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WEEKEND EDITION Whanganui Chronicle

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5-14 February 2021

Downer's second year of commitment to New Zealand Masters Games, Whanganui

Downer has committed, once again, to being the naming rights sponsor for New Zealand's largest multi-sport event, the New Zealand Masters Games, Whanganui, 5-14 February 2021.

Downer is a partner fit for the New Zealand Masters Games, both share a vision for connecting people and celebrating diversity. The New Zealand Masters Games brings people together from around the country to celebrate competition and make lifelong friends through the shared love of sport. Over 50 sports are on offer, with competitors ranging from 20 years of age to triple digits.

Steve Kates, Downer's New Zealand CEO said the sponsorship reflects the ongoing success of the games and the continuing growing health and well-being across New Zealand. "The Downer New Zealand Masters Games offers a unique and inclusive sporting competition that celebrates top performance, participates and invests in mental and physical wellbeing of our people."

"Downer has been an active part of the Whanganui community for a long time which is why we are excited to help promote the region and work closely with the trust to showcase the positive impact

you can have. I will certainly be participating and encouraging our people to pull together a few teams too. I'll hope to see you out there!"

Leighton Toy, Chair of the Whanganui New Zealand Masters Games, says, "Having Downer as our naming rights sponsor is perfect fitting for our Games because we share the same vision, delivering an opportunity for people to compete, connect and celebrate. From the 65-year-old Canterbury who plays table tennis, to the 20-year-old gymnast from Stratford, we are all part of

the Downer New Zealand Masters Games family. Downer, as the naming rights sponsor, completely get the Games' philosophy."

The inaugural New Zealand Masters Games was held in Whanganui in 1983. Whanganui has a proud sporting history across multiple disciplines producing more Olympians, per head of population, than any other city in New Zealand. The Whanganui region is proud of its varied and many sporting venues, making Whanganui the perfect location for a multi-sports event.

Thank you to our partners



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Masters Games partners with economic development agency for maximum impact

WHANGANUI & PARTNERS

Economic development agency Whanganui & Partners is working closely with Downer New Zealand Masters Games organisers to draw more visitors to Whanganui during the 2021 games.

Jonathan Sykes from Whanganui & Partners says the games have significant economic impacts to Whanganui, thanks to spending from out-of-towners.

"The Downer New Zealand Masters Games draws in visitors from across New Zealand, often by car, so it's great when they just come to compete, they also want to experience the destination, which means spending money with our cafés, restaurants, bars, shops, galleries and tourism operators," Sykes said.

"We want competitors to extend their visit by a few days to explore more of Whanganui. The team at the Whanganui i-SITE is supporting that effort as well, which means we have a lot of valuable insight to tap into when it comes to marketing for a great stay," Sykes said.

Downer New Zealand Masters Games manager Rachel O'Connor says the help of Whanganui & Partners team has been valuable.

"The Whanganui & Partners team bring expertise around promoting Whanganui as a destination, and it's great to have their support as we work to make sure local businesses feel the benefit of hosting the games in Whanganui," O'Connor said.

"The Downer New Zealand Masters Games already has a strong brand, which will leverage to encourage more people to give the games a go in Whanganui."



K's Ready, Set, Go with registrations now open for the Downer New Zealand Masters Games, Whanganui, 5-14 February 2021.
From left to right: Louise Follett - NZMC Marketing and Events Coordinator; Paul Chisholm - W&P Strategic Lead - Brand, Events and i-SITE; Nicky Malipana - NZMC Sports Partnership Liaison; Julia Murray - NZMC Host and Sustainability Coordinator; and Rachel O'Connor - Games Manager



Compete • Connect • Celebrate

The names behind the games

The Downer New Zealand Masters Games team are fortunate to have a great team working tirelessly behind the scenes towards the delivery of the 2021 event.

Rachel O'Connor is at the helm of the team as Games Manager, bringing a wealth of experience in the events sector and leading the overall planning and delivery of the event.

The marketing portfolio and general event coordination is led by Louise Follett, who joins the team with great enthusiasm and a knowledge commitment of all things Whanganui and promotion.

Nicky Malipana from Sport Whanganui is our Sports Partner guru, utilising strong relationships with sports partners across Whanganui to ensure our sports calendar is jam packed over the 10 days. Nicky works closely with all 56 of our sports to support their individual event delivery as part of the Downer New Zealand Masters Games.

Together this team of professionals bring you the 2021 Downer New Zealand Masters Games!

Leading the volunteer drive and ensuring we reach our sustainability commitments around waste produced from the event is Julia Murray. Returning to the team after her third Games, Julia has an extensive knowledge base with all things volunteer.

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The NZMC Team from left to right, Julia Murray, Host and Sustainability Coordinator; Nicky Malipana, Sports Partner Liaison, Rachel O'Connor, Games Manager and Louise Follett, Marketing and Event Coordinator.

Opening It's a privilege to have Simon as part of the team, and if you haven't met Simon yet, drop by to 'Mr. Arsenals' Interesting Records' and have a yarn.

Congratulations, Franka family, and welcome to our community Whanganui is a better place for having you here.



Simon Franka, pictured in the front row, far left, at Hibiscus Park with the Hibiscus Coast AFC Over - 35s in 2012.

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The games – A gift that keeps on giving

"What would entice a family from the Hibiscus Coast, Auckland to move to Whanganui? We caught up with Simon Franka, who did that very thing last year, to get the answers."

Simon and his wife Jo had been considering a change of lifestyle. A change that would enable the parents of two, Edna and Stanley, more time to enjoy the good life.

Simon says, "Jo and I had been thinking about getting out of Auckland and working remotely for a few years. We wanted something better for the kids for school, but hadn't found where yet."

Paradoxically, it is often when we don't look for the answer that the best opportunities appear in 2017, that's exactly what happened for the Franka family.

Simon's love of football was about to change the family's lifestyle for the better.

Simon reminisces about the chance occasion,

"Simon was playing Over-35's football for Hibiscus Coast AFC at the 2017 New Zealand Masters Games - first time ever in Whanganui. Be lucky really. I was just filling in for them, I was very over 35 then! It was all a bit last minute. I couldn't get over how hot it was in Whanganui. Proper hot, not sticky Auckland heat!"

"Kenny Halliday, a player on the team, had lived here before. He showed me all around on the Saturday afternoon of the tournament. We drove out to Castlecliff, Virginia Lake, town centre, Cooks Garden. I asked to see Collegiate.

I knew about Collegiate from when I sat at St. Paul's Collegiate in Hamilton. When I saw the school, I began to think we could really move here."

In one short year, Simon has become the President of the Whanganui Toastmasters Club and has found his spot at the Whanganui River Markets, a Whanganui

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