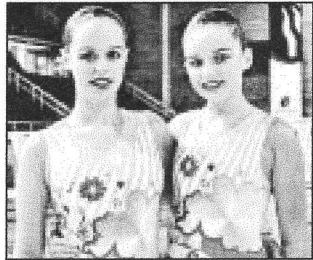


Bright young stars in sync in the water

MEET Jemma Singleton and Melanie Hartshorne — country Victoria's only synchronised swimmers.

Inspired by watching the sport at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the girls decided they wanted to have a go.

But, with the only three synchronised swimming clubs in the state based in Melbourne, Corio's Singleton and Anakie's Hartshorne make the trip up the highway at least twice a week for training at Footscray's Victoria University where their club, Golden Fish, is based.



Melanie Hartshorne and Jemma Singleton

However, the tyranny of distance has not stopped them from becoming two

of the sport's brightest young stars.

As a result of their strong performances at last month's national championships, both girls have been drafted into the Australian under 15 development team — with a trip to New Zealand to represent the country in October in the offing.

And last weekend the girls competed at the state championships at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, with each bringing home medals.

Singleton, 13, won gold in

the 13-to-15-year-old figures and free routine events, as well as the Grade 2 figures event.

"It was good," Singleton said. "I was really nervous, but afterwards it felt amazing to win."

Hartshorne, 14, finished third in the 13-to-15-year-old figures event and finished fourth in the Grade 2 figures.

Both girls were involved in winning duet and teams events.

"It was actually quite exciting because they were my first medals for synchro,"

Hartshorne explained. Singleton said her friend didn't quite believe her sporting talents.

"They think I touch the bottom all the time when I show them what I do," she said.

And, as the medals keep coming in and they both keep improving, Singleton says she and her friend know where they want to go with the sport.

"Me and Mel are aiming for the 2016 Olympics in Brazil," she said.

Matt Windle