

The Standard

LOCAL SPORT



German Funakoshi karate instructors Marius Bower (left) and Matthias Pliszka practice on the sand at Warrnambool's Lady Bay.

130717LP41 Picture: LEANNE PICKETT

A German take on karate

KARATE

By **JARROD WOOLLEY**

KARATE may have ancient origins in Japan, but this week a group of Germans will show south-west locals how a modern form of the martial art is done.

A group of nine Funakoshi karate students are spending the next week touring the south-west working with local clubs to share tips on the martial art.

Funakoshi karate was developed in South Africa in 1966 by Edwin Ward and follows traditional Bushido ethics.

Funakoshi Karate International head instructor Frank McKenzie said the tour was aimed at establishing links with the international Funakoshi community.

"One of the great things about Funakoshi is the way all the clubs around the world work together," he said.

"It's like we are one big international club in some ways, a bit of a family, really.

"We often do Skype link-ups with clubs all over the world and with the international master. So it's nice to be able to train together in person."

The group, from the city of Mehlingen in western Germany, is being led by Marius Bower and comprises five teenage girls, a 10-year-old girl and three senior instructors.

Bower said the group arrived in Warrnambool on Tuesday and would spend the next 10 days visiting Funakoshi clubs in Warrnambool, Hamilton

and Camperdown. It will also tour the Grampians and Great Ocean Road, as well as Port Fairy and Tower Hill.

Bower said the first thing the group had noticed about the south-west was the wide open spaces.

"In Germany, everything is so close together and crowded," Bower said.

"It's beautiful here. The wide open space is lovely.

"We are all really looking forward to heading out to the clubs and sharing and learning."

McKenzie said 54 members of south-west clubs will return the favour next year when they travel to Mehlingen as part of a three-week tour that will also take in Hong Kong, Belgium, France and Singapore.

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