



Victorian Regional Academies of Sport Para-Sport Program 2024 Information



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VRAS Para-Sport Program

The six Victorian Regional Academies of Sport will work with Paralympics Australia (PA) to identify and support talented para-athletes across Regional Victoria. The program is supported by the Victorian Institute of Sport (VIS) and National Sports Organisations.

Program Description

The program will focus on removing barriers for athletes in regional areas by offering *Individual Memberships* to Victorian Regional Academies of Sport, to access strength & conditioning support and education, whilst also receiving additional targeted support. The program aims to complement and elevate an athlete's current training program and athletes will receive support between February 2024 to December 2024, before a process to re-apply for support will take place.

Program Objectives

Broadly, the project aims to achieve the following objectives;

- Identify and connect Emerging and Developing, or pre-categorised para-athletes with the potential to progress to *Emerging* and *Developing* (AIS Categorisation) within 2 years, to individual support through the Victorian Regional Academies of Sport network.
- Educate Regional Academy network about Paralympic Sport Classification, Para-sport Pathway, Equipment, Opportunities for success with the objective of increasing knowledge and understanding of Paralympic Sport.



Image 1: VRAS supported athletes Jaylen Brown (SWAS), Mitch Bond (Barwon) and Will Firth (Gippsland) were part of the successful Victorian Kevin Coombs Cup Team, 2023.

Athlete Criteria:

In order to be eligible for support through this program, an athlete must;

- Have an eligible impairment for para-sport, based on provisional or national level classification
- Meet minimum-level performance outcomes within their sport or show appropriate talent potential[^], as determined by Paralympics Australia, the National/State Sporting Organisation of their sport and the Regional Academy of Sport within their region.
- Be 12 years of age or older, as at 1 January 2024
- Must be living within a catchment area of the Regional Academy of Sport while the program is being conducted.

[^] Please note: Talent potential refers to an Emerging or Developing level athlete, or a pre-categorised athlete that has the potential to progress to Emerging/Developing level categorisation within two years (factors such as current age, training age, projected development and classification may be considered to determine 'talent potential' through the NSO/SSO and Paralympics Australia).



Image 2: Induction Session at the NEC Hangar (Essendon Football Club), February 2023

Athlete Benefits

Each para-athlete supported under this program will receive the following benefits through their Academy between February and December 2024.

As part of the project, supported athletes will receive:

- Individual Athlete support from Paralympics Australia, NSOs/SSOs and Regional Academy staff for performance-based guidance, innovation and solutions to address barriers impacting an athletes progression
- Individual Membership at a Regional Academy of Sport
- Access to strength and conditioning support*
- Access to a range of Athlete Education programs*
- Access to local physio and support network*
- Funds that can be utilised to support individual goals such as additional servicing, equipment, travel to regular training/coaching or travel to National/International# competitions.

* please note the nature of support may vary between Regional Academies and be dependent on each sport

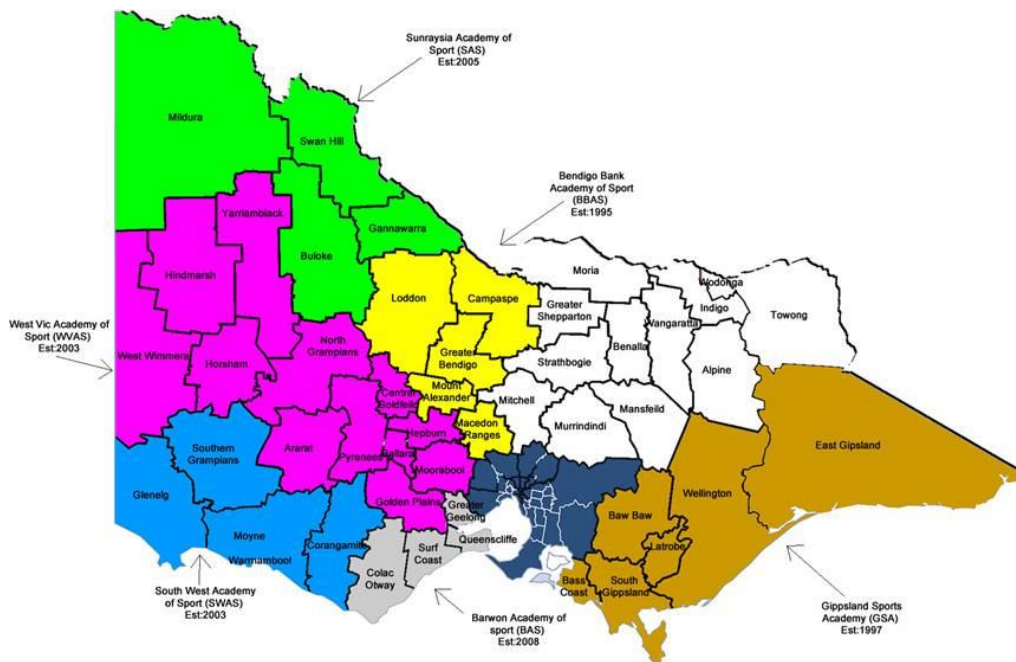
funds should be prioritised for national and international competition



Image 3: Alana Forster (West Vic - centre) and Sharon Boyd (West Vic - right) during a successful 2023 AusCycling Road Nationals in Ballarat.

Regional Academies of Sport – Catchment Areas

- **Barwon:** Colac Otway, Surf Coast, Queenscliffe, Greater Geelong
- **Bendigo:** Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander, Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Campaspe
- **Gippsland:** Bass Coast, South Gippsland, Latrobe, Baw Baw, Wellington, East Gippsland
- **South West:** Glenelg, Moyne, Warrnambool, Corangamite, Southern Grampians
- **Sunraysia:** Mildura, Swan Hill, Gannawarra, Buloke
- **West Vic:** West Wimmera, Horsham, Hindmarsh, Yarramblack, North Grampians, Ararat, Pyrenees, Golden Plains, Moorabool, Ballarat, Hepburn, Central Goldfields
- **Unassigned:** Moria, Greater Shepparton, Strathbogie, Mitchell, Murrindindi, Mansfield, Benalla, Wangaratta, Indigo, Wodonga, Alpine, Towong, and all Metro LGAs. Please note regional LGAs may still be supported through the discretion of VRAS and PA.



Important Dates for 2024

Expressions of Interest open	15 December 2023
Expressions of Interest close	31 January 2024
Assessment of EOIs	February 2024
Confirmation of supported para-athletes	26 February 2024

VRAS Para-Sport Program contacts

Organisation	Name	Number	Email
Barwon	Cameron Loftus	0423 650 219	cameron@barwonsportsacademy.org.au
Bendigo	Graham Gordon	0487 944 642	G.Gordon@latrobe.edu.au
Gippsland	Anita Pistrin	0411 435 819	anitap@sportgippsland.org.au
South-West	Andrew Sloane	0425 758 261	ceo@swas.org.au
Sunraysia	Zac Pullman	0432 353 747	eo@sunraysiaacademyofsport.com.au
West Vic	Shenae Keleher	0417 044 419	wvas@federation.edu.au
Paralympics Australia	Scott Nicholas	0403 238 494	scott.nicholas@paralympic.org.au

2024 Expression of Interest

[CLICK HERE](#) to complete the Expression of Interest for the 2024 program

For further information

If you have any further questions, please contact Paralympics Australia Pathways Lead Scott Nicholas on 0403 238 494 or scott.nicholas@paralympic.org.au.