

# ACADEMY LAUNCH

STEVE TUOHEY

FORMER Olympic weightlifter Joe Haydar and Australian netball squad member Susan Fuhrmann have thrown their support behind the South West Academy of Sport ahead of tomorrow's official launch at the Sanctuary Golf Resort.

Haydar, who is now based in the South West and more commonly known as Joe from Joe's Pizza, has described the Academy as an outstanding concept — a view shared by Australian netball product and West Coast Fever goal keeper Susan Fuhrmann.

"I reckon it's brilliant," said

Haydar, who represented Australia at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 and was six times National Champion.

"We have some outstanding athletes here in the South West and it is a big drain for parents to go up and down to Perth all of the time," he said.

"Unless you are in the eyes of the selectors, you can be the best in Aust-



Susan Fuhrmann

ralia and still get left behind so to get a program like this going is great."

Fuhrmann, who spent many hours in mum and dad's car travelling to State training as a junior, said the academy would bring a host of benefits to young athletes in the region.

"For me, it would have been huge if the academy was up and running," said Fuhrmann, who left the South West as a 17-year-old to pursue her netball career at the Australian Institute of Sport.

"Before I moved I was part of the WAIS Country Program but I had to do it all by myself," she said.

"To have something based in the South West would have been so much better.

"It put my mum and dad under a lot of pressure — they gave up a lot for me. I used to do my homework in the car and spend a lot of hours travelling to training and back but it was worth it in the end."

The four lucky sports set to be named as part of the Academy's inaugural intake will be announced tomorrow by South West Minister Mark McGowan.

With submissions received from basketball, football, soccer, netball, roller skating, hockey, surf lifesaving,

rowing, cricket and tennis, academy directors have been faced with some tough decisions when making the final cut from 10 sports to four.

For those that miss out, another 40-50 individual scholarships will be awarded at a later date to accommodate a wide range of sports.

South West Development Commission project officer Tom Busber said that limiting the inaugural intake to four sports would also make the program more manageable in its first year.

"As the academy grows more sports will be inducted into its program, similar to the WA Institute of Sport," Busber said.