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Cross-Sport Welcome functions held in Bendigo and Melbourne

Two friendly matches between the Scotland Institute of Sport Swim Team and local bowlers from the City of Bendigo and Chadstone in suburban Melbourne last week highlighted the uniqueness of the sport of tenpin bowling and the hospitality of its players.

Where could 20 of Scotland's top Swimmers find themselves in an arena with no water, no starting gun and no finishing line, yet still be able to compete and have fun – as individuals and as a team? Where else but a tenpin bowling centre!

On Wednesday, Dragon City Lanes in Bendigo was the venue for the first of two social functions hosted by the sport's national governing body, Tenpin Bowling Australia. Bendigo Mayor, Cr. Rod Fyffe and Commonwealth Youth Games Director, Michelle Pryde, joined local bowlers and officials in welcoming the visiting Scottish squad. Cr. Fyffe remarked on the special bonds of friendship that grow between athletes irrespective of their sport when linked with a common bond.

Swimming and Tenpin Bowling are two of the ten sports recently announced by the Australian Commonwealth Games Association as part of the program for the 2004 Commonwealth Youth Games to be held in Bendigo in November, 2004.

On Thursday, the Scottish team travelled to Melbourne to continue their comprehensive training regime. Following their Swim schedule and Weights session the next day, the team arrived at AMF's Chadstone Bowling Centre, part of the largest shopping centre complex in the Southern Hemisphere. Here the team was greeted by another contingent of local bowlers, keen to extend a friendly Aussie welcome to the visiting Swimmers. They headed for the lanes with confidence, buoyed by their experience in Bendigo and were soon sending the pins flying. Smiles lit the faces of the Scottish swimmers, and their Aussie hosts, clearly demonstrating the Commonwealth Games Federation principle that sport should be valued in its own right as a force for good.

A member of TBA's Sports Psychology team, Chris Mesagno swapped stories with SIS Coach Chris Martin, both hailing from the same University in Florida, USA. On the lanes, Aileen McGilvary and David Leith took out the honours of top scores for the Scottish team while local bowlers including James Blennerhassett, Ben Hall and Fiona Hutchinson enjoyed the companionship and swapped the odd high five with their new found friends.

Tonight's get together with the Scottish bowlers typifies the true meaning of sport – said President of TBA's Victorian Association, Justin Lopes. Former college mates have met up and totally new friendships have begun across both sports – this is what makes events such as the Commonwealth Youth Games that are coming up in Bendigo next year so very important to us all – he added.

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