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**For immediate release from the Quality Hotel Plymouth International Triathlon World Cup, for more visit [www.itunewplymouthtriathlon.co.nz](http://www.itunewplymouthtriathlon.co.nz)**

*Free to use editorial images attached, credit: Scott Taylor. Captions: Tayler Reid on his way to 7<sup>th</sup> place in New Plymouth earlier this year; South African Richard Murray is a three-time winner in New Plymouth.*

### **NEW PLYMOUTH WORLD CUP TRIATHLON SNARES OCEANIA JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS**

The Quality Hotel Plymouth International ITU Triathlon World Cup just added another string to its bow with confirmation that the event will also play host to the Oceania Triathlon Union Junior (U19) Championships in March 2018, and the New Zealand Schools Championships in 2019.

Securing both junior events is a coup for the already hugely popular ITU World Cup race, one that regularly attracts the best field seen in any World Cup around the world each year.

The elite races will now be complemented by the best Junior athletes from the Oceania region competing for regional honours and qualification spots at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games, and then the battle for school supremacy in 2019.

Triathlon New Zealand High Performance Director Mark Elliott says the opportunity for junior athletes and their coaches is immense.

“To have a full ITU transition, the blue carpet experience that only a World Cup or World Series race can provide, a quality Aussie team crossing the Tasman, and for the New Zealand coaches and athletes to see the level from across the ditch, it is a win-win situation. What is already a great event with the ITU World Cup racing just got greater with the juniors on display in the morning.”

Elliott says the experience for the young New Zealanders at such an event is something you cannot replicate, and something that will stay with them throughout their careers.

“Being part of a World Cup race is almost subliminal messaging, you get a sense of the ‘blue’ and that follows you through the sport to the Olympics. If the first taste for our young athletes is in New Zealand and is positive, every time they see the blue carpet around the world, it creates a great buzz for them.”

Taranaki Triathlon Club President and staunch supporter of the World Cup race, Ross Dingle, loves seeing the best in the world come to his patch, and is even more

excited at news of the Junior Championships being hosted on the same course in 2018 and then the hugely popular National Schools champs the year after.

“The Taranaki Triathlon community is very excited to have the ITU World Cup return to New Plymouth again in 2018. This is now a major event on the New Plymouth sporting calendar that brings the world’s best triathletes to the region.

“Even more exciting is the prospect of combining other national and international triathlon age group events creating a real festival atmosphere and bringing many visitors to the region, the National Schools Champs in 2019 is especially exciting in that regard.

“The Taranaki Triathlon club keenly supports this event and our youth, Superkidz, and slightly more mature club members all enjoy the opportunity to meet their triathlon heroes from New Zealand around the world.”

Tayler Reid knows how tough it can be to make the transition from promising junior into the elite ranks, the 21-year-old Gisborne athlete is a former winner of the National Schools Champs and finished 7<sup>th</sup> in the elite men’s World Cup race in New Plymouth last year and is an ambassador for the 2018 race.

“It is so important to have the Oceania Junior Champs at an event such as the New Plymouth World Cup. It makes the transition into elite racing a lot smoother and for a lot of the juniors this is what they will be looking to be a part of in the near future. Being on the New Plymouth schedule gives them the opportunity to not only see the Elite races and what they will be stepping into, but they will also have chance to race on the same course with all the World Cup trimmings.

“Racing at home has a whole lot of small advantages that add up, no travel over the ditch, cooler weather suits the kiwis and most importantly, home crowd backing, which can get you digging that little bit deeper, to hurt yourself that little bit more for a little bit longer.”

Stuart Trundle, CEO at Venture Taranaki is delighted at the continued growth of the event.

“This event showcases Taranaki to a huge global audience, promoting the region’s unbeatable lifestyle opportunities.

“Just as important is the attraction of many of the world’s top triathletes, who openly share their experience and enthusiasm with local communities and school students. In doing this they help inspire future generations of high performers, both within the sport of triathlon and beyond it.”

All racing will take place on Sunday March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018, with the Oceania Junior Championship races conducted in the morning over the exact same sprint distance (750m swim, 20km bike, 5km run) course based at Ngamotu Beach, with the ITU World Cup races to follow in the early afternoon in a festival of world class triathlon.

Elliott has no doubt the event will once again attract the world’s leading triathletes, especially those eyeing up the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in April.

“The Quality Hotel Plymouth International World Cup is a very rare opportunity to bring the best in the world down here and to have all our HP athletes exposed to that

level of racing is critical. We are fortunate that the New Plymouth community backs this event as they do, I can't speak highly enough of it. The time of season is also perfect, often athletes can use it as a benchmark but with the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games just ten days later, it is a perfect final hit out for us and so many other athletes too."

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# Plymouth ITU Triathlon World

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