



Anyone for tennis? The sport has been big hit with Dawson Public School and Australian Islamic College pupils this term. Go to stmarysstar.com.au to see a photo gallery of last Monday's session. **Picture: Carlos Furtado**

Pupils take to centre court

By **Kylie Stevens**

PUPILS from Dawson Public School and Australian Islamic College made a racquet on centre court just hours after Australian Sam Stosur won the US Open grand slam last Monday.

About 75 children from years 4 to 6 recently spent two afternoons at Rooty Hill tennis courts through the Active After-school Communities program.

More than 20 schools between Blacktown and Mt Druitt are part of the national program, where children are introduced to sports such as yoga, dance, cricket, cycling, hockey and basketball.

"We work with traditionally non-active kids who may not necessarily like sport or don't access because of costs," the program's regional coordinator Belinda Zipevski said.

The program teamed up with Blacktown Tennis Incorporated this term to deliver fun and inclusive sessions to the two schools.

Blacktown Tennis staff have spent the last five weeks teaching skills at both schools.

It then invited participants to its Rooty Hill headquarters for an inter-school competition, followed by twilight tennis where their families could use the court at discounted rates.

"Today is not about winning, it's about being best and fairest," Zipevski told the students at last week's session.

Dawson Public School pupils have done athletics, netball, AFL and volleyball since the program became part of the curriculum earlier this year.

"It's the talk of the school," teacher Nada Tanner said. "The kids are always enthusiastic and can't wait for the next session."

Australian Islamic College teacher Marcus Lu added: "For most of the kids, tennis is new as it's not something they would normally have access to. Sam Stosur winning the US Open is a good thing for them to talk about it over the coming weeks."