

Media Release

Grant funding to continue Indigenous Basketball Program at PCYC Marrickville

The Midjuburi Ballers program is an early morning basketball program for Indigenous teens. Based on a successful pilot in 2021, PCYC Marrickville has proudly secured funding by the Inner West Council and West Connex to continue running the program through 2022.

Club Manager Ryan Johnstone worked with PCYC Marrickville colleagues and Ben Ireland from basketball not-for-profit The U-League to develop the program. It includes a pick-up service from home, one hour of basketball training, a short workshop with a social worker, a healthy breakfast and drop off at school. Running on Friday mornings, two weeks of the program are dedicated to cultural incursions aimed at connecting the boys with their Indigenous background.

“The first thing you see is how quickly kids improve with some coaching rather than just playing. Some of these kids have never played in a team before; they are usually late for school or go to school hungry.” Ryan says the program is teaching the boys discipline and responsibility, as well as giving them a sense of belonging – not only to a team but also their culture.

“For me, the fact that the PCYC is connecting kids through basketball to each other and to Aboriginal culture is what is so magical about it. They feel they belong, which is really powerful.” Yvette, parent of two boys involved in the program.

Teams from the Midjuburi Ballers are currently competing in the Nations of Origin. Nations of Origin is PCYC NSW at its life changing best – a cultural reconciliation, education, leadership and sporting program that brings together nearly 1,500 young people from all around New South Wales. These young people represent their families, communities, and Indigenous Nations with pride, in Rugby League, Football 5s, Netball, Basketball and, planned for the first time in 2022, Gymnastics.

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About PCYC NSW : PCYC NSW is a registered charity, whose mission is to empower young people to reach their potential through Police and community partnerships. With over 66 clubs across the state, PCYC provides quality activities and programs in a safe, fun and friendly environment. For more visit www.pcychnsw.org.au

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