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Big dreams, local support: young people chase opportunities through Youth Incentive Scheme

From **world championships to national stages**, young people across the Light region are turning their ambitions into reality with a helping hand from Light Regional Council's **Youth Incentive Scheme**.

This year, **14 local young people** have received funding through the program, sharing in **\$7,000** to help them pursue opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach.

Behind each grant is a story of dedication, talent and determination.

"Light Regional Council is proud to support our young people to pursue opportunities that build their skills, confidence and future pathways," said Mayor Bill Close.

"These young individuals are achieving incredible things, and we are pleased to play a small role in helping them get there."

Every journey tells a story

For **Lily Bradley (Greenock)**, that journey leads to the **National Vaulting Championships**, where she will compete in the unique and highly skilled discipline of equestrian vaulting.

Excellence is a family affair for the **Barretts**, with siblings making their mark across multiple sports at elite levels. **Evan Barrett** has been selected for the **School Sport Australia U15 Hockey Team**, while **Imelda Barrett** will compete at the **Hockey Australia National Championships**. **Taya Barrett** has achieved **dual selection in both national hockey and softball championships**, showcasing exceptional versatility and commitment. Meanwhile, **Daan Barrett** continues the family's success, representing **South Australia at both U18 and U23 National Softball Championships**, highlighting a clear pathway from **junior to elite competition**.

On the green, **Lucy Keylock (Freeling)** is preparing to represent South Australia at the **School Sport 18&U Golf Championships**, while sisters **Ava and Lilly Ward (Hewett)** will step onto the national stage at the **Irish Dancing Championships**, sharing both talent and passion.

For **Gracie Pizzino (Hewett)**, football is opening international doors, with selection in the **Football SA Under 16 team** competing at the **Singa Cup**.

Taking performance global, **Zoe Mills** will represent Australia at the **Cheer Union World Championships**, while **Tayla McCarthy** will compete with the **U17 SA State Netball Team** at national level.

For **Nate Wenske**, the journey goes all the way to the **BMX World Championships**, while **Pippa Batki** will represent South Australia at the **School Sport Australia Games** in hockey.

And on the athletics track, **Kelechi Ekwomadu** has earned selection in the **Australian U20 relay team**, with sights firmly set on international competition.

Removing barriers, unlocking potential

While their stories differ, each recipient shares a common reality. Without support, these opportunities can be difficult to access.

The Youth Incentive Scheme helps ease financial pressures such as travel, accommodation, equipment and competition costs, making it possible for young people to say “yes” to opportunities that shape their future.

This year’s recipients were selected for their **strong commitment** to their development, with each demonstrating how the funding would directly support their **progress, participation and performance**.

Demand for the program continues to grow, reflecting the increasing number of young people striving to reach higher levels in sport, arts and community activities.

Your story could be next

For every young person stepping onto a field, stage or arena, there are **many more with the same ambition** waiting for their opportunity.



That is the purpose of the Youth Incentive Scheme, backing local young people to **pursue what matters to them.**

Whether it's competing, performing, creating or achieving, Council encourages young people and their families to consider applying for future rounds of funding.

"Programs like this are about removing barriers and investing in potential," Mayor Close said.

"We encourage young people across our community to put themselves forward. Your journey could be next."

Further information on future funding rounds will be released following a review of Council's grants program.

Further photographs available on request.

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