

## **Scope for Australia to host major international events – 2017 update**

### Requested action by States

The paper below outlines the situation for the hosting of major international events and is an update of a paper originally tabled at the 2016 Conference.

Orienteering Australia supports, in principle, the hosting by Australia of significant international events, but recognises that the primary responsibility for organisation will need to rest with a host state association. We would therefore invite expressions of interests by states who are interested in hosting a major international event.

As noted in the paper below, we believe the most realistic hosting prospects for Australia in the short to medium term are JWOC and MTBO WOC. We would also need to consider New Zealand's intentions – it would make no sense to bid against them for the same event.

### Background

Some years ago, OA considered the question of whether it was feasible for Australia to host a World Orienteering Championships (WOC). Our conclusion at that time was that it was technically feasible, but was not financially feasible unless very substantial external funds (probably at least \$500,000) were available, either government or corporate.

Since that time, there have been a number of changes in the international arena, as well as developments closer to home. These include:

- The introduction of a split WOC, with an urban WOC in even years and a forest WOC in odd years.
- The restructuring of the World Cup, whose management is now contracted out to a consortium which includes O-ring and Swiss Cup as partners with IOF. Associated with this is a raising of expectations for World Cup events, including a requirement for live broadcasting.
- Successful hosting of World Cup events in conjunction with the Oceania Championships in 2013 (New Zealand) and 2015 (Australia).

The IOF continues to be keen in principle for major events to be hosted outside Europe (although the new World Cup structure makes it unlikely that World Cup events will take place outside Europe in the near future), and it is likely that any credible bid from outside Europe for WOC, JWOC or MTBO WOC will be taken very seriously. (WMOC is in a category of its own, as it is normally profitable for the host country and there is strong competition to host it).

Applications are required for WOC 4 ½ years ahead, and for JWOC, WMOC and MTBO WOC 3 ½ years ahead (i.e. applications close at the end of 2017 for WOC 2022, and JWOC, WMOC and MTBO WOC 2021).

### Status of major international events

#### WOC

Despite the split WOC, the financial barriers to Australian hosting remain significant. The best prospect for us may be an urban WOC, for two reasons; the logistics of establishing live broadcasting (an

expensive, and essential, part of a modern WOC) are likely to be less challenging in an urban area than in the forest, and there may be better prospects for obtaining external funds in a city. (Indeed, part of IOF's rationale for introducing the split WOC is that, internationally, funds for supporting major events are often the responsibility of city governments). On the other hand, spectator races are likely to be better-attended (and therefore more lucrative) for a forest WOC.

An urban WOC would require four areas: a sprint qualification, sprint final, sprint relay, and a fourth format (likely to be a knock-out sprint format with broadly similar terrain/arena requirements to the other three races).

The potential exists for a WOC to obtain support from city or state events corporations (or equivalent), although this is likely to cover only a modest part of the funds required. In some states, such bodies are primarily focused on the capital city, in others they have a preference for regional areas.

There is no expectation that an urban WOC would take place in the current 'normal' WOC timeslot (July/August). Timings outside this window (e.g. September/October) are particularly attractive in Olympic years when the international sporting calendar is crowded in the northern hemisphere summer.

### World Cup

As noted above, the World Cup has been restructured and is now largely contracted out to an external consortium. The vision for the restructured World Cup is such that it is unlikely that World Cup races will be held outside of Europe in the first few years. As such, it would appear doubtful that there are opportunities for Australia to host a World Cup before 2023, the next time after 2019 that we are scheduled to host the Oceania Championships.

### WMOC

Unlike most other international events, WMOC has been a relatively frequent visitor to our region, with five events in Oceania in 26 years (1992, 2002 and 2009 in Australia, 2000 and 2017 in New Zealand). This means that (unlike most other events), a bid from this region in the near future is likely to face a significant disadvantage.

Competition to host WMOC is strong, and is likely to be particularly strong for the next few years as three of the four WMOCs between 2016 and 2019 were not part of a competitive bidding process (2016 and 2019 were awarded as package deals with WOC, 2017 is a World Masters Games year – although IOF has now broken the link between WMOC and WMG so WMOC 2021 will be awarded separately). There were three very strong bids for WMOC 2020.

As such, we do not believe that there is a realistic possibility of Australia hosting a WMOC before (at least) the mid-2020s.

### JWOC

Australia successfully hosted a JWOC in 2007. The requirements to host a JWOC have not changed radically since then and it is likely that hosting would be within our capabilities, technically and (with judicious combination with our existing major events) financially.

JWOC is required to take place in July (or perhaps very late June), making the July school holidays the only realistic timing for us. As WOC (which is allocated one year earlier than JWOC) has first choice of dates and JWOC is not allowed to clash, that may preclude us from hosting in some years.

We are aware that some preliminary discussions have occurred regarding the possible hosting of a future JWOC in Victoria, although these have not yet proceeded as far as endorsement by Orienteering Victoria. We also understand that consideration is being given to a possible 2021 or 2022 bid by New Zealand.

There has been some competition for JWOC in recent years, although the last three allocated have been uncontested.

### MTBO WOC

Australia has also hosted an MTBO WOC, in 2004. As with JWOC, this is an event where the requirements are a step down from a (foot) WOC in terms of broadcasting etc., and the event is likely to be within our capacity if a state is sufficiently committed to it. This would require substantial support from the foot orienteering community within (and perhaps outside) that state.

### Conclusions and recommendations for State Associations

Orienteering Australia's view is that JWOC and MTBO WOC are potentially within the capacity of a sufficiently committed State Association to host. WOC is a possibility but would require a commitment of substantial external funding. We do not believe World Cup or WMOC are realistic prospects at this time, although that may change for World Cup depending on how the restructured competition evolves.

State Associations are encouraged to consider whether they have any interest in hosting a major international event. Any state which is considering this is encouraged to engage at an early stage with Orienteering Australia, and (in the case of JWOC and MTBO WOC) with past local organisers to get an indication of what would be involved.

Should a State be interested, OA will then discuss with that State the process of a bid and what would be required in order for OA to put that bid forward to the IOF. Whilst the IOF's formal hosting contract is with the relevant National Federation, it is normal for the national federation to enter a subcontract with the hosting body (e.g. with Orienteering Tasmania for the World Cup).

Blair Trewin  
President  
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