

THE AUSTRALIAN

TV heroes give young hunger for archery

KATHRYN SHINE THE AUSTRALIAN JUNE 22, 2013 12:00AM



Emma Nolan, 11, at Yokine Archery Club in Perth, took up the sport last year because it was 'cool' and is now about to compete interstate. Picture: Marie Nirme Source: The Australian

BOW and arrow-wielding heroes such as Katniss Everdeen from *The Hunger Games* are inspiring a growing number of Australians to take up the ancient sport of archery. A surge in interest in the sport has led the number of members in clubs across Australia to double from 5000 to 10,000 in less than a year, according to Archery Australia.

Many clubs have waiting lists for new members and, for the first time, the male-dominated sport is attracting females and males in equal numbers.

Archery Australia chief executive James Larven attributed the increase in members to the popularity of movies and television shows such *The Hunger Games*, *Brave* and *Game of Thrones*.

"We have had some movies come out that have really highlighted the positive aspects of archery," he said. "Archery is being shown as mystical and historical. With the new *Hunger Games* being released later this year, we are expecting the numbers to keep growing."

Archery Australia vice-president Sue Gliddon, who is based in Perth, said she had seen a spike in girls entering the sport after the first *Hunger Games* movie was released and again when the animated film *Brave*, which features a young female archer, came out last year.

"After *Brave* we got a lot of inquiries from parents wanting their six-year-old daughters to do archery but we don't take them that young," she said.

Ms Gliddon said 10 was the minimum age to start practising the sport, which was attracting a high number of families.

Casual sessions of archery offered at Archery Park in Perth were also extremely popular.

"We have actually had to take bookings for that because we were getting inundated," Ms Gliddon said.

Recent convert Emma Nolan, 11, joined an archery club in Perth last year at the urging of a friend who was "crazy" about The Hunger Games.

"I just really wanted to try it," she said. "I thought it was cool."

She is now part of an elite squad and is due to compete at the national youth championships in Brisbane next week.

Mr Larven said archery was experiencing a worldwide resurgence and had been one of the most watched sports at the 2012 London Olympics.