

# Challengers flocking to Australia's most unique triathlon

Julia Creek Dirt n Dust Triathlon Registrants up by 15 per cent

Registrations for one of Australia's most grueling triathlons -- the Cannington Dirt n Dust Triathlon in Julia Creek, Queensland -- are up by 15 per cent on the same time last year, it was announced today (January 18, 2012).

The Triathlon is always a major draw card for the annual Julia Creek Dirt n Dust Festival and comprises an 800m swim across Eastern Creek, a 25km ride over an open outback road and a 5km run through the town. This year the victors will be well rewarded for their efforts with a share of \$10,000 in cash and prizes up for grabs.

Dirt n Dust organiser Margie Ryder said the inundation of registrations so early in the year is a good sign of things to come.

"The triathlon, now in its 18th year, is well known in running circles as one of the country's most unique triathlon events," said Mrs Ryder.

"Many competitors find themselves hooked after their first Dirt n Dust triathlon returning time and time again, however, this is the first time we've had so much interest so far out from the event.

"It seems word is spreading about the great show Outback Queensland puts on and we have people from across Queensland, interstate and overseas all vying to step up to the plate and have a go," Mrs Ryder said.

Townsville triathlete Max Fegan, who's competed in all but one Dirt n Dust triathlon, said it's been great to watch the event grow steadily since 1994.

"In the first year we had about 15 competitors turn up from Julia Creek and neighbouring towns," said Fegan.

"Then competitor numbers doubled and tripled until we had about 300 people from all over the world race last year.

"Now the Dirt n Dust Triathlon is one of those must-do events for a lot of triathletes -- you've got to tick it off at least once, because there's just nothing else like it," Fegan said.

Three-time competitor and 2011 Dirt n Dust Triathlon winner, Sam Betten said the event is an exciting challenge.

"The Dirt n Dust Tri is a true test of physical and mental stamina," said Betten.

"There are no tree-lined avenues to run or calm coastal waters to swim in the outback -- it really is just dirt and dust.

"You start by diving into a muddy creek with a mix of serious competitors and people in wild costumes, spend 25km just riding into the horizon and finish running across searing bitumen.

"It took me three years to walk away from Julia Creek with a win, so I'll be hotly defending the title in 2012," Betten said.

The Cannington Dirt n Dust Triathlon will take place on Saturday, April 21, 2012 and is open to serious competitors, corporate and social teams and individuals looking for a challenge. The Suncorp Agribusiness Junior Triathlon will also take place on Friday, April 20. People wishing to register can do so at [www.dirtndust.com/triathlon](http://www.dirtndust.com/triathlon).

In addition to the Dirt n Dust Triathlon and Junior Triathlon, Julia Creek Dirt n Dust Festival offers three days of non-stop entertainment including a free concert featuring Country music artists Luke Dickens and Victoria Baillie; the Clean It NQ Dirt n Dust Bullride sanctioned by PBR; the BHP Artesian Express Horse Race; an exclusive Red Claw luncheon; the Australia's Best Butt Competition; novelty events; and ongoing family entertainment.

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