

Newsletter of Females in Training  
Autumn 2006



**President's Patch = AGM report**

Greetings and I hope you are safe and well! Now that the weather is cooling off (finally!) and the new year is well under way the time has come to call for some new members for the FITAbility committee.

***Call for members for FITAbility SubCommittee and Womens and Girls Tri Sub-Committee***

The purpose of FITAbility is to encourage women with sight impairment to participate in cycling as recreation and at events such as the Tour de Femme. Thanks to the initial grant, FIT owns four racing tandems and a purpose built trailer to support this program. Interested cyclists within the FIT membership are encouraged to participate by learning to ride as pilots - the person at the front, and women with sight impairment learn cycling skills whilst acting as stoker - the person at the back of the tandem. You may have seen the tandems flying along at the last Tour de Femme. This program also develops excellent communication skills for all concerned.

This sub-committee works closely with the FITAbility Project Officer and the meetings are usually held monthly. The main focus for 2006 will be to have regular

training sessions for pilots and stokers and to participate in events when possible.

The WAG Tri sub-committee is responsible for organising the WAG Tri. (The Women's Triathlon Training Program is organised by another totally separate sub-committee.) The date for the next WAG Tri is 26 November 2006 and we hope that last year's Race Director will accept the offer to be Race Director this year. We will also contract out the set up and pulldown functions again.

The WAG Tri committee meets monthly and then weekly as the event approaches.

Members work closely with the Race Director but also take responsibility for the support systems such as PA system, drinks, fruit and other nourishment, masseurs, port-a-loos, jumping castle, event bags, registration, general administration etc. This year we hope to have a dedicated person for promotion and media liaison.

Please email or ring Phyl Crawford to register your interest in either joining the FITAbility sub-committee or the WAG Tri sub-committee.

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**GO-WILD!**

**ORIENTEERING COME 'N' TRY**

On Saturday 18 February 12 FIT members participated in a very successful (none of us got lost on the course) Orienteering come 'n' try morning. The ACT Orienteering coaches, assisted by our own Ann Ingwersen (a medal winning orienteerer) provided a theoretical and practical introduction to the sport on the slopes behind Campbell Park offices. This was followed by deliciously cold juice and goodies ie. lamingtons and hedgehog. We all had a great



time and FIT members are invited to participate in forthcoming ACT Orienteering events.

For further information on orienteering events during autumn and winter (usually held on Saturdays and Sundays) see: the Orienteering ACT website: [www.act.orienteering.asn.au/](http://www.act.orienteering.asn.au/) Rogaining Association (long distance orienteering, more like a bush walk done with 2 or 3 others) <http://act.rogaine.asn.au/> If anyone would like to know anything at all, please just contact: Scotty at: [anthonycscott@bigpond.com](mailto:anthonycscott@bigpond.com) Ann Ingwersen at [frank.ingwersen@iinet.net.au](mailto:frank.ingwersen@iinet.net.au) or [ann.ingwersen@dcita.gov.au](mailto:ann.ingwersen@dcita.gov.au)

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### Hedgehog

People wanted the recipe for the Hedgehog we had after orienteering, so here it is.

- 1 pkt Marie biscuits
- 1 egg
- couple of drops vanilla
- ½ cup sugar
- 125 grms butter (real butter not margarine)
- 2 heaped Tab cocoa (Bourneville, not home brand)

Melt the sugar, butter and cocoa over a medium heat stirring so that the sugar doesn't catch - take off the heat. Beat the egg & vanilla and add to the other mixture - stir and you will see the mixture bind together (apparently this can be explained by physics but not by me). Crush the Marie biscuits finely and add to the mixture. Press into a lined loaf tin, smooth with the back of a spoon which will create a sheen as the butter comes to the surface and then leave to cool. Almond slivers (or pieces of walnut) can be pressed into the top of the slice to create the hedgehog spines if you wish. Hide the slice from the family or else they will eat it and you will have to make another one.

Phyl Crawford

March 2006

## GO WILD WEEKEND - CONQUERING MT KOSCIUSKO

A WILD weekend was recently held at a lovely lodge in Smiggins where 30 FIT gals and some partners enjoyed a weekend of hiking, great food and friendship. For a few girls it was a challenge getting there late on Friday night with car battery problems in Cooma. Interestingly a few local lads came to the damsels in distress but failed to revive the dead battery with coke. A few hours passed before a new battery was found and they could make the final leg to the lodge, arriving in the early hours of the next day.

Blue sky greeted us early on Saturday morning. With energy abounding we made our way to the start of our 20km alpine walk at Charlottes Pass. A gentle downhill to the trickle of the Snowy River, the first of 2 crossings for the day. It was then gentle upward climbing to the Blue Lake. The wind was beginning to pick up, so it was hold onto your hats or they would be lost to the mountains forever. The first blisters of the day began to appear requiring a few patch up jobs before going on. The Blue Lake was stunning, nestled in a valley, surrounded by rock faces smoothed by glaciers, over thousands of years, sliding their way down the mountains and into the gully. Onward and upward we plodded until we reached the ride, which would eventually lead us to Mt Kosciusko. The views to our right were of mountains, forest trees and gullies, as far as you could see. The wildflowers earlier were scarce but now



there were many more and different varieties. The wind was fierce, often blowing you off balance and it had a slight 'chill' to it, even through the warmth of the sun. At least this wind kept the blowflies at bay.

The mountains we travelled were bare of any trees and the landscape surprisingly rocky. We came across another lake nestled down in a valley, Lake Albina, where we sat and marvelled at the view, soaking in the serenity. After 3 hours of trekking we made our way up the last climb of the day to the base of Mt Kosciuszko. There we were greeted by Rae Palmer and all the children she had helped ride and push bikes up 9km of dirt road from Charlottes Pass. What a great granny. We all walked to the peak and found shelter from the wind amongst the rocks to devour our well-earned lunch. The view from our rock restaurant was spectacular but short lived. We still had some ground to travel.

With our legs rested and bellies full we headed off on the last 9km back to Charlottes Pass. A dirt road/fire trail that wound its way down. Seamans Hut was 3km along the road and would be a welcome site to anyone skiing on this mountain, a shelter from the cold and wind and plenty of wood to build a fire. Our second crossing of the Snowy River a bit further along, not far from its origin. I noticed the vegetation thickening, a few lonely birds and new varieties of wildflowers emerging. Black crows surfed on the strong wind currents, as if they were sitting motionless in the sky. The sun was beginning to burn the  
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backs of our legs as we neared the end of our walk. Amazing snow gums lined the road, beautiful in their coloured twisted form and peeling bark. We are indeed privileged to have such an amazing backyard to play in.

A meal fit for a king was served up, provided by everyone bringing along a delicious dish to share. Wine corks popped and the chatter was loud and fast. With appetites satisfied it was onto the serious part of the evening, dancing and letting your hair down. Lots of laughter and fun was had by all.

It was a slower start the next morning with 2 supposedly shorter walks enjoyed by those who still had some energy left.

Many thanks to Rae Palmer for organising this great weekend.

### **Kosciuszko Weekend Walk**

By Rae Palmer

In September, 2005 I attended an Outward Bound Go Wild weekend course organized by Females In Training (FIT). To implement the skills I learned on that course I undertook to organize a group walk to Mt Kosciuszko via Blue Lake.

This activity took place over the weekend of 17-19 February 2006, using the Gunuma ski lodge at Smiggin Holes, NSW as a base for the walk to Kosciuszko on Saturday and other walks on Sunday. 40 members and their partners participated in the weekend activity.



To start, I advertised the proposed weekend in the FIT Newsflash to get an idea of the level of interest and likely numbers. Gunuma Lodge (of which I am a member) accommodates up to 40 people. The response was much stronger than I expected and I was quickly able to fill the Lodge with FIT members and their families. Several other members registered their interest in the event of vacancies becoming available.

Other key steps in the planning/implementation process included:

- Collection of money for Lodge accommodation.
- Collecting contact information and setting up a 'Go Wild' emailing list.
- Circulating by email directions to get to the accommodation, the food, clothing and linen items to take and a description of the planned Kosciuszko walk and extra activities for the weekend.
- Organizing a dinner menu for Saturday night and a cooking roster for people to follow.

Putting this activity together was challenging but very rewarding as everything went to plan and it was a successful, fun weekend.

Feedback from participants was all positive with many indicating they would like the walking weekend to become an annual event.

Rae Palmer  
27 Feb 2006

## Weetbix Kid's Try-athlon

A small group of FIT members, plus one very generous sister visiting from interstate, volunteered at the Weetbix Kid's Try-athlon on Sunday 26 February. We arrived between 6-6.30am at the AIS to find everything set up and ready to go - volunteers were all given a bright red t-shirt and a backpack with various goodies in it such as water and Ribena to keep us going. After a quick Weetbix breakfast and a volunteers briefing FIT joined Tridents (I think it was) at transition entrance to check bikes and helmets. There were over 1,000 kids entered so this was a huge job, particularly as the majority of the kids all arrived at the same time!! We saw everything from some fabulous Giant road bikes (that we'd all love to own) to bikes rescued from the tip, and very fancy looking helmets to ones that were obviously hand-me-downs. Once the event got under way we were dispersed throughout transition to assist with "hop on" and "hop off". Three of us spent our time at the mount/dismount line and we could have done with some danger money ..... Trina Burrell excelled at catching kids just before they fell off; Sheree Harrison was a great lollipop lady at the mount line to make sure there was some order and safety amongst the chaos; and I lost my voice trying to get the kids to slow down before the dismount line (to save them from the embarrassment of a stack in front of all the mums and dads!). All in all it was a fabulous event - the kids had a



great time and every one of them proudly wore their finisher's medal.

Gillian Mitchell

## **LEVEL 1 COACHING COURSE**

We are after expressions of interest from current cyclists, parents or interested older cyclists in an ACT Cycling organised level 1 coaching course. This will be the first of two courses for 2006. You will need to be a member of a Cycling Club and have CA licence.

The first course will be conducted over a weekend in March or April with the second course held in September.

Numbers will be limited to 20 people per course. The course has been substantially revised by the Sports Commission and Cycling Australia, resulting in some changes to the content to make it a better package.

Please contact Karen Burgan, Coaching Coordinator by email at:  
Karen.Burgan@calvary-act.com.au  
or phone 6205 1744 (W) or 0414 846 806  
if you are interested in undertaking this coaching course.

### **March is Women's History Month**

Women's History Month (WHM) Australia, honours Australian women notable for their contributions and experiences.

WHM Australia was initiated in Australia by (the late) Helen Leonard, Convenor of the National Women's Media Centre (working with Women's Electoral Lobby). Gillian Pollack developed the web resources and put the program in place on-line. WHM is a project of the National Foundation for Australian Women. Its patron is the Hon. Margaret Reid, AO.

### **Theme for 2006**

Women in Music is the theme for the WHM website in 2006.

Women in Music is about women working, creating and teaching music. It is about finding the voices and sounds of women musicians whose stories are not well known. It is also about the many women who taught music in small country towns, schools and convents. It is about exploring the culture from a musical perspective to reveal the lives and times in which these women lived and worked, and in this way to reveal the rich heritage of Australian women's music.

WHM will be celebrating and remembering the lives of these women in many ways this year. On 1 March 2006 a virtual exhibition based on the Women in Music theme will be launched on the website. Go to [http:// www.womenhistory.org.au](http://www.womenhistory.org.au).

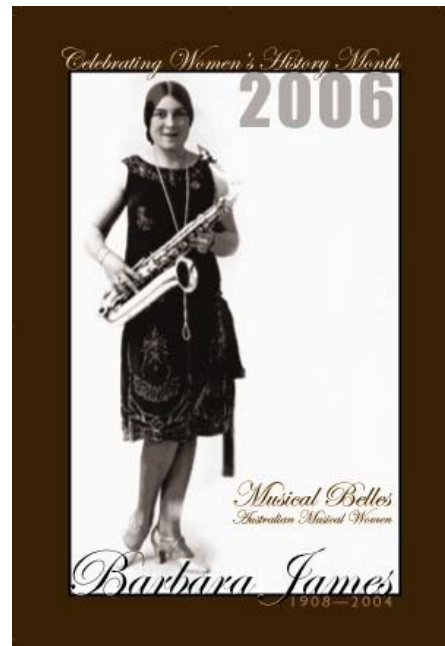
Events will be held across the country in March covering not only women in music, but all aspects of women's history in Australia. Events in country areas include a special display at the Singleton Library in the Hunter Valley. All the museums in the Shoalhaven area will have special WHM



displays. In Shepparton, Victoria, there's a special International Women's Day event on 8 March called 'Women, Music and Leadership' that highlights the relevance of music and song in women's lives.

Canberra has an embarrassment of riches, with not one but two Margaret Roadknight concerts at Manning Clark House on 23 and 24 March, and a conversation with Judy Horacek at CMAG on 2 March; Paulie Higgison, founder and owner of Tilley's Devine Café reflects on the history and evolution of Tilleys at CMAG on 29 March.

As well, a Guest Book is being set up on the website. You are invited to use Guest Book to tell your stories of 'women in music' who are not well known. Perhaps you know of a musician, singer or composer who was only known within their immediate community, or maybe even a nun who taught music at the local school. Certainly these women made a difference to their community and Women's History Month would love to hear of them.



### Spinning Classes Winter 2006

Forget the gloves and booties this winter - get along to spin classes CISAC in Belconnen to keep warm this winter. CISAC have again agreed to allow us to use their cycling studio over the winter months of June, July and August. (CISAC members do not have to pay).

No there are no excuses for not keeping up your cycling fitness up over the long winter months. The class is suitable for all levels of fitness and you work as hard as you choose to on the day. The cost will be \$6 a class commencing **Wednesday 7th June from 6.15am** until 7.30am. Mark this date in your diary.

**VALE - David Palmer**

6/7/1943 - 5/3/2006



The FIT community has been shocked by the sudden death of David Palmer, aged 63, on Sunday 5 March 2006.

Our sympathy and support go out to his wife Rae, daughters Vanessa and Carla, son Duncan and their families.

Many of us were privileged to spend a fun filled weekend with Rae and David, Vanessa and Peter and boys at their ski lodge in Smiggin Holes for the recent GO-Wild Kosciuszko Weekend Walk.

David will be remembered by his many friends as a great organiser. He has been a strong supporter of FIT and FIT members over the years, also providing input into marketing of OutFIT through Rae as OutFIT Manager. He was a major contributor to the Canberra Cycling community through his long association with the Canberra Cycling Club. He has been an institution at the finish line of the Tour de Femme. He also contributed time and expertise toward the organisation of the Aquathlon series last summer.

We will always cherish an image of David enjoying himself enormously while dancing with his beautiful wife Rae on a wonderful evening in the mountains. A funeral for David was held on Friday 10 March 2006.

### *Return Thanks*

*David Palmer died an untimely death preparing to do what he loved best – a*

*Sunday morning bike ride with friends. He will be sorely missed by wife Rae, daughters Vanessa and Carla, and son Duncan, their partners Peter and Rachel and the three grandchildren. David was farewelled in fine style at a celebration of his life, shared by the large extended families and an astounding network of friends. The congregation clapped the speakers and laughed at the memories shared.*

*Many FIT members met David up close for the first time at the GO-Wild weekend at Perisher in February. David really enjoyed being part of the FITs and BITs family, supporting our various endeavours. He especially enjoyed that weekend in the mountains. He was keen to encourage us to hold the weekend as an annual event. It will be a fitting memorial to him.*

*I wish to express our sincere thanks to the wonderful FIT community for their sincere expressions of sympathy and support throughout this period. From the moment the news was out, there were cards, flowers, phone calls and glorious food arriving at our home.*



*A beautiful potted rose, fittingly called 'Remember Me' was delivered from the FIT members. It will be a constant reminder of the support from our many FIT friends. The FIT tent was a perfect addition to the back yard providing shade for the wake.*

*A very special thank-you goes to the treasured Di Evans for her provision of catering facilities and coordination of the food for the wake. I truly don't know how to thank you all for the wonderful things you have done and continue to do. The many hugs were especially welcome!*

*Please all accept this as an expression of my many thanks.*

*Rae Palmer.*

**Canberra Cycling Club Women's Group**  
CCC has started a women's cycling group following the success of the Novice Women's grade in the crits. We have been running skills sessions for women and are looking at starting up some Saturday morning training rides. We will also be running a women's winter road racing series in conjunction with the regular winter season. If you would like to receive emails regarding the training sessions and other information such as upcoming races, please send an email to:  
**Fiona.Hedgecoe@industry.gov.au**

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We also need experienced cyclists to ride with the women, so please contact me if you may be able to help out with that too.

## The life of a marathon trainee - Week 9

### Monday

Rest Day - why do we have to rest, we love to run and we don't want to rest! That was the attitude when we first started training. It didn't take us long to realise why we rest and the benefits associated with it. We now look forward to these days. We change the alarm clock so we can sleep a bit longer. A pity our bodies don't realise this, as we still wake up at 5:30am. Oh well, maybe next time, we might sleep until the alarm goes off.

### Tuesday

We arrange to meet at Acton Park for the 3km time trial. The 'km's' are marked along the Sri Chinmoy track so it makes life easy. We don't have to think which suits us fine. We walk first, can't run straight away, our legs are still asleep. We look at each other, about time we started, ok if we must. We trot to the 2km marker. Anita, as timer keeper, sets her watch and we head out to the 5km turn around mark. We get there, not as quick as we had probably liked, but it was quicker than a trot. We followed the program and that's all that matters. We return and feel much better than when we first started that morning.



### Wednesday

An hour today, so Mt Ainslie is a good spot for this run. It was a morning of 'Rabbits and Roos', we had never seen so many. The rabbits just scamper when they hear us coming, but not the kangaroos. They flank both sides of the track and watch us pass through, probably thinking to themselves - these crazy humans what are they doing up so early. It's fun to run in the bush, enjoying the simple pleasures in life, the animals and the trees, and listening to the birds chatter amongst themselves. We feel so privileged.

### Thursday

Lennox Gardens, hear we come for our 6 x 1 minute with 1 minute recovery. We follow the usual procedure, walk a bit and then trot. Sometimes the trot is pretty close to a 'Cliffy Young' shuffle minus the gumboots. The watch is set and we put in the big ones. Not sure why it is, but the minute recovery always seems to go a lot quicker. We pass a group of people doing the 'Boot Camp' training. Pushing tractor tyres uphill, carrying logs on their shoulders and following various other orders. They seem to enjoy it and that's the main thing. As with any type of physical activity, you need to have fun or you just won't continue. As we head back towards Lennox Gardens, we see the 'Mindere'. 'Good Morning John' we say and he acknowledges us. Deep down we can tell he wants to break out into a run, but he knows his 'Mindere' would never keep up with him, so he just continues on with the brisk walk.

### Friday

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Another rest day. They say as you get older the days and weeks go faster. We can both vouch for that. But wait until you follow a training program. You find yourself going to bed on Monday night and then waking up and it's Friday morning. Where did the days in between go?

### Saturday

The long slow run, 2 hours and 30 minutes. We meet up at Watson so we can run around Mt Majura and Mt Ainslie. Neither of us slept that well, we tend not to on a Friday night. Just like kids looking forward to Christmas, we look forward to the weekend and our runs through the bush. Not sure where we are headed, we take a left here and a right there. It doesn't matter which way we go as long as we do the time on our legs. We turn left, not sure whose idea it is (good one Trina) but it ends up being rather steep. As we slowly climb up we notice Emma Murray, Australia's Female Mountain Running Champion coming down and that makes Anita's day. As we reach the peak we soon realise why she did that section in reverse to us. There is no way we can run down this. Oh well, steady as she goes, walking down on the angle so we don't end up face planting the dirt. Ten minutes later or was it more like fifteen, we finally reach the base, have a good laugh and continue on our way.

### Sunday

Forty minutes today. We are programmed to do this on Friday and have a rest today. But we can't see the sense in having a rest day on the weekend. Weekends are time



for activities. We catch up at Stromlo and Rubes (Anita's Rhodesian Ridgeback) joins us on this run. Mind you she has already been out on a couple of runs this week with Norma and Eric (Anita's parents). When we return to the cars, we arm ourselves with plastic bags. There are blackberries to be picked! We head back out, trying to remember the location of the prolific bushes. We soon discover it was probably not a good idea to go blackberry picking in shorts. Not too worry, the berries were worth a few scratches. Rubes also gets the hang of it and starts eating the fruit straight from the bush.

Rest day tomorrow.....

Anita Lindemann and Trina Burrell

### **The WAG-Tri Training Program - November 2005**

*Lots of caps, white caps, purple caps - Your wave.....5 -4 -3 -2 -1 -GO! In you wade, launch. 400 metres - Steady now, you can do it, get your rhythm, Don't worry about the crowd. You're fortunate, at least you're a confident swimmer. Some of us aren't. Some have only just learnt to swim. That's brave. What an achievement!. Think about what we have all been practising: swim like a fish, swim long, get your balance, head down and control.*

We had 6 swimming sessions in our November 2005 Beginners Triathlon program. A group for each ability; a coach for each group. Instruction, understanding and support. A final session in the lake meant we were all introduced to the course we would swim. Great

confidence booster (to say nothing of the home baked goodies that followed, thoughtfully supplied by FIT members and coaches). Everyone had improved - and here we were all swimming 400 metres (800 for the extremes among us).

*Arm over, breath, reach long, sight - nearly there! Stagger up the bank - Pant, pant - Someone is clapping! "You're doing well!" My! Pant, pant. What encouragement! Ouch that gravel! Where on earth is that 2 wheel demon? Pant, pant. Now what order was it? Helmet, shoes - flipping laces!, unrack your bike, take a drink - No - take a drink, tie on your number then unrack your bike. "Go Mum!" - that's a cheer for a good half of us. Unrack your bike - push it to start line - MOUNT HERE! Dreaded words - wish that it were a horse. Wobble, wobble, find those pedals. I'm off - think about gears - click - change up, pedal, pedal, change again. Woosh - first of many overtaking. Doesn't matter - 14 kilometres here I come! Man, if I make it back this will be something to write home about!!*

And we had 6 cycle sessions - or would have, but for the rain. Again - a group to suit all abilities. Helpful, well-versed instructors to teach, correct and encourage. For me, this was the challenging leg. From a non-bike rider to someone who completed a 14 k ride.....learnt to corner, change gears (well almost), ride on the road, ride with a partner (great partners in the pink - no yellow - or was it rainbow/sparkles cycle group!); Alison, Sheryl, Christine and Rajni. Instruction in basic bike maintenance played a part - oil that chain, seat height, and a special session from The Bike Shed on changing tyres and fixing punctures. Sandy rode with us in the Tour de Femme, conveniently occurring in the middle of the training program. Or perhaps it was designed that way...these women



organizers: Gillian, Sandy, Beth, Sheree and Lindy had thought of everything.

*Adelaide avenue, King's Bridge, Parkes Way, Yarralumla Bay - here I come...I think I'm going to make it. Keep those legs going around. Get ready for jelly legs. DISMOUNT HERE! This time welcome words. Can't believe I'm here. Got to keep going. Get rid of this bicycle. Legs aren't working very well. Feet are blocks of ice. Rack the bike, helmet off, take a drink. Off you go... "only" a 4 k run now! Can she make it? People encouraging us all along the way. Keep breathing and find your rhythm. Remember those training sessions. Run tall, relax, lift your knees, shoulders down, elbows in. Shorter strides up the hills.....I think I can, I think I can..... ..*

Early mornings at the Yarralumla Yacht Club (it was worth it to see the day begin....sky, sun, lake and muscles some of us didn't know we had!)....Sorted into ability groups with helpful coaches and lots of theory, stretches and useful handouts, we all learnt to run at our level and beyond. We started with a 'warm up' that felt like a marathon Mmmm... Good candidate for the HAG Tri-training! Not sure about this 'running'. Sprints and speed work with intervals! Hopeless!. Dunno about this. But then a bit of distance training...and this is where determination plays its part. I think I can, I think I can..... Revelation: all I have to do is keep going! Yes!

The FINISH line! What a buzz. Congratulations to all who participated. A great way to meet like-minded women. Congratulations to all who delivered and contributed to the outstanding program: so well thought out. An excellent balance of practice and theory was superbly organized with regular news and information sent to all participants

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and delivered by a raft of dedicated FIT members. Topped off with a celebration dinner. THANK YOU!

Penny Lovibond



### **FITAbility at the Commonwealth Games**

Congratulations to Sharon Sobey, ACT Young Australian of the Year who, with her guide dog Lena, participated in the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games. Sharon is a member of FIT and rides one of the tandems with FITAbility. Sharon is also a member of the FITAbility sub-committee.

FITAbility is seeking FIT members who wish to learn to ride the tandems as pilots, to enable more women who have vision impairment to enjoy cycling for sport and for recreation. Please contact Sharon Freebody or Phyl Crawford if you are interested. [freecook@ozemail.com.au](mailto:freecook@ozemail.com.au) and [phyl.crawford@health.gov.au](mailto:phyl.crawford@health.gov.au)

### **Queens Baton Relay - a once in a lifetime experience**



That was how it was billed in the information pack that arrived in my letterbox in November 05. The letter started with the word *congratulations*, and went on to tell me where and when I would be running in the baton relay.

Several months earlier my sister had nominated me for a place as a community runner. The nomination process gave her a generous 80 words in which to explain why I deserved a place. She talked about my role as Higher Order Multiples coordinator for the ACT over the past 5 years. She also managed to mention my other community roles, boards I sit on, coaching I do etc. There were 15 000 nominations for just 2000 community runner places. I feel very fortunate to have stood out in that crowd.

Being recognised in such a significant way for the community work that I do has been a terrific boost. It's a funny thing isn't it that we down play our achievements in life. Somehow we believe that society frowns on grandstanding and we don't feel comfortable talking about ourselves. This was a chance to shake off that cultural cringe and stand tall for my achievements.

In January the next parcel arrived. This time it contained the uniform, a list of all the don'ts and the specifics of my run. As the date approached the kids and I got more excited. Day 32 of the relay dawned clear and warm in Canberra. I went for my usual FIT Saturday morning run and thought about *running slowly* so that it  
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wouldn't be over too quickly that afternoon. Running in public felt very different from an early morning run with the girls. The standard quick plait became a braid and judicious makeup was called for to cover the blemishes I somehow haven't managed to grow out of!

The meeting place was Lake Ginninderra just minutes from our home. The first few runners and their escorts met the crew there. What a pity I didn't get to share my bit with the more famous runners, like Petria Thomas, but my fellow runners were all as excited as I was - a fireman of 35 years standing, a teacher with Parkinson's disease, a volunteer in sports for people with disabilities, a Telstra employee, and me. The Crew were great. Despite the job they had to do they managed to make us feel special and worthy at the same time. What a job that would be, constantly on the road, a mammoth organisational and logistical task involving *a lot* of people. Lucky for them, and even more so for me; I willingly agreed to run my original 400 metres and the following 450 for the person who withdrew. A quick phone call to let my supporters know that I wouldn't be finishing at the original spot made sure that I would have familiar faces around when the excitement was over.

Then the cavalry arrived. It was extensive. I counted at least 8 police motor-cycles (and several cars) a couple of SUVs, 2 big media vans, an ambulance and another bus. Phil keeps saying he has never seen such a big police cavalcade when there was no celebrity to escort. I tell him that we *were*



the celebrities! They kept the baton inside somewhere until it was time for the first runner so I didn't get to see it before being transported to my spot.

The baton had every modern electronic gismo imaginable built into it. We each wore special thumb gloves that signalled the hand over from Lee, the fireman, to me and caused the light display to roll up and down the baton. It was beautifully made, and felt rich, substantial rather than flimsy, despite being less than 2kg in weight. Running along, wearing the biggest grin and waving like mad to the spectators, passing (tooting) cars and people watching from their balconies, was a blast. I was so glad to have the extra distance to run because it would most certainly have been over way too soon otherwise. It also gave me a chance to run through an intersection cleared of the traffic that was backed up in every direction just waiting for me to pass!

Megan, Simon and Liesl had flags to wave and waved with a will! They also ran with Aunty Gillian along the side of the road for the full distance. The police escort (3 runners around me) were far more interested in them than in me, and encouraged Simon along when he started to fall behind.

I handed the baton on to Arthur, the disability sportsman and we posed for the media crew hanging out of the RV in front of us before he headed off and I stepped aside. It had been about 8 minutes of a slow jog, friendly supporters, tooting cars, March 2006

waving people, cameras clicking and a little slice of history.

On the following Monday I was invited to the children's class at school, wearing my uniform please, to talk about the relay. Liesl liked the idea that she got to take mummy along for her news day! What do you tell a bunch of 6 and 7 year olds, about the special feeling of being singled out for who you are and what you do? That it's nothing to do with fame, fortune or beauty. That it's everything to do with caring about other people and going the extra step because it's the right thing to do, and that, the rest of the time, the satisfaction of doing it well, is actually enough.

Fiona May  
25 February 2006

