



**Press release for immediate distribution - 19 December 2017**

## **Central West the Distance Running Capital of Australia - Phase 2**

So spectacular has been the success this year of the first NSW Regional Distance Running Championships, the organisers have put together an expanded competition for 2018, with the Marathon and 10k runs being added to the half marathons of 2017, Forbes joining and Optus endorsing the series in a major way as Naming Rights Sponsor.

“We are pleased to announce that the Forbes Running Festival will be joining Orange, Bathurst, Mudgee, Dubbo and Carcoar, and that the wonderful performance and potential of the series has been recognised by Optus, who have grabbed the opportunity to come on board as the naming rights sponsor. From now on the series will be called the Optus NSW Regional Distance Running Championships.” said Championships Coordinator Andrew Baulch.

All three elements of this announcement represent really major steps forward for distance running in NSW and Australia. With marathons and 10k runs being added, runners can choose a race that best suits their year’s preparation, for example running in the 10k at Orange and Dubbo and the Half at Bathurst, Forbes and Carcoar and the Marathon at Mudgee. Points can be accumulated from in all 16 races and each race is divided into six different age groups, so there are 96 races within races. The runners with the most points overall will be recognised in a ceremony after the Carcoar Cup, as will the winners in each age group.

The addition of Forbes Running Festival in early October represents a perfect bridge between the Mudgee and Dubbo Festivals in August, and the Carcoar Cup in November. Forbes Race Director Nick Field said “Forbes is certainly very keen to be part of this going forward. It’s a great idea.”

“When presented with the sponsorship proposal, Optus needed only a very short time to make up its mind that this year-round series involving 10,000 runners and their families was something that they wanted to be backing, said Manager of the Optus Business Centre, Central West, Adam Sawtell. “I was impressed by the Festivals’ emphasis on family involvement with often four, five or even six runners competing from the one family - all running in a race to suit their age and ability. Optus is excited to be backing this top-class regional competition, promoting as it does the health and well-being of Australians.”

We are so pleased to be able to make these announcements almost exactly two months before our first event of 2018, the Orange Running Festival. The participating events in date order are

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| 1. Orange Running Festival - February 2018 | 2. Bathurst Half Marathon - May 2018            |
| 3. Mudgee Running Festival - August 2018   | 4. Dubbo Stampede - August 2018                 |
| 5. Forbes Running Festival - Oct 2018      | 6. Carcoar Cup Running Festival - November 2018 |

\$8,000 of prizemoney has been put up for the 2018 championships, along with \$1,000 of trophies.

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