

November 2020

High Performance Aboriginal Academy launches at AFL Max

AFL Max and the Tjindu Foundation have launched the Tjindu AFL Max Aboriginal Academy. The Academy is a fully funded, high-performance football and education-based program for school aged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male and female students.

The Tjindu Foundation, recently founded by Paul Vandenberg, former Director of Aboriginal Programs at Port Adelaide Football Club, has partnered with James Podsiadly, founder of AFL Max for the inaugural Academy. Both this partnership and program aim to drive retention and success rates of Aboriginal students, enable students to earn a Certificates in Sport Coaching, gain SACE credits, plus train in an elite environment. The program will be fully funded for students by the Tjindu Foundation.

The Academy's weekly sessions will have a strong focus high performance in football. Through practical and theoretical learning, the Academy will educate the students on strength and conditioning, team and individual skill development, recovery process, leadership and more.

Paul Vandenberg, founder of the Tjindu Foundation said, "Importantly, our mission is to cultivate cultural and community wellbeing in South Australia through delivering education activities for Aboriginal students across South Australia."

"The Academy is centering success and excellence for Aboriginal students by providing a combination of innovative, sporting, leadership, health and wellbeing initiatives to ensure greater education opportunities and improved employment prospects."

James Podsiadly, founder of AFL Max and former AFL player and coach said, "I have known Paul for a number of years and believe he is a true leader in the AFL industry in developing and executing outcome-based community programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth."

"This program will be no different, as it is built on a foundation of education with an emphasis on high performance and leadership. The AFL Max Team and I are not only excited about delivering a high-quality program for the students, we are looking forward to working with and learning from the Tjindu Foundation Team." said Podsiadly.

SEDA Group is also working with the Academy, managing the certification of the students, plus offering ongoing student support, post-studies, with links to employers, apprenticeships, traineeships, career advice workshops and mentoring.

The Academy will run one day a week for 35 weeks in 2021. Interested students are invited to apply for the program via the AFL Max website. Applications close 5pm, Friday 4th December.

To learn more and apply for the program, visit aflmax.com.au/aboriginal-academy

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