

# State Updates



## Victorian Athletics

By Kimberley Crow

It was not by chance that Melbourne was designated the home of Australia's new High Performance Centre of distance running. A combination of the exceedingly popular Milers' Club meets and strong performances at the Clarion National Series Meet and the Zatopek Classic have been testament to the strength of Victoria's distance running fraternity.

In only its second meet, the Victorian Milers' Club welcomed over 100

participants to Box Hill Athletics Track. Despite gusty conditions, more than a quarter of competitors achieved personal bests, including 1500m winners Louis Rowan (3.40.0) and Lisa Weightman (4.23.9) and 800m winner Mark Cornish (1.50.7). Female 800m winner Libby Allen fell short of her personal best, but recorded a nonetheless impressive time of 2.05.5 to defeat interstate visitor Debbie Savage. Manchester Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Kris McCarthy marked his return from injury with a promising 1.51.0 in the 800m, while 17 year old Sarah Hall continued her recent improvement with a personal best time of 4.33.3 in the 1500m. Peter Fortune, one of the instrumental

figures in the formation of the Milers' Club, was particularly pleased with the success of the meet.

"It's pleasing to see so many athletes supporting the concept and benefiting from the graded races. I can really see the meets continuing to grow."

The success of the second meet followed the Milers' Club's impressive launch a month earlier. Then, almost half of the 76 competitors achieved personal bests. Mark Tucker won the men's 1500m in 3.42.4, while Libby Allen took out the women's race in 4.23.3.

All athletes registered with an Athletics Australia member organisation are eligible to compete in Milers' Club events.

Strong distance performances were also recorded at the Clarion National Series Meet conducted at Nunawading Athletics Track in November. Crowd favourite Sarah Jamieson took out the women's 5000m in a Commonwealth Games 'B' qualifying time of 15.29.88, while the big improver of 2005, Louis Rowan, ran a blistering final 200m to win the men's 5000m in 13.44.20 from Mark Thompson (13.48.44) and Scott Westcott (13.48.88).

Meanwhile, on the social running scene, Athletics Victoria's annual fun run - the Whitehorse Mega Mile Fun Run/Walk - was another great success. Mark Tucker and Anna Worland took line honours, while Jill Lowe won the randomly drawn Toyota 'Yaris.' Any negative aspect arising from the gloomy weather was compensated by a feast upon crossing the finish line of oranges courtesy of the Melbourne Citrus Committee and lollies thanks to the Natural Confectionery Company.

2006 promises to be huge for Victorian athletes, with the King's Track and Field All Comers Meets getting underway in early January. These meets are open to all athletes, whether registered with Athletics Victoria or not, and cater for competitors of all abilities. Heats are graded and distances range from 60m to 5000m. More information and entry forms can be found at [www.athsvic.org.au](http://www.athsvic.org.au). Entry is \$2 per event for members and \$5 per event for non-members.

The Victorian Track and Field Championships also promise to be huge. Conducted from the 17-19<sup>th</sup> of February, the Championships will be run on the MCG. Entry forms, indicative entry standards and details are available at [www.athsvic.org.au](http://www.athsvic.org.au). All athletes registered



Mark Tucker competing in the Whitehorse Mega Mile Fun Run

with an Australian or international member organisation who have achieved the required standard are eligible to enter.

## Athletics Tasmania

By Catherine Phillips

Hobart's Donna MacFarlane has provided the high point for Tasmanian athletics in recent weeks with her Commonwealth Games qualifying performance in the 3000m steeplechase. MacFarlane, who as Donna Tyberek, was a top junior distance runner, has made an impressive comeback to the sport and her time of 9.51.60 has certainly enhanced her chances of representing Australia in March. Fittingly, several of MacFarlane's young Sandy Bay Harrier clubmates, members of the Tasmanian Pacific School Games team, were in the Olympic Park stands to spur her on. Amongst the juniors, Karinna Fyfe, from the small farming area of Glengarry in northern Tasmania, is beginning to make her mark at the highest level, taking gold in her age group at the PSG in the 3000m in a personal best 9.48. Fyfe, 16, backed up with another win over the distance at the Australian All Schools and Youth championships in Sydney. Launceston ultra runner Simon Phillips was thrilled to recently be selected in the Australian team to contest the IAU 24 Hour World Challenge in Taiwan in February. Phillips, 46, has enjoyed a long running career, representing Tasmania in



Tasmania's Simon Phillips, chosen to represent Australia at the IAU 24 Hour Challenge

track, road, cross country and mountain running over the years. He is a board member of Athletics Tasmania, as well as a club coach and administrator, who first took up running as a 10 year old to combat asthma. World cross country, half marathon and marathon representative Kim Gillard, 35, who has spent the last few years in the US, has returned to his childhood home of Launceston with his equally talented wife Jenny and their young son Hunter. Gillard's running career took off dramatically after he moved to Sydney in the mid 90's and now that he is back in his home state his sights are set on some old local records. Earlier this year, on a holiday visit, he broke the northern Tasmanian one hour run record (formerly held by Simon Phillips) and was also first across the line in the Cadbury marathon. Both Kim and Jenny won their categories of the 21.4km Point to Pinnacle race up Hobart's Mt Wellington recently and are likely to be prominent in Tasmanian running events for some time yet. Summer is full of running action in Tasmania with several local and international events on offer including the Graeme Briggs Memorial Track Classic, the Cadbury Marathon, Tasmanian Combined events championships, Tasmanian 10km walks titles and the Bikes and Spikes carnival. For more information contact Athletics Tasmania at [info@tasathletics.org.au](mailto:info@tasathletics.org.au).



## Athletics NSW

By Lennon Wicks

The past two months have provided many highlights. Firstly, the NSW State 3000m Championships were held in ideal conditions on November 11th. Once again large fields were recorded in both the male and female event, reconfirming the decision to run this championship race away from the regular NSW State Open Championship. The men's field was so large that an A and a B race needed to be conducted.

The early laps in the men's A race indicated that sub 8 minute performances were possible. Several interstate athletes had turned up for this race and were determined to record fast times. Into the second half of the race a bunch of five runners had skipped away from the rest of the field and all five entered the

home straight together. ACT's Corey Tucker surged late, and narrowly edged out Sydney University's David Byrne for the win in 7.58.41. The next three competitors also broke the 8 minute barrier with Byrne (7.58.69) being the first NSW competitor across the line. Byrne adds the NSW 3,000m title to the NSW 10,000m championships that he won earlier this year. Second and third NSW place getters were Jeremy Roff (7.59.09) and Dylan Wkyes (8.00.67).

In the women's race, Sydney University's Emma Rilen took the race lead after 1,000m and was never headed, steadily drawing away from the rest of the field. Rilen went on to record a time of 9.15.25, with Eloise Wellings and 17 year-old Lucy Starrat filling second and third positions. The Australian All Schools and Youth Athletics Championships, held at Sydney Olympic Park from December 8th - 11th, saw a chance for NSW athletes to not only win national medals on their home track, but also qualify for World Juniors. Brooke Simpson showed plenty of front running spirit taking the lead from the gun in the women's U/20 800m to easily win the race and add another qualifier to her ever-growing list (2.07.81). Simpson also won the women's U/20 1500m in similar fashion. Brooke has also qualified for the 1,500m at next year's World Junior championships in Beijing.

Sydney Pacific runner Lucy Starrat clocked her first 3,000m World Junior qualifier winning the U/18 3000m in 9.34.92. Starrat is also not far away from recording a qualifier for the 1,500m. She finished 2nd in the U/18 1500m in 4.28.90, just outside the qualifying time of 4.28.0. Other NSW athletes to already achieve this mark include Lara Tamset (4.26.61) and Heidi Gregson (4.25.46).

January also looks set to be a fast month for distance runners with Athletics NSW to host the Sydney Track Classic on January 19th. With many athletes coming off Christmas and New Year training blocks this meet looks set to produce fast times. The meet is part of the new Athletics Australia National Series and will feature the NSW Open 5,000m championships. Lastly, a correction to the male NSW Distance Runner of the Year award announced earlier in Issue 3 of R4YL. The 2005 award winner is St George's Paul Arthur. Sydney University's Russell Desaix-Chin and Sydney Strider's Glen Guzzo were second and third respectively. Previous results had not included the NSW Marathon Championships.

**R4YL**

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