

THE SPARTAN

CLUB PATRON - Robert de Castella

August 2021

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FROM THE PRESIDENT **Jay Fleming (S1012)**

Spring is just around the corner and nature is looking noticeably more cheery but unfortunately our perception of everything seems to be overwhelmingly influenced by the darkness of COVID. As of a couple of days ago we have officially cancelled our MCG booking for the September 13 AGM and it will be via Zoom like last year. The best that can be said about this is that it's better than nothing but as we all know, nothing is quite the same as pressing the flesh, or the new clinking of elbows which sounds like some interplanetary greeting straight out of a Mork and Mindy script (for those old enough to remember Robin Williams initial work nearly 45 years ago). We held over last year's planned guest speaker, our very own Spartan Legend Bruce Hargreaves to this year as we felt he deserved to be speaking and presenting milestone singlets live at the G. We are loathe to hold him over yet again to next year in case COVID sticks around for several years so I'm proud to say Bruce will be our speaker via Zoom from his home at Mount Tambourine in Queensland on September 13. He will adapt his images and videos to share with us online and the great thing is that he can go over time as we don't have a strict 'bump-out' time as we do at the MCG by which to finish the meeting, pack up and vacate the premises.



Although nothing has yet been announced or confirmed officially at this time, I strongly suspect and expect odds of our own Melbourne Marathon being held live to keep plummeting. Last year we had to make the hard call on where we stood on the extremely predictable issue of counting virtual Melbourne Marathons runs as an official run which would count toward incrementing the total of completed Melbourne Marathons. It was almost unanimously decided that the reason virtual runs weren't recognised anywhere around the world using currently available GPS tracking applications last year was due to several loopholes you could drive several trucks through. We wish to maintain the 'sweat equity' of the Spartan singlet instead of devaluing it by accepting results of lesser probity. Basically,

we don't want a situation developing where some singlets are hard-earned while others have come out of a 'Corn Flakes pack'.

Even though the event is still expected to be held live with some stringent safety protocols at this stage, on Committee we have been proactive with floating possible alternatives of how to respond to the inevitable questions from Spartans this year regarding the counting of any virtual Melbourne Marathon toward their official total. As per usual in democratic entities, we haven't reached anything remotely resembling consensus, but we wanted our members to know that concepts are being tossed around and conversations are definitely being had. I have held exploratory conversations with several of the key people in major organisations regarding any possibilities.

While recognising that no virtual event anywhere is the same as the real thing, what I would like to see us working toward is to think about properly-supervised '[Spartan Runners Hubs](#)' at all 4 points of the compass that would be capped at the limit of the prevailing numbers gathering under COVID restrictions. The biggest barriers to this are issues around regulatory compliance regarding insurance costs, event management and the prevailing COVID protocols at time of run. This added level of supervision would at least serve to increase the integrity of virtual runs by closing off some of the main obvious loopholes: verified identity of the runner, verified number of laps and distance, that the event was run and not slowly cycled, that all runners run at the same date and time. The loopholes that would still remain would be differing gradients depending on the location, differing weather and time zones for interstate or overseas Spartans.

To summarise, The Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club is primarily a record-keeping club that verifies the number of officially completed Melbourne Marathons completed by Spartans and aspiring Spartans. The term 'officially completed' is denoted by 3 main criteria: that the runner is officially entered into the Melbourne Marathon, that they have completed the whole 42.195km distance and that they have done so inside the cut-off time. Having verified these, we present our branded and vividly-coloured garments to be proudly worn by the runner achieving the milestone, thereby inspiring others to strive toward their own goals. With the arrival of COVID-19, 18 months ago came a whole new way of having to examine and reflect on absolutely everything, including running. We made decisions last year assuming it would probably be a one-off. Here we are again this year in the same position, having to make the same decision, two years running. If this were to keep happening for the next five or so years, would we still be okay for there to be no increment of Spartan tallies for five or so years? By stringently adhering to the maxim that no virtual Melbourne Marathons will count toward increments, we also decrease our own relevance as both a club and an entity, as there will be no increments at all to the completed totals of Spartans or aspiring Spartans, so there's essentially nothing for us to count ... and certainly no new milestone singlets to present.

I refer Spartans again to the AFL example of last year where many clubs were advantaged and disadvantaged unfairly over the duration of the 2020 AFL season. The last time I checked, as much as it pains me to say, the Richmond premiership tally has incremented by one. I am asking again the same question I posed last year: Do we want 0% of a pure and

perfect option ... or do we want 100% of an option that is at least imperfect as we can get it?

See Bruce Hargreaves' guide for [Melbourne Marathon Spartans hubs](#). If you would like to comment on this or any other issues please email spartans.team@hotmail.com

COLLECTED RECIPES

We have collected all the recipes published in newsletters since 2014 and [here they are](#). There is something for every occasion, with an emphasis on health and a guaranteed improvement in your marathon time!

RECIPES **Anne Ziogos**

Here is something for you to make, to help with your marathon training. Take them with you during your runs, to help with that extra boost of energy.

Date, Fig and Mint Energy Balls



Ingredients

125 gm pitted Medjool dates
150 gm dried figs
125 gm almonds, with the skin on
4 tablespoons pure raw cacao powder
2 tablespoons organic raw coconut oil
1-2 tablespoons reserved liquid
½ teaspoon pure mint extract
Sifted cacao powder (extra) for dusting
Raw cacao nibs (optional), for coating

Method

Soak dates and figs in hot water (enough to cover) for 5 minutes to soften, then drain well and reserve liquid.

Place almonds into food and process finely

Add dates, figs, cacao powder, coconut oil, mint extract, a little of the reserved liquid (add more if needed later) process till well mixed. Add extra reserved liquid if needed, only a teaspoon at a time.

Lightly wet hands and roll dessertspoons of the mixture (you can make them bigger or smaller as you please).

Then roll them in sifted cacao or crushed cacao nibs

Brian Glover (S0989), 100 Marathons After Turning 70



Brian Glover will be known to many as the “Old Man in Orange” who walks many Victorian marathons at an impressive pace. Brian recently calculated that he has completed 100 marathons since turning 70! In 2021 will walk his 25th consecutive Melbourne Marathon since his first in 1996 at the age of 54.

He also regularly mans the Spartan stand at the Melbourne Marathon expo.

Here are [extracts from the Traralgon newspaper](#) covering some of Brian’s exploits. In the [June 2020 newsletter](#) he shared his virtual marathon experience.

Pre AGM Fun Run

The [2021 de Castella](#) run is scheduled for Sunday the 12th September. It has 5, 10 and 15 kilometre events and might be just what your training schedule needs. Half the race profits go to the Indigenous Marathon Project established by Rob de Castella, our patron.

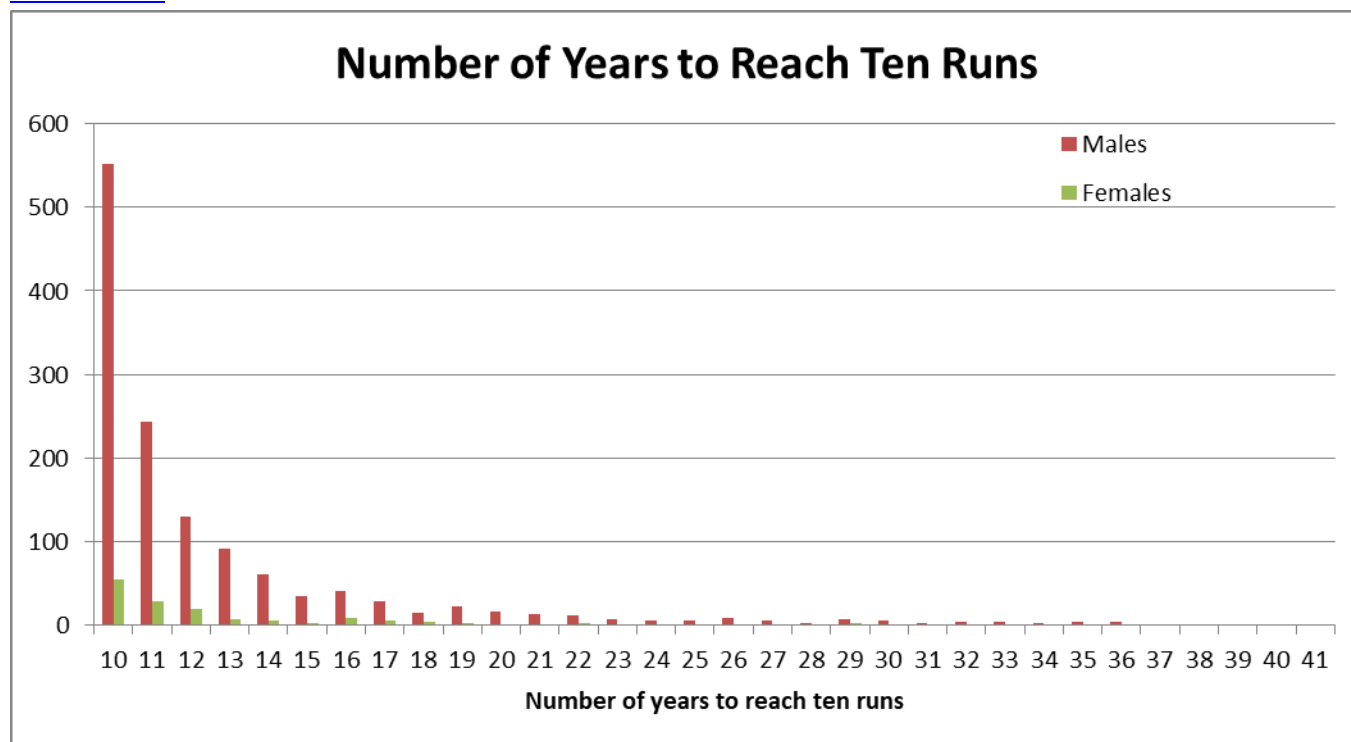
WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER? David Foskey

Do you have a story about your path to becoming a Spartan, or would you like to pay a tribute? We prefer articles in the range of 200 to 2000 words, but that’s a guide only. Contact us to discuss at djfoskey@ozemail.com.au If you have missed a deadline, don’t worry, there is always the next issue!

If you have some photographs that you would like to add to our [photographs collection](#), please send them in!

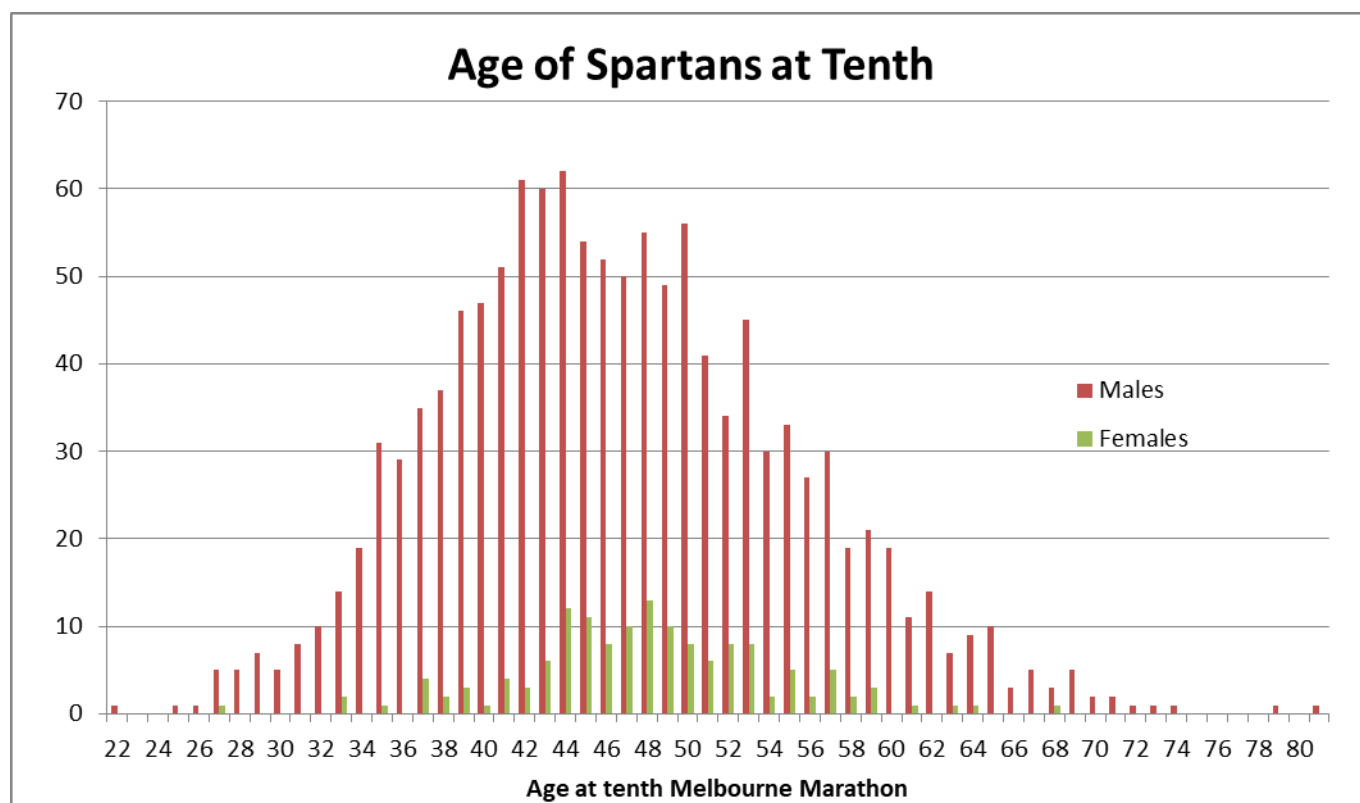
MORE STATISTICS **David Foskey**

I was recently asked how unusual it is for Spartans to run their first ten Melbournes without a gap. The graph below reveals that it isn't unusual at all, with 41.4% of males and 37% of females performing the feat. We also learned that incoming Spartan Matt Arms ran his first Melbourne in 1983 at the age of 12. (Matt has shared his story with us below.) My first thought on discovering this was that Matt would have the longest interval between first and tenth but this isn't the case. Rick Watkins (S1319) ran his first in 1978, his second in 2010 and became a Spartan in 2018, a span of 41 years. Sally Buckingham (SF0138) ran her first in 1986 and her tenth in 2019, an interval of 34. Sally wrote for us in the [Nov 2020 newsletter](#).



The graph below shows the age of Spartans at their tenth. For males the most frequent age range is 42 to 44 while for females the range is 44 to 49. The youngest male, John Veltman (S0359) was 22 when he ran his tenth in 1991. Cyndi Nunn (SF0081) was 27 when she ran her tenth to be the youngest female. Ern Walker (S0726) was 81 in 1995 when he reached 10 and ran his 12th in 1997 at age 84. Sandra Brett (SF0117) was 68 in 2017 when she became a Spartan.

Men are more likely to run their ten marathons without a break, and to be a little younger than women are at the time of their tenth, but the difference is slight. I was expecting to see more evidence of the "Sinead Diver" effect where women start seriously running in their 30s after having children. Spartan examples are Colleen Stephens in the [May 2021 Newsletter](#) and [Shirley Young](#).



Becoming a Melbourne Marathon Spartan – The Long Road Matt Arms

At age 12, I completed my first Melbourne Marathon (MM) way back in 1983 and I am fortunate to still be running. My time for that event was a taxing 5.28 hours; substantially further distance than the Little Athletics 1500m or cross-country 3000m events I was familiar with at the time. I had won a few under 13 fun runs and finished second in the State for All Primary Schools Cross-country in 1982. These achievements really only provided me with some misleading self-confidence that made my first marathon experience a huge challenge.



the long trek north. One mate from our group pulled out before Chelsea, and by Mordialloc I

noticed lots of runners calling it a day. The remaining three of us continued onto Beach Road and past the Black Rock clock, with encouragement from so many other runners and spectators. We did have to walk through the 35km mark near Fitzroy Street, but by St Kilda Road, we had our second wind and crossed the finish line at the Arts Centre together. The experience was awesome and I returned in 1984 to complete another MM in 4.07 hours – a substantial improvement.

Running sort of paused for me after High School, which I regret. Then after University, I got very sick at age 30 with Ulcerative colitis, which resulted in a total colectomy and a very long recovery. It was my surgeon Stewart Skinner a Melbourne Marathon Spartan (S1087), who was pivotal in saving my life back in 2000.

Recovering from this crisis in my late 30's, I began running again and notched up several more MM events. By my mid 40's I was also participating in Ironman triathlons (7 in total), running marathons in Port Macquarie, Cairns and two IM World Championships in Hawaii. The Ironman Melbourne run course had me more or less retrace my 1983-84 Big M Melbourne Marathon steps with the point to point course starting in Frankston and finishing in Catani Gardens, St Kilda. Then I discovered some physical form to my running, and posted my fastest Melbourne Marathon in 2013 with a time of 3.04 hours. From there, I managed to run my first and last sub 3 hour marathon in Traralgon in 2018, posting a 2.57 hour time at age 48 – a life time goal.

Still with a love off running in my late 40's, I became interested in Ultra marathons and have completed numerous events including the Six Foot Track Marathon, 2Bays Trail 56km Run, the Prom 100km trail run, along with the very tough You Yangs Hardcore 100 miler and recently (at age 50) the ETR100km, which has qualified me for competing in the UTMB 100 mile (10,00m elevation) event in France; considered the 'holy grail' of ultra-marathons.



I've always loved running, and have been fortunate to meet so many amazing people because of training groups, clubs & marathons. The comradery amongst marathon athletes in every event I've participated has kept me motivated in running and life's journey. Last year's 'physical' Melbourne Marathon cancellation delayed my next MM attempt, however October this year (fingers crossed) I'm very excited to finally have an opportunity to join the MM Spartan group, participating in my 10th Melbourne Marathon. I'm told by the Melbourne Marathon Legend, David Foskey S25 that I may have the record for the longest period between the first and 10th Melbourne Marathons completed.

(Sorry Matt: see above – David) I'll be 51 years old when I join the 2021 MM runners at the start line this year, which will make it 39 years between my first and 10th Melbourne Marathons. I'm really looking forward more running, sharing experiences and meeting MM Spartans into the future, and I feel fortunate to still be running.

It's been a long road.

Towards 2033 with Deeks for inspiration Wade Noonan S1159

My journey to becoming a Melbourne Marathon Spartan began way back in 1983, when at the tender age of 12, I set off from Frankston, alongside Port Phillip Bay, to run back to the city of Melbourne, and in the process establish the foundations for a lifetime love affair with distance running.



Although my memory of that first marathon is a little patchy, I can recall waking at 4am and catching the first train down to the start line at Frankston with my father, Bill Noonan (also a Spartan). I remember the starter's gun and heading off with thousands of other competitors, and then just running for hour after hour. I'd never run that far before. I hit the dreaded 'wall' at the 40k mark in St Kilda Road and found myself scanning the roadside for spectators generously offering jelly beans. I pushed on and there it was, the finish line under the spire of Melbourne's mighty Arts Centre. Then came the presentation of my medal by one of the glamorous 'Big M' girls. I was overcome with relief and exhaustion, but I'd finished! (*Wade is at bottom right of the photo*)

The 1980s was an amazing time for marathon running in Australia. Record crowds gathered for various events across the country as Rob de Castella, or 'Deeks' as he became affectionately known, reached the peak of his powers winning gold at both the Commonwealth Games and World Championships. He was an extraordinary athlete, perhaps one of Australia's finest and a childhood hero of mine. I wanted to emulate him.

So, I kept on running, and I still run to this day. In fact, running, and more importantly, marathon running has been a constant in my life for the past 40 years. In all, I have completed 15 marathons, including ten Melbourne Marathons, two each in New Zealand and Canberra, and one in country Victoria.

My best personal time of 3.09 came after some misfortune, and on a course jokingly touted by the organisers as one that was likely to deliver a 'PW' (personal worst). Let me explain. The year was 1996 and I was running well in my mid-20s. I decided to have a crack at an elusive sub-3-hour marathon. I entered the Melbourne Marathon and had just clocked a half marathon 'PB' of 82 minutes around Albert Park Lake. Everything was on track until the day before the race when I ate a chicken salad at a local café and ended up with a serious case of food poisoning and couldn't run. Devastated by this bad luck, I decided to look for the next available marathon in Victoria and discovered the *3 Bays Running Festival* in Portland. I immediately entered and re-set myself for this challenge, scheduled for 3-weeks after the Melbourne Marathon. Driving the semi-rural course on the day before the race, I started to understand why the organisers warned that it would be a tough one, and likely to yield a very slow time. Nonetheless, I set out with a small field the following morning and had one of the runs of my life! In fact, I had never run faster, collecting a 'PB', and 6th place overall. I still recall the sheer exhilaration at crossing the finish line, with arms raised triumphantly like Deeks.



More recently, having reached a milestone birthday (the big 50!), I decided to celebrate by running the 2021 Canberra Marathon. Fortunately, our nation's capital produced one of those crisp April mornings, perfect for running, and I had another day out, finishing in 3.23, and placing 16th out of 131 in my age group. The whole experience was made even more special by the opportunity to meet and chat with my childhood hero Rob de Castella at the start line – one of those 'pinch yourself' moments that was happily captured on camera.

As I've got older, I have come to appreciate the importance of running even more. In fact, throughout COVID, it has sustained my physical and mental well-being. I know I can't run forever, so I have set myself an ambitious goal to run a marathon on every continent, and have earmarked several events in Japan, Ireland, and Canada that I would dearly love to complete.



Finally, it may seem a little crazy, but I'm also hoping to bookend my marathon career by running the 2033 Melbourne Marathon – 50 years on from the place where it all started back in 1983. If that happens, I think my marathon journey will be complete.

Melbourne Marathon Results: Years (and times)

1983 (3.36), 1986 (3.57), 1997 (3.16), 2004 (3.33), 2005 (3.26), 2006 (3.17), 2010 (3.29), 2011 (3.32), 2012 (3.28), 2013 (3.27)

NEXT CLUB RUN

We *hope* that the next club run can be held at The Tan on Sunday, September 26. See the [website](#) for more details and photographs from previous runs. Bring friends and family!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR 2021/2022

The Spartan financial year is 1 July to 30 June, so fees for 2021/2022 are now being accepted. Can't remember if you have paid for 2021/22? Look up your name via this link: <http://melbournemarathonspartans.com/financial-spartans/>. If you are not there you haven't paid so here's how:

\$20 via EFT: Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club BSB: 633-000 Account No: 139201743 Please include name and/or Spartan Number	Cheque for \$20 via Post: "Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club" PO Box 162 Rosanna Vic 3084 Please include name and/or Spartan Number
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If you are a current member, you do not need to fill in a Membership Form* but please advise of any changes to your contact details via spartans.team@hotmail.com. OR*: download the [membership form](#) and email or post it in.

SPARTAN MERCHANDISE



Helen van der Nagel (SF0043) is shown at left wearing the new 10 year T-shirt. [Check out the other options](#) available, including a generic training shirt.

Our caps, mugs, stickers are described [here](#).

We have some copies of Doug Wilson's book "Kundalini Running" available for \$20. Contact Jay Fleming at flemingjay2@gmail.com.

We still have copies available of ["The Wall"](#) at the bargain price of \$10.



We now have clips that can be used to secure race numbers to race tops. They have been adopted by many clubs here and overseas, and look as if they were designed for our logo. The selling price is \$8 plus postage.



If you would like a Spartan jacket you can order [here](#). Ian Gainey is pictured modelling the jacket at a recent club run.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

If you would like to be added to our mailing list or if you know someone who might like to join, [please use this link](#)

SPARTANS' CLUB STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To advance the sport of marathon running to athletes of all ages and abilities and to encourage and assist all runners to achieve Melbourne Marathon Spartan status.

To provide a platform and environment for runners to receive and to build upon their achievements enabling progression through the various Spartan milestone singlet colours.

Assist in the promotion and publicity of the Melbourne Marathon and the charities it supports.

BENEFITS OF BEING A SPARTAN

The Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club is a club consisting of marathon runners from all walks of life, ages and abilities that have achieved Spartan status by having run ten Melbourne Marathons.

The benefits of membership include regular newsletters, organised training runs, being presented with a Spartan singlet after ten years and subsequent milestone Spartan singlets each five years, the opportunity to attend our AGM and hear a top-line guest speaker, being able to avail of refreshments and free massage after finishing the marathon.

Life Members

Paul Basile, Peter Battrick, Rod Bayley, John Dean, John Dobson, Peter Feldman, Jay Fleming, David Foskey, Jack Fredrickson, Christine Hodges, Ken Matchett (Dec'd), Conor McNeice, John Raskas, Peter Ryan, Colin Silcock-Delaney, Maureen Wilson, Ron Young (Dec'd), Shirley Young (Dec'd)

COMMITTEE

President	Jay Fleming	0418 374 783
Vice President	Paul Basile	0439 718 281
Treasurer	Rod Bayley	9077 7192
Secretary	Anne Ziogos	9592 4481
Webmaster	David Foskey	0432 146 747
Committee	John Dobson	0412 688 287
Committee	John Kaparelis	0447 447 448
Committee	Colin Silcock-Delaney	5598 6090
Committee	Felicity Doolan	
Committee	Matt Callaghan	
Committee	Vicky Chung	
Committee	Kai Ooi	
Committee	John Zeleznikow	