



THE GRIFFIN GROUP

UPDATE

SOUTH WEST
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

17 NOV 2008

OCTOBER 2008

EDITION 7

FASTER, HIGHER, STRONGER AT THE SOUTH WEST ACADEMY OF SPORT

After its launch in July, the South West Academy of Sport (SWAS) has enjoyed significant progress as it moves to become the launching pad for talented athletes from the region.

The SWAS, which is supported by The Griffin Group as foundation partner, recently appointed Bernice Butlion as its inaugural Chief Executive Officer to drive the SWAS's start-up. Ms Butlion commenced her role in September, taking up the position after working as manager of the Eastern Cape Academy of Sport in her native South Africa.

"The Academy presents an exciting opportunity for the South West by offering regional athletes the resources and support they need to develop their potential into what could be national or international success," Ms Butlion said.

"I am thrilled to be taking on this role and I look forward to working with our foundation partner The Griffin Group, the local community and other key stakeholders to achieve our performance targets."

Griffin Group Executive Director Jason Stowe said the appointment of Ms Butlion was another positive step forward for the SWAS.

"Griffin is proud to have helped the Academy become a reality for the local community and we look forward to seeing the first batch of talented athletes further develop their skills," Mr Stowe said. The SWAS will finalise its partner sports program in the coming month to begin fostering the development of athletes with a focus on four participant sports - Australian Rules football, basketball, hockey and soccer.

Meanwhile, the recent Beijing Olympics saw plenty of South West athletes competing on the world's biggest stage, adding to the region's reputation as a fertile breeding ground for athletic talent. SWAS basketball patron Mark Worthington competed in basketball, with the Boomers reaching the quarterfinals before losing to the eventual gold medalists, the US Dream Team. The South West was also well represented in the Hockeyroos lineup, by Collie's Kobie McGurk and Manjimup's Shelley Liddelow.

SWAS Chairman Don Punch said the performances of South West athletes at the Olympics would provide inspiration to future



SWAS Chief Executive Bernice Butlion.

participants at the Academy.

"The region has an incredible record of producing Olympic athletes over the years and, with the establishment of the South West Academy of Sport, we expect to see the region's contribution to elite sport continue to grow," Mr Punch said.