
THE GIRRAWEEN ATHLETE

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE: -



INCORPORATED

30 YEARS OLD & STILL GOING STRONG!

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Our Club Committee For 2008- 2009!

Our club committee is here to help you. If you have any enquiries or problems, please do not hesitate to get in contact with any of the committee members listed below.

<i>Steve Williams</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>0425227669</i>
<i>Garry Womsley</i>	<i>Secretary, Coaching Co-ordinator, ANSW Delegate, Publicity Officer</i>	<i>9636-6017</i>
<i>Viv Manwaring</i>	<i>Public Officer & Registrar</i>	<i>9631-8887</i>
<i>Vince Adams</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>9863-2731</i>
<i>Robert Eager</i>	<i>Winter Competition</i>	<i>9675-2167</i>
<i>Steve Blunden</i>	<i>Summer Competition</i>	<i>9636-7357</i>
<i>Lynette Smith</i>	<i>ANSW Delegate</i>	<i>0419420393</i>
<i>Peter Matthews</i>	<i>Park Trust Delegate</i>	<i>9636-7352</i>
<i>George Milosevic</i>	<i>Park Trust Delegate</i>	<i>9626-8586</i>
<i>Cheri Womsley</i>	<i>Fundraising Officer</i>	<i>9636-6017</i>
<i>Wayne Thurlow</i>	<i>General Committee</i>	<i>0417216911</i>
<i>Stephen Mifsud</i>	<i>General Committee</i>	<i>0247303450</i>
<i>Nick Hanna</i>	<i>Junior Committee</i>	<i>9621-7895</i>
<i>Erin Grogan</i>	<i>Canteen Assistant</i>	<i>96229357</i>

*The following positions are still vacant: -
Records Officer, Canteen Manager*

If you are interested in taking on the above position, please contact Garry Womsley or Steve Williams. There are also positions open for those who want to join as General Committee or Junior Committee members. Next Meeting: Thursday, 15th January, 2009

GO GIRRA!



GIRRAWEE ATHLETICS CLUB Inc.
ENCOURAGING ATHLETES OF ALL AGES & ABILITIES SINCE 1978 & A
GOLD RATED ATHLETICS NSW AFFILIATED CLUB!

Welcome To 2009!

Welcome to the January 2009 edition of the Girraween Athlete. We hope that the New Year sees you all fit and healthy and ready and raring to go. Our competition resumes on 10th January and we hope to have large crowds participating for the rest of the season. We've been pretty lucky with the weather so far and we hope that continues in 2009. It has been an enjoyable season and we hope to see a few more new faces down at C.V. Kelly. So tell your friends and family how enjoyable it is on a Saturday and bring them down for an afternoon of athletics. We officially have 97 members at present but it would be great if we could get to 100. It has been a great effort to get so close after last year's total of 83. 2008 had many highlights and it was a great year of consolidation and improvement. Hopefully, we can build on that in 2009. Until next time, have a happy and safe New Year and I hope to see you all on the track very soon.

Yours in Athletics,
GARRY WOMSLEY

Results From Fisher's Ghost Fun Run!

Sunday, 9th November, 2008 – University of Western Sydney, MacArthur.

As promised last month, please find below the full results from the Fisher's Ghost Fun Run. Nick Hanna and Terry Rose won awards in their respective age categories in the 5km while Garry Womsley and Richard Frost had their usual close battle in the 10km. Neither gave an inch throughout the race and Garry just shaded Richard by the barest of margins after coming from behind within the last 200m of the race. Ken Scalley also won an age category award in the 10km.

Full results as follows: -

<u>5km</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Overall Placing</u>	<u>Category Placing</u>
1) NICK HANNA	20:15	17 th	3 rd
2) TERRY ROSE	23:28	49 th	3 rd
3) ROCHELLE MACKENZIE	35:01	223 rd	4 th

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10km

1) GARRY WOMSLEY	43:33	32 nd	6 th
2) RICHARD FROST	43:34	33 rd	12 th
3) KEN SCALLEY	48:27	67 th	2 nd
4) ROGER MAR	54:35	128 th	13 th

Results From Girraween All-Comers!

Saturday, 6th December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly.

Another good day was had at C.V. Kelly today. Despite some early morning rain, our events went ahead as normal. Some good performances were put in by Rob Giesler (100m), Felipe Blemith (400m) and Peter Matthews (1500m) in the men's running events while Amanda Giesler (100m), Venessa Separovich (400m) and Lisa Grant (3000m Walk & 1500m) did well for the women. We were also treated to a good exhibition of race walking by our up and coming Little A's including Ben Tisdale, Ashleigh Thurlow and Makayla Ozols. Tim Evans, Wayne Thurlow, Bradley Matthews, Jean Davis and Venessa Separovich did well in the jumps while Rob Giesler and Andrea Hendley did well in the throws.

Full results as follows: -

Men: -

100m:-

- 1) ROB GIESLER - 12.99sec
- 2) WAYNE THURLOW - 13.21sec
- 3) VINCE ADAMS - 14.03sec
- 4) MICHAEL GROGAN - 14.53sec
- 4) DANNY MARTINS - 14.53sec
- 6) BOB FIELD - 15.77sec
- 7) ROGER MAR - 16.40sec
- 8) BRADLEY MATTHEWS - 17.05sec
- 9) BEN TISDALE - 18.28sec
- 10) MICHAEL CHRISTIE - 19.22sec

400m: -

- 1) FELIPE BLEMITH - 56.73sec
- 2) MATT MODINI - 60.61sec
- 3) DANNY MARTINS - 62.99sec
- 4) WAYNE THURLOW - 63.35sec
- 5) PETER MATTHEWS - 64.87sec
- 6) MICHAEL GROGAN - 67.25sec
- 7) ROB GIESLER - 70.91sec
- 8) DAVID PERRY - 74.14sec
- 9) VINCE ADAMS - 74.65sec
- 10) ROGER MAR - 77.21sec

1500m: -

- 1) PETER MATTHEWS - 5:07.57
- 2) MATT MODINI - 5:12.55
- 3) MICHAEL GROGAN - 5:22.15
- 4) GARRY WOMSLEY - 5:35.29
- 5) DANNY MARTINS - 5:35.48
- 6) WAYNE THURLOW - 5:48.75
- 7) DAVID PERRY - 5:49.65
- 8) GREG SARGEANT - 6:14.07
- 9) RICHARD FROST - 6:14.56
- 10) MICHAEL CHRISTIE - 6:37.52

700m Walk: -

1) BEN TISDALE - 5:12.19

Javelin: -

- 1) ROB GIESLER - 27.70m
- 2) VINCE ADAMS - 25.14m
- 3) MICHAEL EVANS - 20.86m

Long Jump: -

- 1) TIM EVANS - 5.79m
- 2) WAYNE THURLOW - 4.31m
- 3) DANNY MARTINS - 4.06m

Triple Jump: -

- 1) WAYNE THURLOW - 9.41m
- 2) PETER MATTHEWS - 9.30m
- 3) DANNY MARTINS - 7.34m

High Jump: -

- 1) BRADLEY MATTHEWS - 1.21m
- 2) BEN TISDALE - 0.91m

Shot Put: -

- 1) ROB GIESLER - 7.34m
- 2) WAYNE THURLOW - 7.33m
- 3) VINCE ADAMS - 7.01m

Women: -

100m: -

- 1) AMANDA GIESLER - 14.24m
- 2) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 15.93sec
- 3) JEAN DAVIS - 16.72sec
- 4) ANDREA HENDLEY - 17.02sec
- 5) MAKAYLA OZOLS - 20.66sec

400m: -

- 1) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 78.83sec
- 2) JEAN DAVIS - 83.07sec
- 3) AMANDA GIESLER - 87.33sec
- 4) ANDREA HENDLEY - 92.93sec
- 5) CARLY EAGER - 97.38sec
- 6) ROCHELLE MacKENZIE - 102.39sec

1500m: -

- 1) LISA GRANT - 6:26.12
- 2) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 6:54.95
- 3) CARLY EAGER - 7:05.56
- 4) JEAN DAVIS - 7:23.10
- 5) ROCHELLE MacKENZIE - 7:57.35
- 6) ANDREA HENDLEY - 8:21.25

700m Walk: -

- 1) MAKAYLA OZOLS - 6:32.76

1100m Walk: -

- 1) ASHLEIGH THURLOW - 12:35.30

3000m Walk: -

- 1) LISA GRANT - 14:56.92

Javelin: -

- 1) ANDREA HENDLEY - 20.92m
- 2) JEAN DAVIS - 11.41m
- 3) CHERI WOMSLEY - 8.65m

Discus: -

- 1) ANDREA HENDLEY - 26.69m
- 2) JEAN DAVIS - 18.74m
- 3) AMANDA GIESLER - 18.44m

High Jump: -

- 1) JEAN DAVIS - 1.26m
- 1) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 1.26m
- 3) ANDREA HENDLEY - 1.11m

Two Members Awarded State Medals!

We are pleased to report that two of our members have been awarded state medals for the recent Blackmore's Marathon which is also the State Marathon Championship. Clive Kidson placed 2nd in the 55+ men's category and now has a silver medal to add to his collection. Linda Balinski went one place better and placed 1st in the 45+ women's category to become the club's latest State Champion. Congratulations to both Clive and Linda on their great efforts! Please contact me on 0405586961 to arrange collection. This brings our tally of State medals to 5 for the 2008/2009 season so far.
GARRY WOMSLEY

VALE KERRY N McCANN

Dual Commonwealth Games marathon Gold medallist, Kerryn McCann, has passed away overnight from breast cancer at her home near Wollongong. She was surrounded by the love of her family - husband Greg and their 3 small children, Benton 11, Josie 5 and baby Cooper, 14 months. She was 41 years of age.

Athletics Australia President Rob Fildes issued the following statement this morning:

"On behalf of the entire athletics community, I would like to pass on my sincere condolences to the McCann family, after Kerryn lost her long battle with cancer at her home in Coledale earlier this morning," Fildes said.

"Kerryn will fondly be remembered for being an extremely popular team member who represented her country on 14 occasions, across an athletics career that spanned 22 years.

"Our thoughts are with her husband Greg and young children Benton 11, Josie 5 and Cooper, 14 months."

The family has requested that no flowers be sent, but instead they welcome donations to Breast Cancer Network Australia (www.bcna.org.au) or to the McGrath Foundation (www.mcgrathfoundation.com.au)

I had the pleasure of running in the same race as Kerryn McCann on a couple of occasions. When I was a member of Kembla Joggers in 1999 I raced against her in a handicap race and somehow kept in front of her that day. When I was a member of Illawong in 2001/2002 I did Interclub at Homebush and she lapped me 3 times in a 5000m race that season. She certainly went on to bigger and better things and I'm particularly saddened that she is no longer with us. GARRY WOMSLEY.

On Saturday, 13th December, Girraween Athletics Club Inc. had our own tribute to Kerryn McCann. Before the 5000m event, we lined up along the home straight and had a minute's silence for her. Some photos were taken by George Milosevic. One of which I e-mailed to Kerryn's club Kembla Joggers.

Please find below, the reply we received from their President Neil Barnett: -

Hi Garry

Many thanks for letting us know. I will pass this on to our committee and contacts with Kerryn's family. It is very touching to see your tribute. We also did the same at our last track and summer road events. The funeral service was very moving but a fitting tribute. We are all heartbroken to lose such a lovely club member and friend, someone who has been a KJ for 30 years and so unaffected and decent. Many thanks again Garry.

Best wishes for Xmas and the New Year.

Regards, Neil

Results From Girraween All-Comers!

Saturday, 13th December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly.

Strong winds and hot temperatures saved our meet today. After quite a bit of rain the night before, the winds dried out the track sufficiently for us to conduct our competition as normal. Unfortunately, the hottest part of the day coincided with the 5000m event. All our athletes who participated deserved a medal for their efforts in such uncomfortable conditions. Reece Diaz was the star of the 200m and 800m while Peter Matthews withstood late challenges from Matt Modini and Garry Womsley to take the 5000m. Ajay Mohan showed that he is a real star of the future with his wins in the Long Jump and Triple Jump while Steve O'Donnell showed good form in the High Jump and Javelin. Charlotte Stenning put in a good all round performance by taking out the 800m, Long and Triple Jumps and Lisa Grant did well in both the 5000m and 1500m Walk. New member Venessa Separovich continued her good form and took out the 200m and Javelin. Jean Davis was consistent as always.

Full results as follows: -

Men: -

200m: -

- 1) REECE DIAZ - 28.08sec
- 2) MATT STENNING - 28.95sec
- 3) MICHAEL GROGAN - 30.15sec
- 4) STEVE PARKINS - 30.35sec
- 5) STEVE O'DONNELL - 30.54sec
- 6) PETER MATTHEWS - 30.72sec
- 7) GRAHAM RYAN - 33.85sec
- 8) ROGER MAR - 36.60sec
- 9) MICHAEL CHRISTIE - 38.40sec
- 10) JONAH STENNING - 39.23sec

800m: -

- 1) REECE DIAZ - 2:21.06
- 2) PETER MATTHEWS - 2:27.57

- 3) MICHAEL GROGAN - 2:35.28
- 4) MICHAEL FREE - 2:39.42
- 5) STEVE PARKINS - 2:54.06
- 6) AJAY MOHAN - 2:56.59
- 7) GARRY WOMSLEY - 2:58.00
- 8) MATT MODINI - 2:58.32
- 9) DAVID PERRY - 2:58.57
- 10) STEVE O'DONNELL - 3:01.51

5000m: -

- 1) PETER MATTHEWS - 20:20.94
- 2) MATT MODINI - 20:38.66
- 3) GARRY WOMSLEY - 20:49.21
- 4) MICHAEL GROGAN - 20:57.58
- 5) MICHAEL FREE - 21:20.03
- 6) DAVID PERRY - 22:59.08
- 7) MICHAEL CHRISTIE - 24:51.40
- 8) ROGER MAR - 25:59.32
- 9) STEVE O'DONNELL - 26:16.12
- 10) ETHAN WOMSLEY - 29:39.66

Long Jump: -

- 1) AJAY MOHAN - 4.90m
- 2) MATT STENNING - 4.07m
- 3) GRAHAM RYAN - 3.53m

Triple Jump: -

- 1) AJAY MOHAN - 9.97m
- 2) GRAHAM RYAN - 7.52m

Javelin: -

- 1) STEVE O'DONNELL - 29.05m
- 2) MATT STENNING - 26.33m
- 3) MICHAEL GROGAN - 19.33m

Discus: -

- 1) MATT MODINI - 28.68m
- 2) MATT STENNING - 25.47m
- 3) STEVE PARKINS - 23.21m

High Jump: -

- 1) STEVE O'DONNELL - 1.41m
- 2) STEVE PARKINS - 1.31m
- 3) PETER MATTHEWS - 1.26m

Women: -

200m: -

- 1) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 34.38sec
- 2) JEAN DAVIS - 36.33sec

800m: -

- 1) CHARLOTTE STENNING - 3:04.16
- 2) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 3:16.03
- 3) JEAN DAVIS - 3:18.97
- 4) JILL WOODRUFF - 4:09.97

5000m: -

- 1) LISA GRANT - 22:01.94
- 2) CARLY EAGER - 26:15.91

1500m Walk: -

1) LISA GRANT - 7:17.71

Long Jump: -

1) CHARLOTTE STENNING - 3.99m

2) JEAN DAVIS - 3.70m

3) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 3.50m

Triple Jump: -

1) CHARLOTTE STENNING - 8.72m

2) JEAN DAVIS - 8.31m

3) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 7.79m

Shot Put: -

1) JEAN DAVIS - 6.29m

2) CHARLOTTE STENNING - 5.73m

3) CHERI WOMSLEY - 4.32m

Javelin: -

1) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 13.65m

2) CHERI WOMSLEY - 10.26m

Results From ANSW Club Premiership!

Saturday, 13th December, 2008 – Homebush Warm-up Track.

It appears that Athletics NSW need to do something about the Club Premiership. Apart from maybe 3 or 4 clubs, this competition has lost it's relevance. Our representation was fairly small throughout the competition with most of our athletes taking a "horses for courses" approach. They divided their time between the Club Premiership and our own competition at C.V. Kelly. The true fact of the matter is that this competition is mainly based on representation rather than performance so the larger clubs are always going to rise to the top. However, in saying that our club did quite well in the various categories as follows: -

A Division - 22nd Place

B Division (for clubs with less than 100 members) - 8th Place

Open - 24th Place

35+ - 9th Place

All-Comers this season will be based on both grading (A & B) and participation (C Grade). Perhaps in future years, the Club Premiership should be graded like this as well with a different scale of points for each. It would certainly be a lot fairer for all clubs.

	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time/Distance</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Category</u>
ROB GIESLER	200m	27.19sec	5 th	35+
LAJOS JONI	Discus	No Distance (3 Fouls)	-	35+
NICK HANNA	3000m	11:13.03	4 th	Open

Garry Has A Ball At The Cronulla International Grand Prix!

Sunday, 14th December, 2008 – Wanda

A hot field turned up for the Cronulla International Grand Prix 1500m Road Race today. In blustery and hot conditions near Wanda Beach, we waited patiently for our start while age category cyclists and roller bladers completed their races. Today's run was just one event on the card supporting two elite open international cycling events to be held later in the afternoon. It was a great idea to include a run on the programme and the prize money on offer added to the incentive of competing. Australian representatives Nick Bromley and Jeremy Roff competed with up and comers such as Mark Warren and James Nipporess. In the ladies' section, current 3000m state champion Bridie Delaney and accomplished marathoner Verity Tolhurst, were expected to fight it out.

To say that I was daunted to be in this field was an understatement but I was determined to do the Girraween singlet proud. I fully expected to come last so this probably took the pressure off a bit. It was only 1500m so I wasn't going to get beat by too much. The elite guys and girls have seen me around at most events and were pretty friendly (and probably sympathetic) and after 10 years on the circuit, I guess I'm just accepted as "part of the furniture". I competed against some of their parents over the years! At 45 I was easily the oldest in the race.

Finally, it was our turn to race and the pace was on right from the start. As expected I dropped to the back of the field but I somehow kept in touch with a runner from Sutherland. Unfortunately, yesterday's 5000m was coming back to haunt me and I seemed puffed out and struggling for air trying to stay with him on the hilly course. As a result, after just a few hundred metres he probably got 20m in front of me and it stayed that way until about 300m to go. At that point, I used a down hill section to get up some momentum and he started to come back to me. With the crowd spurring me on, I flew past him and sprinted as hard as I could to keep him at bay. I was so overjoyed that I didn't come last and even the elite runners came over and shook my hand. My time of 5:19 was a season best by far.

When my Sutherland friend crossed the line, he came over to me and gave me a bit of a sledge: - "If you had shown that sort of speed for the first 1200m, you would have nearly won the race." I just replied that "I would agree with you if I was 20 years younger." The fact was I can go further these days and was only just getting started at 1200m. I just shook his hand and congratulated him on his run and moved on. Nothing could take away from my joy of being in this event and I really did have a ball. I knew I wasn't going to get any 1st, 2nd or 3rd prize money but I thought I may have been a chance for the \$200 prize for the best effort for my final sprint. I could only hope.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, the official results were still not available and no cheques have yet turned up in the mail. (So I guess I missed out!)

GARRY WOMSLEY

Other Race News!

Sunday, 7th December, 2008.

Michael Free competed in the Central Coast Half Marathon and placed 71st in a time of 1:38:23. Former members David Wallis (1:33:55), Keith Mayhew (1:53:38) and Janice Mayhew (2:08:22) also competed in this race. Michael Christie competed in the 9km race and placed 52nd in a time of 42:25.

Saturday, 20th December, 2008.

Nick Hanna participated in the 3000m points race at the ANSW Skins event held at Bankstown today. He finished in a time of 11:15.

Results From Girraween All-Comers

Saturday, 20th December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly.

Our last meet of the year attracted a good crowd in cooler conditions to what we have experienced lately. With a number of the regular meets already finished for a few weeks and the ANSW Skins not really having widespread appeal, we attracted athletes from Hills, UTS Norths, Sydney Pacific and St. George. They all had a good time despite the windy conditions which made fast times hard to come by. It has been a good season so far and hopefully we can keep the momentum going when we resume on 10th January. Rob Giesler, Matt Modini and Reece Diaz did well in the sprints while Peter Matthews and Michael Grogan went well in the 1500m. Michael Free put in some good all-round performances in the running events. Ajay Mohan again excelled in the Long and Triple Jump while Joel Wheatley showed a lot of potential in the Discus and High Jump. Charlotte Stenning went well in every event she contested as did Venessa Separovich.

Full results as follows: -

Men : -

100m: -

- 1) ROB GIESLER - 12.62sec
- 2) STEVE PARKINS - 13.03sec
- 3) MATT STENNING - 13.08sec
- 4) AJAY MOHAN - 13.23sec
- 5) DANNY MARTINS - 13.52sec
- 6) VINCE ADAMS - 13.72sec
- 7) MICHAEL GROGAN - 14.18sec
- 8) MICHAEL FREE - 14.38sec
- 9) PETER MATTHEWS - 14.53sec
- 10) GRAHAM RYAN - 14.95sec

400m: -

- 1) MATT MODINI - 57.93sec
- 2) REECE DIAZ - 58.28sec
- 3) LLOYD HARNEY - 60.54sec
- 4) DANNY MARTINS - 64.39sec
- 5) MICHAEL GROGAN - 65.40sec
- 6) PETER MATTHEWS - 66.54sec
- 7) ROB GIESLER - 67.65sec
- 8) MICHAEL FREE - 69.20sec
- 9) STEVE PARKINS - 69.79sec
- 10) MATT STENNING - 71.80sec

1500m: -

- 1) MATT MODINI - 5:06.15
- 2) PETER MATTHEWS - 5:08.58
- 3) MICHAEL GROGAN - 5:20.50
- 4) MICHAEL FREE - 5:25.77
- 5) DANNY MARTINS - 5:29.61
- 6) GARRY WOMSLEY - 5:44.28
- 7) DAVID PERRY - 5:52.74
- 8) STEVE PARKINS - 6:13.43
- 9) TERRY ROSE - 6:29.11
- 10) MICHAEL CHRISTIE - 6:32.58

Discus: -

- 1) JOEL WHEATLEY - 22.08m

Shot Put: -

- 1) GRAHAM ALLOMES - 7.76m
- 2) STEVE PARKINS - 7.68m

3) STEVE WILLIAMS - 7.57m

Triple Jump: -

- 1) AJAY MOHAN - 9.98m
- 2) PETER MATTHEWS - 9.18m
- 3) STEVE PARKINS - 8.47m

Long Jump: -

- 1) AJAY MOHAN - 4.61m
- 2) PETER MATTHEWS - 4.28m
- 3) STEVE PARKINS - 4.18m

Javelin: -

- 1) MATT STENNING - 27.06m
- 2) VINCE ADAMS - 22.34m
- 3) STEVE WILLIAMS - 22.27m

High Jump: -

- 1) DANNY MARTINS - 1.35m
- 2) MATT STENNING - 1.25m
- 3) JOEL WHEATLEY - 1.25m

Women: -

100m: -

- 1) CHARLOTTE STENNING - 14.24sec
- 2) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 15.28sec
- 3) LINDA GARD - 15.35sec
- 4) STEPHANIE RUSSELL - 15.54sec
- 5) KATRINA RUSSELL - 17.45sec
- 6) BRENDA MICALLEF - 17.89sec

400m: -

- 1) CHARLOTTE STENNING - 73.24sec
- 2) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 76.28sec
- 3) STEPHANIE RUSSELL - 83.12sec
- 4) JESSICA BUTLER - 89.17sec
- 5) KATRINA RUSSELL - 91.65sec

1500m: -

- 1) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 6:41.25
- 2) KATRINA RUSSELL - 7:30.75
- 3) JESSICA BUTLER - 8:09.83
- 4) STEPHANIE RUSSELL - 8:49.50

Discus: -

- 1) BRENDA MICALLEF - 18.77m
- 2) KATRINA RUSSELL - 16.14m
- 3) CHARLOTTE STENNING - 15.74m

Javelin: -

- 1) BRENDA MICALLEF - 17.49m
- 2) CHARLOTTE STENNING - 15.34m
- 3) KATRINA RUSSELL - 13.00m

High Jump: -

- 1) VENESSA SEPAROVICH - 1.20m



The Date For The Blacktown – Girraween Championship Has Been Announced!

Our friends at Blacktown have finally announced the date for the Blacktown – Girraween Championship for this season. It will be held at Blacktown Olympic Park on Wednesday, 18th February, 2009. This will be a night fixture. So please put this date in your diary. We look forward to defending our title!

Safety First At The Track!

Just a few safety issues that should be observed on competition day at C.V. Kelly: -

- 1) When practicing with the Discus, the retriever of the implement should never throw it back. There is a danger of people getting hit by the implement. When retrieving discus the best thing to do is bring it back to the person and either hand it to them or even better, leave it at their feet.
- 2) Footballs have no place at a running track. A stray football can trip up a passing runner causing injury. There is plenty of room near the tiny tots track outside the fence if people want to play football.
- 3) There have been a number of kids playing around the throwing areas while events have been going on recently. If they are not competing, they perhaps should not be on the field and if they are, they need to be well behind the throwing areas. It would be a real tragedy if one of the younger kids is struck by a stray implement.
- 4) There have been a couple of instances of people running across the track while events were on recently. It is always best to either wait for the event to finish or cross when there are no athletes in the area.

We want people to not only have a happy and fun day at C.V. Kelly each Saturday, we want it to be a safe day too.

GARRY WOMSLEY

Qualified Officials Required!

Over the last few years, ANSW have introduced the “Clubs on Track” scheme. This is where all affiliated clubs are rated in different areas to determine their overall rating (Gold, Silver or Bronze). Last year we received a gold rating but there has been a re-weighting of the points system this year directed towards clubs being able to supply qualified technical officials to ANSW events. Unfortunately, we currently have no qualified technical officials and this is affecting our rating with ANSW. Is anybody from our club interested in becoming a technical official? If so, ANSW will be holding regular seminars & exams over the next few months. We will supply more information on these when they are announced.

Regular Working Bees At C.V. Kelly!

Our committee has decided that the club should have more regular working bees than we have had in the past. Previously we have organised one every few months and tried to do everything over a few hours which was not always convenient for our members to commit to and as a result, tasks were not always completed.

As a result, in conjunction with the Little A's club, we are proposing to have regular working bees every two weeks (i.e. Little A's will provide help one week, we will provide help the other so that the ground is looked after every week).

The proposed hours for these working bees is 8.00-10.00am with the requirement for anyone helping out to be there for just 1 hour during this time. We thought that this would be much easier for our members to commit to.

The work being carried out during these working bees will include line marking, raking, filling divots and bare patches, maintenance and general housekeeping.

In the ANSW "Clubs on Track" initiative which we completed recently, we fell down badly in the volunteer participation category so we are really looking at improving this shortcoming over the next couple of years.

Also, this is your club and as members we all share ownership of it. As a result, whether or not you are a committee member, we all need to play a part in keeping the club running smoothly both on and off the track.

If you are interested in helping out, please speak to Steve Williams or Peter Matthews on competition days.

Happy Birthday!

We would like to wish all of our members who are celebrating a birthday this month, a very happy birthday: -

- 4th: - Terry Rose
- 8th: - Ethan Womsley
- 9th: - Michael Grogan
- 16th: - Richard Frost
- 21st: - Vince Adams
- 29th: - Rochelle MacKenzie

Upcoming Events!

Club Events

Sat 10 Jan Girraween All-Comers – Western Zone – C.V. Kelly – 2.00pm (Modified Programme with distance event 1 mile)

Sat 17 Jan Girraween All-Comers – Western Zone – C.V. Kelly – 2.00pm (Week B with distance event 3000m)

Sat 24 Jan Girraween All-Comers – Western Zone – C.V. Kelly – 2.00pm (Week A with distance event 1500m)

Sat 31 Jan Girraween All-Comers – Western Zone – C.V. Kelly – 2.00pm (Modified Programme with distance event 2000m)

ANSW Events

Sat 3 Jan ANSW All-Comers – Campbelltown (incorporating Underage Steeplechase State Championships & 10000m State Walks Championships)

Sat-Sun 3-4 Jan ANSW Combined Events Championships – Campbelltown (Incorporating Masters Pentathlon on 4th Jan)
 Sat 10 Jan ANSW Waratah Invitational Series (Homebush) – note: entry standards apply
 Sat 17 Jan ANSW All-Comers (Campbelltown) – to be confirmed
 Thurs 22 Jan ANSW Waratah Invitational Series (Homebush) – incorporating 5000m State Championships (Note: - entry standards apply to all events except the 5000m events)
 Sat 31 Jan ANSW All-Comers (Homebush)

Fun Runs & Other Events of Interest

Fri 2 Jan Sydney Summer Twilight Series – Henley Marine Drive (near Drummoyne Rowers) – 5km & 10km (7.00pm)
 Fri 9 Jan Sydney Summer Twilight Series – St. George Sailing Club (Riverside Drive, Sans Souci) – 5km & 10km (7.00pm)
 Fri 16 Jan Sydney Summer Twilight Series – Centennial Park (Cnr Parkes & Dickens Drives) – 5km & 10km (7.00pm)
 Sun 18 Jan Sydney Marathon Clinic – Rosford Street Reserve (5km, 10km & 21.1km) – from 7.00am
 Mon 26 Jan Menal Marketplace Community Fun Run – Menai Park (8.2km & 3.2km) – 8.00am

Girraween Club Summer Training Days & Times

Do you want to get, fit, faster and do personal bests? Why not come down and train with us? We offer an extensive training programme as follows: -

Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays – Fitness & Sprint Training with Wayne Thurlow & Gary Micallef – 6.00-7.30pm at C.V. Kelly.

Mondays & Wednesdays – Middle Distance Training with Garry Womsley – 6.30-8.00pm at C.V. Kelly.

Tuesdays – Middle Distance/Steeplechase Training with Garry Womsley – 6.00-7.45pm at C.V. Kelly

Draft Winter Championship Dates For 2009!

Sat - May 2nd - Road Championships (Homebush)
 Sat – May 9th - Novice Cross Country (Ramsgate)
 Sat - May 30th - Cross Country Relays (Miranda)
 Sat - June 20th - Long Course Cross Country (Nowra)
 Sat - July 11th - Road Relays (Wollongong)
 Sat - July 18th - Short Course Cross Country (Camden)
 Sun - August 16th - State Half Marathon (Lake Gillawarna) - to be confirmed
 Sat - August 29th - Australian Cross Country (Camden)

Would You Like To Learn Steeplechase?

Steeplechase is one of the more interesting distance races on the track. It combines running, jumping and plenty of endurance. There is never a dull moment! Would you like to learn how to tackle this event? If so, you've come to the right place. We offer Steeplechase coaching every Tuesday at C.V. Kelly during summer (starting 7th October) starting at 6.00pm. We teach both hurdling technique as

well as the water jump technique. We also do plenty of running to build up your endurance. We used to have a lot of interest in this event but it appears to have waned over the last couple of years for various reasons. It would be great to get back to the success we had in 2005/2006 when 7 of our members won state medals in the event. If you are interested, come down and see us on a Tuesday night. If you require further information, please call me on 0405586961. GARRY WOMSLEY – Level 3 Coach

Training Form!

Monday, 1st December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly (1 x 300m, 2 x 200m, 1 x 150m)

Garry Womsley – 1:02 (300m), 0:36, 0:35 (200m), 0:24 (150m)

Clara Moussa – 0:58 (300m), 0:36, 0:37 (200m), 0:24 (150m)

Roger Mar – 0:58 (300m), 0:37, 0:36 (200m), 0:24 (150m)

Tuesday, 2nd December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly (Middle Distance)

Ethan Womsley – 13:42 (2km), 3:10, 3:04, 3:08 (600m CC)

Garry Womsley – 13:42 (2km), 3:10, 3:04, 3:08, 2:34, 2:21, 2:43 (600m CC)

Clara Moussa – 2:33, 2:20 (600m CC)

Nick Hanna – 4:26, 4:32 (1200m CC)

Wednesday, 3rd December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly (2 x 500m, 1 x 400m)

Danny Martins – 1:42, 1:36 (500m), 1:15 (400m)

David Perry – 1:50, 1:59 (500m), 1:21 (400m)

Garry Womsley – 2:13, 2:12 (500m), 1:28 (400m)

Roger Mar – 2:21, 2:11 (500m), 1:34 (400m)

Lauren Sinclair – untimed, 2:42 (500m), untimed (400m)

Nick Hanna – 1:47, 1:48, 1:48 (500m)

Monday, 8th December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly (2 x 500m & 2 x 400m)

Garry Womsley – 2:02, 2:10 (500m), 1:29, 1:33 (400m)

Michael Christie – 2:05, 2:07 (500m), 1:37, 1:31 (400m)

Danny Martins – 1:33, 1:40 (500m), 1:16, 1:21 (400m)

Venessa Separovich – untimed (2 x 500m & 1 x 400m), 1:35 (400m)

Clara Moussa – untimed (All)

Roger Mar – 2:13, 2:18 (500m), 1:39, 1:41 (400m)

Nick Hanna – 1:19, 1:19, 1:23, 1:24 (4 x 400m)

Tuesday, 9th December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly (Middle Distance)

Nick Hanna – 4:26, 4:11, 4:12 (1200m CC)

Ethan Womsley – 12:28 (2km CC), 3:32, 3:03, 2:57 (600m CC)

Garry Womsley – 12:24 (2km CC), 3:14, 3:04, 2:57, 2:19, 2:15 (600m CC), 4:46 (1200m CC)

Clara Moussa – 2:19, 2:13, 2:18 (600m CC)

Venessa Separovich – 2:17 (600m CC), 5:04 (1200m CC)

Wednesday, 10th December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly (1 x 300m, 3 x 200m & 1 x 60m)

Chol Acuoth – untimed (300m), 0:38, 0:38, untimed (200m), untimed (60m)

Roger Mar – 1:06 (300m), 0:40, 0:40, 0:44 (200m), 0:10 (60m)

Garry Womsley – 1:09 (300m), 0:39, 0:39, 0:42 (200m), 0:10 (60m)

Heidi Juhart – 1:10 (300m), 0:42, 0:45, 0:44 (200m), 0:09 (60m)

Monday, 15th December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly (1 x 300m, 3 x 200m & 1 x 60m)

Roger Mar – 0:54 (300m), 0:38, 0:38, 0:33 (200m), 0:10 (60m)

Garry Womsley – 0:55 (300m), 0:35, 0:35, 0:33 (200m), 0:10 (60m)

Heidi Juhart – 1:01 (300m), 0:36, 0:38, 0:40 (200m)

Danny Martins – 0:45 (300m), 0:30, 0:29, 0:31 (200m), 0:08 (60m)

Clara Moussa – 0:51 (300m), 0:35, 0:35, 0:34 (200m), 0:11 (60m)

Tuesday, 16th December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly (Middle Distance)

Ethan Womsley – 12:51 (2km road), 3:01, 2:48, 2:44 (600m CC)
Garry Womsley – 13:02 (2km road), 3:03, 2:48, 2:44, 2:19, 2:11 (600m CC)
Venessa Separovich – 2:22, 2:20 (600m CC)
Clara Moussa – 2:42, 2:10 (600m CC)

Wednesday, 17th December, 2008 – C.V. Kelly (1 x 600m, 1 x 500m & 1 x 400m)

Michael Christie – 2:32 (600m), 2:12 (500m), untimed (400m)
Reece Diaz – 2:04 (600m), untimed (500m), 1:21 (400m)
Garry Womsley – 2:24 (600m), 2:04 (500m), 1:31 (400m)
Roger Mar – 2:43 (600m), 2:07 (500m), 1:35 (400m)
Joanne Evans – untimed (200m), untimed (400m)

Mid-Week Training Programme For January!

WEEK ONE

Monday, 5th January, 2009 (C.V. Kelly) – 6.30pm

- 1) 2km Road – warm up
- 2) Drills on grass
- 3) 2 x 200m & 2 x 150m
- 4) Warm down – track

Tuesday, 6th January, 2008 (C.V. Kelly) – 6.00pm

- 1) 2km Road – warm up
- 2) Drills on grass
- 3) Steeplechase & Middle Distance training
- 4) Warm down

Wednesday, 7th January, 2008 (C.V. Kelly) – 6.30pm

- 1) 2km Road – warm up
- 2) Drills on grass
- 3) 1 x 500m, 2 x 400m
- 4) Warm down – track

WEEK TWO

Monday, 12th January, 2008 (C.V. Kelly) – 6.30pm

- 1) 2km Road – warm up
- 2) Drills on grass
- 3) 1 x 500m, 3 x 400m
- 4) Warm down - track

Tuesday, 13th January, 2008 (C.V. Kelly) – 6.00pm

- 1) 2km Road – warm up
- 2) Drills on grass
- 3) Steeplechase & Middle Distance training
- 4) Warm down

Wednesday, 14th January, 2008 (C.V. Kelly) – 6.30pm

- 1) 2km Road – warm up
- 2) Drills on grass
- 3) 4 x 200m & 1 x 60m
- 4) Warm down – track

WEEK THREE

Monday, 19th January, 2008 (C.V. Kelly) -6.30pm

- 1) 2km Road – warm up
 - 2) Drills on grass
-

-
- 3) 3 x 200m, 1x 150m & 1 x 60m
 - 4) Warm down - track

Tuesday, 20th January, 2008 (C.V. Kelly) – 6.00pm

- 1) 2km Road – warm up
- 2) Drills on grass
- 3) Steeplechase & Middle Distance training
- 4) Warm down

Wednesday, 21st January, 2008 (C.V. Kelly) – 6.30pm

- 1) 2km Road – warm up
- 2) Drills on grass
- 3) 2 x 500m & 1 x 400m
- 4) Warm down – track

WEEK FOUR

Monday, 26th January, 2008

NO TRAINING TODAY

Tuesday, 27th January, 2008 (C.V. Kelly) – 6.00pm

- 1) 2km Road – warm up
- 2) Drills on grass
- 3) Steeplechase & Middle Distance training
- 4) Warm down

Wednesday, 28th January, 2008 (C.V. Kelly) – 6.30pm

- 1) 2km Road – warm up
 - 2) Drills on grass
 - 3) 1 x 700m, 2 x 400m
 - 4) Warm down – track
-

Lots Of Girraween Gear At Discounted Prices!

We have just received a new shipment of Girraween singlets. These are available in all sizes and they are still at the very reasonable price of \$30.00.

However, we still have some of the older singlets in the following sizes: -

Size 14 (Open Mesh) – 5
Size 16 (Open Mesh) – 6

All of the above are at the discounted price of \$10.00.

We still have two retro t-shirts in the old colours (brown, white & light blue) as follows: -

2 x Size 16

They are \$10.00 each.

They would make great training shirts, a keepsake or even a fashion accessory.

If anyone is interested, please let me know.

GARRY WOMSLEY

We also still have other articles of the Girraween signature gear available: -

Socks
T-Shirts

If anyone is interested in the socks, please see Steve Williams. If anyone is interested in purchasing a T-Shirt, please see Michael Christie.

LOST & FOUND!

A pair of sunglasses was handed in at Prospect on 30th August.

If you lost a pair of sunglasses on that day, these could be yours.

The following items were left at C.V. Kelly last Saturday (29th November): -

1 pair of black Quiksilver thongs
1 Elements brand sports watch

If any of these items are yours, please give me a call on 0405586961.

GARRY WOMSLEY

Can Anybody Help Us With Info. On The History Of Our Club?

Michael Christie and I have decided to write a book on the history of our club and we would like your help. We are currently at the information gathering stage and envisage that the project will take a couple of years to come together. Any information, photos or anecdotes on the club and C.V. Kelly Park (particularly on how it got its name) would be much appreciated. You can contact myself by phone or see me on race days. We look forward to hearing from you. Interesting facts uncovered so far: -

- * The suburb of Girraween was established in 1909/1910 and used to be a part of the large Wentworth estate.
- * Girraween is aboriginal for "where the flowers grow".
- * C.V. Kelly Park seems to have been officially established around 1967/1968.
- * Our club was established in September 1978 as Greystanes-Girraween Amateur Athletics Club so that athletes from the flourishing Girraween and Greystanes Little Athletics Clubs could continue their athletics at a senior level once they graduated from Little A's.
- * The original club colours were light blue, brown and white.

Does Anybody Know Anyone Who Teaches Violin?

One of our younger members would like to learn the violin. Is there anyone in our club who teaches this instrument or knows anyone who can?

If so, please contact Garry Womsley on 0405586961.

ANSW Magazine!

ANSW have launched an official e-zine.

There have been 7 editions so far and can be viewed on the ANSW Website.

The magazine will be released electronically approximately every 2 months.

We hope you enjoy it!

Trophies!

The following members still have trophies to collect: -

David Wallis (2007/2008)

All the rest are from this year's West Metropolitan series: -

Carly Eager
Rachel Evans-Ingram
Jonas Williams
Linda Balinski

Please call Garry Womsley on 0405586961 to organise collection.

We Can Now Be Contacted 24 Hours A Day, 7 Days A Week!

As I now have e-mail at home, I can now be contacted 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. My e-mail address during work hours (7.00am-3.00pm, Monday-Friday) is still gwomsley@olex.com.au. My after hours e-mail address is now gowombat@hotmail.com. Please feel free to use my home e-mail address whenever you need to contact me on club matters after hours. I check my inbox on a regular basis.

GARRY WOMSLEY

THIS SPACE IS FOR HIRE!

If you would like to advertise your business in our newsletter or know someone who could be interested, please let Garry Womsley or Steve Williams know.

Our newsletter is distributed electronically to over 100 people and is available for perusal on our website, so the exposure for a potential advertiser would be quite large at a fairly low cost!

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Until next month, it's goodbye from Girra the Girraween bear. Happy Running!



Great Athletes of the Past!

By Garry Womsley

Rick Mitchell (1955-)

Richard Charles Mitchell was born on 24th March 1955 in Sydney.

Rick Mitchell was one of the few stars of Australian Track in the late 1970's and early 1980's. This was the era where the Eastern Bloc countries and America dominated the track scene.

Mitchell was a three time Olympian who won Olympic silver in 1980 and was Commonwealth Games 400m champion in 1978.

He began his athletics career in late 1972 at the relatively late age of 17. He joined the Waverley club in Melbourne to improve his speed on the Australian Rules Football field (He also dabbled in Rugby Union for a time). In his first attempt at 400m he finished 2nd in an Inter-Club race and recorded a promising time of 51.5sec.

Early in 1974, Mitchell joined coach Norm Osborne at St. Stephens Harriers and began to improve significantly. He won the Victorian Junior Championship soon after and shocked many when he took 2nd place in the National 400m final in 47.7sec running as an independent. Unfortunately, he was 5 days too old to contest the National Junior title that year.

Glandular Fever hampered his development during the 1974-75 season but he still managed to run 2nd in the National Championships 400m recording a personal best 46.8sec. His breakthrough came later in 1975 when he broke 46sec for the first time. Early in 1976, he won the Victorian State Championship running the equal fastest 400m by an Australian in Australia. An easy win in the national title a month later, guaranteed his selection for the Montreal Olympics.

Despite Australia's dismal effort in all sports at these Games, Mitchell was one of the few shining lights. He placed 1st in his 200m heat (21.91sec) but didn't participate any further in the event as he chose to concentrate on his pet event, the 400m. He placed 2nd in his 1st round heat (46.11sec), 1st in his second round heat (45.76sec – personal best), 4th in his semi final (45.69sec – personal best) and 6th in the final (45.40sec – personal best and national record). He even helped Australia to a National Record (3:05.75 – 5th) in the 4 x 400m relay in a great meet for him personally.

Mitchell strained ligaments behind his left knee in February 1978 and this hampered his preparations for the Nationals and Commonwealth Games. He was unable to do any speed work for 3 weeks leading into the '78 nationals and was near to withdrawing. However, he fronted up and put his title on the line and lost in a great race to John Higham (45.9sec) who beat Mitchell by 0.3sec. It was his first defeat by an Australian for 2 years.

He recovered well for the 1978 Commonwealth Games where he defeated Joe Coombs of Trinidad by 0.2sec in 46.32sec. The slow times in Edmonton were due to strong gusty winds in the stadium and Mitchell had the added disadvantage of running from lane 1. His finishing burst up the straight to catch Coombs was remarkable. Coombs in the lead up to the Games was the form runner after defeating the great Cuban Alberto Juantorena. Mitchell became the

first Australian in 24 years to win Commonwealth gold in the 400m and it was Australia's first individual gold on the track since 1966.

Rick and his coach chose to have a low key year in 1979 to build up for Moscow. His leg injury was becoming chronic and he chose complete rest during the 1978-79 domestic season. He even gave up his job to prepare for the Olympic year. It proved to be a good plan in 1980 where he ran a series of sub 46sec times. He finished the season with a new Australian record of 45.35sec, to win the National Championships.

Mitchell's form guaranteed him a place in Australia's Olympic team and he was considered a medal chance if he could maintain his form. The western boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics did not affect the standard of the 400m as significantly as some of the other events. He was named Australian team captain of the athletics team. His 1st round was low key with a 3rd in a time of 46.63sec. He won his 2nd round heat in 45.73sec before placing 2nd in his semi final in a good time of 45.48sec. He clinched the silver in the final with a personal best, national record and commonwealth record of 44.84sec. It ranked him 14th on the all time list at the time.

Mitchell was based in London in 1981 but suffered from injury and could not compete in the 1981 world cup. He returned to form during the European season of 1982 where he posted a series of fast times in big races. He was forced by Athletics Australia to return and contest the Commonwealth Games trials in Australia which he won in a time of 45.58sec. Bert Cameron of Jamaica was unbeatable that year and Mitchell had to settle for silver medals in both the 400m and the 4 x 400m relay at the Brisbane Games. He was given the honour of carrying the flag at the closing ceremony.

Injuries continued to affect his preparation for the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 1984. A heel injury in 1983 developed into a serious problem and with the rising star Darren Clark now showing great promise and former 200m champion Bruce Frayne winning the national title, Mitchell was no longer an automatic selection. Clark was preselected and Frayne was given the other spot. Mitchell had to settle for a place in the 4 x 400m relay which didn't sit well with him. However, he showed promising form in lead up races to the Games. In Los Angeles, Mitchell ran a strong final leg of the 4 x 400m heat in a time of 45.8sec to clinch Australia a finals berth. However, it all unravelled in the final with Mitchell starting the last leg in 2nd spot but being uncharacteristically run down to finish 4th.

Many Australians were disappointed with this result and some conspiracy theorists at the time said that Mitchell lost it on purpose as a way of getting back at the selectors for not picking him in the individual event. However, this is hard to believe as his split time of 45.39sec was a season best by over a second and the team smashed the National record. The statistics show that he ran the best he could on the day but others just ran a little bit better. Unfortunately, Mitchell retired almost immediately after the Games at just 29 years of age. Perhaps he saw the writing on the wall with Clark putting in a promising performance in the individual 400m or perhaps his battered body had just had enough. Either way, it was a sad way to end for one of Australia's most successful male athletes.

Mitchell has continued to be involved in Athletics as a commentator and after dinner speaker and continues to be regarded as one of our best 400m sprinters ever.

Interestingly, Mitchell also proved his versatility over the years with good performances over 100m, 200m and even the sprint/endurance event of 800m. His personal bests in all distances are as follows (they would all probably still go close to winning the National Championships!) :-

100m – 10.6sec – Melbourne 1980
200m – 20.8sec – Melbourne 1976
400m – 44.84sec – Moscow 1980
800m – 1:50.2 – Melbourne 1976

References: - Track & Field Athletics Australia by Graham Thomas
Wikipedia the free encyclopedia

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Please find below an interesting article that appeared in The Age newspaper in Melbourne recently. It really does hit the nail on the head as to why there are so many problems in the growth and development of athletics in Australia – GW

Running on empty

Dan Silkstone

December 18, 2008

The Age

IT HAS been the best of times but, mostly also, the worst. On Beijing's hot nights, in August, Australia's track and field athletes grabbed four medals, one of them gold.

It was the team's best Olympic performance in 40 years, despite the absence of medal fancies Jana Rawlinson and Nathan Deakes. It placed the green and gold eighth on the athletics medal tally. It was a very good year.

So much for the bit of the iceberg visible above the water. Australian athletics now faces some serious hurdles. When chief executive Danny Corcoran took over in 2004, Athletics Australia had just made a \$1.3 million loss.

"We were in substantial trouble financially, confidence had been lost in us as a sport and we were in self-destruct mode," the Athletics Australia chief says. "We had a damaged brand and no viable programs. It has been a fair repair job."

That loss has gradually been turned into a surplus, projected to be \$60,000 next year. But the balance sheet turnaround has been achieved by stripping costs. Actual revenue — the money created by the sport — has shrunk during that time, from \$8.5 million in 2004, to a projected \$7.4 million next year.

Earlier this year, the Australian Sports Commission was so worried about athletics that it commissioned a report into the sport by Melbourne consultancy group Gemba. It makes unhappy reading for Corcoran and his team.

Finished in July, the report highlights glaring difficulties: an inability to commercialise the sport, a fading brand, no link between juniors, emerging and elite programs, few attractive events and no major sponsor.

Corcoran says athletics is now financially secure but the effect of the cost cutting has been to severely limit programs and promotion, cutting spending from key events and pruning television production costs, meaning an inferior product is delivered.

Telstra pulled out as major sponsor in 2007 — a deal worth \$1 million a year. For 18 months the sport has searched in vain for a replacement. None has emerged and only top-up funding from the Federal Government has kept athletics in the black.

The Gemba report looked at the sport's commercial attractiveness. What it found was deeply worrying.

Corcoran is a king of nothing. Athletics matters at Olympic Games time and at the Commonwealth Games but those teams and the money they create are owned by the Australian Olympic Committee and Commonwealth Games Association. When the nation turns to watch track and field, Athletics Australia — expected to run the sport, develop athletes and create champions — reaps little or no reward.

"When the athletes are most visible they are not our properties," Corcoran says. "What do we have to offer to a sponsor?"

Then there are juniors — the biggest of many glaring problems for the sport. The dominant program, Little Athletics, has no relationship with Athletics Australia. Little Athletics began in the 1960s and has grown up completely separate and frequently at loggerheads with the senior body. It is independently run and has refused any attempts to integrate or merge.

Each year 100,000 children participate in Little Athletics but the sport's chief governing body plays no part in their development, has no commercial stake in them and does not even know who they are.

Added together these factors mean that those running the sport do not own the junior structure or the elite one. Imagine if the AFL had no stake in either its Auskick program or its finals series?

Athletics now is where soccer was eight years ago, Corcoran says, but without the natural advantages that sport had. Soccer had junior numbers and it partly fought its way back by imposing a levy on them, reaping millions that was ploughed back into developing a commercially attractive product to sell to sponsors, the government and the public.

The lack of a junior program is also a missed opportunity for potential sponsors interested in community engagement and public health (think of NAB and its links to Auskick).

"If sponsors want to talk to us about the areas of health, family and community they are not ours either," Corcoran says. "These structures have emerged over the past 40 years and now they are holding us all back."

An even bigger problem lies with talent identification. Of those who sign up for Little Athletics each year, less than 1 per cent are still participating in the sport by the time they reach adulthood. It is a disastrous figure, a dropout rate far worse than any other major sport.

The two organisations have almost opposing philosophies. Little Athletics is purely about participation and fun. It sees itself as helping children exercise and as a pathway to a range of other sports. There is little attempt to funnel those children into the dilapidated club system run by Athletics Australia, into specialised coaching or training, into keeping them in athletics.

The "churn rate" — the number who leave the sport each year — is around 50 per cent. In sports such as football or cricket a 20 per cent churn rate would be cause for concern.

In the absence of any pathway, athletically gifted youngsters are usually playing footy, soccer or netball by the time they are 12.

It is not just kids, however. Adult participation has been stagnant for the past 20 years, according to the Sweeney Report. It has declined from 18,000 in 1990 to 16,000 in 2007.

At the elite level, Australia is outspent by rivals, and uses much of the money it does have on travel to race on the other side of the world.

The Gemba team was asked by the Australian Sports Commission to value athletics as a property in the marketplace. On a list of 13 major sports, assessed for participation, spectator numbers and TV viewer figures, athletics ranked a distant 13th. It lagged behind AFL, both rugby codes, V8 Supercars, soccer, netball, swimming, golf, tennis and cricket.

The number of coaches has been stagnant for 20 years and — unlike in swimming — most are unpaid or poorly rewarded. Yet, somehow, Australia produces quality athletes. Few people who matter believe it can continue without dramatic change.

ATHLETICS Australia makes little money from media deals — in fact, it must pay production costs in order to have key meetings shown on television.

Efforts will be channelled into creating more palatable TV-friendly events, but new events cost money and few funds are available.

"We know from filling the MCG for five nights in a row (during the Commonwealth Games) that there is interest in top-quality athletics when Australia is competing in the green and gold," says Danny Corcoran, the chief executive officer of Athletics Australia.

"We need new product and product that is meaningful."

There have been rare successes. The Sydney Marathon gets strong media coverage and nets the organisation about \$200,000.

A new "Ashes" meet pitting Australia against England is planned for next year. A deal has already been done for British television and Athletics Australia is negotiating with the Ten Network for Australian rights.

But the mega-media rights deals that channel cash into the main football codes, tennis and cricket are a distant dream.

PARTICIPATION is a massive problem. Athletics Australia has virtually no development pathway. Little Athletics and its 100,000 juniors have no link to Athletics Australia and the relationship between the two bodies has historically been distant.

Senior participant numbers have slipped from 18,000 to 16,000 in the past two decades. The number of people signing up for fun runs has also been declining. A lack of coordination between junior athletics and the elite level means most interested kids are lost to the sport.

"By the time they reach 15, almost all of them are gone," Athletics Australia chief Danny Corcoran says. "They are gone to other sports, nobody has shown interest in keeping them, they realise they are not going to be a champion — there's a whole host of reasons why."

Gifted athletes are draining to the football codes, netball and basketball. But less talented juniors are also a big loss when they should become future junior coaches,

club officials and — most important — fans and spectators. Keep them involved and your sport has a fanbase. Lose them and they seldom come back.

"If we don't have a strategic shift towards development, this will continue to plague us," Corcoran says.

For adults, there are other issues. The average park footballer almost always follows the AFL. But the average weekend jogger is often not involved with the sport except in the most casual way.

MAIN sponsor Telstra hung up on Australian Athletics in 2007. Times have been lean ever since.

Athletics Australia has an apparel sponsor — Asics — and has second-tier sponsors that bring in about \$300,000 a year but there is a big gap in the accounts that is being temporarily filled by the Australian Sports Commission.

In 2004, government funding accounted for 49 per cent of Athletics Australia revenue. Next year it will be 85 per cent. Corporate support has dried up. Sports management firm ESP was hired to find a replacement but had little success and has been let go. In the present financial climate, sponsorship is hard to find. "A lot of the people we have meetings with just say they are not taking anything on. Budgets are just frozen or being wound back," Athletics Australia chief Danny Corcoran says.

But there remains a perception that the governing body — unable to offer access to juniors or high-level elite competition — has little to offer a sponsor. Steps are being taken to fix those problems, but it will not be cheap or easy. Without a new backer Athletics Australia will not collapse — it has cash reserves thanks to a series of prudent surpluses — but it will stagnate.

"It just means diminished programs," Corcoran says. "You can go on running low-level meets like the sport used to be, but if we want to have something commercially attractive we need to grow."

Stop Press!

Many thanks go to our 10km team who competed at the Sydney Marathon Clinic on Sunday, 21st December. Our team was: - Richard Frost, Garry Womsley (Captain), Nick Hanna, Lisa Grant & Roger Mar. At the time of writing, there were no results available. However, we are hopeful of a high placing after our runners put in a competitive showing. They count the top four runners and their times were as follows: - Richard Frost (42:09), Garry Womsley (42:14), Nick Hanna (42:51) & Lisa Grant (42:53). Steve Mifsud and Greg Sargeant also participated and ran for other teams. Full results for all races will be available in our February edition of the Girraween Athlete.

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