

News Release

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ANZ Support Band helps Kiwi fans reach out to athletes in Tokyo

ANZ is to introduce a world-first wearable device that will enable Kiwi fans to show their support to New Zealand's Olympic and Paralympic athletes in Tokyo.

The ANZ Support Band is a Bluetooth wristband that will enable fans at home to send a "pulse of support" to athletes at the Tokyo Games from 23 July by tapping their device or directly through the NZ Team app.

Athletes will be given a band which can vibrate when a pulse of support is received. It will also show them how many pulses of support have been sent.

With Covid-19 limiting global travel and large gatherings, it's possible that there will be fewer spectators present at the games.

"Whenever our athletes perform they draw a lot of inspiration from the support of their fans. Because fans might not be present in Tokyo, we looked at a new way for Kiwis to show their support," says Antonia Watson, CEO of ANZ New Zealand.

"With the ANZ Support Band fans can show their teams they are still with them and thinking of them even though they can't be physically there."

The ANZ Support Band – which was developed in consultation with several current Olympians and Paralympians - will be launched closer to the start of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. ANZ will make the technology available to other nations' teams.

"We're all part of the global Olympic family and not having our friends and families with us will impact us all – whether we're representing New Zealand or one of the world's 206 Olympic nations," says Kereyn Smith, CEO and Secretary General of the NZ Olympic Team.

"That's why ANZ decided to open up the technology for all to use. Right now we and the world's athletes need this more than ever."

Fiona Allan, Chief Executive and Secretary General of Paralympics New Zealand, says the sharing of the technology embodies the values of the Paralympics.

"The Paralympics are about athletes coming together to showcase courage, determination and inspiration. Sharing this technology helps promote the spirit of equality and inclusion," she says.

New Zealand sprint cyclist and Rio Silver medallist Sam Webster, competing in his second Games, expects the atmosphere at this year's Olympic Games to be very different.

"As an athlete, you thrive off the energy a crowd can bring. Without that support it's tough, but I'm looking forward to sporting my band and seeing the daily support come in knowing my fellow Kiwis are behind me," he says.

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