

# Climb Coogee event given three year trial by Randwick Council

Ben James, Southern Courier

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FORGET the City2Surf or Balmoral Burn, Coogee is to get its own flagship running festival.

Climb Coogee, which is being billed as Australia's steepest hill challenge, will be held for the first time across the weekend of April 13 and 14, 2019.

Athletics Australia (AA) has teamed up with Coogee Surf Life Saving Club for the festival with money raised going to The Royal Hospital for Women Foundation.

The running event, which will be called Climb Rainbow For Royal, is a 500m race, mostly along Dundas St, with gradients steeper than Mosman's Balmoral Burn.

The course starts at Trenerry Reserve where there will be a big screen, live music, food stalls and other entertainment.

Runners will head west along Neptune St then turn left into Dundas St where the gradient ramps up.



*Madeleine Kordina (4) and Amelie Kordina (9) make hard work of Rainbow St, near to the finish line.*

*Picture: AAP / Image Bob Barker*

They will turn onto Rainbow St and finish at Blenheim Park.

As well as competitive races there will be various fun runs for all ages and fitness levels.

The festival will continue on the Sunday with Coogee Surf Life Saving Club's annual open swim.

There will also be a corporate function, charity events and live music across the weekend.

James Matthews, from Athletics Australia said he expected everyone from Olympians to fun runners to take on the challenge.

“The event aims to create a strong and genuine connection with participants that positively positions Coogee and South East Sydney as an iconic backdrop to get involved in walking, running, ocean swims and other outdoor fitness activities,” he said.

“We are committed to supporting health and wellbeing by bringing the community together for a fun and inclusive festival that will provide strong social, economic and health benefits to the region.”



*The event has been created in memory of Geoff Martin*

The event has been created in memory of Geoffrey Martin OAM, who was a legend of both the world of athletics and Surf Lifesaving,

Mr Martin, who died earlier this year, was a Coogee Surf Lifesaving Club stalwart and was regarded as one of the world's greatest athletics starting officials.

He fired the gun for the 100m at the Sydney Olympics.

Randwick Council voted to give event organisers a three-year trial period.

Councillors said the event would promote a healthy lifestyle, be good for local business and help tackle Coogee's reputation as a haven for boozy backpackers. Organisers said the event would be alcohol free.



*The route is said to be steeper than the Balmoral Burn, pictured. Picture: AAP IMAGE / Troy Snook*

“The country certainly is in an obesity epidemic,” Cr Brendan Roberts, Liberal Party, said.

“I think associations like Athletics Australia should be applauded for these initiatives ... I’m very happy and thankful they think Coogee could be a good location. Because Coogee is the jewel in our city and this would be a perfect location to do something like this.”

Cr Murray Matson, Greens, called for the decision to be delayed and said council should carry out additional consultation.

But his amendment was voted down.

Cr Dylan Parker praised organisers for their flexibility and willingness to compromise while Harry Stavrinou, Liberals, said it would put a positive spotlight on Randwick.



*Councillor Brendan Roberts said the event was important to tackle obesity problems.*



*Councillor Dylan Parker praised organisers for their flexibility.*

*Picture: (AAP IMAGE/ Danny Aarons)*

“It is good for local business, good for the local community and also good for charity. What more could we ask?”

Cr Noel D’Souza, Independent, said events like this are needed to tackle the country’s health problems.

“Here is an opportunity to do something mitigating. Here is an opportunity to say to young people, don’t step back home and play with your computers and iPad. Come out and do something positive. Come out and do something healthy.”

There will be an official event launch in November.