

WHEN Stephen Mifsud crosses the finish line of the New York Marathon in November it will be the completion of two long-standing goals as well as a running career spanning 26 years. While finishing the famous race has long been a dream of Mifsud, it will also be the 100th and last marathon he will run.

The 51-year-old, from the Girraween Athletics Club, said the gruelling race holds special significance for him.

"I really suffered from the heat during a race in Canberra in 1984 and almost passed out, but I found a New York Marathon cap," he said.

"I wet it and it cooled me down, kept the sun out of my eyes and kept me well enough to finish.

"I've run nearly all my marathons in that hat since, so now, after 25 years it is going home."

November's race will represent Mifsud's second attempt at the marathon after he was forced to withdraw last year due to illness.

He said he had just about given up on that long-standing ambition when he received some encouragement from his sister.

"She sent me a birthday card with a man climbing a mountain and it said, 'remember your goals and dreams'," he said.

"Afterwards I looked on the website and saw that I had already run a qualifying time."

After premature retirements at 75 and then 84 marathons, Mifsud said he will definitely call it quits at 100.

"That will be it. My body won't take it any more," he said.

"My wife and daughter will be coming over so it is going to be a very special time for me."

