



MAYORAL MEMO - 18 JANUARY 2023

On Monday Phoebe Litchfield became the youngest Australian player to score a One Day International (ODI) fifty with her match-winning 78 not out against Pakistan. She is 19. The fact that she did it on her ODI debut was even more significant. At 16 she became the youngest player to score a fifty in the Big Bash. She took two games to reach her fifty in the Big Bash.

While this seems like fantastic news for a shining new star of Australian cricket, why am I writing about it in a Mayoral column?

Phoebe was born and raised in Orange and attended school there. She has kept her regional base while travelling with her cricket career and even finished her HSC through her local school despite the fact that she was physically in other parts of Australia when she sat some exams.

The point here is that regional locations are lands of opportunity. Decades ago it may have been necessary for a young person with sporting or academic or musical talent – or any special talent - to be sent off to a metropolitan area to receive the correct guidance and

realise their potential.

There is an argument to say that now the opposite may be true.

Having the significant influence of family and close friends around Phoebe may well have helped her achieve more than if she had been sent off to an academy or boarding school at a young age – when her sporting talent was obvious. Phoebe is also a talented hockey player. Regional locations, with easy access to different sporting fields, facilitates young athletes playing a variety of different sports. Even within the one family it makes it easier for different children to play different sports. Cleaner air; less traffic; more down-to-earth attitudes...the reasons are many for young athletes to be able to excel while living in regional locations.

And we are seeing more sporting organisations bringing representative fixtures to regional locations. Just this week I tossed the coin to start the NSW Cricket State Challenge tournament where the best Under 14 male and Under 15 female cricketers in the State will be competing over four days of competition. The State Challenge has been played in Dubbo for more than a decade. In December I tossed the coin for the Cricket NSW Boys Youth Championships. This weekend I will be officially welcoming the athletes to the NSW Country Championships and wishing a warm farewell to the competitors in the Swimming NSW Country Regional Meet. Next month we will have 10,000 people descend on Dubbo for four days with the NSW Touch Footy Junior State Cup – Northern Conference being held here.

I look forward to the time, not too far away, that parents in Sydney with talented young athletes decide to move to regional locations to further their careers!

Councillor Mathew Dickerson
Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council

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