



MEDIA RELEASE

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**WORLD'S BEST TRIATHLETES HEAD TO GEELONG FOR ACCENTURE
WORLD CUP OPENER - APRIL 14**

Australia's triathlon capital, Geelong, will host the world's best triathletes including Olympic champion, Canada's Simon Whitfield, world champ Melbourne bred Peter Robertson and world no 1, the Gold Coast's Chris Hill, when Australia opens the 2002 ITU world series with the Accenture World Cup on Sunday April 14.

It will be the second elite triathlon event for the waterfront city, after staging the final Accenture round and ITU International points race over Easter. With Whitfield winning the March 31 race many Aussies - particularly Robertson who lost his lead to the Canadian in the final 500 metres - have some serious international scores to settle come April 14.

"Last Sunday was a good warm up for the World Cup. I've let him (Whitfield) have this one, so I'll come out in better shape next time and I know the course now," said Robertson after settling for 2nd place.

"I'm still on the comeback with running, I am not happy with it," said Robertson of a knee injury last November that kept him off the circuit till February. *"I really faded probably after the first lap of running at Geelong, and I struggled from then on, but it will be a different story next time."*

Racing in the men's division will be intense with a field of 60 likely to feature no fewer than five former world champions, the Olympic champion, World No 1 and over ten World Cup race winners. The entry list features the who's who of the tri world including Commonwealth Games representative Queensland's Miles Stewart, Accenture Series champ Courtney Atkinson, 2000 World Champion Frenchman Olivier Marceau and Kiwi Hamish Carter.

Along with the world's best men, Australia will host a field of 30 plus women, including world champion and current world No 1 Siri Lindley (USA), Accenture Series champion Barb Lindquist (USA) and Aussies Michellie Jones, Loretta Harrop and Nicole Hackett.

As with the men, the women's showdown also represents a real grudge match for the Aussies - after losing the Olympic Gold, 2001 World Championship and current top world ranking to foreign athletes. However the Australians have a good track record at home with every women's World Cup run in Australia, won by a local.

With \$AUD120 000 (US\$60,000) up for grabs and vital ITU points, World Cup racing gets underway at 11am on Sunday with the women, who will be followed by the men at 1.30pm.

Triathletes compete over the Olympic distance – with a 1.5km swim, 40km cycle and 10km run course. Racing starts with a wet suit swim on a one lap rectangular course from a pontoon moored off Steam Packet Gardens; and will be followed by eight laps of a 5km cycle course overlooking Corio Bay. Athletes will then finish with a four lap run along the Geelong waterfront.

Action is FREE to all spectators, with Victorian Premier Steve Bracks believing Geelong and its new \$300 million waterfront redevelopment, the perfect setting for world class triathlon action.

“Geelong provides a great course and scenic backdrop due to its superb waterfront facilities and excellent cycling and running courses. Continual facility upgrades guarantee that participants and spectators are able to experience a quality event in the finest of locations,” said the Premier.

President of Triathlon Australia David Burt says the course has been designed for spectators, with transition in the centre of the course at Steam Packet Gardens.

“If you base yourself near transition, the swim leg will happen right in front of you off Cunningham Pier, and then the athletes will pass transition 24 times during the bike and run legs,” said Burt.

“We also have a giant screen in the main spectator zone with a live feed of racing action from all areas of the course, backed by colourful and informative commentary.

“It is a testing course, with two hills and technical components in the cycle leg and one hill in each run lap, so it’s challenging for all the field,” said Burt.

Following the ITU Accenture World Cup in Geelong, athletes head for St Petersburg in Florida on April 27, for the second round in the series.

For further information contact Sara Jane Morris or Ingrid Roepers of IRPR on (02) 9360 1166 or sjmorris@irpr.com.au

ITU Accenture Geelong World Cup Schedule – FREE FOR ALL SPECTATORS!

11am ITU Accenture Geelong World Cup – Women’s Race
1.30pm ITU Accenture Geelong World Cup – Men’s Race

Race Course

Swim Start: 1.5km swim loop (wetsuit race) - Adjacent to Cunningham Pier

Bike Leg: 40km – 8 laps of a 5km loop. From Eastern Beach to Glenleith Avenue (two hills)

Run Leg: 10km – 4 laps of a 2.5km loop. Between Eastern Beach and Cavendish Street (one hill)

Transition: Steam Packet Gardens