

STATE NETBALL TO CREATE BOOM FOR LOCAL BUSINESS

Six new netball courts could bring hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Central Coast economy, says the Wyong District Netball Association president.

As of March, Wyong District Netball Association (WDNA) has 30 netball courts, enabling it to host the junior state championships, State Age. This event has the potential to bring approximately 3500 people to the area for its duration, boosting the local economy and increasing tourism.

Netball New South Wales Vice President Rodney Watson said: “Every time State Age is held in an area, the benefit to the local economy is quite enormous. They usually book out every motel or apartment in sight.” He said the provision of food and tourist activities would contribute to bringing revenue into the area.

Wyong Shire Councilor and WDNA patron Emma McBride is a strong advocate of the tourism potential hosting the Stage Age would have: “For the community as a whole, it’s excellent for sports tourism. [State Age is held on] the June long weekend, so a public holiday weekend in Australia, and in terms of the tourism that it would bring to the Central Coast – because people come, their family comes, coaches, officials, spectators – the boost of that would be to tourism, which is one of the key industries on the Central Coast; [it] would be fantastic.”

Local business owner Tony Arbolino said “I believe it brings in extra revenue as it brings extra people to the Central Coast as a tourism thing; and, as a local business owner, I can see that would be really good, and helpful for the local economy to grow.” He feels that more tourists in the area could cause more businesses to open nearby and create more local job opportunities.

WDNA Secretary Chris Miles said: “We’ve been, for about 20 years now, trying to get together with Council to have these new courts, because of all our extra people and because we’d like to host a State Age event.” She said that having the new courts can facilitate further growth both in local netball and local business.

WDNA runs the weekly outdoor netball competition each winter sport season in the Wyong Shire and currently has 294 teams.

President Frank Passmore said State Age is the biggest single-sex sporting event in the southern hemisphere. Netball and government officials are hopeful that an event as large and influential as State Age will encourage more young people to take up the sport.

New South Wales State Member of Parliament David Harris said: “Netball is one of the fastest growing sports in Australia. In a time when we’ve got a lot of obesity, it’s important that people get around, run around, and keep fit. I think it’s a good, healthy sport. With the national team always doing well, it’s got a good profile.”

State Age will this year be held in the Hunter region before returning to Sydney next year; however, WDNA has applied to its governing body, Netball NSW, and hopes to host the event in 2012.