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2016 PORT TO PORT MTB OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

The 2016 Port to Port MTB was officially launched in Newcastle today by NSW Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, Stuart Ayres, with the event returning to the Newcastle region for the third consecutive year.

"In just two years the Port to Port MTB has grown to be a major sporting event for regional NSW, attracting participants from Australia and overseas. This event utilises the best mountain bike trails in the country and showcases the spectacular scenery of Port Stephens, Newcastle and the Hunter Valley," Mr Ayres said.

"The NSW Government is proud to have secured the Port to Port for NSW through our tourism and major events agency Destination NSW. I'm thrilled to be in Newcastle to launch this event and I encourage everyone to register their participation early for an even bigger and better Port to Port in 2016," he said.

Following on from the success of the second annual event held earlier this year which saw more than 500 recreational and professional riders participate, Event Director Chris Heverin says that for 2016 there is going to be a huge focus on getting people Port to Port ready.

"Over the last two years Port to Port MTB has established itself as a must attend event. We have worked to create a world class course with amazing trails and in 2016 we have in place four wonderful days of riding that will appeal to riders of all ages, abilities and fitness levels," Mr. Heverin said.

"Today we also announce some brilliant initiatives including our new Ladies Lane, the Weekend Warrior Award and a partnership with local mountain bike groups, whose help and involvement is absolutely invaluable," he said.

"We are also very pleased to be releasing some fantastic new training programs and rides to get people 'Port to Port ready' in the build up to this fabulous event. Port to Port MTB is ready to explode in 2016 and we urge riders from all over Australia and throughout the world to join us in Newcastle and the Hunter 2016," he said.

The future for Port to Port MTB is extremely exciting and organisers believe that it is important to give back to the community, announcing the Westpac Helicopter Service as their chosen Charity Partner for 2016.

"I am proud to announce the appointment of the Westpac Helicopter Service as the official charity partner for Port to Port MTB 2016. The Westpac Helicopter Service is an institution in Newcastle and the Hunter and does an amazing job in servicing the community in times of need. Port to Port MTB will be encouraging our riders, support crew, sponsors and friends to dig deep and support this great charity, whilst driving awareness and profile through our extensive digital and broadcast channels," Mr. Heverin said.

The Port to Port MTB begins at the tranquil Nelson Bay Marina, where riders are greeted by four days of coastal tracks, fire trails, testing hill climbs and steep descents through the Hunter Valley, Lake Macquarie and Newcastle Region.

Registrations for the 2016 Port to Port MTB are now open. Please visit our website at http://www.porttoportmtb.com for more information on the event.

For more information, images, footage and interview opportunities please contact:

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