

# Academy for our talented young athletes launched

By **BEAU PEARSON**

**ACADEMY:** Talented young athletes will be given the opportunity to pursue their sporting dreams, without having to travel to Perth, after the launch of the South West Academy of Sport.

South West minister Mark McGowan was in Bunbury on Friday to announce the academy was offering Australian Rules football, soccer, hockey and basketball in its first year of operation.

"They seem pretty natural fits for the South West," he said.

"There are a lot of great sports people from those fields who have come from the South West."

Mr McGowan said the academy was an exciting development for the region.

"The academy will provide talented athletes in four sports with the training they require to follow their dreams of competing at the next level without leaving home," he said.

"We want to make sure people in the country have the same opportunity as people in the city to reach the highest levels in sport."

While the academy will initially feature those four sports, Mr McGowan said there was opportunity for growth.

"In the future we may be able to expand it out into other areas," he said.

"As it is we are going to provide support for other sports."



**Ian Telfer, Kevin Lynn, Rachel Hayter and Garry Chandler representing basketball, Aussie Rules football, hockey and soccer respectively.**

South West MLC Adele Farina said talented athletes who were not catered for in the initial partner sports programs had not been forgotten.

"The South West Academy of Sport is about giving young people the opportunity to pursue their dreams, regardless of their chosen sport," she said.

"The academy will offer up to 50 scholarships each year to talented people in a variety of sports so as many people as possible can strive towards their goals."

The State Government and South West Development Commission have committed almost \$250,000 toward the South West Academy of Sport.

The Griffin Group was announced as foundation partner for the academy, together with associate sponsors Worsley Alumina.

"It's great that local companies and businesses have contributed the extra funding for such a unique and exciting initiative for local athletes," Mr McGowan said.

## SWAS gives football youth extra avenues

By **LEE-MAREE GALLO**

**FOOTBALL:** LOCAL footballers now have the chance to follow in former Bunbury footballer Adam Humer's footsteps after the sport was named as one of the four to be included at the South West Academy of Sport.

South West Regional Development Council chairman Kevin Lynn welcomed the inclusion and said it offered a new and exciting dimension for footballing youths in the region.

"It is a great opportunity for the aspiring footballers to be a part of," he said.

"Instead of being forced to travel to Perth they can stay at home and

receive elite coaching and other benefits that go along with the academy."

Mr Lynn said he was delighted football had been named as one of the sports and although it was early days yet he hoped the elite program would be up and running by October.

"A high skills coach will be employed to provide specialist and individual training," he said.

"And our expectation with the academy is that it will offer another dimension such as nutrition and life skills for the players."

Mr Lynn also said footballers would be sourced from Harvey through to Pemberton.