

Montanna poised to make her mark



Picture: MARC MCCORMACK

COMPETITIVE FIELD: Innisfail athlete Montanna McAvoy, 14, will contest the 800m and 1500m track events at this weekend's Oceania Championships.

RHYS O'NEILL

EXCITEMENT, not nerves, is the overarching emotion coursing through Innisfail schoolgirl Montanna McAvoy ahead of tomorrow's start of the Oceania Athletics Championships.

At just 14, the 800m and 1500m runner has every reason to be anxious about a competition that brings

athletes from across the Pacific. Among the rolled-gold medal hopes such as decathlete Cedric Dubler, second in the world at under-20 level last year, is a quiet student happy just to take part.

McAvoy will take on her pet event, the 1500m, on Saturday before backing up with the 800m on Sunday.

"It's great for Cairns because

said. "And it's my first year because I don't know what to expect.

"I'm excited because it will be a good experience.

"I know some of them (my competition) are running good times so the standard will be pretty high."

McAvoy, a bronze medallist at the recent Australian Junior Athletics Championships,

train at Barlow Park six days a week.

Cairns is hosting the biannual event for the third time in five years, with a strong Pacific Island contingent likely to turn out across the three days.

An opening ceremony will be held along the Esplanade at 6pm tonight, with competition running tomorrow until