



**THE HON KATE ELLIS MP
MINISTER FOR SPORT**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Future sport stars to shine in India

Australia's campaign for the Commonwealth Youth Games, to be held in India in October, was officially launched today by the Minister for Sport and Youth, Kate Ellis.

Ms Ellis said the Commonwealth Youth Games – for athletes 18 and under - was an important event for Australia's future stars.

“The young athletes in our Youth Games team will be Commonwealth and Olympic Games medallists of the future,” she said.

“The Youth Games are a great opportunity to visit another nation, live in an athletes’ village, mix with other young athletes from around the world, and most importantly gain the experience we hope will motivate them to represent Australia for many years to come.”

Australia's team members will be chosen over the coming months. Some successful Australian athletes who have competed at past Youth Games include:

- swimmers Jodie Henry, Nick Ffrost, Linda McKenzie, Meagen Nay
- track and field athletes Sally McLellan, Dani Samuels, Chris Noffke
- female hockey player Rebecca Sanders
- female gymnast Monique Blount.

The 2008 Commonwealth Youth Games will be the third event of its kind. The first Youth Games were in Scotland in 2000 and the second in Bendigo in Australia in 2004.

Ms Ellis said the Commonwealth Games were widely and aptly known as the friendly games and the same spirit of co-operation and unity bridging many different races, religions and cultures would be evident at the Youth Games.

“That does not mean the competition is not fierce - of course it is,” Ms Ellis said.

The 2008 Commonwealth Youth Games will be held in Pune in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, from 12 to 18 October. All 71 members of the Commonwealth are expected to field teams, with a total of 1,300 athletes and officials likely to take part.

They will compete in nine sports - athletics, badminton, boxing, shooting, swimming, table tennis, tennis, weightlifting and wrestling.

Australia's team of 140, including 102 athletes, will compete in all of these sports and will be the biggest team after the host nation's.

Petria Thomas – a swimming legend with nine Commonwealth Games Gold Medals and eight Olympic medals – will again be the general manager of the Australian team.

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