



Carol Samsa, Claire Skoss and Kelli Jones meet South West Academy of Sport board member Wayne Vitali and chief executive officer Bernice Butlion. PICTURE: TOM EDWARDS

Sports groups meet academy team

NURTURING talented regional athletes is the primary goal of the South West Academy Sport, according to its chief executive officer.

Bernice Butlion made the comment at a meet-and-greet session with members of district sports groups following a board meeting in Manjimup last Thursday.

Ms Butlion said while the administrative base of her organisation was in Bunbury, it aimed to support talented young athletes of all sports in every corner of the South West.

"We'll be conducting more workshops and coaching sessions around the South West to relieve the financial burden of making trips to Perth for parents," Ms Butlion said.

"This area is an extremely rich talent pool but with that comes the added pressure of finding the best ways of nurturing that talent."

The South West Academy of Sport has the mandate to support identified talented athletes to reach their potential through high performance pathways and programs delivered within the South West.

It has seven partnership sports — AFL, basketball, hockey, soccer, cricket, netball and tennis — but also has an individual sponsorship program for talented athletes in non-mainstream sports.

Board member Wayne Vitali said the board was pleased to be in Manjimup as part of its mission to be a regional group.

"You get a feel for the sacrifices kids and parents make travelling to Perth all the time," Mr Vitali said.

"We are three years into oper-

ation and going a long way to helping families with children showing potential not having to travel to Perth."

Manjimup shire director of community services Gail Ipsen Cutts said council staff would be working with the Department of Sport and Recreation and SWAS to encourage State and regional sporting bodies to increase their focus on sports development in the Shire of Manjimup.

For more information about the South West Academy of Sport, visit www.swaswa.com.au.