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**RELEASED: 11 JUNE 2020**

**Mass participation sporting event industry**

**highlights $1.1 billion COVID-19 hole**

Australia’s leading mass participation sporting event organisers have come together to show how COVID-19 is leaving a $1.1 billion hole in the national economy.

The unprecedented restrictions put in place to fight the pandemic has meant that 8,500 mass participation sporting events have been cancelled or postponed, jeopardising the $1.1 billion that these events pump into the Australian economy each year.

More than 250 organisations involved in the industry have joined forces to create the Australian Mass Participation Sporting Event Alliance (AMPSEA) who will work with all levels of Government to support the industry to survive this crisis.

AMPSEA is seeking Government support to:

1. Develop a road map for the return of mass participation sporting events with the implementation of new measures to improve safety for participants and event staff
2. Ensure that mass participation event operators are included in the next round of the stimulus package, and that relief is focused on allowing us to retain thousands of employees and support hundreds of suppliers until we are operational again
3. Partner with us in delivering mass participation sporting events in regional communities to stimulate recovery of local economies and support local charities.

Mass participation sporting events are critical to the COVID-19 recovery process. Chris Heverin, Managing Director of Spartan Australia & New Zealand, and Executive Member of AMPSEA said that:

“Each year, 3.4 million Australians participate in fun runs, marathons, ocean swims, community cycling events, triathlons and challenging obstacle course racing. These mass participation sporting events bring people together, benefit public health, create 11,000 jobs, drive growth in regional economies and raise $70 million each year for over 2,500 charities.

“Our industry was one of the first to close when the pandemic hit and at this stage will be one of the last to reopen.”

Dave Beeche, Senior Vice President and Managing Director of the IRONMAN Group Oceania, organiser of the Sun-Herald City2Surf presented by Westpac and 24 other sports events around Australia, a portfolio of events attended by over 150,000 people a year, commented:

“The Australian Mass Participation Sporting Events Alliance was formed by a group of industry leaders to bring us together as we battle through the financial impacts of the COVID- 19 pandemic. Our purpose is to find a way to return to the delivery of mass participation sporting events while we maintain a flattened COVID-19 curve.

Much like the rest of the country our industry is hurting with major event organisers down 99% in comparison year on year. Government assistance will avoid significant job losses and enable our industry to get back to what we do best, delivering events that have a positive impact on individuals and communities across Australia.”

Wayne Larden, CEO of Pont3, organisers of the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival and Marathon, said:

“Like many industries in Australia, the mass participation sporting event industry is in financial crisis. What makes our industry unique is that, with the forced cancellation of most mass participation sporting events so far this year and that extending even further, our cash flow has been stopped completely and community confidence in attending large events has been shattered.

“Many popular events with long and proud histories do not have the financial reserves to weather this crisis alone and we are asking Government to partner with us to get the industry back up and running and ensure the future of the visitor economy.”

For more information on the Australian Mass Participation Sporting Event Alliance visit www.ampsea.com.au.

**For additional interviews, rights free vision and images, please contact AMPSEA Media Contact:**

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