

March 13, 2018

## Sports Precinct secures international athletics event

THE exciting new Mackay Regional Sports Precinct, which is due for completion in February next year, has already secured a major international athletics meet.

The 2019 Oceania Masters Athletics Championships will be held at the sports precinct, which is under construction at the CQUniversity Mackay campus, from August 31 to September 7 next year.

It will be a week-long event, with Masters Athletes from all over the Oceania Region converging on Mackay.

More than 500 athletes and technical officials will take part, with teams from as far away as Tahiti, New Caledonia, Nauru, Cook Islands, Fiji, Norfolk Island and Papua New Guinea expected to compete.

Most athletes will be representing Australia and New Zealand.

The championships will include a full track and field program, as well as a half-marathon, cross country events and 10km road race walk.

Funding support from council's Invest Mackay Events Attraction Program has helped secure the international championships for Mackay.

Mayor Greg Williamson said the \$24 million Mackay Regional Sports Precinct was one of the most significant construction projects undertaken by council.

He said the fact the facility, being built by Paynter Dixon Queensland, had already secured international championships was testament to its value for the region.

"Stage one of this sports precinct provides state-of-the-art swimming and athletics facilities for local residents to enjoy and they also put Mackay on the map in terms of hosting major championships."

Jos Grech, of Mackay Athletics Club, is excited the facility will be used for an international event so quickly after its completion in early 2019.

"It is really exciting to see an event of international standing coming to Mackay – what better way to christen the new facility," she said.

Mrs Grech will chair the Local Organising Committee for the event.

"If we did not have a facility of this standard, we would not have had the opportunity to put our hand up for this event, so we are grateful to the Oceania Masters Athletics Council for giving its support," she said.

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The event will be conducted by Athletics North Queensland (ANQ) and hosted by Mackay Athletics Club and other affiliated ANQ clubs in the Mackay region.

All event areas will be contested, including steeplechase, discus, hammer, shot put, javelin, long jump triple jump, high jump and pole vault.

There will also be strong competition in the combined event areas of the decathlon and heptathlon.

A presentation on the new facility and Mackay tourist activities was made to the Oceania Masters Council during the 2018 Oceania Masters Championships in Dunedin, New Zealand, recently, where the Oceania Athletics Council awarded the event to Mackay.

At the closing ceremony, the OMA flag was passed on to a representative of the Mackay Local Organising Committee.

This will be a great event for Mackay and the surrounding districts and an opportunity for our Masters Athletes to strut their stuff against the best that Oceania has on offer.

Athletes 30 years and over are invited to become part of this historical championships.

The Mackay Regional Sports Precinct is a joint initiative between the Australian Government, Mackay Regional Council and CQUniversity.

The Australian Government contributed \$10m to the project and CQUniversity has contributed 12 hectares of its land at Ooralea.

**Photo caption:** [Jos Grech, of Mackay Athletics Club, is ready to fire the starter's gun at the Mackay Regional Sport Precinct as Mayor Greg Williamson and council's capital project manager Jim Carless take their marks.](#)

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