



THE SPARTAN

CLUB PATRON – Robert de Castella

July 2025

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SAVE THE DATE

MELBOURNE MARATHON SPARTANS CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY 15 SEPTEMBER

7.30pm, AFL Dining Room, Melbourne Cricket Ground

FROM THE PRESIDENT JAY FLEMING (S1012)

Welcome to the middle of winter Spartans! A common theme I have subscribed to over the years has been **'Practice Voluntary Discomfort!'** Following through with training sessions in the middle of summer and the middle of winter are probably when our Spartan qualities are most evident ... when we dig that bit deeper to drag ourselves out into the weather, successfully convincing ourselves that it'll be OK after the first couple of km.

When we lived in Korumburra for a decade and a half over thirty years ago, a former work colleague had an interesting way of looking at rainy days. For those who know that part of the state, it regularly receives the highest rainfall, so when I as a city-slicker in the mid-eighties made a super-obvious and needless observation regarding the incessant rainfall as we were finishing building our first house, I was offered some good old-fashioned country advice from a fifth-generation farmer ... 'Look Cocko' ... Graham called everyone Cocko ... 'You only get wet once!' Had the internet existed back then, this and similar sayings would easily have been a 'meme' or 'gif'. Graham's words have always remained with me, particularly when stepping out into teeming sideways rain. The man was right ... once we initially get wet, it's physiologically impossible to get any wetter!

Throughout my running journey, I have always found running in either cold or balmy rain to be extremely exhilarating. It may be the sensation of giant droplets rolling off the hair onto lashes, onto both cheeks and then turning salty when reaching the mouth due to mixing with the accumulated sweat. It may be the sound of squelchy runners and the fairly annoying, yet oddly enjoyable sensation of a bunched up drenched sock in one or both shoes. feeling like a stone that you just know will be a blister when removing runners at the end of the run. It may be the channelling of toddler years by running through giant puddles with an extra-high stomp, knowing I'm not going to get any wetter. It may be the satisfying and affirming nods we exchange with fellow runners, cyclists and people walking back carrying bags of grocery shopping, fellow Bravehearts not caring one iota about the elements.

It may also be that due to our extremely advanced and comfortable push-button world, our bodies no longer need to adapt to temperature all that much anymore as technology does most of the adapting for us. Climate control adapts our indoor environment by heating when it's cold and cooling when it's hot, resulting in the total luxury of avoiding extremes. Similarly, depending on the weather, we don't technologically advanced clothing to do much of the adapting for us when outdoors. However, by denying ourselves the opportunity to experience weather extremes or sudden changes in temperature, we negatively impact our health by stealing from our body the opportunity to use its own systems to maintain equilibrium and homeostasis ... to adapt to change, the very essence of survival. We also deny ourselves the sheer joy of feeling our feelings, the sheer joy of feeling vital and alive.



In my professional setting on campus, over the colder months I regularly hear fellow workers asking others about the weather outside to ensure they are sensibly attired for the elements before stepping out mid-morning for the 15-minute return walk to the café and back. Ironically, despite their admirable efforts, it is these very same employees that are most often seen falling victim to most viruses and coughing and spluttering over others.

A long time ago, a couple of hardcore acquaintances of mine recommended cold morning swims or at the very least, cold showers as a healthy way to start my day. I gave it a good go for the best part of two months but found it too torturous to continue, so I adapted it to something I've been regularly able to incorporate into my list of patterns and habits over the journey. At the end of every morning shower, I turn the hot water off first and finish with just the cold for about a minute. Apart from the vibrant wake-up and lively start to the day, the constriction of blood vessels during exposure to cold and slow dilation during gradual warming up is excellent for cardio health.

It is tremendously beneficial to regularly practice brief bouts of voluntary discomfort. For us Spartans, patterns of living and training are closely intertwined with habits as the two terms may almost be used interchangeably. At times when the challenges of life get a little overwhelming, our discipline with our healthy (and sometimes uncomfortable) patterns and habits lapses a little and we fall into some less helpful (and more comfortable) patterns as coping mechanisms while we weather life's troughs in survival mode. Unfortunately, these less helpful patterns and habits tend to also be easier, more enjoyable and less tedious which can make it quite difficult for us to break away by slowly weaning ourselves off them when the pressures have passed.

Put simply, we get nice and comfortable, and Planet 'Comfortable' has an exceptionally powerful gravitational pull which can be hard to overcome, without us deliberately positioning another planet (goal or life event) with its own opposing gravitational pull to neutralise it. We also benefit greatly from being kind to ourselves during these difficult times, as we Spartans are absolutely disciplined beasts for the vast majority of our existence, so we do well to cut ourselves some slack when we wander off course and are forced to struggle through some of life's inevitable mud and quicksand while navigating our way back to the trail proper.

To break out of a pattern, one must first understand the pattern. – J.K Krishnamurthi

Integrity of Results

Over the last several years of the Melbourne Marathon, a small but not insignificant number of Spartans have had frustrating challenges with having their genuinely achieved results officially recognised among the list of finishers. When it comes to impropriety and cheating in the Melbourne Marathon, we on Committee have been particularly strident with monitoring and calling it out and having results annulled as our prime focus is to preserve the 'sweat equity' of the Spartan singlet.

Upon discovering anomalies, we have moved quickly to rescind results and not have them count toward incrementing toward a Spartan tally.

Over the last 15 or so years, cheating in the Melbourne Marathon has taken several creative twists and turns, and has become particularly prevalent since several high-profile International Marathons have implemented cut-off qualifying entry times.

On Committee, we have also listened to our fair share of justifications/excuses/reasons to rationalise cheating.

Some runners have attempted to use their high standing in society to sway us ... a little of the old ... 'Do you know who I am' ... type of approach, and you can imagine how that goes down.



Even in the most emotionally charged of cases, sometimes involving terminal illness, our approach has been that several criteria need to be satisfied for an entrant to be **'deemed'** a finisher. It is possible to finish the 42.195 km distance but not be **deemed** a finisher for official records:

- The runner must be **entered into the correct event**
- The runner must be **entered in their own name**
- The runner must **wear their own bib number from start to finish of the 42.195 km distance**
- The runner **must have run the entirety of the official 42.195 km distance** (instead of some shortened version of the event)
- The runner must have run the official 42.195 km distance **on the day of the event**
- The runner must have run the official 42.195 km distance and **within the cut-off time**, which until 2024 has been seven hours but will increase to seven hours and 30 minutes from 2025 onwards
- By opting to enter an event, **a runner agrees to abide by the above parameters and not enter into interpretation or negotiation** regardless of any physical ailments, disabilities or misadventure

Unfortunately, due to needing to tighten and enforce regulatory parameters to reduce and stamp out the increasing prevalence of the above issues, each of which we have actually faced on Committee, we now face a difficult situation where some **genuine finishing times have not been recognised as legitimate**. Each of the above bullet points have been creative initiatives employed by previous entrants to bypass regulations.

Therefore, we certainly don't wish to compromise the systems that event organisers have in place to maintain integrity of the event; however, we have also needed to advocate on behalf of several Spartans who have put in a genuine 'long day at the office' out on the course, only to receive a DNF for their efforts. The most disturbing part of this has been that in several of these cases, the runner was totally oblivious to having a DNF recorded beside their name.

We urge all Spartans to please run on the 'course proper' and try to avoid cutting corners across footpaths ... as this may result in inadvertently missing a timing mat, not all of which are visible to the naked eye, which then inadvertently flags an anomaly with a timing chip to both

event scrutineers and the timing company. Members of Committee, particularly Legend David Foskey, have done a power of advocacy work liaising with the timing company to have legitimate results recognised.

[The Great Marathon Mystery: Why Do Runners Cheat?](#)



SparTAN Club Run

Incoming Committee member Vilim Podreka has been quite the 'ideas man' at the Spartan Club Runs ... for those of you who are fans of the iconic Aussie movie, *The Castle*. [Bing Videos](#)

Vilim has proposed to Spartanise the monthly Tan Club Runs by extending the single 3.8km circuit via a brief detour into a 4.2km using a satellite application to confirm accuracy. This will provide greater clarity for Spartans with calculating the distance run as a fraction of the marathon distance.

Furthermore, we intend to approach Melbourne City Council regarding erecting a Spartans Identifying Marker built to proposed specifications within regulatory parameters to further inform runners and international visitors, not only of Spartan history but also of the history of marathons in Australia. We are also very enthusiastic about the marketing around the SparTAN name, and congratulate Vilim on his creativity and contribution. If you have your own creative gem, please write in!



Spartan Calendar 2026

One initiative I have unsuccessfully tried to kick off over several years now is the Spartan Wall and Desk Calendar. I am reliably informed by infinitely more informed members of Committee that wall and desk calendars are 'no longer a thing'. Despite this I have kept pestering away in the background with a little humour on Committee as I can definitely see a Spartan Calendar becoming a reality. If you fancy your image being used in the 2026 Spartans Wall and Desk Calendar, please feel welcome to forward one or several photos with decent resolution.



Perhaps you have participated solo in some stunning overseas events and locations or perhaps run solo or as a couple, or with family or significant others in Victoria, interstate, overseas or in events such as the City to Surf or your local parkrun. You could be the Spartan on the March-2026 page or perhaps the Spartan on the September-2026 page. Your image could be looking down from a kitchen or study wall inspiring a runner and their family for 30 days. We'll endeavour to match the scenery or theme of your image with the month and season of the 2026 year! Calendar sales also have tremendous potential for raising additional funds for IMF so it's a good bit of fun for a fine cause!

The Pheidippides Award

Among Spartans, our ethos is to recognise and reward effort and accomplishment. Our Club Statement of Purpose stipulates that we exist: 'To advance the sport of marathon running to athletes of all ages and abilities.' Unfortunately, since our formation, our recognition and reward has rather simplistically focused solely on the fastest runners, which while certainly deserving of accolades and recognition of the time and dedication to excellence, has not demonstrated inclusivity.

Since our formation in 1988, runners running 5-, 6- or 7-hour times, have similarly invested copious effort and dedication often bouncing back from insurmountable challenges, and for their efforts have been repeatedly greeted with silence. Last year, in addition to our Fastest Male and Female Spartan Awards, we proposed to introduce recognition for runners finishing just inside the cut-off time of 7 hours. The first recipients of the Pheidippides Award will be presented at this year's AGM.



The cut-off time for this year's Melbourne Marathon will be extended from seven hours to seven hours and 30 minutes, meaning that the Spartan being presented with The Pheidippides Award at the 2026 AGM will be closest to the cut-off time of seven hours and 30 minutes.

I have long felt uneasy when listening to conversations among runners with terms such as 'disappointing time' or 'slow time' when referring to results. Unless I'm somehow sadly deluded, every race that every runner has ever run, has been their fastest time they could possibly have run in that event on that day ... regardless of what the numerical figure may be or how well or otherwise they stuck to their planned pace or cadence.

At the Start Line of an event, nobody sets out to run a slower time than they are capable of in that event on that day. The time it takes them to cross the Finish Line is the best and quickest time they could have run in that event on that day, taking into account how they slept the previous night, felt on the day, their injuries, their age, their family or personal traumas, went out too fast too early or tried to keep up with the wrong pacer etc. **The runner has done their best! Nobody can do better than their best!**

Therefore, if a runner records a 7:25 time for the 42.195 km, that is their best possible effort on that day, of which they should be enormously proud and it ought to be appropriately recognised and celebrated as an enormous achievement ... as it is arguably just as challenging if not more difficult to cover the distance in 7:25 than it is in 2:25, 3:25 or 4:25.

Acceptance of the Pheidippides Award will be strictly optional ... and if declined, will be offered to the next eligible runner until accepted.

As somebody who has most likely completed their last Melbourne Marathon due to a debilitating issue with my right hip, which is being attended to next March, it is my 'pie-in-the-sky' goal to enter the 2026 Melbourne Marathon and shuffle around the course narrowly within the newly extended cut-off time. If I successfully complete it and if my finishing time makes me eligible, I would proudly accept such an award.

We hope the Pheidippides Award is warmly accepted and embraced by all Spartans in the spirit in which it is intended ... that of contributing to the inspirational vibe, camaraderie, recognition and celebrating the triumph of the human spirit.

New Charity – Indigenous Marathon Foundation (IMF)

We have determined to align ourselves with this fine initiative and get behind **our patron Rob De Castella**, who founded it in 2009. This noble endeavour literally saves lives and continues to be a shining beacon among First Nations Communities. We plan to regularly announce initiatives where a percentage of merchandise sales goes directly to IMF.



We thank Spartans in advance for any support you are able to offer Rob and the IMF through purchase of Spartan merchandise. [Indigenous Marathon Foundation | Health Promotion Charity](#)

Guest Speaker for 2025 AGM

Our guest speaker for the Spartans AGM on 15 September, 2025, is our own local superstar, Ian Gainey. Ian's story is as amazing as the man himself, and we look forward with great anticipation to Ian sharing his running journey, imagery and story of resilience and tenacity.

Ian's unrelenting inner strength was forged in the furnace of an Australian Society of the fifties, sixties and seventies, only just beginning to mature and evolve with its approach to acceptance, tolerance, human rights and equitable opportunity for all members of Australian society. As a unique and integral trailblazing member of our Spartan Hall of Fame, we are extremely privileged to have Ian join us for the AGM and to present our incoming and milestone Spartans with their singlets. [Stories - Melbourne Marathon Spartans](#)



Kosice Peace Marathon

The Košice Peace Marathon (Slovak: Medzinárodný maratón mieru), first held in 1924, is the oldest marathon in Europe and the third oldest in the world (after the [Boston Marathon](#), first held in 1897, and the [Yonkers Marathon](#), first held in 1907).

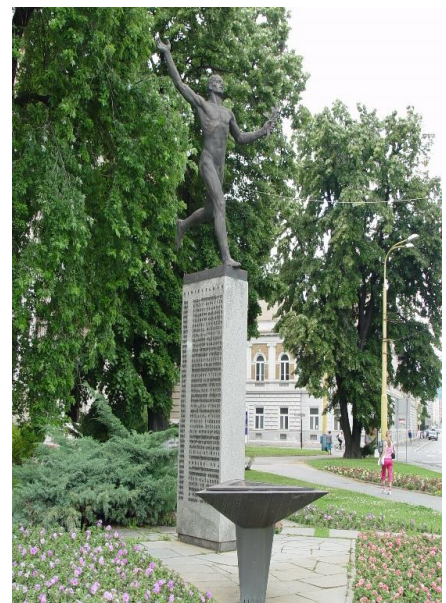
The marathon generally takes place each year on the first Sunday in October. The course is relatively flat and consists of two loops, mostly within the city centre.

Inspired by the 1924 Paris Olympics, Košice sports enthusiast Vojtech (born Braun) Bukovsky organised the inaugural race, which began beneath the ruins of [Turňa Castle](#) on October 28 1924 to celebrate the sixth anniversary of establishing the Czechoslovak Republic (break-up of Austria-Hungary Empire).

In co-operation with the local army division, eight running enthusiasts run successfully this race and the Czech Karol Hala was the winner with the time 3:01:35



The start of the first event (8 from left Hala, 9 Bukovsky)



Statue in centre of Kosice on Marathon Square

Present course records are for Men 2:06:55 (2023) Philemon Rono (Kenya) and Women 2:21:08 Rebecca Tanui (Kenya).

The marathon quickly gained international prestige, attracting prominent athletes like 1931 winner [Juan Carlos Zabala](#), who went on to win the 1932 Olympic marathon. Known for its adherence to the official marathon distance of 42.195km, even in its early years, the race has hosted numerous world-class runners and witnessed historic performances, including [Abebe Bikila](#)'s victory in 1961. The Košice Peace Marathon has endured through war and societal change, adapting its course and expanding to include women in 1980.

In 2016, the marathon received [IAAF Bronze Label Road Race](#) status,¹ and in 2018, it received [IAAF Silver Label Road Race](#) status. The marathon is an [AIMS](#)-certified race. It is also categorized as a [Silver Label Road Race](#) by [World Athletics](#), and was certified as a 5-Star Quality Road Race by European Athletics Running for All in 2015.

SPARTAN STORIES

Without Limits - My Road to 200 & Beyond! GEORGE DYER (S1140)

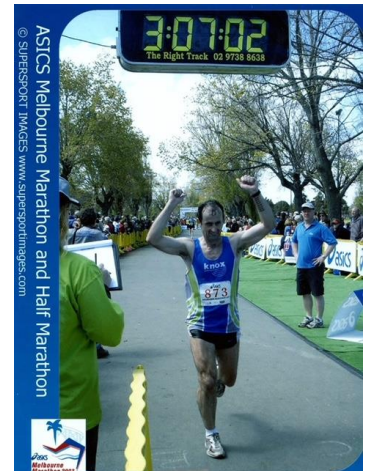
I first started to write this story about my marathon journey 18 months before I crossed the finish line in the Melbourne Marathon of December 2021 to complete my 100th marathon. After numerous lockdowns, 10 marathon cancellations due to COVID 19 that mission was finally accomplished.

This recant of my marathon adventures went into its own lockdown and only resurfaced recently as I fast approach my 200th marathon in Melbourne this year.

The Beginning: Born and bred into a sports loving family my athletics career began at the age of 6 in 1970 when I joined St Joseph's Little Athletics Club. After six years of little athletics, I became a member of Knox Athletics to where I have been a member for the last 50 years. Growing up I played football and basketball but Athletics has been the one constant throughout my life. In my early days I found I excelled in the Shot Put, discus and then also the Hammer Throw.

I considered myself a bit of a decathlete and enjoyed competing in all events. It wasn't until I divorced at 35 that I started turning to distance running as my mates at athletics were mainly distance runners.

This amazing, crazy marathon adventure I've been on for the last 20+ years started during the winter of 2003 when at the age of 39 a group of approximately 10 athletes from Knox Athletics decided to run our first ever marathon. Never in my wildest dreams did an ex shot put, discus and hammer thrower ever envisage the journey that I was about to embark on, on that fateful day.



Melbourne Marathon - Sunday 19 October, 2003: 22 years on my memories of that day are a bit vague. It was an exciting day for the 10 of us and I remember being quite nervous on the starting line down at Frankston with the great unknown that lay ahead. The gun went off and the nerves disappeared and I settled into a nice rhythm. In my head I had little check points to tick off along the way. Nepean Hwy to Beach Rd Mordialloc. Done! Feeling pretty good at halfway somewhere around Ricketts Point. Done! Brighton Baths. Done! Luna Park. Done! Grabbed a drink at the last drink station on Beaconsfield Parade. Going okay and a little under three-hour marathon pace.

Turn right into Kerford Rd and just pass the 40k marker, bang! Massive hamstring cramp. I couldn't move. Waited for what seemed like an eternity and started to run again and bang! Massive cramp in the other hamstring. Couldn't move again.

Eventually I managed to get slowly moving. Right turn into Canterbury Rd. Done! Left turn and take the underpass into Albert Park. Done! Left turn again and I finally see the home straight to the finish line. The pain, thrill and joy of crossing that finish line in 3.07.14 was just out of this world. 'That's it, never again' I said. Famous last words. By 10:00pm that night after a few amber refreshments with my other Knox Athletes a return bout for the following year was on the agenda. I was so excited at finishing my 1st marathon and the sense of achievement that I slept with that medal around my neck. I still get the same buzz and feeling at the end of every marathon.

The Adventure: At the age of 50 in 2015 I ventured off for my first ever overseas trip. What do runners do when they go on holidays? They look for somewhere to race. So, my first trip became six marathons on six consecutive weekends in six countries.

- Helsinki, Finland
- Reykjavik, Iceland
- Guernsey
- Dingle, Ireland
- Jungfrau, Switzerland
- Sydney, Australia

This was such an amazing experience and took quite some planning. They were all beautiful locations and every marathon was so special with its uniqueness. From finishing in the 1952 Olympic Stadium in Helsinki, to the far-flung region of Iceland and snowcapped mountains in the Swiss Alps. My first foray overseas finished in front of the Sydney Opera House where I got to represent Victoria for the first time in the Australian Marathon Championships and bring home a bronze medal in the team's event. This would light the fire for many more crazy marathon adventures



Since 2015 this addiction has led to endless overseas running holidays. It's been quite an adventure and life changing as well. It has taken me all around the world, 100 overseas marathons, in 20 countries from active volcanos in Japan to the Swiss Alps. Niagara Falls, Iceland, Dubai and the mountains of Nepal to name a few. The Abbotts 6 World Major Marathons twice. All 50 states of America plus Washington DC. From Death Valley to the Gettysburg Battlefields, snow in Grand Rapids Michigan and the occasional tornado, 9 marathons in 9 days in 9 different states, ran dressed as Rocky Balboa in Philadelphia up those famous steps, an Indoor Marathon in Milwaukee Wisconsin where the outside temperature was minus 18 degrees Celsius and in a chicken suit at the home of KFC in Corbin, Kentucky.

I've also been privileged enough to be able to put this addiction to good use for the National Breast Cancer Foundation in 2020 where I ran 100km on the Knox Athletics Track and two days later the entire metropolitan train network. 10 days, 467km and 222 train stations in a pink Tutu and wig. Quite a busy little 13-day period. What do you on the 14th day? Go out for a 33km run to round the fortnight out to a nice even 600km! Last September I also ran the entire length of the Yarra River, 240km over three days dressed in a yellow Tutu and wig for the Sunshine

Foundation for my gorgeous grandson Eli who suffers from a very rare genetic disorder called ZTTK Syndrome. 36 hours later I was on the starting line of the Ross Marathon in Tasmania to finish off a great week of running for such a great cause.

My Favourite Marathon: I often get asked 'what was your favourite marathon?' People get disappointed when I say Melbourne but being a proud Melbournian I just love running through this great city. Outside of Melbourne though there is one that stands out more than any other. The Jungfrau Marathon in Switzerland. The whole event was just amazing. The small town of Interlaken nestled in the Swiss Alps is the host Venue of this marathon. They had a massive Marquee for number pickup and a free pasta night before the race where I got to meet lots of people from around the world. On race day we gathered at the start line in the crowded village centre at 500m above sea level. I thought Americans were patriotic but the Swiss definitely have them covered. Just before the start, they play the Swiss National Anthem on those big, long Swiss Alphorn by musicians dressed in traditional Swiss costumes, right on the road in front of us. It was very uplifting and inspiring. When the gun goes off the noise from the crowd was deafening. We complete a 3km loop of the town and pass back through the start line where the crowd were very raucous once again before heading off into the Swiss Alps.

For the first 26km of the race you wind your way around the mountains passing through little villages where the whole town come out to cheer with their cowbells and incessant chanting of Hopp, Hopp, Hopp! The fun begins from the 26km mark. You're now at an elevation of about 700m you take a left turn at one of these little Villages. It doesn't pay to look up. Everybody started walking and I couldn't understand why. I tried to run up the hill but soon discovered that I wasn't getting there any faster than the walkers and expending a lot more energy. A change of plans quickly ensued and I walked up the steep parts and ran wherever possible.

For the next 15km we climbed our way up through the very picturesque snowcapped Swiss Alps to an elevation of nearly 2500m. The last kilometre was downhill and finished in a Swiss Ski Village. What a relief to finally get to that finish line. What a marathon with probably the best backdrop and scenery you will ever get. You then have two-hour train trip to get back to Interlaken. That same night back at the Marquee they have one of the biggest celebrations after a marathon that I've ever been to! They parade the top three place getters in every age category up on stage and present them with their awards. Last but not least they had an ABBA tribute band play the night away. A marathon I will never forget.



My Favourite Major: I was recently reminded in April this year when I completed my second Boston marathon eight years after my first that it is my favourite of the World Major Marathons. The City of Boston just own the entire event and you're treated like a rock star. On race day the incessant, never-ending cheering along the route is amazing and one that will live long forever in my memories.

My Hardest and Craziest Adventure: Probably the hardest and most crazy adventure I attempted was to run 14 Marathons in 36 days in under four hours with the last 9 in 9 days in 9 different states of America.

200th Marathon: Having just completed the Gold Coast Marathon my tally now stands at 198 and the 200 marathon milestone is at the forefront of my mind. With only Sydney to go before I head to the start line for the Melbourne Marathon in October in what I hope will be my 200th it has given me the opportunity to look back on an amazing journey that I've been on since 2003. Upon that reflection, as runners we sometimes forget how lucky and privileged we are to be able to run a marathon and all the benefits that come along with it. I've been so blessed to meet so many amazing people, travelled to a myriad of incredible places and have oodles of wonderful memories along the way. I've learnt so much about myself, life and that we live in the best country in the world. I've also learnt that the body is an incredible piece of equipment that can be pushed far beyond what I ever thought it could. I now like to live my life by the motto 'Without Limits' the title of a movie about the great Steve Prefontaine. This is not the end but the start of another chapter. Here's to 200 and beyond!



Gratitude PAMELA YOUNG (SF93)

Always concentrate on how far you've come, rather than how far you have left to go - Unknown

Feeling you are a valued member of a community and place where you spend your time is imperative to wellbeing. We know the relationships we invest in; nurture and respect are also important in the support of a healthy lifestyle, personal satisfaction and aspirational achievement. There are many theories on connectedness and how to live a full and happy life.

In Ancient Greece, Aristotle and Plato knew and encouraged the acquisition and display of moral and intellectual virtues, and both advocated the importance of friendship (defined by Aristotle as reciprocated goodwill), and positive relationships. Aristotle believed humans are fulfilled in community, and individual happiness must involve the happiness of others and the welfare of the community as a whole.

The Blue Zones, which are areas identified around the world where people live measurably longer and better, have been researched and developed by Dan Buettner since 2004, with a book published, and a more recent documentary espousing the characteristics required for extending life. Lifestyle factors include, diet, physical activity, a sense of purpose and social connections.

Stephen Schimpff, in his book published in 2018, *Longevity Decoded: The Seven Keys to Healthy Aging*, identifies the 'seven keys' to living longer and healthier lives which are not far removed from Buettner's conclusions. Schimpff advises that humans should eat a healthy diet, exercise, sleep well, avoid tobacco, manage stress, stimulate the brain, and 'engage socially'.

The Spartan community may not be a Blue Zone per se, but we are a microcosm that has benefited from a mindset of movement, challenge, sharing, engaging with one another, and caring about the people who are close and part of our purpose. We understand the rewards running and distance running most particularly provides, which in many ways supports the attributes of an Aristotle and Plato philosophy, the *Blue Zones* and *The Seven Keys*.



At the monthly Spartan Club runs, there is a tangible sense of connectedness. We all share one common denominator; the completion of ten Melbourne Marathons, and for a lot of us, many more. Our unique community embodies the values of compassion, integrity, optimism, perseverance and respect. Whether we are aware of it or not, we have subscribed to a way of life that contributes to longevity and living a good life. For that, I am grateful.



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, but that is a guide only. Contact us to discuss at djfoskey@ozemail.com.au 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 send them in. We hope you are inspired by the Spartan Stories in this issue.

Vale Peter Nicoll (S0223)

It is with great sadness that we advise the passing this week of blue singlet Spartan **Peter Nicoll (S0223)**. Peter completed 16 Melbourne Marathons, the final of which was in 1995. He became a Life Member of the Victorian Road Runners (VRR), having run more than 100 8km and more than 200 4km laps.

Peter has been a regular presence at The Tan and had his first absence this month in over 30 years due to illness. Our thoughts go out to Louise and family. Further information to be provided via public notices and Victorian Road Runners.

Vale Maxim Wood (S0087)

We are similarly saddened to advise the passing of black singlet Spartan **Maxim Wood (S0087)**. Maxim completed 25 Melbourne Marathons. Maxim's loving family have provided the following brief biography and images:

Melbourne Marathon Spartan Club

BIO – Spartan No. 0087

Maxim Wood (1938 – 2025)

Running: Maxim Wood completed the Melbourne marathon on 25 occasions, including the original event starting from Frankston in 1978. He finished 32 marathons recording a personal best time of three hours and three minutes.

Background: Maxim was born on the 24 April 1938 in the northern English city of Bradford in the county of West Yorkshire. He qualified as a plasterer by trade after finishing his studies at the Bradford Technical College. Later in life he earned a Bachelor of Arts majoring in political science from Deakin University.

Military Service: He was called up for National Service in the United Kingdom as part of one of the final program cohorts. He served for two years with the York and Lancaster Regiment and was stationed in Berlin with responsibility for guarding Third Reich officers (Rudolf Hess and Albert Speer) at Spandau Prison.

National Parks: After migrating to Australia under the Ten Pound Pom scheme, he served as a Ranger with Parks Victoria and its predecessor organisations for 40 years. He played a pivotal role at the Mornington Peninsula and Wilson's Promontory national parks. He was awarded the Public Service Medal with two bars for distinguished service in land and fire management.

Oxfam Trailwalker: He completed the 100km endurance walking event 11 times, his final one in 2018 at the age of 79. He was duly recognised as a member of the group of Legends.



SPARTAN RECIPE – COURTESY OF MARATHON HANDBOOK

President, Jay Fleming, has made Number 3 in this batch of seven recipes (link below) and says they are absolutely delicious. His grandkids have gobbled them up after their rugby and basketball games. Give it a go ... or perhaps one of the other six recipes may appeal more to you.

[How To Make Homemade Protein Bars: 7 Yummy Recipes For Runners](#)



SPARTAN MERCHANDISE

Enquire about the new additions to our Spartan merchandise range:

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

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](#).

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 2025-2026 are now being accepted. The membership fee is now \$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	Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club PO Box 486, Camberwell, Victoria 3124
Please include name and/or Spartan Number	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.

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 running 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](#).

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	0432 146 747
Committee	Candida Baskcomb	
Committee	John Kaparelis	
Committee	Peter Seal	
Committee	Gavin Criddle	
LIFE MEMBERS		
Paul Basile , Peter Battrick , Rod Bayley , John Dean , John Dobson , Felicity Doolan , 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)		

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