Beijing In Sight For Fong

Sports Minister Matthew Bonson today gave pint-sized judo champion Kelly Fong an opportunity to pit her strengths against him in a judo challenge at Parliament House.

The challenge comes on the eve of Kelly preparing to fly out to New Zealand to earn a position in the Olympics.

The NTIS Elite Scholarship holder will enter the Oceania Judo Union (OJU) Championships this weekend as the number one ranked Australian.

Ms Fong, 29 needs to gain enough points at the Championships to earn a position on the 2008 Australian Olympic Team heading to Beijing.

“She may be only 1.56cm tall but Kelly packs a mean strangle hold!,” Mr Bonson said.

“And this is why she is on her way to the Oceania Championships as Australia’s number one ranked judo challenger.”

Mr Bonson said Kelly was now in her seventh year as an NTIS Scholarship holder, and had just returned from training at the University of Bath, England.

The NT Government provides $2.43 million towards the NTIS to help elite NT athletes strive to be amongst the best in Australia.

Kelly said she was confident that her decision to prepare overseas gave her the edge she needs for Christchurch.

“While in England I had the opportunity to train with athletes from New Zealand, Malta and Brazil as well as several athletes who were preparing for the English and British Open,” Kelly said.

“I am thrilled to have made the Australian team for the last Olympic selection event.”

Kelly leaves on Tuesday to compete at the Oceania Judo Union Championships which will be held in Christchurch from 21 to 23 March.

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