

# WRFL GIRLS HELP SECURE NATIONAL YOUTH GIRLS CHAMPIONSHIP

**By: Kirstie Fitzgerald**

Five young female football stars from the WRFL have helped the Victorian Metro representative squad secure the 2013 AFL Under 18 Youth Girls National Championship, last week.

Held in Shepparton over six days, the Vic Metro girls made it a clean sweep, not dropping a match throughout the competition, beating a determined Western Australian outfit in the Grand Final by fifteen points.

Made up of five state representative squads including Vic Metro, Vic Country/Tasmania, South Australia/Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland, girls aged between 13 and 18 competed in the national competition, all vying to win the elusive premiership shield.

Included in the Victorian Metro squad of 30 girls were five WRFL representatives from Altona, St.Albans and Wyndhamvale.

Brittany Bonnici (St.Albans), Madeline Keryk (St.Albans), Maddie Lister (St.Albans), Amanda Tessari (Wyndhamvale) and Stephanie Webb (Altona) were among the premiership side, all having solid games throughout the carnival.

Vic Metro coach, Paul Groves was proud of the professionalism and effort displayed by all of his girls in the competition, particularly in their Grand Final match against WA.

“I cannot applaud each and every girl enough for the job they did, we made a big deal of being the most professional team there to give us the best chance of winning it and their attitude towards recovery, diet and training assisted us in the final result.”

St.Albans’ on-baller, Brittany Bonnici, was part of the team’s leadership group, played in the midfield for most of the carnival and her good form earned her a position in the All-Australian side in the forward pocket.

“Brit has super endurance which means she just keeps running and is really hard at it. She has now proven to herself that she has the ability to play at the highest level,” Groves said.



Vic Metro U18 Youth Girls celebrate their 2013 Grand Final win over WA- *Image courtesy of AFL-Victoria Youth Girls*

Fellow St.Albans teammate and Vic Metro co-captain, Madeline Keryk was in the top possession winners throughout the carnival and has recently been selected in the first National Women's draft by Melbourne.

"Madeline's leadership during the week was amazing, we had a really young group playing their first carnival and she really drove the efforts to make it a team," Groves said.

14-year-old Maddie Lister was the youngest member in the Vic Metro squad who predominately played on the ball and applied enormous tackling pressure, particularly in the grand final.

"Once Maddie realized she could make an impact at this level, she was really good and made some really big tackles in the grand final game," Groves said.

In her fourth year at the National Championships, Wyndhamvale's Amanda Tessari played in the Vic's ruck and provided a real turning point in the grand final match.

"I had coached Amanda in the past two carnivals in the development team and it is outstanding the improvement she has made in her game.

"Due to match-ups, she spent the first half of the grand final on the bench but when she came into the ruck in the second half she turned the game," Groves added.

Altona's Stephanie Webb also played in Vic Metro's ruck and was a tough competitor to beat, however she missed the grand final match due to a rib injury she sustained in the last few minutes of game two in the competition.

"There is always one hard luck story of any carnival and Steph Webb was ours. She was going really well in the ruck early in the week, before she copped a big knock to her ribs.

"The doctor said she would miss 4-6 weeks but she did everything she could to be ready for the grand final. Although she was injured, she was an influential part of Vic Metro winning the championship."

Beating Queensland in the first match 8.5.53 to 1.1.7, Vic Metro held their next two competitors scoreless thrashing the NSW/ACT and SA/NT sides by more than 70 points.

Although starting off slowly in the first half of the grand final against WA, the Vic Metro girls came out firing, booting three goals to four points in the third term, running out 15-point winners at the final siren.

"The Grand Final against Western Australia was always going to be a really good game as they are a very quick team that had really improved on their overall game plan from previous years," Groves said.

"We had a motto all week that it doesn't take talent to give effort and the girls were reminding each other of this throughout the game."

This win sees the Vic Metro squad continue their dominance in female football, making this their fourth straight AFL National Youth Girl Competitions in a row.