

# GAME OF

# Life

BACKGROUND AND PROGRAMS  
ANALYSIS GUIDE

2018



**IRON ARMOUR**  
**ACADEMY**  
IRON SHARPENS IRON

This guide is provided as an overview and background of Iron Armour Academy - who Iron Armour Academy is, programs offered, outreach and results evaluation.

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# The Game we can't afford to lose

IRON ARMOUR ACADEMY is a non-for-profit organisation, that has successfully supported young people and their families since 2012.

Iron Armour Academy (IAA) has been designed to fill a gap by providing tailored, evidence based mentoring programs to young people including rehabilitation strategies for positive engagement in their communities. Our programs have been successfully implemented throughout the community, schools, juvenile justice sector and both grass roots & professional sports clubs.

Our purpose is to assist young people, in relation to improving their life skills and athletic development through various training, mentoring and scholarship programs that are generally not offered to or available, building strong foundations to win the game you can't afford to lose - the game of life.





# WHO WE ARE

Beginning in Melbourne's west by sports, health industry and youth work professionals to close the gap of dis-engaged young people. Iron Armour Academy now reaching throughout Victoria, Australia, New Zealand and around the Globe.

From the beginning the aim has been to provide programs for young athletes preventing/suffering mental health issues. Learning that their valuable beyond their athletic ability.

Each program (though the delivery/design may differ) is developed to provide tools that support young people in becoming valued members of their greater community.

Our programs consist of both physical the mindful training methods that both challenge and nurture habits of the young person.

## AT A GLISPE 2012:

- 3 Coaches/Mentors
- 12 Boys (Ages 12-18)
- 1 Location
- Local field training
- Home Garage Mentoring
- 1 session per week
- Off Season Only/Part time program

## 2018:

- Self sustainable initiative
- 20+ Coaches/Mentors
- Academy numbers multiple hundreds Boys & Girls (Ages 4-20+)
- Group Training - Healthy families
- 2 Australian Locations
- 1 New Zealand Location
- Multiple Field training
- Iron Armour Academy Facility
- Facility Location Mentoring
- WTA: Touch and Tag Competitions
- Operating full year
- Youth Sector Mentoring
- Juvenile Justice Programs
- Multiple School Locations
- Secondary and Primary schools
- Holiday Programs
- Overnight Camps
- Worldwide Tours
- Multiple Pathways Across Australia, New Zealand, United States, France.
- School Scholarship Partners
- Sports Pathways/Opportunities
- Staff/Corporate Workshops
- Grass Roots sport club support
- Peak Body Sport club support
- Community Engagement seminars
- REAL Outcomes and more...

## FOUNDATIONAL FRAMEWORK PILLARS



### RENEW

Renew the mindset, renewed attitude.



### EQUIP

Equip with the tools to help make the better behavioural choices.



### RELEASE

Release to grow and to serve; responsibility



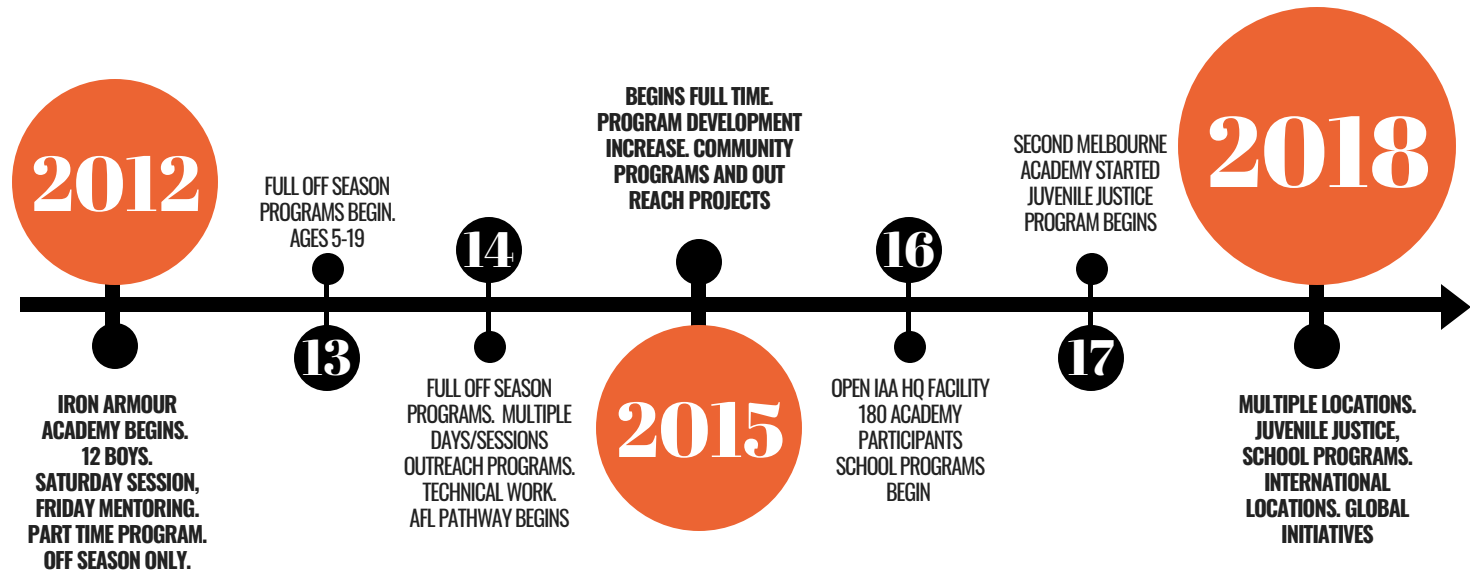


# OUR TEAM

The team at Iron Armour Academy have many years of combined experience, to deliver quality services to individuals, groups and the community. We continue to be passionate about developing an academy that is available to more people and focuses on developing the youth entirely regardless of background, religion and circumstances. Each program has been developed through real-life experience and professional standards to ensure to stay relevant and connected.

Starting with our foundational framework and purpose to ensure our programs remain innovative and results focused. Each member brings to the table their own unique talents and expertise, and as a team, we stand together, united to serve a common purpose in serving and making a positive impact for our young people their families and communities. Our number one criteria to each of our programs is outcomes, without outcomes there is no program.

TIMELINE



# 6 YEARS OF IAA

## IMPACTING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

Starting with an idea to make an impact with local youth at risk, transformed into a vision to impact how young people see themselves and inspire to make their own impact. From 12 Boys on a field to over 200 youth across 2 countries impacted with the training programs alone.







## DESIGNED TO **FILL THE GAP**

Iron Armour Academy was created when our founders saw first hand the gap of well supported young people needing to be filled. Closing the gap of increased disengagement, mental health issues in young athletes/people.

Iron Armour Academy has be designed to provided high level training methods as an tool to engage, mentor and guide young people in winning the game of Life.

**"Life is a sport, make it count"**

# EXPLAINING 'THE GAP'

The programs at Iron Armour Academy are designed for prevention and intervention services to young people and their families. Our programs are created to be holistic in approach supporting young people from all backgrounds that may also be experiencing or leading towards disengagement, mental health issues and/or gangsterism.

Over the past 6 years, Iron Armour Academy has provided more than 4000 young people with services, to support them in making choices that support healthy life.

Coming from high level sports background our founders saw they themselves (as young athletes) and the athletes around them, didn't have the mental or emotional support to make the best choices once cut from the squad or suffering an injury. Having no network to help deal with the follow on from life's events their own personal stories of being touched by youth suicide due to lack of self worth. As they became adults and entered the sports industry as professionals they realised that this story was not rare but very common and decided that with their experience they could make a change.

Athletes, in particular, are especially susceptible to mental health issues. The environment surrounding sports can be hyper-competitive and the pressure put on students to keep up with their grades as well as their game can take its toll physically and mentally. Beyond this many young people from low socio-economic background may also have the added pressure of supporting their family financially.

**Statistics suggest that suicide remains the third leading cause of death in children between the ages of 12 and 19 around the world and is the leading cause of death for Australians between 15 and 44 years of age. About 75% of people who died by suicide were males and 25% were females.**

... Disengagement as a whole is found to be strongly associated with the home and family context and the degree to which parents can economically, socially, and emotionally support children and young people to engage at school. A large volume of both Australian and international research consistently shows that children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience markers of disengagement. [Children and young people at risk of disengagement from school Report]

Iron Armour Academy is designed as a non-profit as it is of key importance that our programs be accessible for all, reaching the most disadvantaged, at risk and dis-engaged youth. As sport and fitness is a universal language and has been scientifically proven to support wellbeing hormones we saw the need to attach an element of sport in many (but not all) of our mentoring programs.

We at Iron Armour Academy are honoured to be able to bring empowering programs with a emphasis on resilience, respect and integrity, to the community.



... Beyond the direct benefits of sport in schools and other curricula for formal education, sport can provide a unique tool for social development in a variety of ways. Outside the school environment the skills learnt through sport, traditional games and play are essential for the holistic development of an individual. The convening power of sport as a universal language has the faculty to appeal to all, across gender barriers, social origins, political affiliations and religions. Sport can act as a powerful tool for social integration with the capacity for adaptation to the needs of the individuals or populations concerned especially for women, people living with a disability, the disadvantaged and the marginalized. [Report on the International Year of Sport & Education, UN]





Through our programs we collect session case notes to capture the objectives, effectiveness and quality of sessions conducted by our team. Each session has specific objectives based on IAA's program planning. Elements within the program include:

**Positive psychology:** Beginning with building rapport with the young people, instilling set ground rules, and establishing foundational elements of shared language and basic session structures. These are informed by growth mindset and grit literature, organisational and positive psychology.

**Physical health and well-being:** The physical component challenges the young people physically and mentally. This provides an opportunity to build resilience and to approach challenging situations as an opportunity to learn, rather than a win and/or loss.

# MENTORING PROGRAMS ANALYSIS

# JUVENILE JUSTICE

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Quantitative Data:

Iron Armour Academy carried out

# 225

well-being sessions (1 Session = 2 Hours) across  
Malmsbury and Parkville precincts.

From 2017-2018 Iron Armour Academy in collaboration with two other organisations was asked to deliver programs to most dis-engaged juvenile offenders in both Parkville and Malmsbury precincts. The Consortium consists of Iron Armour Academy (IAA) to deliver In The Grid program, health and well-being, mentoring sessions along with wider transitional pathways, EPS as a staffing solution, and MANA Community Mentoring Inc. (MCMI) who provide project management and data analysis. Together creating the MANA Toa framework. The following is an overview of the MANA Toa program originally created for the Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR).

At an average of

# 10.39

young people per session.

Over recorded 2037 attendances

**THE CLIENTS ARE ACQUIRING  
SKILLS AND CONTENT LEARNT  
IN THE SESSIONS THAT THEY  
CAN APPLY OUTSIDE OF THE  
PROGRAM.**

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## WHAT CORRECTIONAL STAFF SAY

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"Good interaction with clients, keeping clients engaged. Teaching and coaching clients proper techniques, encouraging and mentoring." [Parkville Supervising staff survey]

"Clients are respectful towards IA staff. IA staff engaging clients, great team work/team spirits clients listen well" [Malmsbury Supervising staff survey]

"...Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre would like to express our great like and appreciation of the Iron (Armour) Academy and all that they do, and stand for. They have become a welcome and much-looked-forward-to event each week in our unit" ...

"Overall the Iron Academy help our clients in a multitude of positive ways, from both inside and out and are both well-listened to and respected by the clients and also provide another, different form, of positive role-modelling" ... [Reference letter from Malmsbury staff]



# JUVENILE JUSTICE CONTINUED

## MANA TOA; IN THE GRID PROGRAM

2017-2018 Iron Armour Academy created a consortium to provide programs that support high risk youth in detention.

### PARTICIPANTS EVALUATED THE PROGRAM USING CASE NOTES AND FEEDBACK FORMS;

Aspects that they enjoyed about the sessions were the physical health and well-being sessions of playing sport, doing fitness, and enjoyed hanging out with their peers. Aspects they thought could be improved was to have more sessions, with majority enjoying the program as it was. What was unanimous was that the young people all felt there were things that they could take away from the sessions that could help them in life. Specific aspects were the importance of being healthy, and specific activities and sport that they enjoy.

Session case notes captured the following developments.

**Positive psychology:** During the program the coaches seen a shift in young people's ownership of the program and session components and are building in confidence in their leadership skills, team building opportunities (with their peers), and learning skills that they can use in their everyday life particularly life outside the detention centre.

**Physical health and well-being:** Coaches affirm individual and group wins, while reflecting on challenges and weaknesses. Supporting each other.

*Client made sure that other clients were participating and holding them accountable for their language. All clients made most of the time available and were focused and listening when asked to things. Client who was being moved to the Immigration Centre thanked being a part of the program and said, "I will use what I learnt in here back home."*

[Malmsbury Case Notes]

*The culture within the group is changing. Clients are more open to encouraging and supporting each other. Clients are more self-conscious of the type of language they use during the program. Clients are starting to be more open with their reflections of the session. [Parkville Case Notes]*

SURVEYED PARTICIPANTS AGREE

REALLY ENJOYED THE SESSIONS

**88.9%**

COACHES EASY TO UNDERSTAND AND APPROACH

**100%**

ACTIVITIES WERE RELEVANT, FUN AND ENGAGING

**100%**

LEARNT A LOT FROM THE SESSIONS

**88.9%**

WILL TAKE AWAY SOMETHING THAT WILL HELP IN LIFE

**100%**

# EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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Data reflective of Bounce Mentoring program from September 2017- September 2018.

BOUNCE is a group mentoring program designed to help young people overcome or identify key factors that trigger behaviour, using the platform of sport, health or creative arts to re-engage at risk students or a support platform for development of youth leaders. The Bounce program provides students with the tools to 'bounce' from problematic situations and make good decisions. Bounce back after Setbacks.

Bounce also includes the added support structure of TOUCH POINT mentoring. Touch Point are One on One mentoring program that works as follow up with any/all of our programs to assist the young person in continuing to be pro-active with their goals while taking more ownership and responsibility.

Quantitative Data:

Iron Armour Academy carried out

# 343

Bounce sessions (1 Session = 1-2 Hours)  
across approximately 13 Secondary and  
Primary Schools.

At an average of

# 13.1

young people per session.

Over recorded 4493 attendances

**THE STUDENTS ARE BUILDING  
SKILLS THAT SUPPORT THEM  
IN MAKING BETTER CHOICES  
AT SCHOOL, AT HOME AND  
THE WIDER COMMUNITY**

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## TEACHERS/SUPPORT STAFF SAY

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"I loved observing your leaders in action. The first ice breaker was a great lead into the session and it was a highlight to see the whole group of boys cracking up and comfortably mingling with others in the group. Some boys I rarely see laughing like this, so it was cool to see. Throughout the whole session the boys were completely engaged and participated easily in discussion through some relevant topics.."[Melton Team Leader/Supervising Staff]

"...boys involved have told me how much they are enjoying it. They have made good connections with the presenters" ... [Deputy Principle, Catholic Regional College]

"Both (Well being teacher) and (Well being teacher) loved the program and loved seeing the progress the girls made." [Mentor Case Notes, Brookfield Secondary College]



# EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CONTINUED

## BOUNCE PROGRAM

In 2016 IAA created various mentoring programs that target with intervention and prevention for dis-engaged students.

### PARTICIPANTS EVALUATED THE PROGRAM USING FEEDBACK FORMS;

Aspects that they enjoyed about the sessions were the active and creative sessions of playing sport, doing fitness, and enjoyed connecting with the group. Aspects they thought could be improved was to continue the program beyond the 10 weeks, with majority enjoying the program as it was. What was unanimous was that the young people all felt there were things that they could take away from the sessions that could help them in life. Specific aspects were the importance of setting life goals to achieve results and seeing improvements at home and wider community as well as school.

Session case notes captured the objectives

**Positive psychology:** The program saw a transition in empathic behaviours, participants being more aware of other participants stories and connected with each other where they had not previously. This created an environment of encouragement and unity. Participants reported taking these learnt skills into their homes and community.

**Physical health and well-being:** Providing an opportunity for the group to collaborate and interact with others they would otherwise not. The sessions left many participants feeling more included and increasing confidence while still focusing on resilience - Bouncing back.

"Bounce really helped slowing things down and looking things through ... That each week they asked how we are feeling and what it like at home and helped us set goals ... made me see the difference in the community as well as school and home" [Feedback Form, Boy, Grade 9]

"(I enjoyed) Training and having people support when others were struggling ... (would like to) extend the program" [Feedback form, Girl, Grade 10]

"It (Bounce) helped with communication, respect and leadership ... That you have to set life goals to achieve ... I have got goals set for later on in my life" [Feedback Form, Boy, Grade 10]

SURVEYED  
PARTICIPANTS AGREE

REALL ENJOYED THE SESSIONS

**95.2%**

COACHES EASY TO  
UNDERSTAND AND APPROACH

**100%**

ACTIVITIES WERE RELEVANT,  
FUN AND ENGEAGING

**90.5%**

LEARNT A LOT FROM THE  
SESSIONS

**100%**

WILL TAKE AWAY SOMETHING  
THAT WILL HELP IN LIFE

**100%**

# FOUNTAIN GATE SECONDARY RUGBY ACADEMY

Iron Armour Academy was asked to support the FGSC Rugby Academy in November 2016. In 2017 Fountain Gate Secondary College became IAA first anchor school; Evaluated in this document includes the Rugby Academy Program, the Bounce Mentoring Program and the Chaplaincy Program which are currently being conducted at FGSC and heading into its first year of completion with the school. Initially the Rugby Program was implemented to support the delivery and growth of the school's current Rugby Academy. However, after 3 months, the school requested IAA to provide additional mentoring programs in order to assist with the increasing number of disengaged students and students requiring additional chaplaincy support.

Quantitative Data:

Students attending Sports Academy

**2015: 50**

**2017: 120**

**10%** OF ALL STUDENTS NOW ENROLLED IN ACADEMY

**FITNESS TEST SCORES INCREASED BY A MINIMUM OF**

**3 POINTS UNDEFEATED**

**2017 SCHOOLS STATE CHAMPIONS  
2018 SCHOOLS STATE CHAMPIONS**

**THE PHYSICAL HEALTH AND FITNESS AS WELL AS IMPROVED MENTAL TOUGHNESS AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING HAS IMPACTED POSITIVELY IN THE CLASSROOM WITH TEACHERS REPORTING IMPROVEMENTS IN THEIR WORK LIFE AS WELL AS IN THEIR SPORTS. THE BOUNCE MENTORING AND CHAPLAINCY PROGRAMS HAVE ALSO RESULTED IN SIMILAR IMPROVEMENTS STRUGGLING AND DISENGAGED STUDENTS WHERE TEACHERS HAVE SEEN IMPROVEMENTS IN ATTITUDES AND WORK HABITS.**

## DIRECTOR OF RUGBY

"(IAA) have supported the program by offering coaches and mentors, which has allowed the program to grow as we now have multiple staff involved. On top of that, the expertise they have brought, has improved greatly the Rugby skills and fitness Levels of these young students" ... Overall, the Director of Rugby indicates that the partnership with IAA has allowed the school to "grow, expand and become more successful. More importantly, it has allowed our students to become stronger and healthier physically, mentally and spiritually..."





# RESULTS

## FOUNTAIN GATE SECONDARY COLLEGE



### Insert from 'BENEFITS FROM IRON ARMOUR PARTNERSHIP'

The girls in particular have experienced a noticeable boost in confidence levels. One girl who came into the program overweight in Year 9 has dropped 16kg in a year. She says she feels so good about herself and it motivates her to keep going. This is just one of the many that have similar experiences. Any student could be asked how they have benefitted from the Rugby Academy and the partnership with Iron Armour and they would be able to tell you of their improvements and achievements. We are able to back up all these findings with the testing data we keep throughout their school life. We have another student of a Samoan background who was a school refuser. He is greatly overweight, experienced huge confidence issues, his father passed away 3 years ago and his Mother had a hard time getting him to school and feeding him healthy foods. Offering him a place in the Rugby Academy immediately got him to school after refusing for over a term, he is visibly getting healthier and is in a supportive environment and mentored by the Iron Armour coaches and myself. [FGFC Rugby Director]

NOVA PERIS VISIT. IRON ARMOUR ACADEMY is honoured to be supported by Nova and they time she gave the youth at FGSC.

# GREATER IMPACT

## OTHER PROGRAMS ON OFFER

As a community first program, IAA offer many youth development initiatives seeking to activate community with exceptional sports/health and connect youth to resources and career pathways.



# 200

 ATTENDING ACADEMY TRAINING SESSION

Registered members across Australia and New Zealand in our community based academy sessions. This program is designed to ensure young people receive high level development both on and off the field without the high cost. From ages 5; building strong foundations to 19 years and over; providing opportunities/pathways

# 154

 ATTENDING NEW BREED ATHLETES CONFERENCE

New Breed Athletes Conference is about uniting athletes, coaches and their families together of all levels, ages and codes, from all over Victoria, Australia and the world, to be encouraged and empowered as they head into their new sporting season. Starting with Friday evening session designed to inspire, followed by Saturday sessions workshops that provide tools that last. Special Guest speakers to share their experiences and knowledge.

# 185

 SESSIONS OF GAME ON PROGRAM (NOW CALLED - GET INTO RUGBY SCHOOLS):

IAA facilitated a program that is designed to increase student sport participation for Australian Rugby Union. Get into Rugby Schools is Rugby Australia's national primary and secondary school program, designed to increase the participation gateway in schools. The program introduces participants to the skills and core values required to play traditional rugby and is a mix of non-contact classroom and field based sessions.

# 200

 HOURS OF WTA (WYNDHAM TOUCH ASSOCIATION) TOUCH COMP COMMUNITY EVENTS

WTA has been created by IAA in collaboration with Werribee Bears Rugby League team to offer more fun, affordable and healthy was for entire families to connect program runs from November to February. WTA also aligned with South East Titans Rugby League club to offer the community the same benefits. In 2018 we have now expanded to adding TAG competition.

# 14

 HOURS OF CLUB REACH PROGRAM

Free initiative that begun May 2018 designed to support grass roots clubs and their volunteers by providing services to enhance the players development. This may be skills, fitness, team bonding, coaching support, leadership workshops and so on.

# 1 YEAR+

 WORK FOR THE DOLE COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Over 2015 - 2017 Iron Armour Academy conducted over 6 project across Victoria helping to update churches, supporting community initiatives against domestic violence and food bank operations.

# 50

 YOUTH (12-18YRS) ATTENDING RECON CAMP

Recon Camp is an innovative program covering all areas of sport, resilience and mindset training. Recon Camp is designed to improve participants skills while creating the competitive edge to succeed at their goals. The program is designed for young people that wish to push themselves as an athlete and enhance the participant to push beyond their current level. The Camp uses a combination of physical training, and mindset workshops to create an environment of change.





# ONGOING SUPPORT STRUCTURE

We are honoured to watch the youth we mentor succeed over the years, particularly the growth over the last 3 years since becoming a full time operation.

As we are community first organisation all our programs lead to our Academy, meaning the young person/family has on going support outside of school, transitional programs, home life and so on. Allowing the young person to continue to strengthen the tools gained from the program they have been involved in.



## COMMUNITY

"We have been with Iron Armour Academy for 5 years now, and I couldn't thank them enough for what they have done for my kid's especially my son. They have helped him grow but most importantly made his mindset stronger. Once Iron Armour always Iron Armour..Come and check them out and join the Iron Armour family!!" [Parent, Overall Academy Programs]

"Such a well run program. The time devoted to the development of the kids was outstanding. My two boys, 6 & 9 thoroughly enjoyed their day with all involved. Would highly recommend." [Parent, Sport Development Pro Holiday program]

"The confidence you guys have bought out in Treyh is amazing also perfecting his techniques for league is BEYOND. Thank-you, Thank-you." [Parent, Overall Academy Programs]

"You are Amazing Iron Armour Academy. thanks for accommodating my Under 8s ... promised the boys were challenged and gained so much skills and fitness throughout the entire hour. As coaches we learnt a lot from the session watching from the side as well. The professionalism and experience is evident through the entire staff that was there. I'm definitely enrolling my son for the off season . I strongly recommend this academy for anyone who wants to see their children thrive and pushed to their limits with the help of such passionate people.Thank you again Iron Armour! I love your academy and what it stands for." [Coach, Club Reach Program]

"The programs they provide will take your child to the level they need to be at in their sporting career and beyond. They also instil and reinforce important values and life skills into your child's life. The Iron Armour Academy is an amazing community based provider. If we never found them, our son would not be the vastly improved athlete he is today, as opposed to being a couch potato that would turn up unfit to his club training. As a result, he is now a state rep and has had the opportunity to participate in an AFL Diversity squad and trial for rugby scholarships. I cannot recommend them highly enough. We consider them a family rather than an organisation." [Parent, Overall Academy Program]





FIRST ARMOUR COMBINE  
NZ CHIEFS DEVELOPMENT SCOUT

Over the years we are please to see many of the participants in our programs take on 'The Game of Life'.

Which includes two of our original members owning business's, another becoming a professional boxer.

Seeing one of our long time participants become the only Australian Rugby Union representative from Victoria.

Multiple participants representative squads.  
Multiple School Scholarships. Developing IAA tour squad.

Many participants finishing high school that may otherwise not, taking on leadership roles, professional work.

And much much more.

# IAA HIGHLIGHTS





NZ TOUR 2018



CANTERBURY BULLDOGS  
DEVELOPMENT. SCHOLARSHIP



NZ SCHOLARSHIP



New Breed Athletes Conference



CANTERBURY BULLDOGS  
DEVELOPMENT. SCHOLARSHIP



NZ SCHOLARSHIP



REBELS 7s CAPTIN



QLD SCHOLARSHIP



1st Rugby 7s Tournament - U16s Winner, U18s Runner Ups



## REFERENCES



<https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/clinical-resources/suicide-self-harm/facts-about-suicide-in-australia>

<https://anzmh.asn.au/2018/05/18/mental-health-struggles-student-athletes/>

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