More than 3800 participants in the 15th Alice Springs Masters Games were welcomed in emphatic style at the Opening Ceremony last night.

NT Chief Minister Adam Giles told the athletes this was their week to show their friends, their family and themselves what they can really do.

While 13 of the Games 32 sports had already kicked off, the night heralded a week of camaraderie and competition as participants renewed and made new friendships under the clear skies of Anzac Oval.

Many turned back the years as they broke training to party the night away with entertainment from Clearway, Dragon and The Beatnix.

Participants gathered in the Todd Mall from 5pm for the traditional march to the oval for the Games Opening by Mr Giles.

“This event was the first sporting event of its kind to be held in Australia,” he said.

“Since those early days, the event has gone from strength to strength with Alice Springs welcoming almost 50,000 competitors to this wonderful occasion over the past 28 years.

“The event has earned a reputation as “the friendly games” and people now come from all over Australia and overseas to compete here.

“At last count there were more than 3800 people registered to compete this week and more than 560 volunteers offering their time to help.

“That’s why it’s known as the friendly games.”

The Northern Territory Government has supported the Alice Springs Masters Games since its inception and is incredibly proud of the reputation this event has earned throughout the sporting community of Australia.”

Mr Giles said the Red Centre is a unique part of Australia and special events such as this add to the experience.

Alice Springs has grown from very humble beginnings as a relay station on the overland telegraph line in the 1800s.

“As an Alice Springs local it makes me extremely proud to be able to stand here today and open this event,” Mr Giles said.

“I would like to acknowledge the fine work of all the sports clubs, associations and individuals that goes into ensuring the success of this event.

“We also appreciate the support from the Alice Springs community, sponsors and local businesses, who help to ensure this event keeps building on its reputation as one of the must do sporting events on the Australian sporting calendar.

“I wish each and every one of you all the best in your chosen competitions and the personal challenges you have set yourself.

“You deserve full credit for your determination to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle no matter what your age.”

The Masters Games anthem was sung by local entertainer and Games Ambassador Shauna Hartig while the flag was raised.

Mr Giles then declared the Games open which was followed by a spectacular fireworks display and entertainment.

Alice Springs Masters Games Patron Dawn Fraser, who has championed the event since its conception in 1986 was unable to attend the opening but will arrive in Alice Springs on Tuesday.

Notables at the Opening were NT Administrator Sally Thomas, who will compete in the event and Games Ambassador at Large Daryl Somers.

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The Friendly Games

SPORTS HOROSCOPE

October 12, 2014 is far from being a favourable day. Excessive optimism, inferiority complex or being uncertain of a chosen path may give birth to failure. Don't start anything important today, don't give any promises, either – you may be very well overestimating your abilities while being caught in the moment.

ARIES

This is not the best day for having fun, going on a date and having guests over. Consider it as a transition period between a weekend and a working week. You may be lost in your thoughts about work plans, career achievements and failures and your relations with management.

TAURUS

Today’s circumstances will let you easily finalize what you’ve started and achieve good results. The recently chosen strategy will prove successful. Your tastes and preferences may change later in the day which can lead to unexpected changes in the relations with your constant partner.

GEMINI

For many Twins October 12, 2014 will start with solving yesterday’s problems. You won’t be able to relax without finding a solution or at least getting closer to finalizing your current endeavours. At the end of the day you will be able to transition to a more inspired life style.

CANCER

Cancer’s habit of being considerate of others’ opinions helps business affairs, but hurts true self expression and recreation. At the end of the day be sure to forget about all etiquettes and requirements and start acting naturally free.

LEO

Leo won’t be able to tick the load of all routine responsibilities, but at the same time no one will make it work hard, either. After having done away with the most urgent household chores, you can have a day off; otherwise, your friends may forget how you look.

VIRGO

Virgo is probably quite happy with the current scenario of its personal contacts and they don’t seem to bother it at all. You know how to express your feelings without making others uncomfortable. However, in the evening you and your other half may want new experiences.

LIBRA

The evening hours will give Libra inspiration and the feeling of being in love; they will also sharpen your creative abilities. Libra lacks the feeling of being love-struck. However, you may also have to face the necessity to do some household chores.

SCORPIO

Those Scorpio who dream of spending the rest of the day with their fees, do not choose any activity or mode of actions. However, first, they will have to finish important work. If you have planned something more important for the evening, you’ll have to put in some effort.

SAGITTARIUS

Sagitarian’s financial affairs do need some attention, it goes without saying. But today stars recommend that you avoid focusing on the life style only. On having done the important things be sure to allow yourself to enjoy more pleasant and less burdensome activities.

CAPRICORN

Do your duty and carry out your ambitious plans, but avoid becoming a victim of perfectionism. If something is not working out for you, put off your attempts till better times. If you can’t get along with everyone you are interested in, try to temporarily shift your focus.

AQUARIUS

Don’t be afraid of loneliness in the morning of October 12, 2014: it can prove healing and even relaxing. The ambitious plans with which you are ready to think through while alone may become the reality, even though this reality may be slightly different from how you picture it.

PISCES

Pieces should learn to choose its friends and patrons, but avoid advertising its helplessness without any need. If you are capable of solving a problem on your own, don’t resort to turning to high authoritative acquaintances for help.


The 1550km drive from Waikerie, on the banks of the Murray River in SA, could not deter 81-year-old Graham Walters from coming to his 15th Alice Springs Masters Games.

A self-confessed golfaholic, Graham was on the Alice Springs Golf Club committee when the first Games were held in 1986, so naturally he signed on to play. And he has kept competing despite retiring and leaving Alice Springs in the mid 1990s.

“The Games have been great right from the first one,” Graham said.

“The best thing about the Alice Springs Masters Games is meeting the people I know from years ago.”

“You make new friends every year as you meet people from all over the place.

“I won quite a few medals in the early years – but you got medals for almost everything then.

“My handicap is out to 30 now after it was down to 13 once.

“I don’t know if I’ll win a medal this year but I know the course fairly well.”

Golf only has two age division 35-59 and 60+ for men and women.

Do not be caught out and have your Games experience curtailed by injury - the Sports Medicine team is at the Games to help.

Free treatments provided for Games participants at the clinic, under the grandstand at TIO Traeger Park, are provided by experienced sports doctors and sports physiotherapists.

In 2012 85 per cent of athletes treated at the clinic returned to their chosen sports.

The treatments provided include:
• Immediate first aid.
• Diagnosis and medication.
• Reducing swelling and ongoing damage.
• Preventative care and taping.

Participants attending the clinic should bring their Medicare/health fund cards.

The Sports Medicine Clinic is one of the stops on the free Masters Games Bus Service.

The Friendly Games

Sports Medicine crew are here to look after you

telling tales from around the Games...

Volunteer Barb Williams, who is volunteering at her third Games, has been the centre of thank yous in the Games Centre.

Strangers are coming up to her and thanking her for sending out postcards posted in a red Post Office box about 2002 which her son bought at a lawn (garage) sale last year.

The post box was locked and it wasn’t until earlier this year that they discovered the postcards inside. Barb decided to write a letter and send it and the postcards on to their intended recipients.

Since then she has received letters and emails of thanks and people coming to participate in the Games have taken the time to thank her personally.

Games registration and volunteer coordinator Alicia Shoulta has been building support at the Alice Springs Masters Games.

She won a silver medal with a time of 2:8:23.

There was no pressure from Games Manager Jim Lawrie to be on duty for the 8am opening of the Games Centre. But she wasn’t able to attend the medal presentation.

So the Games Centre was brought to a standstill as the medal was presented to her personally.

The players in all grades will be able to recover and be at their best for the finals on Thursday and Friday.

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The Alice Springs Masters Games are to be so popular that an amazing tradition appears to be re-occurring.

Several magnetic stickers on the sides of the Games officials vehicles are being ‘souvenired’. Games officials understand the fascination with owning an official Games vehicle sticker but have pleaded that the stickers be left on the vehicles.

There were a couple of omisions on the Honour Board printed on Page 43 of the Souvenir Program. If you were one, please let the friendly staff at the Games Centre know so you can be included on the list if you come back for the 30th anniversary Alice Springs Masters Games in 2016.

SPORTS HORSOCOP

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Father and son duo wheel’n to success

Father and son Michael and Chris Smith will be looking to repeat their gold medal success in the final event of the BMX at the Alice Springs Masters Games today. They won their age groups in the 24" event on Friday night.

Michael had a perfect night winning the five heats against Anthony Prow and Des Kelly in the 50+ men division. “It has taken a long time to get to a stage where I can win gold,” Michael said afterwards.

Anthony and Des battled out the minor placings with Anthony finishing second four times. Chris won his gold in the 23-34 and 50+ age group respectively.

Gavin Cohen won gold in the 45-49 age group. He just missed out on a perfect night when Stephen Rosier, who finished with the silver, pipped him on the line in one of the heats.

Unfortunately for tonight’s racing, on 20” bikes, 40-44 gold medallist Stuart Wright returns to Gawler, South Australia for work commitments tomorrow.

He came to Alice Springs for the NT Titles and stayed on to compete in the Games.

There are two women riding BMX, Brooke Klarerbeek and Rhonda Villiger in the 23-34 and 50+ age group respectively.

Racing at the Red Centre BMX Club on Len Kittle Drive (south of The Gap) begins at 5pm.

Age proves no limits

Age does not seem to stop the competitors in the Alice Springs Masters Games from producing amazing performances.

The half marathon yesterday morning was a case in point as three of the top 20 overall finishers were in their 60s.

Tom Hobbs, from Canton Beach in NSW, at 77 was the oldest of the 74 runners to complete the course.

He clocked a time of 2:46:42.

Philip Russell, 51, from Yalalunga was the outright winner in the good time of 1:23:08.

Interestingly the third overall runner to finish was Fiona Coyle, 30, in the equally good time of 1:30:53.

Neither Philip nor Sarah expected to be returning home with gold medals but they have certainly set the pace for the running events to come - including the Masters Mile on Thursday afternoon and the 10km run on Friday morning.

Philip took control of the race in the first kilometre and then ran consistently to finish almost a minute ahead of Reuben McLoughlin, 30. Fiona was using the run in preparation for an upcoming iron woman event.

Both looked for a consistent pace throughout the run which Philip said was the key to success.

In the spirit of friendship that prevails across the board for the week of the Games, Alice Springs Town Council Chief Executive Officer Rex Mooney and Pagano Cricket were the final participants to finish as they crossed the line together in a time of 3:17:53.

There has been some confusion about the details for the Shuttle Bus Service on Pages 10 and 11 of the Competitor Handbook provided when participants registered.

The free bus runs a circular route from the Alice Springs CBD (the rear of the Civic Centre and across the road from the Post Office) to venues along Gap Road including Traeger Park, and Barrett Drive - Lasseters Hotel Casino and DoubleTree by Hilton.

The map on Page 11 is correct but the bus does not stop at Hotel Ibis Styles or Todd’s Backpackers. People staying at these venues will have to walk to a stop outside the nearby sporting venue.

This free service will begin at 8am daily and continue until 5pm. No one should have to wait more than half an hour to catch the bus at any stop.

There is a Dial-A-Bus Service that can be booked the day before any event. It is strictly for travel between accommodation venues and the sporting venue.

This service will run from 7am until 11pm but must be booked by calling 1800 487 287.

An Early Bird service has been arranged to pick people up for the early morning Athletics events.

There are two buses with pick-ups at MacDonnell Range Caravan Park and Alice Motor Inn (at 4:45am), Lasseters Hotel/Casino and Anzac Oval carpark (at 5am), Araluen Art and Cultural Centre carpark and Wintersun Caravan park (at 5.15am). Competitors who miss these pick-ups will have to make their own way to the events.

The Games Centre is open from 9am to 5pm Sunday to Friday and from 9am to 4pm on Saturday and 10am to 1pm on Sunday.

There is even more outreach from the Alice Springs Masters Games to the general community this year.

The fun and colour of the event will be broadcast across video and social media as well as through the Advocate and Friendly Times.

This allows us to show our family, friends and the rest of Australia what the Games is all about.

The Masters Games is now on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. See left for the details and official hashtags.

We encourage everyone to share their stories and photos with us on social media.

Don’t miss the next seven issues of The Friendly Times online. It is the only place to find it as it is not being printed this year.

Participants will also have the chance to see themselves up in lights in the Todd Mall, with a big screen to broadcast snippets of Games action throughout the next week.

The big screen will be positioned in the Todd Mall outside Tourism Central Australia.

It will show highlights of the Games, which will be updated each day of the Games to showcase the characters, fun and healthy competition that the Friendly Games is famous for.

A couple of sports will be featured each day as will the fantastic music and specials at Alice entertainment venues.

For Games info:

Call 1800 487 287.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tr>
<td>Archery</td>
<td>8am-12pm</td>
<td>Alice Springs Shooting Complex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics - Track &amp; Field</td>
<td>10am &amp; 12pm</td>
<td>Traeger Park Oval</td>
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<tr>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>9am</td>
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<td>Basketball</td>
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<td>BMX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>1pm, 2pm &amp; 3pm</td>
<td>CDU Oval, Jim McConville Park &amp; Rhonda Davis Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cycling - Track &amp; Road</td>
<td>9am &amp; 12pm</td>
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<td>Darts</td>
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<td>Eightball</td>
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<td>Alice Springs Golf Club</td>
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<td>Competition</td>
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