

Wellingtonian springs into action

By REBECCA THOMSON

A YOUNG Wellington diver is putting the spring back into the country's diving hopes.

Eighteen-year-old Alice Wylie Van Eerd is the first New Zealander in six years to be selected for diving's World Junior Championships and will compete in the one-metre and three-metre spring board categories.

The September competition is in Aachen, Germany and Alice is looking forward to the experience though she's unsure of what to expect.

"I'm not sure of what the standard is like so I don't know how I'll do but I'm hoping to get into the final for the

one-metre [spring board event].

"I'm really happy because it [Aachen] was one of my goals and I think it will be a great experience.

"I'm looking forward to watching the other divers and checking the standard; seeing what everyone is doing."

Until six months ago, Alice trained with the Wellington Diving Club under coach James Hardaker. She was selected for Wellington the High Performance Aquatic Centre when it was set up six months ago and now trains with Steven Zhu, the centre's head coach.

"It's a great opportunity [to train at the high performance centre] because we have much better facilities and hopefully it will be beneficial for the long run," says Alice.

She has set her sights on the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Dehli and the 2012 Olympic Games in London. She closely watched the diving at this year's Olympics in Beijing.

Alice started out as a gymnast but quit when she was 13. "My mum signed me up for one of the council diving sessions and I loved it."

Since then, she's gone from strength to strength and holds half a dozen national titles for one- and three-metre spring board events. Last year, Alice scored three personal bests at the Merv Campbell meet.

Alice studies health sciences at Massey University in Wellington and also enjoys squash and tennis.

RIISING STAR - Alice Wylie Van Eerd concentrates hard on perfecting her diving technique.



SUPPLIED