

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT - NEW ZEALAND MARCHING CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Board of Marching New Zealand regrets to announce the cancellation of the 2022 New Zealand Marching Championships, scheduled to be held in Hamilton 17-19 March. This decision is due to the nationwide application of the Red Traffic Light setting under the COVID Protection Framework (CPF) and the continued uncertainty around the extent and spread of the virus.

The Board was presented with information and guidelines collated throughout the week from key stakeholders including Sport New Zealand, Claudelands Event Centre, the host Association, and its own Technical Working Party. A range of alternative options for running the event were discussed and considered (including postponement dates and removing the qualifying phase) however, it has become clear that there are no real viable options available to run the event safely within the Red traffic light status.

The Board is incredibly disappointed that our premier national event has to be cancelled for the second time in three years due to the ongoing pandemic but ultimately, we were guided by Sport NZ and our venue to work within the CPF. The health and safety of all of our participants, volunteers and supporters must be paramount.

The guidance that Marching New Zealand was given by Sport NZ was led with the following statement:

"Even if you could safely hold an event under the Covid Protection Framework, should you".

Sport NZ then provided MNZ with guidance around running "Events" in a red setting (distinctly different to a "gathering").

An event can only take place, using mandated vaccine passes, with "bubbles" of up to 100 people indoors. Those bubbles cannot intermingle or cross throughout the duration of the event (not day, but event) i.e., you cannot move to another "bubble" throughout the course of the Event, nor can you wander around the venue. You must stay within the defined area allocated to your "bubble" at any one time. This restriction alone makes it impossible to proceed with the event.

Claudelands Event Centre have been working with our host association, Marching Waikato, this week to consider a range of options such as rotating each "bubble" to different areas as needed. However, we have been advised by Claudelands that

given each "bubble" of up to 100 also requires their own facilities (amongst other things), and cleaning of the spaces when the "bubbles" move/rotate areas (e.g. to the arena for their march), we are unable to make it work in the context of how our competitions are run.

With the nature of our event, and the large number of participants we do not believe we could safely deliver the event while ensuring the health and safety of all marchers, volunteers, and supporters. There were several other factors that the Board also discussed around safety, security, and support.

The Board took the view that a decision needed to be made now - well in advance of the event - to provide certainty to our community and enable our competitors and host Association to try and recoup costs outlaid to-date. While there is no guarantee of what setting we would be under when the New Zealand Championships are due to take place, we felt we needed to err on the side of caution, based on predictions for the coming weeks and months.

We would like to thank our host Association, Marching Waikato, for all their hard work to date, and for collating information and working through various scenarios with our CEO and the Claudelands Events Centre. It was shaping up to be a stellar event at a stellar venue and it is with great sadness that we have made this decision.

Marching events can still take place within the CPF Red Traffic Light setting on a smaller scale. We encourage all Associations to continue with local events, if you can within the CPF, and continue to promote Marching within your communities. We hope local associations can enjoy a strong finish to the 2021/22 Marching Season.

If you require guidance on how to run your events please contact CEO Emma Barnes who is up to date with all the requirements. Emma and the Board will work closely with our local Associations to see as many of the planned local competitions and events to continue as possible.