

THE SPARTAN

CLUB PATRON - Robert de Castella

August 2023

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FROM THE PRESIDENT Jay Fleming (S1012)

Spring is only a week away and the mornings are getting that little bit lighter every day. Winter veggies are prolific in some of our beds while other beds are resting for the spring planting, flowers are blooming and Collingwood is again teasing me but have faltered over recent weeks so I don't quite know what to feel any more! Feelings abound and at the risk of sounding warm and fuzzy, I want to briefly talk about **feelings**! Most of my early mornings commence under the carport around 5am with one of a variety of heart-starters such as: 100 mountain climbers, 60 push-ups, 60 squats, 60 band-rows, a minute plank, a minute wall-sit, and a minute skipping. I'm certainly not big noting myself or suggesting these are huge or challenging numbers, but they're one of my set of numbers that help me **feel** good throughout the day and well into the evening. For me, the 'nirvana' I **feel** with the highly oxygenated deep-lung capacity is difficult to describe as I'm certain similar **feelings** are difficult for any of us to put into words, given they're a deeply personal inner **feeling**. For me it's been the biggest organic high I can get on a daily basis. About twenty minutes later I'm back in the shower and all's well with the dawning of another day. While I probably wouldn't suffer any dire health consequences without this and similar routines, I'm far too addicted to the **feeling** to deny myself the high. Just as Kate Moss controversially, regrettably (and dangerously) observed in a well-intentioned 2009 interview: "Nothing tastes as good as skinny **feels**", similarly no cosy sleep-in regardless of the weather **feels** as good to me as the dawn 'nirvana'. In fact, if I developed amnesia by evening and couldn't remember if I worked out that morning, I would know by how I **felt**. Please share your special routines and rituals with us or basically anything that gives you that organic high.

As we prepare for our AGM at the MCG next month, we are super excited to welcome our guest speakers David Eadie and Nikki Wynd. David and Nikki are an inspirational couple that have certainly walked the talk and will expand on their accomplishments, training regimens, travels and the euphoric **feelings** experienced threefold: working up to an event, participating in an event and reflecting back on an event. They will also talk about the importance of listening to the body, aligning our training load with what it's feeding back to us and knowing our mind/body/spirit well enough to read the difference between discomfort to push through and genuine pain to not push through. We look forward to David and Nikki welcoming our incoming Spartans and presenting their singlets, as well as presenting existing Spartans with their next milestone singlets.

On Committee, for the last several Meetings we have welcomed four enthusiastic Spartans from our Club Runs to gauge whether contributing on Committee may be something they

have the time/inclination for. For our last Committee Meeting of the year in November, we would like to invite written expressions of interest (EOI) from any of our 2023 incoming Spartans who will have just run their 10th Melbourne Marathon in their new green singlet to join us at The Auburn Hotel 5:30pm-7pm for our regular pre-Meeting meal and a casual meet and greet.

There is always a tinge of sadness when Committee members are required to prioritise their valuable time elsewhere or are otherwise forced by life circumstances to leave the group. It has been quite a closeknit group for around seven years now but we will likely be farewelling at least one member and most probably a second one. Spartans aim to celebrate everyone's contributions to Committee over the last 35 years via profiles on our website, which will be just one of the many projects undertaken going forward. I guess the positive of welcoming new members is the rejuvenation injected by fresh perspectives and ideas.

The 2023 Melbourne Marathon is sold out. Over the last seven weeks, other members on Committee and myself have been contacted by both Spartans and aspiring Spartans regarding being unable to enter this year's Marathon, which was sold out at the start of July, around 100 days from the event itself. This was promptly announced by organisers around the start of July and we put it on the Spartans website and emailed members when we became aware. There has obviously been unprecedented demand for entries which may well be due to a post-COVID pent-up demand or similar, which has clearly taken many by surprise. In the interim, we have all been urged to put our name on the Waiting List to be considered for a very limited number of entries. In my capacity as President, I have written on behalf of Spartans to IMG and have been assured Spartans on the Waiting List would be prioritised as positions become available. However, it was also communicated to us there would be **no guarantee of entry**. At last count, the number of Spartans on the Waiting List is in the thirties and I know many of their circumstances have been extremely dramatic including needing to wait for medical clearance and several even in remission between recurring bouts of cancer. The Committee and I are well aware of what the event means to Spartans and within our operating constraints will certainly keep representing the interests of Spartans right up to race day. We will keep you informed of any further developments.

Finally, to all our Newsletter contributors, including this one, thank you!! Thank you to Anne Ziogos for eloquently chronicling your awe-inspiring effort in the 250km Gobi Desert event below. Thank you also to Paul Burke and Godfrey Pollard for your inspiring contributions and the recurring theme among us of wearing our Spartan colours in other events we enter. Way to go Paul!!! Over the last dozen or so Newsletters, I think it is fantastic that we are now becoming a little more OK with sharing and celebrating our achievements with others in print! I have always felt it extremely important for us all to bathe in the glow of each other's successes, 'overcomings' and triumphs. I hope you're all enjoying a smooth lead-up with your preparation for our iconic event seven weeks away. Let's do this!!

Discipline is the strongest form of self-love. It's ignoring current pleasures for bigger rewards to come. It's loving yourself enough to do whatever you need to do, to give yourself everything you've ever wanted. It's giving up the good for the great. - Unknown

2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT THE MCG

We are beyond excited to welcome the magnificent David Eadie and Nikki Wynd as our headline speakers and presenters for the 2023 AGM. They have been the real deal for decades and will share their inspirational journey both as elite sporting individuals and as an elite couple from various perspectives. This is a dynamic evening not to be missed! [Click here](#) for a taste of their achievements.

For this year's AGM, the MCG have informed us attendees driving to the ground and requiring underground parking will be required to RSVP providing their vehicle registration and either email or phone number. Upon receipt, a QR code will be issued to enable smooth entry at the gate. We will send the Invitation and RSVP details shortly.

SPARTAN MEMBERSHIP

Our \$20 annual membership has remained unchanged for 13 years and for several years before that it was \$15. We have endeavoured to keep membership cost extremely low for three decades, but this has become increasingly untenable over the last several years due to a combination of diversified member benefits along with rising costs. I think it's fair to say on Committee we've often reflected on the benefits of Spartans membership and what that entails. Being a member of any club should be all about the 'belonging' and occasionally questions have arisen over whether the wearing of a coloured garment once yearly along with attending an AGM (for those of us that are able to) constitutes enough 'belonging'. For some that may be sufficient as many Spartans also 'belong' to other clubs, while many others have indicated they would like more opportunities to get together, so for us as a representative body it's about presenting members with some viable options to choose from. Additionally, we have explored expanding the roles of serving Committee members to include duties other than the core duties of verifying the number of completed Melbourne Marathons and organising major events. We will shortly be announcing some exciting initiatives going forward as we genuinely wish to increase the vibrancy of being a Spartan. **From July 2024, we are proposing to increase the annual membership fee to \$45 and as per regulations will be announcing this at our upcoming 2023 AGM.**

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOW DUE FOR 2023-2024

The Spartan financial year is 1 July to 30 June, so fees for 2023-2024 are now being accepted. Can't remember if you have paid for 2023-2024? Look up your name via this link: <http://melbournemarathonspartans.com/financial-spartans/>.

\$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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You can also now pay online.

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.

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 completed ten Melbourne Marathons.

The benefits of membership include [regular newsletters](#), being presented with a Spartan singlet after ten years and subsequent milestone Spartan singlets each five years, and the opportunity to attend our AGM to hear a top-line guest speaker.

Our [monthly Sunday runs](#) enable members to do a lap or two of the Tan at their own pace and enjoy a social coffee afterwards.

We have a stand at the pre-marathon expo to meet with members, exhibit some of our memorabilia and sell merchandise.

On marathon day we have a tent where bags can be stored securely. After run refreshments and free massages are provided as well as the opportunity to rest and chat. In 2021 we began photographing Spartans just past the finish line to create a [gallery of finishers](#).

GOBI DESERT Anne Ziogos (SF0045)

In the last few months I have given myself a few challenges. The most memorable was the Gobi Desert. It was a 6 stage self supporting race, 250 kms. It had all elements to give you a great challenge, heat, cold, hills, sand, dunes and rock climbing. But lots of fun and happy people.

We arrived at the capital city of Mongolia, Ulanbaatar, on June the 16th. This was very important for the officials to pass on important information, about the race and check that all competitors had all of the mandatory equipment and most importantly enough food for the week. On Saturday the 17th of June, we headed out on a 7 hour trip to the first camp.

Day One

Only 35 kms. Weather was perfect 30 degrees. The course was open valleys, many Gers of nomadic farmers, grazing animals, a few river crossings and of course a lovely 2 km hill and down hill. The race finished on a kilometre of white clay. Time to settle down on camp 1 at The Ruins of Khar Bukhiin Balgas Palace. We had some locals performing local dancing and singing.



Day two

45 kilometers of Nomadic Wilderness. It was a hot day 45degrees and continuous climbing. The ground was hard dirt and lots of rocks. Sunny day not a cloud in sight. Very testing. The start of blisters. Time to take care of the feet.

We camped in the Ancient Petroglyphs amongst the rocks and hills. Hmm what does tomorrow hold? Do we need to rock climb?

Day Three

40km, 45degrees, Rock climbing to sand dunes. Not a great way to start. it was straight up a rocky climb. Extremely scary. 2.5 kms of rock climbing, On the first 500metres I heard a snap, I felt the pain, I yelled, fell backwards, was saved by two other runners and kept on the move. After the climb there was a 3 km of steep down hill. Not good for a throbbing knee. We went past a monastery and some locals cheering us on. Just beautiful amongst the mountains and the running streams. We then had sun, sand and THE DUNES!!!!!!7 big km all up. What a challenge! best way to get up, I found was to crawl on all fours. Every time we heard swearing from the runners ahead, we knew there were more dunes coming. The day finished on sand dunes. Not a great end to the day. Right knee was unbearable and the blisters were all over my feet

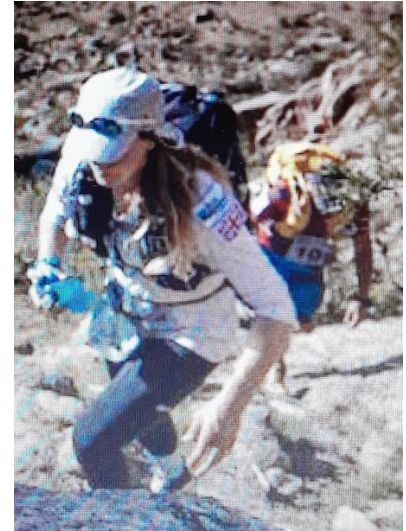
and hands. Time to take care of the feet and rest, for the long day coming up tomorrow.

Day Four

80 kilometers. 47 degrees, sunny, hot, hilly, rocky and stinking nettles.

We crossed the Mongolian Steppe to arrive at the Orkhon Valley. UNESCO Heritage area.

Just breathtaking scenes. But the sun was relentless. I drank 10 litres of water and didn't need to use the toilet once. Due to the heat at the 50 km stage, I got bad nausea, nothing would stay down. The doctors kept me at the second last check point to keep an eye on me. That was just wasted time, I needed to keep moving, I knew as soon as the sun went down I would feel a bit better. The sun went down at 9pm. I got away when the Dr wasn't looking, at that point only 20km to go. I was not pulling out now. The hard work had been done. The Drs were great, they send someone out to check on me. I finally got in at 1 am. I was so pleased it was over. 17 hours on my feet 2.5 hours lost at the check point.



Day Five

Rest day. What a great spot. We were camped next to a river. Fantastic! Time for a wash. I was very popular as I had a cake of soap. Nausea was still there and food of any sort didn't smell or taste good. The blisters got infected, so the doctors suggested I start using the antibiotics that I brought with me. The blisters on the feet were not looking great. We had some excitement. We had a thunder storm and had to evacuate the camp for a few hours.

Day Six

Marathon day. It was raining heavily and was extremely cold, with a strong wind blowing. We were heading from the Battle Grounds of Genghis Khan to the Mongolian Forest. What a beautiful place, the first time we saw any trees and flowers. My body was very depleted and I found this day very hard. I decided the best thing to do is take it easy, mainly walk and run if I could. There were a few steep hills and steep down hills as well. Finally the end was very challenging we had to cross a fast running river. The organisers had a rope for the runners to hang on to I was never so pleased to see the end of a race. It's done and dusted just 10 kms to go. HOORAY!!!!!!

This day we were joined by gorgeous Mongolian mountain dogs. They were so friendly and caring. They stayed amongst all the runners and enjoyed the human company. It seemed like all the animals were over friendly. We went past thousands of horses, cows, goats and sheep. They didn't mind us running amongst them.

Day Seven



The end is very close.... just 10 kms away once we crossed the river. We ran from the camp to The Ancient City Of Karakorum. I jogged with the poles to the end. I just couldn't wait to see the finish line. We had the company of the dogs all the way into town. I couldn't believe the end came so quickly. After all the long days 10 kms seemed like a casual walk in the park. There was music and celebrations and most importantly REAL FOOD!!!! no dehydrated meals. I never knew pizza could taste so good. I didn't dare have any fizzy drinks in case they upset the

stomach. The sun was shining, the music was festive and we would be having our first shower in eight days. Let's be honest WE ALL STANK!

What a fantastic experience, What amazing people from all over the globe. One competitor ran the whole course in an eggplant suit and Japanese clogs. He went through 3 pairs. We all waited for him and cheered him in. WHAT AN EFFORT!
As tough as it is, it's worth it.

GODFREY POLLARD (S0662)

Godfrey ran twelve Melbournes between 1984 (age 53) and 1997 (age 66), with a fastest time of 3:55:09. He has consistently been a financial member of the club and has also made generous donations.

At the age of 91, his life story has now been published and is available on our [website](#) as a PDF.

In addition to frank personal recollections, major life events include:

- Favourite for the 1950 Melbourne to Warrnambool bike race;
- Being severely burned in the 1969 Lara bushfires;
- Working at the Geelong Football Club;
- Running marathons and further.



Godfrey and Cliff Young, the gumboot runner

PAUL BURKE (S1268)

I'm a New Zealander, living in the Wellington region. I have completed 67 full marathons since 2002 across New Zealand, Australia, USA and Germany. I've also run 129 half marathons in New Zealand and Australia.



In 2001 my weight had increased to 95kg. So, I started regular exercise at the gym including running on the treadmill. After running an hour on the treadmill for 6 months, I started running 2 hours outside on Saturdays. In 2002 I saw the training plan for a marathon at my original hometown, Invercargill. I was running enough to complete my first event, the Southland marathon. I was also motivated by workmates who had run marathons. I have now run 20 Rotorua marathons and am a member of their Survivors club.

My first Melbourne Marathon in 2006 was my 16th full marathon. Visiting Melbourne was an opportunity to catch up with my son, aunties, uncle, and cousins.

I'm a proud Spartan member. I completed eleven Melbourne marathons from 2006 to 2018. Since 2018 I have completed two Melbourne half marathons in October.

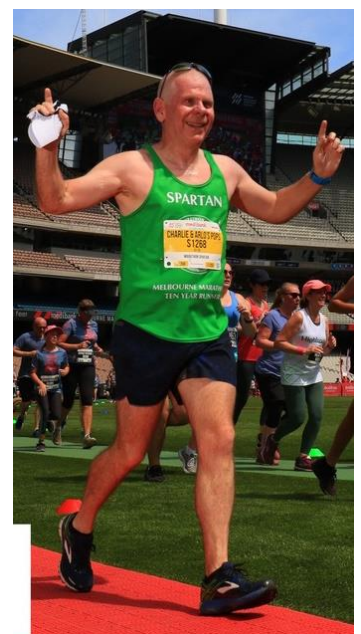
The 2006 marathon, from Frankston to Melbourne, was supported with training advice from Pat Carroll (four-time winner of the Gold Coast marathon). It was my fastest marathon at 3:38. A highlight of the eleven Melbourne marathons I have completed is that eight times the Melbourne marathon was my best marathon time for the year. In another year it was my 2nd best time, and the other two years it was the 3rd best time. This reflects the course is quite flat. Another positive influence for completing the event is finishing in the MCG.

Within the period I ran eleven Melbourne marathons, I lived in Melbourne, working at the Department of Education, from 2011 to 2015. Since 2015, I enjoy re-visiting Melbourne each year to catch up with my Melbourne relatives and my Melbourne 2011-2015 work mates. I time the Melbourne visits to participate in the Melbourne October events. The photo at right shows the 2018 finish.

In my Melbourne days, my weekend long run training included the Capital Trail, plus catching the train to Chelsea, Dandenong, Aspendale or Werribee and running 35-40 kilometres home.

Another proud element of being a Spartan member is access to Spartan clothes. I wear my Spartan T-shirt and Spartan cap in all my events. [The Spartan jacket is a great piece of clothing.](#)

I have also run many Rotorua marathons with my uncle and work mates. Over the last six years I've run some events with my sons and son-in-law, e.g. half marathon and 10km. Plus, in the last two years I have run three 5km events with my two oldest grandsons and completed a few ocean swim events with them too.



OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

If you would like to send a shout-out to someone doing it tough, please drop us a line

Just a brief thumbs-up to our magnificent Hall of Famer Ian Gainey (SW0001) who is displaying trademark resilience while recovering from a procedure. Similarly, we hail the determination of Wayne Thompson (S0078), one of only three remaining Legends who himself is recovering from a procedure and back in training for the big one! Gentlemen we salute your courage and determination!



GENEROUS DONATION

We wish to acknowledge the kind donation made by Chris Muirden of the final remaining boxes of his magnificent book 'The Wall' which has been presented at our AGMs to all incoming Spartans along with their singlets for over a decade. It's a marvellous gesture that is deeply appreciated by us all as it's clearly evident on every page that this book was compiled and written with an unparalleled love and passion for the Melbourne Marathon. Thank you very much Chris!!

SHAMELESS CLICKBAIT TO GET YOU TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE Jay Fleming

We have a [collection of race photographs](#), and I recommend that you scroll down to the 1978 post race photographs link.

RECIPE

Zucchini and tofu noodles with coriander pesto **Jay Fleming**



I found this quick and [easy to prepare](#). A really healthy and delicious plant-based meal. If you're not a huge fan of coriander, it can be used sparingly or substituted with any parsley variety.

(courtesy Women's Weekly Food)

I'VE BEEN THINKING **Jay Fleming**

(We've had some real 'thinking outside the box' initiatives explode from some Spartans as they channel their version of 'the ideas man' from 'The Castle'. If you've been brewing one or two out-there initiatives of your own, please get involved!)

paraphrased extract from Matt Callaghan (S1269)

Marathon Day

1. I believe we should have a Spartan finishers chute in the MCG.
2. I think we should have Spartan ribbons on the medal, perhaps different ribbons for the full, half, 10, 5 etc so this might be possible.

If the above are not possible, we could maybe do some things ourselves. I believe that we should design and present a Spartan medal to all new Spartans once they have completed their 10th Melbourne. They could come to the tent after the race for a presentation ceremony. Use a microphone (so the other tents can hear) and do something like they do in the ironman "Jay Spearing, you're a Spartan"!!!! I thought we could further add to our culture by introducing the [Spartan war chant](#).

We need to do more on the day (post finish line) to celebrate becoming a Spartan, more for those running in the next singlet colour for the first time, and frankly more for anyone completing the Melbourne Marathon in a Spartan singlet. This would not only benefit Spartans but the theatre of it would inspire those aspiring to Spartan status as it would be much more visible to all.

SPARTAN MERCHANDISE

Merchandise can now be ordered online through [this link](#).



T-Shirt Models Candida Baskcomb SF0106, Mandy Skipper SF0066, Vilim Podreka S1052, Jay Fleming S1012, Lorraine Allen SF0011, Anthony Egan S1158 above are wearing different milestone T-shirts. [Check out the other options](#) available, including a generic training shirt which can come with long-sleeves.

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



We 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 \$5 plus postage.



We have a new shipment of buffs.

They are a very versatile item, excellent for winter training.

\$16



Lapel pins, a new item, only \$5.



Caps and visors are available in black or white, priced at \$25.



Anyone seeking a jacket or vest will be pleased to know that we now have a [Melbourne based supplier](#).

We have some copies of Doug Wilson's book "Kundalini Running" available for \$20. Contact Jay Fleming at flemi230727@myyahoo.com.

Our buffs, caps, lapel pins, stickers are described on the website [here](#).

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.

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!

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 flemini230727@myyahoo.com
Vice President	Paul Basile	0439 718 281
Treasurer	Rod Bayley	9077 7192
Co-Secretary	Anne Ziogos	9592 4481
Membership Secretary	Felicity Doolan	0411 405 529
Co-Secretary	Vicky Chung	
Committee	Kai Ooi	
Committee	John Zeleznikow	
Webmaster	David Foskey	0432 146 747
Committee	John Dobson	0412 688 287
Committee	John Kaparelis	0447 447 448

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](#)

We have lost contact with many of our older members. If you know a Spartan who doesn't receive our emails and is on email, please encourage them to use the above link. We deliberately limit the number of emails we send, and all have an unsubscribe link.