

TRI TARANAKI FESTIVAL

16 November 2020

2021 WORLD TRIATHLON CUP NEW PLYMOUTH REPLACED BY DOMESTIC-ONLY EVENT

The 2021 World Triathlon Cup New Plymouth planned for March next year has been replaced by a domestic celebration of triathlon, with Ngāmotu Beach set to host the New Zealand Schools Championship, Tri NZ North Island Sprint Champs, a Fun Run and the Taranaki Tri-er for allcomers to give the sport a go.

Sadly, the World Cup race has fallen victim to COVID-19, the latest of many planned international sporting events forced to cancel with ongoing uncertainty over border closures affecting the ability of international athletes and officials to travel freely.

Event Director Shanelle Barrett says the decision to focus on domestic racing was made after exhausting all possible avenues to again host a World Triathlon Cup race.

“We reached our a point of no return, with significant set-up costs and a commitment to accommodation and travel for athletes we sadly had to make the call now to cancel the World Triathlon Cup race. This has come about after extensive discussions with the New Zealand Government, World Triathlon and various National Federations, and locally with our stakeholders and Venture Taranaki.

“In the current environment the cost of isolating and quarantining athletes and officials alone was set to exceed one million dollars. Those costs are clearly prohibitive to World Triathlon Cup race proceeding,” she said.

Barrett says the decision to continue with a one-day domestic event was by contrast an easy one to come to and was made thanks to the continued superb support of the Taranaki Community, Venture Taranaki and the event stakeholders.

“The wider Taranaki community has always been so welcoming of the athletes, the officials and the hosting of the event at Ngāmotu. That commitment remains for our domestic athletes and

in this case, the very best of our school talent with the New Zealand Schools Triathlon and Team Relay Championship returning after it was last in New Plymouth in 2019 to great acclaim.

“We will also partner with Triathlon New Zealand to deliver the 2021 North Island Sprint Championships for all age groups and we look forward to welcoming beginners and social athletes with the Fun Run and Taranaki Tri-er, events that are pitched at entry level of the sport.”

Venture Taranaki has long been a partner and supporter of the Taranaki Tri Festival and while naturally disappointed not to be hosting international athletes next year, Venture Taranaki CE Justine Gilliland is delighted that the region will once again welcome athletes and their friends, family and spectators from around New Zealand to come and experience the reimagined domestic event.

“The fallout from COVID-19 on events has been huge, especially those that depend on an international market, so it’s great to see this event continue with a reformatted offering. Despite not having the international athletes of previous year’s the event is still sure to pull a crowd, adding to our visitation levels, off the back of a huge summer line up, and injecting a boost into our local economy through retail, accommodation and tourism. We look forward to welcoming everyone in March, and the return of the World Triathlon in coming years.”

Triathlon New Zealand CEO Claire Beard can’t wait to welcome domestic athletes of all ages and abilities to the region for a celebration of the sport.

“With the continued great work of New Zealanders in response to COVID-19 we look forward to a great day of racing and the chance to bring an exciting and vibrant event to New Plymouth,” said Beard.

“The National Schools event is one of our most prestigious and most popular events on the calendar, I know planning is already well underway in many schools around the country to send strong representation for what will be a great day’s racing at a great venue.

“With the North Island Sprint Champs and fun events for all abilities, I have no doubt the event will be a great way to end the season for New Zealand athletes and provide a great boost to the regional economy, notably in the areas of tourism, accommodation, and hospitality.”

Further information and entry details are available now on the event website, www.tritaranakifestival.nz

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