

## **Tasmanian athletes receive first scholarships of 2022**

The Sports Excellence Scholarship Fund (SESF) have awarded their first scholarships to two students in Tasmania, making them the first recipients outside of Victoria. Both recipients will compete at the Australian Track and Field Championships in Sydney later this year.

### **Natalia Leszczynski**

Our first recipient, Natalia Leszczynski has competed in the sport for 14 years, currently training 3 days a week and frequently attending meets at a state level in Hobart, Penguin, and Launceston.

In the past 12 months she has competed at the 2021 Australian Track and Field Championships, finishing within the top 8 and the State All Schools Championships. In addition, she's competed at the recent Tasmanian Age Championships, winning gold in the Under 20 discus and silver in the Under 20 shotput as well as the bronze for shotput.

Natalia fell into athletics at the tender age of 3, following the athletics pathway until her late teens. Her main events fall under the 'throwing' category (shotput, discus, and javelin) after idolising Olympian Dani Stevens for many years, whom Natalia met at the 2021 Australian Championships.

By attending the 2022 Australian Championships, Natalia hopes to inspire girls in her local community, and show them that if they work hard, anything can happen.

This scholarship will help cover the costs associated with attending the National Championships, with Natalia's mother estimating the total cost of the trip to be in excess of \$1500. With the SESF scholarship, the out of pocket expense will now be around the \$500 mark, enabling the family to attend the event.

### **Bailey Van Den Brook**

Bailey Van Den Brook represents Tasmania as a Heptathlete and is currently ranked within the top 10 of all Under 15 female athletes in the 7 events. She has represented Tasmania on 4 different occasions and trains on an almost everyday basis to continually represent her state.

As a heptathlete, Bailey is required to provide her own equipment for the 7 events she competes in and invest time at training into each event to become a well-rounded athlete. Although both of her parents work full-time, the costs of national travel, entry fees, uniforms, and the many, many shoes continuously add up over time. Her father has recently accepted a job and relocated to Western Australia in an effort to support both Bailey's education and sporting talent.

The National Championships will be the second national event for Bailey this year after competing in the National Under Aged Combined Event. She has since qualified to represent Tasmania in 6 events at the National Championships in Sydney.

Back home in Tasmania, the family run a rescue farm offering sanctuary to 33 animals, which Bailey helps out with when she isn't training.

### **How you can help**

In 2022, the SESF expanded nationally, and we're looking for the funding to match. Every year, students are selected to represent their state at a national level but pull out due to financial constraints. The SESF provides scholarships to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds to enable them to attend national events and continue on their sporting pathway. To learn more about the foundation, or to donate, visit the SESF website.