



The SparTAN

Extending the Tan to 4.2km to create Melbourne's own marathon loop – where 10 laps equals the ultimate challenge

Vision & Purpose

The vision is to extend Melbourne's iconic Tan Track from 3.8 km to 4.2 km, transforming it into a full marathon loop where ten laps equal 42.2 km — the marathon distance.

This extension creates a natural platform for runners of all levels to challenge themselves with measurable goals: one lap for fitness, five laps for a half marathon, and ten for the full.

It elevates the Tan from a popular training circuit to a landmark endurance loop, promoting health, inclusivity, and Melbourne's status as a running city.

The project also honours the legacy of the Melbourne Marathon Spartans, inviting the next generation to join the journey, one lap at a time.



The Current State of the TAN

The Tan Track is a 3.827 km gravel loop encircling Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens and Kings Domain.

It's one of the city's most iconic and well-used running routes, drawing thousands of locals and visitors each day.

With mostly flat terrain and the famous Anderson Street Hill adding a challenge, it suits runners of all levels.

The track is lined with distance markers every 250 metres, water fountains, and is fully floodlit from 5 a.m. to midnight — ideal for early-morning jogs or those long 30 km sessions after work as part of serious marathon training.



SparTAN 4.22km Melb Mara lap

The Spartan Lap reimagines Melbourne's iconic Tan Track by extending its distance by 392.5metres from 3,827metres to a precise 4,219.5metres, aligning perfectly with marathon (10 laps) and half-marathon (5 laps) distances.

This subtle yet strategic modification maintains the spirit and flow of the original Tan while providing runners with a simple, goal-oriented training benchmark — no calculations, just laps.

The Spartan Lap is designed to inspire, simplify marathon prep, and honour the endurance legacy of Melbourne Marathon Spartans.

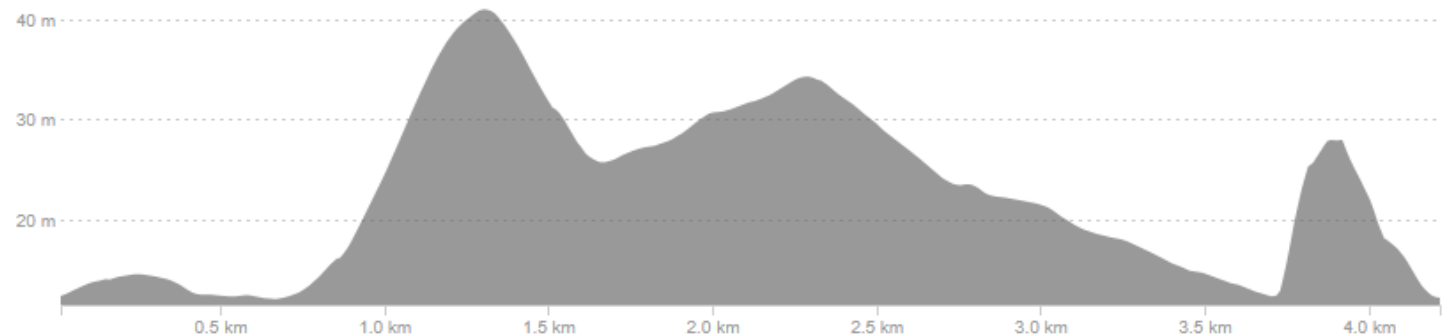
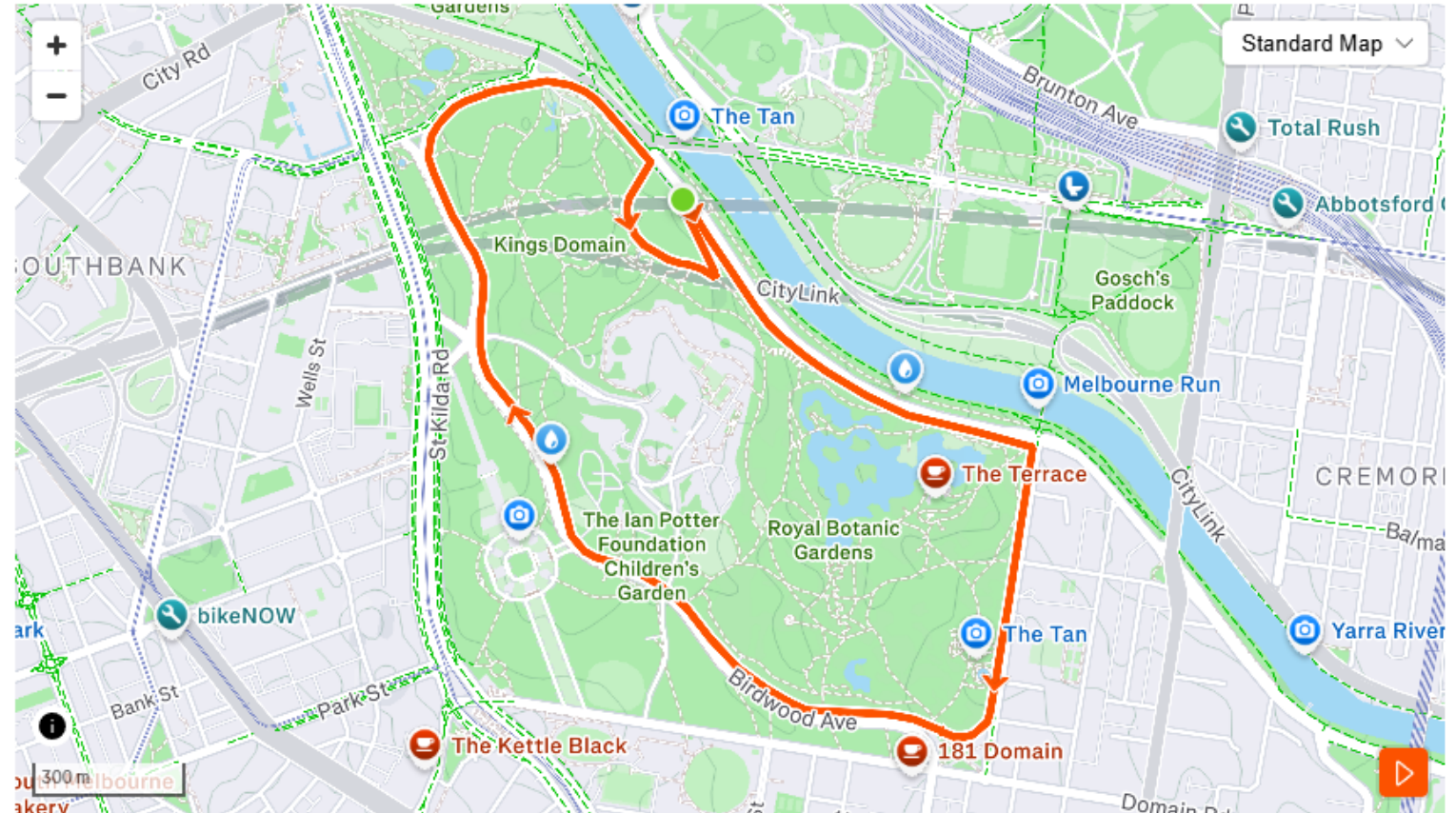
CREATED BY

Vilim Podreka

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Route and Elevation



The SparTAN Lap



The SparTAN Lap – follow the Spartan Helmet

The SparTAN Lap

Along the 4.2 km Spartan Lap, we propose the installation of a series of permanent story markers, each highlighting a key moment, race, or figure in the history of marathon running. These markers will be placed at intervals around the lap, creating a motivational and educational circuit for runners.

Stories will include:

- the origin of the marathon in ancient Greece, the Boston Marathon as the world's oldest annual event (since 1897)
- Australia's own Traralgon Marathon (the nation's oldest, since 1968)
- the legendary Comrades Ultra in South Africa — a race the Melbourne Marathon proudly qualifies for.
- Local heroes will be celebrated too: the Melbourne Marathon's launch in 1978
- Victoria's first marathon from Frankston to Melbourne in 1909
- Aswell as tributes to iconic Victorian runners like Robert de Castella, Steve Moneghetti, and Lee Troop.

Each marker will be designed as a low-profile plinth or upright post, made of durable materials (e.g. timber, steel, or sandstone) to blend into the natural surrounds of the Tan. A brief story, date, and image or QR code (linking to a longer story or video) will be included.

Together, these form a “Spartan Story Trail” — an inspiring loop where every lap connects runners with the spirit and legacy of marathon running.



The SparTAN Lap

The Spartan Lap reimagines the Tan — one of Melbourne’s most iconic and heavily visited running routes — as a complete 4.2km loop that aligns perfectly with marathon and half-marathon distances.

Already a high-footfall tourist and fitness destination, the Tan holds a special place in Melbourne’s identity and even features in the Melbourne Marathon course itself.

By formalising the Spartan Lap, we not only enhance its value as a training tool, but we activate it as a community platform.

The route will host Spartan-led events throughout the year — including group runs, clinics and training sessions — with veteran Spartans on-site to mentor and inspire runners of all abilities.

Informative markers will share stories from Melbourne’s rich running history, connecting every lap to a legacy of endurance.

Most importantly, this project will honour the commitment, persistence, and grit of Spartan legends who have shaped the Melbourne Marathon across decades — using their stories to inspire the next generation of runners.

The goal is to make this more than a track — to make it a legendary circuit where every stride carries the weight of history and the hope of future greatness.



THANK YOU

