

PETER KING - ATHLETICS CANTERBURY MERIT AWARD 26th June 2023



This recipient is a stalwart supporter of cross country, road and trail running in Canterbury. His service to sport spans over two decades.

Like many volunteers in our sport, he began taking on leadership roles within his own club alongside his own active participation as a cross country runner. He was Secretary of the Port Hills Athletic Club Committee from 2004 to 2012, and then swapped to Treasurer. He has provided careful management and thorough reporting of club finances for 11 years. He is a Life Member of Port Hills.

Port Hills Athletic Club hosts two flagship events in the Canterbury cross country, road and trail running calendar. He has been Race Director of both. He was Race Director of the Shoe Clinic Asics 5K Series for several years. This pop-up event is held over five consecutive Tuesday evenings during summer, and caters for both recreational community runners, and able athletes. When the numbers were dwindling in the race for registered athletes, He came up with a clever way to include skilled – but non-registered – athletes by rebranding it as the ‘Competitive Race’ and treating it as one event made up of five component races. This allowed able non-registered athletes to enter the series with the payment of just one sanctioned fee. Numbers rose and the 5K series Competitive Race is now a popular summer event for able athletes, and spectators are treated to some excellent running.

He passed his 5K Series role on to another club member and took over as Race Director of the Crater Rim Ultra in 2021. Crater Rim Ultra is truly an enormous undertaking. There are five component races on the day, and the event has served as both the NZ and the Oceania Trail Running Championships. It weaves across huge distances on public and private land of Banks’ Peninsula. An army of Marshalls and other volunteers are required.

As he was already a member of the Crater Rim Organising Committee, he probably thought he knew what he was in for. He already managed the finances and the complex health and safety aspects of the event. But he cannot have anticipated the impact of Covid. He navigated Crater Rim through Covid, constantly pondering the financial and reputational impacts of a range of ‘what ifs’. Crater Rim 2020 had run as normal, operating in a window of time when Covid infection was low and domestic restrictions were light. Crater Rim 2021 was a different matter. In the end, the hard decision was made to cancel the event when Covid restrictions made it impossible to run it. His careful handling of the huge finances, and his strong connections with the event’s sponsors, allowed the organising committee to pay a partial refund to athletes who had entered, despite the race rules saying that would not happen. Competitors appreciated this gesture and returned in big numbers for Crater Rim 2022. An 83 km option was added to the mix of distances that year.

Focusing now on Athletics Canterbury, he has been heavily involved with the Athletics Canterbury centre over many years. He was Treasurer of Athletics Canterbury for several years and served as Manager of the Sports Development Coordinator. He has been a member of the Cross Country and Road Committee since 2013. He has been involved on the organising committee for the Takahe to Akaroa Road Relay since 2014 and has a leading role with the Canterbury Half Marathon Championships. He is a regular official at cross country and road events. You will often see him at a race venue, hours before the start, busily setting up the course.

Sports like ours thrive on the efforts of volunteers like him.

Peter King is a truly deserving of an Athletics Canterbury Merit Award – for exceptional service to athletics in the Canterbury region. Congratulations Peter.

Prepared by Bernadette Jago and presented by Daniel Reese 26th July 2023