

TQ 2023 up and running

One hundred and sixty kilometres in one day is the enormous challenge that will face some of Australia's best endurance horses and riders at Imbil this year.

Preparations and planning for the 57th Tom Quilty Gold Cup National Championship to be held this year at the Stirling's Crossing Equestrian Complex has got off to a flying start with a highly-successful committee meeting 160 days ahead of the 160km event to be held June 23-25.

The Quilty, as it is known among horse enthusiasts, is an annual event and was first run in 1966 when the legend himself, RM Williams, wrote to his friend, Tom Quilty, looking for support to run the race.

Tom Quilty donated \$1000 which was used to make a gold cup to be awarded to the winner. The original gold cup now resides in the Stockman's Hall of Fame in Longreach Queensland.

The Stirling's Crossing complex is a purpose-built endurance ride base and Arabian horse stud a few kilometres from the picturesque township of Imbil in South East Queensland's historic Mary Valley.

The Stirling's Crossing Endurance Club, will be hosting the event this year, which was originally scheduled to be held in Victoria this September.

The race these days is hosted on an annual rotation basis but there have been major disruptions over the past few years due to Covid restrictions and a string of bad weather.

Stirling's Crossing Endurance Club president Kim Moir said, despite the short time-frame, the club was both grateful and excited to be given the opportunity to host the next Tom Quilty Gold Cup.

"Our team of members and volunteers have a great deal of experience and knowledge in running successful endurance events, including the 2019 Tom Quilty.

"To get the event organised is a challenge in



The Tom Quilty 2023 planning committee at Stirling's Crossing Equestrian Complex in Imbil. 317343

itself and we are determined to put the Covid lockdowns and horrid weather that have disrupted our sport over the past few years behind us."

Along with the change of venue, the 2023 event has been rescheduled to the week of the 23-25 June.

The club is expecting about 250 to 300 horses and riders from all parts of Australia and overseas to muster just before midnight for the start of a five-leg course that traverses through the Imbil State Forest.

The Quilty is a test of skill and stamina for both horses and riders who are required to qualify for the ride by achieving open status, and each rider must have successfully com-

pleted a 160-kilometre endurance ride.

As with all endurance events, the health and well-being of the horses are top priority.

Owner of the complex and Tom Quilty Gold Cup winner himself, Matthew Sample said it was a privilege to have this marvellous event at Stirling's again in 2023, after such a successful 2019 event.

"Our hope is that we can again be a showcase for the sport of endurance and that our venue provides all our visitors with fond memories of what is undoubtedly the premier event on our annual calendar.

"We want everyone who is coming to Stirling's that week, riders, support crews, volunteers and spectators, to have a great time."



Ride base at the 2019 Tom Quilty at Stirling's Crossing Endurance Complex, Imbil, Queensland. 317363



2019 Tom Quilty winner Kaylea Maher crosses the finish line at Stirling's Crossing Endurance Complex at Imbil, Queensland. 317363

Pictures: COLIN MCLELLAN

To host an event such as the Quilty takes an enormous amount of planning and co-ordination.

Throughout the competition week, many of the activities will need to be supported by volunteers.

The organising team will have established a web page where anybody interested in donating some of their time to help at the TQ23, can provide their name and contact details, so that a volunteers roster can be established.

Keep your eyes out for more information on the website tomquilty.com.au as well as Facebook and Instagram pages.

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