



WESTERN PLAINS ZOO

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News Release

For Tuesday 3 October 2006

ZOO TO PROVIDE UNIQUE SETTING FOR ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS

It's official...Western Plains Zoo is the venue for the sprint leg of the Junior World Orienteering Championships (JWOC), to be held in Dubbo in July 2007. Speculation as to the precise location for the sprint event has been rife ever since Dubbo was announced as the JWOC host city early this year.

JWOC Marketing Manager Paul Prudhoe said: "We chose Dubbo as host city because we felt the surrounding terrain really suited the more traditional orienteering events.

"We chose the Zoo for the sprint component because we felt it would provide a truly unique challenge for the competitors. The Zoo is a very different setting for a sprint event. In fact, 2007 will be the first time a World Championship event (at any level) has been held within a Zoo."

Western Plains Zoo General Manager William Garton said: "We are absolutely thrilled to have been chosen as the venue for this prestigious event. Next year represents the first time the JWOC have been held outside Europe (Lithuania was the 2006 host country) and we are looking forward to working closely with the organisers to make it a huge success."

Mr Garton said hosting the event would provide a wonderful opportunity to showcase not only the Zoo, but Dubbo and the surrounding region, to an international audience. The Championships are expected to attract as many as 30 mainly European nations, with each nation sending up to 6 male and 6 female orienteers.

The 2007 Junior World Championships, organised by the Orienteering Association of New South Wales (OANSW), consists of 5 events, and will take place from 8-13 July 2007, with the sprint component scheduled for Sunday 8 July.

Billed as a sport that combines athletic ability with mental skills, orienteering involves navigating around the bush, and sometimes streets and parks, using only a compass and a specially created map. The aim is to locate various checkpoints, which are set up on a range of natural and man-made features, with the fastest competitor earning the title of World Champion.

The sprint orienteering event, which Western Plains Zoo will host, is conducted over a shorter distance than the more traditional orienteering events and involves tricky navigation. This year's JWOC sprint male winner completed the 3.1Km Lithuanian course in just over 11 minutes, hence why sprint orienteering is often referred to as "navigation on the run".

In July 2007, JWOC sprint competitors will face the very different challenges associated with orienteering within a Zoo, namely trying not to be distracted by the animals or by the general public, as the Zoo will be opened for normal trade.

The JWOC organising committee feels the event will be great for Dubbo, presenting the Zoo and the city to the international stage. The events are expected to attract both national and international media coverage, especially from the traditionally strong orienteering Scandinavian nations.

In parallel with JWOC, OANSW will also be staging the Western Plains Carnival for the orienteering public. The Carnival includes the NSW State Championships, the Australian Long Distance

Championships and the Australian Schools Championships. The Carnival is expected to attract to Dubbo 1,000 - 1,500 runners over nine days.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: Meet at the Front Gate at 10.00am Tuesday, 3 October 2006.

For further information please contact Shallon McReaddie, Western Plains Zoo on 6881 1413.

For further information on the Junior World Orienteering Championships or on Orienteering in general, please contact Paul Prudhoe 0418 287 694 or Dave Lotty, Orienteering Association New South Wales on (02) 9660 2067 (or orienteering@sydney.net).