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# Talented rugby union junior Louis Bottomley joins Northern Inland Academy of Sport under-13 team on New Zealand tour, with the help of Malabar Coal

• Rod Thompson

Local Sport



BRIGHT FUTURE: Junior rugby player Louis Bottomley and Malabar Coals manager environment and community Donna McLaughlin.

SANDY Hollow-based junior Louis Bottomley laced up his boots in New Zealand this month with the help of local mining company, Malabar Coal.

The gifted youngster, who attends St Joseph's High School Aberdeen and plays for the Scone Rugby Club, was selected in the Northern Inland Academy of Sport (NIAS) under-13 team to take part in a union tour overseas during October.

To pay for the trip, he sold raffle tickets and, with Malabar's support, reached his \$2500 goal.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience that would not be possible without the help of Malabar," Bottomley said.

"They sponsored me for \$1000 and also gave me a rugby kit, which included a backpack full of training gear.

"I was so excited.

"We stayed at Christchurch for six days, played two games, attended a bunch of training sessions and toured around the area.

"It was fun.

"The NIAS program has been incredible.

"It teaches young guys like me to play rugby union and to be the best athlete I can be - on and off the field.

"They've helped me out with a bunch of other stuff, too.

"Thanks go to everyone who bought raffle tickets; and especially Malabar."



Malabar chairman Wayne Seabrook said the local miner was delighted to support Bottomley achieve his goal.

"There are few chances in life to tour another country and compete in the sport you love most," he added.

"It's a credit to Louis' hard work, character and talent that he represented our region in New Zealand this month."

In September, Bottomley visited the Maxwell Infrastructure site at Muswellbrook to observe the rehabilitation of the now-closed Drayton open cut mine.

"They are doing some amazing stuff by regrowing all the plants and trees so animals can live there again," he said.

Bottomley's backing is just one of many examples of Malabar's active role in the community.

The company's sponsorship program currently supports the Australian Men's Shed Association, Wildlife Aid, Upper Hunter Education Fund, Denman Rugby League Football Club and local schools in the area, including Muswellbrook Public, Denman Public and St Joseph's Primary Denman.