



PRESS RELEASE

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The 2010 PowerNet Tour of Southland has followed the lead of other Australasian events and will not be an UCI-registered road cycling event in 2010.

Cycling Southland Chief Executive Nick Jeffrey is relieved that the international body has finally given some direction as to the Tour's ability to continue to operate under the UCI's onerous Road regulations.

"We have been seeking clarification for months. In fact our initial correspondence was sent in April of 2009 and since then we have been working with our Australian counterparts to seek a considered approach from UCI towards hosting large scale road events in the Oceania region," Jeffrey said.

"We are not surprised that our request for a UCI-Calendar event under a variation of the rules has been declined. We feel that while UCI accreditation has been valuable in the past, it has become apparent that the event has the flexibility to attract New Zealand's top national and international riders by being a stand-alone National Tour."

"In the past two years we have struggled to allow our top riders to take place. Yesterday we couldn't offer a ride to our Pro-Tour riders Julian Dean, Hayden Roulston or Greg Henderson. Today we can."

"We continue to be concerned that the international body remains completely out of step with the development needs of road cycling in Oceania and the Asia-Pacific region. At its highest level the UCI is questioning the lack of events registered on the UCI Oceania Tour calendar for the 2010-11 season. There is only one UCI calendar event in New Zealand and Australia this season. The UCI should be asking itself serious questions as to why that might be."

Major sponsor PowerNet has re-confirmed its support of the Tour.

Chief Executive of PowerNet Limited Martin Walton said, "We regret the decision of the UCI and that the UCI has not granted sensible dispensations for the Oceania region. This decision will not encourage the development of UCI ranked events in Australasia."

"PowerNet encourages continued lobbying of the UCI by Cycling Southland and other associations to establish a framework that supports the development of cycling and future high-quality UCI-calendar events in the Oceania region."

"Despite the UCI decision we continue to support the position of Cycling Southland and will maintain our support of the PowerNet Tour. The PowerNet Tour provides significant benefits to our community and to high performance road cycling in Australasia. For this reason, irrespective of the UCI decision, we believe that the PowerNet Tour will continue to grow as a National Tour and

provide an opportunity for our riders to compete with seasoned professional riders. Fortunately the Tour now allows New Zealand's international cyclists the ability to compete and showcase their talent to an appreciative audience in Southland and New Zealand which in the past has been seriously limited by the UCI rules," Walton said.

The UCI's major issues around the PowerNet Tour appear to be:

- The lack of foreign teams (a minimum of five should ride under UCI regulations);
- The appearance of mixed teams (UCI-accredited riders can only ride with UCI riders from the same team)
- The charging of an entry fee.

"These would all be fine if we were in the middle of Europe with twenty countries within three hours. We aren't. To run a financially-viable event is challenging enough in the current environment let alone having to fund extra teams from off-shore and not be able to seek any form of even minor contribution from the riders and/or teams," Nick Jeffrey said

The UCI also draws reference to the fact that not all Commissaires' cars have an open roof and Officials' cars didn't match the size set by the rules.

"It gives you an indication of how suffocating financially and logistically the UCI's rules have become. I doubt whether we'd get many volunteers into open-roof cars on the Tour given past years' weather conditions," Jeffrey said with a smile.

"We have now gone from having to work with over 200 pages of regulations under the UCI to running a National Tour with four bullet points to guide us."

Jeffrey said "It's a sad indictment on the international body, but this is truly a weight off our shoulders. We can now get on with running the country's premier Tour, with the riders we want and continue to showcase the racing, the hospitality and the experience that is the PowerNet Tour, without being stymied by European-centric regulations."

The 54th Tour of Southland, sponsored by PowerNet will run from November 1st to 6th 2010.

For further information contact:

Nick Jeffrey
Chief Executive
Cycling Southland
03 2173215
027 228 9194
nick@cyclingsouth.org.nz