The Northern Territory Government will develop four new sporting academies for girls.

The Education Minister Chris Burns said the sporting centres would be set up with $2m in Federal funding under the *Sporting Chance* program, $2m from the Northern Territory Government and $2m in private sponsorship.

“These academies will use sport as a vehicle to engage Indigenous girls in secondary education, with the aim of improving educational outcomes,” Dr Burns said.

“Education is at the heart of our *Territory 2030* plan. Increasing school participation among our Indigenous students is an important target within that plan.

“The academies will be modelled on the successful Clontarf program for Indigenous boys that operate in 12 government and non-government schools across the Territory.

“Girls will be counselled, trained and mentored in behaviour, health, life skills and self-esteem. They will also be provided with coaching and specialist training.

“In return, they must attend school regularly, study and live by the academy’s requirements for behaviour and self-discipline.

Dr Burns said the Sporting Chance academies are being developed at Palmerston High, Katherine High, West Arnhem College (Jabiru and Gunbalanya campuses) and a combined academy at the Centralian Middle School and Senior College.
The Member for Solomon Damian Hale welcomed Government funding for Palmerston High School through the Sporting Chance expansion.

Mr Hale said by being involved in the Sporting Chance program, Palmerston High School will have access to funding that will make a real difference to the education of Indigenous students.

Dr Burns said a pilot girls’ sporting academy began at Palmerston High School this year with Territory sporting talent Bo De La Cruz as the program manager.

“Bo is an outstanding role model and has the ability to connect with young girls. She is committed to making a difference to the education and achievement of young girls by using sporting as a hook for engagement.

“Young Indigenous girls at Palmerston are lucky to have such a strong mentor and guide.”

Dr Burns said the predominant sport at the girls’ academies will be basketball and netball, with about 300 girls involved this year, rising to about 380 next year.

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