who had championed the idea. Jeff Hardy is a former first grade player in the National Rugby League (NRL) who had been a member of the Endeavour staff for several years in sport and coaching capacities. It was his attributes and advocacy that 'tipped it in favour of going ahead', said one school staff member: 'He is a high-profile man with a reputation of character and is well-respected in the community. He was a teacher here at Endeavour and so was a strong endorsement for the programme.' With the principal's support, meetings with Clontarf management followed an implementation proposal which was presented to school staff and the committee of the Parents and Citizens Association.

Perhaps as a response to concerns about the school's reputation, the original plan modelled the Endeavour Academy as a 'finishing school' for regional Academies, with the 'cream of the crop' in performance and talent being given the chance to take advantage of the sporting and academic programme opportunities at Endeavour.

Though that model has not eventuated, with the Academy operating on standard lines, it did not appear to have detracted from perceptions about overall implementation success (which has included boosting the school's enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and numbers at the Kirinari hostel). That success did, however, bring with it two areas of concern for school staff, which are itemised in this case study's discussion of unintended consequences.

Those interviewed overwhelmingly attributed the success of the first year of operations to the reputation and dedication of the Academy staff, with the Director supported by an Operations Officer also with strong ties to Endeavour (being a former school captain). 'It is so important for the boys to have a good male role model and the quality of the staff and the time and effort they invest in the programme is key,' said one school stakeholder. Another agreed: 'Being able to say to parents during a challenging situation that Jeff is involved has been such an important thing to clear the way and open up the process. That's the kind of respect and influence he has.'

However, with a change of Academy personnel likely at the time of the site interviews, concerns were expressed about finding someone to fill the Director's role. (Jeff Hardy is now one of Clontarf's NSW Regional Managers). Members of the school's leadership term expressed desire for the school to have a greater future role in Academy staff selection – not just to ensure the same high calibre of staff were recruited, it was explained, but also to share the responsibility if staff choice didn't work out.

While at the site visit, school staff and students, as well as the two Academy staff, suggested that having a third staff member was needed for the Academy to operate more effectively. It was noted that other obligations often meant there was no-one to keep the Academy room open or to respond to problems at the school or hostel. Three Academy staff was seen as the minimum to invest the time needed to form strong personal relationships with Academy students as contribute to the activities of the wider school community. Since the site visit Clontarf has engaged a third staff member at Endeavour.

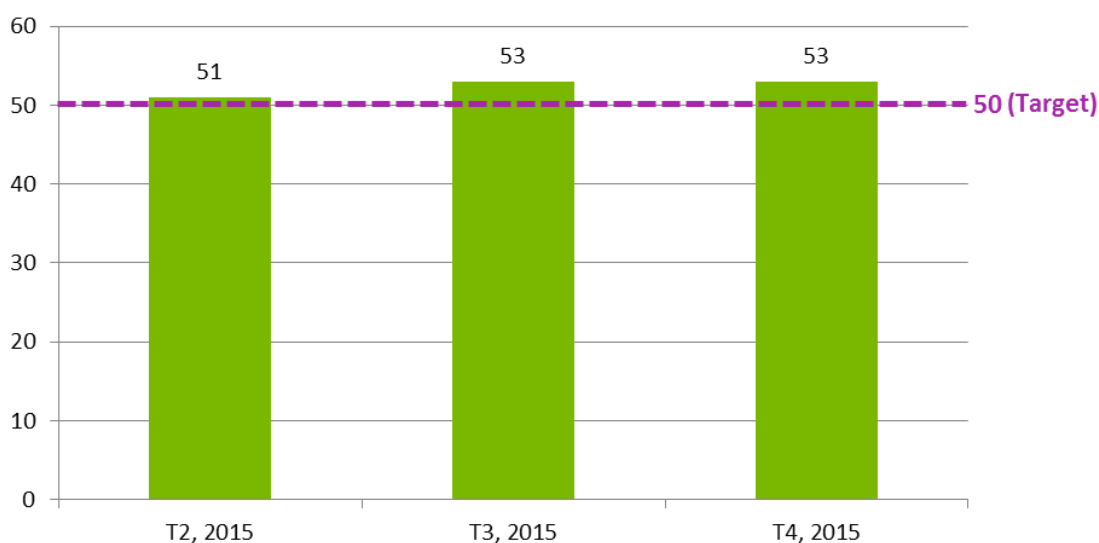
## Outcomes

The Endeavour Academy ended its first year of operations (2015) with 53 boys enrolled in the programme as shown in Figure 41. With enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students anticipated to

increase, it was expected at the time of the site visit that number would surpass 60 in 2016. Endeavour is contracted for 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at maturity as part of the Expansion Measure.

As the Endeavour Academy is the most recent implementation within the NSW expansion, there are limitations to the outcomes that can be quantified, attributed directly to the programme or compared with other Academies. In many cases stakeholders felt it was too soon to pass judgement on how the programme was performing. However, a number of indicators were pointed to as signs of early success.

Figure 41: Endeavour Academy Enrolments



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

It must also be noted that school staff believed other programmes embraced by the school to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education outcomes have been contributing to the positive results, making it inappropriate to apportion sole credit to the Clontarf programme. Some suggested the Academy's influence was more important for new students from regional areas rather than for students already at the school for a number of years.

*Clontarf is a very strong program that will be definitely contributing to those [positive] results, but we were already doing a lot to create the same outcomes. What [Clontarf] does do differently is to bring boys from the country to access those experiences and programmes.*

## Education

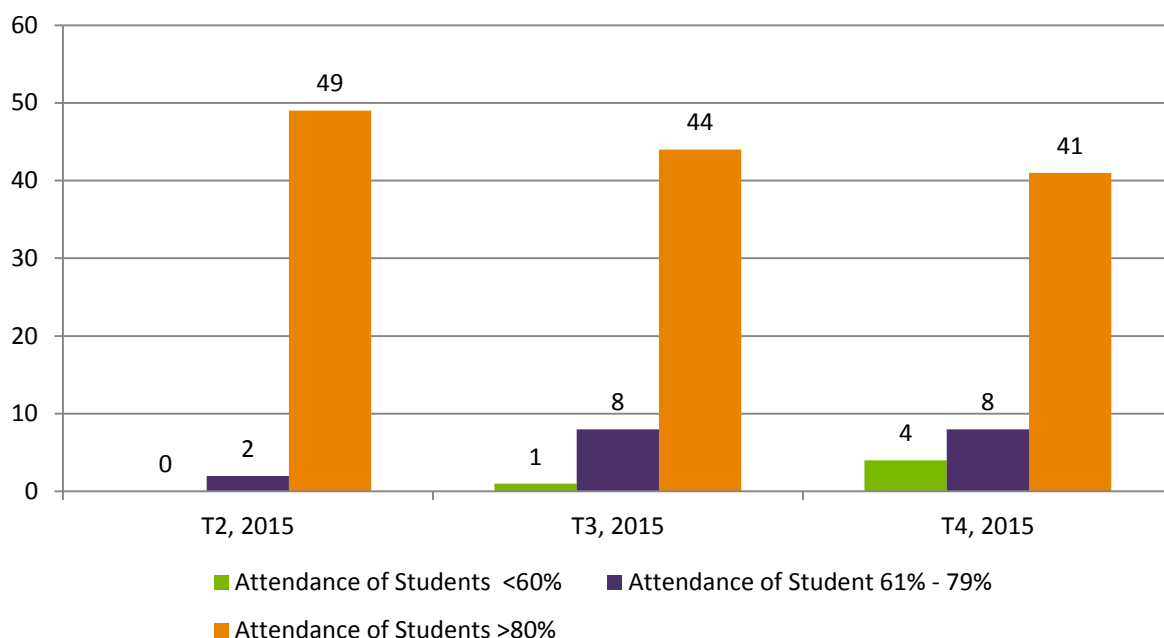
### Attendance

The Academy's data indicates generally strong results with the exception of one class cohort where lengthy absences by several students significantly suppressed the group's average attendance rate. The impact of outlier effects underlines the caution with which statistics for a relatively small group with limited data points should be treated.

Nonetheless, feedback tended to support the perception that the Academy has contributed to improved attendance rates. As can be seen in Figure 42 below, the majority of students attended more than 80% of school days. Overall, by the end of Term 4, 2015, the average attendance rate for boys at the Academy

was 86%. According to the Term 4, 2015 Director’s Report, the key issue with attendance is mainly restricted to the Year 10 cohort, which is skewing the aggregate data for the Academy population.

Figure 42: Endeavour Academy Attendance



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

An additional line of supporting evidence was provided by hostel staff about a decline in ‘N’ warnings – cautionary notes issued by the school about students at risk of receiving non-completion results in HSC subjects. Before the Academy began, staff said, the hostel had received two or three ‘N’ warnings a week for students failing to attend class; now whole weeks went by without one – something they ‘never imagined was possible’. Hostel staff also mentioned that Academy staff’s role in mediating between school staff and students has also led to better communication between school and hostel – ‘passing on positive messages if the boys are doing well, rather than always bringing bad news’.

‘It has changed my attendance.’ said one student. ‘I was here at Endeavour before Clontarf came and now it has gone up. It is from the rewards, but also the mentors make me feel welcome.’

### Engagement

The senior Academy students interviewed indicated they felt more positive about school, more interested in learning, and more motivated to work harder since joining the Academy. These outcomes were attributed to the sense of belonging they experienced being part of the programme. ‘Back at home I never went to school but here I feel good about myself coming every day and wanting to learn,’ said one student. ‘They make you feel welcome and part of the school, not left out.’ Another student agreed: It has changed my attitude to learning. Now we have Aboriginal mentors who understand what we are going through a bit more. I listen more than I used to in class too.’

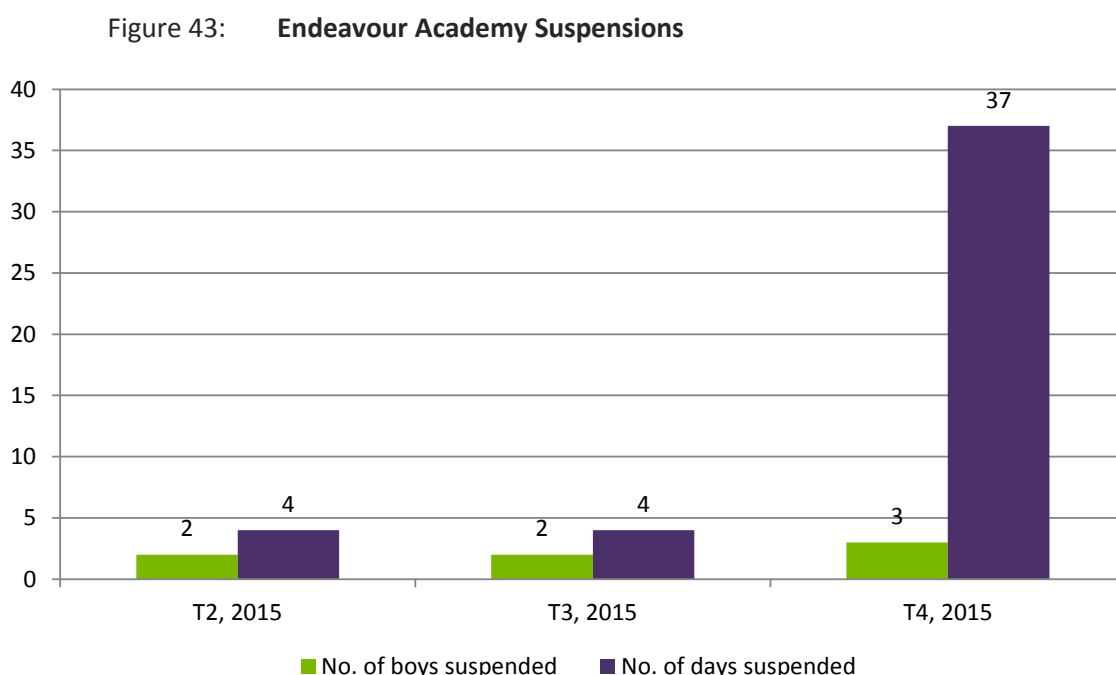
### Academic Performance

While school staff suggested a single year of operation was insufficient to make any substantial claims about the Academy’s contribution to better grades, anecdotal feedback did point to some hopeful signs for improved retention and completion rates. Hostel staff interviewed noted the Kirinari facility was at full capacity for the first time in nine years. This was attributed to the Academy having a positive effect on the number of boys returning to school after holidays and family events, as well as in attracting new students, with the hostel fielding new enquiries every week.

### Discipline

Feedback from school staff, parents and hostel staff indicated a noticeable improvement in behaviour by Academy participants. School staff connected the change to the sense of pride and identification that the boys felt towards the Academy and the Clontarf ethos. One teacher noted that the desire to maintain the Clontarf reputation motivated both individual and group self-policing: ‘They behave themselves across the board because if they don’t it brings a bad name to Clontarf, and they don’t want to do that.’

Data on suspensions suggest the relatively low incidence of extreme behavioural problems. This is demonstrated in Figure 43 which shows that only two boys were suspended in Term 2 and 3, 2015 and three boys suspended in Term 4.



Source: Clontarf Director Reports

The spike in suspensions is largely due to two boys who present with chronic behaviour problems and who come from dysfunctional families. In both these cases, the Academy staff are keeping tabs on the home situation of these boys with a view to trying to re-engage with them in the New Year.

### *Self-esteem*

As elsewhere, stakeholder comments indicated the connection between respect for others and respect for oneself, and the importance of self-confidence for success in more tangible outcomes. One parent remarked on how participating in the programme had helped her son ‘come out of his shell and gain in confidence and make some friends; it has made him feel comfortable moving into high school.’ The

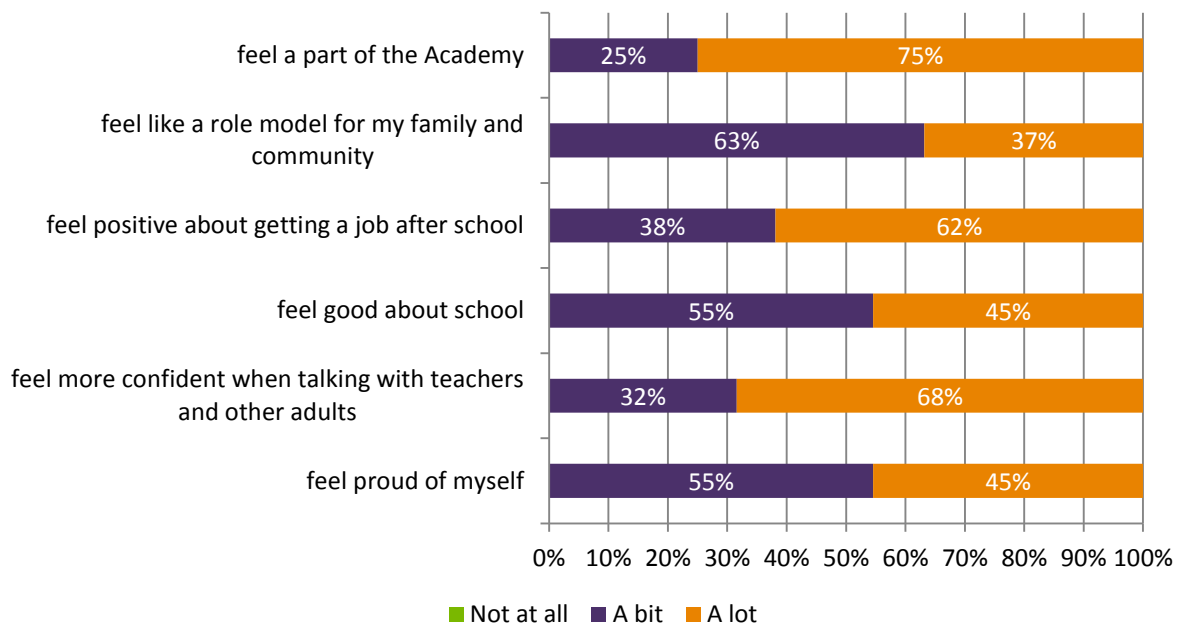


importance of a feeling of belonging was noted, with another stakeholder saying the Academy rooms provided a sense of community that was ‘sometimes more than what they get back home’.

Strong core values, high expectations and consistency in word and action were identified as key contributors to the environment created by the Academy. As one Academy staff member put it: ‘We are not like the uncle who is sober one day and drunk the next, or who sometimes turns up when he says he will and other times is nowhere to be found.’ Said another staff member: ‘There are six or seven kids still here who wouldn’t have lasted a week in a normal school programme. The encouragement, support and structure of the programme helps them transition and gives them a reason to stay instead of running away.’

Figure 44 illustrates the responses from the boys at the Endeavour Academy that relate to a sense of belonging, self-confidence and leadership qualities. Twenty two Academy boys participated in the survey.

Figure 44: **Since attending the Academy, I...(n=19 - 22)<sup>15</sup>**



**Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.**

As can be seen from Figure 44, since attending the Academy:

- 100% of boys felt good about school
- 100% of boys felt positive about getting a job after school
- 100% of boys felt proud of themselves
- 100% of boys felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults
- 100% of boys felt like a role model for their family and community

<sup>15</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

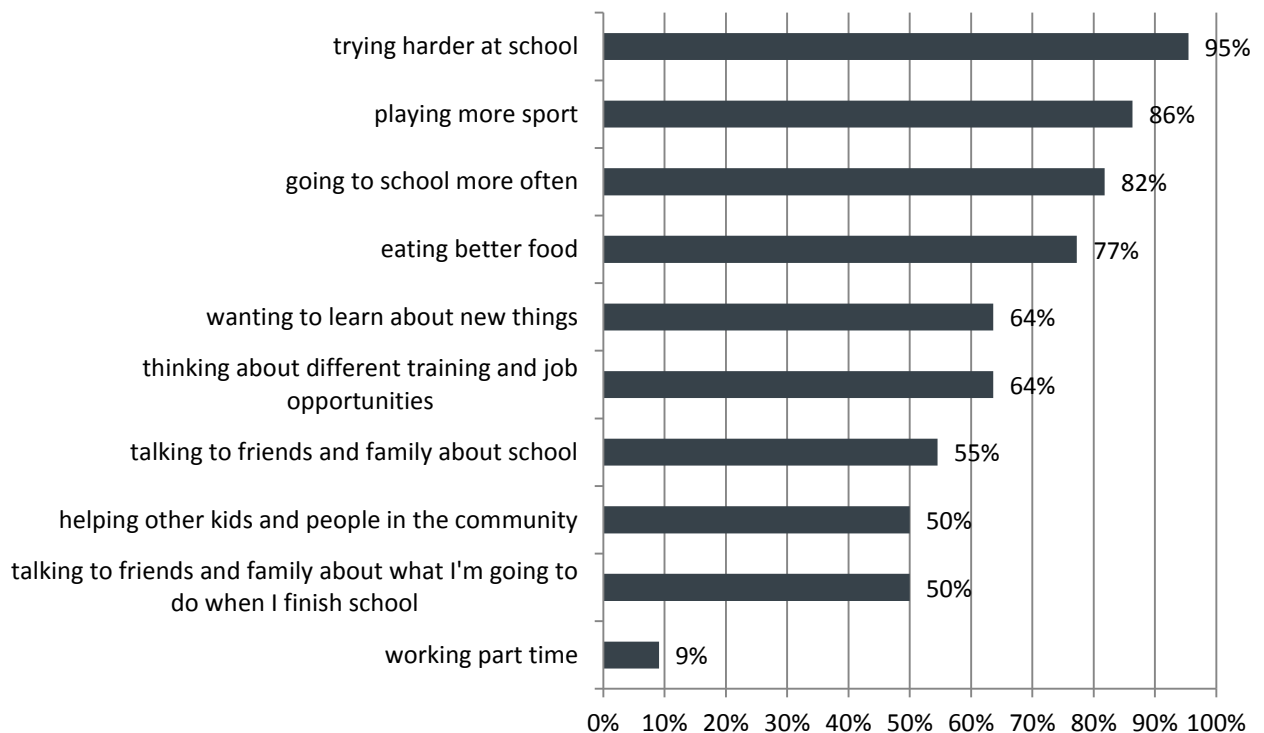
### Life skills

During the site visits several stories were shared about the extreme challenges faced by some boys in their home lives. While the Academy programme is built around education and employment outcomes, staff emphasised the importance of mentoring and ‘life support’ for boys to overcome the socialisation and psychological hurdles to integrating at school and beyond. ‘I feel like they support us with tackling issues like depression, suicidal thoughts and bullying,’ said one student.

Along with examples of Academy activities helping to develop interpersonal skills, time management, teamwork and problem-solving, parental anecdotes highlighted their sons’ greater interest in healthier eating habits, cutting up fruit for the family to eat and always carrying a water bottle, while at Kirinari, where the students asked that the hostel to cut out the cordial and soft drink that used to be served.

Academy boys who participated in the survey were asked to nominate which of these skills they had felt develop since attending the Academy at Endeavour.

Figure 45: **After attending the Academy, I am...(n=22)<sup>16</sup>**



The data from Figure 45 shows a positive change for many students since attending the Academy, 95% reported trying harder at school and a further 82% acknowledged they were going to school more often since the programme commenced. Similarly strong were changes in healthy behaviour with 86% stating they were playing more sport and 77% eating healthier food since attending the Academy.

<sup>16</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some response.

Results were more mixed when it came to changes in boys attitudes to community engagement. 50% identified that since the Academy they were helping other kids and people in the community as well as talking to friends and family about what they are going to do when they finish.

### *Employment prospects*

Given the relative newness of the Endeavour programme, it is difficult to draw any substantial conclusions about the Academy's contribution to improving employment outcomes, though mention was made of one student who graduated in 2015 and was now undertaking a course in social services. At this point, it was suggested, the most fundamental indicator of Academy success was improving attendance and engagement at school. 'Maybe not all of them will pass their HSC,' said one stakeholder, 'but if they are here in school getting some good influences then they are not out on the street getting into the justice system. If they are not here then there is really only one option for them.'

The data collected from surveys of boys at Endeavour suggests that attention was being given to career opportunities post their schooling life; which correlated with the work experience arrangement for senior boys as stated in the Academy report. Figure 44 shows that all of boys from the Endeavour Academy who completed the survey felt more positive about getting a job after school.

## **Unintended consequences**

Two unintended consequences of the overall success of the Academy implemented at Endeavour were highlighted during the site visit.

The first stemmed from the rapid growth of enrolments in the Academy programme. This was seen to place a strain on Academy staff and hinder the programme's development. With the increase in numbers, greater time and effort was required to work with the more challenging students. A school staff representative indicated this led to the structure of the programme becoming 'a bit loose' as the Academy staff struggled to maintain the level of discipline and attention to education priorities expected.

A further concern expressed by a senior school staff member was that Academy students had not '*bought into*' the school as much as other students – that they identified as Clontarf students who attended Endeavour rather than Endeavour students. One interviewee suggested that high participation in Academy activities might be a hindrance to students taking advantage of opportunities with the school's own programmes. However the same interviewee also acknowledged that initial concerns the Academy might generate isolation from the rest of the student body had not eventuated, and there had been no complaints or signs of segregation or discontent within the school community.

## Case Study: Mount Austin Academy, NSW

### Overview

The Mount Austin Clontarf Academy is hosted by Mount Austin High School in Wagga Wagga, NSW. The school has a relatively stable enrolment of about 500 students from Years 7 through 12, with its student intake drawn from the south-western suburbs of Ashmont, Tolland, Turvey Park and Mount Austin – areas that include a high proportion of current or former government housing – as well as outlying rural communities including Mangoplah, Uranquinty and The Rock.

The school has a substantial number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, who comprised 38% of the student population (209 of 549) at the time of the Academy's commencement in July 2014, and 43% (222 of 514) at the end of 2015.<sup>17</sup> This compares with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students making up about 8% of enrolments at Wagga's two other public high schools (and 3% or less at non-government high schools). Within the Wagga Wagga local government area, which takes in the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise 4.6% of the total population (of about 59,500).

For this case study, interviews were conducted during a site visit in March 2016 with 14 stakeholders including students from Years 7 to 12, parents, school, Academy staff and representatives of community groups.

#### Key facts: Mount Austin Academy, NSW

Academy commencement date: Term 3, 2014

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at May, 2014: 93

Target Academy enrolment number: 100

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 89

### Implementation

Site visit interviews indicated a strong working relationship had been built between the Academy and the school's teaching and support staff in the time since its establishment. 'We have walked down the same road together,' said a member of the school's leadership team, noting the Academy staff supported and complemented the school's own programmes to lift educational outcomes, with consistent efforts made to engage school staff and keep them informed of Academy activities. The Academy staff praised the school's 'amazing' principal for her 'massive' support and endeavours to equip the Academy with the resources its operations required.

An example of the partnership in action was the collaboration between school and Academy staff to manage cases where individual boys were disruptive or struggling in class: 'We may negotiate three

<sup>17</sup> Myschool.edu.au

periods in class and one in Clontarf to give that outlet and different kind of input, and slowly phase to a full day in class as he gets better.’

However, despite the attention paid as part of Clontarf’s standard practices to inform and engage the community prior to an Academy’s implementation – which included well-received presentations and sessions with local representatives of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), interagency personnel, the school’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education team and the parents and citizens association – the early engagement of school staff was described as less than ideal. ‘It felt like some sections were very aware and supportive but the rest were not sure what was going on and had bits and pieces of information,’ commented one stakeholder. ‘The hardest part of setting up a new Academy is getting the teachers on side.’

Challenges also faced the Academy’s three staff members during the early months of the implementation phase due to a lack of previous experience in working for Clontarf, let alone establishing a new Academy, or within a school environment<sup>18</sup>. An Academy staff member described the struggle to set up the Academy rooms during the school term while trying to run programme activities as well: ‘It was really tough. It took us a good three to six months before we were set up properly. It would be much better to do it during the holidays.’ At the same time, the three staff members had to come to grips with the school’s administrative systems, management structure and policies: ‘It would have been a big help if we had someone from another Academy with that experience, who could walk us through it and help that initial process.’ The steep learning curve and lack of preparatory lead-in time compounded the diverse challenges that routinely come during the first few terms of any new Academy.

While time and the Academy’s growth appears to have attenuated those early problems, with the helpful addition of a fourth Academy staff position and recruitment of a staff member with prior connections to the school and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the experience does seem to have informed feedback from the school’s leadership team, who expressed a desire for a greater say in the recruitment and induction of Academy staff. ‘As a school dealing with a lot of big issues, I need to know and have trust in my staff,’ the principal commented. ‘To have term begin and three new staff walk through the gate who I had never met before was very challenging.’

The funding model for Clontarf Academies in NSW, requiring a 1/6 financial contribution from the host school, was cited as reasonable grounds for the school to expect greater input into decisions involving the Academy: ‘Given we’re directly funding the programme, we should have more formal input into recruitment.’ In general, however, feedback was highly positive about the quality of Clontarf’s recruitment practices, with the Academy staff’s passion and commitment praised by teachers and parents as the main factor in the Academy’s success. ‘The biggest thing that stands out really is the staff,’ commented one stakeholder. ‘They are such good role models.’

The school’s leadership also acknowledged the ‘wrap-around’ experience provided by the Academy programme had been great value for the money spent: ‘I think I have been able to leverage on those spends 2:1 than if I had only used the funds to bring staff in on my own,’ the principal said. ‘It has been a good thing for us to have a toe in the water.’

---

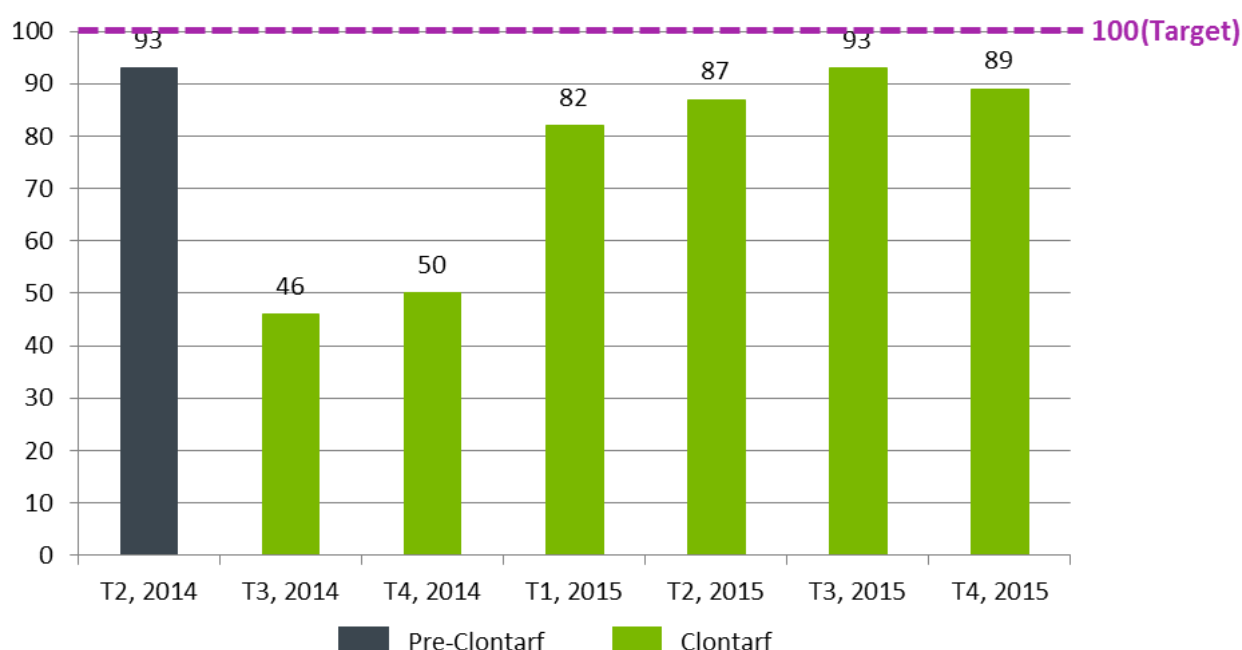
<sup>18</sup> The original Director of the Academy was an experienced teacher, however left in term 2, 2014, less than a year after the Academy opened.

## Outcomes

Despite the teething problems noted, as shown in Figure 46 the Academy has grown its numbers significantly since its first term of operation (Term 3, 2014), which ended with 46 boys in the programme. At the end of Term 4, 2015, 89 boys were enrolled at the Academy. The target for the Mount Austin Academy under the Expansion Measure is 100 enrolments at maturity.

According to the Academy scoping study, prior to the establishment of the Academy, there were 93 male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments at Mount Austin HS in May 2014.

Figure 46: **Mount Austin Academy Enrolments**



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

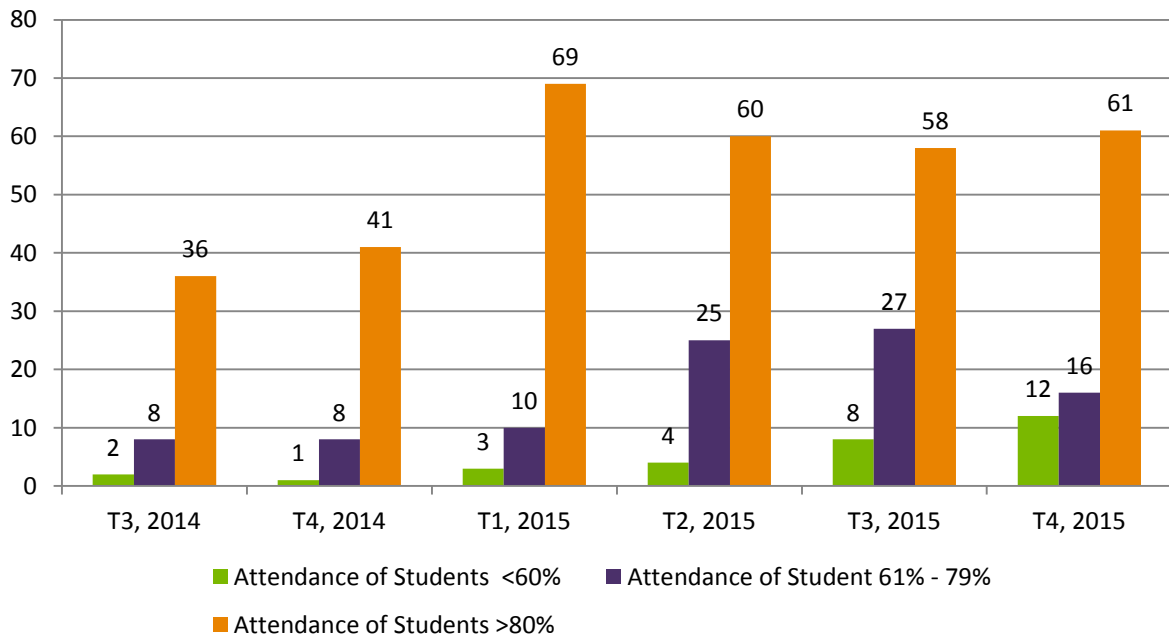
## Education

### Attendance

Figure 47 shows the attendance rate of boys between Term 3, 2014 and Term 4, 2015. The data shows a steady increase in the initial phase, Term 3, 2014 to Term 1, 2015, partially explained by the increasing numbers of enrolments during that period. Afterwards, there was a plateauing of attendance figures over the following three terms. The rise during Term 2, 2015 of boys attending less than 60% of the time and between 61 and 79% of the time can be partially explained by four new Academy boys arriving to the Academy- two arrived with 50% attendance figures and four with 70%. By the end of Term 4, 2015, 69% of all Academy enrolments had attendance rates above 80%. Overall, by the end of Term 4, 2015, the average attendance rate for boys enrolled at the Academy was 82%. The average attendance rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at Mount Austin HS in 2013 (prior to the establishment of the Academy) was 74%.

The school noted the encouragement provided by Academy staff through the prominent display of attendance records, communication with carers, targeted transport interventions and rewards for those achieving high levels.

Figure 47: **Mount Austin Academy Attendance**



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

### Engagement

Feedback about engagement with school work was mostly in line with that about attendance. ‘The boys are engaging more in school,’ said the principal. ‘Clontarf is also helping them to move into relevant programmes such as guided reading, making Clontarf an extension of their education.’ Another interviewee, however, suggested the Academy still needed to develop a culture promoting academic success: ‘It’s great that they have sporting role models, but that academic focus is also important, if they could emphasise that a bit more it would be beneficial.’ While it is difficult to gauge how widely this concern was shared, even Academy staff were prepared to acknowledge the right balance might not have yet been struck. ‘To be honest I think we do too much with the boys,’ the Academy staff member said. ‘There are two or three things on each week that are constantly taking them out of school, four camps a term, employment trips – it’s a lot.’ Pulling back on activities that took the boys out of class had merit as a means to concentrate minds on educational goals and ensure stronger unity of purpose with school staff.

### Academic Performance

Anecdotal reports of better grades among Academy participants is at this point insufficient to draw conclusions about the outcomes achieved by the Academy group as a whole. In terms of retention rates, in 2015 the school recorded a rise of more than five percentage points in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students transitioning from Year 10 to Year 12, but the Academy’s contribution to this must be assessed cautiously given the even greater percentage gains recorded in the years prior to the Academy’s establishment.

### Discipline

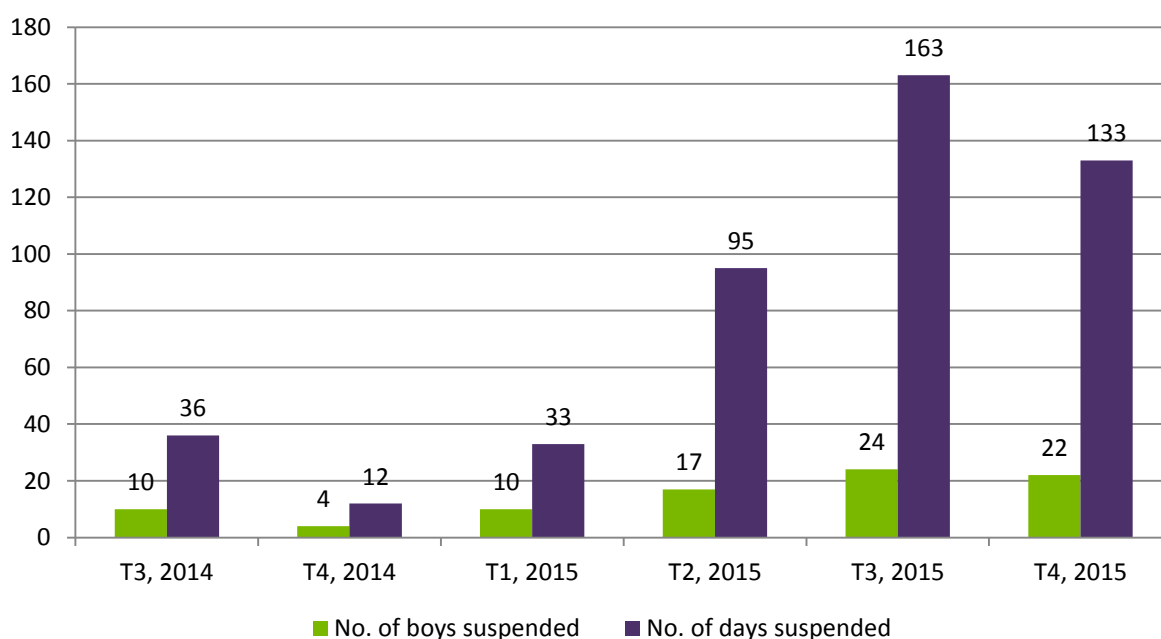
Suspension rates are, of course, reflective only of serious incidents that might vary wildly between terms with no obvious trend. Nor are they necessarily indicative of a broader spectrum of behaviour, including

cases that Mount Austin manages with a 'restorative justice unit' as a more productive alternative to suspension.

Moreover, stakeholders contrasted the difference between outcomes that can be quantified and those that reflect a change in character that can only be recognised by knowing the personal context and witnessing before and after effects. On this basis, therefore, it cannot be assumed that data will necessarily confirm the qualitative feedback that the Academy programme has contributed to better behaviour, and been complementary and supportive of the school's other strategies. Key to the Academy's influence was the strong group identification with the 'Clontarf spirit' which had a powerful self-regulatory effect on behaviour (though it was noted that this could sometimes be derailed on any given day by the antics of a 'select few').

These observations are reflected in Figure 48 which illustrates the number of boys and the total number of days suspended from Term 3, 2014 to Term 4, 2015.

Figure 48: **Mount Austin Academy Suspensions**



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

The quantitative evidence suggests that there was a minimal increase in the number of boys suspended between the second Term 2, 2015 and the last. However, the number of days suspended increases substantially from 95 to 133 over that same period. Directors' reports identified that the peak suspension rates in Term 3, 2015 were a result of a small number of students that were quick to misbehave in class or not go to it all together. This reinforces the qualitative accounts of teachers who suggested that the behaviour of a select few was against the overall trend.

### Self-esteem

The school's teaching and support staff shared observations of changes in Academy participants indicating improved self-esteem, including 'the pride and respect they have for themselves and others'. One interviewee noted the boys were less overtly self-conscious and more likely to engage in extended

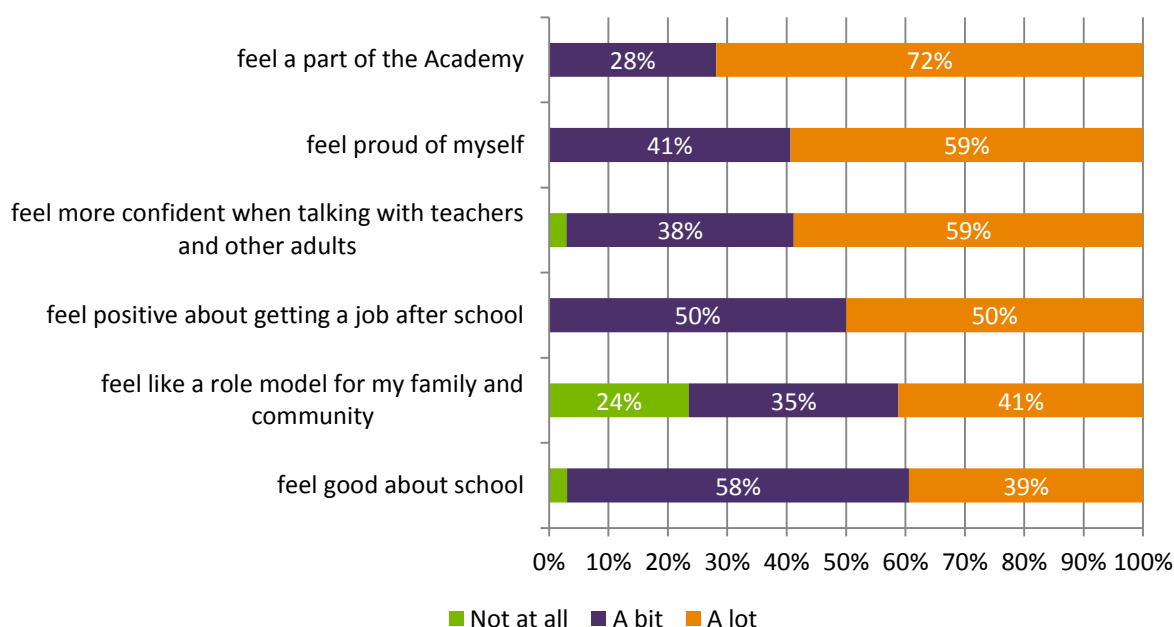


animated conversations: ‘It doesn’t just stop dead after one response.’ Another described the turnaround in some senior boys involved in the Academy from the outset as ‘amazing – it’s just so different’.

Interviews with parents and others also confirmed the virtuous circle of self-respect, respect gained and respect developed for others, and of self-perception and perception by others. ‘I have noticed out in the community with our boys in the Clontarf shirt that they are a lot more settled,’ commented one parent. ‘People see the difference and it makes the boys feel part of something. They walk around with heads held high.’

Figure 49 presents responses from boys at the Mount Austin Academy that relate to a sense of belonging, self-confidence and leadership qualities. Thirty-two to 34 Academy boys participated in the survey.

Figure 49: **After attending the Academy, I ... (n=32-34)<sup>19</sup>**



**Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.**

As can be seen from Figure 49, since attending the Academy:

- 100% of boys felt proud of themselves
- 97% of boys felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults
- 100% of boys felt positive about getting a job after school
- 76% of boys felt like a role model for their family and community
- 97% of boys felt good about school

### Life Skills

In addition to the usual life skills seen to be promoted by Academy activities – self-discipline, teamwork, communication, time-management – stakeholders highlighted particular success in the Academy’s

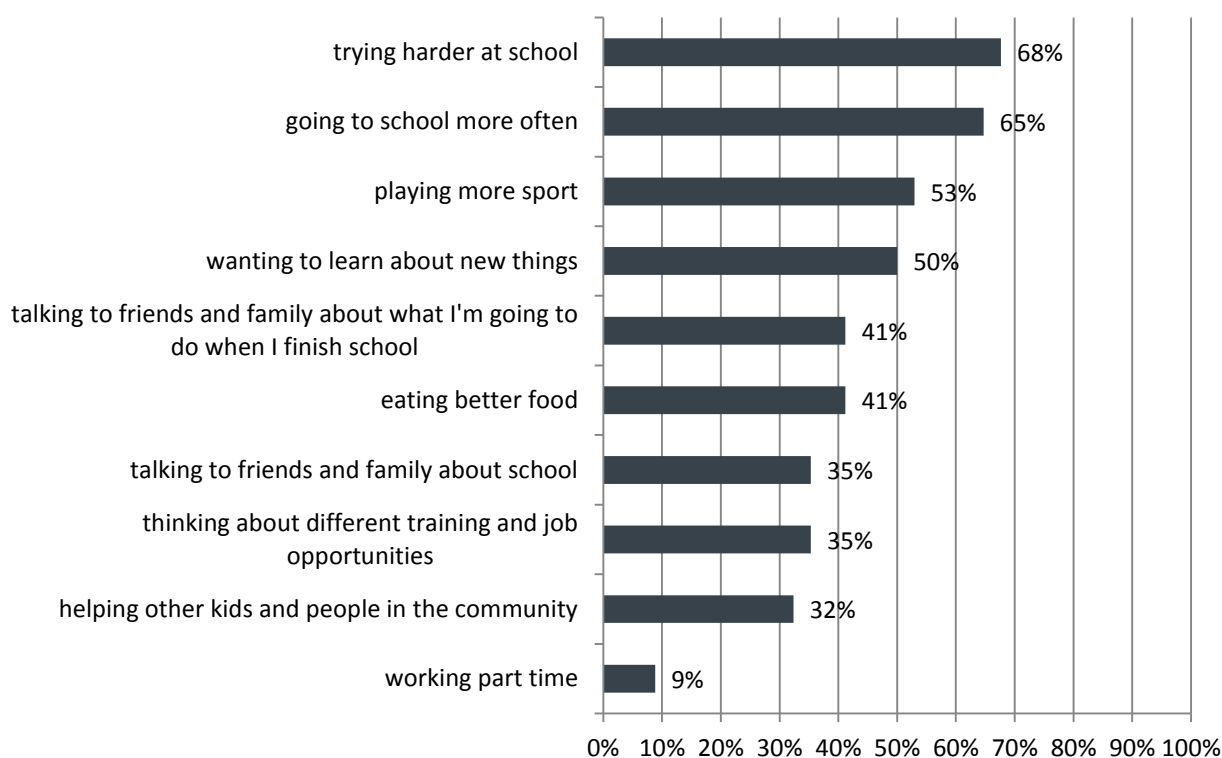
<sup>19</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

attention to health. A health worker acknowledged the ‘great’ work of the Academy staff in making boys attend health checks and liaising with parents. Health education sessions were also run in partnership with the Red Cross and Riverina Medical and Dental Aboriginal Corporation.

‘One of my boys has lost 20 kilograms from all the gym and footy training, but also the healthy eating habits they teach’, one parent related. ‘It has done wonders for his self-confidence. The boys don’t eat McDonalds anymore and won’t drink soft drink – only water. I see it and it makes me as the mum want to improve my health.’

Figure 50 shows the data collected through a survey of boys pertaining to the life-skills component of Mount Austin Academy.

Figure 50: **Since attending the Academy, I am... (n=34)<sup>20</sup>**



The feedback from boys who participated in the survey indicates that since they started attending the Academy they have improved their engagement with school. Specifically, 68% of boys from Mount Austin are trying harder at school while 65% are going to school more often. Similarly, 50% contend that they want to learn more things.

In addition, 53% reported playing more sport since the Academy, while 41% stated they were eating better food. 32% indicated they were helping other kids and people in the community since joining the Academy.

<sup>20</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some response.

### *Employment prospects*

While substantive indicators of improved employment outcomes were still slight, there was evidence during the site visit of concerted efforts to preparing boys for employment. Students and staff shared experiences of worksite visits to Bunnings, Rebel Sport, REX, Australian Defence Force and the Dubbo Clontarf Employment Forum. Evaluators also observed a lesson from the school's careers advisor, explaining to senior students how to construct a resume and perform in a job interview; where 50% of seniors have completed their portfolio for job application. During a focus group, students were able to nominate clear occupational objectives after graduating from school (these included joining the army, plumbing and nursing). Boys successfully holding down part-time jobs were celebrated on a wall of the Academy room.

There were positive indications of progress in building relationships with potential employers, with one school staff member expressing admiration at the ability of the Academy staff source employment opportunities. Clontarf's reputation and relationship with business partners and public figures was also seen as positive for the entire school. When representatives from well-known organisations visited the Academy, another teacher said 'people begin to take notice and think about the school and the kids in a different way'.

Figure 49 shows that 100% of respondents felt more positive about getting a job after school. Figure 50 shows that 41% are talking to family and friends about what they are going to do after school, and 35% were thinking about different training and job opportunities. A further 9% identified as working part-time since attending the Academy in Mount Austin.

### **Unintended consequences**

The three major unintended consequences arising from the Mount Austin Academy implementation process have been covered in the preceding discussion. First, less than ideal engagement of school staff prior to the commencement of Academy operations. Second, hiccups in the early phase of the roll-out due to the Academy staff's lack of previous experience with the Clontarf model and a high school environment (and also the lack of lead-in time prior to commencing programme operations). Third, the concerns arising from a full programme of activities resulting in Academy boys spending too much school time out of class.

The two issues typically raised by stakeholders at other schools – gender and racial equity – do not appear to have been concerns. This is likely to be because of the school's particular demographic profile makes the embrace of the Clontarf programme less remarkable or a focus for resentment. Indeed the Academy is just one of more than a dozen Indigenous student programmes sponsored by the school. Among those is Magarra Malungan (Wiradjuri for 'bright young stars'), a programme developed in partnership with The Smith Family to support the educational and life skills outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls.

## Case Study: Dubbo College (Delroy Campus, South Campus and Senior Campus), NSW

### Overview

The distinguishing feature of Clontarf's expansion into Dubbo is the hosting of three separate Academies by the one school, Dubbo College (NSW). Created in 2000 through the merger of the city's three public high schools (Dubbo High, South Dubbo High and Delroy High), the college continues to operate as three campuses, each effectively a principal-led school in its own right, within a 'collegiate' administrative structure.

Students in Year 7 to 10 attend either Dubbo College South Campus (in South Dubbo) or Dubbo College Delroy Campus (in west Dubbo). Students in Years 11 and 12 go to Dubbo College Senior Campus (in north Dubbo, near Charles Sturt University).

In 2015 the college had a total enrolment of approximately 1600 with about 35% being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. About 410 students were enrolled at Delroy Campus, with 49% being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; this higher proportion reflects the school's location, with a greater concentration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families living in the city's west. At both South Campus (enrolment about 700) and Senior Campus (enrolment about 470), about 30 % of students were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

This relatively high number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at each campus, and the reality that all three campuses are in most respects self-contained school communities, indicates the rationale for establishing three separate Academies with their own staff attached to the campus. However, given the centralised executive structure of Dubbo College and the commonalities and connections shared by the campuses and academies, it seems more appropriate for case-study purposes to consider the implementations together. Campus-specific issues or insights are covered where warranted.

As part of this case study, interviews were conducted with 37 key stakeholders, including students from all year cohorts, parents, school teaching and support staff, representative of community organisations and Academy staff during site visits in July 2015 and March 2016.

Key facts: Delroy Academy, NSW

Academy commencement date: Term 3, 2014

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at May, 2014: 103

Target Academy enrolment number: 85

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 84

Key facts: Dubbo South Academy, NSW

Academy commencement date: Term 3, 2014

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at May, 2014: 124

Target Academy enrolment number: 95

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 73

Key facts: Dubbo Senior Academy, NSW

Academy commencement date: Term 1, 2015

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at May, 2014: 90

Target Academy enrolment number: 70

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 44

## Implementation

The Delroy and Dubbo South Academies commenced operation in Term 3, 2014 and Dubbo Senior Campus in Term 1, 2015. This later commencement allowed for a smoother transition of Academy boys in Year 10 at Delroy and Dubbo South into Year 11 at the senior campus.

The scoping and preparation phase prior to implementation conformed to Clontarf's standard practice. The principals of the three campuses spoke of 'strong engagement' with the schools and the wider community (including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders and advocates, local businesses and other stakeholders) with the response being '*enthusiasm for them coming on-board*'.

School leaders recalled the length and depth of the planning process, taking six to eight months and '15 to 20' meetings covered everything from describing the programme to detailed contract negotiations: 'Clontarf were very upfront about their needs, so we knew what we were getting into.'

One particular negotiating point was the college's existing relationship with the National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy (NASCA) programme, which also uses sport as a vehicle to achieve better health, education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. With DEWR funding regulations precluding students from participating in both programmes, there were concerns that the overlap between the two models might see students switching between programmes depending on the upcoming activities, causing discontinuity and complicating assessment of outcomes. It was agreed, among other things, that students enrolled in NASCA could not change to Clontarf until 2015. Clontarf, the

school and NASCA held conversations around their roles with respect to each other. These conversations led, informally, to NASCA working more with girls.

To newer school staff not around for the initial engagement process, it was noted, the programme had been less effectively 'sold'. This was particularly pertinent at Dubbo South, where high turnover has seen about 20 new school staff each year. It was observed that these staff were introduced to the Academy programme in the context of its activities, such as excursions, rather than its overall design and purpose.

Although it was emphasised that 'there is no one who would dare be negative about Clontarf here' because 'it is so well respected and everyone knows the results it gets', it is possible that deficiencies in ongoing reinforcement of the principles behind the Clontarf model have contributed to teacher concerns about the extent to which Academy activities divert participants from time in classes.

While those activities – including excursions and camps – are intended as an incentive to motivate achievement, teachers noted obvious tensions with academic outcomes. 'Last year in Terms 3 and 4 there was one Clontarf student who was away for 20 days on excursions and 11 days for matches' said one teacher.<sup>21</sup> 'You can't get outcomes by being out of school.' The number of activities resulting in students missing class needed to be a collaborative decision 'rather than being presented with a list at the beginning of the school year'.

The resolution of this tension to the satisfaction of both Academy and teaching staff will depend in large part on to what degree activity schedules are regarded as intrinsic to the Clontarf model or a matter of judicious discretion and negotiation. As one Academy staff member said: 'We don't change our formula for different groups; we can come in with experience and know what to do.' On this point, advice provided to the evaluators is that Clontarf Academies usually plan their activities for the year in advance of school planning processes and that, if clashes do occur in planning, Clontarf look for opportunities to address these in a satisfactory way to both parties, and with the interests of the boys foremost.

With one of Clontarf's established expansion practices being to roll out several Academies within the same geographic region to leverage resources for operational support and harness the synergies of inter-Academy networking, it can be assumed the close proximity of the three Dubbo Academies (all within 6 km of each other) has contributed to implementation success. With nine Academy staff members (four at Delroy, three at Dubbo South and two at Dubbo Senior), there has been greater latitude to deploy support from other campuses when Academy staff members are leading camps or excursions, or to run larger events.

One example experienced directly during a site visit was a regular morning 'super' training session for boys from all three Academies. Evaluators met with staff from the Delroy and Dubbo South Academies at 6am and rode the bus with them as they picked up students. The experience and discussion on the route demonstrated the depth of knowledge the staff had about each boy, his personal circumstances and his parents or guardians. This and other evidence demonstrated their dedication to building strong relationships with the boys, including spending their free time on group activities additional to those in the programme.

---

<sup>21</sup> It is noted that this comment is anecdotal and absences from school may have been the result of a combination of programmes, in addition to Clontarf.

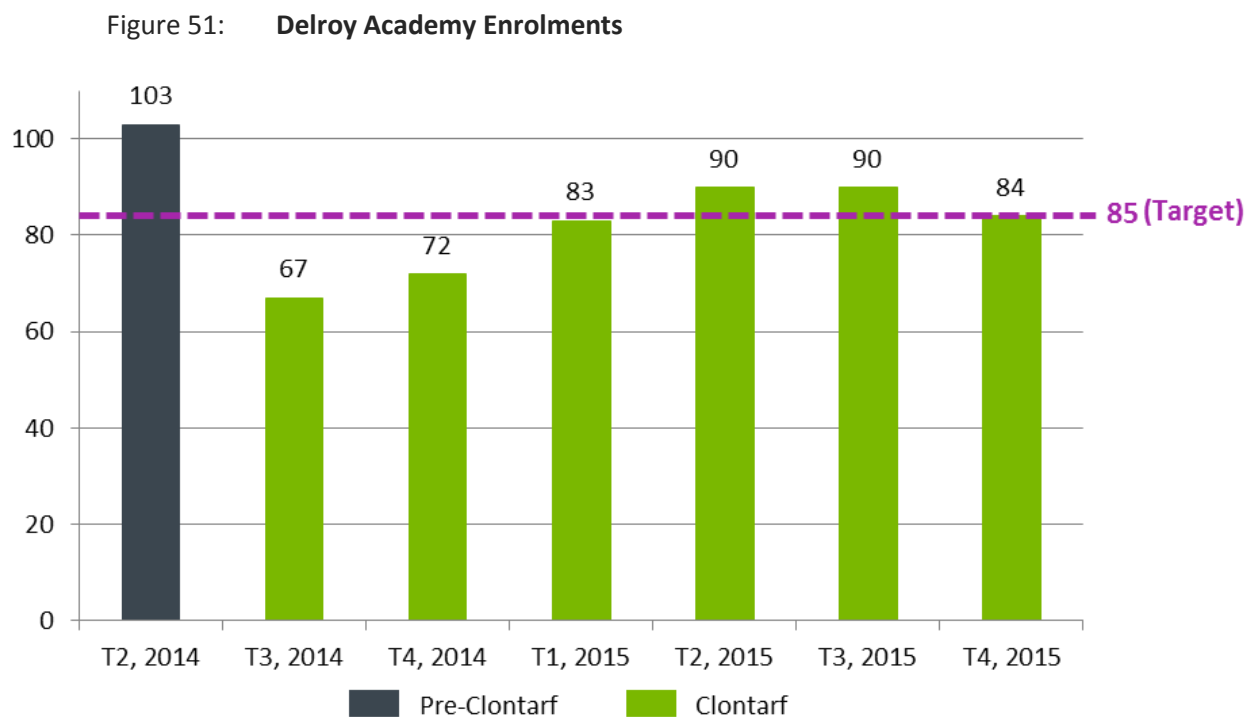
As elsewhere, the strength of Clontarf’s staff selection processes was underlined by stakeholder feedback, with the qualities of the Academy staff seen as the key to success of the programme’s implementation and the outcomes so far achieved. ‘I love that the staff are always smiling and, dressed in uniform, they add to the positive atmosphere of the school grounds,’ commented one school staff member.

## Outcomes

It is worth reiterating that figures for pre-Clontarf enrolment rates presented in figures 48, 49 and 50 reflect the enrolment numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at Delroy, Dubbo South and Dubbo Senior campuses respectively. The difference between Academy enrolment numbers and these pre-Clontarf numbers is partly due to the fact that not all school students choose to enrol at the Academies.

That said, enrolment figures indicate comparatively strong growth in programme engagement at the Delroy and Dubbo South Academies over their first 18 months of operation, with relatively stable numbers for the first year of the Dubbo Senior Academy.

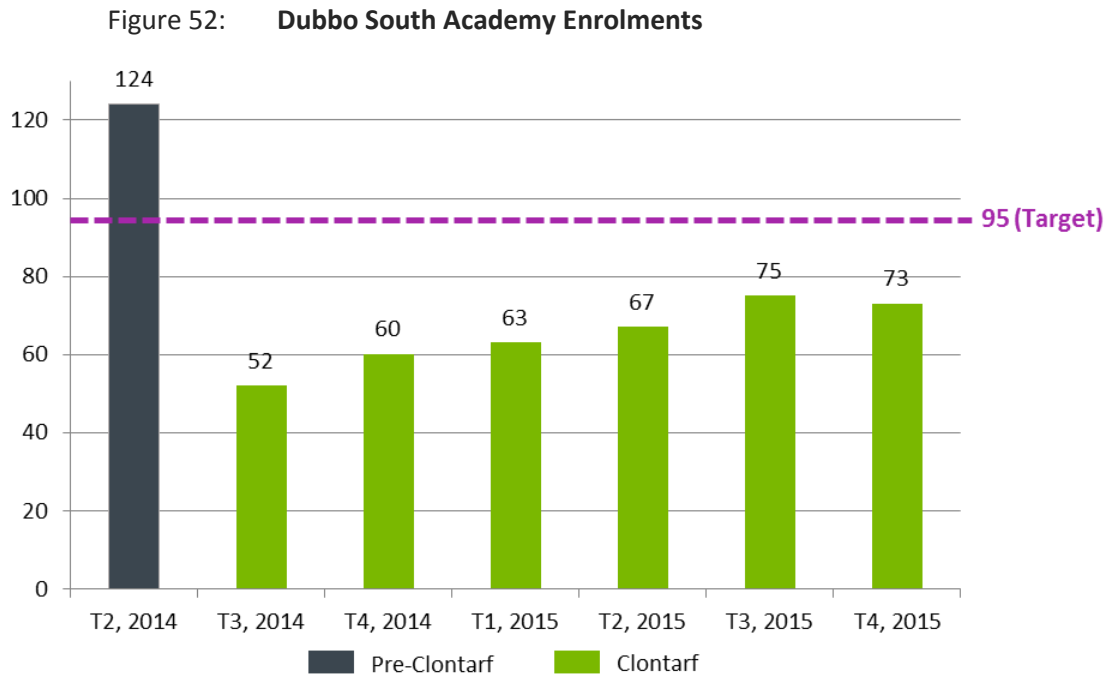
Figure 51 illustrates the enrolment numbers at the Academy in Delroy from Term 3, 2014 to Term 4, 2015.



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

As the data shows, the Academy enrolment numbers have been increasing steadily from its inception at Delroy in Term 3, 2014. Beginning at 67 it peaked at 90 in Terms 2 and 3 of 2015 before a slight drop in Term 4 of 2015. According to the Academy scoping study, prior to the introduction of the Academy there were 103 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at Delroy (May 2014). Delroy is contracted to have 85 enrolments at maturity as part of the Expansion Measure.

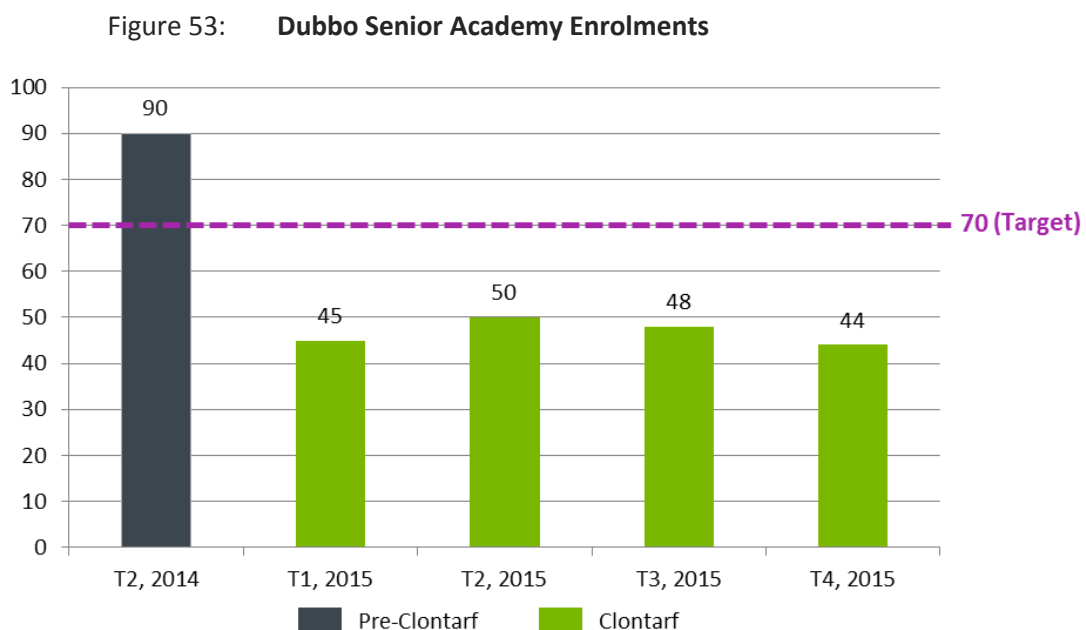
Figure 52 shows the enrolment figures for the Dubbo South Academy between Term 3 of 2014 and Term 4 of 2015.



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

Dubbo South has shown a consistent rise of enrolment figures from 52 in Term 3, 2014 to 73 in Term 4 of 2015. According to the Academy scoping study, prior to the introduction of the Academy there were 124 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at the Dubbo South campus (May 2014). South Dubbo is contracted to have 95 enrolments at maturity as part of the Expansion Measure.

Figure 53 shows the enrolment numbers at Dubbo Senior campus between Term 1 and Term 4, 2015.



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports



Given its short length of establishment, the data set for Dubbo Senior is quite small. However, what is presented suggests fairly stable enrolment figures over the course of its operation, with a slight peak in Term 2 of 2015. According to the Academy scoping study, prior to the introduction of the Academy there were 90 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at Dubbo Senior (May 2014). Dubbo Senior is contracted to have 70 enrolments at maturity as part of the Expansion Measure.

## Education

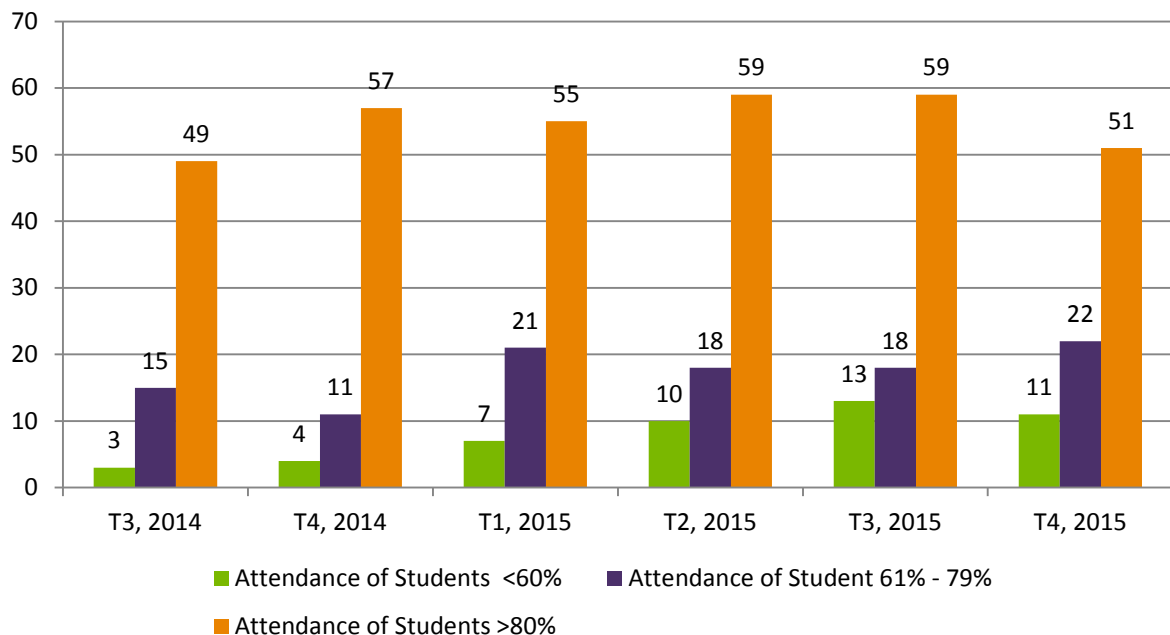
### Attendance

Teachers, parents and students from all three campuses were generally consistent in their opinion that attendance rates among Academy participants had improved, though the extent of this enthusiasm is not necessarily reflected in the attendance data reported by all three Academies. With the Delroy numbers, it was calculated that the influence of a handful of individuals could suppress a class cohort’s average attendance rate by about five percentage points. At Dubbo Senior, a lack of obvious improvement in the average attendance rate was attributed to the effect of a number of suspensions.

While feedback was mostly positive, there was a suggestion by some teachers that greater monitoring during the day would better ensure that recorded school attendance translated into attendance at all classes during the day, since it was possible for students to be counted as present in the morning by both Academy and school but then skip classes.

Figure 54 shows the attendance rates for the Delroy Academy from Term 3, 2014 to Term 4, 2015. This data shows that attendance rates have been fairly consistent since the Academy was introduced in Delroy. It shows that in Term 4, 2015, approximately 61% of Academy boys had an average attendance rate greater than 80%. Overall, the average attendance rate at Delroy Academy in Term 4, 2015 was 80%. Prior to the establishment of the Academy, the average attendance rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at Delroy was 83%.

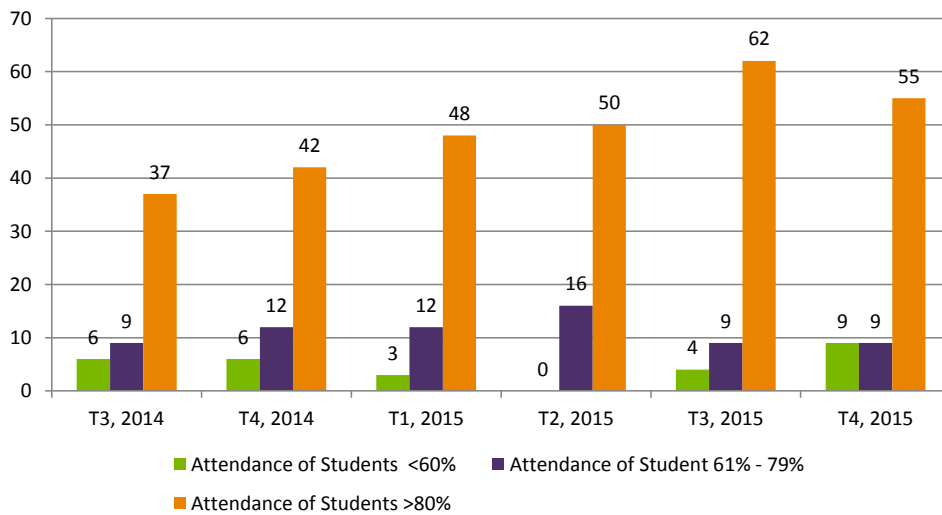
Figure 54: **Delroy Academy Attendance**



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

Figure 55 shows the attendance rates for the Dubbo South Academy from Term 3, 2014 to Term 4, 2015. These figures show a steady increase in students attending more than 80% of classes. It shows that in Term 4, 2015, approximately 75% of Academy boys had an average attendance rate greater than 80%. Overall, the average attendance rate at the Dubbo South Academy in Term 4, 2015 was 85%. Prior to the establishment of the Academy, the average attendance rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at Dubbo South was 89% (May 2014).

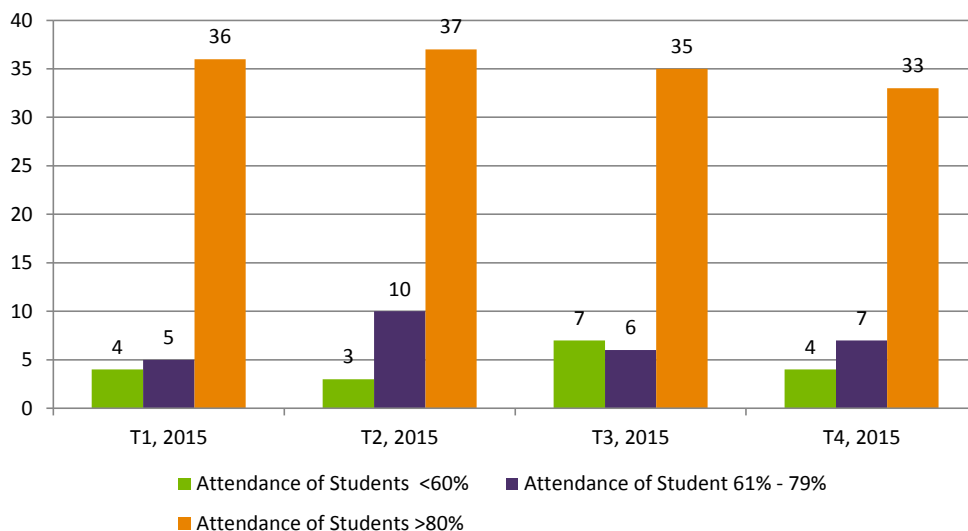
Figure 55: **Dubbo South Academy attendance**



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

Figure 56 shows the attendance rates for the Dubbo Senior Academy over 2015. These figures show a relatively stable pattern in attendance since the establishment of the Academy. By Term 4, 2015, approximately 75% of Academy boys had an average attendance rate greater than 80%. Overall, the average attendance rate at the Dubbo Senior Academy in Term 4, 2015 was over 80%. Prior to the establishment of the Academy, the average attendance rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at Dubbo Senior was 66% (May 2014).

Figure 56: **Dubbo Senior Academy attendance**



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

### Engagement

Parents and school staff reported that students were making a greater effort to complete assessments and were finishing homework more regularly. The key factor for the change was seen to be Academy staff actively following up and assisting students with school work.

It was also reported that Academy staff had made a positive contribution to greater parental engagement in their sons' schooling, acting as trusted intermediaries between the parents and teachers. 'The work they do really helps to break down the barriers between school and parents,' said one school staff member. This included encouraging parents to make appointments with teachers and picking them up to take them to the interviews. One parent spoke about developing greater rapport with her son's teachers as the support of the Academy staff had helped her overcome 'the shame' and made it a positive experience: 'Clontarf staff themselves are more approachable than normal teachers or schools. They are easy-going, talk on our level and help out with things that are not just school-related.'

### Academic performance

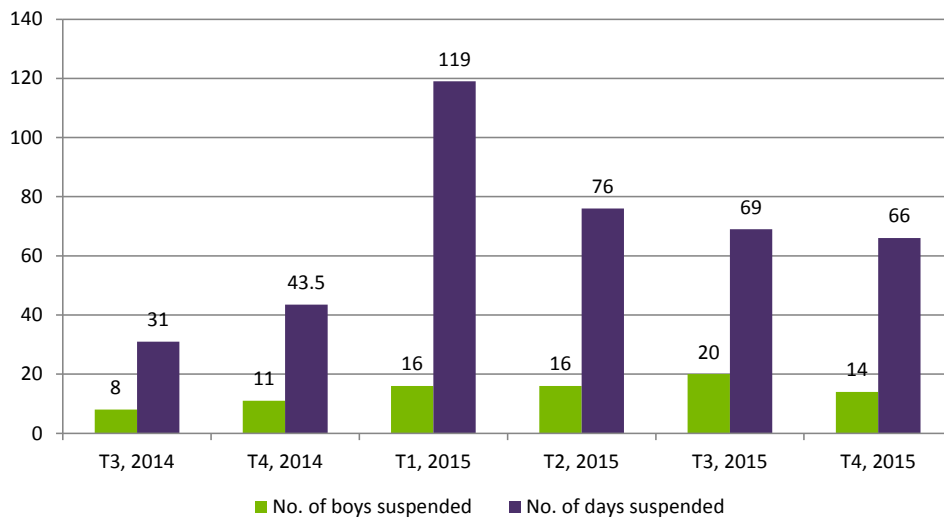
Given the Academies' short period of operation, it is not possible to establish a direct causal effect on education outcomes. While strong attendance and engagement levels should translate to better academic performance, it was noted by school staff at all three campuses that this was not necessarily so; and anecdotal examples of improved performance by individuals was not the same as the quantifiable gains across the whole cohort needed to validate the cost of the programme. There was a general feeling among the campus leadership teams that the Academy programmes needed to develop a stronger focus on education outcomes. As one principal put it: 'Attendance is not an outcome, it's an indicator,' Another staff member from the Senior Campus agreed: 'You have to build on that to achieve education outcomes.'

### Discipline

Site visit feedback was strongly positive about behavioural improvement among Academy students. At the Dubbo South Campus, administrative staff in a position to witness the flow of students in and out of the principal's office praised the programme for its effect.

Figure 57 shows the number of boys suspended at Delroy and maps them against the number of days spent suspended.

Figure 57: **Delroy Academy Suspensions**

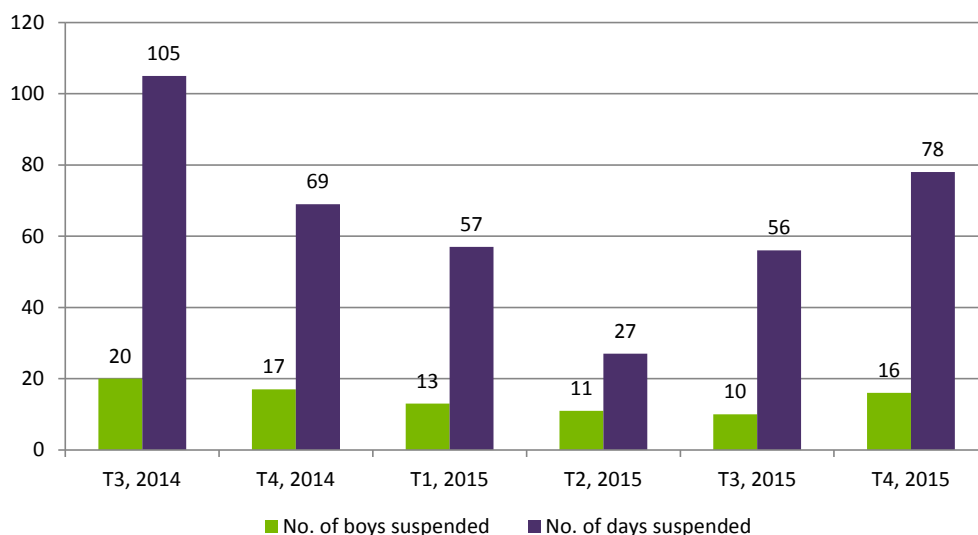


Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

Figure 57 shows that there was a slight increase in the number of boys suspended between Term 3, 2014 and Term 4, 2015. A mitigating factor could be that the enrolment numbers rose in that same time period. The number of days spent suspended spiked to 119 in Term 1, 2015, in part due to two boys that accounted for 62 days spent in suspension. However, this number declined to 66 by Term 4 of 2015.

Figure 58 shows the number of boys suspended and the number of days they spent suspended at the Dubbo South Academy.

Figure 58: **Dubbo South Academy Suspensions**

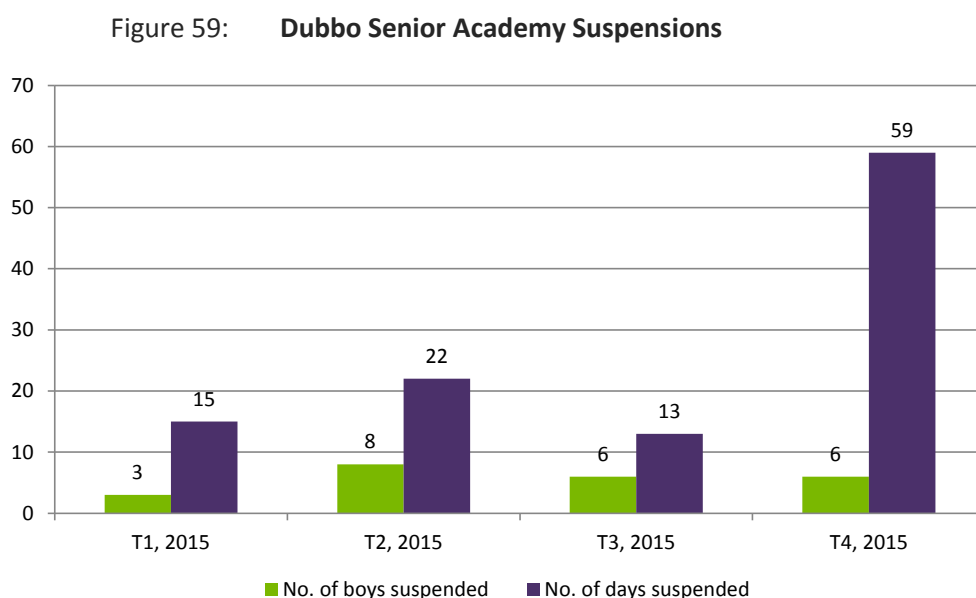


Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

Figure 58 shows that between Term 3, 2014 and Term 1, 2015 there was a steady decline in both the number of boys being suspended and the number of days that they were being suspended for. The Directors' report highlighted that while some of the same misbehaviour was being exhibited, the boys were doing it to a lesser degree.

The suspension rates have begun to trend upwards again during 2015, partly due to recidivism among a small group of students. The Director of the Academy was concerned at this trend and was intending to brainstorm different strategies to come up with new ways to educate the boys on appropriate and decent behaviour as well as providing good opportunities for them to practice and grow their new skills, such as through participation in a walk against domestic violence.

Figure 59 illustrates the number of boys suspended at the Dubbo Senior Academy from Term 1 to Term 4 of 2015.



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

This dataset is smaller than the others. However, both the number of boys being suspended and the number of days remained low over the first three terms. In Term 4 of 2015, the number of boys suspended remained at six while the number of days suspended spiked from 13 to 59. This sudden rise in suspension days is focused on a small group of students and meetings have taken place to try find ways the Academy and school can work together to try and curb these negative attitudes in 2016.

As has been observed elsewhere, the emphasis on respect and responsibility in the Clontarf ethos was seen to exert a powerful self-regulating influence, with students active in setting and monitoring standards of behaviour. During the site visit, Delroy students proudly pointed to rules posted on the door of the Academy room (which included no wearing of hats inside, eating at the table and no swearing – all crimes punishable with 10 push-ups). The students had helped to create the rules, and there was plenty of banter around the table tennis table about potential infringements.

In dealing with more serious transgressions, teachers and parents noted the positive role of Academy staff as mediators, both between students and school staff, and when parents were called to the school.

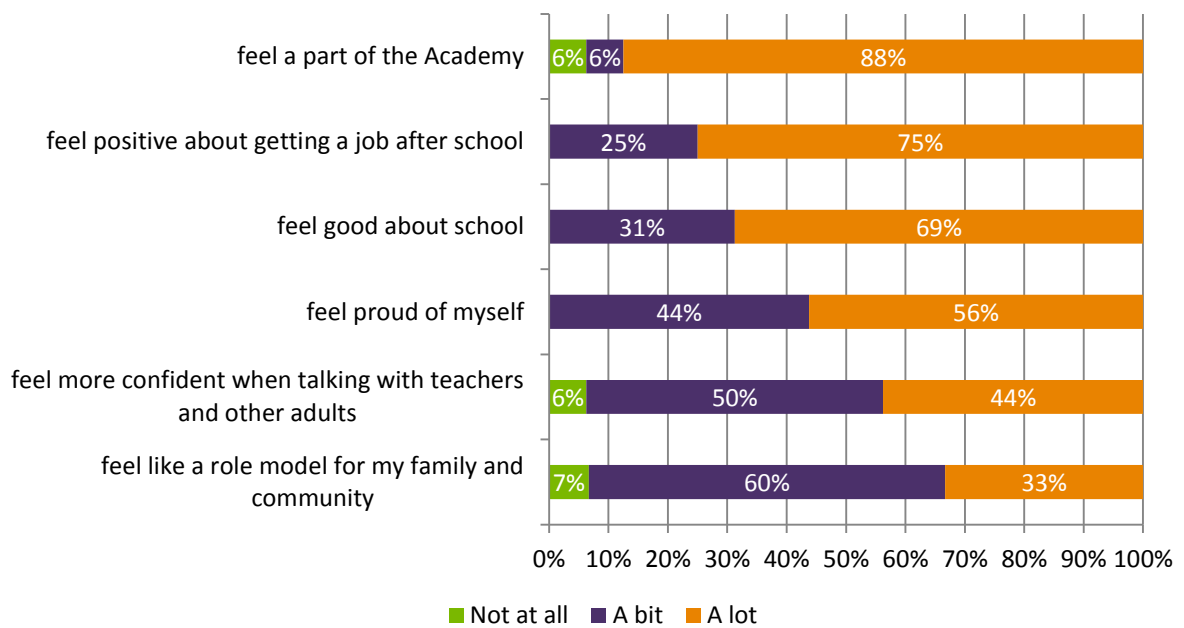
### Self-esteem

Respect, confidence, empowerment, pride and increased self-esteem were among the words used by interviewees in describing Academy students. Teachers commented on happy and smiling faces whenever they went into the Academy rooms, and on the way students shook hands and greeted them. Individuals known for their shyness were more outgoing. Changes were also noticed beyond the comfort zone of

Academy rooms or school grounds: stakeholders from the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, Police, Dubbo Council and Alkane Mining Company all remarked on the way Academy students engaged with adults and authority figures. One interviewee described the friendlier interactions between Clontarf students and the local school liaison police officer: where in the past the boys would not engage, they would now go up, shake hands and say hello: ‘That’s very powerful, changing policemen’s view of Aboriginal boys.’

Figures 60 through to 62 show the feedback on the impact that the attending the Academy has had on self-esteem for boys at Delroy, Dubbo South and Dubbo Senior.

Figure 60: **Delroy: Since attending the Academy, I... (n=15-16)<sup>22</sup>**



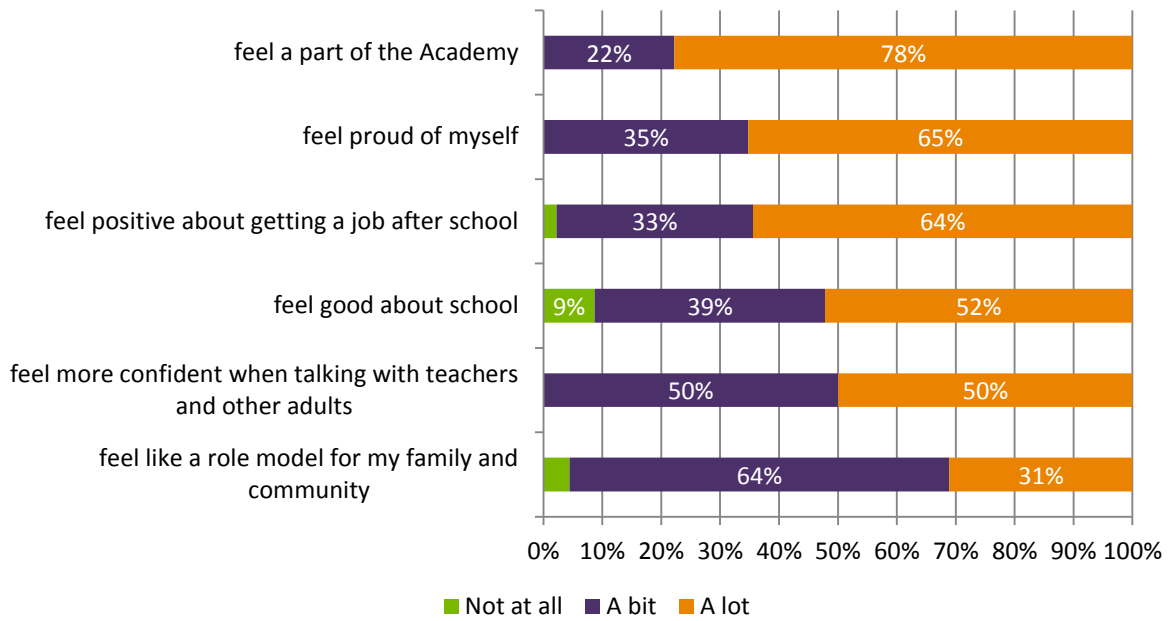
**Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.**

As can be seen above, of the boys from the Delroy Academy who participated in the survey:

- 100% of boys felt positive about getting a job after school
- 100% of boys felt good about school
- 100% of boys felt proud of themselves
- 94% of boys felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults
- 93% of boys felt like a role model for their family and community.

<sup>22</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

Figure 61: **Dubbo South: Since attending the Academy, I... (n=45-46)<sup>23</sup>**



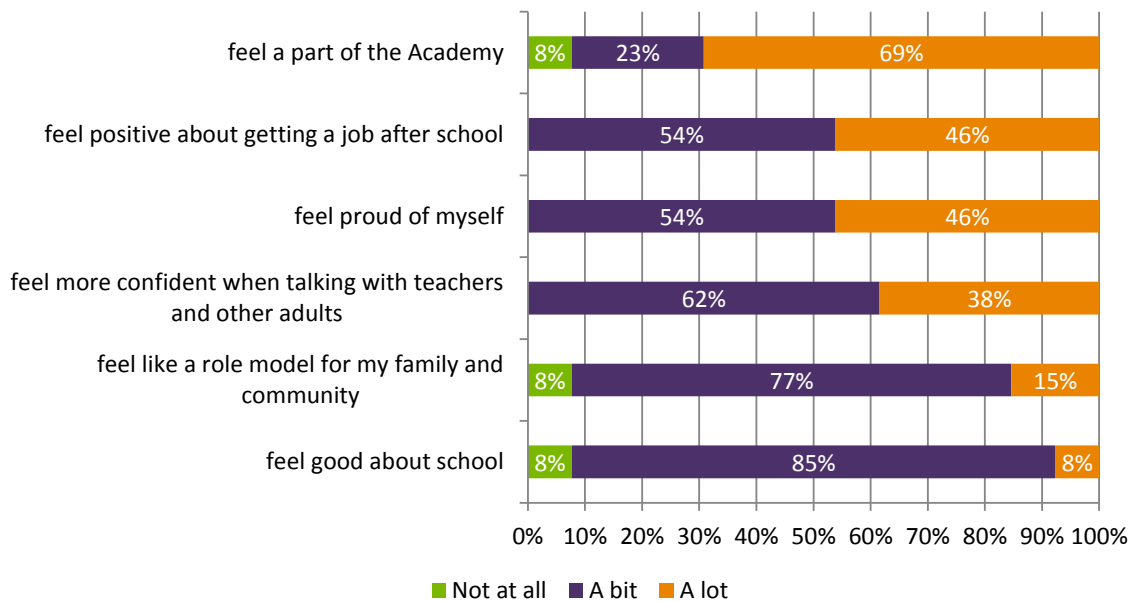
**Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.**

In terms of the boys from the Dubbo South Academy who participated in the survey:

- 100% of boys felt proud of themselves
- 97% of boys felt positive about getting a job after school
- 91% of boys felt good about school
- 100% of boys felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults
- 94% of boys felt like a role model for their family and community.

Figure 62: **Dubbo Senior: Since attending the Academy, I... (n=13)<sup>24</sup>**

<sup>23</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.



**Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.**

Similarly, of the boys from the Dubbo Senior Academy who participated in the survey:

- 100% of boys felt proud of themselves
- 100% of boys felt positive about getting a job after school
- 93% of boys felt good about school
- 100% of boys felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults
- 92% of boys felt like a role model for their family and community.

### Life skills

Self-discipline, self-awareness and taking responsibility for one’s own actions were among the life skills that Academy participation was seen to develop. Another was leadership – something the Clontarf programme actively seeks to foster in all things as well as through specific activities such as ‘leadership camps’. One parent noted the importance of this aspect of the programme because it showed the Academy was not just for ‘troubled students’ but for boys with talents and ambitions.

One more immediate benefit of the Academy’s emphasis on leadership was that older boys took on the responsibility to be good role models within the Academy, the school and the community. ‘Younger boys often look up to older boys,’ a Year 7 student confirmed, ‘but you can really ask anyone here for help.’

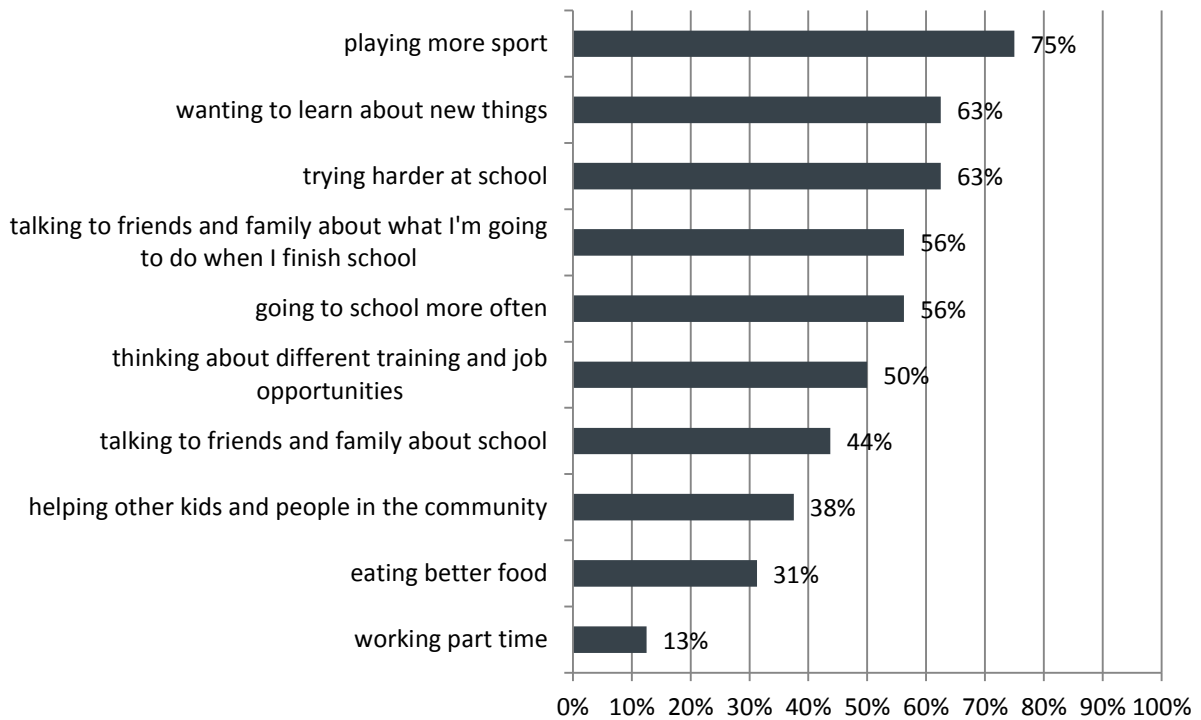
Figures 63 to 65 look at survey responses for boys across all three schools in Dubbo. The questions pertain to what life skills they may have taken away after attending the Academy.

Figure 63 presents the responses of boys from the Delroy Academy when asked a series of questions relating to behavioural and attitudinal changes since attending the Academy.

<sup>24</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.



Figure 63: **Delroy: Since attending the Academy, I am... (n=16)<sup>25</sup>**



As can be seen in Figure 63, 56% of responses identified that they were going to school more often since attending the Academy, while 63% were trying harder at school. Similarly 63% iterated that they wanted to learn about new things.

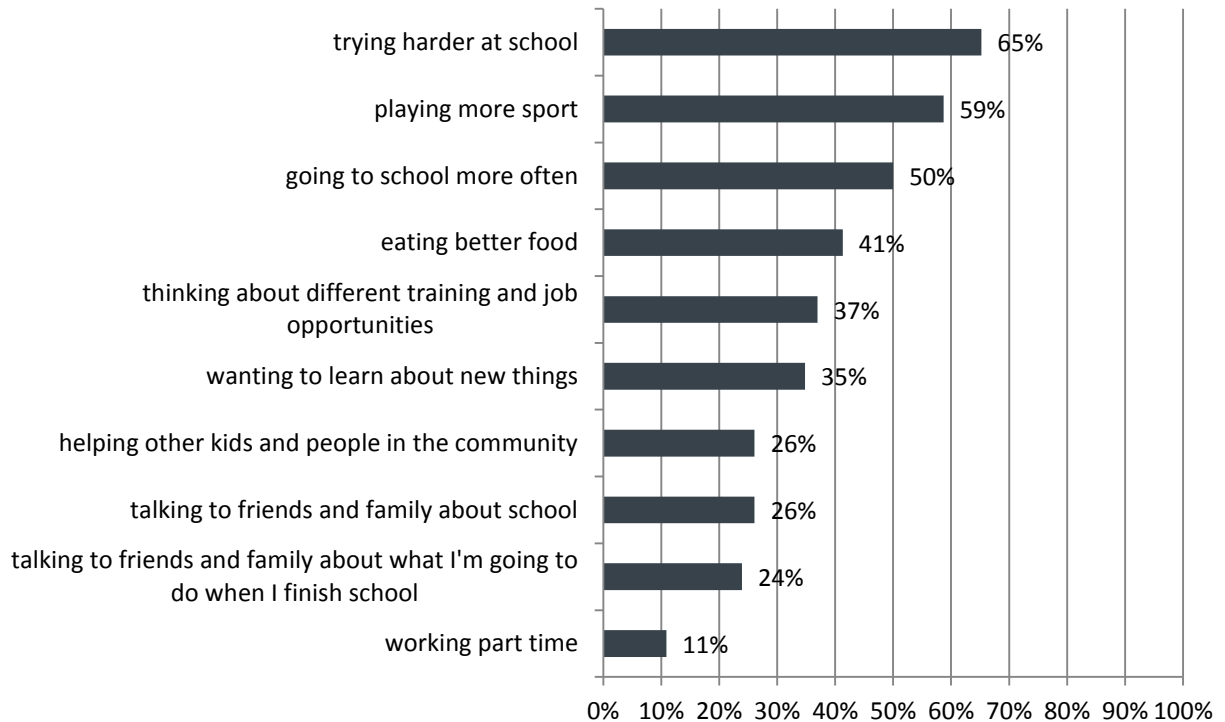
Results were more mixed in terms of the boys reporting a change in healthy behaviour. Participation in sport was popular, with 75% reporting that they were playing more sport, and 31% stated that they were eating better food. Improved leadership qualities were less prevalent, with 38% of boys stating that they were helping other kids and people in the community.

---

<sup>25</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

Figure 64 presents similar findings from boys at the Dubbo South Academy.

Figure 64: **Dubbo South: Since attending the Academy, I am... (n=46)**<sup>26</sup>



Responses from students at the Dubbo South Academy were encouraging. 65% of students said that they were trying harder at school, and a further 50% going to school more often since attending the Academy. In addition, 35% of participants iterated that they were wanting to learn about new things.

There were strong results in terms of changes to healthy behaviour at Dubbo South, 59% indicated that they had been playing more sport, while another 41% were eating better food.

To a lesser extent the data shows leadership qualities developing outside of school, with 26% stating that they were helping other kids and people in the community.

---

<sup>26</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

Figure 65: **Dubbo Senior: Since attending the Academy, I am... (n=13)**<sup>27</sup>

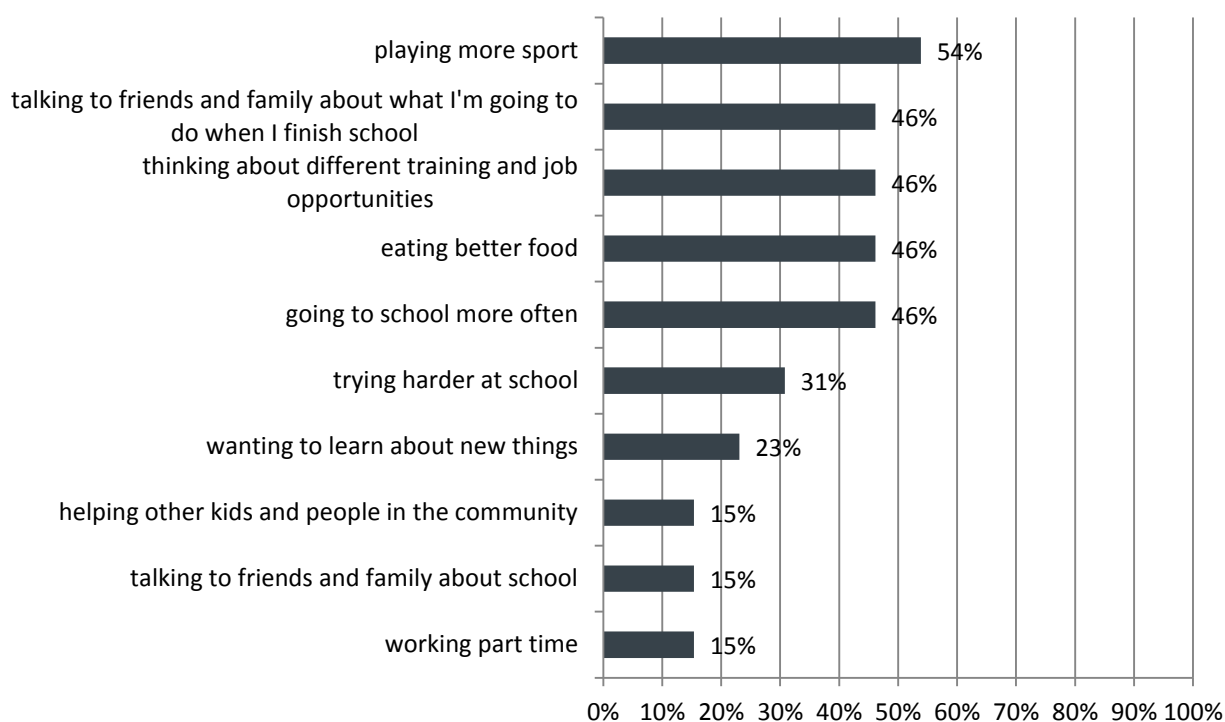


Figure 65, relating to Dubbo Senior, shows some improvement in the boys' attitudes and behaviours, however low levels of survey responses suggest these results are only indicative. 46% responded that they were going to school more often since attending the Academy, while 31% stated that they were trying harder at school. Only 23% said that they wanted to learn about new things since attending the Academy. In addition, 54% identified that they were playing more sport, and a further 46% indicated that they were eating better food since attending the Academy.

Improvements to leadership amongst kids was shown to a lesser extent, with 15% stating they had been helping kids and people in the community.

### *Employment prospects*

During a focus group at Delroy with five students from Years 7 to 10, there was a consensus that being part of the Academy had really made them think about the importance of doing well at school for their future prospects. A number already had clear ideas of what they wanted to do when they finished school.

Evidence of the Academy's championing of long-term career goals was on prominent display in the Academy rooms with employment as one the programme's 'five pillars', with each pillar decorated with pictures of activities students had taken part in or celebrating successes such as gaining part-time jobs. 'We have learnt that being part of the Academy is about more than just sport,' one student explained. 'It is about the pillars, about jobs and education.'

<sup>27</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

While it is too early in the life of the Dubbo Academies to attempt to quantify substantive improvement in employment outcomes, students noted the practical assistance given to make them work-ready, such as help preparing CVs, and arranging fee-free bank accounts with the Greater Union Building Society. In addition, boys were taken to worksite visits at Tomingly Gold Mine, Energy Australia and GrainCorp to encourage them to think about their job goals. One Year 10 student related that a visit to a GrainCorp facility had inspired him to want to become a diesel mechanic, and he was aiming to gain one of three apprenticeships GrainCorp was offering to Clontarf graduates in Dubbo.

As can also be seen from the figures above, students from all three campuses indicated that attending the Academy has increased their positive feelings about getting a job after finishing school. In addition, at the Delroy Academy, 56% of respondents recognized that since attending the Academy they were talking to friends and family about what they are going to do when they finish school and another 50% were thinking about different training and job opportunities. 13% had a part time job since joining the Academy.

At the Dubbo South Academy 97% of the boys indicated that they were more positive about getting a job after school and 37% of boys were thinking about different training and job opportunities, while 24% were talking to friends and family about what they were going to do when they finish school.

Attitudes of survey participants at Dubbo Senior towards the prospects of employment were similar. All surveyed boys felt more positive about getting a job after school and 46% of boys were talking to friend and family about what they are going to do after they finish school and thinking about different training and job opportunities. 15% of these boys were working part time since joining the Academy.

## Unintended consequences

With NSW government funding for Clontarf Academies requiring a contributing co-payment from host schools, the juggling of budgets at the Dubbo College campuses to afford the Clontarf programme has concentrated minds on the costs and opportunity costs of Indigenous student programme choices. It is a crowded marketplace. School staff at Dubbo South related that at one stage the campus had 17 different Indigenous education programmes operating concurrently. Not only did the overlapping aims of programmes make it difficult to determine relative value for money in terms of actual outcomes achieved, there was a risk of actual detriment, with some students involved in so many programmes they were missing out on core schooling.

Within this context, the fact the NSW funding model for Clontarf Academies requires it to compete for funding from host schools themselves (who must cover one-sixth of the overall cost of the programme) might be seen as both a negative and a positive.

All three Dubbo campuses reported that the cost of the Clontarf programme (\$1250 per student a year) had required cutting back or passing on other programmes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The QuickSmart mathematics intervention program was cited as a general programme the campuses would have liked to introduce but had no funds for. Principals were conscious that the benefits of the Clontarf model had to be weighed against the opportunity cost of channelling a large proportion of the school's funding allocation for Indigenous programmes under the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) on one select cohort. 'There is that constant tension between recognising the value of Clontarf and recognising that the RAM is supposed to support all Aboriginal children in school,' said one. 'Yes, there are outcomes and improvements,' another agreed, 'but it's a serious discussion that has to take place, because that money could be achieving outcomes in another area.'

Counting in Clontarf's favour has been its reputation for success, attention to data collection and promise of quantifiable outcomes to demonstrate its value and validate its cost.

One obvious casualty of the Clontarf implementation has been the co-educational NASCA programme, in which Dubbo College was a significant participant (accounting for two of the seven NSW schools with a NASCA operation). As a result of a majority of boys in the NASCA programme transferring to the Clontarf programme, South Campus has suspended its involvement due to unviable numbers.

The issue of gender inequity arising from the resourcing of the Clontarf Academies at Dubbo College provoked two distinct responses among stakeholders interviewed: on the one (smaller) hand, criticism of the Clontarf model; on the other (larger) hand, enthusiasm for the Clontarf model to be extended to girls. In response to disquiet about the gender discrepancy, South Campus is introducing a new programme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls created in partnership with The Smith Family.

Jealousy among some students of the out-of-class activities enjoyed by Academy students – which had included trips to the snowfields, Melbourne, Sydney and a week in Coffs Harbour – was mentioned as an issue by Delroy Campus school staff. While it was acknowledged those excursions were incentives that had to be earned by Academy participants, teachers made the point it was hard to make that case to other students when the outings the school could organise didn't compare to those of the Academy. The inequity was recognised by a number of Academy students interviewed, who said they would like to see stricter criteria to ensure the incentive trips and excursions were only for those 'who really deserved it'.

## Case Study: Dalby Academy, Qld

### Overview

Clontarf's Dalby Academy is hosted by Dalby State High School, in the Western Downs area of the Darling Downs in Qld. The school has approximately 900 students from Years 7 to 12, with the first intake of Year 7 students beginning in 2015. There is also a large Year 11 intake of students from neighbouring p-10 schools.

In 2011 the school acquired the former Australian Agricultural College 4.6 km to the north of its main campus. Along with sporting facilities, specialist workshops and facilities for agricultural education, the 340 hectare 'Bunya' campus houses a 116-bed residence for boarders, making Dalby State High School one of three state secondary schools in Queensland with boarding facilities. The number of boarders has grown quickly, almost doubling in 2015 to 72 students, who hailed from across the state, including the remote north (Aurukun and Kowanyama, on the Cape York peninsula), and south-west (Thargomindah and Quilpie).

As part of this case study, interviews were conducted with 15 key stakeholders, including students, a parent, school teaching and support staff, representatives of community organisations and Academy staff during site visits in April 2016.

#### Key facts: Dalby Academy, Qld

Academy commencement date: Term 3, 2015

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at February, 2015: 84

Target Academy enrolment number: 70

Academy enrolment number Term 4, 2015: 54

### Implementation

Interviews with stakeholders suggest early challenges in Academy staff winning the full engagement of school staff, the local community and parents. A school staff member described preparations as 'hush-hush' with just a handful of teachers in the know as the schools administration awaited official state government sign-off: 'It could have been done a whole lot better. It was a political problem ... We did the best we could under the circumstances.'

Advice from the Clontarf Foundation suggests that the initial implementation process was impacted by the Queensland election, which slowed the process down including gaining final approval from Education Queensland. It is noted that without this approval Academy staff were not able to begin operation.

It seems reasonable to conclude that insufficient lead-in time has contributed to initial reservation, and perhaps even some passive resistance, among teaching staff to the Academy. For example, in contradistinction to other implementations, Academy staff do not attend teaching staff meetings. 'We don't consider them part of our teaching staff,' a senior teacher explained. 'We wanted them to be seen as separate.' The stated reason for this decision seems to have been well-intentioned – a belief the Academy staff can be more effective if not regarded as part of the 'system' – but this feedback suggested some

disconnect with the school leadership, who indicated the Academy staff 'have got some work to do to become a part of the community' and 'should be turning up to staff meetings'.

Regardless of the cause, this is evidence of lost opportunities to build more effective relationships within the school. As another example, one staff member said there were 'many instances' of Academy staff 'being invited into the classroom', but it was also noted there were teachers 'reluctant to let them into the classroom'. There was an observation that some teaching staff 'don't want Dalby State High School being labelled a Clontarf school'.

This raises questions about how the Clontarf programme is perceived, and about how teachers perceive the school itself. Several teachers commented that attendance – an important milestone for the Academy programme – was not really an issue at Dalby, that the school was already effectively 'closing the gap'. It may be that there has been some resentment at the resourcing of the Academy: several teachers interviewed noted the struggle of managing existing resources to cope with a growing student population.

There is a distinct possibility reservations have also been fuelled by the Academy being seen as importing a solution to a recently imported problem – namely the difficulties presented by a group of boarding students from the Cape York region.

This motivation for hosting the Academy was acknowledged by the principal. 'We hadn't seen those behaviours before – kids getting glassed, violence, more exclusions than we had seen in 10 years. They were coming but refusing to go into the classroom.' He learnt about the Clontarf programme at about the same time as the arrival of the Cape York cohort. 'We were almost hands-in-the-air exasperated. Clontarf rolled in and told us what they knew and I just saw this as a potential solution.'

In addition to these internal issues, feedback suggested challenges in engaging parents and what was described as a 'fragmented' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. 'We don't have much interaction with elders here. It is disputed territory. We have historically had difficulty engaging elders. The model that [Clontarf] used would have been more successful in a town with a more engaged community.' Other comments underlined parental disengagement with the school: 'Parents don't have a good association with this school so they avoid coming here,' observed one teacher.

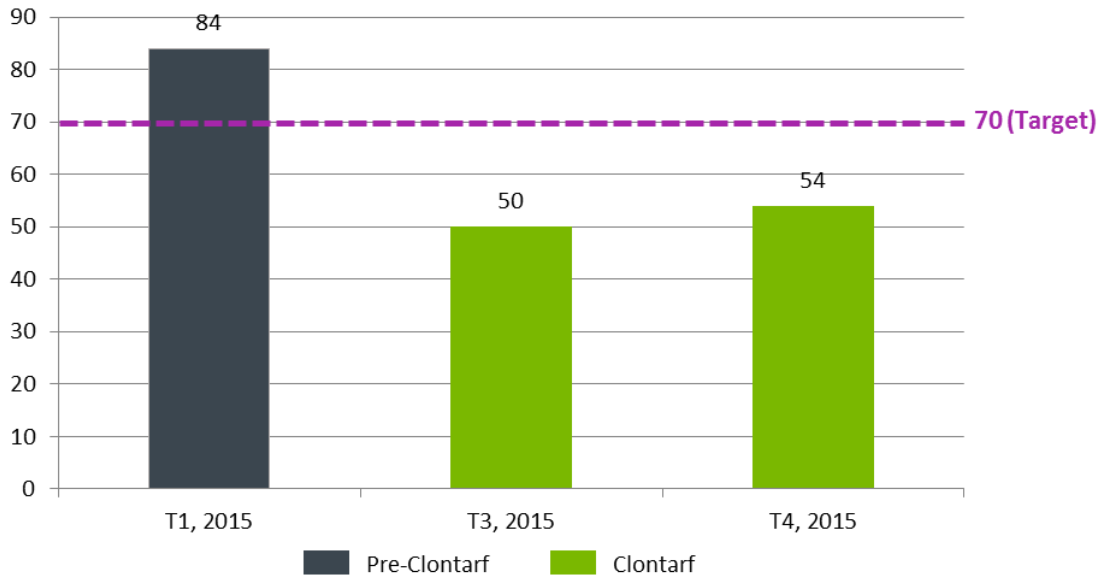
Despite these teething issues, feedback indicated enthusiasm among the school's leadership for the programme's potential and ongoing support so long as the Academy achieved tangible results in line with other successful Academy implementations.

## Outcomes

As shown in Figure 66, Dalby Academy recruited 50 boys in its first term of operation, with no drop-outs, and seven more boys joined during its second term (Term 4, 2015) with three exiting the programme due to school exclusions. Under the Expansion Measure, the Dalby Academy is contracted for 70 enrolments at maturity.

According to the scoping study for the Queensland Expansion of Clontarf, in February 2015, prior to the establishment of the Academy, there were 84 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at Dalby SHS.

Figure 66: Dalby Academy Enrolments



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

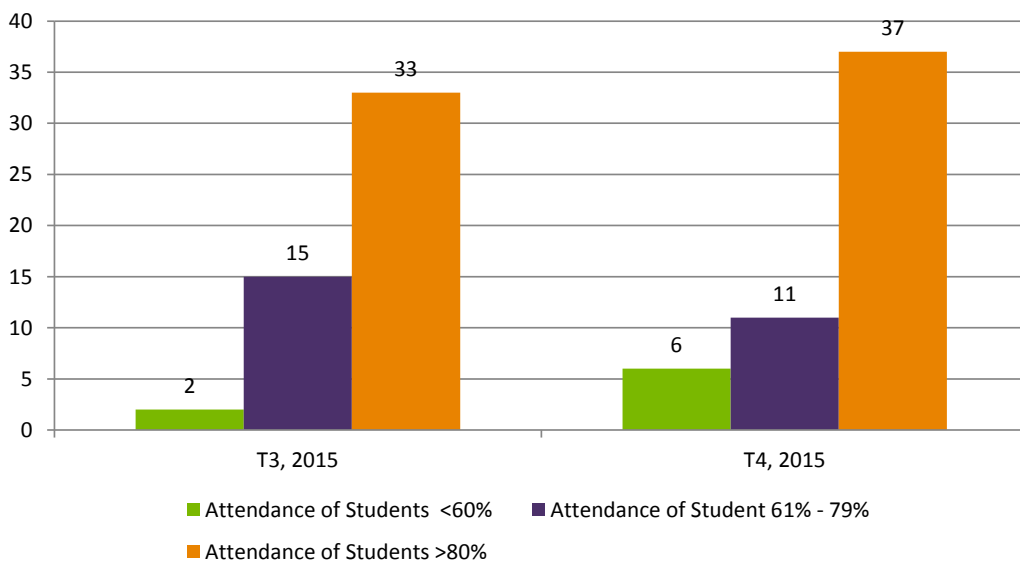
### Education

#### Attendance

As noted in the discussion of implementation, school teaching staff indicated attendance was not regarded as a particular problem at Dalby, and few conclusions can be drawn from early quantitative data given the small statistical sample size and ‘outlier’ effects (notably the individual cases resulting in exclusions). Teaching staff also indicated the Academy’s different measurement methodology (‘They count bums on seats and not approved absences’) would result in lower figures than the schools.

Figure 67 shows the attendance rate for Term 3 and Term 4 of 2015.

Figure 67: Dalby Academy Attendance





Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

As already mentioned the small sample size and timeframe limit the usefulness of the data. With this in mind Figure 67 shows a slight increase in the number of students with a greater than 80% attendance rate, however, it also saw those attending fewer than 60% grew in the same timeframe.

According to the Term 4, 2015 Directors Report for the Dalby Academy, the overall attendance rate for Academy students was 81%, this is in contrast to an average attendance rate of 77% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys in 2014, prior to the establishment of the Academy.

‘Our attendance was good; it has gotten better since Clontarf started,’ one teacher said. A number of anecdotal examples were given. The principal cited one boy whose ‘attendance has gone up to 99% from the high 70s’. An Academy staff member cited ‘cases of kids going from 30s to 70s. We have some kids on 100%.’

### Engagement

Engagement is a high priority for the school, particularly given the challenges associated with the aforementioned group of boarding students from Cape York. ‘We just weren’t prepared,’ explained one staff member. ‘If I had known how much trouble we would have just trying to get them in the classroom. They were so scared and homesick, and so worried. They used to sleep during the day.’ While the school has improved its orientation processes and made allowances to minimise the culture shock, doubt was expressed that the school would have had the success ‘with the FNQ boys’ without the Academy.

Overall, feedback was positive about the Academy’s contribution to greater engagement, including from the boys. ‘It gives us a reason to come to school, gives us a better time, and they can help us when we are struggling at school’ explained one. ‘They can come into classes and give support. Some kids might be ashamed. But Craig and Tom will ask you questions so you can work it out on your own.’ The degree of success, however, does vary according to the individual. A parent with two sons in the Academy related that one was doing better while the other was ‘wishy-washy’.

### Academic performance

It is too early in the life of the Dalby Academy to draw conclusions on its impact on academic performance. Cases were cited of individual students performing better academically, but it was stated that others had yet to make the link between the Academy room and the classroom. ‘Effort in class was our biggest concern and still is,’ said one teacher.

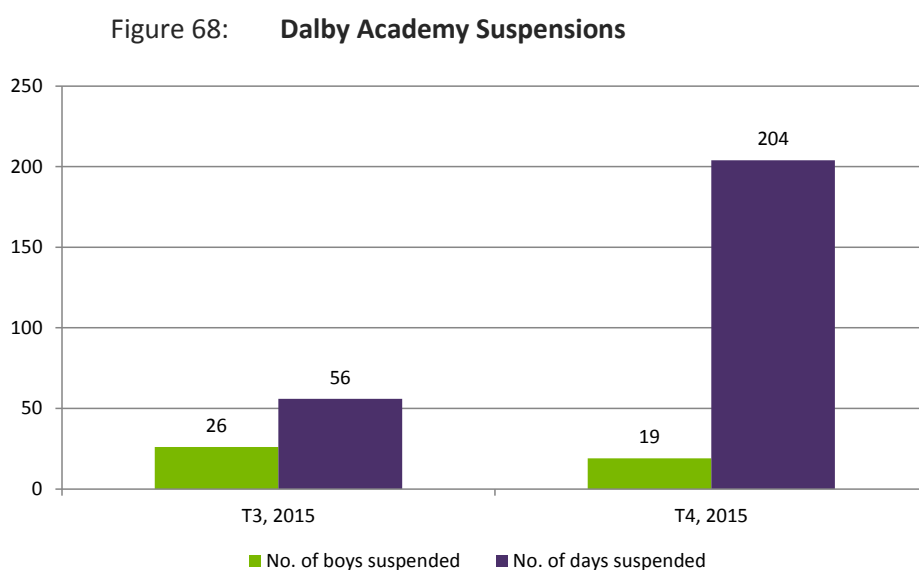
Home support, as in most cases, may be a mitigating factor. It is likely the parents willing to be interviewed about the Academy represented the more motivated end of the spectrum. It was suggested by one teacher that other Indigenous students had parents who ‘didn’t enjoy school’ themselves, hence the disengagement apparent in low parental attendance at school functions. Negative attitudes about the educational system may be reflected in students’ expectations of themselves, and this will take time to change.

Concern was expressed by school leadership that the Academy programme was not yet sufficiently engaging participants on education. ‘I hope it naturally evolves from what Clontarf is doing, but if it doesn’t, that is when I will intervene,’ said one member of the school’s leadership team. ‘If you pull aside one of the boys, they would say Clontarf is about training, activities and sport. But I want them to talk about getting a QCE or getting assignments done. We want to see these guys doing less fun stuff, more

work.’ Feedback from Clontarf indicates that time is needed to build trust with boys and to re-engage them with schooling. Once students are better engaged, then the focus can move on to academic progress.

### Discipline

Quantifiable improvements in discipline, such as suspension data, are subject to the same statistical caveats mentioned previously. A few students made a particular strong impression on the early suspension rates. Tracking progress of class cohorts as they proceed through the programme over several years may elicit more useful information. Figure 68 shows the number of boys suspended and the number of days suspended.



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

The fact that the number of days almost quadrupled in a semester, while the number of boys suspended decreased, suggests that there were students with very high rates of recidivism. Chronic cases aside, qualitative feedback about the group as whole was more positive. One teacher spoke about a remedial class with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that began with ‘extremely disengaged and disrespectful’ behaviour. ‘They all came out with us at the end of the year. Partly administration looked after us, and provided extra support, but Clontarf had a huge impact on that.’ This was a successful example of Academy staff being welcome to come into the class and provide assistance, with benefit for the whole group: ‘Their mates wanted to be successful too.’

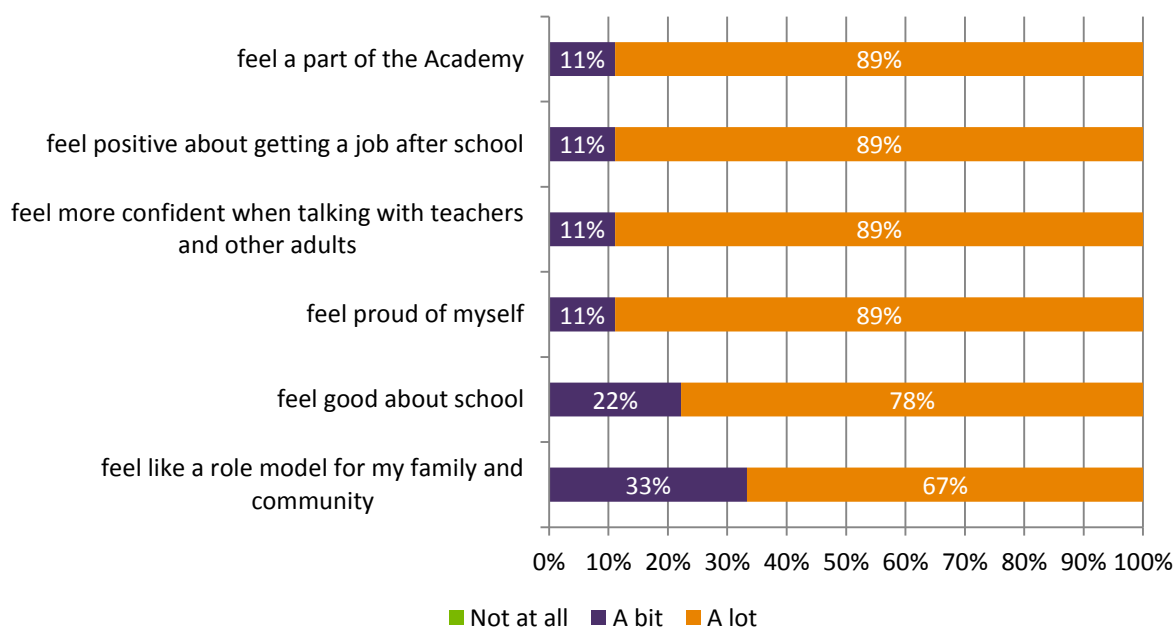
As in other academies, the Academy staff were seen as positive male role models, particularly for boys lacking such figures in their family. Enhancing opportunities for older boys to see themselves as role models for younger boys was also seen as important.

### *Self-esteem*

Self-esteem, as one senior member of the teaching staff noted, ‘is the hardest to measure’, but the overall sentiment expressed was that this was the area of greatest improvement. A sense of ‘respectful identity’ was described as ‘the big plus’ by one teacher: ‘It is clearer in their heads what respectful behaviour is. It is the way they carry themselves. They hang out together a lot. There are no longer cliques of Murri boys. They are whole. They have something to aspire to.’

Figure 69 presents feedback on the impact that attending the Academy has had on self-esteem and other aspects for boys at the Dalby Academy.

Figure 69: **Since attending the Academy, I am... (n=9)<sup>28</sup>**



**Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.**

The small size of the data sample, nine boys, must be kept in mind when reading the data from the survey. However, despite this small number Figure 69 shows that since attending the Academy all the boys who participated in the survey:

- felt like a role model for their family and community
- felt proud of themselves
- felt positive about getting a job after school
- felt good about school
- felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults.

Evidence of greater self-confidence was increased participation at functions such as awards presentations, which boys often did not show up to even if they were recipients: ‘The award ceremony last year was very special. They had no reluctance to get up there.’

The feedback from Academy boys indicated the confidence-boosting role of activities such as sporting events with other Clontarf academies and camps (which incorporated visits to locations including to a university campus and the Qantas workshops in Brisbane). The opportunity to meet people through the Academy, with it being a rule that boys must shake hands with those they meet, ‘breaks that barrier,’ explained one boy. ‘That just gives you confidence.’

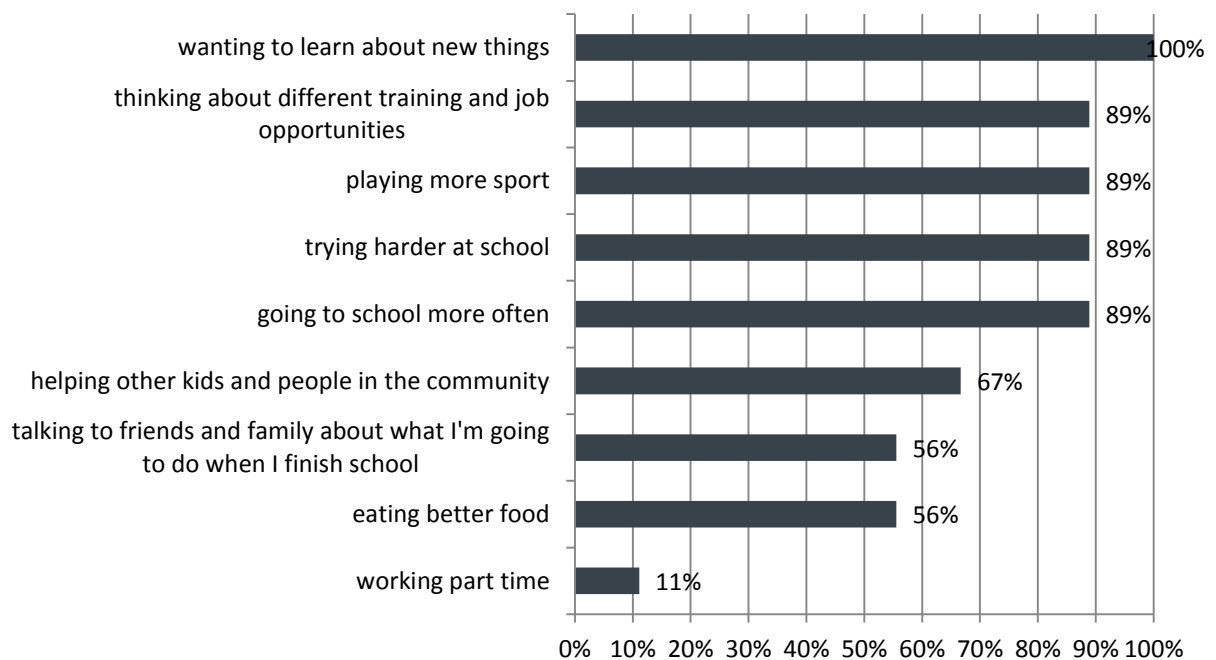
<sup>28</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

### Life skills

While teacher, parent and community stakeholder interviews did not elicit particularly concrete responses to the question of life-skills development, comments about different elements of Academy activities underscored Clontarf's focus on building respect, leadership, honesty, responsibility and teamwork. 'It is not just sport, or teamwork, or academic,' is how one parent put it. 'It is basically everything all in one. When you first hear about it, you think: Is it going to take my kid away from the academic focus? But it is more than that.'

Figure 70 presents the findings from nine Dalby Academy students who provided feedback on the impact of attending the Academy on the development of general life skills.

Figure 70: **Since attending the Academy I am... (n=9)<sup>29</sup>**



In terms of engagement with academic life, there was a strong response in this small cohort. 100% of students indicated that they wanted to learn new things, while 89% stated that they were thinking about different training and job opportunities, trying harder at school and going more often to school. 67% of respondents indicated that they were helping other kids and people in the community.

In terms of health, 89% of the boys at Dalby felt they were playing more sport than before attending the Academy and 56% indicated that they were eating better food.

### Employment prospects

Elevating retention and completion rates was identified by both Academy and teaching staff as the key focus in improving post-school prospects, with a high number of students leaving school in Year 10 or

<sup>29</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

failing to complete the senior years. 'We do have a problem,' the principal confirmed. 'We haven't had too many kids come through Year 12.' Though hopeful a change 'will come in time', he did express concern about the risks that engagement with the Academy would not translate to better academic application – 'and that would be a real problem'.

While Academy staff spoke of efforts to prepare boys for employment opportunities, and a number had gained part-time jobs, it is too early to make any substantive assessment of the programme's contribution to post-school prospects. One teacher noted that to be successful the programme will not only have to raise completion rates (and academic outcomes) but also equip the boys with the confidence and capacity to aspire to opportunities outside the 'Dalby bubble'.

As can be seen from Figure 69, 89% of boys who responded to the survey felt good about getting a job after school. In addition, Figure 70 shows that of these nine boys who participated in the survey, one boy is already working in a part time job since attending the Academy.

## Unintended consequences

As in other schools, there was consistent feedback that resources available to boys should also be available to girls. The school has responded to these concerns by targeting existing programme resources to where there is a perceived deficit: 'The community was pretty much demanding it.'

Whether as a cause or symptom, one particular aspect of the Clontarf programme emerged as a focal point of teacher reservations – namely the in-term Academy camps that are offered as an incentive for regular school attendance and good behaviour (as well as building life skills). While Academy staff worked to ensure boys completed assignments due during these times beforehand, one senior teacher noted that, with not enough time in the curriculum to fit everything in, 'if they miss out on class, they miss out'.

It would, of course, be surprising if there were not differing views within a large school community. The same teacher who commented on the camp issue perhaps summed it up best: 'In general, people wanted an extra layer of support for our kids. That was positive but, like in all organisations, there was a sense of reservation; people wondered whether this was just about more privilege for a minority group, is it going to go anywhere? But now it is a part of schooling. Once it is in and working, people start taking it for granted.'

## Case Study: Harristown Academy, Qld

### Overview

The Harristown Clontarf Academy is hosted by Harristown State High School in Toowoomba, Qld. With approximately 1700 students from Years 7 to 12, the school is large, relatively well-resourced and shows evidence of effective administrative and management structures. There is a strong sporting tradition for both girls and boys at the school.

The Harristown school values the ethnic diversity of its student population, with about 10% of the student population from non-English speaking backgrounds (representing more than 30 different nationalities), while about 13 % (or 230 students) are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

For this case study, interviews were undertaken with 12 stakeholder representatives, including six boys, from Years 7-13 (four in senior Years 10-13 and two in Junior Years 7 and 8), staff in a range of positions in the school hierarchy including the principal and deputy principal, and parents.

#### Key facts: Harristown Academy, Qld

Academy commencement date: Term 3, 2015

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at February, 2015: 126

Target Academy enrolment number: 100

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 98

### Implementation

The groundwork for cooperative relationships appears to have been laid through early efforts to communicate the Clontarf model and ethos in the two years of discussions that preceded the Academy's formal establishment in mid-2015. Clontarf staff made detailed presentations to the school's leadership group as well speaking to all of the school's 200 staff. This built trust and minimised the danger of surprises. According to the principal: 'Everyone felt confident.'

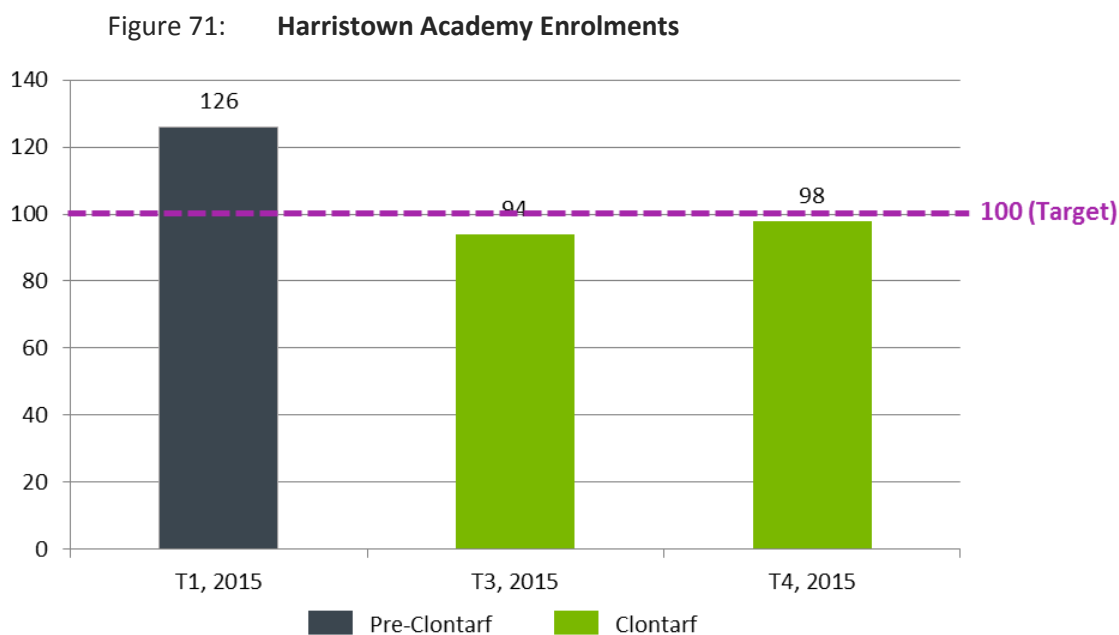
There appears to have been a strong willingness for school and Academy staff to work together from the outset. One key early discussion, for example, worked to ensure the Academy's sports programme would complement the school's strongly held sporting emphases. Critically important has been the inclusion of the Academy staff in regular school staff meetings. There does not appear to have been any sense of anyone being left out or a two-tier system operating.

From the interviews it appears that consistency of school leadership – with the same principal since 2008 – has delivered a strong sense of purpose and deep understanding of school and student dynamics. This knowledge and drive appears to be an important factor for the relatively smooth implementation of the Harristown Academy. Equally important has been Clontarf's appointment of staff well-drilled in the Academy establishment process. 'Clontarf are a brilliantly organised organisation,' said a member of the school's leadership team.

## Outcomes

As shown in Figure 71, the Harristown Academy had 94 boys enrolled by the end of its first term of operation (Term 3, 2015) and had 98 participants at the end of its second term. The Harristown Academy is contracted for 100 enrolments at maturity as part of the Expansion Measure.

According to the Clontarf Qld Scoping study, in February 2015 prior to the establishment of the Academy, there were 126 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male students enrolled at Harristown.



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

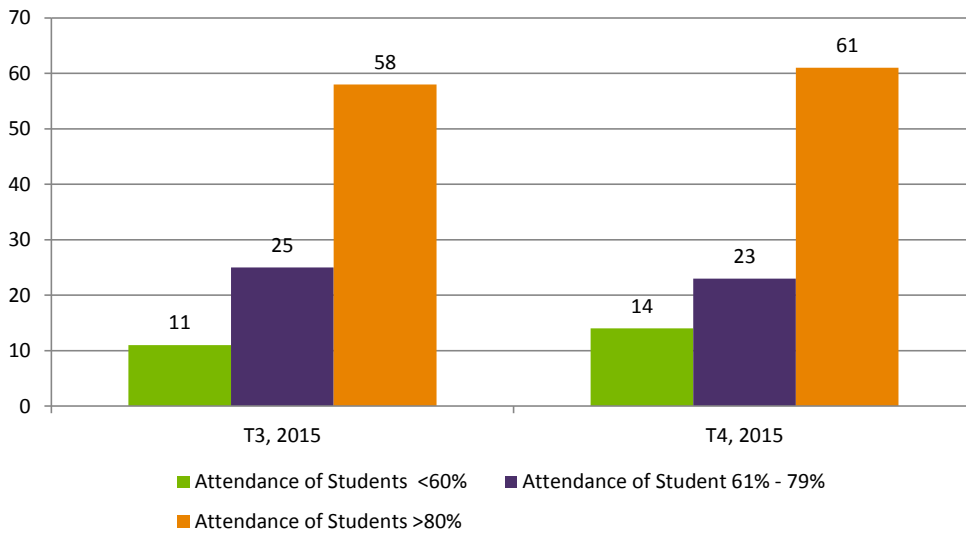
### Education

There is early anecdotal evidence from student, teaching staff, school management, parents and the community that Clontarf's interventions are having a positive impact on educational (and other) outcomes.

#### Attendance

As can be seen from Figure 72, the average attendance data for the Harristown Academy has been relative stable. The overall average attendance rate as at Term 4, 2015 was 78%. This compares with an average attendance rate of 80% prior to the establishment of the Academy (in February 2015), as reported in the Clontarf QLD Scoping study.

Figure 72: **Harristown Academy Attendance**



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

Contrary to the data, teaching staff reported a noticeable improvement in attendance since the Academy’s establishment. Factors cited as contributing to better outcomes included judicious and targeted incentives for attendance, such as participation in camps, sporting events and excursions. It was noted that the Academy and school staff had worked together to keep Clontarf activities clear of key academic assessment periods.

There were some differences in drivers between junior and senior students, with younger boys more likely to cite the motivation of direct incentives like a trip to Dream World, while older boys tended to mention the positive reinforcement of being part of a group and of ‘looking forward to going to Clontarf after classes’.

One commonality was that Academy staff had sought to work within the school’s existing codes and culture. For example, they had encouraged senior boys to think of the Year 12 school formal – for which the school requires 90% class attendance over the year – as a ‘must attend’ event.

Engagement

Comments from the boys – both junior and senior – indicated a pride and desire to strive to improve their grades, with many of them attributing this desire to the encouragement and attention they are getting from Academy staff. One student (who admitted to having a lot of Ds the year before) talked about looking forward to going to the Academy room after classes. ‘Now I am getting better grades on my report card; I feel good.’

Mentoring and positive encouragement by older to younger brothers as well as ongoing connections to past graduates was identified as a positive impact and is something that is actively sponsored by the Academy staff.



### Academic Performance

It was clear that most staff and parents interviewed believed the extra general and specific academic assistance provided by the Academy's four staff was having a positive impact on individual results.

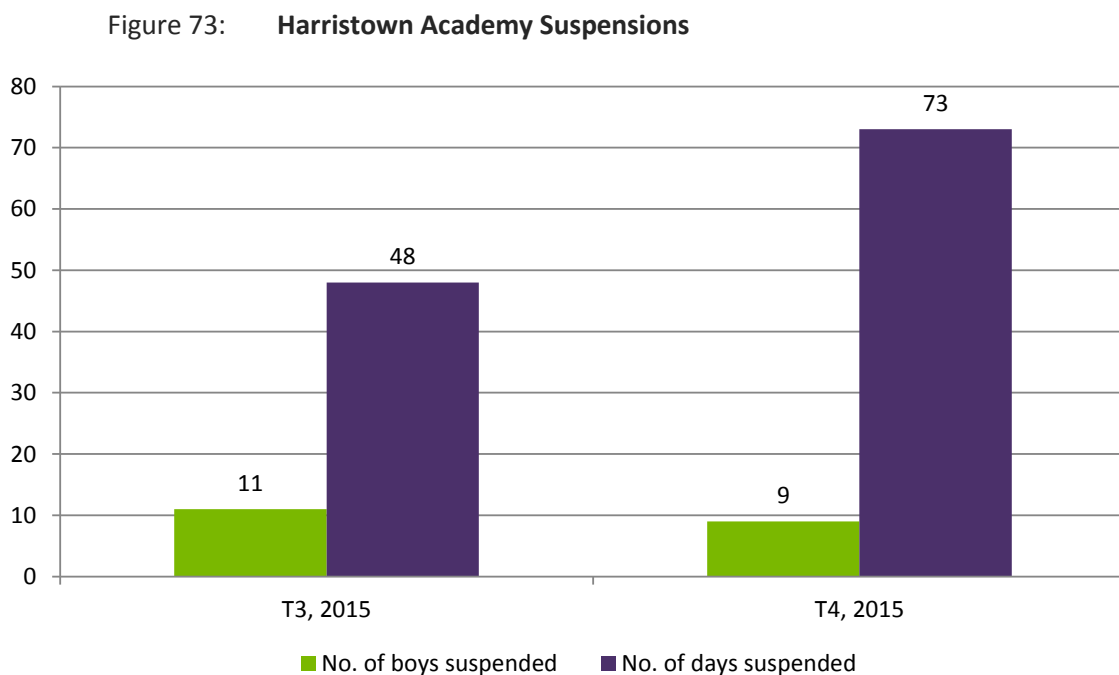
One way to measure the connection between attendance, engagement and performance is by considering retention and completion rates. In 2015, all 17 Indigenous students in Year 12 graduated. 'Every single Indigenous kid student gained their QCE,' enthused a member of the school's leadership team. 'We closed the gap; our Indigenous kids beat our non-Indigenous kids.'

Though a source of pride for the school, it may be too early to attribute such an outstanding result entirely to the Clontarf Academy – or to expect the success rate being replicated in the future. Recognising the scope for natural variations between school years, the rate may also be influenced by the degree to which the Academy successfully increases the number of Indigenous students making it to Year 12: in the recent past, as the principal reported, something like half of all Indigenous students had dropped out between Years 11 and 12.

### Discipline

Behaviour and student discipline appear to be better with the Academy's advent, according to school staff. Students talked of the Academy's role in fostering respect. 'You have to give it and earn it,' said one senior student. An important 'modifier' of group behaviour was older boys assuming the mantle of being good role models. 'You try and pull the younger boys in line,' one senior student explained. 'I was suspended myself. I don't want to have them go through it.'

Figure 73 shows the number of boys that have been suspended and maps it against the total number of days they have spent suspended.



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

The fruits of this behavioural change are not necessarily evident in early quantitative data such as suspension rates -which at Harristown, from Clontarf's perspective, are relatively low. Early figures suggest a decrease in the number of boys suspended but a significant increase in the number of suspension days, especially in one particular year cohort. As an Academy staff reported 'this was largely because it is usually not the first time a boy is suspended and by the time it gets to Term 4 often there is a greater punishment for repeat offenders.'

It has also been suggested by Clontarf that the establishment phase of an Academy might contribute to worse data through its extra efforts with extremely disengaged individuals. Simply increasing attendance by some students may lead directly to more chances of interactions resulting in disciplinary action. Clontarf's intervention strategies are also designed to keep in the system boys who would have otherwise been excluded.

Academy staff expressed confidence that more tailored before-school and after-school activities as part of a deeper and more diverse programme should help bring the suspension rates down, along with the longer-term effects of positive peer pressure.

### **Self esteem**

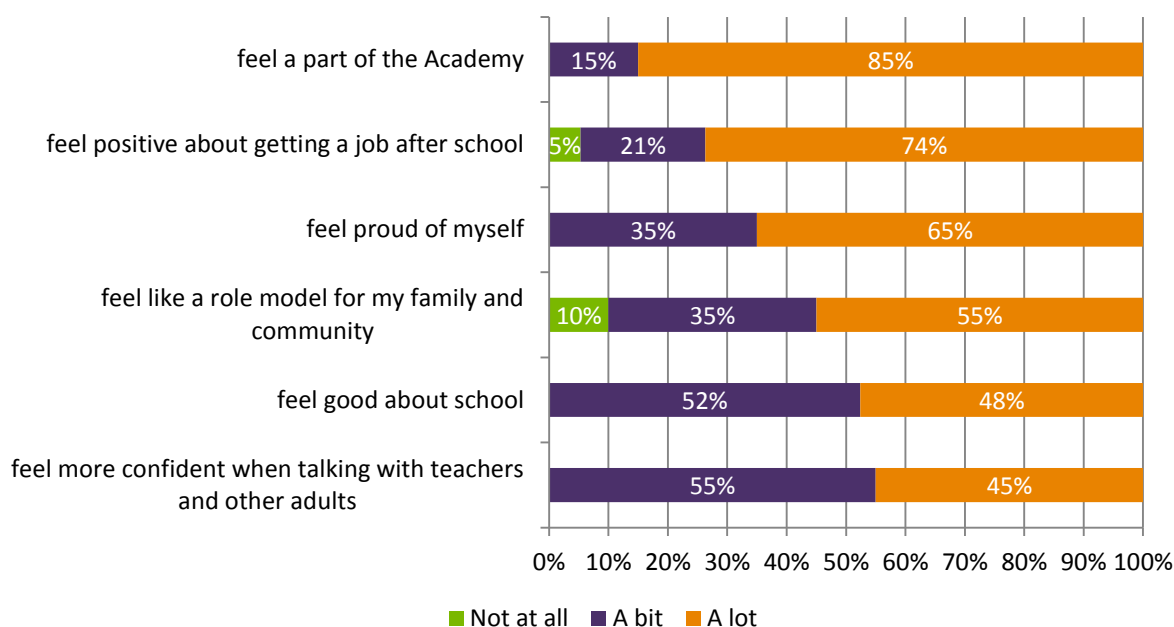
Most parents and staff commented positively on the Academy's impact on participants' self-esteem and confidence. A recurring theme was the importance of the Academy in creating a sense of belonging within the school. 'It is that thing of belonging to something,' noted one parent. 'It is empowering the boys.'

The virtuous cycle of this sense of belonging leading to more school attendance, greater engagement and better performance, and thereby a greater sense of belonging, was noted – with benefits extending beyond the boys themselves. The principal spoke of a big improvement in attendance at the NAIDOC celebrations in 2015: 'You can tell when it is going well with something when everyone is talking and getting along.'

Parents reported a growing enthusiasm to lead (one mother commented that her son 'isn't a follower any more') while boys spoke of about having greater confidence to express themselves in front of others. Several boys talked about their desire to be self-sufficient, leaving school with the capacity to not have to depend on welfare: 'So I can be proud of myself,' said one senior student.

Figure 74 shows the results of a survey of students reporting on self-esteem post participating in the Harristown Academy. Twenty one boys from the Academy participated in the survey.

Figure 74: **Since attending the Academy, I... (n=19-21)<sup>30</sup>**



**Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.**

As can be seen from the data above, since attending the Academy:

- 95% of boys felt positive about getting a job after school
- 100% of boys felt proud of themselves
- 90% of boys felt like a role model for their family and community.
- 100% of boys felt good about school
- 100% of boys felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults

### Life skills

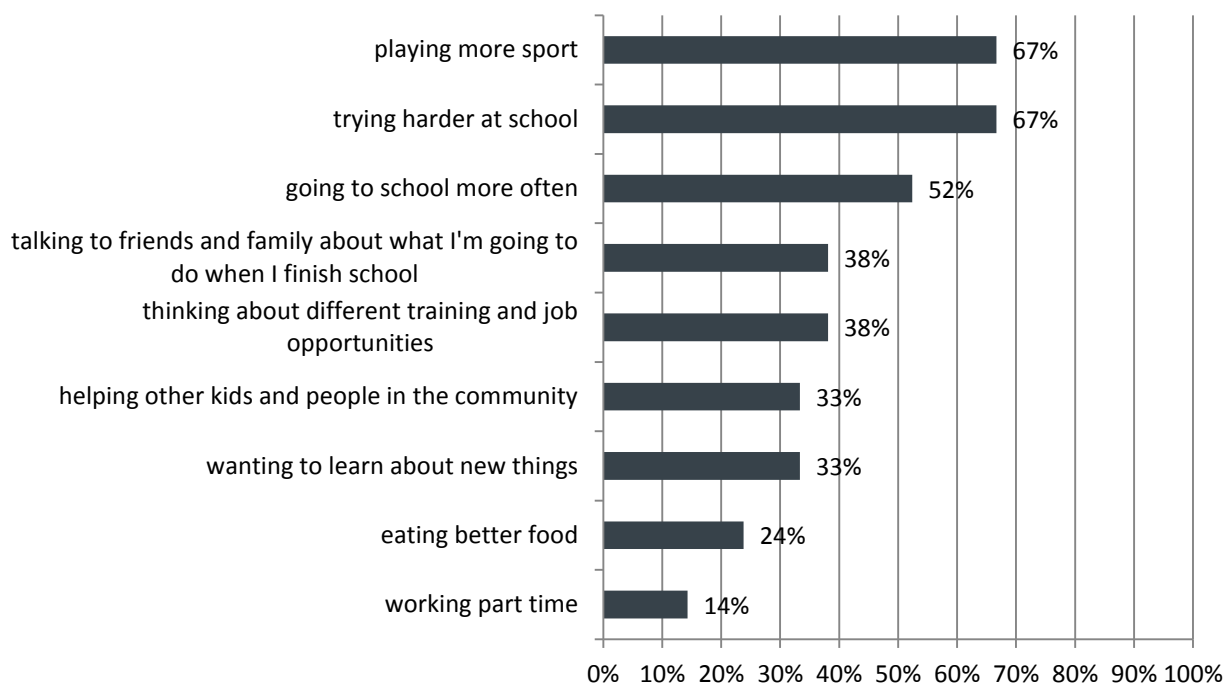
Academy activities have built upon and given extra effect to a pre-existing school culture with a strong emphasis on inculcating life skills: communication, time management, self-discipline, leadership and teamwork. Non-academic activities such as regional rugby league and cricket competitions were cited as opportunities to build teamwork and a desire to collaborate, network, listen and learn from others. Mention was made of the day Clontarf students prepared breakfast for the staff. Such activities combined with time-management and problem-solving tasks on camps appear to reinforce learning back in school.

An awareness of the importance of eating fruit and vegetables and the health dangers of bad eating habits was also apparent in some of the interviews, including among young students.

<sup>30</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some response.

Figure 75 shows the results from a survey taken by boys at Harristown of how they feel their life skills have developed since attending the Academy.

Figure 75: **Since attending the Academy, I am... (n=20)<sup>31</sup>**



The data presented in Figure 75 reflects the sporting activities mentioned in the interview process, with 67% stating that they are playing more sport since attending the Academy. In addition, 24% of the boys stated that they were eating better food.

There was reasonable improvement with school engagement, with 67% of boys stating that they were trying harder at school and 52% going to school more often.

There were also improvement in communication and leadership in the community outside school. In terms of communication, 38% of boys stated that they were talking to friends and family about what they are going to do when they finish school. While leadership qualities were similar with 33% stating that they were helping other kids and people in the community. A further 33% suggested that they wanted to learn about new things since joining the Academy.

### *Employment prospects*

The extra resources provided by the Academy have built on existing programmes and extended to comprehensively introducing junior and senior boys to potential employers and job opportunities. Work site visits have been a prominent part of the Academy programme. The effort put into introducing and repeatedly exposing students to potential employers appears to be creating a positive environment

<sup>31</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some response.

encouraging boys to think about the steps they need to take to get a job that interests them. This may include work experience, further education or other qualifications. 'I want to get my licence and get a part-time job.' said one student. 'I want to finish Year 12 and get a good education; I want to get a good job,' said another.

With senior boys, there is also a heavy emphasis from Academy staff on being work-ready. This appears to have involved substantial effort attending to everyday issues such as ensuring individuals have a driving licence, a high quality resume and other employment essentials such as a bank account, tax file number and Medicare card.

Figure 74 shows that this emphasis on being work ready has translated to 95% feeling positive about getting a job after school. While Figure 75 shows that 14% of boys were working a part time job after attending the Academy.

## Unintended consequences

Feedback from Harristown stakeholders suggested no significant unintended consequences. This is probably due to the effort and spirit that characterised pre-establishment discussions and the Academy's implementation. The only 'problem' identified by interviewees was logistical – securing appropriate accommodation – and that was resolved and the schools continues to be supportive in finding suitable facilities.

## Case Study: Toowoomba Academy, Qld

### Overview

Clontarf's Toowoomba Academy is hosted by Toowoomba State High School, Qld, one of six state secondary schools servicing the regional city in Queensland. A distinctive element of the school is its division into two 'boutique' campuses: the longer-established Mt Lofty campus, in north-east Toowoomba, has a student enrolment of approximately 900; its Wilsonton campus, about 4 km to the west, has an enrolment of approximately 850. Each campus offers classes from Years 7 to 12. Wilsonton is subject to an enrolment management plan while Mt Lofty is open to students from any location – the Clontarf Academy operates across both campuses.

Approximately 160 students – about 9% of the student body – are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, with slightly higher numbers at Mt Lofty. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up a little less than 4% of Toowoomba's urban population.

As part of this case study, interviews were conducted with 17 key stakeholders, including school teaching and support staff, parents, five students from Years 8, 10 and 11, Queensland Education representatives and Academy staff during site visits in April 2016.

#### Key facts: Toowoomba Academy, Qld

Academy commencement date: Term 3, 2015

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at February, 2015: 102

(64 at Wilsonton Campus & 38 at Mt Lofty Campus)

Target Academy enrolment number: 100

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 72

### Implementation

Stakeholder interviews indicate a highly successful implementation process for the Toowoomba Academy, with the programme and its staff integrating smoothly with the school's existing programmes and resource structures for Indigenous and at-risk students. Staff, student and parental engagement has been high, with ongoing regular communication and consistent efforts to build effective relationships throughout the school community.

Contributing to this success was a number of discernible factors. The school's principal has been in his position for more than decade, and therefore has been able to draw on a deep understanding of the school's culture, community context and the nuances of programme delivery in assessing the merits of the Clontarf model and determining its compatibility. Length of tenure implies a stable and consistent leadership conducive to the cultivation of a cohesive sense of mission and a strong commitment to mentorship among teaching and support staff – though as with any large staff cohort, there are variances in the degrees to which staff have adjusted to the Clontarf ethos: 'Some teachers really connect, some just don't have that rapport there,' a staff member noted.

On the Clontarf side of the equation, staff selection has been particularly adept: the three Academy staff have collectively brought solid experience in working with the Clontarf model, local knowledge and contacts, a pre-existing relationship with the school and cultural credibility with students and their families.

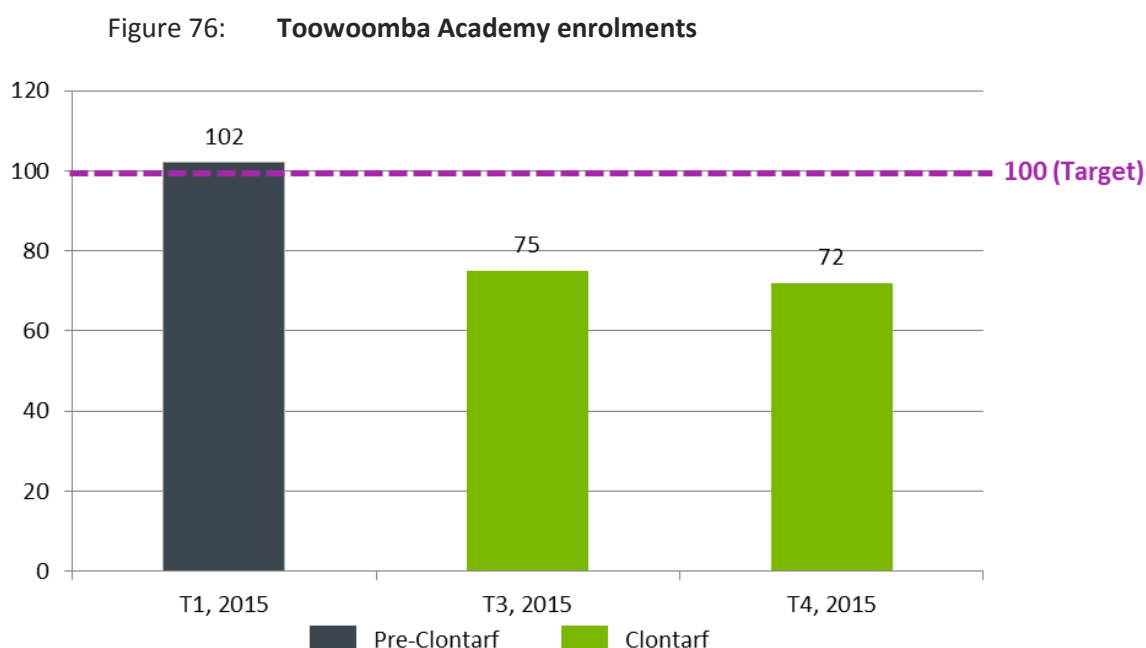
Feedback suggested a strong and seamless partnership has been established, with the Academy staff working 'hand-in-hand' with the school's community education counsellor in outreach to students, parents and the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The only issue seems to have been the length of time and amount of 'red tape' before receiving state government approval for the Academy's establishment. 'It took a very long time,' a member of the school's senior management team said. 'I was worried we would lose traction around the community.'

In terms of the length of time associated with implementation, Clontarf has advised that this process was not within their control and that external factors, such as the change in government in Queensland drew out the implementation process.

## Outcomes

The enrolment of boys into the Academies at Toowoomba is depicted in Figure 76.



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

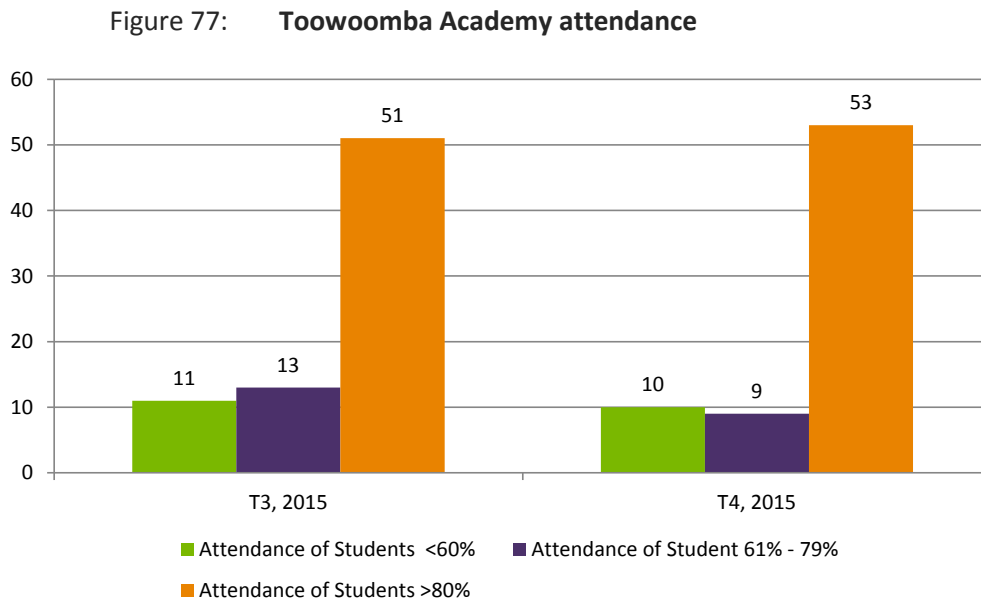
As Figure 76 shows, the Toowoomba Academy ended its first term of operation with 75 enrolled boys (Term 3, 2015). During its second term (Term 4, 2015) a further five boys joined the programme while seven exited due to family relocations, resulting in an enrolment of 72. Under the Expansion Measure, the Toowoomba Academy is contracted for 100 enrolments at maturity. In February 2015, prior to the introduction of the Academy in both campuses, there were 102 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled in the campuses, 64 in the Wilsonton campus and 38 at the Mt Lofty campus.

Recruitment has been particularly successful among the boys in junior years. 'The older boys feel like they have gotten along on their own', an Academy staff member observed. 'We will probably sign them all over time.' This likely reflects optimism that the older boys will eventually opt in to the Academy.

## Education

### Attendance

Figure 77 shows the attendance rates for boys at the Toowoomba Academy for Term 3 and Term 4 of 2015.



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

Given the short time series for comparisons and the statistical imprecision inherent in small sample sizes, attendance data must be considered cautiously. Despite this, Figure 77 does show a relative consistency in the average attendance of boys at the Academy. In Term 4, 2015, 74% of Academy boys had an attendance rate of 80% or higher. Overall, Academy boys had an average attendance rate of 83%. In 2014, prior to the establishment of the Academy, the average attendance rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at both campuses was approximately 84%, as reported by the Academy scoping study.

Academy staff had been proactive in ensuring boys get to school (with morning pick-ups) and in patrolling the campus grounds to ensure boys were where they should be; but their key contribution, as one student put it, was that 'you want to come to school because you get to do more stuff'. According to a senior teacher, only two Indigenous students were now in the 'red zone': 'Everyone's data is lifting.'

### Engagement

Senior members of the school's management team reported signs of greater class participation. Feedback suggests the causes of poor attendance and lack of class engagement can be multifaceted; while in some cases the diagnosis might be due to lack of parental engagement, in many cases it may be due to shyness or shame in having to ask for help. That Academy staff are perceived as friends, rather than representatives of an education system with a history of critical judgement, enables them to play an important mediating role. Through their approach to activities such as a homework club, providing assistance in class, and encouraging the boys to dare to pursue their dreams, Academy staff appear to have been successful in translating the sense of belonging the boys find in the Academy room to the classroom.

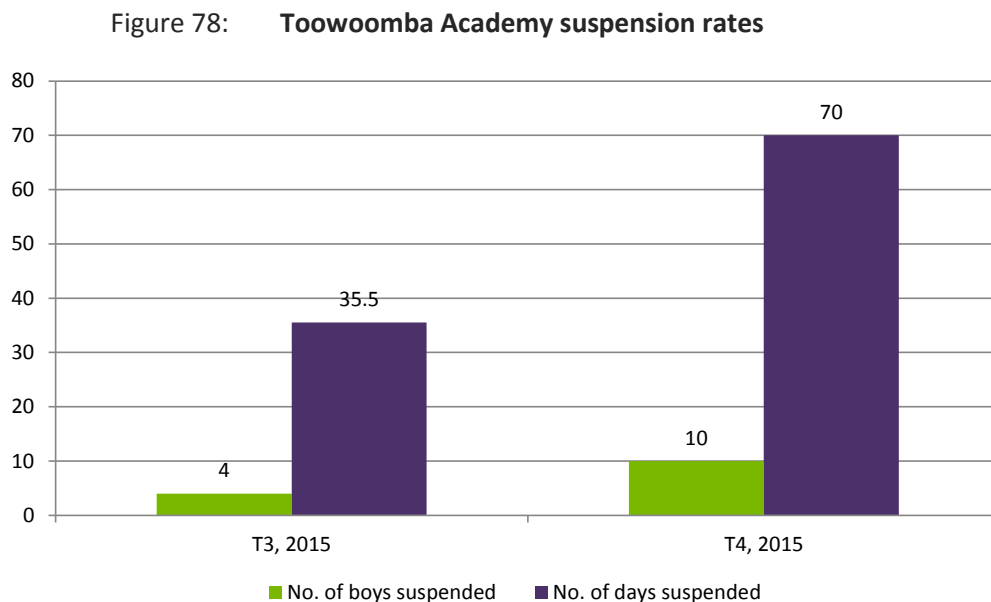


### Academic performance

While teachers, parents and students interviewed provided a range of anecdotal examples of improved marks and grades, it is difficult to make an assessment about the extent and degree of improvement across the cohort as whole. The real ‘proof of the pudding’ will be changes in retention and completion rates as younger boys in the Academy progress through school. Nonetheless, school leadership credited the Academy with playing a part in all of the school’s 2015 Year 12 cohort of Indigenous students attaining their QCE: ‘That was a big improvement. The mainstream average is about 94%.’

### Discipline

Figure 78 shows the number of boys suspended in Toowoomba against the total number of suspension days handed out.



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

Suspension data is mainly driven by a cohort of Year 8 and 9 students at the Academy and not reflective of the broader Academy population. The prevalence of chronic instances of severe behavioural problems, moreover, does not necessarily correlate to the overall degree of lower-level misbehaviour below the threshold of recorded sanction. Qualitative assessments may be more valid.

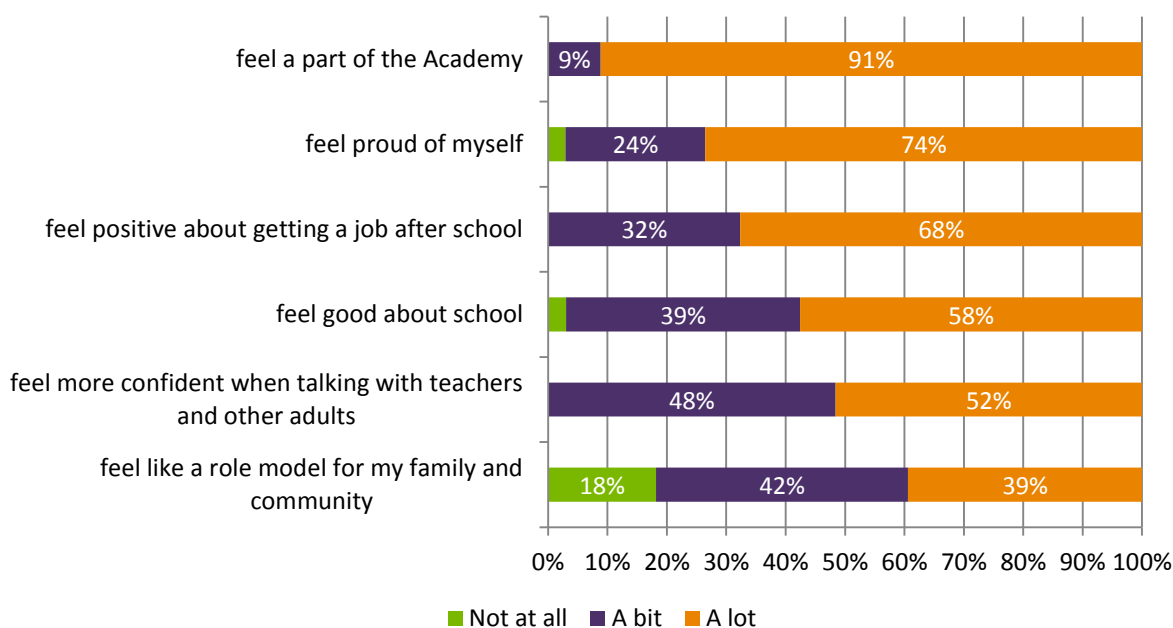
On this score, the overall impression of teaching staff interviewed was of a general improvement in behaviour. Several teachers cited dramatic transformation in boys who had previously manifested severe behavioural problems. ‘One of my Indigenous boys was on his way to cancelling his way out of school but now he has a perfect behaviour report,’ said one. Another noted the marked change in a boy who had been the worst-behaved child ‘by far’ in a class cohort of 150 students. The school’s community education counsellor remarked on the change in Year 11 boys who in Year 8 had been ill-disciplined. ‘Clontarf instilled something in them,’ she said. ‘There is no shame any more in being a good kid.’

### *Self-esteem*

While self-esteem might be considered difficult to measure, an Academy staff member observed that it underscores improvements in more quantifiable outcomes. ‘Attendance doesn’t change without it,’ he

said. A chronic lack of self-confidence, he noted, could often be the reason boys ended up missing class: ‘If they turn up five minutes late, they are too ashamed to go in.’ Cited perceptions of Academy participants being friendlier, more outgoing and willing to talk more can therefore be seen as being strongly correlated with better educational outcomes. Figure 79 presents how students measured their self-esteem after becoming part of the Toowoomba Academy.

Figure 79: **Since attending the Academy, I... (n=31-34)<sup>32</sup>**



**Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.**

As can be seen from the figure above, since attending the Academy:

- 98% of boys felt proud of themselves
- 100% of boys felt positive about getting a job after school
- 97% of boys felt good about school
- 100% of boys felt more confident when talking with teachers and other adults
- 81% of boys felt like a role model for their family and community.

A key theme to emerge from interviews was the role the Academy played in providing a much-needed sense of identity and belonging in a school system with a resource bias towards size and scale – but the bigger the school, the easier it was for a child to feel small and lost. ‘I welcome them to school every day,’ an Academy staff member said. ‘They feel part of the school, they feel safe here.’

### Life skills

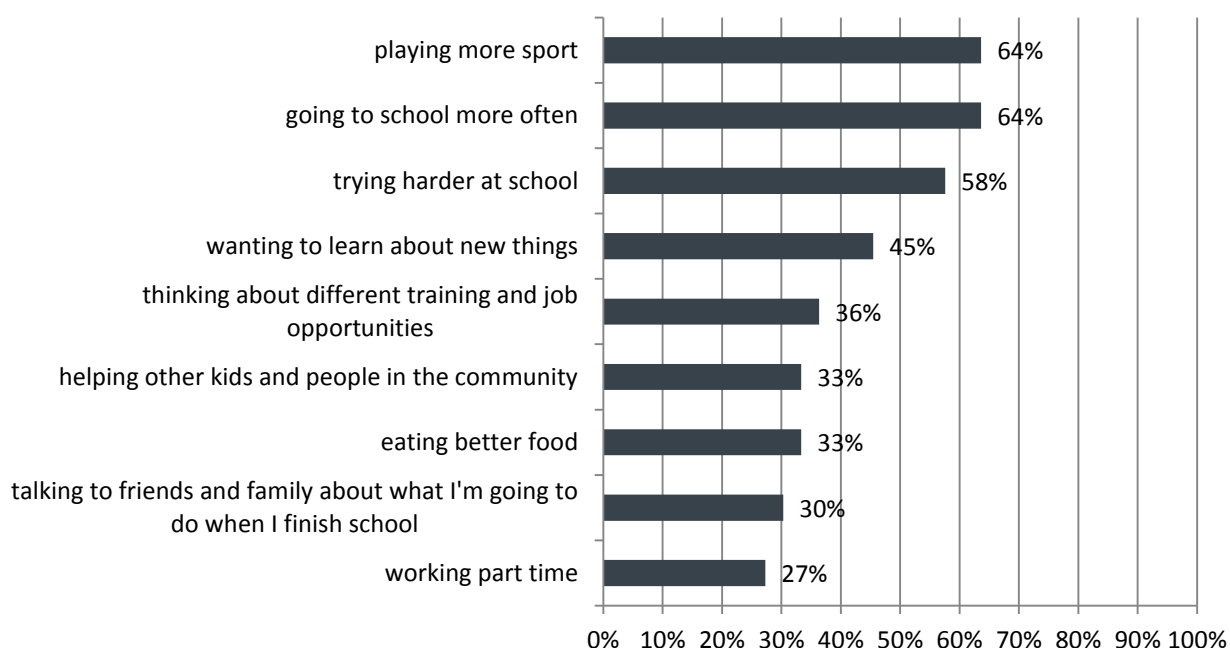
All activities of the Toowoomba Academy are intended to instil the core values of respect, commitment, responsibility, resilience and effort. Attributes such as good manners, punctuality, time management and

<sup>32</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

the habit of getting up early (for morning sports training) were nominated as clear benefits. Another was presentation, with boys taking pride in their appearance: ‘My boy talked about needing to wear a tie, and needing to wear a uniform,’ said one parent, ‘because he says he is a leader now.’

Figure 80 presents feedback from 33 boys regarding the influence of attending the Academy on these general life skill attributes.

Figure 80: **Since Attending the Academy, I am... (n=33)<sup>33</sup>**



The survey data shows that 64% of boys surveyed identified that they were playing more sport and going to school more often since the Academy. To a similar extent, 58% stated that they were trying harder at school and a further 45% wanted to learn about new things.

Parents commented on the effective way the Academy imparted life skills in an incidental manner through the type of activities that are typically part of Clontarf Academy programmes – sports training and competition, camps, excursions, work site visits and active participation in events.

One less typical element of the Toowoomba Academy has been to nurture a love of chess – a game of considerable intellectual stimulation that can be credited with teaching many strategic lessons applicable in life. ‘We have boys who love drama and love chess; we embrace that,’ an Academy staff member explained. As a result the school has fielded its first all-Indigenous chess team in the Darling Downs Secondary Schools Chess Tournament.

<sup>33</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

### *Employment prospects*

The clear perception of gains in the aforementioned outcomes all point to enhanced prospects in post-school outcomes. Multiple parents and teachers cited cases of students being more focused on life goals and careers aspirations, and with making considered decisions about subject selection and their learning programme. As with other academies, staff have provided practical assistance in things like work experience and resume preparation, and ongoing support is provided to ensure graduates end up in work, training or further education.

Figure 79 shows that all students who responded to the survey feel either a bit or a lot positive about their getting a job after they finish school. Furthermore, Figure 80 shows that 27% of the students participating in the survey are working full time.

Clontarf's Regional Manager indicated all graduates from Toowoomba are now employed, doing a course, or both. One was pursuing qualifications in agriculture, another in construction, a third in youth work, and two others in community services. More generally, of 39 Academy graduates from the Darling Downs region in 2015, half had found a job within three months, and 38 were now employed as of May 2016.

### **Unintended consequences**

As with other Academies, the perceived value of the Academy programme has raised the issue of the lack of a similarly resourced programme for girls. 'The Clontarf programme has worked so well the girls are feeling left out,' one teacher noted. Frustration or disappointment that there was no Clontarf equivalent for girls was the issue raised most regularly by Indigenous families with the school's community education counsellor. While the school had addressed the issue by targeting other programme resources, there remained the challenge 'to make it look fair from the community's perspective'.

## Case Study: Barambah Academy, Qld

### Overview

Clontarf's Barambah Academy is co-hosted by Murgon State High School, in the town of Murgon (Qld) and Cherbourg State School, in the community of Cherbourg about eight kilometres to Murgon's south.

Murgon State High School has about 400 enrolled students from Years 7 through 12, with its intake coming from primary schools both in Murgon and surrounding communities including Cherbourg State School, which has about 150 enrolled students from pre-primary to Year 7.

Originally established as a mission school, the Cherbourg school's student demographics reflect those of the Cherbourg community, which is 97.5% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Cherbourg primary students transitioning to Murgon State High comprise a sizeable proportion of that school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student cohort, which is slightly less than 40% of the total student enrolments. This compares to about 10% in the wider community of Murgon (approximate population 2500) and about 4% of the local government area of South Burnett (approximate population 31,000).

Cherbourg, known as Barambah until 1932, is the third-largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Queensland, with a population of about 1200. Though located on the traditional lands of the Wakka Wakka people, its legacy involves the resettlement to the site of many tribal groups from surrounding areas.

For this case study, interviews were undertaken with 24 stakeholder representatives, including four boys, from years 7-12, school teaching and support staff, parents, community members and Academy staff.

#### Key facts: Barambah Academy, Qld

Academy commencement date: Term 3, 2015

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at February, 2015: 161

(81 at Murgon SHS & 80 at Cherbourg SS)

Target Academy enrolment number: 90

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 86

### Implementation

Barambah Academy deviates from the typical Clontarf model by being open to boys below high school level – specifically, boys in Years 4 to 6 at Cherbourg State School along with boys in Years 7 to 12 at Murgon State High School. The particular conditions of the Cherbourg community, the transition between the two school populations, and an appreciation of the potential for earlier socialisation efforts to improve participants' educational progress in later years suggests the rationale for this deviation, rather than more pragmatic considerations such as ensuring a sufficiently large recruiting base to make the programme viable. Of 81 boys enrolled at the end of the Academy's first term of operation (Term 3, 2015), 32 were at Cherbourg.

Stakeholder feedback suggests high levels of support for the Academy's establishment, particularly in Cherbourg. Advocates within the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council were enthusiastic about the

programme's potential to improve educational outcomes and job prospects. Several years of advocacy preceded the agreement to host the Academy. The full support of the two school principals was seen as key, particularly in navigating the complex politics of the Foundation's tripartite funding model requiring funds from state, federal and private sources.

Scoping and implementation processes conformed to Clontarf's standard practice. 'There is a Clontarf way but it is not dictatorial,' the Academy's Director noted. 'Structure is important to the organisation.'

Some concern had been expressed at the end of 2015 about the potential impact that school staff turnover, including the replacement of the two principals involved in establishing the Academy, might have on school buy-in to the Academy ethos – that it is more than just a football coaching programme. Staff turnover at Cherbourg State School was particularly pronounced. However, the onsite interviews (conducted in April 2016) indicated those concerns had been allayed, with a high degree of mutual appreciation of effort and support between the Academy and school staff. Of the Academy staff: 'They have established a rapport with staff, community and family members; they can't do any more.' Of school staff: 'Both schools have been really supportive. Requests never too big or too small.'

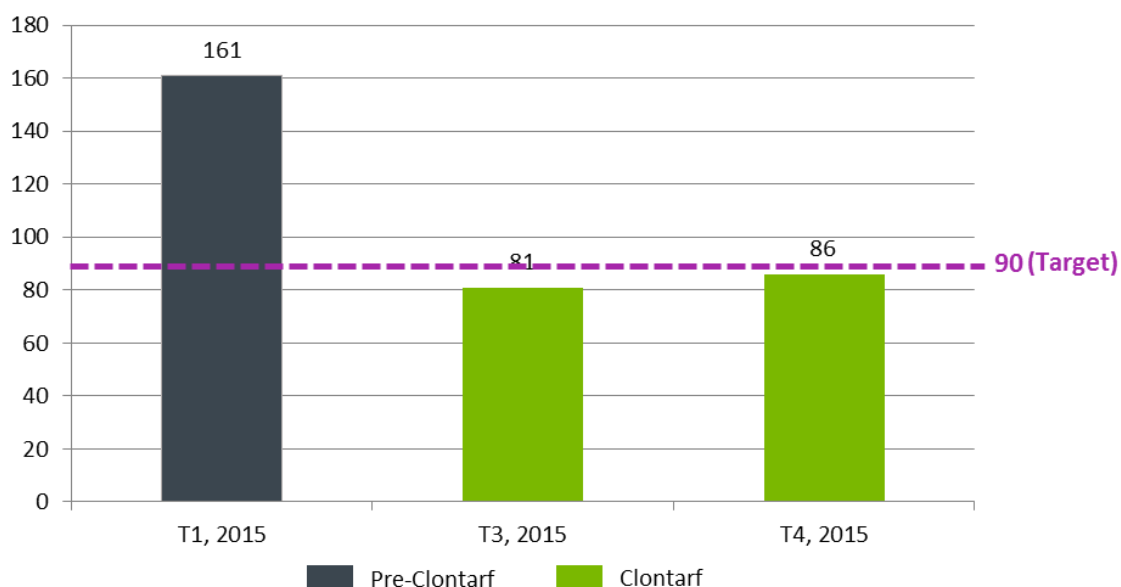
Perhaps counter-intuitively, the inclusion of younger boys in the Academy programme appears, at least at this early stage, to have contributed to the challenge of achieving quantifiable successes, due in particular to some specific attendance and disciplinary issues arising within one class cohort at Cherbourg State School. This will be discussed in the 'Outcomes' section. On the other hand, qualitative feedback suggested benefits to the Academy taking in a wider age group in the sense of fostering a feeling of 'family' support and mentorship.

## Outcomes

As already noted, 81 boys were enrolled at the end of Barambah Academy's first term of operation. Five more boys joined during its second term (Term 4, 2015). Barambah is contracted for 90 enrolments at maturity through the Expansion Measure (refer to Figure 81).

Prior to the implementation of the Academy, there were 81 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at Murgon SHS and 80 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at Cherbourg (as at February 2015), as reported in the Academy scoping study.

Figure 81: Barambah Academy Enrolments



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

## Education

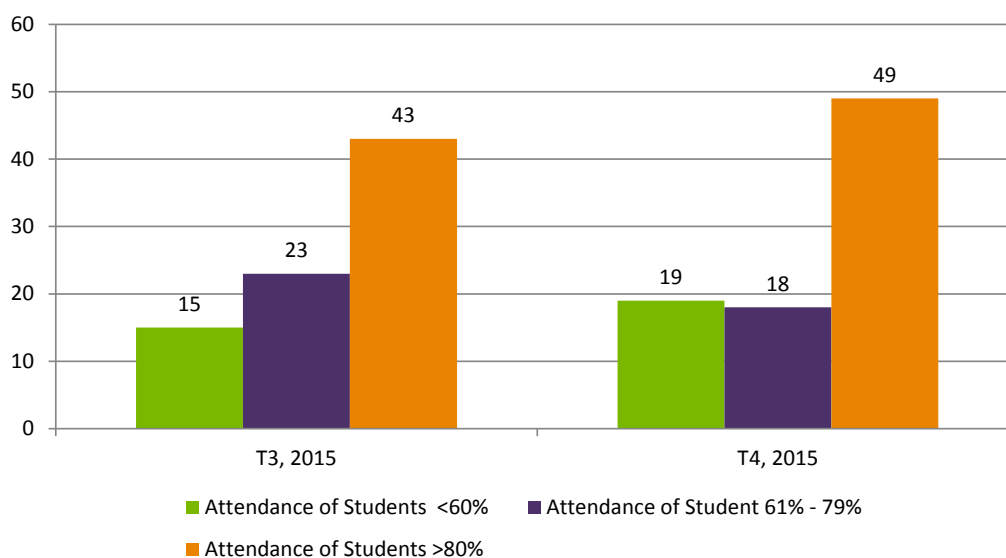
### Attendance

In terms of the first hurdle in raising educational outcomes – encouraging more regular attendance – the early indicators (between the first and second terms of operation) present variable results, with greater success in motivating the older boys, particularly those in Years 11 and 12. As in all cases regard must be paid to the likelihood of statistical anomalies given the small sample size as well as the reality that the Academy does not operate in a vacuum. In this case Cherbourg State School consolidated its Year 6 special education class, which had required only half-day attendance, with the normal class – a change with which a handful of the boys also in the Academy programme struggled.

Notwithstanding these caveats, parents and teachers interviewed were positive the Academy was helping to improve attendance. Two parents remarked on how early morning training had transformed their sons' attitude about getting up for school. 'On Tuesdays and Thursdays my son will get up early and on his own,' said one. 'He hasn't missed a training yet.' Said the other: 'I just say one word, "football", and they are up. It used to be a real fight.' Cherbourg teachers noted that the simple attraction of a ping-pong table in the Academy room had helped arrest a longstanding problem of students cutting school at lunchtime. Confidence was expressed about further attendance gains due to Academy activities and expectations having helped 'break the back of behaviour around wagging or going down the creek'.

Figure 82 presents the attendance for Barambah in Term 3 and 4 of 2015. Due to the recent establishment of the Academy, the data set is quite small and it is possible that statistical anomalies may be present. There is also limited scope to comment on trends.

Figure 82: **Barambah Academy attendance**



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

With this in mind, the data shows that there has been little change over the two semesters in attendance rates. By the end of Term 4, 2015, 57% of the Academy’s population had an attendance rate of 80% or over. More generally, the average attendance rate for Academy boys was 75% in Term 4, 2015. For comparison, the average attendance rate in 2014 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at Murgon was 58.5% and 78.9% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at Cherbourg.

### Engagement

In line with positive feedback about attendance was greater engagement while at school. Cherbourg teachers regarded the Academy staff as excellent role models who would assist the boys in class when needed. At Murgon, teachers felt the senior students engaged with the Academy were also becoming more engaged in school. ‘There is a small group seeking out assistance on a regular basis,’ one teacher observed ‘This is brilliantly positive.’ (It might be noted, in passing, that the school has already made considerable efforts to overcome engagement problems in recent years including overcoming racial divisions and ensuring teachers have equal expectations of students.) Other observations were that there were more Academy boys in the library: ‘And because the boys are doing it, the girls are doing it too.’

### Academic performance

Teachers, parents and students provided anecdotal evidence of improved grades – the expected consequence of higher attendance and greater engagement with schoolwork. As one student put it: ‘If I muck up at school, I get kicked out of Clontarf. Now my marks are better.’ Along with the extra-curricular incentives offered by the Academy to encourage attendance, specific academic assistance was noted, such as one-on-one mentorship by the Academy staff, in-class assistance when needed, and an Academy homework club. Teachers credited the Academy as being instrumental in all five Academy students in their senior year in 2015 gaining their QCE. ‘All of them could have dropped out,’ a teacher said. ‘They were looking like it in the middle of the year.’



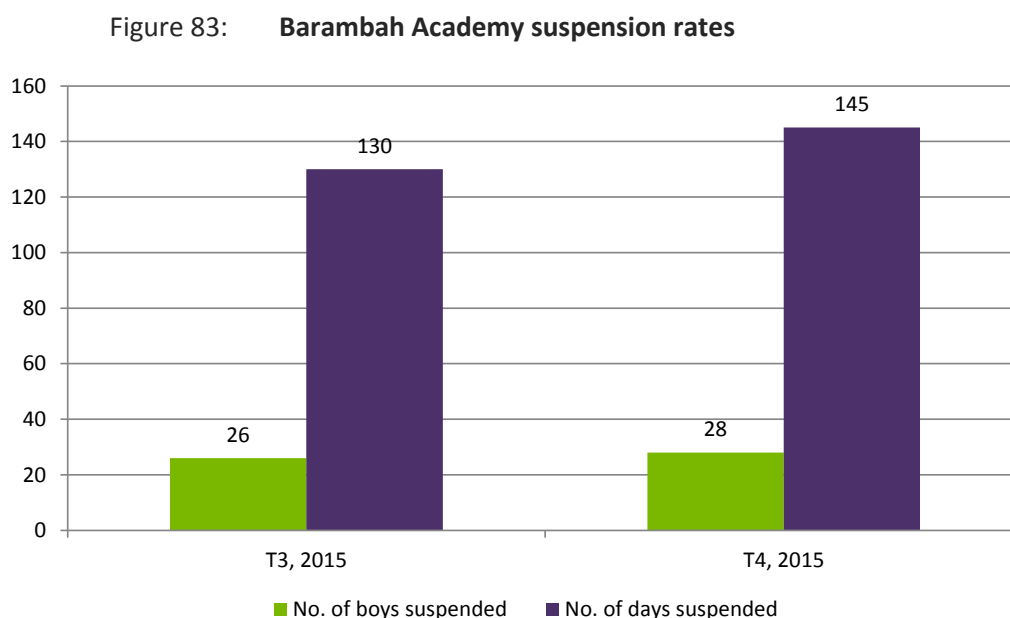
## Discipline

Quantifying improvements in discipline, such as suspension data, is subject to the same caveats mentioned previously. The raising of the bar for acceptable behaviour through the introduction of the 'Positive Behaviour for Learning' framework at Cherbourg State School might also have been a factor in a significant increase in the number of suspension days incurred by primary-school participants between the first and second terms of the Academy's operations. For boys attending Murgon State High School, a reduction from 98 to 61 suspension days was attributed by the school's principal to the influence of the Academy programme.

A Murgon teacher noted, more generally, on the need to ensure Academy and school programmes were aligned for better outcomes: 'The school has to be a lot tighter in terms of behaviour management for that to happen.'

Stakeholder representatives commented favourably on the Academy staff as strong role models. Also seen as important was the boys' sense of belonging to the Academy 'family', with its own uniform, a uniform code of conduct, and clear benefits to being part of that group. 'It is good because it is like a brotherhood,' explained one student, 'Teaches us the right thing to do, not the wrong thing.' The manager of a local pool noted 'a big difference between when they come to the pool as part of Clontarf and when they come on their own. They misbehave when they aren't under that banner, when they haven't got their shirt on.'

Figure 83 maps the number of boys suspended along with the number of days they spent suspended for both schools in the Barambah Academy.



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

Figure 83 does show a slight increase in both the number of boys suspended and the number of days that they have been suspended for. When examined further, it is clear that the number of boys and suspension days have increased at Cherbourg and decreased in Murgon. However, given the small size of the data presented here, it is difficult to comment on the long term trends for suspensions at Cherbourg and Murgon.

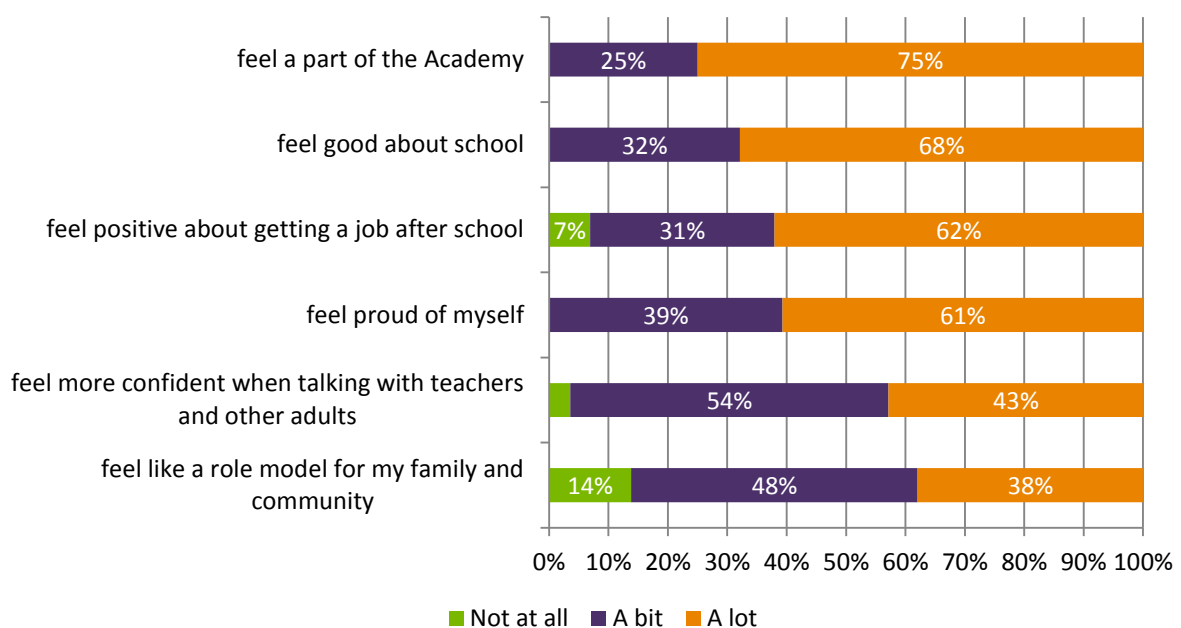
## Self-esteem

Stakeholders interviewed noted the connection between building self-respect and respect for others. Teachers, particularly at Murgon, cited examples of boys demonstrating new levels of confidence in speaking before others in class, taking on extra-curricular responsibilities and showing leadership by encouraging their peers to ‘step up’. Particular cases were cited that indicate a connection between emotional isolation, shyness or ‘shame’ and negative attitudes to school manifested in poor attendance, engagement and social behaviour.

The feedback suggested a number of ways the Academy overcomes this. Membership provides a positive ‘brotherhood’ and sense of identity to face the world. Its activities inculcate a sense of purpose and facilitate achievement. Excursions and events provide a ‘safe’ space to engage with others, and expand the boys’ perception of their own potential. Importantly, the Academy staff relate to them as persons, not as problem students. As one parent put it: ‘They love them no matter what happens.’

Figure 84 shows the data from student surveys on how they felt about their engagement with school, their self-esteem and their role as a leader in the community.

Figure 84: **Since attending the Academy, I... (n=28-29)<sup>34</sup>**



**Note: Figures with less than 5% are not labelled in the graph.**

There was strong agreement amongst boys from Barambah about the connection they felt to the Academy and to school. 100% felt a part of the Academy as well as good about school since attending the Academy. There were similarly strong responses about the boys’ sense of self-worth. 100% felt proud of themselves since joining the Academy and a further 96% reported that they felt more confident when talking with

<sup>34</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

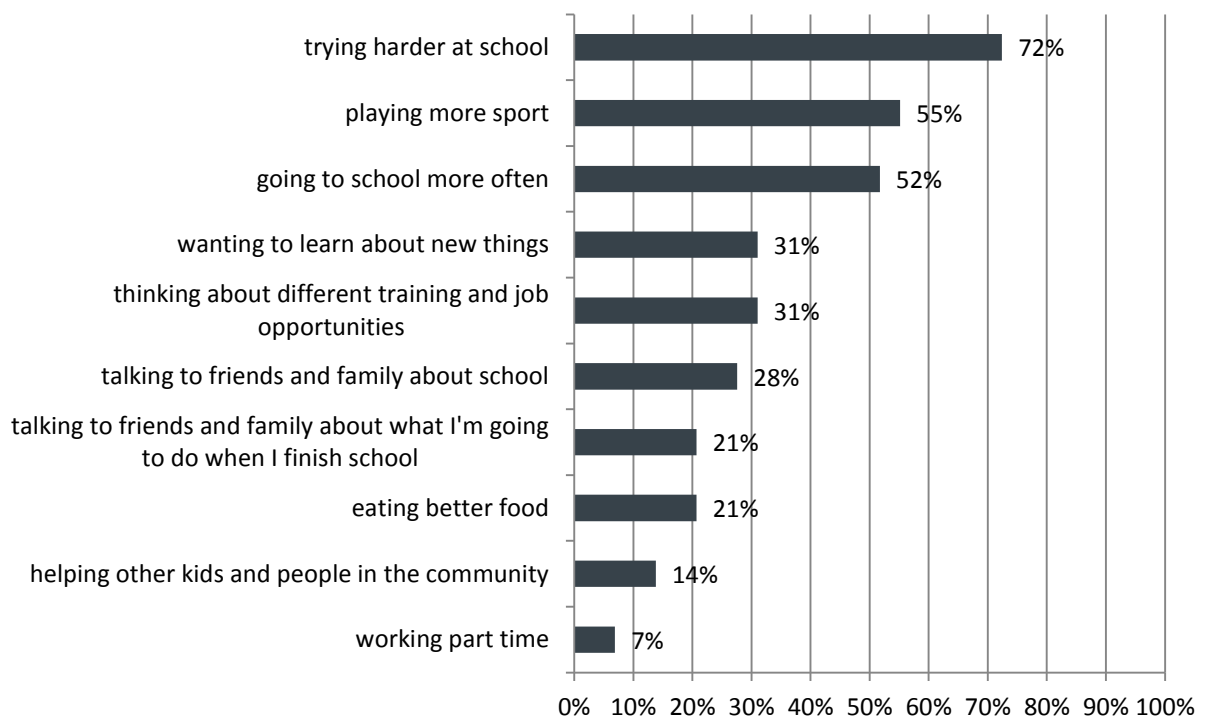
teachers and other adults. To a slightly lesser extent, 86% of boys identified that they either felt more like a role model for my family and community.

*Life skills*

Life skills identified by interviewees reflected the five pillars of the Clontarf programme: education, employment, leadership, well-being and sport. Seen as particularly important by parents and community representative was the way the Academy fostered self-discipline in the boys – through sports training, being held accountable for school attendance, and being expected to conduct themselves respectfully. These things, along with a regard for learning, were seen as equipping the boys to succeed in life. The boys themselves talked about teamwork – ‘Some boys are achieving and some are struggling; we look out for each other.’ – and sportsmanship – ‘It is not all about winning.’

Figure 85 illustrates how boys are engaging with school, practicing healthy habits as well as being a leader in their community since participating in the Academy.

Figure 85: **Since attending the Academy, I am (n=30)<sup>35</sup>**



The data here shows that there have been positive engagement with school by boys at the Barambah Academy. 72% of boys who responded to the survey are trying harder at school, while 52% are going to school more often since attending the Academy. However, only 31% acknowledged wanting to learn new things. Boys’ feedback on changes to healthy living were more mixed, with 55% stating they are playing more sport, and 21% said they were eating better food since attending the Academy. In terms of

<sup>35</sup> Clontarf boys volunteered to participate in the survey, this self-selection process may cause some bias in some responses.

leadership and engagement with the community, 14% iterated that they were helping other kids and people in the community.

### *Employment prospects*

Cherbourg stakeholder representatives, conscious of that community's endemic unemployment, emphasised the important role of the Academy in providing the boys opportunities to visit work sites, engage in work experience and think about what they want to do in later life. To increase the boys' exposure to job opportunities, the Academy staff arranged a visit to the Work Expo at Kingaroy. The five Academy students interviewed all nominated definite job aspirations. 'They encourage you to do things you think you can't do,' said one student.

While interviewees said it was too early to measure tangible results, Clontarf staff were successful in placing the Academy's five graduating students into work or training in 2015.

Figure 84 shows that 93% of surveyed boys identified that they were feeling positive about getting a job after school. To a lesser extent, Figure 85 shows that 31% were thinking about training and job opportunities after attending the Academy. Twenty-one percent acknowledged that they were talking to family and friends about what they were going to do after school. A further 7% were working part time since attending the Academy.

### **Unintended consequences**

From the onsite interviews, the only 'unintended' consequences of the Barambah Academy's establishment has been identification of the need of similar programmes for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls as well as non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. 'We are a low socio-economic area,' a Murgon teacher explained. The 'exclusive' nature of the programme was acknowledged by the boys themselves, who nominated the value girls could get from the programme. 'They don't get nothing, said one. 'It would be better if they could be a part of it.'

Despite this, no issues of evident resentment towards the Academy were raised. On the contrary, the Academy was seen as benefiting all students by contributing to a better school culture. 'We had to do something with those kids,' a teacher said. 'Equity is not always equal. Sometimes you have to put some kids first. It is about the whole being the sum of its parts. This has lifted the whole school.' It was also noted that the Academy staff were trying hard to get non-Indigenous people involved: 'They engage non-Indigenous students wherever they can.'

## Case Study: Warwick Academy, Qld

### Overview

The Warwick Academy was established at Warwick State High School midyear in 2015, Qld, located 80km south of Toowoomba and caters for Years 7 to 12. The Academy offers a vast variety of engaging activities including morning training sessions, camps, in class support, sporting games, employment visits, community events and many more.

The Warwick Academy was not the subject of a site visit by Synergistiq.

#### Key facts: Warwick Academy, Qld

Academy commencement date: Term 3, 2015

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at February, 2015: 55

Target Academy enrolment number: 60

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 37

### Implementation

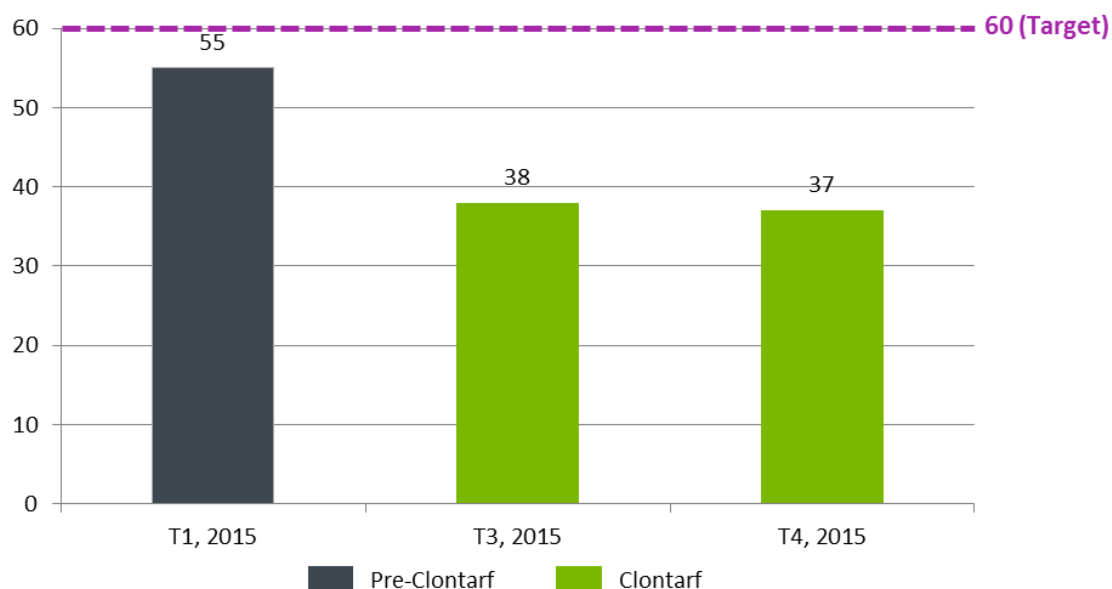
According to the Clontarf scoping study for Queensland Academies, there were several meetings that took place in the establishment of the Warwick Academy. Meetings have been held with business, government agencies, and prominent members of the Toowoombah community. Community information sessions also took place, which parents, students and significant stakeholders were invited to participate.

An Academy room had been identified prior to the opening of the Academy and it was expected that renovations would be complete by the end of Term 2, 2015.

### Outcomes

Thirty-eight boys were enrolled at the end of Warwick Academy's first term of operation (Term 3, 2015). By the end of Term 4, 2015, 37 boys were enrolled at the Academy. Warwick is contracted for 60 enrolments at maturity through the Expansion Measure. In February 2015, prior to the implementation of the Academy, there were 55 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at Warwick SHS, as reported in the Academy scoping study.

Figure 86: Warwick Academy Enrolments



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

According to the Director of the Academy, the first term was focused on building relationships with the boys at the school, their parents and school staff.

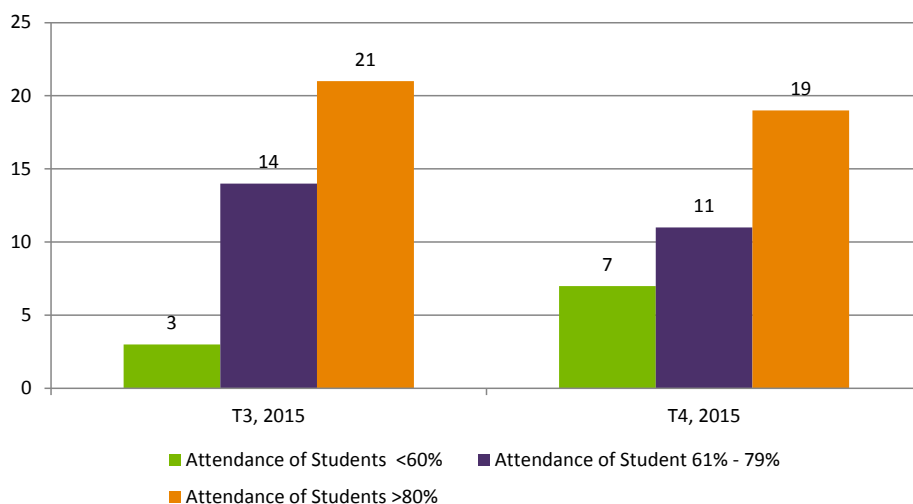
‘We have made a solid start building relationships with the boys and the school staff. We have also begun a number of relationships with many parents which is vital for the success of the programme. The culture we are building in our room and amongst our boys is one of respect and positivity. We have guideline signs that are very visible in the room, Tom and I are consistent with enforcing our values and culture and many of the boys pull each other up when anyone sways from this. We endeavour to continue to build throughout the next term and this will give us a great foundation to start 2016.’

### Education

#### Attendance

Figure 87 presents the attendance for the Warwick Academy in Term 3 and 4 of 2015.

Figure 87: **Warwick Academy attendance**



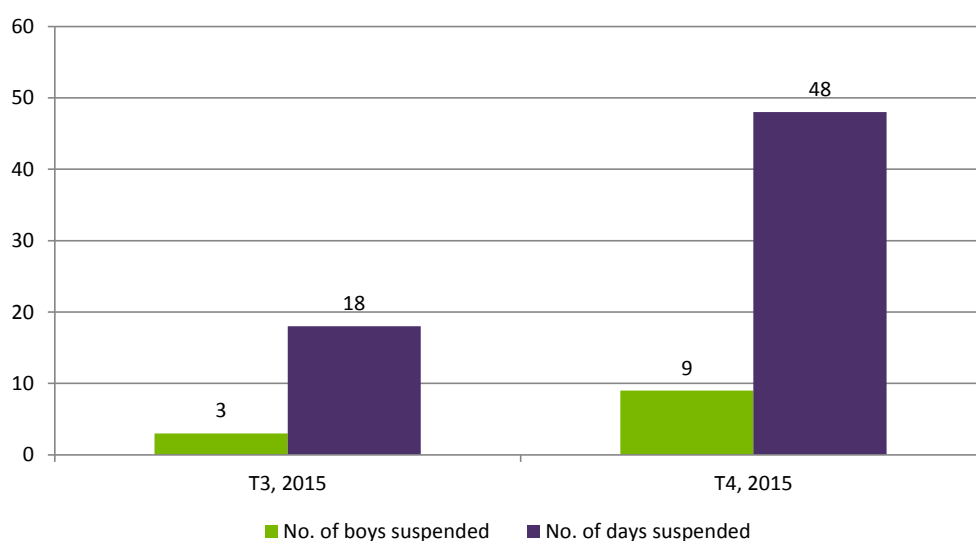
Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

The data shows that by the end of Term 4, 2015, 51% of the Academy's population had an attendance rate of 80% or over. More generally, the average attendance rate for Academy boys was 77% in Term 4, 2015. For comparison, the average attendance rate in 2014 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at Warwick SHS was 76%.

### Discipline

Figure 88 maps the number of boys suspended along with the number of days they spent suspended for both schools in the Warwick Academy.

Figure 88: **Warwick Academy suspension rates**



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

Figure 88 does show an increasing trend in the number of boys suspended and suspension days between Terms 3 and 4, 2015.

## Case Study: Kingaroy Academy, Qld

### Overview

Established in 2015, the Kingaroy Academy operates out of Kingaroy State High School, Qld, and caters to students from Years 7 through 12.

Kingaroy has a strong culture for academic and sporting achievement and the Academy aims to be a positive contributor to that culture by engaging the boys in a diverse range of activities from community service to intra-school sporting challenges. By embracing the school's core values of respect, responsibility and resilience the Academy provides an environment encouraging personal growth and aspirations in keeping with the proud tradition of our community.

The Kingaroy Academy was not the subject of a site visit by Synergistiq.

#### Key facts: Kingaroy Academy, Qld

Academy commencement date: Term 3, 2015

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled prior to Clontarf Expansion at February, 2015: 38

Target Academy enrolment number: 40

Academy enrolment number at Term 4, 2015: 31

### Implementation

According to the Clontarf scoping study for Queensland Academies, there were several meetings that took place in the establishment of the Kingaroy Academy. Meetings have been held with business, government agencies, and prominent members of the community. Community information sessions also took place, which parents, students and significant stakeholders were invited to participate.

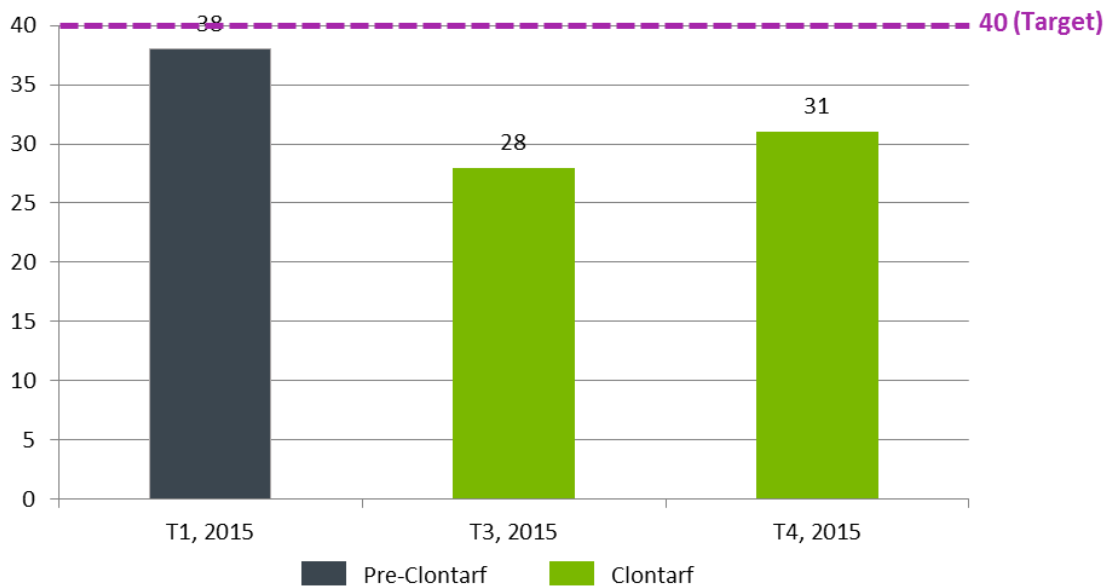
An Academy room had been identified prior to the opening of the Academy and it was expected that renovations would be complete by the end of Term 3, 2015.

### Outcomes

28 boys were enrolled at the end of Kingaroy Academy's first term of operation (Term 3, 2015). By the end of Term 4, 2015, 31 boys were enrolled at the Academy. Kingaroy is contracted for 40 enrolments at maturity through the Expansion Measure. In February 2015, prior to the implementation of the Academy, there were 38 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys enrolled at Kingaroy Academy, as reported in the Academy scoping study.



Figure 89: Kingaroy Academy Enrolments



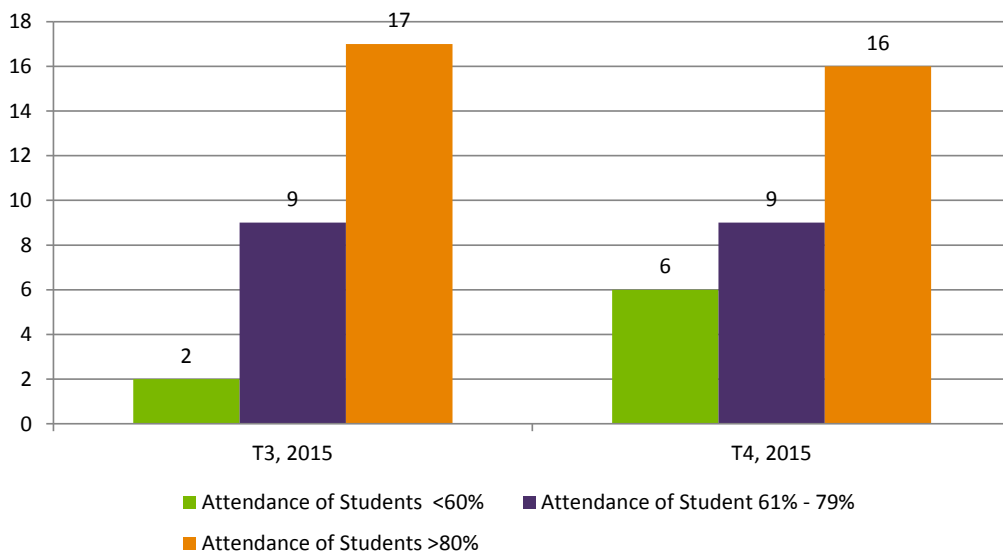
Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

*Education*

Attendance

Figure 90 presents the attendance for the Kingaroy Academy in Term 3 and 4 of 2015.

Figure 90: Kingaroy Academy attendance



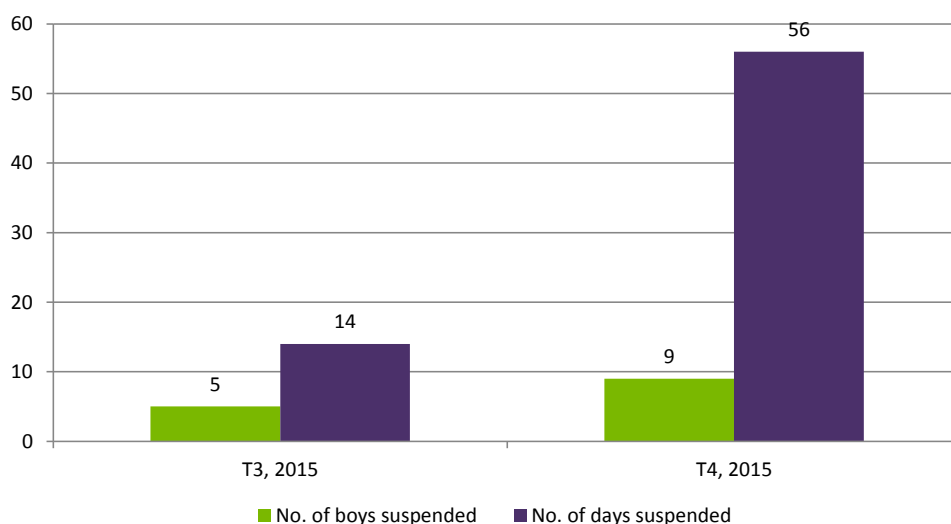
Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

The data shows that by the end of Term 4, 2015, 52% of the Academy’s population had an attendance rate of 80% or over. More generally, the average attendance rate for Academy boys was 80% in Term 4, 2015. For comparison, the average attendance rate in 2014 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at Kingaroy Academy was 82%.

## Discipline

Figure 91 maps the number of boys suspended along with the number of days they spent suspended for both schools in the Kingaroy Academy.

Figure 91: **Kingaroy Academy suspension rates**



Source: Clontarf Directors Reports

Figure 91 does show an increasing trend in the number of boys suspended and suspension days between Terms 3 and 4, 2015. According to the Director's report, there appears to be a small cohort of boys with very low engagement with school and as such are not responsive to suspensions. Other students, however, demonstrate remorse for their behaviour upon being suspended and it is these boys whom the Director believe will improve their behaviour over time and with exposure to the Academy.