

# Fighting to make Sydney

By Laine Clark

THE disappointment of the 1998 national titles is finally starting to dull for Cairns boxer Kenneth Dalton as he regroups for a final fling at Sydney 2000 selection.

A pumped-up Dalton entered the nationals in Perth late last year with an impressive resume and one hand on the light-heavyweight championship belt — then it all went very wrong.

Dalton was eliminated in the first round in a major boilover.

Dalton successfully defended his Arafura Games gold medal in Darwin in June before he hit another speed bump on the road to Sydney — nosebleeds.

Trainer Gavan James's charge was plagued by nosebleeds in Darwin as the effects of more than 40 career fights finally caught up with him.

Surgery on his nose ruled Dalton out of the



**GEARING up:** Cairns fighter Kenneth Dalton.

Golden Gloves Championships in July in another blow.

But Dalton admitted he had "learned some important lessons" this year and was keen to bounce back after completing another stage of his Sydney 2000 gameplan on the weekend.

Dalton downed tough Gladstone customer Ben McCracken in a unanimous points decision after four rounds to claim the Darling Downs light heavyweight title at Been-

leigh on Saturday.

Dalton said the tournament taught him the dos, and overwhelming don'ts, of boxing preparation.

Since his mid-year break, Dalton has had weight problems and was forced to drop 4kg in as many days before the Darling Downs fight.

"Although I am 22 my body is still growing and I have been having trouble with my weight," he said.

"I didn't eat anything the day before (the final

and hit the sauna the morning of the fight — I got my weight down but I felt pretty weak."

Dalton will resume his countdown to Sydney at the State titles on the Sunshine Coast on October 4.

He said a State titles campaign would precede another crack at the national titles in Darwin in December.

Dalton said New South Welshmen Jason Delyle and national champion Jeff Erichsen of Western Australia may not be the main threats to his national titles and, ultimately, an Olympic berth.

"My goal is the Olympics but what is stopping me is not my ability, it seems to be politics," he said. "It seems as though it is extra hard to get noticed from Queensland. To be considered, you have to be extra special.

"Unfortunately politics is part of boxing but it won't stop me."