

Academy all go

THE new South West Academy of Sport administration centre was officially opened by Sport and Recreation Minister Terry Waldron yesterday.

The official opening at the South West Sports Centre was attended by special guests, sponsors and stakeholders including Mr Waldron, Forrest MHR Nola Marino, Albany MLA Peter Watson and Bunbury mayor David Smith.

The launch was coupled with the recent release of a sport and recreation review in regional Western Australia, with Mr Waldron saying WA's first regional sports academy in Bunbury

would help achieve some of the goals outlined. Authored by Albany MLA Peter Watson, the report identifies opportunities for improving the delivery of sport and recreation in country WA.

One of its findings was the need for more regionally-based talent identification and development programs.

Mr Waldron said the opening of the SWAS office was an important first step towards addressing this need — ensuring athletes receive the most professional level of preparation without having to leave the South West.

“As a person raised on sport in the country, I can only say I wish there had been something like this around when I

was a kid,” he said. Waldron also paid tribute to the late Wally Foreman, who was one of the driving forces behind the South West Academy of Sport.

“Wally was a good mate of mine and I think he would be rapt today,” he said.

Bunbury MLA John Castrilli echoed Mr Waldron's comments and said he looked forward to seeing other sports infrastructure projects moved forward.

“This development finally recognises the immense value of our region to the sporting achievements of this State as a whole,” Mr Castrilli said.