

MEDIA RELEASE

PARTNERSHIP TO STRENGTHEN ATHLETE PATHWAYS IN REGIONAL NSW

29/07/20

The **NSW Institute of Sport (NSWIS)** and **Regional Academies of Sport (RASi)** today announced a partnership that will deliver improved pathway opportunities for regionally based athletes across NSW.

A four-year agreement which will run throughout the next Olympic cycle, the partnership will leverage off RASi environments and world class NSWIS high performance expertise to develop coaches, identify emerging athletes and nurture sporting talent through to the elite level of competition.

Acting NSW Minister for Sport Geoff Lee was thrilled to see both organisations working towards the shared goals of helping to create an active and inclusive NSW in which everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential.

“The NSW Government remains committed to the young people of regional NSW and I’m delighted at the opportunities this partnership will create for talented athletes,” Mr Lee said.

“Improving athlete pathways will have a positive effect on the health and wellbeing of our regional youth, while investing in the development of young coaches will help create skilled and job-ready candidates for the workforce.”

NSWIS CEO Kevin Thompson spoke about the importance of the agreement for Australian and NSW high performance sporting systems.

“RASi and NSWIS have joined forces to address a fundamental gap existing in the national high-performance system,” Mr Thompson stated.

“By leveraging off our respective resources and expertise, together we can work towards achieving the vision of more NSW athletes representing Australia and winning medals at major international events.”

Some of the state’s most successful athletes, including NSWIS scholarship holder and Paralympic superstar Ryley Batt (wheelchair rugby) and two-time Olympian Emily Chalker (hockey), have risen to international success from their beginnings in regional NSW.

Batt, who resides in Port Macquarie, is a four-time Paralympian and co-captain of the Australian Paralympic team for the 2021 Tokyo Games, while Chalker originated from the Southern Tablelands and has since gone on to captain the Australian women’s hockey team, winning a host of international medals. The pair provide inspiring examples of what is possible with the right opportunities and support.

RASi Chair, Ian Robilliard OAM, was excited by the potential that the new partnership provides.

“We’re thrilled to be working alongside NSWIS to deliver emerging athlete pathways for the youth of regional NSW,” he said.

“RASi has a proud history of supporting the development of regional athletes and coaches. As well as creating 187 jobs supporting the regional community across the state, we take great pride in the holistic support and wellbeing messages we provide to our younger generation of future leaders. This partnership allows us to further build upon our legacy and help nurture the next crop of Australian sporting stars and world class coaches hailing from regional areas.”

Currently, 620 athletes have progressed from RASi to represent Australia, with 34 competing at the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The network currently consists approximately 2500 athletes, aged between 13 & 17 years of age, of which 55% are female. We have close to 750 coaches and volunteers in our system spanning across 86 LGA’s delivering over \$60million of economic value each year.

The partnership will initially focus on identifying and supporting the transition of talented athletes into high performance pathways, as well as selecting regional coaches to participate in coach development opportunities.

It is hoped the partnership will lay the foundation for the development of a NSW Talent Unit which, with increased investment, would further advance inclusive talent initiatives across the state, provide dedicated support for athlete wellbeing, create PhD research opportunities, and implement a targeted coach development program.

- ENDS -

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For reference:

The Regional Academies of Sport Network include:

- Hunter Academy of Sport
- Central Coast Academy of Sport
- Western Region Academy of Sport
- Western Sydney Academy of Sport
- South West Sydney Academy of Sport
- Illawarra Academy of Sport
- Southern Sports Academy
- Northern Inland Academy of Sport
- North Coast Academy of Sport
- **Managed by Office of Sport**
- Far West Academy of Sport
- South East Sports Academy

NSWIS & RASI PARTNERSHIP



Nurture and identify talent



Increase NSW representation on national teams



Address fundamental gaps and build NSW athlete pathways



Develop the next generation of NSW high performance coaches



Strengthen regional communities via: increased jobs and capabilities in sport, opportunities for emerging athletes, inclusiveness



Develop the foundation for a future NSW Talent Unit

#TEAMNSWIS



REGIONAL ATHLETE SUCCESS



180 current NSWIS scholarship athletes have come through the regional academy pathway including:



MATTHEW GRAHAM
Mogul Skiing

(24 years, Narara - Central Coast)

Silver medallist at the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympics

Silver medallist in Men's Mogul Skiing at the 2019 FIS Freestyle World Ski Championships

Winner of the 2018 NSWIS Male Athlete of the Year award



POPPY OLSEN
Skateboarding

(19 years, The Junction - Newcastle)

Bronze medal at the 2018 Park Skateboarding World Championships

First Australian female to be invited to compete at the Summer X Games



RYLEY BATT
Wheelchair Rugby

(30 years, King Creek - Port Macquarie)

Captain of the Australian wheelchair rugby team; the Steelers

Member of the first wheelchair rugby team to win consecutive Paralympic gold medals (2012, 2016) and a world championship title (2014) in a four-year period

Captained the Steelers to silver at the 2018 Wheelchair Rugby World Championship

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NSWIS \$6.2M BUSINESS CASE BENEFITS TO REGIONAL COMMUNITIES



Supports our vision of more NSW athletes representing Australia and winning medals



Development of NSW Talent Unit based at NSWIS and working collaboratively with the RASi, OoS and SSO's to: (1) address fundamental gaps in national talent pathway system, (2) identify, develop and transition sporting talent from regional areas into elite pathways, (3) encourage healthy and active lifestyles amongst regional youth, (4) develop the next generation of coaches to support regional coaching and create future NSWIS coaches



Integrate data science capabilities to support decision making and program effectiveness for talented regional athlete support



Increase commercial investment in youth and regional communities via partnerships associated with a future NSW Talent Unit



Secure access to facilities in regional NSW for NSWIS emerging athletes and regionally-based high performance programs



Improve medical, strength and conditioning, and physiotherapy services access to regionally based NSWIS athletes



Athlete Wellbeing & Engagement services will be delivered to talented regional athletes to better equip them to deal with the demands of sport, school, university and life



All programs will be inclusive of para and able bodied, male and female and culturally diverse backgrounds

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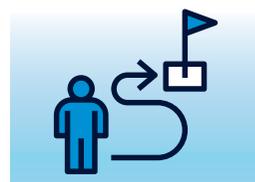
RASI \$3.717M BUSINESS CASE BENEFITS TO REGIONAL COMMUNITIES



Identify and support regional talent



Educate and develop regional talent



Provide access to chosen pathways for regional athletes



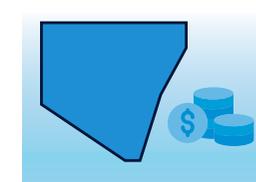
Holistic development of regional youth



Foster healthier choices in youth lifestyles



Provide community support and wellbeing frameworks



Provide a cost effective, full geographic coverage for SS0 high performance programs

WHAT DOES ADDED FUNDING DO FOR RASI & THE STATE?

- Boost in regional tourism via Academy Games
- Athlete numbers grow from 2500 to 4000
- Programs offered increases from 30 to 40, with the inclusion of sporting precincts in regional areas
- Sharp increase in economy with more jobs & economic value

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