

NZMA Championships 2022 Update – Sunday 6 February 2022



Firstly, I would like to acknowledge those who took the time to reply to my request for feedback about our up-coming 2022 Championships.

As you will be aware, New Zealand is currently under TRAFFIC LIGHT Red restrictions. Red is designed to protect at-risk people and the health system from an unsustainable number of hospitalisations.

During the past two weeks, I have been involved in discussions via zoom with Athletics New Zealand & all Centre Presidents. Athletics NZ has been guided by SportNZ as to how the gathering restrictions of 100 will impact on hosting an athletic event. It certainly makes holding large events a challenge, given once a gathering of 100 is created, this group cannot mix with other groups for the duration of the meeting!

While it may be possible to organise our championships to comply with the current restrictions, there are some significant unknowns at this time which complicate all future events, not just the NZMA Championships. Our event is five weeks away and as we have seen, a lot can happen in five weeks.

Today the NZMA Board conducted a ZOOM meeting, which included feedback from the Wellington LOC hosting the event. We discussed the recent Classic events and the challenges they faced. The following concerns were raised:

1. Omicron cases continue to rise and are expected to rise rapidly over the next few weeks.
2. The unwillingness of members to travel, especially if flying to Wellington. The availability of flights could also be an issue, given Air New Zealand has already been forced to cancel flights as crew members isolate.
3. The requirement for 'close contacts' to self-isolate in Wellington will potentially also put members off coming.
4. The availability of officials is an issue we face annually, and this will be exacerbated by the need for more volunteers to monitor RED gathering restrictions.
5. With several key Wellington officials attending the Athletics NZ Championships a week earlier, their availability is not guaranteed, should any be required to self-isolate in Hastings or upon their return to Wellington.
6. The NZMA Championship event becoming a 'super-spreading' event is not a risk we are prepared to take. We are an aging population and need to look after each other.

All members of the NZMA Board & the LOC are committed volunteers who give of their time willingly to organise and promote masters' athletics. Taking into account our concerns and those of the LOC, we believe the pragmatic decision to postpone the 2022 Championships to 2023 is the most appropriate decision we can make at this time. This decision was not taken lightly.

We appreciate this postponement decision will not please everyone. However, I trust you understand and will continue to support the sport while we wait for the world to 'settle down' and life can return to our new 'normal'.

All those who have entered will be refunded accordingly.

Our intention is to hold the **NZMA AGM via ZOOM on Sunday 13th March @ 2:00 p.m.**

Kind regards,

Andrew Stark – NZMA President