THE SPARTAN

CLUB PATRON – Robert de Castella **November 2025**

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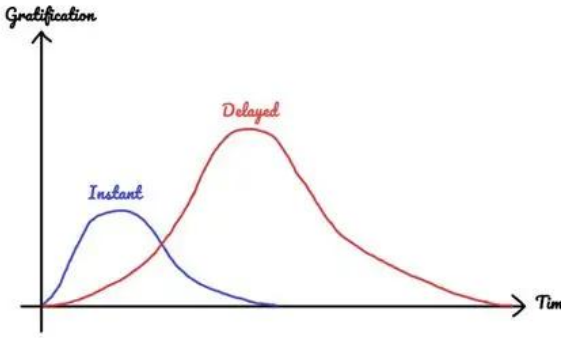
FROM THE PRESIDENT JAY FLEMING (S1012)

Welcome to the end of another wonderful year and the exciting lead-in to the Christmas and New Year period and welcome to you if this is your first look at a Spartans Newsletter! Welcome to the **58** incoming Spartans this year, adding to the **68** incoming Spartans in 2024 and **50** in 2023 and **61** in 2022. I mention these totals from the last couple of years just to give you an idea of our growing numbers with over 200 additional green Spartan singlets running around the Melbourne Marathon course since the COVID years. There were 317 Spartan finishers including our incoming Spartans.

While we on Committee certainly appreciate that everyone is extremely time-poor and probably receives several other Newsletters, all Spartans have a standing invitation to please get involved by emailing spartans.team@hotmail.com anything of interest to you in either you are running or personal life. We love receiving your input and hearing your stories.

I have already put up our Christmas tree and outdoor lights as I love the childlike joy I feel at this time of year, even in my mid-60s. Our family is rather divided on this extraordinarily unimportant topic as my wife Mary and elder daughter Charlotte are far more sensible about the whole thing and lean more toward early to mid-December for both the lights and tree, whereas my younger daughter Emily up in Byron has already put up her lights and tree, much to her husband's dismay.

During our regular Club Runs at The Tan, on the fourth Sunday morning of every month, we each run our desired quota of laps together and often share as much as we are comfortable sharing about our life and fitness journeys, both during the run and over coffee afterward. This time of year, is renowned for the making of New Year's Resolutions, reflecting on how life is going and making any adjustments as required. As manager of our life, we make decisions on how we spend our time, and then we monitor and evaluate the outcomes.



Is what we are doing and the way we are doing it giving us roughly what we want? Rightly or wrongly, we tend to associate the end of a 365-day period with making a fresh start by either mobilising things we have been meaning to start doing or breaking out of undesirable loops and patterns of things we have desperately been trying to stop doing.

A little basic Psychology 101 tells us we are always trying to balance our *(want to do's that give us instant gratification)* and our *(need to do's that give us delayed gratification)*. I **want to** eat cheesecake, but I **need to** eat vegetables. Unfortunately, we live in a predominantly instant gratification society, where due to the immense stresses of life, we tend to want to feel good 15-minutes ago, not in weeks or months from now.

Because instant gratification gives us an instant ‘sugar hit’, it tends to have a sharper incline and quicker shorter path to pleasure, but also a sharper decline resulting in yo-yo crashes **(high GI)** whereas delayed gratification tends to be the less exciting gentler incline and a longer slower path to pleasure along with the gentler decline on the other side **(low GI).** I **want to** go for a run or do a workout, but I **need to** take kids to music lessons, or clean the gutters, or weed the garden, or service the car. There are certainly some very creative strategies we devise to avoid reducing it to either one option or the other, but eventually we come to the unsavoury conclusion that we simply cannot do it all. Hence the popularity of options such as *Air tasker* which enables the outsourcing of actions perceived as chores or drudgery to others at an hourly rate, so that we can have as much disposable time for what we want for as long as we want.

As athletes with a passion for running longer distances, we tend to invest significant time into training for those longer distances, which often takes us away from other things we need to do and people we need to spend time with. Despite our dedication to duty and obligation, we simply cannot be all things to all people without trashing ourselves and our health in the process. Everyone gets the same 24 hours, which requires scheduling the most important things as a priority, usually those perceived to be of greatest value. Whenever we are saying yes to something we **want** now, we are probably saying no to several other things we feel we **should** be doing right now. Additionally, this guilt detracts somewhat from the enjoyment of our preferred option, as we feel we should have had greater discipline to resist our own preference in favour of duty, obligation or perhaps the sharing of burdens.

The most valuable gift we can give anybody is our time as it is the stuff life is made of, and just like life, it is finite as it eventually runs out, so sharing our finite time is priceless. Being disciplined involves sacrificing something pleasurable that we want to experience right now for something more pleasurable we want to experience later or perhaps much later … but discipline often comes at a cost, depending on what has been relegated down the order of importance. Among the running community and similar passionate pursuits, when our significant others do not participate in training and scheduled events, we often hear the term running widow/widower. Many partners and families make significant sacrifices to enable our passion for running, so we all have our ways of repaying the favour so they also get to experience their passions at other times while we take a back seat.

The Wellbeing/Wellness industries continually mention terms such as **alignment** and **state of flow.** Alignment is a large-scale term that invites us to consider the direction of our life journey and reflect on the degree of difference between where it is currently heading and where we’d like our journey of life to be heading. State of flow invites us to consider the many individual pockets of time that make up our life journey … and to reflect on roughly how many activities we regularly participate in that we find so engrossing, satisfying, enjoyable, absorbing and overflowing with creative juices that we totally lose track of time in drift-away mode.

It is impossible for us to always be doing exactly what we would prefer to be doing, and ironically the pleasurable high would become far less enjoyable if we constantly experienced it, as we would develop a tolerance and need even more of it just to get the same high (e.g. coffee, alcohol)

It can be quite challenging to remain true to ourselves and to give ourselves permission to prioritise some of our own choices to ensure we are getting our fair share of genuine fulfilment in the present, while also balancing our duties, obligations and the expectations of others. We have been raised with the mantra that it’s not good for everything to be ‘all about me’. This same mantra almost glorifies putting others first and putting the self, last. Although it is impossible to fool ourselves because we can see right through our pretending, it can be very easy to fake fulfillment to others and to pretend to be fulfilled by the altruism of always prioritising others and the humility of putting oneself last.

Unless we reserve some of our time for us, others will reserve some of our time for them, which ironically is something we greatly resent. A life consisting mainly of self-sacrifice may gain greater approval and social standing points, however it has a huge price as it is impossible to be predominantly selfless

without also being selfish in equal measure. It is impossible to prioritise others without first prioritising self. It is impossible to pour from an empty cup.

While it is a topic that may not exactly keep us up at night, keeping an eye on the selfless/selfish gauge of our life dashboard is something we all strive to manage. While the needle may fluctuate through certain chapters of life, allowing prolonged imbalance into either selfishness or selflessness greatly impacts our mind, body and spirit. There is an excellent reason why we are repeatedly told during flight safety instructions to put on our own oxygen mask first before attending to others, as regardless of how much we want to help others, we are not much good to anybody unconscious.

If we naturally tend to lean more toward the selfless side and wish to continue making a difference in society by prioritising the needs of others and contributing to the greater good, we must first prioritise the care of the self … for without a vibrant and healthy self, prioritising the needs of others is not an option as we hardly have enough energy for the self, let alone to share with others.

When one is pretending, the entire body revolts! – **Anais Nin**

Melbourne Marathon 2026

All Spartans have been emailed their non-transferable registration link for the 2026 Melbourne Marathon, valid between **12.00am AEDT, 10 November, 2025 to 12.00am AEST, 31 July, 2026.**

The hardworking team on Committee, particularly **Felicity Doolan** aided by **David Foskey** have attended to well over 100 enquiries from anxious runners eager to secure an entry into the 2026 event.

We certainly appreciate there is genuine excitement around individuals ensuring entry into the event and not breaking the sequence. This has led to 'severe marathon entry anxiety', which we as fellow runners on Committee certainly understand. From the enquiry sender's end, it is only one lot of individual anxiety ensuring entry, but at the receiver's end it becomes 100 individual lots of anxiety, which can be quite overwhelming for our hardworking group of volunteers, so please be sensitive to this.

For runners who have successfully completed 7, 8 or 9 Melbourne Marathons, please contact https://melbournemarathonspartans.com/frequently-asked-questions/

For runners who have successfully completed 6 Melbourne Marathons or less, this is independent of Spartan Committee, so please register your name on the Ballot on the Melbourne Marathon website.

Additionally, to further ease the burden on our team and to save valuable time, **please refrain from asking the following questions either by email or phone:**

- Does my 2020 virtual Melbourne Marathon run count? **No, it doesn't count for anybody.**
- When will my registration link be sent to me by IMG? **We don't know, as we simply provide IMG a spreadsheet of runners who have successfully completed a minimum of 7 Melbourne Marathons (aspiring Spartans), and IMG do the rest according to their schedule.**

The Pheidippides Award

Confirming the presentation of our Inaugural *Pheidippides Award* this year to **Alex Whitworth (S882)** recognising the achievement of his run in the 2024 Melbourne Marathon.

Going forward, this award will be presented at the following year's AGM to the runner/s who have recorded the net time closest to the 7:30 minute cut-off in the previous year's Melbourne Marathon.

Alex is here, on the Spartan Podium at the end of this year's Melbourne Marathon.

Vale George Dyer (Senior) (S0087)

On 6 November, I was privileged to attend the commemoration of the life of George Dyer Senior (S0382), at St Josephs Catholic Church in Boronia. I found it particularly heartwarming to see the contagion of inspiration among family members.

George was clearly a larger-than-life figure in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, and people instantly recognised the siblings by the Dyer surname and would universally compliment their dad George and his amazing feats, work ethic, tenacity and determination to find a way to get things done. Simply put, the man was a supernova of activity which rubbed off on everyone within cooee.

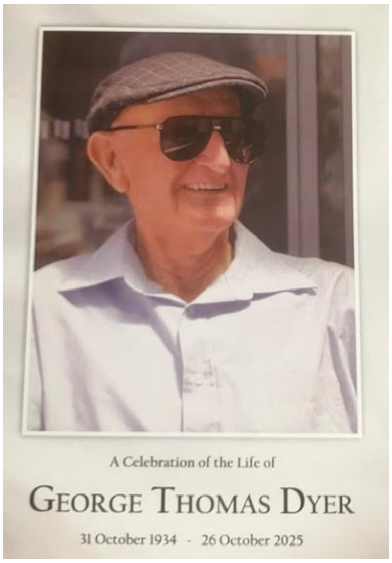
We extend our heartfelt condolences to the wonderful Dyer family and significant others. The Dyer name is also notable among Spartan ranks in that it's in the very rare father-son Spartan category. Our thoughts are with **George Dyer Junior (S1140)** on the loss of his beloved dad**, George Dyer Senior (S0382).**


GEORGE DYER'S COMMUNITY SERVICE

Founding & Life Member of St Joseph's Little Athletics Club
Founding & Life Member of St Joseph's Junior Football Club
Founding & Life Member of St Joseph's/Knox Cricket Club
Founding & Life Member of Knox Little Athletics
Founding & Life member of Knox Sherbrooke/Knox Athletics Club.

President St Joseph's Little Athletics Club
President Knox Little Athletics
President Knox Senior Athletics Club
Chairman of Chandler Park Committee of Management
Chairman Knox Park Committee of Management
Committeeman Knox Cricket Club
Committeeman Knox Athletics Board of Management
Committeeman St Joseph's Junior Football Club
Technical Member Athletics Victoria
Technical Member Knox Park Athletics Venue
Ground Manager Knox Park
A Grade Walk Judge Little Athletics Victoria
Coach Knox Little Athletics Centre
Coach Knox Cricket Club
Coach St Joseph's Junior Football Club
Player St Joseph's/Knox Cricket Club
Athlete Knox Athletics Club

Knox Citizen of the Year Medal 1984
Eastern Suburbs Silver Plate Services Award
Australian Volunteers Award
Final 3 Victorian Sports Awards
Centenary Medal Award
25 Years Victorian Little Athletics Award


A Celebration of the Life of

GEORGE THOMAS DYER

31 October 1934 - 26 October 2025

50 Years of the Melbourne Marathon 1978-2027

Thirteen years have passed since Chris Muirden released his now famous book *The Wall* in 2012, a real project of passion for which he has been widely lauded and admired. We have presented every incoming Spartan with a copy, and we are now promptly running down our stock, which is not being reprinted.

This declining stock of *The Wall* may just be a timely 'sign' as we are also approaching the 50th anniversary of the Melbourne Marathon in 2027, and thought it may be a wonderful opportunity to use the milestone as a catalyst to pay homage to the Spartan spirit by chronicling as many Spartan stories as we can in time for the 2027 AGM.

While we are happy to include some of the current contributions showcasing numerous superhuman feats of runners who have worn the famous Running Man logo, we are also asking for contributions from Spartans of all abilities as per our Statement of Purpose. A project of this magnitude requires a lot of buy-in, as many hands make light work! Now is not the time to be overly humble as that is not going to inspire anybody. To assist with prompting you, some interesting angles may include any of the following combinations/profiles:

Brothers, sisters, husband-wife, father-son, mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, runners with a disability, runners who have dropped a lot of weight, runners who have overcome significant illness, runners who have run

events in memory of the dearly departed, runners returning to running post-rehab after genuinely thinking they would never run again, runners who have run famous or scenic overseas marathons, runners who have run on all continents, runners who have run consecutive events such as 10 in 10 days or 30 in 30 days, or runners who have simply been fiercely determined everyday runners with a fire in the belly driven to do something totally outside your comfort zone.

We want your contributions of 500-1000 words (a rough guide), along with any imagery you wish to share to spartans.team@hotmail.com

Spartan Calendar 2026 – Proceeds to Rob de Castella's Indigenous Marathon Foundation (IMF)

Please send in any images you believe would look great on a 2026 wall calendar. These could be of you or a significant other running, crossing a finish line, or perhaps stunning pics you've taken while training or during your events: nature, birds, cloud formations, sunrises, sunsets, insects, food, flowers, café visits, weather events, animals, sweat, grimace, injuries … anything really.

Please send contributions to spartans.team@hotmail.com entering 'Calendar' in the subject line. **Please get involved** for a great cause!!

Networking - Overseas Marathons

On several occasions over the last 15 years, I have sought to network with Spartan counterpart clubs associated with international marathons. We would like to establish and hopefully maintain ongoing relationships with national and international marathons.

This project has been relegated to the backburner due to a couple of setbacks including COVID and an unfortunate hacking incident which compromised an email account. I am currently re-establishing contact with The London Marathon Ever Presents Ever Present Home Page and hope to add significantly to this list through Christmas and beyond.

I will keep researching and cold calling but if you do have any contacts, **please forward their names to us** as we are super fortunate to have many Spartans who regularly spread their wings annually into overseas events.

Spartan Artefacts & Memorabilia

As a Committee and a Club, we are now getting far too big to store items in bits and pieces sporadically at Committee members' homes as we have done for nearly 40 years. We are now consolidating by moving all Spartan resources into rented storage space.

Along with freeing up Committee members' home spaces, proper storage will keep Spartan items safe from rodents and weather events and will afford easy central access to stock for all Committee members for events such as the Expo and AGM.

If you or your loved ones have any items relevant to the Melbourne Marathon or Spartans, please get in touch with us. While we do not wish to become a dumping ground for stock as we would very quickly run out of space, we are eager to be custodians of the history of the Melbourne Marathons and most importantly the Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club.

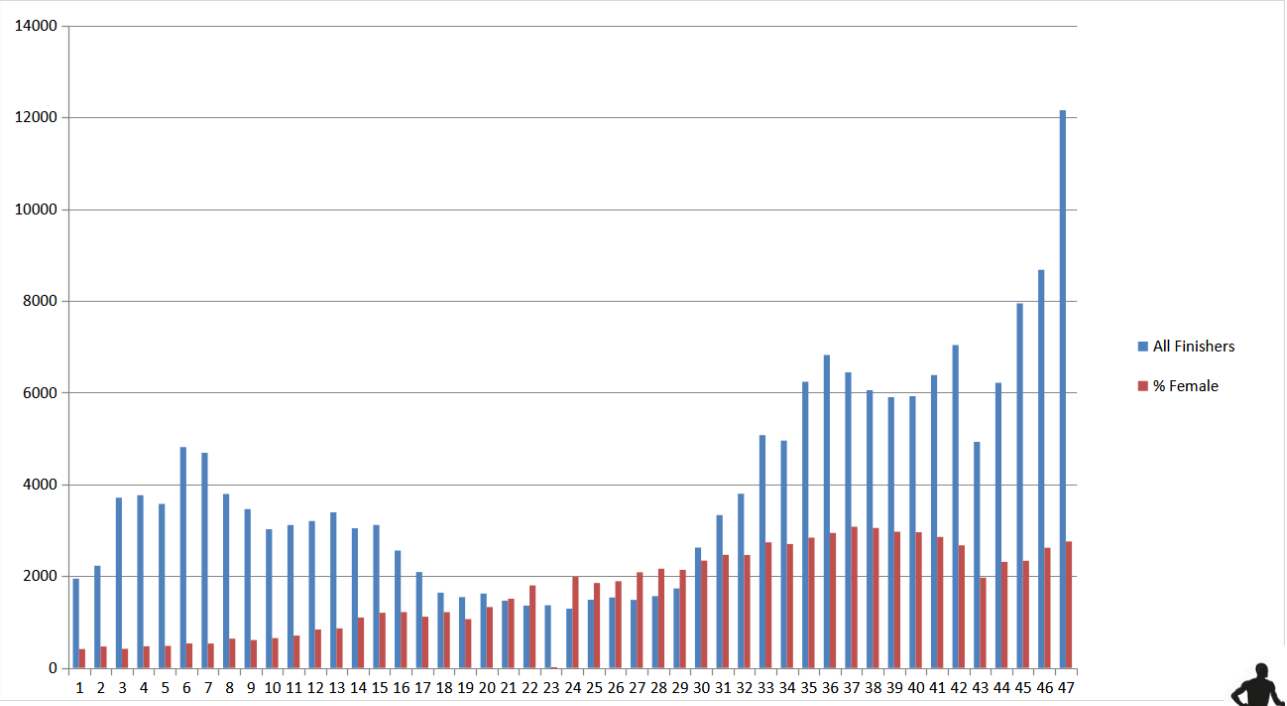
We already do this via the Spartans website but would love to expand this to include rare memorabilia and artefacts. By sheer luck, on Committee we happen to have a member with quite a rare skillset for restoring artefacts, and while she cannot perform miracles, she can at least evaluate items for potential restoration if they happen to be old and damaged.

MELBOURNE MARATHON GROWTH **DAVID FOSKEY (S25)**

The graph below shows the number of finishers (blue bar) and the percentage of female finishers (red) for the 47 Melbourne Marathons.

There were a record 12,142 finishers in 2025, a considerable increase from 8,678 in 2024. The second figure tracked (in red) is the proportion of female finishers which rose from just over 4% in1978 to almost 31% in 2014 (marathon 37). There was a gentle decline since then, but the 202 (43rd marathon) figure of under 20% improved to over 27% in 2025.

The previous highest number of female finishers of 2,272 in 2024 was exceeded by the 2025 total of 3,348. 8,780 males finished this year, greater than the previous highest number of 6,389 in 2024.



SPARTAN STORIES

Chicago, Chicago! **DARREN CROTON (S1440)**

On Sunday 12 October, whilst many Spartans were running the Melbourne Marathon back home, I lined up in Chicago for my 5th World Marathon Major. The course was flat and it was superb. The event was exceptionally well organised, with aid stations every 1-2 miles and enthusiastic crowds the entire way. The morning started crisp but became quite sunny by the back half, making for challenging conditions. I was proud to represent the Melbourne Marathon in my Spartan singlet, and heard people shouting ‘Spartan’ throughout the race as if it was my name. I am sure most had no idea what it meant, but I loved carrying a piece of Melbourne across the finish line on the other side of the world.

Parkrun Milestone

On the coldest November day in Melbourne, since 1913, our club's past Treasurer, **Rod Bayley**, ran his 250th Parkrun, at Studley Park. Anyone who was brave enough to get out of bed that morning would attest to the miserable weather we experienced on Saturday 8 November.

Rod, a loyal and passionate Spartan and 25-year runner, faced the elements, the rain, the course undulations, the tree roots and the mud. A few MMSC Committee members, David Foskey, Felicity Doolan and Pamela Young were there to support Rod, alongside his fellow Parkrunners.

David ran beside him, while Felicity (on her special birthday and with a broken bone in her foot *and* in a moon boot), and Pamela, cheered and clapped at the finish line. Congratulations to Rod on this significant milestone.

We know that Helen Bayley (our club's 'Singlet Queen') who we miss greatly, and who was remembered fondly for her many years of service at the 2025 AGM, was with Rod in spirit.

The morning was a testament to our running communities, and the calibre of the people involved in running, the volunteers, the clubs, and the organisation behind these great events that bring us all together.

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.

Spartan Healthy Recipe – Courtesy of *Eating Well*

Roasted Potato Tzatziki Bowl

A bright, minty cucumber-garlic tzatziki sauce provides a creamy foundation.

Roasted fibre-filled baby gold potatoes become perfectly crisp on the outside and tender on the inside and join the bowl with antioxidant-rich cucumber, juicy cherry tomatoes, pungent red onion and protein-packed chickpeas, fresh dill and mint finish the bowl.

Roasted Potato Tzatziki Bowls

If you have a favourite recipe, please send it to us.

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 $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.

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	
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