

THE ALARA JETS STORY...

On 20th June 2013 the CEO of the Luxury Paints Ipswich Jets received an unusual letter. The letter was simply formatted but firm in its objective. ALARA would like to challenge the Ipswich Jets to a game of football!! The letter was penned by Grant Fullarton an enthusiastic football fan. A few conversations and emails later, ALARA set about recruiting a team of players and plans were set in motion for the first training night with the Jets!! A small but confident group of four young people attended the first training session on the 8th August 2013 and continued to train with the Jets each week under the guidance of experienced coach Chris Fullarton (Grant's Dad). Within a month the number of ALARA Jets players had grown to ten.

The initiative attracted the attention of the new ABC regional office that had just been set up in Ipswich. An extra training session was held on September 19th and the resulting footage and story aired on National TV on Saturday 26th September. The activities of the ALARA Jets team were then promoted by the Jets during Disability Action Week.

The ALARA Jets team and their families held a BBQ for the Jets team in December 2013 to thank the players for their time and generosity. The evening culminated in the ALARA Jets team receiving a trophy. The event received media attention and an article appeared in the local Queensland Times newspaper.

Training recommenced in earnest in February 2014 with player numbers continuing to increase. The ALARA Jets players trained hard towards a new goalplaying a demonstration match at half time on Saturday 26th April during the PNG Hunters vs Ipswich Jets game to be held at the North Ipswich Reserve. This would be a televised game... taking the Jets and ALARA Jets to an international audience. The game would also coincide with a Disability Awareness Day focusing services and groups that promoted active and healthy options for people with a disability.

Meanwhile team captain Grant was busy writing to local Ipswich businesses to secure sponsorship to assist with the cost of uniforms. A number of Ipswich City Councillors rallied behind the cause with a substantial donation and additional financial sponsorship and support was received through Youngcare, Limestone Dental Group, XYNZ Clothing, Australian Services and Distribution, Masters Springfield, Disability Community Awareness and Articulate Framing. Wayne Wendt donated a signed 2012 State of Origin Jersey which when framed by Articulate Framing became the first prize in a very successful raffle to support team costs. The team now had funds for their uniforms complete with sponsors' logos.

The ALARA Jets team has grown from four players to nineteen with more young people showing an interest.

The Ipswich Jets Vs PNG Hunters game had sparked interest amongst ALARA Jets team members to accompany and support the Jets in a return game against the PNG Hunters to be held in East New Britain, New Guinea. Interest is high and plans are underway for this to occur in 2015.

The ALARA Jets story is the outcome of one young man's dream and determination to pursue his love of football. It is a testament to the vision and community spirit of Wayne Wendt, CEO of the Luxury Paints, the members of the Jets Team and the willingness of Ipswich Councillors and local business to back a great initiative. It is a credit to the ALARA staff, families and community members who have volunteered their time to help make this dream a reality.



