

Media Release

QUEENSLAND SOFTBALL OLYMPIAN ON INTERNATIONAL MISSION TO REVIVE OLYMPIC SPOT



**Tuesday, 9 June, 2009
(2 pages)**



Queensland Olympic softball bronze medallist Danielle Stewart will head off to Switzerland on Thursday hoping to help save her sport from the Olympic wilderness.

She will be the only Australian on a six-person delegation representing the International Softball Federation that will front the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne from 12-16 June.

They are hoping to have softball, an Olympic sport since 1996, reinstated for the 2016 Olympics after it was among those cut from the program for the London Games in 2012.

Seven sports are fighting for inclusion on a preliminary short-list of two that be announced in August. These two sports will then go to a full vote at the 121st IOC session in Copenhagen in October to determine which will be added to the current roster of 26 sports for the 2016 Olympic Games.

Stewart described her Olympic experience in Beijing as the highlight of her sporting career. "Just being able to compete at the highest level was something I'll always treasure and I'd hate to think that other girls didn't get the same opportunity in the years ahead," she said.

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“Softball is a truly world sport which meets perfectly the ideals of the Olympic movement and we’ll be doing everything within our power to convince the IOC it should be reinstated as at regular Olympic sport.”

Proud to be chosen as an international softball ambassador, she said: “The decision to cut the list of sports to two for a vote by 115 IOC members was a surprise, but it has enhanced our commitment and focus to our campaign.

“We have been working even harder at communicating the extraordinary value that softball offers the Olympic movement.

“We are greatly encouraged by the way IOC members are reacting to how softball would help the Olympic Movement open up women’s sport – especially in Muslim countries. They also like our global focus on youth and our 100% doping-free track record.”

Softball needs to be shortlisted and then obtain a 50% majority from the IOC vote to be reinstated for the 2016 Games.

The other six sports chasing inclusion for 2016 are rugby union, golf, squash, karate, basketball and roller sports.

Australia has won a medal in softball at each of the past four Olympic Games – a bronze at Atlanta in '96 and Sydney in 2000, a silver in Athens in 2004 and a bronze at Beijing in 2008.

For further campaign information see www.backsoftball.com

To arrange follow-up media interviews, please contact DANIELLE STEWART on (0421) – 124682. She is available until 10am Thursday.

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