

Special Olympics New Zealand

2011 World Summer Game

Newsletter update June



The Special Olympics New Zealand 2011 World Summer Games team

Καλό ταξίδι! (Kaló taksídi) Καλή τύχη! (Kalí tíhi) (that's Bon Voyage and Good Luck in Greek)

The time has finally arrived. The team are ready. Their bags are packed. It's all go! The Special Olympics New Zealand World Summer Games delegation is on its way to Athens, Greece! From all of us in New Zealand, good luck and have a ball!

Follow the team

You can keep up to date with the team's travels at www.specialolympics.org.nz/worldsummergegames. Journalist Rob Tighe and photographer Penny Towns will be keeping a regular blog during the trip to give us a glimpse into the team's preparation and competition.

Plus you can email the team directly at NZWSG2011@gmail.com and post words of encouragement on our special Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Special-Olympics-New-Zealand/170869542955696>. ■

The Games timetable

All the action kicks off in Athens on 25 June with, what is sure to be, an epic Opening Ceremony. Our athletes will join their 7500 fellow competitors to march around the Panathenaic Stadium and watch the Flame of Hope ignite the Games beacon. (Read more about the ceremony's design: www.athens2011.org/en/ceremonies.asp.)

The next day the competition begins! You can check out each sport's timetable at www.athens2011.org/en/schedulegames.asp—this site will be updated regularly during the Games so you can stay abreast of any changes.

Finally on 4 July the team will again congregate in the Panathenaic Stadium for the Closing Ceremony (and no doubt emotional farewells).

The team returns to Auckland on 8 July at 1.35pm (Emirates Airlines, EK434). If you're nearby that day we encourage you to join us in welcoming them home at the Auckland International Airport. ■

A shout out to our sponsors

Our trip to the World Summer Games would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors. Thank you to all of you who have donated funds, time, and support to help our team prepare for the trip of a lifetime. We encourage you to support these businesses just as they continue to support us.

Pub Charity

House of Travel and Orbit Nelson

Air New Zealand

Emirates Airlines

Kathmandu

Brandex Adventure Sports Ltd

B2B Clothing

Shoe Clinic

Asics

Keen

Briscoes Group

Global Culture

Korjo Travel Products

Fiordland Souvenirs

Saddlery Warehouse

Peter Baker Transport Nelson

South Island Screenprinters

Dot Neiman Leisurewear

Academy Apparel

Storage World Nelson

Nelson Electorate Office

Mum Humms Products

Rollos Nelson

Helens Designwear

Name-It-Labels

Subway Nelson

Topz Shoe Repair Nelson

Emily Farquhar

Emblems NZ Ltd

Sharpies Nelson

TLB Global Industries Ltd. ■



Keeping the team healthy

Dunedin GP Paul Johns has a mammoth task over the next three weeks—ensuring everyone remains healthy for the duration of the trip.

Having been to three other World Summer Games “Dr Paul”, as the athletes refer to him, knows what’s involved taking a group overseas. He has been preparing for this trip since before the selection camp last year, providing advice to the selectors to determine whether the athletes would be up for the trip medically and assessing whether any of their medications would pose issues. Since then he has been working with the regional teams to document each athlete’s medications, allergies, vaccinations, and to learn more about their medical requirements.

In recent weeks Dr Paul has been preparing a detailed flight plan that takes into account departure and arrival times, meal times and sleep times. This has allowed him to plan precisely when each athlete should take their medications and ensure minimal disruption with time differences.

“The busiest time for me is on the plane but I find myself having to do odd things at odd moments,” he says.

“I have to plan for every contingency. I’m taking a big bag over with me with everything from medication for an outbreak of gastroenteritis to bandages and splints in case anyone breaks anything. We have medical support at the World Games but it’s useful to have someone close to the team at all times who knows the athletes and knows what everyone needs.”

We’re thankful to have Dr Paul on board! ■

Spotlight on Aquatics

While most of the delegation will be baking in 35°C heat, our aquatics team will be able to cool off in the OAKA’s Olympic Aquatic Centre. Come 26 June, Edward Borkin (Special Olympics Tamaki), Sam Donaldson (Special Olympics Wanganui), Almitra Langdon (Special Olympics Hutt Valley), Teresa Nicol (Special Olympics North Harbour), Jody Sanson (Special Olympics North Taranaki) and Eru Whakatihi (Special Olympics Horowhenua) will take to the water to compete in a range of events from 25m backstroke to 1500m freestyle.

“We have a good representation across the events; none of the New Zealand swimmers is in the same event,” says Head Coach Dave Burrowes (Special Olympics Hutt Valley).

“We talked over what events they wanted to do and what they were best at. Some have taken time off their existing personal bests in training and have been going to the gym and rowing to build up their stamina. Their training has gone swimmingly,” he jokes.

Palmerston North-based swimmer Eru Whakatihi agrees.

“[Dave] is the best. He makes me train hard. He makes all of us train hard; everyone in the team he wants to see do better. [Coach] Maria [Smith] has also taken me for extra swims,” he says.

“I can’t wait to be in Athens [and competing]. I swim fast, like real, real fast. I’m looking forward to reaching my goal of a new personal best and maybe a medal. If I get a gold, I’ll just be so proud! I’m going to get out there and just do it,” he says. ■

**Θέλω να νικήσω! Αν όμως δεν τα καταφέρω βοηθήστε με να προσπαθήσω με θάρρος!
(Let me Win! But if I Cannot win, Let me be brave in the attempt!)**