THE SPARTAN

CLUB PATRON – Robert de Castella AO, MBE **August 2026**

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RSVP

MELBOURNE MARATHON SPARTANS CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER
6.45pm for 7.15pm start, AFL Dining Room, Melbourne Cricket Ground

FROM THE PRESIDENT Jay Fleming (S1012)

There is great anticipation building with the 2026 Annual General Meeting preparations well underway. Members will have received a **Notice of Annual General Meeting** earlier this week, to the meeting which will once again be held at the MCG.

All Spartans, their families and friends are welcome. **RSVP is essential by Sunday 30 August** to **Felicity** via spartans.team@hotmail.com or Text 0411 405 529 with guest names and any dietary requirements as a light supper will be served on arrival and during the break. If car parking required, include your car registration and mobile number as required by MCG Security.

We are very much looking forward to seeing you there.

As spring approaches, I hope your training and recovery are going to plan as this is the time of year when many of us are rehabilitating from medical procedures and managing our injury niggles. On Committee, we have been tirelessly preparing for our our two busiest months of the year, the AGM in September and the Expo Tent and Raceday Tent in October. Last week we had our annual pre-AGM pilgrimage visit to the MCG to finalise our exacting arrangements for the big night. Attending on the day were one of our newest Committee members Mark Wenckowski along with one of our iconic elder statesmen, immediate past President John Dean, which in itself summarises where the club is at in its evolving history since first being conceptualised in 1987. Spartans has a little bit of 'Hotel California' about it … *"You can check out any time, but you can never leave".*

Over the years, we have managed to pay homage to our rich history of nearly 40 years, while also needing to be forward-thinking and outward-facing to cater for a membership growing by 80-90 incoming Spartans annually. All past and current members of Committee have contributed their own strengths and skillsets to have the club positioned where it is today, a major presence on the Australian running landscape. Our growing numbers across the country means we are now far more dispersed, as we are strewn far and wide, which brings its own challenges as well as tremendous opportunities.Our exponential growth has required a rethinking of systems and processes to help us work smarter, and to maintain our professional approach with database maintenance, while also ensuring enquiries are handled in a timely manner.

As a representative body of volunteers, we continue to open ourselves up to members for proposals and suggestions as we divide our focus between providing leadership with initiatives we feel will grow the Spartan experience … while also continually seeking feedback from those at the coalface and implementing initiatives wherever possible. While the uniqueness of our club is our superpower, it has also made it somewhat challenging to arrive at a streamlined

purpose of what being a Spartan ought to feel like. Apart from the pride of wearing the Spartan singlet, being a Spartan means slightly different things to all of us.

To many Spartans, proudly wearing the Spartan singlet once a year in the Melbourne Marathon or in various events here and around the world is enough of a connection and they seek little more, which is perfectly fine … while many others like to avail themselves of other arranged opportunities to connect throughout the year as their individual schedules allow.

Some of the current options to connect with fellow Spartans include:

- ***SparTAN* Club Runs** - ***every fourth Sunday of the month on the reimagined 4.22 km circuit***
- **Frankston Spartans Club Runs** - ***every second Sunday of the month,*** meeting at the water's edge and running along the scenic Frankston waterfront trails and boardwalks - *special thanks to Spartan Trent Malcolm (S1399) who three months ago initiated this event in the south-east which we are looking to roll out at all points of the compass*

Some additional concepts being tossed around and other initiatives in various stages of planning include:

- **Trivia Night -** *at the Auburn Hotel*
- **Run Nation Film Festival** - *usually at a couple of selected cinemas announced annually around July-August*
- **Bowling Night** – *perhaps combined with a bite*
- **Themed dinner night** – *e g Mediterranean Monday, Taco Tuesday, Waffle Wednesday, Fondue Friday, Curry Night, Burger Night, Austin Powers Retro dress-up …*
- **Pasta Night** – *pre-run carb loading*
- **Spartans Football Tipping** – *follow your heart and always tip Collingwood!*
- **Spartan Cheer Squads –** *cheering Spartans on with chants along the Melbourne Marathon course*
- **Spartans Wall or Desk Calendar** – *fancy yourself as a Ms October or Mr February? … send in your pics!*
- **Attending an inclusive group activity/class organised by a Spartan** - *e g photography, pottery, marbling, woodwork, reimagined use of upcycled materials e g make a Spartans Christmas banner or bunting for the December Tan Run, using leftover fabrics promoting sustainability …*

For most of the above options, after covering costs we would be looking to donate any excess funds to the Indigenous Marathon Foundation (IMF), formed in 2009 by our Patron Rob de Castella. Further updates of the Spartan year will be provided with the President's Report as part of the AGM Agenda.

The Committee and I are excitedly looking forward to seeing you at the AGM on Monday September 14 … where our headline speaker and presenter will be the amazing Spartan David Staehr (S1253), who embodies all the admirable qualities of Spartanhood … and will himself be accepting his blue singlet on the night!

It is a real buzz for us on Committee to share in the excitement of runners being rewarded for ten years of perseverance and dedication to be now considered a Spartan … and we certainly know that the milestone Spartans moving up to the next singlet colour will be proud running in their new shade of garment! See you there!

One day you will miss the body you are currently complaining about. Look after it while it is still asking politely – attributed to Jonti Mayer

AGM Guest Speaker

We are super excited to announce our Headline Speaker for the 2026 AGM! Apart from being a dedicated family man and an all-round classy human being, **David Staehr,** S1253, is a seriously fast runner with a best time of 2:37 and despite being time-poor due to demands of personal and professional life, it's a testament to his dedicated training regimen that he consistently runs in the 2:40's.

David ran his first Melbourne Marathon in 2001. During his training, he tore the labrum cartilage in both hips which would plague him for several years. It would take until 2008 to make his return to running his second Melbourne Marathon. Since then, he has completed another 90 marathons and 11 ultramarathons, including achieving a prestigious silver medal at the Comrades Marathon in 2011.

After debuting as the three-hour Melbourne Marathon pacer in 2010, David became the first person to lead a 2:50 group the following year. He has now led the fastest pacing group for the Melbourne Marathon eleven times, each time on his own, with him lining up for the 2:48 pace group in 2026. David has also paced the Sydney and Ballarat marathons over the last three years in the 2:50 group, which included the opportunity to lead Eliud Kipchoge around Sydney's Centennial Park on the morning before the 2025 marathon.

Since the beginning of 2023, David has won more than 25 marathons across three states, regularly running well under the three-hour mark. He credits his pacing responsibilities with providing the motivation needed to train for and sustain a relentless schedule of a dozen or more marathons a year. Known for his positivity, he can always be found on the course with a smile on his face, offering constant encouragement to every runner he crosses paths with.

During this year's AGM night, along with speaking to us and presenting incoming and milestone Spartans with their singlets, David will also be among the milestone singlet recipients and will be presented with his blue singlet as he will be running his 15th Melbourne Marathon this year.

We'll get one of the Legends to present him with his singlet for the photo! I am certain he will do his new colours proud over the next five years!

TRAVELLING SPARTANS – Please send in your pics

Mike Zervos S1174 sent in this photograph from Croatia.

MELBOURNE MARATHON SPARTANS CLUB

WANTED:

CLUB TREASURER

A volunteer role for a Spartan who is good with numbers

Ten Melbourne Marathons earned you the green singlet. Could you spare your time to look after the numbers that keep the Club running? Our Treasurer role is becoming vacant, and we are looking for a Spartan to help the steer the future of our unique running club.

What the role involves

- Maintaining the Club's accounts and monthly bank reconciliations
- Presenting a Treasurer's report and monthly financial statements at committee meetings
- Receipting membership subscriptions, singlets, merchandise and donation income
- Record financial Spartan fees in the correct membership year
- Paying supplier invoices and reimbursing volunteer club expenses
- Preparing the annual financial statements for the AGM

What we are looking for

- Comfort with basic bookkeeping — a finance background is desirable but not essential
- Confidence with online banking, Excel spreadsheets and accounting software (Xero desirable but not essential)
- Someone organised, reliable and happy to work with a friendly committee
- Attend Committee meetings in Melbourne (February to November). Consideration will be given for this role to be done remotely

What you get

- Handover and ongoing support from the outgoing Treasurer
  For more information please email the club: spartans.team@hotmail.com

Please attention your email to the Treasurer, Vicky.

THE SparTAN LAP – Vilim Podreka (S1052)

The reconceptualized vision of the Tan as SparTAN 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 SparTAN Lap extends the lap from 3.8 km to a precise 4.2 km, aligning perfectly with marathon (10 laps) and half-marathon (5 laps) distances. As shown in the map below, the route follows the traditional Tan loop around the Royal Botanic Gardens and Yarra River, then adds a scenic extension from Alexandra Avenue up the gentle steps via The Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden and The Grotto, before rejoining the main path. 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.

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.

Our Spartans 'Ideas Men' from 'The Castle' – Vilim Podreka (S1052) and Gavin Criddle (S0973)

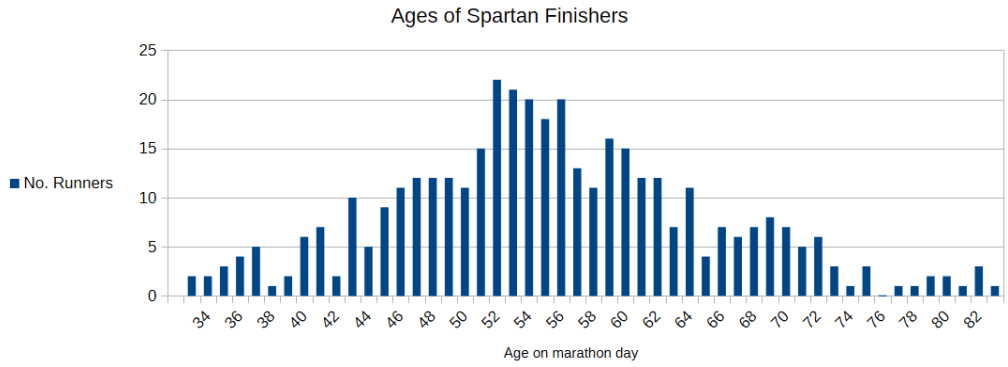
Editor's Note: At the next Tan Club Run, if you haven't tried the SparTAN, ask Vilim or Gavin for instuctions, or download the PDF which describes the track changes.

SPARTAN FINISHERS IN 2025

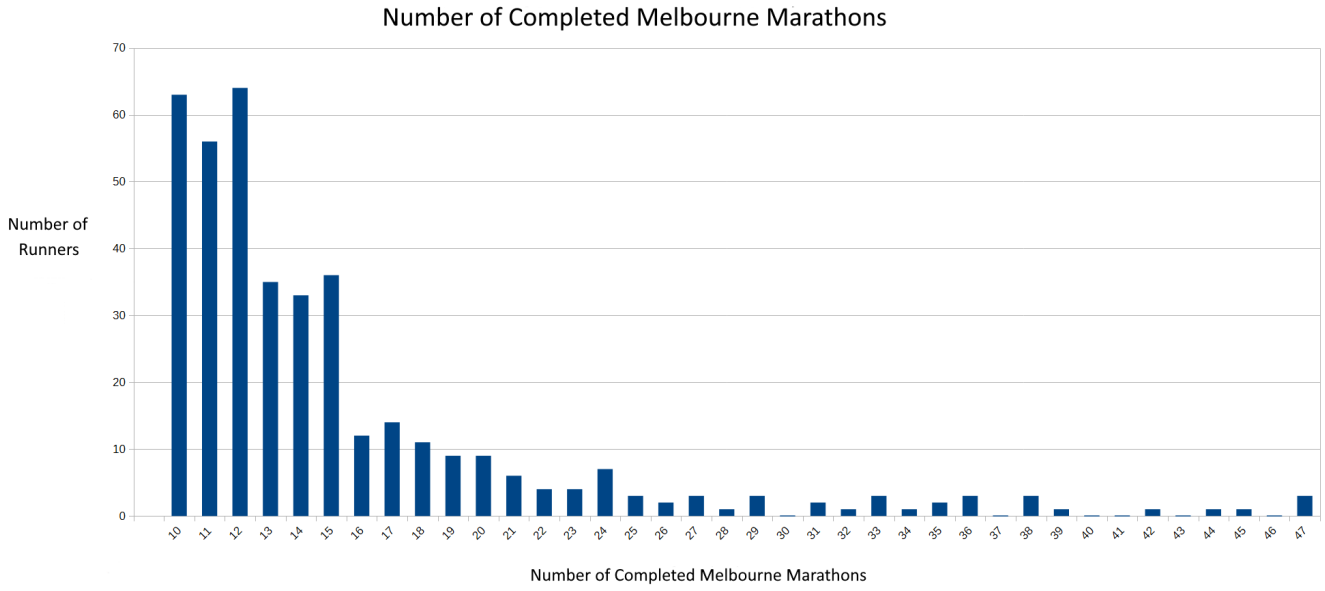
David Foskey (S25)

In 2025 there were 397 Spartans (68 females, 17%) who completed the Melbourne Marathon. This figure includes 63 (14 females) who qualified by running their tenth in 2025. Compare with 1987, when there were 88 original Spartans only two of whom were female.

The graph below shows the ages of Spartans, with two runners who were 33 equal youngest, and a single 83 year old as the oldest. The most common age was 52. 182 finishers were in the 50 to 60 range.



The second graph shows that the number of finishes per Spartan tails off after 15, with 287 in the10 to 15 range. The ‘blue singlets’ range from 14 to 18 (those with 19 would presumably be wearing a red singlet) numbered 106 – there certainly seemed to be many scattered through the field.



If the above hasn’t sated your desire for graphs and statistics, there is plenty more here.

SPARTAN RUNNER PROFILE

Please consult **page 15 of the March Newsletter** on the website regarding suggested questions … and send in your profile as we would love to compile as many stories as possible of the person behind the Spartan number. Email your Spartan Runner Profile to: spartans.team@hotmail.com

EVERY SPARTAN HAS A STORY

Do you have a story about your path to becoming a Spartan, or would you like to write a tribute?

We prefer articles in the range of 500 to 1000 words. Please email your story and photographs to pmaieyoung@gmail.com. Please use **MMSC Newsletter Submission** in the subject line. A Word document, 10pt Arial, with no formatting is preferred.

If you have missed a deadline, there is always the next issue.

If you have some photographs that you would like to add to our photographs collection, please email them to djfoskey@ozemail.com.au.

SPARTAN MERCHANDISE

Some of the latest additions to our Spartan merchandise range:

- Spartan pens in a variety of colours
- Spartan bottle openers
- Crop Tops

Merchandise is available for Spartans to purchase. Many members have come to enjoy the many items available which can all now be ordered online through this link.

STORING SPARTAN MEMORABILIA – *please contact us to discuss*

Now that we rent a storage unit in Camberwell for the Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club, we are in a position to offer members the option of preserving some of the rich tapestry of Spartan history. So, if you are decluttering, dealing with a deceased estate or for whatever reason wanting to move on items linked with either the Melbourne Marathon or Spartans, please get in touch!

While we clearly don't wish to end up with ten of the same item as we would quickly clutter up the space and outgrow our current storage locker, please feel welcome to send us a list of items to peruse, and we are happy to sort through and arrange collection.

THE MELBOURNE MARATHON SPARTANS CLUB PROUDLY SUPPORTS THE IMF 2026 VIRTUAL RUN

The QR code below will also be available at the AGM and at both Spartan tents throughout the Melbourne Marathon Festival.

The event website is: www.everystep.org.au
The registration page is: https://www.everystep.org.au/register/every-step

The donation link is: https://donate.imf.org.au/

EVERY STEP MATTERS. DONATE NOW!

SPARTAN RECIPE –Jay Fleming (S1012)

courtesy of RunBuzz – *just click on link below*

I prepared this last week found it delicious … thought members may like to try!

[Sugar Snap Pea & Carrot Soba Noodles | RunBuzz]

ODD SPOT – *sometimes there are no words!*

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.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The Spartan financial year is 1 July to 30 June, so fees for 2026-2027 are now being accepted. The membership fee is $45. Current financial Spartans are listed here.

$45 via EFT:	**Cheque for $45 via Post:**
Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club BSB: 633-000 Account No: 139201743 Please include name and/or Spartan Number	Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club PO Box 486, Camberwell, Victoria 3124 Please include name and/or Spartan Number

You can also pay through our on-line Square site, using this link. 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 that comprises marathon runners from all walks of life, ages and abilities that have achieved Spartan status by completing ten Melbourne Marathons.

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

Importantly, membership guarantees you entry to the Melbourne Marathon via a special link that is **only for financial Spartans**.

Our monthly TAN 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 recently commenced Club Runs from Frankston Pier on every second Sunday.Watch for emails with more details.

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 and you can gather afterwards to debrief, celebrate and enjoy the company and the achievement of finishing another Melbourne Marathon. Refreshments and free massages are also provided. In 2021 we began photographing Spartans just past the finish line to create a gallery of finishers.

SPARTAN CHEER SQUADS

We are looking to organise several cheer squads at various points of the Melbourne Marathon course, comprising either of family members of participating Spartans or Spartans themselves unable to participate due to injury.

COMMITTEE	
President	Jay Fleming 0418 374 783 flemi230727@myyahoo.com
Vice President	Paul Basile 0439 718 281
Treasurer	Vicky Chung
Secretary	Pamela Young
Membership Secretary	Felicity Doolan spartans.team@hotmail.com
Committee	Kai Ooi
Committee	John Zeleznikow
Webmaster	David Foskey
Committee	Candida Baskcomb
Committee	John Kaparelis
Committee	Peter Seal
Committee	Gavin Criddle
Committee	Vilem Podreka

LIFE MEMBERS

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

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 does not 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 option.

Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club
ONCE A SPARTAN ALWAYS A SPARTAN