THE SPARTAN

CLUB PATRON - Robert de Castella

December 2023

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FROM THE PRESIDENT Jay Fleming (S1012)

Just a brief Christmas message to wish a heartfelt Merry Christmas and a brilliant 2024 to every single member of our Spartan family! It has been an absolute pleasure welcoming and sharing the joy of incoming Spartans running in the green for the first time and milestone Spartans running in new colours for the first time. Everyday life and Spartans running and fitness regimens seem to have largely returned to normal in 2023, and in fact I have a hard time believing the events of 2020, 2021 and some of 2022 actually ever happened. We have



faced unprecedented challenges with Melbourne Marathon entries this year and it looks to be a similar story for the 2024 event. It's almost as if there's been an uncontrolled release of pent-up energy built up over the COVID years, together with the slightly reduced entries cap due to CBD infrastructure works combining to create a perfect storm of demand grossly outstripping supply. It has created a first-in, best-dressed scenario which has caught many of us unaware, but this will change drastically in coming events as we are all now very much aware of the need to get in early. It is a difficult but welcome problem for the event organisers as there is clearly a need to factor in some attrition, entrants who won't be running on the day due to injury, poor health or misadventure. We will continue to liaise with IMG as they manage similar scenarios going forward.

In 2023, Committee has enjoyed our new venue for Meetings at the Auburn Hotel and we have had an influx of four members to contribute their perspectives on matters. We also take the opportunity to thank Anne Ziogos and John Kaparelis for their contributions to Committee over many years as they needed to free up their valuable time for other pursuits. In fact we regularly acknowledge and have paid homage on the website to every person that has served on Committee as they have helped make Spartans what it is today.

Thank you to Spartans who attended our Christmas Club Run on December 10 for a little tinsel, holly, fruit mince tart and gingerbread house action. Thank you to Felicity Doolan for some superb architectural work with the gingerbread house which she then dismembered

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with some fierce fist punches before handing out the delicious pieces to a grateful Spartan populace. See you on the other side of the Christmas and New Year celebrations Spartans! Enjoy!!

Don't speak negatively about yourself, even as a joke. Your body doesn't know the difference. Words are energy and cast spells, that's why it's called spelling. Change the way you speak about yourself and you can change your life. What you're not changing, you're also choosing. – Bruce Lee

SPARTANS AND THE MELBOURNE MARATHON Jay Fleming (S1012)

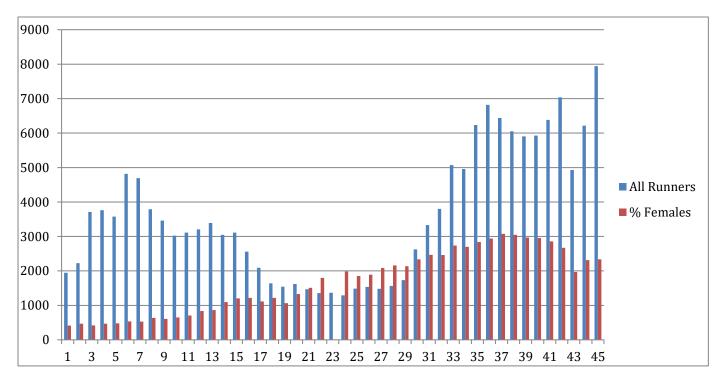
This year on Committee, we had a very challenging time fielding enquiries from Spartans when the 2023 event sold out in early July, about 100 days before the event. The 2024 Melbourne Marathon has sold out well over 300 days before the event so undoubtedly there will again be Spartans who will likely get caught up, sometimes unavoidably, in the rush for late entries. For the 2023 event we Spartans were offered a lifeline via a preferential waitlist which benefited about 36 Spartans, and for next year's event we've gone one better with a personal entry link emailed to every Spartan. Personally, I have been ecstatic with the collaboration and collegiate liaison with IMG resulting in the priority treatment we Spartans have been afforded. I like to think we have been humble with our communications with the team at IMG as I recognise they have an extremely difficult job to satisfy numerous stakeholders. I have not initiated any contacts with an air of expectation of preferential treatment just because we are Spartans as I simply don't see it as healthy way of conducting relationships. We look forward to ongoing and mutually beneficial collaborations with IMG as we hope to smooth out some of the bumps from the event's significant growth over the next several years. We would love to see the event prosper, and while this may cause some inconvenience with demand for entries, it's a far more préférable 'problem' to have than when the event nearly folded thirty years ago when the Spartans Club was only five years old and very nearly became a distant memory along with the Melbourne Marathon itself.



If you are a Spartan or have run nine and haven't received your link for 2024, contact us at spartans.team@hotmail.com.

PARTICIPATION FIGURES David Foskey S25

The graph below shows the number of finishers (blue line) and the percentage of female finishers (red) for the 45 Melbourne Marathons. There were a record 7943 finishers in 2023. The second figure tracked (in red) is the proportion of female finishers which rose from just over 4% in 1978 to almost 31% in 2014 (marathon 37). There has been a gentle decline since then, but the 2021 figure of under 20% improved to over 23% in 2022 and 2023. The highest number of female finishers was 2004 in 2013 exceeding the 2023 total of 1855. 6090 males finished this year, much greater than the previous highest number of 5157 in 2019.



There were 284 Spartan finishers, (up from 254 in 2022) which included 47 running their tenth. The proportion of females was 17% (47 runners), greater than the overall membership percentage of 11%. There were 57 new Spartans since 2022, 42 males and 15 females. Nine of these had qualified in earlier years, but hadn't applied for membership. There is a table of new members at the end of this newsletter.

In addition to the 7943 finishers, there were 204 who did not finish. Most DNF runners pulled out before the MCG, but some had anomalous splits. 878, including 16 Spartans, did not start. There were a further six entrants disqualified, most for someone else wearing their bib.

TASSY STEVO Kim Steven S1479

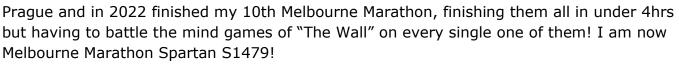
I'm 58 years old, been a police officer for 36 years and currently Detective Inspector at Devonport CIB.

I consider myself fortunate to have been pretty healthy all my life, to date. I have also kept regular appointments with my GP. I played Aussie Rules football until I was nearly 40 years old and then took up running to try to keep fit.

I've been a member of the Professional Cross Country Club of Tasmania (PCCCT) for about 20 years. PCCCT is a running club that is based on the NW coast. Their races vary in distance from 5km to Marathon length and are time handicapped, so anyone can win.

When I first started with the club, I hadn't run over 10km. I slowly increased the distances until I was able to complete my first marathon in 2004. It was then that I first discovered "The Wall" at the 32km mark. For me that meant a physical and mental battle to push on, to run, walk or stumble, one foot in front of the other, knowing the immense emotional feeling of achievement when crossing the line at the end (and maybe partaking in a cold beverage or two).

I have since completed 17 marathons: 3 in Tasmania, 1 in Perth WA, 1 at Gold Coast, 1 in





Why do I run?

I run to keep physically fit. To help me to keep up with my three grandchildren!

I feel like I can solve many of the world's (or at least my own) problems whilst out on a two hour run, so in essence it also gives me clarity in my thoughts. It helps to keep me mentally well to enable me to continue to do the job I do. Anecdotally, there is plenty of evidence of the mental health benefits of running and exercise in general.

Why do I run Marathons?

I love the personal challenge to the body and the mind, it's amazing what the body can achieve! Running a marathon requires training and discipline to keep going when the going gets tough, however that sense of achievement when crossing the finishing line is something quite special.



Speaking of special, there is nothing like doing a lap inside the MCG to finish the Melbourne Marathon, treading the turf 1 week after the AFL Grand Final was played there! (In 2019 I was able to follow the steps of my beloved Tigers star Dusty when he won the Norm Smith Medal).

Preparation is key. I have been lucky to not receive any longterm injuries, however, to assist my recovery, I participate in yoga classes once a week and get a massage once a month (treat yourself, they are well worth it).

Food for Fuel?

It is not just running that contributes to my wellbeing. I am very fortunate that my wife, Luanne, who happens to be a medical educator, has educated me on the importance of healthy eating habits. These are some of her key tips:

- 1. Reducing salt has major benefits to your cardiovascular health only use it for making kids play dough. Use reduced salt sauces, beans and pasta tomato sauces. Himalayan salt is still 99% salt and all salt increases your blood pressure.
- 2. Beer and wine can be loaded with calories per glass substitute these with a spirit and diet cordial, or even extra virgin cocktails... No alcohol no sugar. Remember fruit juice is loaded with sugar and those fruit boxes can have 10 teaspoons of sugar.
- 3. Watch your portion sizes. Eat less it may help to buy some smaller dinner plates. Eat more tin fish, sardines and beans with salad for lunch. CSIROs Total Wellbeing Diet has great recipes for eating healthily.
- 4. Look after your bones ensure you have enough low fat/skim dairy serves per day for your age (see your web browser).
- 5. Avoid pastry (sausage rolls pies, biscuits) unless you are on holiday in France. Frittata is a better choice.

FROM FOOTBALL TO 2:48 MM PACER David Staehr S1253

Dad was a talented sportsman at anything he tried his hand at. He played in a senior football premiership for Kaniva as a 15 year old. The following season he was chased by Essendon, but my grandmother made it very clear he needed to finish his final two years of schooling before leaving town. By the time summer came around, he had secretly signed with Geelong and ran off to the big smoke! Mum's father was also a strong footballer, starting at Geelong in his late teens.

Not surprisingly, sport was more than in the blood growing up. At age seven, we moved from a standard suburban block on to the expanses of an acre and a half. The front half of the block quickly became a football and cricket ground. An asphalt tennis court followed a few years later, which became home to all manner of sports. It wasn't uncommon for five, ten or more neighbours turning up after school or on weekends to take part in whatever sport was popular at the time.

Running was also in the family. Mum's three brothers were all talented middle distance runners and were heavily involved with the Geelong Cross Country Club as I was growing up. They competed in many Great Otway Classics, an annual three day relay team event of seven runners over the Queen's Birthday long weekend covering 350km from Geelong to Lorne via Colac and Apollo Bay.

Having watched Robert de Castella on TV as a youngster to win in Brisbane and then Helsinki the following year, there was always an interest in the marathon distance from a very early age. The concept of the Westfield Sydney to Melbourne also captured my imagination, firstly Cliff Young, and to a greater extent, the incredible feats of Yiannis Kouros that followed. In that era, having watched the coverage of the Melbourne Marathon over the years, and seen a neighbour's finishing medals, it became something I wanted to attempt someday.

My first try at competitive sports was Little Athletics in the Under 8 age group. From here, the next seven years was primarily spent playing tennis, with a side hobby of golf. I did run the occasional fun run, including a 10km Barwon Banks Fun Run as an eight year old, as well as being a regular at the weekly Geelong Sri Chinmoy events for the first two years of high school with my dad and sister.



I had some success in Interschool Cross Country events at a 10 Years Age Group with minimal training. However, from here, many of my peers developed much earlier than I did and I found myself going backwards. By the time I hit Year 12, I was keen to try something new and moved on to play cricket over summer and Australian rules over winter. I also completed my first half marathon in that year, on my 17th birthday, with little training.

After graduating from university, I started my career with a large Engineering firm in February 2000. I decided to give football away and was still running a little, completing two half marathons in the first half of the year. By the middle of the year, work had taken over my life and all exercise had gone by the wayside. By April 2001, I had realised that things needed to change and started on the path to a career change into teaching and fulfilling my dream of running the Melbourne Marathon.

After dropping the extra weight I was carrying, my training quickly progressed to running 15-20km six times a week. About nine weeks out, I woke up one morning with excruciating pain in both hips. Three years later an arthroscopy to both hips would repair tears to the labrum in both hips, a result of running on the hard concrete footpaths of Melbourne's inner eastern suburbs and a training program with little variation. At the time, I could barely walk the 200m to the tram stop each morning, but I found if I could bear the pain for the first five to ten minutes, it would subside enough to keep up the training. This was enough for me to make it to the start line and achieve a time that I was more than happy with.

Ongoing hip pain gave me little motivation to run a second marathon, as well as the general leg soreness for weeks afterwards. I returned to playing football in 2002 and on completing my teaching course, I moved to Kaniva to teach at the start of 2003, where I have lived ever since. Even after the surgery, the hip pain continued. At the end of the 2008 season, issues with fingers, thumbs, ribs and shoulders made me question continuing to play football. With eight weeks to the Melbourne Marathon, I decided to make a last minute attempt to train for the marathon. Despite the continuing pain, I got enough kilometres in the legs and managed to make to home on a hot and blustery day.

The challenge of finishing the 2008 Melbourne Marathon at the time cured me for good, but by the time I had made it home, I was plotting to get fit to try and break 2hr45mins. Twelve months on, I achieved this at the Melbourne Marathon. Without the bash and crash on the body that football created, the hips slowly improved and have not been an issue since. This has led to more than 50 marathons and 12 ultras since. The Adelaide marathon become a regular event on my calendar, given Adelaide's closer proximity to Kaniva than to Melbourne. It has been pleasing to see how the festival has grown from my first Adelaide Marathon in 2009.

I am very proud of what I have achieved with my running over the last decade or so. But I am also very realistic about how my performances stack up against the elite runners across the country. I feel that I underachieved greatly for most of that time, mainly due to struggles with getting nutrition right during races.



My run at the 2015 Barossa Marathon is one I reflect on with pride. My wife was in hospital in Melbourne and Ballarat all the preceding summer, pregnant with our second child, Zoe. In between travelling up and down the highway from our temporary home in Geelong, a lot of running over that period was with our son Jackson in a running pram. Operating on little sleep once Zoe arrived, my training was much more limited than hoped heading to Tanunda. To pull away in the second half and finish with lots left in the tank, still has me scratching my head at all the faults of my diet, sleep patterns and training in the lead up that somehow allowed me to run better than I had before and since! (Ed - 2:38:53)

One of my biggest moments was winning the Coburg 6 hour in 2011, only having run two 50km races prior. My training was not suited to running that sort of distance, and I felt unwell for most of the second half, but managed to keep pushing myself.

Nine of my twelve Melbourne Marathons have been as pacer, firstly as 3hr pacer in 2010, and then as 2hr50min pacer in 2011,12,13,14,15&16. (Ed: sole 2:48 pacer in 2022 and 2023) I also paced 3hrs at Adelaide in 2010, and 2hr48min in 2019. The satisfaction of helping athletes that are driven like myself to achieve a goal that hadn't otherwise been achievable is as rewarding as anything I have done individually. The stories aren't always

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apparent at the finish line; it isn't until the runners track you down in the days after or even years later to tell you what it meant to them and how it has changed their lives that it adds so much meaning.

After a successful 2019, my plan was to hopefully knock off my tenth Adelaide marathon in 2020, and after five or six marathons for the year, give marathon running away. When the first COVID-19 restrictions were announced in March 2020, I was well into a taper for my first marathon of the year, less than a fortnight away. At that point, I put my faith in what our leaders were telling us about their plans and timelines for beating the virus and ramped my training back up in the expectation that events would start back up in the not too distant future. Sadly, I turned out to be living in the wrong state, which was made even harder by being allowed into South Australia as a Cross Border Community member, but not far enough into SA to compete in events that were able to go ahead. I have kept up my training in preparation for upcoming events, and time and time again been defeated by last minute postponements, cancellations and border closures. My only run this period being the 2021 Pichi Richi Marathon. (Ed – in 2022 David became an Adelaide Marathon Warrior with a PB of 2:37)

I have reached a point where I feel I have satisfied everything I have wanted to with my running. While some people would think I need to tick off a big event like London, Boston etc, I always get lots of enjoyment out of meeting up with people I have met over my journey at smaller events. There is still a small desire to run 100km, 100miles and even a multi-day race.

(Ed: David features heavily in one of Ian Hill's articles on the Adelaide Marathon)

RECIPE – Extra Virgin Mojito Kim Steven (S1479)

To prove that healthy food tastes good, why don't you spoil yourself with an Extra Virgin Mojito?

- Lime juice
- Lime pieces
- Mint leaves bruised by twisting
- Diet solo or lemonade
- Ice



Is Running Wise? Phil Urquhart S1217

Is running wise? Is running wise? Don't patronise Let's analyse

Aching thighs
Stinging eyes
Nasty flies
Shoe unties
Cramps paralyse
Bowels liquidise

But otherwise

See the sunrise Runners highs Reduce my size Carn the pies Spirits rise Another slice We socialise

Is running wise?

Don't moralise You can't disguise As exercise It qualifies



Phil Urquhart and Lavinia Petrie at the 2015 Annual General Meeting

Phil's first Melbourne was in 1980, his tenth and most recent was 35 years later in 2015

THE BALLARAT MARATHON

Jay Fleming S1012

Australian marathon legend and former Spartans AGM guest speaker Steve Moneghetti has kicked off the inaugural Ballarat Marathon to be held on April 28, 2024. It has long been a goal of mine to repay the kindnesses of our AGM guest speakers in addition to the thank you



gifts we present on stage. Over the years we have ensured healthy Spartan numbers at our patron and twice AGM speaker Rob De Castella's annual De Castella Run and similarly we would love to extend some gratitude and support to Steve Moneghetti. Spartan Hall of Fame runner John Kaparelis, who recently ran his 200th marathon at Lilydale's 'Run for the Young', has also been making quite a name for himself as a pacer (see photo at left) in several notable events including the Sydney Marathon. As those of us who know John well will readily attest, John is a ball of infectious energy with a knack of creating momentum and marshalling the troops for most endeavours. John did a quick ring-around and has managed to ensure an extremely heavy Spartan presence filling nearly all pacer positions for

the Ballarat Marathon and Half Marathon. We hope this inaugural event is a huge success for Steve and his team and for Ballarat's prodigious running community.

THE PROFILE OF SPARTANS Jay Fleming S1012

As our number of Spartans grows by a yearly average of around 50, so does our profile as that's 50 more little 'Running Man' logos running around not just in the Melbourne Marathon but countless other events. When profile, branding or membership are mentioned in corporate circles, it is often with a growth mindset. However, when we speak of growing the Spartan profile and presence, we're not trying to grow our number of members as there's only one way to become a Spartan and that takes a minimum of 10 years. No amount of media posts or influencing is going to fast-forward the 10-year timespan. My personal goal is to have a healthy Spartan presence at any event, be it the City to Surf, any of the major marathons in Australia, any of the plethora of Parkruns here and internationally or filling the pacers positions in the Ballarat Marathon. To me the most famous running logo is the Comrades logo, the iconic winged sandals of Hermes enabling him to fly between the heavens, the earth and the underworld. However, Comrades has been around for twice as long as the Melbourne Marathon so I am extremely proud of the

profile and presence our Spartan 'Running Man' has achieved since our formation in 1988.

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. <u>Check out the other options</u> 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.

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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 <u>here</u>.

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 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:	Cheque for \$20 via Post:
Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club BSB: 633-000 Account No: 139201743	"Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club" PO Box 162 Rosanna Vic 3084
Please include name and/or Spartan Number	Please include name and/or Spartan Number

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 <u>regular newsletters</u>, 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 <u>monthly Sunday runs</u> 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.

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 <u>photographs collection</u>, 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
		flemi230727@myyahoo.com
Vice President	Paul Basile	0439 718 281
Treasurer	Rod Bayley	9077 7192
Secretary	Pamela Young	
Membership Secretary	Felicity Doolan	0411 405 529
		spartans.team@hotmail.com
Co-Secretary	Vicky Chung	
Committee	Kai Ooi	
Committee	John Zeleznikow	
Webmaster	David Foskey	0432 146 747
Committee	John Dobson	0412 688 287
Committee	Candida Baskcomb	
Committee	Peter Seal	

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, <u>please use this link</u>

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.

INCOMING SPARTANS SINCE 2022

Agnoletto, Sandro (S1480) Amabile, Mark (S1520) Anderson, Scott (S1492) Bailey, Grace (SF0170) Barlow, Andrew (S1511) Brooks, Kara (SF0173) Brown, Matthew (S1497) Brown, Douglas (S1518) Burnett, Nick (S1519) Buskens, Teena (SF0177) Camilleri, Edward (S1506) Casas, Jamie (S1487) Christie, Deborah (SF0178) Ciavarella, Mathew (S1485) Cohen, Peter (S1481) Coltman, Jamie (S1509) Coulthard, Peter (S1490) Cram, Russell (S1510) Davis, Steve (S1500)

Di Pierro, Frank (S1501) Dowdle, Francis (S1483) Dugina, Linda (SF0180) Dusi, Jeremy (S1505) Fisher, Emmeline (SF0181) Ford, Carina (SF0174) Franks, Sarah (SF0175) Gordon, Jeff (S1494) Gregory, Adam (S1516) Ham, Sharon (SF0172) Harper, Nick (S1502) Hill, Christine (SF0176) Hogan, Wayne (S1517) Howden, Nick (S1515) Jayasinghe, Anishka (S1503) Kewley, Douglas (S1482) Lau, Matthew (S1513) Lawlor, Simon (S1496) Leith, Sean (S1495)

McDowall, Ashley (S1508) McLaughlan, Kate(SF0179) McPherson, Daniel (S1488) McSwain, Chris (S1514) Mullavey, Jarrod (S1498) Myers, Kristy (SF0183) O'Brien, Andrew (S1512) O'Brien, Sue (SF0182) Patel, Dharmesh (S1493) Sacco, Michael (S1486) Smith, Barry (S1507) Steven, Kim (S1479) Stuart, Veronica (SF0169) Styles, Neil (S1499) Thorburn, Karin (SF0184) Trezise, Matthew (S1484) Tsialtas, Sofianos (S1491) Wright, Jeffrey (S1504) Young, Vanessa (SF0171)

Congratulations to you all!