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 **Henry has a ball as stadium construction starts**

Since Henry Van Til took up basketball as an eight-year old; he has played in at least eight stadiums across the region. He’s pleased that the court tally won’t be as high for future juniors, thanks to the Surf Coast Multi-Purpose Indoor Stadium which is under construction in the north of Torquay.

“I started playing basketball very young in Torquay, so it will be good to know that young players who start soon are going to have one great place to play locally,” the Surf Coast Basketball Association (SCBA) member said.

“It’s also good to know there’s going to be a central space for all of us Surf Coast basketballers. It will make it easier to bring along mates to play basketball, being at the same place every week.”

The Surf Coast Multi-Purpose Indoor Stadium will be formed by adding three courts to the existing single-court stadium at Surf Coast Secondary College. As well as being home to SCBA, it will be the base for numerous sports, activities and events.

“This stadium’s going to give a lot of people a real sense of community,” said 17-year-old Henry.

“It’s also going to help a lot of people be fit and active.”

SCBA has about 100 teams and more than 750 players. Another 300 basketballers train in Torquay each week as part of the Surfcoast Basketball Club

Association president Nicole Crammond – one of the key community advocates for the stadium – is thrilled to see it taking shape.

“The design process and the planning process has been awesome,” Ms Crammond said. “We’re looking forward to everything and everyone being in the same place – equipment, referees, administration, players. Logistically it’s going to make things a lot easier.”

Mayor Rose Hodge highlighted the teamwork to deliver the stadium, with three levels of government combining for the $13.5 million project as well as great leadership from the school. The stadium will consist of four courts, a café, meeting rooms, change facilities, all abilities design features and additional car parking.

“It’s going to be a real hub of activity for the community,” Cr Hodge said. “I’m looking forward to seeing people of all ages and abilities enjoying the space.”

Construction of the stadium is expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

Surf Coast Shire Council acknowledges the funding received from the Australian Government through the Building Better Regions Fund ($5 million) and the Victorian Government via the Better Indoor Stadiums Fund ($3 million).

**Not for publication:**

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