

Touch footy, tucker and talk for Chatham indigenous students

CHATHAM High School's inaugural Touch Footy, BBQ and Yarn Day as been hailed a success and is set to become an annual feature on the school's calendar.

The brainchild of Chatham's Aboriginal education officer Matt Mitchell and Sean Ploder from TIDE (Taree Indigenous Development and Employment), the day was designed to encourage interaction between the school's teaching staff and the families of Aboriginal students who attend Chatham.

It was held at Ruprecht Park.

Chatham's community liaison officer Jenny Curtis said around 70 family members and students attended the day and took the opportunity to meet and speak to teachers.

She said the idea was for the school to consult the community on how they can improve the learning experience for their Aboriginal students. Jenny said Ruprecht Park was chosen because it is in Chatham's drawing area and also away from the school-proper, which some Aboriginal people can find daunting.

"The day had a real family feel," she said.

Discussion was largely informal, but instructive, Jenny said. The school will now use the input gained from family members to better meet the needs of educat-



John Clark, Sean Ploder (TIDE PACE), Matt Mitchell, Keelyn Davis, Shane Morcome, Jayden Boorer, Tyereese Slater and Blade Thorpe.

ing their Aboriginal students.

As the name suggests, it wasn't just about talking. Games of touch footy were played along with softball while there was also a barbecue.

Those who attended were given personal invitations to Chatham's NAIDOC Day celebrations to be held early next term. Invitations will also be sent out to the broader community.

"I'd say we'll certainly be holding another day next year," Jenny added.

The day was supported by Baker's Delight, Woolworths, Town Head Fruit and Vege and McGrath Meats.



Blade Thorpe is action on the touch footy field.