

## **ATHLETES SHINE AT REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

A small but eager team of competitors from Leongatha Little Athletics Club turned in wholehearted performances at the Gippsland Region Track and Field Championships and Junior Carnival at Newborough on February 19-20.

Among the many personal best times recorded and commendable achievements from budding young athletes on display at the Joe Carmody reserve, Eleanor Patterson and Wesley Graeme broke Gippsland region records – and more.

Battling extremely windy conditions, Eleanor enthralled the crowd with her outstanding high jump ability, clearing the bar at 1.80m to smash not only the regional record (1.63m) in the Under 15 girls' class but also the Victorian record (1.71m).

The 1.80m jump also equalled the Australian record, with worsening weather prompting Eleanor to decide against taking a full tilt at an even higher mark.

Wes Graeme, who was also competing in difficult conditions, later set a new benchmark of 11.50m in the Under 13 boys' triple jump, up from the previous record of 11.46m.

These two records for the Leongatha club representatives were among 11 regional records broken over the weekend, with the vast majority of them from the larger outer metropolitan club of Casey.

Eleanor also won gold in the 300m hurdles, long jump and triple jump events, while Wes likewise took gold in the high jump, long jump and 400m.

Other medallists from the Leongatha club were: Ruby Martin (1st 70m, 1st 100m, 1st 200m, 1st triple jump, U10G), Lucinda Graeme (3rd 60m hurdles, U10G), Shannon Kennedy (2nd high jump, 3rd 800m, U10B), Nicholas Matheson (2nd 1100m race walk, U10B), Sara Riseley (2nd 60m hurdles, 2nd high jump, 2nd long jump, 3rd triple jump, U11G), Shannon Mellings (3rd 70m, U11G), Brett Thorson (1st high jump, U11B), Christine Byrne (1st 100m, 2nd 200m, 1st long jump, U12G), Georgia Riseley (1st high jump, U13G), Gemma Martin (2nd 100m, U13G), Shane Byrne (1st 200m, 2nd 100m, U13B), Julian Patterson (2nd 80m hurdles, 2nd high jump, U13B), Robyn Byrne (1st 100m, 2nd long jump, 3rd triple jump, U15G), Mikaela Witherow (2nd 1500m, 2nd 800m, 2nd javelin, 2nd high jump, U15G), and Mitchell Green (1st shot put, 1st discus, U15B).

Excellent efforts were also put in by Kaylah Thomas, Amy Tudor, Trent Kelly, Luca Riseley, Joel Norton, Rohan Baudinette, Ella Findlay and other athletes, including a large number in the Under 6 to 8 age groups who competed with great enthusiasm in the special junior carnival.

Special thanks to Lyndall Green for her tireless work and dedication as chief recorder over the entire weekend. Thanks also to Paula O'Loughlin (team manager), Sue Ritchie (junior carnival chief official), Helen Patterson, Margie Matheson and Terry Martin (recorders) and the many other parents and helpers who assisted with a range of official duties over the two-day competition.

Many of the young Leongatha team members will now go on to compete at the State Track and Field Championships at Olympic Park on March 19-20.