

## **Report of the Interim Board of the Two Oceans Marathon NPC**

### **for the period 21<sup>st</sup> July to 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

#### **Board Structure**

Following the resignation of many of the elected directors, the Founding Members, namely Western Province Athletics and Celtic Harriers Club, appointed additional directors to ensure the business of the NPC could continue.

The interim board was constituted as follows

##### **New appointments**

Mr Chris Goldschmidt – WPA – elected as Chairman

Mr Glenn Muller – Celtic Harriers – elected as Vice-Chairperson

Mr Julius Oosthuizen – WPA

Mr Achmat Jacobs – WPA

Mr Krishna Patel – Celtic Harriers

Mr Stuart Mann – Celtic Harriers

Mr Craig February – Celtic Harriers (previously resigned)

##### **Existing directors**

Mr Ashraf Orrie – Ordinary Member (existing Board member)

Ms Toni Cavanagh – Ordinary Member (existing Board member)

Ms Nombini Zaku – WPA (existing Board member)

Ms Phumi Mlotshwa – Co-opted (existing Board member)

The appointment of the new board was made public on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. The week following the announcement was taken up with meeting and updating sponsors and key stakeholders.

As stated in the press release :

“Top priority for the new board is to continue the work of the previous board to repair the relationship between the event and the City of Cape Town following the breach of the permit conditions for the number of participants in this year’s race, as well as restoring the trust of the running community following incidents at this year’s event which detracted from their race experience. A comprehensive reform package has already been presented to the relevant City departments who were responsive and remain positively engaged, with ongoing meetings scheduled so that joint communication and coordinated planning can proceed.”

## **Event Approval**

The full board met with officials from the City of Cape Town Events Department on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025 where it was made clear that TOM had failed to uphold the promises made in earlier meetings to implement a turn-around strategy.

It was further emphasized that the City would not support an application for the 2026 event unless TOM presented clear and tangible evidence of its ability to stage a safe and compliant event. A deadline of 8<sup>th</sup> August 2025 (1 week) was given to submit this report.

The previous board had already engaged with two organizations as prospective event staging partners. Following the announcement of the new board, expressions of interest were also received from several other event companies.

The board reviewed the applications and conducted online interviews over two days, and on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August Stillwater Sports Management was announced as the selected Staging Partner.

A strategy document to stage the 2026 event was delivered to the City on the afternoon of Friday 8<sup>th</sup> August.

The following week we received confirmation from the City that Stillwater could submit an Event Application and on 22<sup>nd</sup> August permission was given to go ahead to submit detailed plans to stage the event on 11/12 April 2026.

## **Staging Partner**

For those who may not know, Stillwater manages the highly popular and successful ABSA Run Your City series as well as the Totalsports Women's Races around the country. They are well versed in the requirements of mass participation events in the city environment.

The relationship between TOM and Stillwater is a long-term partnership with TOM retaining ownership and oversight of the event with Stillwater managing the presentation and operational details. Both parties share in the profits, incentivizing Stillwater to increase sponsorship revenue and implement cost savings.

Stillwater has an experienced management team that will be supplemented by additional resources as required. The existing TOM staff will remain based at the TOM offices in Diep River working under the supervision of Stillwater.

## **2026 Event Plan**

The strategy of the 2026 event plan is to present the Ultra, Half and Trail runs with the runners' experience as the top priority.

Some decisions already made include:

No more than 14 000 entries for the Ultra and 17 000 entries for the Half will be sold. Entries will be initially allocated by a ballot process, after providing for international and charity entries. A further draw will be considered to ensure that as close to the maximum allowed numbers actually start the race.

The entry for the Half Marathon will include a complimentary race T-shirt.

Entry fees will remain the same as 2025.

The TOM website is being refreshed to improve navigation and the user experience.

A dedicated team has been put into place to monitor and respond to queries on the Totalsports Two Oceans Marathon social media platforms.

The Start, Route and Finish for the Ultra and Half will be similar to previous years.

Race Pack Collection and Expo will move to CTICC 2 with an experienced expo convenor already appointed.

The sizes and spacing of the start batches are being reviewed to address the concerns of congestion on the route.

The dog leg at Kirstenbosch for both the Ultra and Half will be removed by moving the Start line back to Dean Street.

The positions of the refreshment stations are being reviewed to ensure they comply with the ASA requirement for refreshments every 3km. Additionally the resourcing of each point will be analyzed to ensure they are sufficient to serve every runner without delay.

It is intended to still stage the Trail Run on Friday (10<sup>th</sup> April), but as it is a normal working and school/university day, a different start/finish venue will be required.

## **Two Oceans Marathon Initiative (TOMI)**

The appointment of the Staging Partner will free the TOM Board to focus more on activities under the TOMI umbrella. This will include community outreach and assistance under the four categories of Athletics Development, Environment, Education and Health and Wellness.

Donations from the 2025 event totaling R273 499 are still to be disbursed.

Charity involvement with the 2025 Totalsports Two Oceans Marathon through the Given Gain fundraising platform totaled R3.419 Million.

## **Problems with the 2025 Events**

As part of the planning for 2026, it has been necessary to review the permit breach and complaints about the 2025 events.

**Overselling entries in the Half Marathon.** The permit was for 17 000 participants.

Runners registered 20513

Started 18082

Finished 17957

The interim board cannot find any clear reason for the overselling and concludes that it was negligence due to inexperience and a lack of operational resources.

**Shortage of medals for the Half Marathon.** This was directly attributable to the oversell of entries. Additional medals were procured and distributed.

**Withdrawal of City Sponsorship.** Due to the breach of permit conditions, the City withdrew its sponsorship for City services. This cost TOM R1,7 million.

**Unpopular T-shirt design.** The board was responsible for the approval of the design.

**Legal action against Mr Stuart Mann for defamation against the TOM chairperson.** Hindsight suggests that the decision of the board to pursue legal action was ill advised as the application was unsuccessful and resulted in negative publicity for TOM. The action cost TOM slightly over R750 000 and resulted in the resignation of at least two board members. The interim board has settled the lawyers' accounts. The new board will consider whether any action should be taken to attempt to recover a portion of these costs from the co-applicant.

**Delay with Final Results.** Anti-doping testing returned two positive tests

4<sup>th</sup> place Ultra : Nkosikhona Mhlakwana positive for Erythropoietin(EPO) 3 year ban

1<sup>st</sup> Place Half : William Kaptain positive for Cannabinoids/Carboxy THA 1 month suspension

The results could only be declared final after the conclusion of the appeal process for the above sanctions. Both athletes have been disqualified and the results and prize money payments adjusted accordingly.

An upgrade to the TOM database will be considered to enable provisional results to be uploaded pending anti-doping results.

**Disciplinary issues.** A more robust and effective disciplinary process is required to address the many reported instances of irregularities with qualifying times, use of other athletes' entries, irregularities on the route, and batch jumping at the Start. TOM is in discussion with Comrades Marathon and other large local events to develop a united and consistent approach to these matters in accordance with World Athletics guidelines.

Further action for transgressions in the 2025 event may still be considered by the board after the 2025 AGM.

**Trail Run marking.** The trail runs were marred by poor marking and ineffective marshaling resulting in many runners getting lost or taking an incorrect route. The emergency number for the VOC (printed on the race bibs) was not functioning on the Friday.

## **Thanks**

The interim board of the Two Oceans Marathon NPC would like to thank all the sponsors and partners, as well as the running community for the support and goodwill that we have experienced since stepping into this role.

As the current custodians of the event that is so close to many runners' hearts and is embedded in the sporting landscape of Cape Town, we acknowledge the errors from the 2025 event and apologize to all affected parties. We further commit to honesty and transparency in all future communications with runners and stakeholders.

It has been a whirlwind two months, but we believe that the outcomes are positive for the event, and we now have a structure to ensure the future commercial and operational security of the event both in the short and long terms.

Only when addressing the details of the race does one appreciate how unrealistic it is to think that an amateur (unpaid) board that rotates members with regularity and a small office team can consistently deliver an event of the complexity of TOM.

So we would like to sincerely thank the past board members (and staff) for their passion, time and commitment in staging the 2025 event.

Yours sincerely

Interim Board – Two Oceans Marathon NPC

September 2025