IRONMAN RACING RETURNS TO CAIRNS IN COVID SAFE ENVIRONMENT

More than 1,000 athletes take part in IRONMAN Cairns under COVID Safe Event Plan

Mass participation sport successfully returned to Tropical North Queensland last month with the Cairns Airport IRONMAN Cairns Asia-Pacific Championship delivered under a Queensland Health approved COVID Safe plan.

The event, the first IRONMAN to be held in Oceania since the pandemic was declared, saw more than 1,000 athletes take part in both IRONMAN and IRONMAN 70.3 distance events on Sunday 27 September.

In developing the COVID Safe Event Plan the IRONMAN Group worked closely with stakeholders including several Queensland Government departments, local councils, Triathlon Australia and Triathlon Queensland, along with event contractors and suppliers.

The approved COVID Safe Event Plan was developed to manage the risks associated with the transmission of the virus, and central to the plan was The IRONMAN Group’s COVID Safe Return to Racing Principles, which focus on tracing, education, enhanced hygiene, density reduction, touchpoint minimisation, athlete self-reliance and screening.

Dave Beeche, Senior Vice President and Managing Director of The IRONMAN Group Oceania, thanked everyone involved in the event for their contribution to its success.

“It was great to see athletes back on course and doing what they have trained so hard for, and love doing, in Cairns last month,” said Beeche. “A significant amount of work went in to developing and executing a COVID Safe Event Plan that ensured we could deliver a great event for all participants while also looking after the health of the community.

“Our athletes were great in complying with the COVID safety requirements and we were able to show once again that mass participation sporting events can be delivered in a way that meets all of the Government requirements while allowing those taking part to be active, outdoors and gaining all of the mental and physical benefits that come from participating in an event such as this,” he said. “I’d like to thank the stakeholders that we worked with in developing the plan, their support and contribution allowed us to get to a position where we could successfully deliver this event in a COVID Safe manner,” he said.

Cairns Mayor Bob Manning said that the event provided a positive boost for the region.
“The value of this event to Cairns and the Far North cannot be understated,” said Manning. “Despite all the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic, we were committed to having this internationally recognised sporting event go ahead in our city.

“I am proud to look back on what we achieved and it once again demonstrates Council’s commitment to supporting events that attract visitors to our region and lift community spirit, qualities IRONMAN certainly fulfils,” he said. “The event provided the city with a very positive injection, you could feel the vibe in the city, the cafes were full, restaurants were full and people really enjoyed the experience. Council has a long and strong relationship with the IRONMAN, and we can look forward to celebrating the 10th anniversary of this event on 5-6 June, 2021.”

Local competitor Nick Carling said that athletes were thrilled to be able to get back to racing.

“I was very impressed with the preparation and implementation strategies from IRONMAN, there was obviously many months of hard work and planning that had gone on in the lead up as the messages, signs and officials were everywhere ensuring all athletes and spectators were following the guidelines,” said Carling. “It wasn’t intrusive and certainly made me feel like everything was under control and for my own good health.

“Thinking back on the race, I was never in a crowded situation, the only place being the swim start but we were spread out really well along the beach and sent off in small spaced out groups,” he said. “It was really well done, start, transitions, bike, run and finish, you kind of felt like you had your own safety bubble around you but it still felt like we were racing at the same time.

“It was brilliant to finally be back racing after so many months of training and uncertainty, the event gave me a target and focus to help me through a very challenging time of restrictions and lockdowns,” he said.

IRONMAN Cairns featured a number of key COVID Safe measures, including scheduled check in and bike racking which regulated the number of athletes on site at any time and 1.5m distance markings were used in all queues and capacities in spaces were regulated by event staff.

Organisers also ensured that there was a thorough cleaning schedule undertaken by staff, volunteers and contracted cleaners, and spectators were educated on key health messages throughout the event by on-site commentators and COVID Safe Officers.

The Cairns Airport IRONMAN Cairns Asia Pacific Championship is supported by the Queensland Government through Tourism and Events Queensland and features on the It’s Live! in Queensland events calendar.

For more information on the Cairns Airport IRONMAN Cairns Asia Pacific Championship visit https://www.ironman.com/im-cairns.

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About The IRONMAN Group

The IRONMAN Group operates a global portfolio of events that includes the IRONMAN® Triathlon Series, the IRONMAN® 70.3® Triathlon Series, the IRONMAN® Virtual Racing™ (VR™) Series, 5150™ Triathlon Series, the Rock ‘n’ Roll Marathon Series®, the Rock ‘n’ Roll Virtual Running™ Series, IRONKIDS®, ITU World Triathlon Series, premier running events including the Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon™ and The Sun-Herald City2Surf®, Ultra-Trail® World Tour events including Tarawera Ultra and Ultra-Trail Australia™, mountain bike races including the Absa Cape Epic®, road cycling events, and other multisport races. The IRONMAN Group is the largest operator of mass participation sports in the world and provides more than a million participants annually the benefits of endurance sports through the company’s vast offerings. Since the inception of the iconic IRONMAN® brand and its first event in 1978, athletes have proven that ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE® by crossing finish lines around the world. Beginning as a single race, The IRONMAN Group has grown to become a global sensation with hundreds of events across 55+ countries. The IRONMAN Group is owned by Advance (www.advance.com), a private, family-owned business. For more information, visit www.ironman.com.