

INDIGENOUS BOXING SENSATION LEAH REUBEN SETS HER SIGHTS ON HONG KONG

After securing the title of Australian under-19 Bantamweight with a unanimous points decision against her opponent at the Boxing Australia Championships on the Gold Coast, Leah Reuben has her sights firmly set on competing at the Hong Kong Invitational in January 2020. Athletes from all over the world will be attending, however for 18-year-old Reuben to compete at the event, a GoFundMe campaign was created by former Project Booyah coordinator Sergeant Kelly Chamberlain. Sgt Chamberlain said a stepping stone to reach Reuben's ultimate goal of representing Australia at the next Commonwealth Games is to compete at Hong Kong. "Leah is supporting herself on a low wage, and is doing her absolute best, but it will be near impossible for her to raise the minimum amount required to travel to the tournament," Sgt Chamberlain said. "I have been her mentor and biggest advocate for the last three years." "This girl is going places. She just needs the support to get there," she said. Sgt Chamberlain mentored Reuben through a challenging period of her young life which had lead her to doing time in the Townsville Cleveland Youth Detention Centre but by the time Reuben graduated from Project Booyah she had started to turn her life around. Project Booyah is a program designed to help at-risk teenagers build careers and bridge their disconnect with society and it was the spark Reuben needed to give rise to her transformation from running riot on the streets of Townsville to National boxing star. Recently, the pair secured an all-expenses paid training trip with the Phillipine Boxing team and on Reuben's return from Asia she said it was "the best step" she had taken to help achieve her dream of representing Australia. The two-week training camp was "an unforgettable experience". "I even stepped into the ring to do movement work with Neshty Petecio who recently defeated Russian boxer Liudmila Vorontsova, to win the featherweight gold at the 2019 AIBA Women's World Championships." "I was the youngest on the trip and the girls were really strong and professional," she said. Reuben admitted there are a lot more steps to take to realise her dream of fighting at the 2020 Olympics but her determination and drive won't let her throw in the towel. "I'll try my best to get there." To donate to Leah's Hong Kong Dream, visit www.gofundme.com/f/leahs-hong-kong-dream

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