

Media Release

The Hon Martin Pakula MP

Minister for Jobs, Innovation and Trade

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Racing



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Wednesday, 10 July 2019

FROM REGIONAL VICTORIA TO THE WORLD – VIA ALBERT PARK

Postcodes mean little when it comes to chasing sporting dreams in Victoria, as 41 junior stars discovered during a special session at the Victorian Institute of Sport today.

Regional athletes continue to punch above their weight, with one in four VIS scholarship holders hailing from beyond the metropolitan area.

The Andrews Labor Government backs equal opportunity in sport – male and female, city and country – and supports 260 VIS athletes to compete on the world stage with \$6.7 million annual funding for the institute.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula welcomed the young athletes to VIS headquarters at Albert Park where they took part in sessions on gym training, sports science, psychology and nutrition.

The budding stars heard from a panel of three outstanding VIS athletes: three-time Paralympian skier Mitch Gourley (originally from Geelong), Vixens netballer Lara Dunkley (Sale) and world number three amateur golfer David Michelluzi (Cranbourne).

The representatives from Victorian Regional Academies of Sport in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Mildura, Traralgon and Warrnambool included 17-year-old runner Harry Sharp from Ballarat, 17-year-old golfer Mitchell Crabbe from Geelong and 15-year-old basketballer Piper Dunlop from Bendigo.

Through the regional academies and the VIS, the Labor Government is ensuring our high-performance athletes and teams have the facilities, resources, coaching and medical support to compete on the world stage.

Current VIS athletes also include Olympic swimming gold medallist Mack Horton, snowboard superstar Scotty James and Vixens netballers Liz Watson and Caitlin Thwaites, both currently in England with the Diamonds national team for the World Cup.

The VIS was established in 1990 and moved to its current base at Albert Park in 2011.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula

“All Victorians deserve a shot at making it to the top in their chosen sport and the chances of success shouldn’t depend on where you live.”

“The regional academies and the VIS do an outstanding job in guiding and supporting our young stars and it’s great to see such enthusiasm and belief on display today.”

“While this is our next crop of stars, it’s now just over a year until the opening ceremonies for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic games and our elite performers are shaping to deliver outstanding results in Tokyo.”

Quote attributable to 17-year-old Ballarat middle-distance runner Harry Sharp

“It’s great to be able to learn more about things like training, sports science and nutrition – hopefully I can be a VIS scholarship holder one day.”

Media contact: | Tom Whitty 0488 084 717 | Jobsmedia@minstaff.vic.gov.au