

MARATHON ENSURES LEGACY IS LEFT WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Air New Zealand Queenstown International Marathon will have a significant impact on the Queenstown Lakes District when thousands of runners and their families and supporters arrive into town for the November 19 Festival of Running, with millions of dollars in economic benefit pouring into the local economy.

It is a longer lasting legacy however that the event organisers are just as proud of, and that is the impact on many community groups who play a crucial role in ensuring the safe and efficient delivery of a world class event to the 9,544 participants and the many more there to offer support and sample the wonders of the region.

Race Director Nicole Fairweather says the event simply couldn't happen without the involvement of an amazing team of volunteers, with just over 50% representing a community group or club who in turn benefit from their commitment.

“Our model is one of long term sustainability and to do that we have to return value to the local community. The benefits to the economy and local businesses are one thing with thousands of people coming to town, but we must also look after those volunteers who make the event possible.

“We achieve that through partnerships with clubs, schools and community groups. They help us with ‘people power’ and we are able to in turn help them as they fundraise for their own projects – many of which benefit the volunteers directly or the wider community.”

One of the significant partners within the Air New Zealand Queenstown International Marathon volunteer programme is Queenstown Rotary, with their donation from the event going towards the ongoing upkeep of the vehicle for the recently established fulltime Hospice Southland palliative care nurse for the Wakatipu Basin.

“Hospice Southland has recently established a full-time palliative care nurse for the Wakatipu Basin. She will be visiting many patients across the region and will see additional wear and tear on her car,” said Queenstown Rotary President Keith McIntosh.

“Queenstown's Rotary and Innerwheel Clubs have joined forces to provide financial support to cover her vehicle expenses for the next year. We are thankful for the opportunity to volunteer with the Queenstown Marathon team.”

Others involved in the event this year and in return receiving support from event organisers towards their own projects include:

- WHS World challenge students- School trip to Japan
- WHS Basketball Team
- WHS Netball Club

- Queenstown Tennis Club
- Queenstown Pedallers
- Queenstown Scouts
- Arrowtown Scouts
- Cromwell Home and School Club
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Charging Rhinos ice hockey team
- Queenstown preschool and nurse
- Arrowtown Rugby Club

Fairweather says the total funds put back into the community this year amounts to \$18,000, but knows it is money well invested into the region.

“Volunteers are the best advocates for our event, in their many and varied roles from marshalling to registration to drink stations to the finish line they are the smiling faces and helping hands for our runners, many of whom are visitors to the region.

“Our partnerships with the community groups is vital to the ongoing success of the event, to keep the volunteers engaged and supporting the event it is important that they know we are doing something for them or their community in return. It is something we as an organising team are very proud of and will look to continue to build on for future events.”

The total number of volunteers for the event will total 420, but the event can always do with more. Anyone keen on lending a hand either on registration day or more importantly on event day (Saturday November 19), should make contact through the event website www.queenstown-marathon.co.nz

As well as the investment into the community through the volunteer programme, the Air New Zealand Queenstown International Marathon has as its official charity the Queenstown Trails Trust, an organization focused on creating a world class trail network for walking and cycling.

With every NZ Sotheby's RE half and Air New Zealand full marathon entry, a donation goes to the Queenstown Trails Trust for the maintenance and further development of trails throughout the Wakatipu Basin. Runners also have the ability to further support the Queenstown Trails Trust by donating when prompted through the online registration system.

IRONMAN Oceania Managing Director Dave Beeche is proud of the legacy that is building around the event and the contribution of the local community to those efforts.

“Over the last two years the event has donated over \$70,000 to the Queenstown Trails Trust to invest in developing and maintaining trails in the Queenstown region.

“Last year we donated over \$12,000 to charity and community organisations who assisted by providing volunteers for the event and will increase that to approximately \$18,000 this year.

“We are here to work with the community and local groups for the long term benefit of everyone, we hope to always leave a positive financial and social legacy in the local community in which we hold our events. This ranges from the donations outlined above, to encouraging local participants to participate and enjoy healthier active lifestyles, to delivering significant economic impact into a region (over \$7million last year).”

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