**AGE GROUP PROGRAMME REVIEW & SUGGESTED CHANGES.**

To ensure time and resource is being allocated correctly in the most needed and valued places a review was undertaken in the age group space. Part of this review included surveying over 80 athletes from the 2017 World Championships as well as engaging with other sponsors and stakeholders. The following outlines the suggested changes within different aspects of the age group experience.

With only four staff members at the Tri NZ head office (CEO, Community Director, Events & Technical Manager, and the Age Group Manager) resourcefulness is key within Tri NZ to ensure maximum benefits to the community, including age group athletes.

**SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED CHANGES BASED OFF SURVEY FINDINGS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SUGGESTED CHANGE** | **PERCEIVED RISK** | **MANAGEABLE** |
| Communicate National Championships earlier in the year. | Low expression of interest (from event community) if the process commences during current event season. | Yes, by streamlining process (already in place). |
| One selection event per race format.  (The National Championship) | Some events will not have a National Championship (or selection event). | Yes, where there is no national championship the selection will occur through special circumstance application only (fee waved). |
| Refine the Age Group Management role to have a World Championship team management focus.  *Discontinue Age Grouper of the year and the growth of the Age Group Programme.* ***Make Age Group Role part time.*** | Lower service being provided creating perception/ expectation of time and resource needing to be allocate elsewhere. | Yes, change the role and contract and build this into the broader consultation process happening in the community. |
| Team activities at World Championships to be offered by HOT Events only. | 1. Lower service offering being provided by Tri NZ compared to previous years. 2. May lose HOT Events as travel partner if bookings don’t increase. | Yes, through communication with team and promotion of travel packages. |
| Athletes offered two insurance policies, one to include bike cover, whilst the other excludes bike cover at a lesser rate. | Increase in premium cost from 2017 | Yes, if fully transparent with reasoning. |

**GENERAL TRI NZ SUPPORT AND AGE GROUP EXPERIENCE**

Conscious that age group athletes have other interactions with Tri NZ outside of their age group specific interactions, we asked if athletes were happy with the general support they receive from Tri NZ as well as separately asking about their age group experience. We were pleased to see that those surveyed reported that they were happy with the service they received from Tri NZ in the last 12 months rating the service 4/5 and the age group experience rating was also rated 4/5.

However, the area which was addressed as needing to be improved was the **communication of selection events.** Athletes felt as though this needed to be confirmed earlier to allow more planning in their season.

**Suggestion/ outcome:** Tri NZ have changed our timelines to communicate this information further in advance.

**Perceived Risk:** Low expressions of interest from event providers in hosting championships title if the bidding process commences during current event season.

**Manageable:** Yes, by streamlining process (already in place).

**SELECTION STANDARDS**

Selection standards for numerous years have required athletes to finish within 120% of the winner in their age group, and within the allocated number of eligible finish positions. This standard was compared against other nations and when asked in the 2017 survey was most favourable with athletes. However, over ¼ of those surveyed indicated that selection could be made more difficult.

Different qualifying event allocations have been investigated in previous seasons for age group selection. In 2016 a point based (multiple race) selection system was used for sprint triathlon to allow more racing opportunities for athletes. The trial of this system showed that the point (and multiple race) system did provide more racing opportunities for athletes but it also weakened the competition field at selection races and devalued the national championships.

**Suggestion/ outcome:** The 120%-time selection standard will remain for upcoming seasons, however there will only be one selection event for each race format- this will be the national championship by default.

**Perceived risk:** Fewer National Championships and thus selection events. Selection for teams in less popular race formats will not be as competitive.

**Manageable:** Yes, age group selection can still occur by special circumstance application where there are no national championships.

**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROLE:**

World Championship team management is a large part of the Age Group Managers role. Outside the fundamentals of world championship management, 2017 team members were asked to rank the value they saw in the additional services provided.

The onsite event support provided by the team manager was ranked as the most valued service, followed by the updates over four months leading up to World Championships.

The organising of team activities, a team schedule and writing media releases was not seen as valuable to over 70% of those surveyed.

**Suggestion/ outcome:**  Refine team management to: 1) providing updates in the four months leading up to world championships and 2) providing onsite support (Team management at all ITU World Championship recognised events).

Team activities can be done informally whilst at event or through team travel partner, and media releases can be sharing social media content created by athletes utilising hashtags. One post event media release can be generated rather than daily releases

**Perceived risk:** Lower service offering

**Managebale:** Financing- yes, see appendices.

**AGE GROUP MANAGEMENT**

In addition to the team management at World Championships the age group manager’s role coordinates the selection policies and qualifying events as well as equipping the uniform suppliers, travel partners and insurance brokers with the necessary information and processes for the world championship season. All the while taking steps to improve the experience of age group athletes competing nationally.

The survey showed that athletes significantly valued the world championship support referenced above more than the additional services provided.

The Age Grouper of the Year competition, growing the age group programme and age group media reporting were considered the least valuable services.

**Suggestion/ outcome:**  Refine the Age Group Management role to have a World Championship team management focus only. *Discontinue Age Grouper of the year and the growth of the Age Group Programme. Make Age Group Role part time.*

**Perceived Risk:** Less service being provided so perception of time and resource to allocate elsewhere.

**Manageable:** Yes, change the role and contract and build this into the broader consultation process happening in the community.

**TEAM VALUE**

Athletes can attend the ITU World Championships without associating themselves with the team. However, 86 % of those who attended the 2017 World Championships said that the team environment enhanced their experience. However, ‘the team experience’ is not directly associated with staying in the team hotel.

**Suggestion/ outcome:** Build team activities into the World Championship travel packages.

**Perceived Risk:** Lower service offering perceived by athletes from Tri NZ.

**Manageable:** Yes, through communication with team and promotion of travel packages.

**TRAVEL**

Athletes travelling to the World Championships are encouraged to book with Tri NZ’s Travel partner HOT Events however may choose to book their flights and accommodation themselves. Travel is no longer the daunting task it once was, meaning that more athletes are booking through the internet. Of those survey around half used HOT Events for part (if not all) of their booking. The internet and Air BnB was utilised by nearly all of those who didn’t book with HOT Events due to finding cheaper and/ or more convenient travel arrangements.

**Suggestion/ outcome:** as above

**Perceived risk:** losing ‘the team experience’ due to athletes becoming less associated with the core service offering.

**Manageable: R**easonable level of manageability by working with HOT Events to identify areas for growth- suggested above.

**UNIFORM**

2XU have been supplying Age Group Athletes with high quality suits for multiple World Championships, each year offering creative and innovative uniforms. The team uniform comprises of more than the race suit. Both 2XU and Tri NZ were interested to see if the uniform items offered were what team members wanted to wear when representing NZ.

As expected, the variety of items offered aligned with what athletes wanted. Suggestions for improving the uniform included improving the size guidelines for items. Race suits will continue to be given a one year’s grace.

**Suggestion/ outcome:** N/A

**Perceived risk:** N/A

**Manageable:** N/A

**INSURANCE**

Since the ITU appointed each national body responsible for their athletes’ insurance in 2015, Tri NZ has mandated a policy which is fit for purpose and meets the ITU standards for all athletes competing at the ITU World Championships. Aon is Tri NZ’s insurance broker for establishing and managing the policy for Tri NZ athletes, and has shown exceptional leadership in negotiating with insurers to offer athletes a fair and reasonable rate.

The increasingly litigious world, and poor handling of bikes by airlines in the last 18 months (as well as a select few accidents/ emergencies) has unfortunately resulted in many damaged bike claims and thus dollars paid by the insurer. This has been an unfavourable contributor for both AON and Tri NZ when negotiating the renewal of the offered policy (and rates) with the insurer. So much so, that at the close of 2017 there was an extremely high risk of losing insurance to offer to athletes at all. The issue made most prevalent with the amount collected in premiums by the insurer ($xxx) not offsetting the total amount paid out in claims to athletes ($xxx) from November 2016- November 2017.

Ensuring our World Championship teams have adequate insurance and protecting the liability of Tri NZ in a process which is achievable is key to the success of the Age Group World Championship team management, and the sustainability of the Age Group programme. Aon has negotiated a policy option with the insurer which allows athletes to make informed decisions about their policy coverage and premiums.

The 2018 insurance policy offering includes 2 options, one which includes bike coverage, and one which excludes bike coverage at a lower daily rate. Tri NZ has reduced their rebate scheme, no longer offering a higher daily collection on “competition days”.

A comparative breakdown can be shown below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2017 10DAY TRIP** | | | |
| **Insurer rate** | | **TRINZ rebate rate** | |
| Competition rate (min 3day req.)  $23.50/ day | X3=$70.5 | $6.50/ day | X3=$19.5 |
| Leisure  ($16.50/ day) | X7= $115.5 | $3.50/ day | X7= $24.5 |
| **Insurer total:** | **10days =$186** | **Tri NZ rebate total** | **=$44** |
| **Premium total paid:** | | | | **$230** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2018 (NO BIKE) 10DAY TRIP** | | | |
| **Insurer rate** | | **TRINZ rebate rate** | |
| No Bike rates  $20/ day | X 10= $200 | $3.50/ day | X 10= $35 |
| **Premium total paid:** | | | | **$235** |

**OR**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2018 (BIKE INC.) 10DAY TRIP** | | | |
| **Insurer rate** | | **TRINZ rebate rate** | |
| No Bike rates  $27/ day | X 10= $270 | $3.50/ day | X 10= $35 |
| **Premium total paid:** | | | | **$305** |