

<b>ORDINARY MEETING</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>22 NOVEMBER 2023</b>	

## **2023 GREAT BARRIER REEF MASTERS GAMES – POST EVENT REPORT**

52/1/21-01 | #7299943

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**It is recommended that Council notes the outcomes of the 2023 Great Barrier Reef Masters Games and endorses future planning of the 2025 event.**

### **Executive Summary**

This report provides an overview and performance outcomes of 2023 Great Barrier Reef Masters Games (GBRMG) held from 25 – 28 May 2023. In its 6<sup>th</sup> year, the 2023 Games was a highly performing event, providing the region with the greatest economic benefit since its inception in 2013.

A total of 2,366 competitors, non-playing officials and supporters participated in the Games, a decrease from the 2021 games by 128. The decrease was largely attributed to the 2021 event attracting higher participation as it was the only Masters Games held in Australia that year due to COVID-19. In 2023, competitors travelled from within Queensland, all states within Australia and internationally from New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, India, Sweden, and the United States of America.

#### **The Games consisted of:**

- 17 sporting competitions
- Registration and merchandise hub located at Barlow Park
- Social hub located at The Jack Hotel
- Four social night events:
  1. Opening Ceremony, competitor march-past, lighting of the Games cauldron and opening event at Barlow Park.
  2. Sportspersons dinner held at the Pullman Cairns International
  3. “Shipwrecked party” held at The Jack Hotel
  4. Barn dance party held at the Sugar Shed, located in a cane field at Yorkeys Knob.
- Three community sports clinics attended by 150 local school students; Basketball conducted by former Olympic and NBA players. Swimming conducted by Games Ambassador Leisel Jones OAM and Rugby League conducted by Games Ambassador Matthew Bowen.

#### **Key insights from the Games included:**

- The 2023 GBRMG event was delivered at a net cost to council of \$27K, \$13K favourable to the budget of \$40K.
- Generated a \$4.1M direct and incremental economic impact to the Cairns region (\$3.4M in 2021).
- Generated 15,189 visitor nights to the Cairns region, staying an average of 5 nights each (14,333 in 2021).
- The event attracted 3,434 primary purpose visitors to the region (2,932 in 2021).

- A total of 4,524 competitors, supporters, officials, and spectators attended the 2023 Games (4,750 in 2021).

## Statistics

The following noteworthy figures were provided by research specialists IER and 2023 GBRMG Syntax registration data:

<b>ATTENDEES</b>	
Local attendees	1,038
International attendees	184
Interstate attendees	1,329
Intrastate attendees	1,973
Total athletes (does not include non-playing officials or supporters)	2,166
Non-playing officials	101
Supporters	99
Gender demographics	46% male 54% female
First time event attendee at the GBRMG	58%
Sports participating	17

The 2023 GBRMG saw a 36.8 % increase in the number of withdrawals due to injury and elective surgery compared to 2021. International competitors showed the largest increase in numbers, an understandable growth market due COVID-19 travel restrictions in 2021.

## Participation

Target Pistol Shooting recorded a 53% increase in competitors and was held in two locations.

Team sports such as Netball and Ambrose Golf saw the greatest increase in international competitor numbers, with Netball, Softball and Basketball also seeing an increase in interstate team participation.

Swimming was down on participation numbers, due to a national Masters swimming competition running two weeks prior to the GBRMG in Mackay. Trail and Road Running saw a significant drop in numbers with three major running events delivered before and after the GBRMG.

Further consultation is planned for the 2025 GBRMG, via the governing bodies of each sporting association to mitigate other Masters-aged event sporting clashes.

## **Year on year statistics for each sport:**

<b>Sport</b>	2017	2019	2021	<b>2023</b>	<i>Difference '21 to '23</i>	<i>% increase</i>
<b>Archery</b>	19	19	20	<b>22</b>	+2	+9%
<b>Athletics</b>	67	87	120	<b>115</b>	-5	-4%
<b>Baseball</b>	64	85	125	<b>106</b>	-19	-17%
<b>Basketball</b>	126	150	196	<b>210</b>	+14	+6%
<b>Beach Volleyball</b>	51	73	138	<b>100</b>	-38	-38%
<b>Cricket</b>	132	218	169	<b>188</b>	+19	+10%

<b>Sport</b>	2017	2019	2021	<b>2023</b>	<i>Difference '21 to '23</i>	<i>% increase</i>
<b>Cycling</b>	45	40	59	<b>42</b>	-17	-40%
<b>Golf</b>	77	105	117	<b>116</b>	-1	-0.8%
<b>Hockey</b>	86	149	171	<b>176</b>	+5	+2%
<b>Lawn Bowls</b>	-	-	-	<b>24</b>	+24	+24%
<b>Netball</b>	258	264	259	<b>394</b>	+135	+34%
<b>Non-playing Officials</b>	33	79	72	<b>101</b>	+29	+28%
<b>Rugby League</b>	0	41	113	<b>63</b>	-50	-79%
<b>Softball</b>	159	276	254	<b>366</b>	+112	+30%
<b>Swimming</b>	115	147	279	<b>167</b>	-112	-67%
<b>Target Pistol Shooting</b>	-	22	35	<b>77</b>	+42	+54%
<b>Tennis</b>	60	49	103	<b>72</b>	-31	-58%
<b>Trail and Road Running</b>	-	81	130	<b>64</b>	-66	-103%
<b>Registered Supporters</b>	55	98	146	<b>99</b>	-47	-47%

### **Ambassadors**

The GBRMG played host to Olympic swimmer Leisel Jones OAM and former NRL North Queensland Cowboys player Matthew Bowen as the 2023 Games Ambassadors.

Leisel and Matthew both opened the GBRMG, attended all social events and were keynote speakers at the Sportsperson's Dinner. They visited every sporting venue, spent time with sponsors, ran free community sporting clinics and took part in countless media appearances prior to and during the Games.

The Hasbeens basketball team is made up of former Olympic, Australian, International and NBL basketball players. They have been a part of the GBRMG for the past five games. The team played in the GBRMG basketball competition, attended media appearances, presented medals, attended social events, and ran a community basketball clinic.

### **Marketing and Communications**

Media, marketing, and public relations for the 2023 Great Barrier Masters Games were delivered by Council's Marketing and Communications team. Media partnerships were secured with Southern Cross Austereo for exclusive radio promotion, while Adhesive Advertising were engaged for all other media. The campaign was rolled out across multiple platforms over a one-year period from the GBRMG launch in May of 2022 through to the Games event date in 2023.

These platforms included traditional media (print, radio, and television), plus new opportunities with StackAdapt programmatic video/display advertising and a AGG Fox Sports news package. A strong focus was spent on digital advertising (Google Ads; search and display, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram). These new platforms received high engagement from podcasts, on demand and paid TV advertising.

### **Sponsorship**

As part of a four-year sponsorship agreement, Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) provided \$50,000 cash over two instalments for the 2021 and 2023 Games, to be attributed to out of region marketing costs. Team Elite signed as the games merchandise

partner, providing \$10,000 cash and discounted merchandise for GBRMG registration bags, shirts, and medals.

The Jack Hotel, Lotsa Print, Cairns Pullman International, Adhesive Advertising, Adllins Media, Wolf Lane Distillery and Southern Cross Austereo provided paid and in-kind support via venue spaces, accommodation, beverages, graphic design, advertising, and videography.

Local cash sponsors of the Games included Price Right Car Rental, Amanda Gale Physio, Genesis Gym and Tropic Wings.

### **Financials**

- Cairns Regional Council's net cost was \$27K, excluding \$55K wages for 50% of GBRMG Coordinator position.
- Despite the GBRMG not reaching the 2,500 target for competitors (2,366 reached) 72% of competitors paid the full \$89.00 games entry fee, assisting in offsetting the total budget expenditure.
- 17 local sporting clubs and associations benefited from a total of \$144,854 in sport entry fees, playing host to each of the competition's sports. A further \$60,000 was generated by several sporting clubs via their canteen revenue over the games period.
- The Reef Restoration Fund was the event's chosen charity with a total of \$1,747 donated to the charity via competitors.

### **Planning for the future**

- Awaiting the outcome of the Queensland Destination Events Program Grant (TEQ) application for the 2025 and 2027 GBRMG (\$140K over two events).
- Launch of the 2025 GBRMG, Thursday 30 May 2024
- Date of 2025 GBRMG, 29 May to 1 June 2025
- To increase tourism outcomes, development of the GBRMG event hub is proposed for the 2025/27 games event via creating a multipurpose event hub on the Cairns Esplanade's, Eastern Events Lawn. The hoecker will provide the opportunity to host the games hub in a central and iconic location and to house the events; registration, merchandise, opening ceremony and all social events.
- Estimated budget for the 2025 games will total \$300K. A total investment of \$95k is required for Council to deliver the 2025 games, this commitment is equivalent to Council's 2023 GBMRG contribution (\$40K cash and \$55K in wages).

### **OPTIONS:**

#### **Option 1 (recommended):**

That Council notes the outcomes in this report.

#### **Option 2:**

That Council **does not** note the outcomes in this report at this time and requests further information from officers before reconsidering this matter.

**CONSIDERATIONS:****Council Finance and the Local Economy:**

The 2023 Great Barrier Reef Masters Games was funded through Marketing and Communications Operational budget. It should be noted that the budget requested for future years has not increased. Council Officers are actively seeking grants to assist in growing and delivering this event into the future.

**Corporate and Operational Plans:**

The event outcomes are in support of Council's Corporate Plan 2021 – 2026, specifically;

- Focus Area One: Robust Economy – to optimise visitation and tourism opportunities to achieve growth in visitation and high-profile events.
- Focus Area Four: Community & Culture – support diverse sport, cultural and community groups that contribute to wellbeing.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.



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