

# Western Region Academy of Sport



2023 Yearbook



# About the Academy

## The Western Region Academy of Sport:

- Commenced operations in July 1991
- 1 of 11 regional academies in NSW
- A non-profit organisation supporting talented regional sportspeople
- Works with NSW Office of Sport, NSW Institute of Sport and State Sporting Organisations to provide pathways for pre-elite junior athletes and umpires, coaches and sport managers to progress to higher level representation in their chosen sport
- Geographical area of 91,552 squad kilometres
- Covers 17 local government areas – Bathurst Regional, Bland, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra, Dubbo Regional, Forbes, Gilgandra, Hilltops, Lachlan, Lithgow, Mid-Western Regional, Narromine, Oberon, Orange, Parkes and Weddin

## Vision

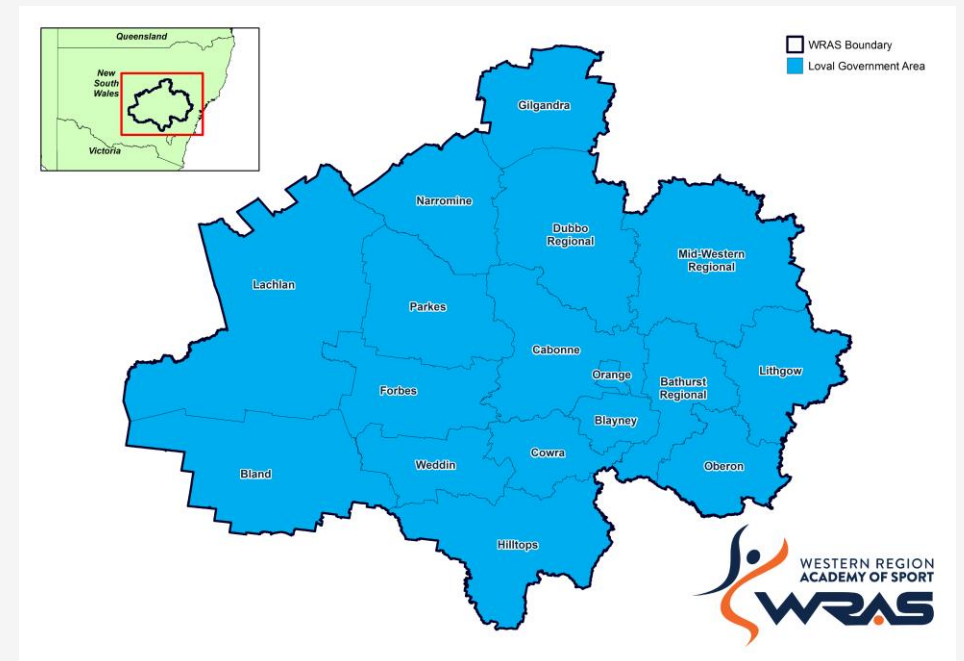
- To be the leader in regional sports development

## Mission

- To enhance and provide opportunities for aspiring regional athletes, coaches and officials on the pathway to sporting success

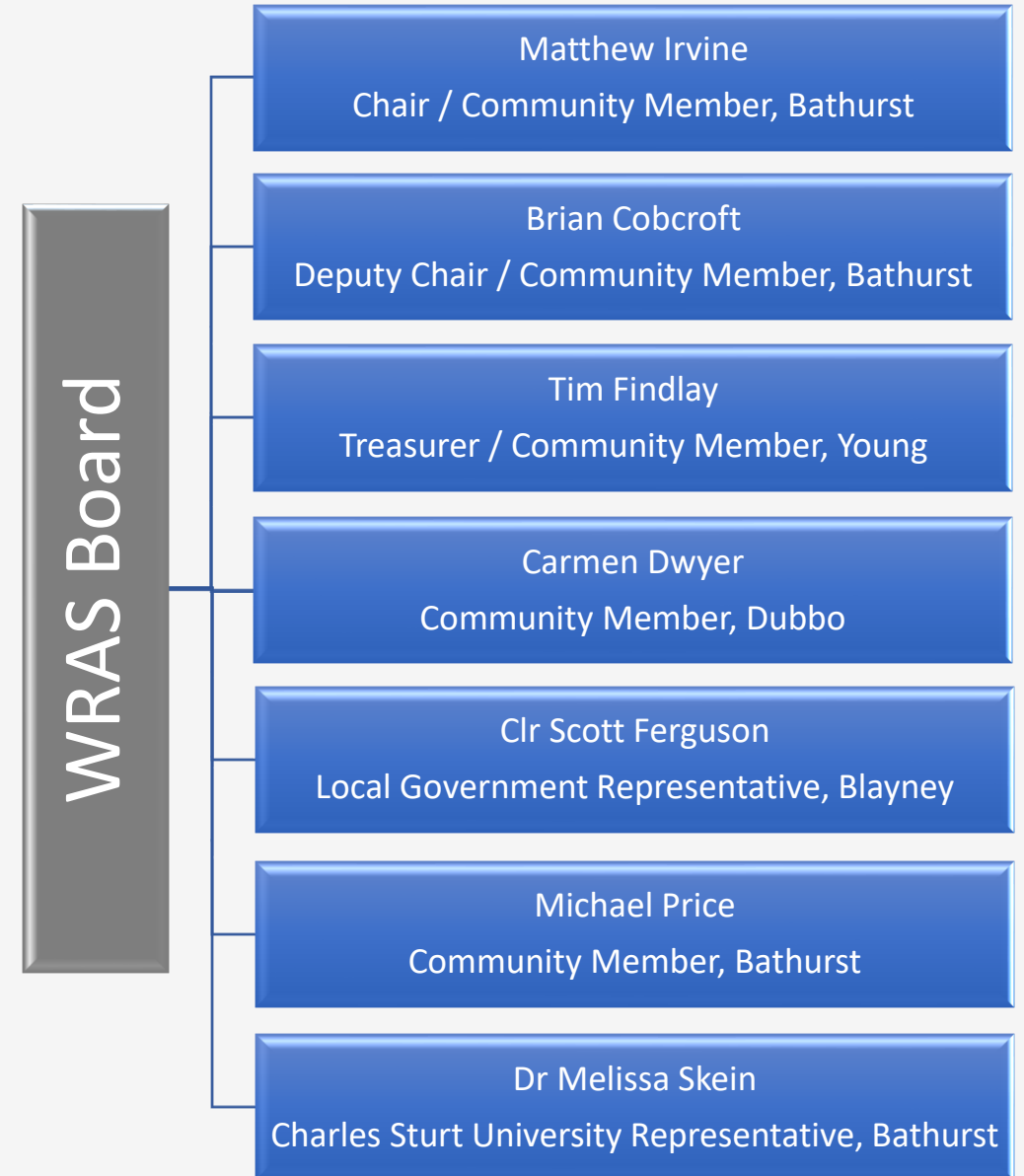
## Benefits to athletes selected in WRAS programs:

- Skills development
- Intensive training sessions conducted by local and visiting elite coaches
- Sports science testing, functional movement screening
- Strength and conditioning programs
- Educational workshops
- Inter-Academy development camps
- Opportunities to compete in elite events such as Your Local Club Academy Games



# Meet the Team

- WRAS is governed by a Board of 7 members.
- Board members are nominated, elected and appointed from within the western region community.
- WRAS employs an Executive Officer, Office Manager, Programs/Strength and Conditioning Manager and Communications Officer.
- The organisation is supported by 30+ volunteers.



# Year in Review – a word from the Chair

At a strategic level, the WRAS Board and Executive have been working closely with the NSW Office of Sport and the Regional Academies of Sport (RAS) collective to ensure the Academy 'model' is fit-for-purpose for the future. We acknowledge that any organisation receiving government funding must be prudent in how it operates. We recognise the need to ensure our model is financially sustainable, whilst keeping our mission and purpose front of mind. The NSW Government granted us a short-term increase in funding for 2023, however it is now imperative that we develop a sound model and plan that will secure support for athletes living in Regional NSW for many years to come.

WRAS is privileged to have support from a number of partners. We have long-standing stakeholder relationships with the NSW Office of Sport and Charles Sturt University (CSU). WRAS is also supported by a range of organisations across our region. Clubs NSW, and particularly their member organisations including the Orange Ex-Services Club, Bathurst Panthers and Bathurst RSL, are valued supporters. Local business also assist WRAS sports programs through their financial support. I sincerely thank Underwriting Agencies Australia and Greater Bank for their ongoing support. A full listing of our partners and sponsors can be found on our website, and I encourage everyone involved with WRAS to support these organisations whenever possible.

Our catchment covers a staggering 17 Local Government Areas, and we appreciate the financial and in-kind support offered by the Councils in our region. We also work closely with the various State Sporting Organisations that govern the many disciplines of sport covered by our programs.

At Presentation Night, Isabelle Russell was the deserving recipient of the Chairman's Award for Excellence. Isabelle represents everything the Chairman's Award stands for – giving your best as an athlete, but also maintaining a strong academic commitment at school and/or making a significant contribution to your squad and sport away from competitions.

During the year, Cr Scott Ferguson and Dr Melissa Skein were reappointed to the WRAS Board by their respective organisations. Carmen Dwyer and Tim Findlay were both re-elected at our AGM, and continue to serve alongside Brian Cobcroft, Michael Price, and myself. I am most grateful to this professional and experienced group for their efforts in overseeing our governance. Looking ahead to 2024, there will be a focus by our WRAS board and the RAS collective on our future operating model.

I want to say thank you to our many volunteer coaches, managers and supporters who make everything we do possible. I also applaud Candice and the staff for their efforts in what has been a solid year for WRAS.

Matthew.



# Year in Review – a word from the Executive Officer

Welcome to the 2023 Western Region Academy of Sport (WRAS) Annual Report.

2023 commenced with the inaugural Regional Academies of Sport (RAS) Awards Night in Paramatta to celebrate and recognise the achievements of Regional Academy athletes and coaches across NSW.

This memorable event brought together athletes and coaches from the 11 regional academies of sport, highlighting outstanding achievements across various categories. WRAS athletes and coaches were represented across the five categories by our 2022 major award winners: Athlete of the Year (Alesha Bennetts), Coach of the Year (Adam Marjoram), Indigenous Athlete of the Year (Millie Sutcliffe), Para-Athlete of the Year (Aaron Houston), and Athlete Leadership Award (Xavier Bland). I am particularly proud to share that Alesha Bennetts was named the 2023 RAS Athlete of the Year. Alesha's accomplishments over the past 12 months on the track have been nothing short of extraordinary and this recognition is a testament to her talent and work ethic.

The Regional Academy influence with the sports pathway continues to deepen as RAS solidifies our partnership with the New South Wales Institute of Sport (NSWIS) by introducing the Pursue32+ RAS Talent Program. This program is an initiative designed to identify and develop athletes exhibiting the potential to progress to elite competition in Olympic and Paralympic sports and events. WRAS is pleased to congratulate Sophie and Max McAneney on their selection into this program for 2023. Sophie and Max join a small cohort of athletes who will receive additional support and resources via the program.

2023 has seen remarkable accomplishments across all facets of our programs, highlighted throughout this report. Athletes have demonstrated great successes achieving personal bests, breaking records, and proudly representing the Western Region on the national and international stages. Their accomplishments are a testament to the exceptional coaching, training, and support the talented and dedicated coaches, squad staff and families provide.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to our dedicated Board, staff, coaches, volunteers, and sponsors. Your unwavering support and commitment have been instrumental in our achievements. I also extend my thanks to the athletes and their families for entrusting the WRAS staff and coaches with their development and allowing us to be part of their journey.

I am confident that the upcoming year will bring even greater achievements and milestones for the WRAS community (and hopefully, we will see a few new sports programs introduced to WRAS).

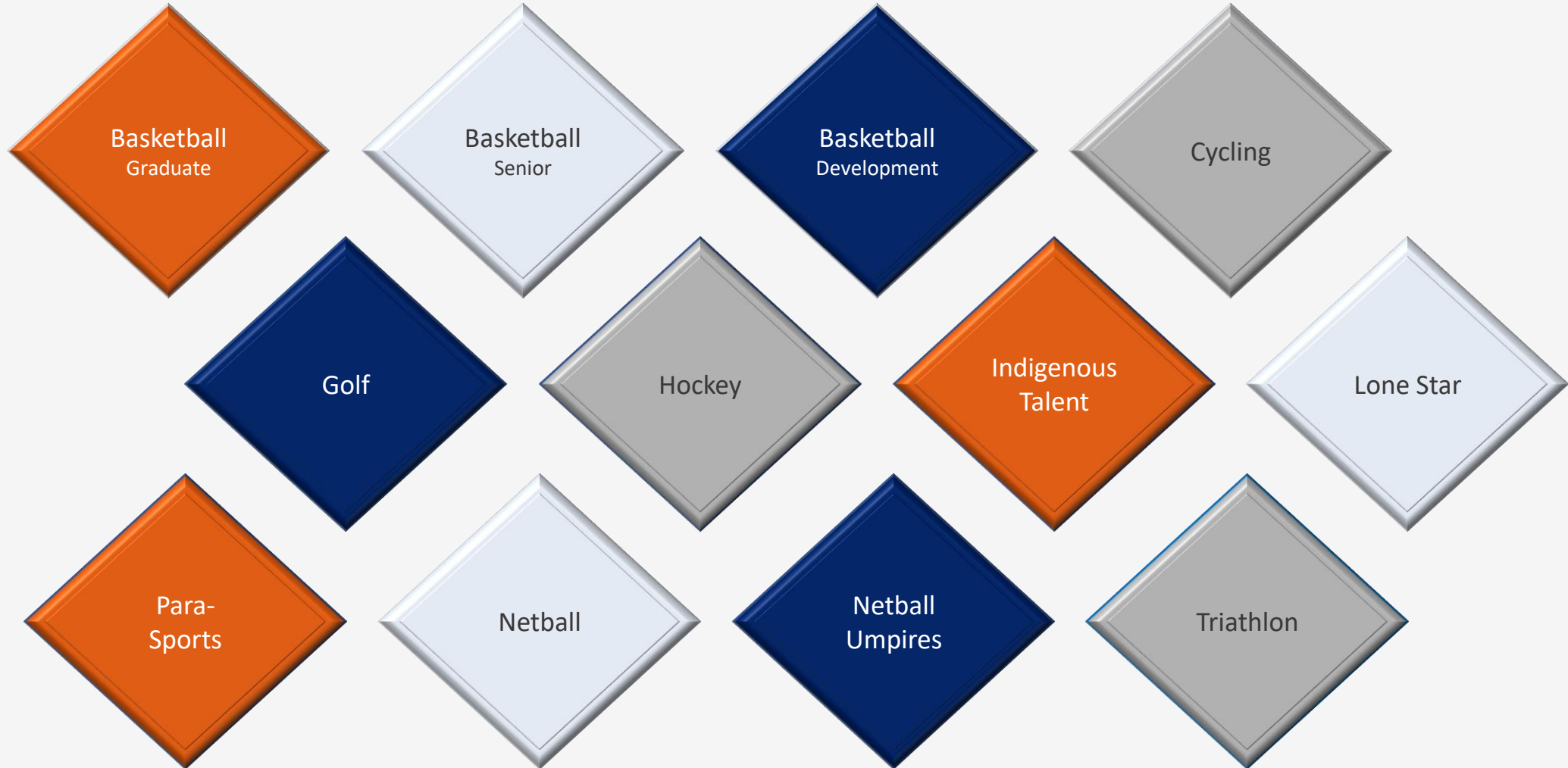
Thank you for your ongoing support.

Candice.



Candice Boggs, WRAS Executive Officer (left)  
pictured with Poppy Channing, WRAS 2023 Athlete of the Year

# WRAS Programs in 2023



# Basketball

## Graduate Squad

Eric Downes – Katoomba  
Riley George – Bathurst  
Roxy George – Bathurst  
Ruby Griffin – Bathurst  
Max Hamson – Gulgong  
Ryan Hyde – Wellington

Kurt Lansom – Bathurst  
Gus McMahon – Bathurst  
Zavier Newton – Dubbo  
Abby Osborne – Dubbo  
Jack Taylor – Dubbo  
Tilly Wilson – Dubbo  
Emily Winterton – Dubbo

## Senior Squad

Danika Breen – Bathurst  
Sam Bynon-Hargreaves – Dubbo  
Rachel Channon – Mudgee  
Cooper Crowe – Mudgee  
Lachlan Doran – Mudgee  
Charlie Fischbeck – Bathurst  
Logan Geddes – Mudgee  
Jazzy Gordon – Dubbo  
Cyarah Hargraves – Dubbo

Kiara McKeown – Dubbo  
Tayla Mongan – Dubbo  
Max Morton – Dubbo  
Lochy Nolan – Gilgandra  
Tully Pickering – Dubbo  
Isaac Roberts – Blackheath  
Xavier Scovell-Wynne – Orange  
Millie Sutcliffe – Dubbo  
Clancy Toshack – Dubbo  
Cohen Weir – Dubbo

## Development Squad

Indi Amos – Dubbo  
Beau Blattman – Bathurst  
Callum Bowen – Dubbo  
Lily Bower – Bathurst  
Sian Campbell – Bathurst  
Archie Dickson – Dubbo  
Ziaire Forrester – Dubbo  
Lowan Francis – Lithgow  
Patrick Frew – Orange

Jordan Geddes – Mudgee  
Maddison Hart – Lithgow  
Shaylee Holmes – Orange  
Lincoln Hutchison – Lithgow  
Milo Mages – Dubbo  
Amarii Pitt – Orange  
Mia Richardson – Dubbo  
Clifford Smith – Orange  
Pania Tapu – Bathurst  
Hannah Wallace – Lithgow

The WRAS basketball program was supported by  
**Basketball NSW** and **Underwriting Agencies of Australia (UAA)**



The logo for Underwriting Agencies of Australia (UAA), consisting of the letters "UAA" in white, bold, sans-serif font centered within a solid red square.

## Squad Staff

Adam Marjoram, Head Coach – Sydney  
Claire Bynon, Assistant Coach – Dubbo  
Scott Holmes, Assistant Coach – Orange  
Jess McGrath, Assistant Coach – Bathurst  
Cathy Raidaveta, Squad Manager – Dubbo

Brett Murphy, Satellite Coach – Mudgee  
Jamahl Zegzula, Satellite Coach – Orange  
Molly Croft, Apprentice Coach – Dubbo  
Chrystal O'Brien, Apprentice Coach – Dubbo  
Lara Winterton, Apprentice Coach – Dubbo



# Basketball



UAA

**Claire Bynon, WRAS basketball coach...** *'Continuing on from a very successful 2022, 2023 was to build on that success to make WRAS basketball a program players (and coaches) want to be part of.'*

*The culture of WRAS is about setting a standard and not accepting anything less. To have players grow on and off the court in skill development, game play, leadership and to be all round great young people.*

*With great coaches and support from WRAS staff, the program continues to grow from strength to strength. I am very proud to be part of the team that is building a program that strives for success for western kids. 2023/2024 is looking very exciting!!'*

## Program Outline

The 2023 basketball program ran from November 2022 to June 2023 and included:

- Orientation
- Fitness Testing
- Functional Movement Screening
- Strength and Conditioning Programs
- Education workshops - Recovery Practices, Team Challenge Australia session (teamwork, leadership and breath for mind body conditioning)
- Squad training days and weekly hometown satellite trainings
- Senior Squads competed at Your Local Clubs Academy Games in Wagga Wagga
- Inter-Academy camp in Canberra
- Interstate Victorian Experience camp
- WRAS presentation evening





# Basketball



## Highlights and Athlete Achievements

- Basketball NSW representative selections:
  - **Kiara McKeown** and **Millie Sutcliffe** – NSW Country U16 State Team
  - **Roxy George, Kiara McKeown, Lochy Nolan, Tully Pickering, Millie Sutcliffe** – State Performance Program
  - **Sam Bynon-Hargreaves, Sian Campbell, Riley George, Clancy Toshack, Cohen Weir** – Shootout
  - **Beau Blattman, Sam Bynon-Hargreaves, Sian Campbell, Cooper Crowe, Ziaire Forrester, Roxy George, Kiara McKeown, Tayla Mongan, Tully Pickering, Mia Richardson, Millie Sutcliffe, Pania Tapu, Clancy Toshack, Cohen Weir** – D-League
  - **Indi Amos** – U14 Talented Athlete Program
  - **Indi Amos, Beau Blattman, Cooper Crowe, Roxy George, Kiara McKeown, Lochy Nolan, Mia Richardson, Millie Sutcliffe, Pania Tapu** – Country NSW teams for 2023 Australian Country Junior Cup
- National Indigenous Basketball Tournament (14yrs and under):
  - **Indi Amos, Cooper Crowe, Ziare Forrester, Jazzy Gordon, Cyarah Hargraves, Amarii Pitt, Tully Pickering** selected in NSW teams
  - **Jazzy Gordon** named NSW team captain
  - **Tully Pickering** named in Girls All-Stars 5s Team after the tour
- **Millie Sutcliffe** – NSW CHS Opens basketball team for NSW All Schools Tournament



# Basketball



## Highlights and Athlete Achievements *continued ...*

- The WRAS athletes attended an Inter-Academy camp in Canberra with Southern and South East Sports Academies. The camp included a tour of the Australian Institute of Sport, education sessions, training with guest coaches and match play opportunities.
- WRAS athletes had match play with NSW Indigenous Community Basketball League Teams in preparation for the senior squads attending the Your Local Club Academy Games.
- Senior Girls team were undefeated Gold medallists at Your Local Club Academy Games.
- Senior Boys team claimed Silver at the Your Local Club Academy Games.
- Seven WRAS athletes were named in Academy Games All-Star teams - **Cooper Crowe, Jazzy Gordon, Kiara McKeown, Lochy Nolan, Tully Pickering, Millie Sutcliffe and Cohen Weir.**
- Daniel Kickert (Sydney Kings Assistant Coach) and Macsen Monk (Basketball NSW High Performance Coach) were special guests at the May training session. Daniel held a coaching clinic, followed by a Q&A session sharing his story and knowledge with WRAS athletes. Macsen provided coaching and player development drills during the on-court session.
- The Victorian Experience provided 4 days of training opportunities and experiences. The athletes attended NBL1 Southern Conference basketball matches and had the opportunity to speak with Angus Glover (Eltham Wildcats and Sydney Kings Premiership winning athlete). The camp included some unique Melbourne experiences – travelling around the city by tram and attending an AFL match at the MCG.





**Kiara McKeown**

Basketball Athlete of the Year (joint winner)

Basketball Australian U16 National Championships  
– NSW State Team

Basketball NSW State Performance Program

Australian Country Junior Basketball Cup – NSW  
Country U16 team

2023 Academy Games – selected in All Star Team,  
U16 girls gold medal



**Millie Sutcliffe**

Basketball Athlete of the Year (joint winner)

Basketball Australian U16 National Championships  
– NSW State Team

Basketball NSW State Performance Program

Australian Country Junior Basketball Cup – NSW  
Country U16 team

NSW All Schools Basketball – NSW CHS team  
2023 Academy Games – selected in All Star Team,  
U16 girls gold medal



**Cooper Crowe**

Chairman's Award for Excellence Nominee

National Indigenous Basketball Tournament –  
NSW team, high point scorer in team, selected  
for Junior NBA camp

Australian Country Junior Basketball Cup – NSW  
Country U16 team, 4<sup>th</sup> highest point scorer on  
team

2023 Academy Games – selected in All Star  
Team, U16 boys silver medal



**Emily Winterton**

**Coach's Award – Graduate Squad**

Emily is a dedicated WRAS athlete and was selected as a team captain for 2023.

Emily is a great role model for younger athletes, attending additional weekly training to better her skills. She volunteers with her local association and was recognised with the Barbara Amos Medal for giving back to her local basketball community.

Emily was a member of her school team, which won the Diocesan Tournament undefeated and was selected in the U18s Dubbo Rams representative team.



**Jazzy Gordon**

**Coach's Award – Senior Squad**

Jazzy loves to learn and improve. The WRAS coaches saw major improvement in her game during 2023. Jazzy volunteers to coach younger athletes and is always willing to help out when needed.

Jazzy was a vital member of the Senior Team at Academy Games and was named in the All-Star Team.

Jazzy was named team captain for NSW at the National Indigenous Basketball Tournament.

She was part of the U16 Dubbo Rams team that won the John Martin Country Tour Premier Division.



**Mia Richardson**

**Coach's Award – Development Squad**

Mia is hard-working athlete that always seeks feedback to improve her game. She volunteers to coach younger players and referees at local junior competitions.

Mia was selected in the U14 NSW Kookaburras to play in the Australian Country Junior Basketball Cup.

Mia was also selected to play in the Basketball NSW D-League competition.

Mia was a member of the U14 Dubbo Rams team that finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Western Junior League.

# Cycling

## Squad Athletes

Lara Allen – Bathurst  
Xavier Bland – Orange  
Cameron Crump – Orange  
Lachlan Crump - Orange

Jenna Gallagher – Bathurst  
Cadel Lovett – Bathurst  
Charlotte Lovett – Bathurst  
Ebony Robinson – O’Connell  
Isabelle Russell - Dubbo

## Squad Staff

Marian Renshaw, Coach – Bathurst  
Michael Robinson, Coach – Dubbo  
Mitchell Bland, Manager – Orange

## Program Outline

The 2023 cycling program ran from September 2022 to July 2023 and included:

- Orientation
- Fitness / Cadence Testing
- Functional Movement Screening
- Strength and Conditioning Programs
- Education workshops - Recovery Practices, Sports Psychology and Team Challenge Australia session (teamwork, leadership and breath for mind body conditioning)
- Track camp at Dunc Grey Velodrome
- Inter-academy road camp in Bathurst attended by Hunter, Illawarra, South-East, Western Sydney and Western Region Academies
- Your Local Clubs Academy Games
- WRAS presentation

The WRAS cycling program was supported by AusCycling Australia



**Michael Robinson, WRAS cycling coach...** *‘The cycling squad had a tremendous year with a highly cohesive and committed group of athletes. In January, a full weekend track camp at the Dunc Gray Velodrome in Sydney helped to hone skills and fine tune performance leading into major events. The squad reveling in national level racing on the track in the AJTS series - traveling as a team to Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide during the summer track season. A major highlight for the squad was hosting the statewide RAS road camp in May - with focus around education, skills, racing and hearing the first hand experience of international riders.’*



# Cycling



## Highlights

- Special guest NSWIS coaches at the Dunc Gray Track Camp, Mick Marshall, Sean Eddie and Rebecca Dicello, provided education sessions for the WRAS athletes.
- Illawarra, South East, Southern and Western Sydney Academies joined WRAS for the Inter-Academy Road Camp in Bathurst. Riders were provided with valuable road race practice. Guest coaches, Mick Marshall, Brad McGee and Rebecca Dicello, provided education sessions on AusCycling and NSW Institute of Sport pathways and scholarships.
- The U15 and U17 cyclists competed in the Australian Junior Track Series.

## Athlete Achievements

- **Isabelle Russell** selected in AusCycling U19 Rauland squad for 4 weeks of training and race experience in Europe. Isabelle was the only female rider selected.
- **Xavier Bland** named Emerging Track Sprint Cyclist in AusCycling 2023/24 athlete categorisations.
- **Ebony Robinson** selected in AusCycling U17 Track Squad that travelled to Malaysia for international racing experience.
- **Xavier Bland** won Gold in the U19M team sprint at 2023 Oceania U19 Track Cycling Championships.
- **Cadel Lovett, Ebony Robinson** and **Isabelle Russell** selected in NSW road teams for 2022 AusCycling National Junior Road Championships.
- **Xavier Bland, Jenna Gallagher, Cadel Lovett, Ebony Robinson** and **Isabelle Russell** – selected in NSW track teams for 2023 AusCycling National Junior and U19 Track Championships.
- **3 Australian medals** at 2022 AusCycling Junior National Road Championships.
  - **Cadel Lovett** – Silver (U17M road race) and NSW Team Captain
  - **Ebony Robinson** – Gold (U17W criterium)
  - **Isabelle Russell** – Silver (U17W road race)



Photo - Andrew Trovas Photography

# Cycling



## Athlete Achievements continued:

- **15 Australian medals** at 2023 AusCycling National Track Championships.
  - **Xavier Bland** – Silver (team sprint), Bronze (sprint)
  - **Isabelle Russell** – Silver (madison), Bronze (scratch race)
  - **Cadel Lovett** – Bronze (team pursuit)
  - **Ebony Robinson** dominated U17W events - 6 Gold (madison, sprint, 500m time trial, scratch race, team sprint, keirin) and 2 Bronze (individual pursuit, omnium)
  - **Jenna Gallagher** won 2 Silver (500m time trial, individual sprint) in the U15W
- **38 NSW State medals** at 2022 NSW State Road and 2023 State Track Championships
  - **Isabelle Russell** (U17W road) – Silver (road race), 2 Bronze (time trial, criterium) and (U19W track) – Gold (team pursuit), Bronze (points race)
  - **Ebony Robinson** (U17W road) – Gold (criterium), Bronze (road race) and (U17W track) – 7 Gold (500m time trial, omnium, scratch race, keirin, madison, sprint, elimination), 2 Silver (points race, team pursuit), 2 Bronze (individual pursuit, team sprint)
  - **Lara Allen** (U17W track) – Silver (team pursuit), 2 Bronze (madison, team sprint)
  - **Xavier Bland** (U19M track) - Gold (team pursuit), Silver (points race), 2 Bronze (individual time trial, sprint)
  - **Cadel Lovett** (U19M track) – 2 Gold (points race, team pursuit)
  - **Charlotte Lovett** (U17W track) – Silver (team pursuit), 2 Bronze (points race, team sprint)
  - **Cameron Crump** (U17M track) – Silver (team pursuit), Bronze (team sprint)
  - **Lachlan Crump** (U17M track) – Silver (team pursuit), Bronze (team sprint)
  - **Jenna Gallagher** (U15W track) – 2 Gold (individual time trial, points race), Silver (individual pursuit), Bronze (omnium)



# Cycling



**Isabelle Russell**

Chairman's Award for Excellence Nominee  
and Overall Winner

Isabelle is a mature athlete, a pleasure to coach and a vital member of WRAS cycling. Her time management skills and application to her school studies has seen her record exceptional results. Excelling academically, in cycling events and extra-curricular school activities is testament to Isabelle's work ethic.

Isabelle's cycling results this season, including 2 Australian Track medals, have seen her selected in the NSW Team that raced in Europe. Isabelle was the only U/19 female cyclist chosen for this event.



**Ebony Robinson**

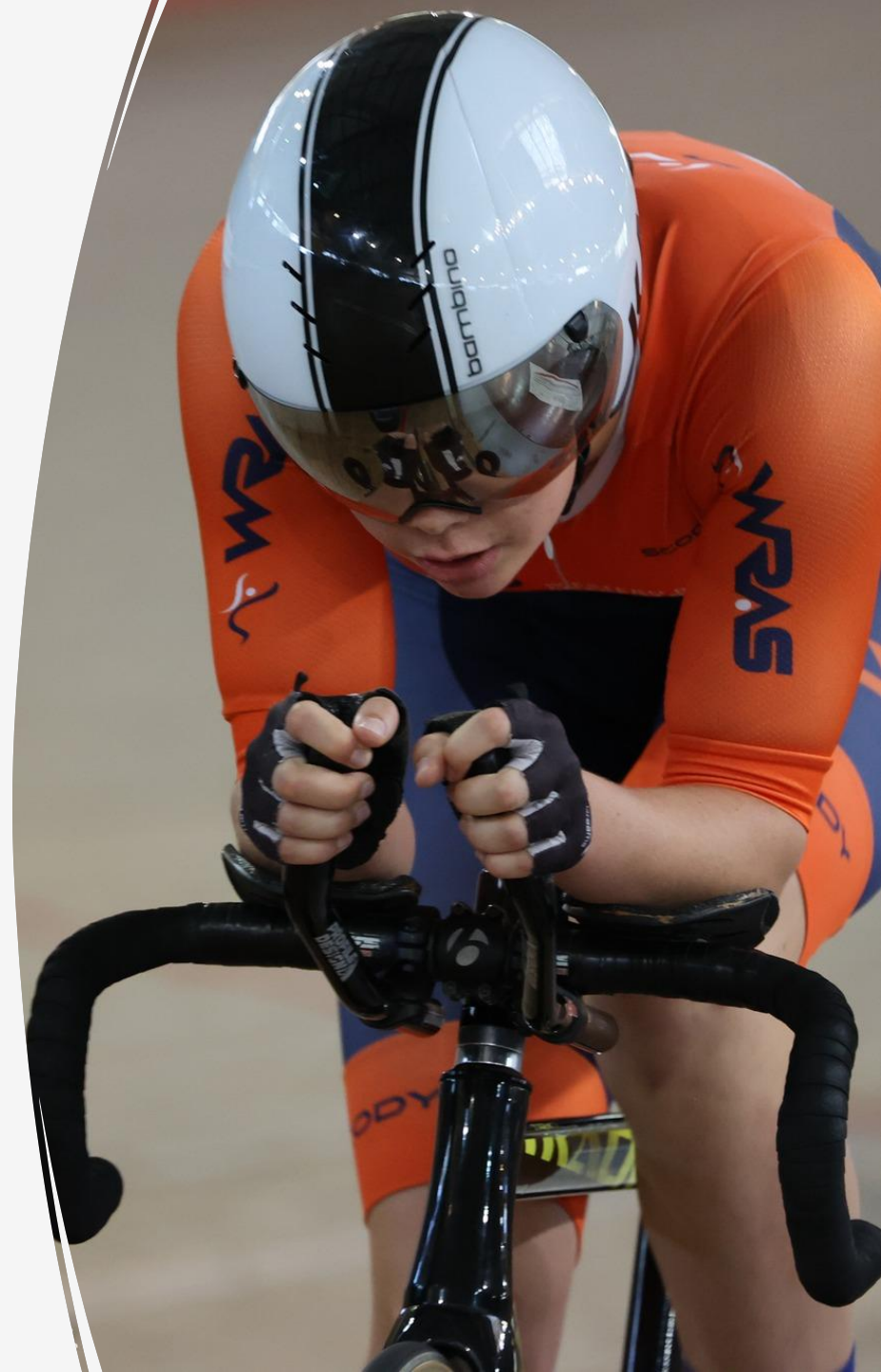
Cycling Athlete of the Year

2023 National Track Championships – NSW team  
8 Australian medals (6 Gold, 2 Bronze)

2022 National Road Championships – NSW team  
1 Australian Gold medal

2023 NSW Junior Track Championships  
11 State medals (7 Gold, 2 Silver, 2 Bronze)

2022 NSW Junior Road Championships  
2 State medals (1 Gold, 1 Bronze)





# Golf

The WRAS golf program was supported by  
Jack Newton Junior Golf



## Squad Athletes

Rory Elphick – Bathurst  
Ethan Russell – Dunedoo  
Cooper Starkey – Bathurst  
Joey Walker – Warren

## Squad Staff

Bruce McLean, Head Coach – Orange  
Casey Thompson, Apprentice Coach – Bathurst

## Program Outline

The 2023 golf program ran from September 2022 to July 2023 and included:

- Orientation
- Fitness Testing, Functional Movement Screening
- Strength and Conditioning Programs
- Training days
- Education workshops - Recovery Practices, Teams Challenge Australia session (teamwork, leadership and breath for mind body conditioning)
- Wagga Wagga and Peter O'Malley Junior Masters
- Your Local Clubs Academy Games
- Southern Inter-Academy camp
- Regional Academies of Sport North V South Presidents Cup for golfers selected to represent WRAS and Team South
- NSW State Age Championships
- WRAS presentation

**Bruce McLean, WRAS golf coach...** *'The Golf squad for 2023 was a joy to coach, with all members improving their handicap and those who were selected for further representation of the western region showing good performances.'*

*'Wins in the Wagga Wagga junior tournament, personal best scores in state titles, close matches in the North v South Cup, and a div 3 win in the Academy games, being the highlights of the year. We look forward to 2023-24 with keen interest..'*



## Highlights and Athlete Achievements

- All golfers reduced their handicaps during the 2023 program.
- Southern Academies Golf Camp was attended by athletes from Western, Southern, South West, South East and Illawarra Academies. Athletes took part in skill technique drills, sport psychology sessions and match play events.
- Wagga Wagga Junior Masters
  - **Rory Elphick** - T4 Overall boys, 1st U13 boys (won in a playoff hole), T2 U13 boys nett
  - **Joey Walker** – 2nd 14/15 year boys nett
  - **Ethan Russell** – T2 U13 boys nett
- Your Local Club Academy Games included 36 holes of individual match play at Wagga Wagga on Saturday and teams events at Tumut on Sunday. WRAS golfers claimed Division 3 gold medal for the team event.
- **Cooper Starkey** and **Rory Elphick** were selected to represent WRAS and Team South at the RAS North V South Presidents Cup. Cooper won his singles match and Rory was part of the winning team in the Foursomes event. Cooper and Rory combined in the Fourball for a tie.
- **Ethan Russell** – 12yr nett runner up at JNIG International Sub-junior Classic
- **Rory Elphick** and **Joey Walker** selected to represent Western Schools in golf.
- **Cooper Starkey** was the winner of the Bathurst Junior Golf Classic. **Rory Elphick** was the runner up in his age group.
- In December 2022 **Cooper Starkey** completed The Longest Day Challenge raising funds for the Cancer Council – 72 holes across a 24-hour period. This was the 2nd year that Cooper has completed this challenge.



### Rory Elphick Golf Athlete of the Year

2022 Wagga Wagga Junior Masters  
U13 Boys Champion, T2 Nett, T4 Overall Boys

2023 Bathurst Junior Championships - Junior Champion

2022 Bathurst Golf Club – Top Gun Winner

Handicap reduced from 8.5 to 3.5 during 2023 program

Regional Academy North V South Presidents Cup -  
selected to represent WRAS and Team South



# Hockey

The WRAS hockey program was supported by **Hockey NSW**



## Squad Athletes

Zayden Berger – Dubbo  
Oliver Bestwick – Bathurst  
Sophia Burke – Bathurst  
Chloe Clark – Dubbo  
Angus Coddington – Dubbo  
Holly Duncan – Parkes  
Tayla Grabham – Bathurst  
Amelia Heath – Orange  
Mark Jachi – Orange  
Blake Livingstone – Bathurst  
Ashton McDonald – Lithgow  
Nicholas McPherson – Parkes  
Georgia Milligan – Bathurst

Tahlia O’Connell – Bathurst  
Kade O’Connell – Bathurst  
Elsie Orr – Parkes  
Ellie Parker – Peak Hill  
Kelsie Richards – Bathurst  
Morgan Still – Bathurst  
Zoe Tattersall – Cargo  
Elly Thornberry – Parkes  
Deklin Unsworth – Lithgow  
Brianna Weal – Bathurst  
Lauren Weal – Bathurst  
Pip Webb – O’Connell  
Giaan Willott – Bathurst  
Zoe Wood – Cudal

## Squad Staff

Kent Bestwick, Head Coach – Bathurst  
Sarah White, Assistant Coach – Bathurst  
Luke Abbott, Apprentice Coach – Bathurst  
Ian McAlister, Manager – Orange

## Program Outline

The 2023 hockey program ran from October 2022 to July 2023 and included:

- ❖ Orientation
- ❖ Fitness Testing
- ❖ Functional Movement Screening
- ❖ Strength and Conditioning Programs
- ❖ Education workshops - Recovery Practices and Teams Challenge Australia session (teamwork, leadership and breath for mind body conditioning)
- ❖ Inter-academy camp in Lithgow with Illawarra, Sydney Metro, Southern and South West Academies
- ❖ Your Local Clubs Academy Games
- ❖ WRAS presentation



# Hockey



**Kent Bestwick, WRAS hockey coach...** *'The key focus points for the 2023 program were team and squad culture with the aim to become better athletes and team members. Game awareness was a big part of all training activities. Although we didn't get the results at Academy games, all athletes excelled in these focus capabilities.'*

## Highlights and Athlete Achievements

- The inter-academy camp in Lithgow was attended by Illawarra, Southern, South West Sydney and Sydney Metro Academies. The was a focus on developing a range of position-specific skills and drills and providing valuable match play against other academies. The camp was a terrific opportunity for team bonding and for athletes and coaches to learn from each other.
- **Oliver Bestwick, Tayla Grabham and Elly Thornberry** selected in Hockey NSW 2023/24 Accelerated Athlete Program.
- **Tayla Grabham** – NSW State Team and Team Captain for 2023 National Indoor Hockey Championships
- **Oliver Bestwick, Tayla Grabham, Zoe Tattersall and Lauren Weal** selected in 2023 Western Open Hockey teams for NSW CHS Championships
- **Giaan Willott** selected in NSW CCC Opens Hockey team for NSW All Schools Championships
- **Pip Webb** – selected in AICES Opens Hockey Team for NSW CIS Hockey Carnival
- **Tahlia O'Connell** –Western Associated Schools Open team for AICES Hockey Carnival





**Oliver Bestwick**

Hockey Athlete of the Year (joint winner)

2023/24 Hockey NSW Accelerated Athlete Program

2022 Gryphon Cup – Gold Medal

Ciriello Coaching Academy Team Captain

2023 Premier League and U17 Metro League for  
Ryde Hockey Club

2023 NSW CHS Opens Hockey  
Western Team - Champions



**Tayla Grabham**

Hockey Athlete of the Year (joint winner)

2023/24 Hockey NSW Accelerated Athlete Program

2023 National Indoor Hockey Championships

NSW State Team

NSW Team Captain

2023 NSW CHS Opens Hockey  
Western Team



**Elly Thornberry**

Chairman's Award for Excellence Nominee

Elly had a great year of success in Hockey demonstrated by her selection in the Hockey NSW Accelerated Athlete Program.

Elly was awarded Parkes Goalkeeper of the Year and selected for Parkes United Premier League team.

In the last 18 months, Elly received 3 Principal Awards and 28 School Achievement Awards. She is placed in the High Potential class for all subjects and participated in coaching sessions at a local primary school with her PASS class.

# Lone Star / Para-Sports Athletes

## Athletes

Hadden Bennett (athletics) – Forest Reef

Jocelyn Blair (athletics) – Orange

Poppy Channing (football) – Bathurst

Annie Craig (rugby union) – Oberon

Luke Hinrichsen (athletics) – Orange

Skye Morrissey (para-sports swimming) – Narromine

Ella Penman (athletics) – Dubbo

Mia Penman (athletics) – Dubbo

Phebie Ryan (athletics) – Dubbo

## Program Outline

- Orientation
- Functional Movement Screening
- Strength and Conditioning Programs
- Education workshops included:
  - Recovery Practices
  - Advanced strength and conditioning
  - Nutrition
  - Condor Performance – Sport and Performance Psychology
  - Team Challenge Australia – teamwork, leadership and breathing for mind body conditioning
  - The Wellness Edge – injury management and psychological strategies for injured athletes during their recovery
  - Marc Wheeldon - holistic athlete development /multi-sport pathways
  - Mark Penman - athletics track training

## Athlete Achievements

### ➤ Skye Morrissey

- 2023 Australian Age Swimming Championships 14-15yrs – Two A finals (50m and 100m breaststroke) recording personal bests in both events.
- 2023 NSW Country Swimming Championships 12-14yrs – 5 events, 2 Silver medals (100m breaststroke, 100m butterfly), 3 personal bests, 4 qualifying times for Australian Age Championships.
- 2023 NSW Combined High Schools Swimming Championships – represented her school in 7 events – 5 personal bests, 3rd in 200m individual medley, 4th in 50m breaststroke.



# Lone Star / Para-Sports Athletes

## Athlete Achievements continued

### ➤ Poppy Channing

- Selected in 2023 Football NSW State Team (Country) for National Youth Championships
- Debuted for the U17 Australia team against South Korea after being selected for Football Australia Junior Matildas' camp.
- 2022 Football Australian U16 Youth Championships – NSW Country Team Vice Captain

### ➤ Ella Penman

- 2 Australian Medals at the 2023 Australian Junior Track and Field Championships – Gold (U18 4x400m relay), Silver (U18 800m - PB and Youth Commonwealth Games qualifying time) and a PB and 5<sup>th</sup> (U18 400m)
- 4<sup>th</sup> and PB at 2023 Australian U23/Open Athletics Championships (U20 800m)
- 2 Gold medals at 2023 NSW Junior Athletics Championships (U18 400m, 800m)
- Australian Schools Champion claiming Gold in U17 800m at 2022 All Schools Athletics Championships

### ➤ Jocelyn Blair

- Represented NSW at 2023 Australian Junior Track and Field Championships – U16 200m hurdles (7<sup>th</sup>) and U16 90m hurdles (14<sup>th</sup>)
- 4<sup>th</sup> in both U16 200m sprint and 200m hurdles at 2023 NSW Junior Athletics Championships, qualifying for Australian Championships
- 2 Gold (U16 high jump, 200m hurdles), 2 Silver (U16 100m, 90m hurdles) and 1 Bronze (U16 200m) at 2023 Athletics NSW Country Championships



# Lone Star / Para-Sports Athletes

## Athlete Achievements continued

### ➤ Hadden Bennett

- Bronze medal at Athletics NSW Country Championships (U18 800m)
- PB at 2023 Little Athletics NSW State Combined Carnival (U17 400m)
- Bronze medal at 2022 NSW CCC Athletics Championships (U16 800m)

### ➤ Annie Craig

- Selected in NSW All Schools Rugby 7s team for 2023 National Championships
- Selected in Sydney U18 Rugby XV's team for 2023 NSW Championships (City V Country)
- Selected in Cavaliers Rugby U18 Academy team for 2022 the World Schools 7s

### ➤ Luke Hinrichsen

- PBs at 2023 NSW Junior Athletics Championships (U18 long jump, 400m)
- PBs in 6 out of 7 events at 2023 Little Athletics NSW State Combined Carnival
- Bronze medal at Athletics NSW Country Championships (U18 long jump)

### ➤ Mia Penman

- Qualified for NSW State Little Athletics (U17 1500m) after achieving a Silver medal at Regional Championships
- 5<sup>th</sup> at Athletics NSW Country Championships (U17 3000m)

### ➤ Phebie Ryan

- Qualified for Athletics NSW Junior Championships and competed in U17 400m, 800m, and 400m hurdles
- Bronze medal at Athletics NSW Country Championships (U17 shot put), 4<sup>th</sup> (U17 triple jump) and 5<sup>th</sup> (U17 javelin)
- PB at Little Athletics NSW State Combined Carnival (U17 100m hurdles)





# Lone Star / Para Sports Athletes



**Poppy Channing**

Lone Star Athlete of the Year

Debut for Australian U17 team against South Korea following Junior Matildas Camp selection

Football Australian Youth Championships  
NSW Country Team Vice Captain

NSW CHS Football Tournament  
Named Emerging Country Talent

Football NSW National Premier League  
Womens 1 Competition – Blacktown Spartans



**Skye Morrissey**

Para-Sports Athlete of the Year

Australian Age Swimming Championships  
100m breaststroke (8<sup>th</sup>), 50m breaststroke (9<sup>th</sup>)

NSW Country Championships  
2 Silver Medals  
(100m breaststroke, 100m butterfly)

NSW CHS Swimming Championships  
200m individual medley (4<sup>th</sup>)  
50m breaststroke (5<sup>th</sup>)



**Ella Penman**

Chairman's Award for Excellence Nominee

Ella's achievements include placing 4<sup>th</sup> at the U20s Australian Open Athletics Championships; Gold and Silver medals at Australian Junior Track and Field Championships; Gold at Australian All Schools; 2 Gold at NSW Junior Athletics Championships and 2 Gold at NSW All Schools.

When not training or working part-time, Ella volunteers with her local club, assisting with fundraising or coaching juniors. Away from the Athletics Field, Ella is a strong contributor to her school community involving herself in school events. She is a diligent, self-motivated student achieving strong results across all her studies.

# Netball

## Squad Athletes

Marley Aplin – Orange  
Jorja Bennetts – Mudgee  
Grace Dunford – Parkes  
Lily Escrett (umpire) – Orange  
Emily Fairman – Dubbo  
Theane Gouws (umpire) – Dubbo  
Samantha Hanrahan – Bathurst  
Emily Hines – Dubbo  
Adeline Hollingsworth – Orange  
Millicent Hollingsworth – Orange  
Freya Keegan – Orange  
Ella Kilby - Cowra

Isabel Marchant – Dubbo  
Rachel Marshall – Mudgee  
Milla Nelson – Bathurst  
Malia Nicol – Orange  
Tilly Redfern – Orange  
Kaylee Roberts (umpire) – Mudgee  
Grace Simpson – Orange  
Isla Stringer – Orange  
Abigale Swane (umpire) – Dubbo  
Emily Turner – Orange  
Lily-Louise Walker – Narromine  
Lucy Wilson – Orange

## Program Outline

The 2023 netball program ran from February 2023 to September 2023 and included:

- Orientation and Team Building Camp at Lake Burrendong
- Fitness Testing and Functional Movement Screening
- Strength and Conditioning Programs
- Training days
- Education workshops – Nutrition, Recovery Practices, Sports Taping
- Netball NSW Regional Academy Camp
- Your Local Clubs Academy Games
- WRAS presentation
- Netball Academy Challenge

The WRAS netball program was supported by  
**Netball NSW** and **Greater Bank**



## Squad Staff

Nadia Macdonald, Head Coach - Sydney  
Karen Weeks, Assistant Coach – Dubbo  
Emily Williams, Assistant Coach – Orange  
Michelle Ensor, Umpire Coach – Dubbo  
Shelley Hutchinson, Umpire Coach – Dubbo  
Kylie Tzavaras, Manager – Sydney



# Netball



## Highlights and Athlete Achievements

- **Marley Aplin** selected in Netball NSW 2024 State Train On Squad U17
- **Isla Stringer** and **Adeline Hollingworth** selected for Phase 3 of Netball NSW U17 State Team trials
- **Lily-Louise Walker** and **Sam Hanrahan** selected for Phase 2 of Netball NSW U17 State Team trials
- **Lily-Louise Walker** selected in Netball NSW First Nations Emerging Talent Team
- **Marley Aplin** selected in Netball NSW Regional Emerging Talent Team
- **Kaylee Roberts** achieved National C Badge at Netball NSW Regional Academy camp
- **Abigale Swane** achieved National C Badge at Your Local Club Academy Games
- **Marley Aplin** (Div 1) and **Freya Keegan** (Div 2) name MVPs at Your Local Club Academy Games
- **Jorja Bennetts** and **Samantha Hanrahan** selected in West Central West U23 team for Netball NSW 2023 Regional State Cup
- **Isabel Marchant** – invited to Netball NSW Talent Identification skills session
- **Jorja Bennetts** selected in Bathurst Diocesan Opens netball team for NSW CCC Open Netball Trials
- **Samantha Hanrahan** selected in Western Open netball team for CHS Championships
- **Ella Kilby** selected in Western Associated Schools Opens netball team for AICES Competition
- **Milla Nelson** selected in AICES Open netball team for NSW CIS Competition
- **Isabel Marchant** selected in CSSA U15 State Netball Squad
- **Lily Escreet** selected to umpire for Western Region at CHS Netball Championships



# Netball



**Sam Hanrahan**

Netball Athlete of the Year

Netball NSW U23 Regional State Cup  
West Central West Team

NSW CHS Netball Championships  
Western Team

Division 1 Team for Academy Games and  
Academy Challenge

Western Rams U17 Rugby League  
Regional Lisa Fiaola Cup



**Marley Aplin**

Chairman's Award for Excellence Nominee

Marley is committed to her netball training and is a valuable member of any team she plays in. Marley's potential was recognised with selection in the Netball NSWs Regional Emerging Talent Program. Marley is a high-achieving student. As part of her dance studies, Marley wrote and performed 'A Message to Me' about accepting yourself, being true to yourself and being kind to yourself. Marley is also an active fundraiser for Hearts Kids Australia.

# Netball



**Rachel Marshall**  
Coach's Award

This is Rachel's second year in the WRAS netball program and 2023's most improved player. She takes feedback in her stride to ensure each game is better than the last and has been a pivotal part of the squad's success. Rachel displays great sportsmanship, leadership and encouragement towards all squad members.

Rachel was in the Division 1 team for Academy Games and Academy Challenge and was part of the Mudgee representative team for Regional League and State Titles.



**Kaylee Roberts**  
Coach's Award

Kaylee gained her National C Badge at the Academy Camp in 2023. Kaylee is committed to improving her knowledge and skills and progress her umpire development. Her ability to take on feedback at training and events is reflected in the improvement seen in the games umpired throughout this year.

Her confidence and improved performance led to Kaylee being selected to umpire at the NSW State Titles and Regional Representative carnivals.



# Triathlon

The WRAS triathlon program was supported by Triathlon NSW

## Squad Athletes

Angus Argent-Smith – Rankin Springs  
Sam Bayada – Orange  
Halle Potter – Mudgee  
Will Robinson – Orange  
Flynn Wolfe – Bathurst

## Squad Staff

Rory Thornhill, Head Coach – Canberra  
Tristan Harrison, Assistant Coach – Orange

## Program Outline

The 2023 triathlon program ran from October 2022 to July 2023 and included:

- Orientation
- Fitness and Skill Testing
- Functional Movement Screening
- Strength and Conditioning Programs
- Training Days
- Biligence Pathway Championship Series events
- Regional Inter-Club Races
- Education workshops - Recovery Practices, Sport and Performance Psychology, Teams Challenge Australia session (teamwork, leadership and breath for mind body conditioning)
- Your Local Clubs Academy Games
- WRAS presentation

NSW  
TRIATHLON



# Triathlon

## Athlete Achievements

- **Angus Argent-Smith** selected in Triathlon NSW 2023/24 Emerging Talent Squad
- **Halle Potter** selected in NSW Triathlon All Schools team for 2023 School Sport Australia National Triathlon Championships
- **Halle Potter** – 3<sup>rd</sup> girl overall at the Your Local Club Academy Games
- 2023 NSW All Schools
  - **Halle Potter** – 3<sup>rd</sup> CCC Intermedial Women
  - **Angus Argent Smith** – 3<sup>rd</sup> CIS Intermediate Male
  - **Will Robinson** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Government Schools Junior Male
- Dubbo Inter-Club Race
  - **Angus Argent Smith** – 1<sup>st</sup> U20 male sprint, 2<sup>nd</sup> overall male sprint
  - **Will Robinson** – 2<sup>nd</sup> U20 male sprint
  - **Flynn Wolfe** – 4<sup>th</sup> – U20 male super sprint
- Orange Inter-Club Race
  - **Flynn Wolfe** – 1<sup>st</sup> men's super sprint
  - **Halle Potter** – 2<sup>nd</sup> women's sprint
  - **Angus Argent Smith** – 3<sup>rd</sup> men's sprint
- Bathurst Inter-Club Race
  - **Flynn Wolfe** – 1<sup>st</sup> men's short course
  - **Halle Potter** – 3<sup>rd</sup> women's long course
  - **Angus Argent Smith** – 3<sup>rd</sup> men's long course

NSW  
TRIATHLON



### **Halle Potter** Triathlon Athlete of the Year

School Sport Australia Triathlon Championships  
Intermedial Girls (20<sup>th</sup>)

NSW All Schools Triathlon  
Qualified to represent NSW at Nationals

Academy Games – Junior female (3<sup>rd</sup>), C Final (6<sup>th</sup>)



# Indigenous Talent Program

The WRAS Indigenous talent program is supported by Underwriting Agencies Australia (UAA).

UAA

## Selected Athletes

Indi Amos – Dubbo

Trent Byrne – Bathurst

Connor Daley – Narromine

Billy Darlington – Dubbo

Jaylin Donnelly – Narromine

Kacey Fuller – Wellington

Adam Gollan – Orange

Layne Horton – Cowra

Tully Pickering – Dubbo

Isabelle Ravot – Dubbo

Bryson Read – Narromine

Aiden Riley – Dubbo

Riley Shaw – Bathurst

Claire Spence – Dubbo

Mia Trudgett – Bathurst

## 2023 UAA Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Talent Identification Day

The 2023 Talent Identification Day (TID) was held on 18 May in Dubbo. 71 students from 12 western region high schools registered for the day.

The students participated in five stations showcasing their sporting skills across AFL, athletics, basketball, hockey and rugby league.

Coaches at the TID included:

- Kate Lynch (Level 3 Performance Development Athletics Coach)
- Mark Leavy (AFL Diversity Partner)
- Erin Naden (AFL Central West Development Officer/ East Coast Eagles Player)
- Adam Marjoram (Basketball NSW Western Development Officer)
- Chrystal O'Brien (Indigenous Basketball Australia)
- Glenn Johnstone (Hockey NSW Western Region Community and Pathways Lead Coordinator)
- Kurt Hancock (U16s Western Rams Coach/ Boys To The Bush)
- Andrew Burton (Boys To The Bush)

## Stage 2 for Selected Athletes

Athletes selected from the TID attended Stage 2 which provided cultural education, specialist speed and power development and a ball skills/tactical awareness session.

Special guest coach for Stage 2 was Jess Skinner (First Nationals Gems Head Coach and NRL Pathway Strategy Manager)





# Strength and Conditioning

**Dan Bunyan – WRAS Strength and Conditioning and Program Manager (Level 3 ASCA Coach)**

**CSU Student Interns assisting WRAS athletes**

Elyse Lawry  
Adam Plummer

**Regional providers for venues and/or group strength and conditioning sessions:**

Bathurst – Charles Sturt University Gymnasium  
Bathurst – Dedicated 2 Fitness  
Cowra – RAD Gym  
Dubbo – Dubbo RSL Health and Aquatic Centre  
Mudgee – Country Fit Gym  
Narromine – Macquarie Health Hub  
Orange – JLW Performance  
Parkes – Pulse Gym  
Parkes – Western Services Group  
Gilgandra – Fitness Centre



**Xavier Bland (Cycling)**  
Strength and Conditioning Award

Xavier progressed his training on several fronts during the 2023 program. Xavier worked on improving his self-awareness relating to what and how he needs to train to support his cycling. Xavier's increased efforts in the gym reflect his commitment to cycling training over the past 12 months, resulting in him gaining selection in the AusCycling Emerging Track Sprint squad.



**Kiara McKeown (Basketball)**  
Strength and Conditioning Award

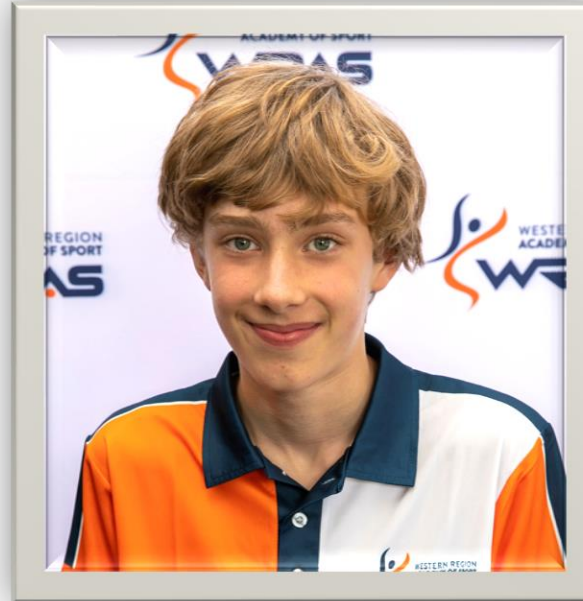
Kiara's attendance at gym sessions has been exceptional. She displays a mature and dedicated attitude towards her strength training. While Kiara works hard to improve her strength and conditioning abilities, she takes time to ensure that all other WRAS athletes are encouraged throughout the sessions. A trait of Kiara's that translates to her basketball leadership abilities. Kiara is a great athlete to coach and has a strong work ethic in the gym and on the court.

# Strength and Conditioning



**Rory Elphick (Golf)**  
Strength and Conditioning Award

Rory has been persistent and regular in attendance at his gym sessions. Even though Rory is one of the younger and newer athletes in strength and conditioning, he has applied himself as though he was a seasoned veteran. Rory's movement IQ has improved, and his loading capacity continues to improve. His efforts in the gym are being reflected in his improved golf game.



**Lachlan Doran (Basketball)**  
Strength and Conditioning Award

Lachlan's commitment to the gym program was outstanding. Movements that were once a challenge have become comfortable due to Lachlan's ongoing commitment to his strength and conditioning program. Exercises, including the squat and other lower limb pushing movements, no longer threaten Lachlan; he can now utilise his newfound ability and improve his athletic output.



**Elly Thornberry (Hockey)**  
Strength and Conditioning Award

Elly has been focusing intently on improving her ability in the gym. Technical improvements in all her lifting, particularly her lower body lifting, have allowed her to develop greater confidence and strength. This has translated to practical improvements in speed, endurance, and power. Elly's hard work is reflected in her Hockey NSW Accelerated Athlete Program selection.

# WRAS 2023 Presentation Evening

The WRAS 2023 presentation evening celebrated the achievement of the WRAS athletes, and recognised the contribution of volunteers, sponsors and supporters.

A total of 321 WRAS athletes, squad staff, supporters and their families attend the event that was held at Panthers Bathurst in July. Representatives of the following WRAS sponsors and supporters attended:

- NSW Office of Sport
- Underwriting Agencies of Australia
- Greater Bank
- Charles Sturt University
- Bathurst RSL Club
- Bathurst Regional Council
- Parkes Shire Councils
- Dedicated 2 Fitness Bathurst

Cooper Crowe (WRAS basketball athlete) performed the Acknowledgement of Country to start the proceedings.

The following graduating athletes spoke on the evening, providing guests with the highlights of the WRAS 2023 programs :

- Emily Winterton – basketball
- Xavier Bland – cycling
- Cooper Starkey – golf
- Pip Webb – hockey
- Samantha Hanrahan – netball
- Ella Penman – individual athletes (lone star and para-sports)
- Sam Bayada – triathlon

*Images by Julia Strang Photography*



# WRAS 2023 Major Award Winners

## WRAS 2023 Athlete of the Year

This major award is presented to the WRAS athlete who has achieved the highest sporting achievements during the 2023 programs.

- **Poppy Channing** – Winner – 2023 Athlete of the Year *(on RHS in photo)*
- **Ebony Robinson** – Runner Up - 2023 Athlete of the Year *(on LHS in photo)*

**WRAS 2023 Squad Athletes of the Year** and nominees for the major award were:

- **Kiara McKeown** – Basketball Athlete of the Year (joint winner)
- **Millie Sutcliffe** – Basketball Athlete of the Year (joint winner)
- **Ebony Robinson** – Cycling Athlete of the Year
- **Rory Elphick** – Golf Athlete of the Year
- **Oliver Bestwick** – Hockey Athlete of the Year (joint winner)
- **Tayla Grabham** – Hockey Athlete of the Year (joint winner)
- **Poppy Channing** – Lone Star Athlete of the Year
- **Skye Morrissey** – Para-Sports Athlete of the Year
- **Samantha Hanrahan** – Netball Athlete of the Year
- **Halle Potter** – Triathlon Athlete of the Year

## WRAS Chairman's Award for Excellence

- **Isabelle Russell** – Winner and Cycling nominee

This award recognises an athlete who excels in their sporting endeavours whilst also succeeding in other aspects of their life, including academic and leadership areas.

The other nominees were: **Cooper Crowe** (basketball), **Elly Thornberry** (hockey), **Ella Penman** (lone star) and **Marley Aplin** (netball).



# WRAS 2023 Major Award Winners

## WRAS 2023 Outstanding Achievement by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Athlete – Millie Sutcliffe

Sponsored by Underwriting Agencies of Australia (UAA) this award recognises an athlete within WRAS who has demonstrated outstanding achievements and success with their sport.

Millie Sutcliffe (*picture right*) received the award for her high level basketball selections and achievements, including selection in NSW U16 State Team for Basketball Australia National Championships and Basketball NSW State Performance Program. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year that Millie has received this award.

## 2023 Coach's Awards

Athletes that have demonstrated the greatest level of dedication and/or improvement during the 2023 programs. Winners were:

**Emily Winterton** (Basketball Graduate)

**Jazzy Gordon** (Basketball Senior)

**Mia Richardson** (Basketball Development)

**Rachel Marshall** (Netball)

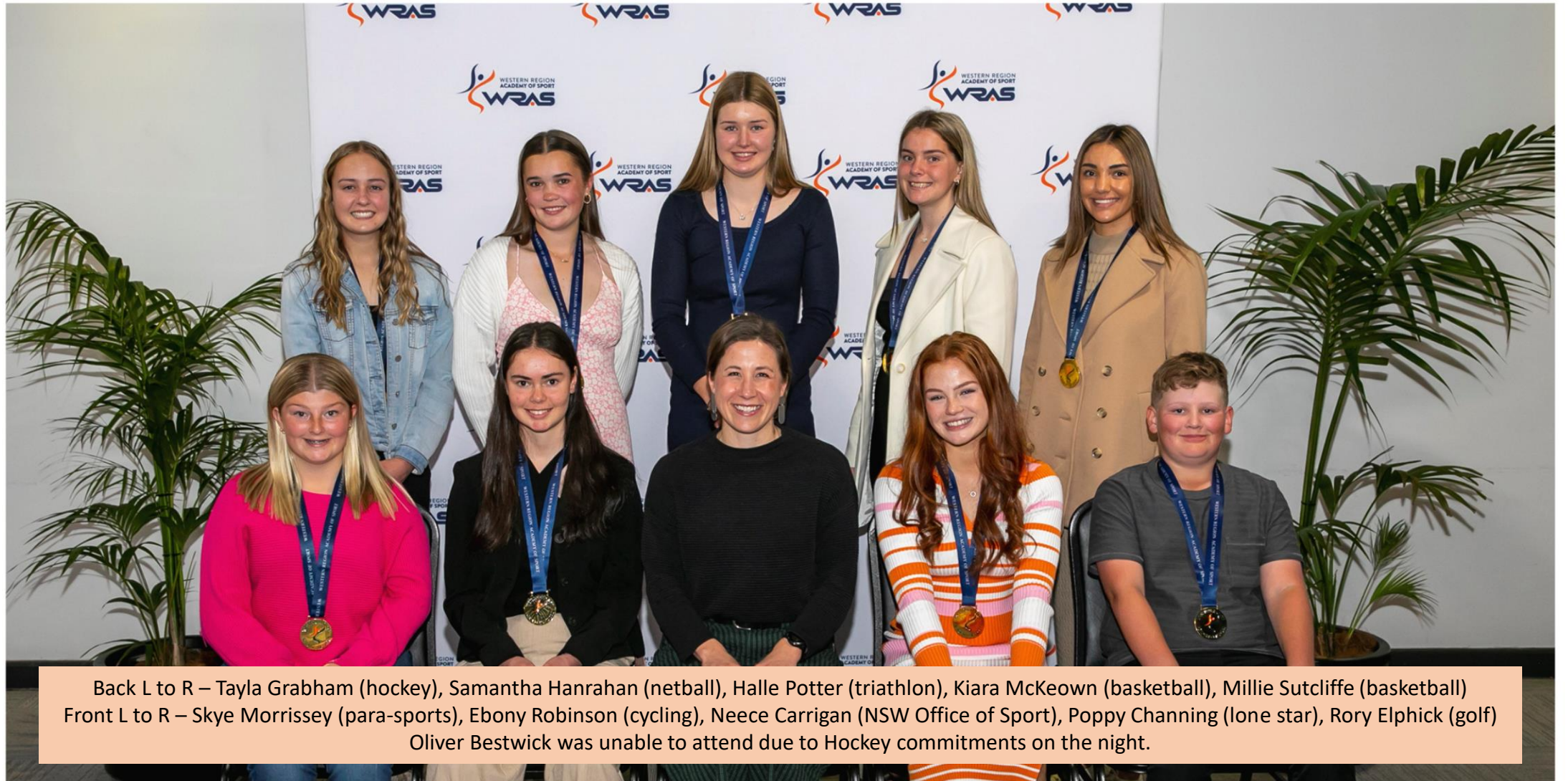
**Kaylee Roberts** (Netball Umpire)

## 2023 Coach of the Year – Marian Renshaw

Marian has personally coached many of the WRAS squad who have won multiple National Championships, Oceania Championships, State Titles and been selected for higher pathway programs including Auscycling's Emerging Talent Squad. Marian is patient with her athletes and gives so much of her time and knowledge to both the athletes and their parents. WRAS is grateful for the contribution of such an extremely knowledgeable and talented coach.



## 2023 Squad Athletes of the Year



Back L to R – Tayla Grabham (hockey), Samantha Hanrahan (netball), Halle Potter (triathlon), Kiara McKeown (basketball), Millie Sutcliffe (basketball)  
Front L to R – Skye Morrissey (para-sports), Ebony Robinson (cycling), Neece Carrigan (NSW Office of Sport), Poppy Channing (lone star), Rory Elphick (golf)  
Oliver Bestwick was unable to attend due to Hockey commitments on the night.

## 2023 Chairman's Award for Excellence Nominees



L to R – Michael Price (WRAS Board Member), Elly Thornberry (hockey), Ella Penman (lone star), Cooper Crowe (basketball), Marley Aplin (netball)  
The winner of this award, Isabelle Russell, was unable to attend as she was in Europe with the AusCycling U19 Rauland squad.

## 2023 Coach's Awards



L to R – Linda Macleod (WRAS Life Member), Jazy Gordon (basketball - senior), Rachel Marshall (netball), Emily Winterton (basketball – graduate), Mia Richardson (basketball – development), Kaylee Roberts (netball umpire)



## 2023 Strength and Conditioning Awards



L to R – Rory Elphick (golf), Lachlan Doran (basketball), Elly Thornberry (hockey), Kiara McKeown (basketball), Xavier Bland (cycling), Daniel Bunyan (WRAS Programs/Strength and Conditioning Manager)

# NSWIS Pursue32+ RAS Talent Program

## Program Overview

The New South Wales Institute of Sport (NSWIS) in partnership with the Regional Academies of Sport (RAS) launched a high performance talent pathway program for athletes from country NSW. The program connects both targeted regional athletes and their coaches to high performance expertise and provides opportunities to develop their success in Olympic sports.

The Pursue32+ RAS Talent Program is a selective talent ID program aimed at identifying, supporting and providing opportunities to aspiring talent from regional NSW.

43 athletes from across regional NSW were selected for the first intake of the Pursue32+ RAS Talent Program.

The program provides talented regional athletes with exposure to high level expertise in coaching, dietetics, nutrition, self regulation, performance planning, skill technique and body control, assisting these athletes to be NSWIS 'READY' to succeed on the international stage. The program is delivered in partnership by NSW Institute of Sport (NSWIS) and the Regional Academies of Sport (RAS).

## 2023 Program Outline

**Camp 1** 1-3 September held at Sydney Olympic Park included: high performance venue tour, physical screening and testing and education sessions (what is high performance, recovery, nutrition, injury prevention, goal setting, Q&A with elite coaches and athletes, introduction into individual athlete performance plans).

Max and Sophie returned to Sydney Olympic Park in November for a track skills running workshop with Athletics Australia coaches and NSWIS athletes Rohan Browning and Ella Connolly.

Pursue32+ camps and workshops will continue in 2024.

## WRAS Athletes selected

Max McAneney (Athletics) - Dubbo

Sophie McAneney (Swimming) - Dubbo

The Pursue32+ RAS Talent Program was supported by **NSWIS** and **the Regional Academies of Sport NSW**.



# Regional Academies of Sport Coach Conference

The 2023 Regional Academies of Sport (RAS) Coaching Conference, held 27-29 October brought together coaches and sports enthusiasts for a day of knowledge sharing, innovation, and inspiration. Building upon the immense success of the 2022 edition, this conference set new standards for the sporting industry in NSW.

Close to 130 regional coaches, administrators and staff came together at Mingara Recreation Club, Tumby Umbi. This event was an opportunity to upskill the coaches across NSW but also a chance to acknowledge and say a very sincere thankyou to the many volunteer coaches who support the pre-elite athlete pathway in NSW.

Hosted by the Central Coast Academy of Sport (CCAS), on behalf of the RAS network, the 1-day conference brought together the best regional pre-elite coaches from all 11 RAS from throughout New South Wales; Central Coast, Far West, Illawarra, Hunter, North Coast, Northern Inland, South East, South West Sydney, Southern, Western Region and Western Sydney Academies of Sport.

The stacked agenda included special guests:

- Liz Ellis AO (former Australia Netballer)
- Carrie Graf AM (Former Australian Women's Basketball Head Coach)
- Mark McVeigh (Sydney Swans Academy Head Coach)
- Melissa Wu (Australian Diver)
- Chava Sobrino (NSWIS Diving Head Coach)
- Katie Kelly OAM (former Australian Para-triathlete)
- Rob Mullard (NSWIS Physiotherapist and Lead Coordinator for Athletics Australia)
- NSWIS Support Staff - Anthony Quinn (Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement Advisor), Sean Cooney (Head of Performance Health), Simon Harries (Head of Strength and Conditioning)

- Dean Widders (NRL Indigenous Pathways Manager)
- Central Coast Mariners staff - Shaun Mielekamp (CEO), Emily Husband (Women's Head Coach), Andy Bernal (Former Socceroo)
- Simon Woinarski (Office of Sport)
- Video presentation by Lauren Jackson AO (Australian Basketballer)

The RAS Coach Conference was supported by



# Partnerships



The **NSW Government Office of Sport** is the major partner of WRAS and the Regional Academies of Sport (RAS). Office of Sport provide financial support to WRAS as well as professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers via conferences/workshops.



**Charles Sturt University (CSU)** has been a long-term partner of WRAS. The WRAS office is based on the CSU Bathurst Campus. WRAS hosts many major events on CSU campus including our program orientation each year. WRAS works with the school of Allied Health, Exercise and Sport Science staff and students supported CSU students with placement hours.



In 2023, the partnership between RAS and the **NSW Institute of Sport (NSWIS)** introduced Pursu32, a high-performance talent pathway program for athletes from regional NSW. The program connect targeted regional athletes and their coaches to high performance expertise to provide opportunities to develop their success in Olympic and Paralympic sports.



The partnership between RAS and the **Steadfast Group** provides investment in the holistic growth of Academy athletes and coaches with programs focusing on leadership, athlete well-being and coach development.



WRAS is an active member of the **Regional Academies of Sport (RAS)**, the collective of NSW Regional Academies of Sport that prepare talented young athletes for the rigours of the elite levels of their chosen sport.



**Your Local Club** has been the principle partner for the Academy Games since its inception. The 2023 Your Local Club Academy Games were hosted by the Southern Sports Academy 21-23 April 2023. WRAS were represented at this event by our senior basketball, cycling, golf, hockey, triathlon and netball squads.



**Greater Bank** has been the major partner of the WRAS Netball Program since 2018. In addition to their financial support, Greater Bank provide netball athletes with off court education opportunities and learnings.



**Aceit Sportswear – official apparel partner** of WRAS since 2020. Aceit provided uniforms for WRAS staff, athletes and coaches, catering for the wide range of sporting programs WRAS offers.



**UAA (Underwriting Agencies of Australia)** have partnered with WRAS supporting our Indigenous Athlete Program since 2022. UAA also provide sponsorship for the WRAS basketball program.

# Sponsors and Supporters

## State Sport Organisations



## Regional Businesses supporting WRAS athletes



## Friends of the Academy (local businesses supporting WRAS athletes)

### DUBBO

- Avalon Drafting Pty Ltd
- Cobra Plant and Crane Hire
- Flourish FM Pty Ltd
- Keicha Pty Ltd
- Simtec Surveillance and Security Pty Ltd
- WF Industries Pty Ltd

### MUDGEE

- Sunrai Design

### BATHURST

- Bathurst Air Conditioning Pty Ltd
- Central West Foot and Ankle Pty Ltd

### ORANGE

- Clever Cookie Academy
- Duntryleague Golf Club
- RW Corkery & Co
- Watkins Dental

# Local Government Supporting WRAS

