



# Tasmanian Masters Athletics Inc.

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## SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

It is again pleasing to be able to report, in our 41<sup>st</sup> year, on another successful season for Tasmanian Masters Athletics. During an extraordinary year due to the impact of the pandemic, we managed to keep membership numbers at exactly the same level as the 2019-20 season being 237 financial members. Given the dearth of athletic activity early in the season and therefore the reduced amount of budgeted expenses, the committee decided to reduce its membership fees for the 2020-21 year. This may have been the catalyst for maintaining membership numbers which we consider to be an excellent result. Obtaining new members and having previous members re-join, will remain as a major focus in 2021-22.

The membership split by region is South 184 (-2%), North 32 (+3%), North West 18 (+28%) and interstate 3 (-25%). The gender split is Female: 96 and Male 141 (minimal change).

Hobart was scheduled to host the 2022 Australian Masters Athletics Track and Field Championship. We traditionally have experienced a spike in membership numbers during our AMA Championship hosting years. After the 2021 AMA National Championships scheduled for Canberra were cancelled, we recommended to AMA that it would be best for the 2022 Championships to be hosted by one of the eastern states. This was because we considered that after such a long time between the 2019 Championships in Melbourne and the next championships, that there would likely to be a large number of participants. We felt that Hobart would not have sufficient facilities to host the expected numbers. Hobart is now scheduled to host the 2024 Championships, after Brisbane in 2022 and Sydney in 2023.

Track and field competition continued to provide a wide range of opportunities for members. Participation in the South was particularly strong where we enjoyed record numbers particularly before Christmas. It was very pleasing to see excellent numbers in field events. Participation in the North was low, and attracting new members remains a challenge. In January 2021, we held a 3000m championship at Penguin on the North West Coast which was, encouragingly, well supported by members.

TMA continued to combine with Athletics South for Interclub 3000m or 5000m events on a Wednesday night in Hobart during the Summer season. These distance events attract a larger number of participants and continue to be successful. Many TMA members also represent an Athletics Tasmania affiliated club in track and field competition. TMA's Northern Branch once again combined with the Northern Tasmanian Athletics to conduct joint meetings. Integrated meets are likely to continue in all three regions of the State into the future.

### **TMA Awards**

Competition for the annual TMA Awards was again very keen with strong contenders in all categories. The winners were:

- Female Athlete of the Year – Sharee Maksimovic (W55)
- Male Athlete of the Year – Geoff Gibbons (M44)
- Sprints/Hurdles Athlete of the Year – Sharee Maksimovic
- Middle Distance – Anna Smees (W48)
- Distance / Walks Athlete of the Year – Michael Davis (M51)
- Jumps/Multi Events Athlete of the Year – Geoff Gibbons
- Throws Athlete of the Year – Cathy McKeown (W50).

Sharee Maksimovic had an exceptional year which, considering it was after a period of almost career ending injury, even more meritorious. Sharee broke 3 sprint records in her age group, 1 pentathlon record and a long jump record which is not only testimony to her ability but also her athletic versatility. Geoff Gibbons again performed at his usual high standard. While he didn't break numerous records, he did break Mick Stevenson's M40 triple jump record which had stood since 1987.

Congratulations go to all of the above athletes who had exceptional seasons.

### **Track and Field Championships**

Nearly 70 Masters athletes participated in the 2021 State Track & Field Championships which this year were held at the Northern Athletic Centre in Launceston. These Championships were once again held in conjunction with Athletics Tasmania. Given that 77% of our members for the season were from the South of the state, we consider the participation numbers to be excellent. There were also 16 entrants in our 10,000m championships held on 6 February 2021. Michael Davis was the best performer in that event with a time of 35:30.82 and easily the highest age grade percentage of 84.76%.

Competition for the Male and Female Athlete of the Championships awards was again extremely strong with a number of contenders to choose from. In a change from past seasons, early in the 2020-21 season TMA committee decided to present Track Athlete of the Championships and Field Athlete of the Championships awards rather than male and female awards.

Award winners were as follows:

- Graeme Cruise Award (best age-graded performance) - Vicky Gunn (W55) 93.87% in the 1500m (5:32.81)
- Masters Track Athlete of the State Championships - Sharee Maksimovic for her wins in the 60m 8.88s, 94.82%<sup>1</sup> (new Residential W55 record); 200m 29.50s, 91.12% (new Open and Residential W55 record) and 400m 66.44s, 91.80% (new Open and Residential W55 record)
- Masters Field Athlete of the State Championships - Geoff Gibbons for his wins in the Open Pole Vault 3.90m, 73.86% and Masters Triple Jump 12.00m, 73.80% (M40 State record). and 4<sup>th</sup> in the Open Javelin 48.36m, 59.26%.

The following athletes also put in exceptional performances in Masters events at these Championships: Anna Smee, Daniel Smee, Caleb Gardner, Tim Potter, Craig Downie and Michael Davis. Suzanne Westbrook (W79) was another notable athlete, winning 8 of her 9 events.

There were also some excellent performances by TMA members in other Athletics Tasmania Open events at the Championships. Congratulations to the athletes below on their performances:

- Abby Chapman                    400m 56.11, 84.83% (Tasmanian Residential W30 record)  
    200m 24.65, 86.57% (Tasmanian Residential W30 Record)
- Kiara Calvert                     200m 25.17, 84.78%  
    100m 12.28, 85.42%
- Elizabeth Leitch:                5000m Race Walk 34:27.93, 76.26%.

<sup>1</sup>60m performances are not eligible for the Graeme Cruise Award

## State Teams

TMA athletes Yvette Edward and Matthew Zegveld were named in the 2021 Tasmanian Marathon Team. At the time of writing, a half marathon team had not been announced. We congratulate Yvette and Matthew on their achievements and wish them well for the Australian Marathon Championship in July 2021.

## Australian Masters Athletics 2020 Awards

John Howe won the AMA Award for the Most Outstanding Male Athlete. John set three Tasmanian Records in 2020 (his 60m record of 7.10s being a new M35 Australian Record).

In addition to John, Adele Lucas, Kiara Calvert, Mick Davis, Vicky Gunn, Cathy McKeown and Jessica Lyndon all had excellent years and were also nominated for awards.

## Other Championship Events

- **Combined Events Championships.**

There were 5 Masters athletes who competed in these championships held over the weekend of 9 and 10 January 2021.

The final points tally was as follows:

Geoff Gibbons M40, 5435 points, Caleb Gardner M50 4779 points, Andrew Bonsey M40 4657 points, Greg Mann M55 4226 points and Michael Higgs M35 4048 points.

Geoff Gibbons won the Tasmanian Open Decathlon Championship with a tally of 5435 points. Greg Mann had a very successful meet, breaking his own M55 Decathlon record set in March 2019 of 3912 points.

- **Track & Field Pentathlon Championships**

This season these championships reverted to Hobart at the Domain Athletic Centre after being held in Launceston the previous season. An excellent field of 21 athletes took part (10 female and 11 male) which was an exceptional number and well in excess of previous years. Jessica Lyndon (W30) and Sharee Maksimovic (W55) both broke state residential records in their respective age groups. Sharee Maksimovic also broke the W55 long jump residential record which had stood since 1988.

- **Cross country Championships**

There were 57 Masters entrants in the 2020 Cross-Country Championships conducted with Athletics Tasmania at the Queens Domain in Hobart in August. This was another record after 47 participants in 2019, which at the time was also a record.

Michael Davis, Daniel Smee, David O'Brien, Vicky Gunn, Alvin Johns and Yvette Edward all performed very well in this event.

- **3000m Championship**

TMA held this event on 26 January 2021 in conjunction with the Athletics Tasmania open championship. It was the first time the TMA 3000m Championship has been run. There was a pleasing number of 11 participants in the Masters event and 1 Masters athlete in the open event. Athletes supported the events from all three regions of the state. Best performers were Vicky Gunn finishing in a time of 12:26.44 (88.96%) and Matthew Zegveld with a time of 09:47.89 (81.00%).

- **Walking Championship Events**

A small but select group of members continue to participate in regular race-walking club events as well as Athletics Tasmania and TMA Road Walk Championships over various distances. Elizabeth Leitch had a very good season, taking advantage of moving into a new age group setting residential and open records in the

W65 5km Road Walk in 34:21 (76.52%) and 1500m Walk in 9:44.19 (75.10%). Elizabeth also set a residential record in the 3000m Walk in 19:59.45 (76.20%). Teresa Hatten set a residential and open record W35 1500m Walk in 10:14.41 (56.20%).

- **Other Competition**

Due to the impact of covid-19 restrictions and in particular relation to travel, a number of our members participated in virtual and postal competitions that were staged by various organisations in an effort to keep athletes motivated and engaged in their sport.

Cathy McKeown and Geoff Gibbons were both very successful in the Oceania Masters Athletics Championships each winning multiple gold and silver medals.

- **2020 Road Championship**

This event was not held in 2020 due to covid restrictions.

TMA athletes continued to have strong representation in the winter competition of Athletics South in 2020. Many of our members are also members of other clubs.

### **Marathon and Half Marathon Challenges**

The Marathon and Half Marathon Challenges were introduced by TMA in 2018 and continued with good support again during the season considering the reduced number of opportunities due to covid restrictions. These challenges enable members to provide their times for marathons and half marathons anywhere in the world. The winners are decided by the highest age graded percentage during the competition period.

Peter Barrett (M35), with a time of 2:59.51 in the Easter Marathon won the Marathon Challenge with an age grade percentage of 73.88%.

David O'Brien (M55) with his excellent time of 1:17.59 in the Launceston Half Marathon in December 2020, won the Half Marathon Challenge with an age grade percentage of 87.18%. David broke the M55 half marathon residential and open record with this run.

### **TMA Sealed Handicap**

In January 2021 we initiated a sealed handicap competition in which all members who take part in Parkrun events anywhere in the world can participate. This event is conducted once a month and the winner is decided by the athletes' Parkrun result on the chosen Saturday. Handicaps are decided by members' most recent parkrun results. The monthly winner receives a free year's membership. We have been fortunate to gain sponsorship from the Hobart business, Hobart Refrigeration and Appliance Repairs for this event and thank Bruce Lansdell and his team at HRAR for their support. I thank Mike Walker for suggesting this initiative and running of this event each month.

### **TMA History Book**

In June 2020 Janet Upcher's book "*From Small Beginnings*", was launched in Hobart. Janet's book is an excellent account of the history of Veterans and Masters Athletics in Tasmania from 1979 to 2020. The book was launched to coincide with our 40<sup>th</sup> year. We thank Janet for her dedication and countless hours of work in writing the book and also arranging its publication. If you don't have a copy of the book, it is available to borrow from the State Library; if sufficient demand, a second edition is possible.

### **Volunteers**

We are most fortunate to have a small but regular group of volunteers who assist with the running of TMA events, particularly during the summer season. In addition to those, many of our people continued to perform roles for other athletic competitions and various community fun runs, all of which rely on us for our expertise and energy. Our volunteers at the events like the Easter Marathon and City to Casino fun run / walk earn

significant funds for TMA. These funds assist us in keeping membership fees low. Our membership fees have not increased for in excess of ten years.

I thank all volunteers and also those who assisted in various other roles, especially our dedicated committee members during the season. Vicky Gunn, our Northern Branch delegate deserves special mention having worked extremely hard to improve the profile of Masters athletics in Launceston. This has been greatly appreciated by our Northern members and all other committee members.

I also thank John O'Keeffe who is stepping down as Communications Director after assuming the role in the 2018-19 season. John's contribution to the club through the Weekly News has been significant and much appreciated by all. As we say every year, without volunteers, the club would not be able to function.

### **The next 12 months**

The coming year will hopefully provide many more opportunities for our athletes in the Covid19 environment that we all now live in. In addition to local competition, we hope there will be the AMA Winter Throwing Championships in Wollongong in October 2020, the World Cross Country Championships (including Masters Championship) in Bathurst in February 2022, the AMA Championships in Brisbane in March 2022; and the WMA Stadia Championships in Tampere, Finland commencing in June 2022.

I wish all members and their families excellent health and happiness and urge members to take the opportunity to participate in one or more of the available Championships which are open to all registered Masters athletes.

The State Association remains aware of the difficulties being experienced concerning participation in the North.

The Association remains keen to support the Northern Branch in overcoming these difficulties and restoring membership numbers to those experienced in 2018-19. We are fortunate to have excellent members on the Northern Branch committee, led by Vicky Gunn who, as previously mentioned, has been doing an excellent job in attempting to improve Masters participation in athletics in the north of the state.

### **Conclusion**

I thank all committee members for their support and commitment over the past season. It has again been a great team effort. I also thank acting Executive Officer at Athletics Tasmania, Glenn Turnor, his various staff and all those involved in various capacities with Athletics South and the other athletics clubs for their good work and co-operation. It has been most appreciated.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the sad passing of Lynne Andrews who passed away on 11 December 2020. Lynne was a member of TMA for 30 years, a past TMA President and a regular competitor until shortly before her death. Our thoughts remain with Lynne's family, friends and fellow athletes at this time.

**Philip Hand**

**Secretary**

**29 May 2021**