

Media Release 6th April 2009

2008 Gippsland Sports Academy Award Night

Stephanie Barnett gains major Award

After being awarded the Tennis Panel's Encouragement Award at last Friday night's Annual Gippsland Sports Academy (GSA) Awards Night held at the Morwell Italian Australian Club, Bairnsdale's Stephanie Barnett was thrilled when the Board of GSA awarded her the David Drane Encouragement Award ahead of nine other quality sports' nominees.

The Awards dinner required skills of a non-sporting nature to overcome an electrical blackout until 10 pm with MC Barry Switzer and GSA CEO Bryan Herron performing exceptional feats to proceed through the very full evening program assisted by candle lighting, and the back up generator supplied by Tennis Advisory Panel member Geoff Hawke from Traralgon's Quality Inn Motel.

Stephanie became the second tennis awardee since the introduction of the prestigious Award in 2000 following Kate Marshall's win in 2004 and she was over the moon with her success following a busy 2008 year.

"Steph" played 12 National Points tournaments and many other events in the year and improved her Australian Ranking from 583 at the start of the year to 460 by year's end, a fantastic effort considering this was her first year of her two year stint in the 14 and under age group.

An accomplished athlete, Steph not only represented Victoria in the 2008 Foundation Cup event in Sydney, but also represented Victoria in her second sport, cricket.

But it's her first love, tennis, for which Steph is held in high regard as one of the few up-and-coming "serve and volley" female players in the country. Her self confidence in this lost style has won her many matches during 2008 and she has been rewarded with a spot in the State's Advantage Program in Melbourne for the top juniors of her level.

Local Bairnsdale Advisory Panel Members and committed supporters, East Gippsland Regional Development Officer Julie Glynn and GSA Program Manager Barry Stokes, were ecstatic with Steph's Award and both acknowledged Steph's dedication to her training regime.