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30 December 2019

**Picture perfect: Towards Zero Race Torquay**
For international riders, the inaugural Towards Zero Race Torquay will be a postcard that’s come to life – says leading cycling commentator Matt Keenan.

The Thursday 30 January event will be the official prelude to the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race weekend, with Keenan predicting the world-class peloton will be thrilled to be in Torquay.

“For the internationals, it’s going to be great to have the chance to base themselves on the Surf Coast for the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race. They know about the surf culture because they’ve all been on plane rides and watched Australian surfing documentaries – most of which mention Torquay and Bells Beach.

“They know about the Surf Coast lifestyle and this is going to be the one race that really demonstrates it. It’s like they’re racing in an Australian postcard.”

Towards Zero Race Torquay is a 13km circuit which starts on The Esplanade near the Price Street intersection and takes in Bell Street, Great Ocean Road, Duffields and Messmate Roads, before heading back via South Beach Road, Horseshoe Bend Road and The Esplanade. The women will complete eight laps of the course while the men will complete 10.

Keenan – a prominent broadcaster who lends his voice to the world’s biggest cycling events – plans to ride the Torquay course the week of the race.

“Racing wise, it’s potentially windy which makes it a technically hard place to race,” he said.

“You don’t need mountains to make it an interesting race. If you look at the (2019) Tour de France, one of the best stages was a flat stage where it was windy. Teamwork is going to be really important.”

With the UCI 1.1-classified Towards Zero Race Torquay stamping the Surf Coast Shire as a key player on the massive Australian summer cycling calendar, Keenan encouraged residents and visitors to support the inaugural event.

“It’s a rare opportunity to see the world’s best in your backyard,” he said.

“Melbourne is renowned for international sporting events like the Grand Prix and the Australian Open but how often do you get to see the world’s best in any sport in a regional area?

“Torquay is going to be welcoming Tour de France riders and women riders who will be competing at the Tokyo Olympic Games. There are going to be so many top-10 riders in the world racing in Torquay, which is so exciting.”

He described the introduction of Towards Zero Race Torquay as a great move.

“It’s a big step forward for the whole Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race weekend, to have this event in Torquay. It’s going to be really fast and really exciting. There is also a great link between this area and Cadel, having trained for so long in this region.”

People can line the Towards Zero Race Torquay course to cheer on the riders or check out the action from the Event Village on the foreshore area near The Esplanade-Price Street intersection. The Event Village will feature entertainment including food stalls, boutique bars, music and kids’ activities. There will be seating, tables, umbrellas and beanbags. Bell Street will be another popular viewing point.

For more information, visit **[www.cadelroadrace.com/race-torquay](http://www.cadelroadrace.com/race-torquay)**.

**Towards Zero Race Torquay – Thursday 30 January 2020**

* Elite women (8 x 13km laps): 12pm start, approx. finish 2.45pm
* Elite men (10 x 13km laps): 4.50pm start, approx. finish 7.45pm

**Not for publication:**

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