



Feature Story

Boeing partnership with Clontarf Foundation gives wings to young Indigenous men

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For most high school graduates, securing a job with a global aerospace leader on an advanced uncrewed aircraft program is something they can only dream about.

But for Jack Lucas, that dream became a reality when he landed a job with Boeing Defence Australia working on the Airpower Teaming System (ATS) – the first military aircraft to be designed and manufactured in Australia in more than 50 years – in his final week of high school.

“My job is amazing and the skills I’ve learned since starting in January are unbelievable,” Lucas said. “For a country boy like me to have the experiences I’ve had is phenomenal. I love going to work every day.”

Lucas was just days away from graduating from year 12 at Kingaroy State High School, 200km north-west of Brisbane, when he was asked if he’d like to apply for a traineeship with Boeing building the highly advanced nose section for the ATS.

The job offer came through the Clontarf Foundation, which aims to improve the education, life skills and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. Boeing has partnered with the Clontarf Foundation since 2020.

As a proud Worimi man, Lucas joined Kingaroy State High School's Clontarf Program in 2018 when he was in grade 9.

"Jack always knew what he wanted to do when he left school," said Toby Broomhall, Darling Downs Employment Officer for the Clontarf Foundation. "His love of working on cars at home was something he was able to build on while he was at Kingaroy SHS, getting various qualifications and experience through his senior subjects."

"School wasn't always the place Jack wanted to be though. Seeing opportunities outside of school made it difficult at times for Jack to commit to graduating year 12. But with the help of his parents, the school and Clontarf, Jack graduated and is setting a great example for the young Indigenous Clontarf boys."

According to Lucas's Boeing manager, David Stilianos, Lucas was a standout in his interview and he's continued to impress during his traineeship.

"Jack's skills and can-do attitude immediately set him apart during the interview process, and since starting with us, he's proven to be an enthusiastic, hard worker with a positive can-do attitude. He's the model trainee and we couldn't be more pleased he's with Boeing."

Lucas credits the Clontarf Foundation and his parents for getting him to where he is today.

"Not many people get an opportunity to work at a company like Boeing, and I couldn't have done it without Clontarf. They helped me with homework and assignments, and with getting my first part-time job in grade 10, and they were always there if I needed a hand."

"But I'm most grateful to my parents. I wouldn't be where I am today without them. Every time I go home to see them, they can't stop saying how proud they are of me. It almost gets tiring."

BDA's Reconciliation Action Plan executive sponsor Rowena Beckworth praised the Clontarf Foundation for its impact on young Indigenous men and said BDA will continue providing support so more attend school, finish Year 12 and enter employment.

"We've visited a number of Clontarf Foundation host schools in south-east Queensland and seen first-hand their very positive impact on their students," Beckworth said. "It's because of that program's success that we've also partnered with Netball Queensland's Diamond Spirit program to support and empower First Nations girls in remote and regional communities."

"Both partnerships are enabling us to drive meaningful change on diversity and inclusion, and through our future focus on creating additional employment pathways for First Nations peoples, we hope to welcome more impressive young people like Jack to Boeing."

