

## OUR PEOPLE

# Gymnast's comeback a graceful moment

Dan Jervis-Bardy

AS Grace Popplestone lay in hospital, her arm severely broken, the young gymnast feared she would never compete again.

Eighteen months later, the Henley High student is a national champion.

Grace, 12, won a gold medal in the vault competition at the National Club Gymnastics Championships in Geelong last month.

"I'm so proud of what I have overcome," Grace, who is now fully recovered, said.

"It feels like all the hard work has paid off and I can't wait to continue to improve at future championships."

Grace, who started gymnastics as a four-year-old, fractured her radius and ulna bones after misjudging a landing while training in July 2013.

She was sidelined for more than a year after having surgery to insert a metal rod into her arm.



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"It was really scary when it happened," she said. "I really worried that I wouldn't be able to get back."

"But after a few days, I had a big think about it and I decided that I would be focused and determined."

Gymnastics SA coach Crystal Yeo said Grace's remarkable recovery was a testament to her hard work and belief in herself.

"An injury of that nature can be quite traumatic for anyone, let alone a 12-year-old gymnast competing at an elite level," Ms Yeo said.

"We thought it would be a real struggle for her to recover physically and mentally, so for her to have achieved what she has in such a short period of time is pretty special."



**Grace Popplestone, on the vault, has recovered from a broken arm to win a gold medal at the National Club Gymnastics Championships in Geelong.**

Picture: STEPHEN LAFFER