

Ironman 'invaluable' to city economy

By [Odette Parfitt](#)

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Hosting the Ironman 70.3 World Championship will cost the metro more than R200m over the next year, but the event will be invaluable to the city's economy and tourism industry. This is the positive view of previous host cities of the event that will be held in Nelson Mandela Bay in September next year.



Image Source: [Where2Stay](#)

It was previously reported that the metro's host agreement with Ironman required an investment of at least R8m, with roadworks amounting to a further R200m as an additional prerequisite.

"If anyone doubts [the benefits of the event], just give them my number," Dominique Pich, who was race director when the event was held in Mont-Tremblant in Quebec, Canada, in 2014, said. Pich said the city had decided to bid to be the first non-American host, primarily because of the international visibility it would bring. "We were not in a position to host if we did not invest strongly in our infrastructure," he said.

"[This included] swimming, because we have a magnificent lake but it was unsecured and not meant for open swimming - and we needed to adjust our running course [which meant paving] just over 6km of road."



Plan to develop lake precinct

24 Jul 2015



A new influx of economic impact by international visitors

The city and the province of Qubec invested close to CAD 10m (about R112m) in preparing for the event.

"Coming out of the Ironman, the region became a more secure destination for motorists, cyclists and runners. It started to change the DNA of the community, and that was never in the business plan [when we made our bid] in 2010."

In return, the city earned at least CAD 7.5m (nearly R84m) in tourism revenue alone.

"We surveyed our athletes and we were able to underline that each party of an athlete would generate close to CAD 3,000 in tourism impact.

"We had just over 2,700 athletes registered and about 2,500 athletes showed up, [which meant revenue of] about CAD 7.5m.

"The average stay of the athletes amounted to just over five nights.

"[We were] not just pushing money inside the province from one region to another, but receiving a new influx of economic impact by international visitors, and next year Port Elizabeth will be in the same boat."

Invaluable international exposure

Nicole McNaughton, a spokeswoman for the Sunshine Coast in Australia, said the event had brought a significant economic contribution when the region hosted the championship last year. "The international exposure of hosting the event here was invaluable, as our beautiful beaches and sunny surrounds were showcased to a global audience in the qualifying stages and during the actual event," McNaughton said.

"More than 2.4 million minutes of live stream footage of our region was broadcast to a worldwide audience and more than 10,000 images of the Sunshine Coast were shared through social media.

"This showcasing of the region, alongside the positive testimony of event participants and their guests, is a great advertisement for our region and a strong driver for future tourist visitation."

McNaughton would not divulge how much the region invested to host the event, but said it had generated an estimated AUD 15m (R162m) for the region's economy.

The most recent host city, Chattanooga in the US state of Tennessee, was still calculating their revenue after this year's September event. Tim Morgan, of the municipality's sports committee, said he believed the projected estimate of \$22m (R314m) was conservative. "Overall, the championship had an amazing economic impact on our region, strengthened how our community works together and gave us the platform to introduce Chattanooga to the world through sport," Morgan said.

Source: Herald