

BOX HILL

# Top students on the ball

UNIQUE COLLEGE PROGRAM BALANCES ACADEMIA WITH SPORTING SUCCESS



Box Hill Senior Secondary College Middle Years Sports Campus students including tennis player Tim Karpinski, 13, basketballer Dylan Donnelly, 14, and tennis player Jasmin Starr, 14, balance sport and academic studies.

Picture: BRENDAN FRANCIS

## Sally Heppleston

BOX Hill Senior Secondary College's renowned program for gifted tennis and basketball players is not just about ability, it's about passion, according to tennis coach Elizabeth Peers.

The school is one of only two specialist sports schools in the state.

The Middle Years Sports Campus was established in 2005 for students in years 5 to 9 to combine their tennis and education goals.

In 2011, year 9 basketball was added to the program, which aims to integrate academic and sporting achievement to help students achieve excellence in both.

The school also caters for AFL and along with core subjects, the sports are woven into the timetable in place of more common elective subjects.

Peers was herself a gifted tennis player, playing in Wimbledon, the Australian Open and the US Open, and at one point had a singles world ranking of 105.

She reached the semi-finals of the Australian Open doubles in 1980 and is a former *Waverley Leader* Sports Star.

Her daughter Sally is now also a successful player on the women's circuit, with a career-high ranking of 145 in 2011.

Peers said students trav-

elled from all over Melbourne to Box Hill to attend the unique school.

"The school really helps the athletes to balance their education and sporting dreams," Peers said.

"We help them on and off the court, all with professional qualified coaches and with things like psychology and nutrition as well."

She said while there was an in-depth enrolment procedure to get a spot, they were not "elitist".

"It's more about their passion for the sport," she said.

"And we help provide them with pathways because tennis is such a big industry."

She said most students from the tennis program went on to the US college system after they graduated.

She said the program had 64 students, and that it provided a warm and friendly environment where everyone knew each other.

The school has produced many success stories.

Tim Karpinski, 13, received the Schools Sports Victoria 2013 Award for Outstanding Achievement in Tennis.

Ranked 997 in the men's national tennis rankings, Tim has been part of the Tennis Victoria Future Stars invitational program for nearly two years.

Dylan Donnelly, 14, re-

cently received a Local Sporting Champions Grant for basketball.

Dylan was a member of the Melbourne Tigers silver medal winning team who played at the National Basketball Championships in Darwin earlier this year.

Jasmin Starr, 14, represented Victoria in the State Schools Australia Tennis Championship (Pizzey Cup) in Perth in May this year.

Jasmin played in the under-18 team, an impressive feat for her age, and won six of her total seven matches.

For more information about the school, visit [bhssc.vic.edu.au](http://bhssc.vic.edu.au) or phone 9895 1127.