

Kingsley, 7, has been selected to fly Australia's flag in the world Pokemon championship. Picture: JASON EDWARDS



EPIC BATTLE IS ON THE CARDS

HE'S CAUGHT 'em all in Victoria and now he's flying across the world to catch the rest.

With only one year of training, young Pokemon champion Kingsley Kheng is heading to Washington DC next week to represent Australia in the Pokemon World Championship.

After finishing seventh in the Oceania Junior competition, the seven-year-old champ has earned enough points to qualify for a world invite from

KRYSTAL MIZZI

Pokemon International to battle it out over two days.

The tournament is a game of strategic trading and challenges between the famous Japanese anime characters and trainers, collecting points with a deck of 60 cards.

Kingsley is prepared to heat up the tournament with his favourite Pokemon, Charizard, who is known to breathe fire.

The little competitor is

excited to test his deck against players from across the globe.

"I have heard the game is seriously intense but I know it will be a fun and exciting to battle, as each trainer is different," Kingsley said.

Proud Kensington mum of two Cecilia Kheng said the game was "educational and helps with the kids' social interaction".

Kingsley's sister, Naomi, will be competing in the video game championship.

Regional push 'not needed'

MONIQUE HORE

THE state government has dismissed calls for a campaign encouraging Victorians to make a sea or tree change.

The Regional Australia Institute pushed for the public promotion yesterday, as it revealed Melbourne's outer suburbs faced growing pains.

The institute's research found that decentralisation would tap the brakes on rising house prices and commuter times on the urban fringe.

But Planning Minister Richard Wynne told 3AW that Victoria did not need a campaign because "people are voting with their feet" and moving to places such as Geelong.

"You can't tell people where to live but you can provide high quality services where they live and that's what we're delivering," he later told the *Herald Sun*.

One of the roles of the Victorian Planning Authority is to plan growth outside Melbourne.

Melbourne's population is projected to hit 10.2 million by 2056 and the population of the outer suburbs is expected to more than double.

Opposition population spokesman Tim Smith said the state government was dragging its feet on planning for Victoria's rapid growth.

"Melbourne is bursting at the seams with population," he said. "Richard Wynne is engaging in the ostrich management style — sticking his head in the sand and pretending everything is fine."

Leprosy fear in far north

EXPERTS say more can be done to stop leprosy spreading from Papua New Guinea to Far North Queensland.

"Leprosy is now very rarely acquired in Australia, but it is still diagnosed," James Cook University, Cairns Hospital and Thursday Island Hospital researchers say in *The Medical Journal of Australia* this week.

Since 1985, Torres Strait Islanders and PNG nationals have been able to move freely across the border to pursue traditional activities.

"The continuous flow of people between Australia and PNG makes ongoing vigilance essential," the report states.