

MEDIA RELEASE

5 February 2026

Unearthing the next generation of Indigenous football talent at the inaugural JMF National Talent Showcase

In the year of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia™ and FIFA World Cup 2026™, John Moriarty Football (JMF) will shine the spotlight on young Indigenous football talent in an Australian first at JMF's National Talent Showcase in Sydney on 30-31 May.

This JMF event will showcase the talents of female and male Indigenous footballers aged 12 to 16 from all over Australia, giving them the chance to demonstrate their skills to the professional football community.

Participants' travel and accommodation costs will be fully funded by JMF and they will also receive financial assistance to support football related expenses for the showcase.

Yanyuwa man John Moriarty AM, JMF Co-Founder and the first Aboriginal footballer selected to play for Australia, said "The talent pool is deep, and JMF's coaching methodologies are geared to activating natural speed, gifted coordination and creativity to optimise the X Factor that Aboriginal children bring to the game. The next step is the opportunity to be scouted and channelled through pathways - this is where JMF is changing the game by taking this step."

The JMF National Talent Showcase will be led by former Chelsea FC Academy Director, UEFA A license holder and JMF Program Manager - Performance and Coaching, Jen Wicks.

"This experience will be life-changing. In addition to having the opportunity to showcase their talent, participants will also benefit from weekly mentoring in the lead up to the showcase, athlete workshops, opportunities to hear from professional athletes and access to future elite pathways."

"We are asking players interested in being involved to send us videos of them playing. So far we've been blown away by what is coming in. There has been some really impressive talent, which is very exciting," added Ms Wicks.

According to former A-Leagues player and JMF Ambassador, Allira Toby (Kanolu/Gangulu), it's not enough to place young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players in representative teams for one-off matches.

Ms Toby adds, "The fact that we have so few Indigenous professional players is disappointing. There are just too many barriers for them. This opportunity will open up pathways to new opportunities and could kick start some incredible football careers. This is what JMF is all about."

Showcase participants will also be in the running to secure several 12-month JMF Scholarships which will include wrap-around personalised support including mentoring and technical performance.

JMF inaugural scholarship holder, Shadeene (Shay) Evans, is a testament to the pathways JMF creates.

All the way from the remote community of Borroloola in the Northern Territory, Evans was awarded a JMF Scholarship at 13 years of age after being scouted by former Matildas coach Alen Stajcic.

In 2019 Evans debuted with Sydney FC and was selected as a Young Matilda and named vice-captain. She went on to play for Adelaide United and the Central Coast Mariners, and was part of the 2025 premiership-winning team. In 2025 Evans secured her first international signing and played with Thai club BGC-College of Asian Scholars in the qualifying rounds of the 2025/26 AFC Women's Champions League.

[Expressions of interest](#) for the JMF National Talent Showcase close 5pm AEDT Friday 27 February 2026.

JMF is an award-winning program that uses football to positively engage over 5,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth aged 2 to 18 years of age annually, with groundbreaking impacts on health, education and wellbeing. JMF delivers to 16 communities and 18 public schools in NT, NSW and Qld.

JMF is delivered by [Moriarty Foundation](#), an Indigenous children's charity that is creating a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive.

For more information visit www.jmf.org.au

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Available upon request:

- High resolution images of John Moriarty Football players
- Head shots of spokespeople
- Interviews with:
 - Former A-Leagues player and JMF Ambassador, Allira Toby (Kanolu/Gangulu)

- Former Chelsea FC Academy Director, UEFA A license holder and JMF Program Manager - Performance and Coaching, Jen Wicks.

Editor's notes:

A UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) License is highly prestigious, representing one of the highest qualifications in European football. It is a mark of significant expertise and experience, recognised globally as a high standard for coaching education. Learn more [here](#).

About John Moriarty Football

John Moriarty Football (JMF) is an award-winning initiative that harnesses the power of football to positively engage Indigenous children and youth aged 2-18 years, supporting education, health, wellbeing and connection to Country.

JMF's majority Indigenous coaching teams are employed from our local communities and maintain a continuous presence. JMF delivers sessions five to six days a week in schools, at before and after school sessions, holiday clinics and tournaments.

Facebook: [@JohnMoriartyFootball](#)

Instagram: [@footballjmf](#)

Twitter: [@FootballJMF](#)

Web: www.jmf.org.au

About Moriarty Foundation

Moriarty Foundation is a community-led (ACCO) Indigenous children's charity that is creating a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive. Its groundbreaking programs, Indi Kindi and John Moriarty Football, harness the power of sport and education to create pathways to improved outcomes in education, wellbeing, health and employment. Moriarty Foundation's programs are delivered through an Aboriginal Worldview that celebrates, nurtures and respects cultural identity, traditions and connection to Country. <https://www.moriartyfoundation.org.au/>