

MEDIA RELEASE

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UTAS on the hunt for new Olympic champions

UTAS has been appointed Tasmania's only Talent Assessment Centre for aspiring athletes who believe they have the talent to go to the London Olympics and beyond.

In the School of Human Life Sciences in Launceston, potential Olympians will be tested and directed into sports that suit their fitness and body type.

Lecturer Dr James Fell said the great thing about the initiative of the Australian Sports Commission, the National Talent Identification and Development program is that any member of the public aged under 29 can access it.

"They can get on the interactive eTID website to find out how to test their own fitness capacity; then they insert their test results," he said.

"The computer system responds by telling them they are in the top 10 per cent of the population, for example, and if the results are especially good it recommends they visit our Talent Assessment Centre for further testing."

UTAS will hold its first testing session on September 15 at the Human Life Science exercise laboratory.

There athletes will be measured to assess the predictors of aptitude for certain sports - height, weight, arm span. Tests in endurance, speed, power and strength also help find a potential sporting champion.

"We're identifying talent in fit, young people with the right anatomy for rowing, for example," Dr Fell said.

"And we're looking for older people who have already been elite athletes and want to change sports. For example Tasmanian Cameron Wurf was an Olympic rower and tried cycling after doing it for injury rehabilitation. Now he's an elite cyclist.

"Also, some kids are playing the wrong sports for their physique; we can point them in the right direction."

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