

Urgent Special Olympics National Summer Games Update and Survey



Our apologies that for many of you that this will be the first update on the National Summer Games (NSG) since it was postponed last year. This email is particularly aimed at the athletes and volunteers (including reserves) that we still have listed (a few have left) to find out who still wants to go to the National Summer Games. Please note that at this stage this is NOT about which sport you may take part in as we may need to make some changes.

Please read the email from Liz below for details on how Special Olympics NZ (SONZ) plans to run the NSG in **Hamilton this year from Thursday 8th December to Monday 12th December** (inclusive). As you will read, they have several protocols and requirements and still some uncertainty. We need a response from every volunteer and athlete (and for many athletes this email is going to the family contact person for that athlete so please discuss this with your athlete). Our local committee needs to make decisions about our team's entry into the NSG soon as entries close at the end of July so we would like everyone, athletes and volunteers, to **complete this survey by WEDNESDAY 20th July**, to give us time to follow up anyone we haven't heard from. All this information and the survey will also be available online for those who wish to access it there and we will ensure those who don't have access to an email account also receive a copy.

Before completing the survey, please read the email below, particularly the COVID MITIGATION section, highlighted in yellow. Points to note: The tests will be provided for free but we will not be administering them. Please also read the requirements for if you have symptoms or if you are a close contact of someone who tests positive (a potential issue where more than one person in the household is part of the team). Masks are required but they are working on protocols re mask exemptions. Vaccination is no longer mandatory, but recommended. Also, Special Olympics Rotorua have told SONZ that our team members will return home if they become unwell during the NSG, rather than go into isolation at the games.

The survey:

Name: Athlete/Volunteer

1. Are you willing and able to take a RAT 48 and 24 hours before the NSG? Y/N
2. Are you willing to wear a mask during the NSG? Y/N
3. Are you fully vaccinated? (At least two doses.) Y/N
4. Are you willing to have a booster/s? Y/N
5. Are you comfortable that our team and the NSG may include both vaccinated and unvaccinated participants? Y/N
5. Will you have someone who can bring you home during the games if you become unwell? Y/N
6. Are you still available to be part of the team? Y/N



Any Comments:

Please either reply by Wednesday, 20th July. Copy and paste this survey, complete it and send it to rotorua@specialolympics.org.nz or you can message Stella, Shona or Special Olympics Rotorua.

Kind regards,
Stella McLeod

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----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Liz Fitzgerald <events@specialolympics.org.nz>
Date: 12/07/2022 4:12:08 PM
Subject: Special Olympics National Summer Games Update
To: Liz Fitzgerald <events@specialolympics.org.nz>

Kia ora all

We hope this finds you all well and I am sure very busy in your Clubs.

As we mentioned on the Zoom call, we are looking to do everything we can to hold the Games, however it needs to be done safely for all participants.

As promised, we wanted to provide you an update on the Special Olympics National Summer Games. Thanks to all you who took the time to respond to our survey – it was very helpful in further developing the protocols and processes for the Games.

We have continued to discuss the challenges and possible options to help minimise the risk of Covid at the Games with medical experts, our colleagues in Australia and the USA who are either planning or have recently hosted their NSG, Sport New Zealand and the SONZ Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. One factor we are currently considering is what the Opening and Closing Ceremonies may look like, we will have further information in the coming months on this.

Though there are some considerations we are still working through and need to further investigate options/solutions for, we did want to provide an update to Clubs on the key areas from the survey that we can confirm. The below status is as at today, as we move closer to the Games there may be some areas that we are able to review further, but based on the current environment the below is the information that clubs should consider when completing their registrations for National Summer Games:

COVID MITIGATION – in an effort to minimise Covid infection, below are a number of protocols and requirements for attendance at the NSG

- It will be a requirement of all those attending the NSG to take a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) 48 and then 24 hours prior to departing for Hamilton. SONZ has secured RATs for all participants which will be distributed to all Clubs by Monday 21 November to manage with their teams and volunteers – at no cost to the Clubs. We noted from the surveys that 5 clubs would require further assistance in this area. We will work with you directly to provide a solution.
- Standard Government requirements will prevail and we will continue to update these as we get closer to the Games.
- Anyone showing symptoms prior to departure for the Games, but not tested positive, would be required to stay home and not attend the Games.
- If you are a close contact (as per the Government definition at that time) you will need to stay home.
- Mask wearing will be **mandatory** at the NSG except for when competing, eating or in individual accommodation rooms
 - Further clarification on mask requirements will be made closer to the Games when the current Covid environment will be taken into account, alongside consideration for outdoor sports
 - We will advise the protocols once we have had the opportunity to work through the process for those with a mask wearing exemption
 - SONZ has also secured a supply of medical grade masks which will be distributed to all Clubs with the RATs in November to supplement their supply at no cost to the clubs – numbers will be confirmed once total registered teams numbers are known
- Though not mandatory Vaccinations and boosters are strongly recommended to attend the NSG
- Clubs will be accommodated in Club groupings with appropriate hygiene/handwashing stations and food service managed to maximise high levels of hygiene.

NSG REFUND POLICY – has been updated to the following;

- **Refunds**
 - Instalment one payments have been finalised and no further refunds are possible
 - Should Covid cause the National Summer Games to be cancelled or a team to decrease in size the following refund parameters would apply:
 - Second instalment would be partially refundable up until 30 September
 - Third instalment would be partially refundable up until 15 November
 - No refund would be available after 15 November
 - The amount of any potential refund would be advised after a full reconciliation of the NSG financial position has been completed, which will likely be early February for all invoices to be received and paid.

- *NB. If an athlete is unable to attend due to illness and there is sufficient time to register a replacement athlete – the registration fee can be applied to the new athlete*

NSG COVID CARE COSTS

We received strong support from clubs to provide a contribution if needed. Since we held the zoom meeting we have managed to secure some contingent funding from an external party, which will alleviate potential costs for clubs. We also received wide support from those clubs in relatively close proximity to Hamilton that they would commit to get any sick participants home, which will help maintain costs for everyone. As a result our recommendations are as follows:

- SONZ committing to ensuring the Games can proceed and are committing up to \$50,000 maximum towards the initial expenses related to any potential Covid Care Costs
- We are having positive conversations with a third party to provide contingency back up for the Covid Care plan and will be in a position to confirm this in August.
- At this stage our planning is that there would be no cost to clubs.
- We are budgeting on having to accommodate up to 100 people, with the knowledge that many clubs would be in a position to have their athletes transported home. Beyond this number we would need to cancel the Games.

We hope this provides sufficient guidance and information for Clubs to make decisions on their NSG team registration. If you have a specific question or concern that is not covered that you need answered prior to making a decision please let me know and we will endeavour to provide further information where possible.

Ngā mihi nui

Liz Fitzgerald

Events Director

Special Olympics New Zealand

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