

AUSTRALIAN RACEWALKING CHAMPIONSHIPS MEN: 2009-2012

This follows on from my previous articles which detail the early Australasian and Australian Racewalking Championships (along with other particularly significant races), up to and including 2008.

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Our story continues from 2009.

On Sunday 31st January 2009, 34 year old Jane Saville announced her retirement. The four-time Olympian and triple Commonwealth Games gold medallist said that a nagging foot injury, which impeded her performance at the Beijing Olympics, had finally convinced her that she had reached the end of the line. It had been a stellar career.

Australian 20km Summer Championships Fawkner Park, Melbourne, Sunday 7th March 2009

The Australian 20km Summer Championships were held at Fawkner Park in Melbourne and once again, the course produced great performances with 5 IAAF A qualifiers, 3 IAAF B qualifiers and nearly half the field registering PBs.

First to the men where **Jared Tallent** led from start to finish, his time of 1:19:42 only 1 sec off his all time best and matching his 2008 Olympic bronze medal time. Tallent started with a 7:55 first lap (2km), walked very evenly, passing the half way mark in 39:29 and held on well. In fact, he looked like he had lots in reserve and finished fresh. **Adam Rutter** went with him at the start, but fell off the pace after only 1 lap and walked the rest of the race on his own. He was rewarded with an IAAF A qualifying time of 1:22:16 and now looked set to pick up the vital third spot in the Australian 20km team for the 2009 World Championships. **Chris Erickson** was third for most of the race but was clearly having a bad day and was swallowed up in the last few laps by faster finishing walkers. **Luke Adams**, walking only to satisfy the selectors, started conservatively but came through well to take third in 1:26:33. Further back in the field, **Tom Barnes** and **Ian Rayson** were after World University Games qualifiers and both were successful, being well under the 1:28:00 mark. **Darren Bown** showed that he could still match it with his younger rivals and walked well for 1:27:29. Further back, **Brendon Reading** (1:30:19) and **Rhydian Cowley** (1:36:14) also walked well and took the silver and bronze U23 medals behind Rayson.

20km Summer Champ Men, Melbourne, Sun 7th Mar 2009

1.	Jared Tallent	VIC/AIS	1:19.42
2.	Adam Rutter	NSW/AIS	1:22.16
3.	Luke Adams	NSW/AIS	1:26.33
4.	Thomas Barnes	VIC	1:26.57
5.	Darren Bown	SA	1:27.29
6.	Chris Erickson	VIC/AIS	1:27.31
7.	Ian Rayson	NSW	1:27.43
8.	Brendon Reading	ACT	1:30.19
9.	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	1:36.14
10.	Kim Mottrom	SA	1:42.05
11.	Stuart Kollmorgen	VIC	1:50.06
-	Andrew Jamieson	VIC	DNF

The women's race was an even higher quality affair, with 6 of the 7 finishers recording IAAF qualifiers. **Cheryl Webb** and **Jess Rothwell** passed the 10km mark together in 44:52, but it was Webb who finished the stronger, walking an identical 44:52 for the second 10km to win in 1:29:44. Her performance was the first sub-90 done by an Australian on Australian soil, a fantastic effort. **Jess Rothwell**, still only 19, was a revelation, holding on well to record a 7 min PB time of 1:30:25. **Claire Tallent** let them go early but then chased the whole way for her own big PB time of 1:32:12. **Megan Szirom** must be the unluckiest walker of the meet, recording 1:33:45 but still missing out on a medal. **Jillian Hosking** and **Jess Heazlewood** also recorded big PBs further back in the field and took the minor medals behind Rothwell in the U23 race.

1.	Cheryl Webb	NSW	1:29.44	PB 1:59
2.	Jess Rothwell	VIS	1:30.25	PB 7:09
3.	Claire Tallent	SA/AIS	1:32.12	PB 0:50
4.	Megan Szirom	VIC	1:33.45	PB 2:52
5.	Natalie Saville	NSWIS	1:36.45	
6.	Jillian Hosking	ACT	1:37.36	PB 3:26
7.	Jess Heazlewood	NSW	1:40.39	PB 1:16
-	Susan Knapton	NSW	DNF	

Athletics Australia announced the team for the 2009 IAAF World Championships in mid March. An initial 39 Australian athletes were named with the possibility of more being added before the final selector's meeting on July 20th. As expected, all walk places were allocated, with all our top walkers gaining selection:

20km walk Men	Luke Adams (32, NSW)	Adam Rutter (22, NSW)	Jared Tallent (24, VIC)
50km walk Men	Adams	Nathan Deakes (31, VIC)	Chris Erickson (27, VIC) Tallent
20km walk Women	Jessica Rothwell (19, VIC)	Claire Tallent (27, SA)	Cheryl Webb (32, NSW)

Luke Adams and Jared Tallent would do the double. With Nathan Deakes a wild card entry as defending champion, there would be 4 Australians in the men's 50km.

43th Lake Burley Griffin Carnival

Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, Sunday 7th June 2009

A record 397 entries by 297 competitors broke the previous year's attendance record. While conditions were perfect for the 20 mile and 10 mile events, intermittent showers later in the day meant that some of the events for the younger walkers were held in trying conditions, but nothing dampened what was a huge carnival.

The 20 mile race was a corker, with the four AIS walkers in control. **Luke Adams** took off from the gun with an 8 minute first 2km over the rolling hills. **Jared Tallent** took up the challenge, caught him at around the 4km mark and then went straight to the front and was never headed. With Tallent passing the 10 mile mark in 1:06:21, the record was always going to fall and fall it did, with the Olympic dual medalist crossing the finish line in 2:14:57. Adams continued to walk strongly to record an 11 min PB time of 2:18:49, the third fastest of all time while **Chris Erickson** also PB'd with his third place time of 2:22:47. Young ACT walker **Brendon Reading** debuted with an excellent 2:35:43 while **Andrew Jamieson**, now 62 years of age, belied the years with his time of 2:42:53. **Megan Szirom** walked the second fastest ever time by a woman to finish 8th with 2:49:54.

1.	Jared Tallent	VRWC	2:14:57
2.	Luke Adams	REGAL	2:18:49
3.	Chris Erickson	VRWC	2:22:47
4.	Adam Rutter	NSWRWC	2:28:40
5.	Darren Bown	SAAWC	2:34:27
6.	Brendon Reading	ACTRWC	2:35:43
7.	Andrew Jamieson	VRWC	2:42:53
8.	Megan Szirom (F)	VRWC	2:49:54
9.	Peter Crump	SAAWC	3:02:41
10.	Ignacio Jimenez	QRWC	3:03:51
11.	Colin Heywood	ACTRWC	3:07:21
12.	Stuart Kollmorgen	VRWC	3:15:56
13.	Peter Bennett	QRWC	3:27:02

14.	Robin Whyte	ACTRWC	3:33:24
15.	Robert Osborne	REGAL	3:43:56
16.	Bill Starr	SAAWC	3:59:30
17.	Val Chesterton (F)	ACTRWC	4:40:26
-	Bryan Thomas	ACTRWC	DQ

In the week following the 2009 LBG Carnival, it was announced that reigning world champion Nathan Deakes would not defend his 50km world title in Berlin in August but was withdrawing from the Australian team. The press release went on to say:

Deakes has been unable to return to competition since undergoing surgery on his left hamstring in July last year, an injury which ruled him out of the Beijing Olympics. Although his recovery and training has been progressing well, the 31-year-old has decided he has not reached a point in his training where he can line up on the start line in Berlin and be competitive. After discussions with his coach Craig Hilliard and AIS head coach Tudor Bidder, it was decided yesterday that he would not attempt a return to competition this year.

World University Games Belgrade, Serbia, 1-12 July 2009

Athletics Australia announced a team of 34 athletes to represent Australia at the 25th World University Summer Games in Belgrade, Serbia from July 1 – 12, 2009. Four walkers - **Adam Rutter** (NSW), **Tom Barnes** (VIC), **Ian Rayson** (NSW) and **Jillian Hosking** (ACT) - were named in the 20km walk events. For Barnes, this was his second World Uni Games, having already represented us in 2007 in Bangkok. For the other 3, this was their first appearance at these Games. For Rayson and Hosking, this is their first Australian vest..

The men's race saw the first 5 walkers all better Robert Korzenioski's 1993 Universiade Games record of 1:22:01. Barnes and Rayson finished in 19th and 21st respectively. In March they recorded 1:26:57 and 1:27:43 respectively but their times in Serbia were a little down on this. Rutter withdrew some days before, so that he could concentrate on his preparation for the World Championships the following month.

Men 20km Walk, Thursday 9 July, 7:30AM			
19.	Thomas Barnes	AUS	1:28:11
21.	Ian Rayson	AUS	1:30:59
-	Adam Rutter	AUS	DNS

The women's race was also fast with the first 4 all bettering the Universiade Games record of 1:33:13, held by Chinese walker Jiang Qiuyan. Hosking was well up when disqualified mid race.

Women 20 km Walk, Friday 10 July, 7:30AM			
-	Jillian Hosking	AUS	DQ

2009 IAAF World Championships Berlin, 15-23 August 2009

With 2102 athletes representing 202 countries, the 2009 IAAF World Championships in Berlin were run with German precision. I was roadside for all 3 walks and can report on huge crowds, great excitement and high quality walking. Traditionally, championship meets see the walks start on the track, proceed to a road loop and then return to finish on the track. In Berlin the walk events were held exclusively on a 2km road loop starting and finishing at the Brandenburg Gate – it was a fantastic course from all perspectives.

20km Men, Saturday 15 August 2009, 1PM

A 1PM start for the men's 20km meant hot and sunny conditions, but walkers of this calibre are not phased by the weather and the racing was aggressive from the start. With the 2007 champion and 2008 Olympic silver medallist Jefferson Pérez having retired, the reigning Olympic champion **Valeriy Borchin** was regarded as strong favourite. He had recorded the world-leading time prior to the tournament and had been undefeated that season. The Olympic third and fourth-place finishers, **Jared Tallent** and **Wang Hao**, were regarded as the strongest challengers to Borchin, while Italians **Giorgio Rubino** and **Ivano Brugnetti** were also singled out as medal contenders.

Borchin prevailed and was first to cross the line at the Brandenburg gate, with a winning time of 1:18:41. Chinese athlete Hao improved upon his previous best to take the silver medal while Mexican Eder Sánchez produced a season's best performance for the bronze medal. Eventually WADA caught up with Borchin in 2016 and he was retrospectively disqualified, meaning that Hao was now the gold medallist.

Of the Australians, **Jared Tallent** fared best, finishing 5th with 1:20:27. Tallent had been battling a shin injury for some time and his final preparation had been effected. This meant that he was not in quite the same form as in Beijing but his class showed through with his high place. **Adam Rutter** surged effortlessly through the first 10km with the leading pack in a PB time of 39:59 and then took the lead shortly after. He was in the same position as Jared had been in 2007 in Osaka – looking great and heading for a medal – when DQ'd. **Luke Adams** had been suffering from a cold in the leadup to this event and he was obviously still feeling the effects, struggling through to an uncharacteristic 17th place in 1:22:37.

IAAF World Champs 20km Men, Saturday 15 August			
1.	Hao Wang	CHN	1:19:06
2.	Eder Sanchez	MEX	1:19:22
3.	Giorgio Rubino	ITA	1:19:50
	...		
5.	Jared Tallent	AUS	1:20:27
17.	Luke Adams	AUS	1:22:37
-	Adam Rutter	AUS	DQ

20km Women, Sunday 16th August 2009, 12PM

The women's 20km walk was held the following day, starting at noon. It was some degrees hotter than the Saturday and this was reflected in the early pace and final time. Whereas the men's race had started fast, the women slowly got into the mood, with a large lead pack rolling through the first laps and no one really prepared to lay down the gauntlet. But when the pace did pick up, it was not surprising to see Olympic champion Olga Kaniskina in the lead. Putting on an awesome display of power walking, she moved well clear and won by nearly 1 minute – yet another gold medal to this seemingly unstoppable Russian. In what was one of the slowest major walks for some years, only the first 3 walkers managed to break 90 minutes. Of course, Kaniskina was eventually stopped by WADA and had this medal taken away from her, meaning that **Olive Loughnan, Hong Liu** and **Anisya Kirdyapkina** were retrospectively upgraded to the medal positions. Kirdyapkina was also subsequently banned, with all performances from 2011 onwards purged. Sadly, this bronze medal remains in her possession.

Of the Australians, 20 year old **Jess Rothwell** finished best in 21st place with 1:36:01. **Claire Tallent** had been with the lead pack early on but, when the pace quickened, she found nothing in the tank and had to draw on all her reserves to struggle through to a final place of 26th and a time of 1:38:12. **Cheryl Webb**, who went in as our number one walker with a PB of 1:29:45, had a similar day, finding nothing there right from the start. She fell back through the field and was eventually DQ'd (one of 7 walkers to suffer that fate).

IAAF World Champs 20km Women, Sunday 16 th August 2007			
1.	Olive Loughnane	IRL	1:28:58
2.	Hong Liu	CHN	1:29:10
3.	Anisya Kirdyapkina	RUS	1:30:09
	...		
21.	Jess Rothwell	AUS	1:36:01
26.	Claire Tallent	AUS	1:38:12
-	Cheryl Webb	AUS	DQ

50km Men, Friday 21st August 2009, 9:15AM

After hot conditions in the two 20km races, we were woken early on the Friday morning by heavy rain and thunder. Luckily all cleared by the 9:15AM start time and the entire race was held in overcast and cooler weather – just about ideal 50km conditions in my book. After an early breakaway, the main favourites were all together again by the 10km mark. With the laps getting faster, the lead group trimmed as lesser walkers were dropped. The 20km mark was reached in 1:28:25. By the time the half way mark was reached in 1:50:07, the lead group was down to three walkers – world record holder **Denis Nizhegorodov, Jared Tallent** and **Luke Adams**. At this stage, the pace really picked up and we saw it drop from 8:40's to 8:37 to 8:27 to 8:25. When Nizhegorodov was forced to stop for a call of nature, Tallent and Adams suddenly found themselves in the lead, some 30 secs clear of anyone else. It was a euphoric time for us Aussies roadside and we started to dream of a gold/silver finish.

Alas, it was not to be. Coming up to 40km, the two Australians had slowed and those immediately behind were slowly bridging the gap. First **Sergey Kirdyapkin** caught and passed them, putting in a 21:31 split to 45km to take a commanding lead. Then **Trond Nymark** caught them to secure second spot. Then in the final lap and a bit, they were passed by 3 more walkers (**Jesus Garcia**, **Grzegorz Sudol** and **Andre Holne**). Adams eventually finished the stronger of the two Australians, recording a personal best of 3.43.39, just ahead of Tallent with 3.44.50.

Sergey Kirdyapkin's win completed an unprecedented clean sweep for Russia – golds in all 3 walks (never before in the World Championships or Olympics had one country produced the winners of all three walks). Of course, he too retrospectively lost his gold medal in 2016. It took 7 years to catch up with Borchin, Kanyiskina and Kirdyapkin. And athletics had nearly been ruined by the years of insitutionalised cheating by Russia.

Chris Erickson was a surprise non-starter, with Athletics Australia announcing he had been rushed to hospital 2 days before the race to have his appendix removed. This was incorrect. He had in fact been rushed to hospital with a severe case of blood poisoning, caused by an ingrown hair follicle on his buttock. For whatever reason, A.A. seemed too prudish to publish the real reason, even though Erickson did not mind people knowing. I remember sitting in his hospital room while he was on a drip, watching Usain Bolt set a new 200m world record in the stadium! He was released from hospital the night before the race but could only watch from the sidelines as it was held. Many people expressed great astonishment to see him up and around so soon after an “appendix operation”! AIS coach Brent Vallance was of the opinion that Erickson had trained the best of all his charges in St Moritz in the leadup to the World Champs, and he would have been a dark horse and could have been very competitive. Oh well, that’s life, isn’t it!

IAAF World Champs 50km Men, Friday 21st August 2009			
1.	Trond Nymark	NOR	3:41:16
2.	Jesus Angel Garcia	ESP	3:41:37
3.	Grzegorz Sudol	POL	3:42:34
	...		
5.	Luke Adams	AUS	3:43:39
6.	Jared Tallent	AUS	3:44:50
-	Chris Erickson	AUS	DNS

Australian Winter 20km Championships Paramatta Park, Sydney, Sunday 30th August 2009

The 2009 Australian roadwalking championships were held in conjunction with the Second Federation Carnival in Sydney on Sunday 30th August. With the World Championships team still away, it was a chance for others to excel, and the 20km golds went to **Darren Bown** and **Claire Tallent**.

Aust Winter 20km Champ Men, Sydney, Sun 30th Aug 2009			
1.	Darren Bown	SA	1:27:16
2.	Ian Rayson	NSW	1:31:45
3.	Quentin Rew	NZ	1:33:22
4.	Kim Mottrom	SA	1:42:36
5.	Peter Crump	SA	1:52:15
6.	Anthony Albanese	NSW	1:59:08
7.	Robert Osborne	NSW	2:06:03
-	Brendon Reading	ACT	DNF
-	David Smyth	WA	DNF
-	Robin Whyte	ACT	DQ
-	George Megas	QLD	DQ

Aust Winter 20km Champ Women, Sydney, Sun 30th Aug 2009			
1.	Claire Tallent	AIS/SA	1:35:58
2.	Nicole Fagan	NSW	1:50:40
-	Yeong Eun Jeon	KOREA	DQ

Australian 50km Championship

Fawkner Park, Melbourne, Sunday 22nd November 2009

The 2009 Australian 50km championship was held at Fawkner Park in Melbourne in late November. The weekend had seen a huge downpour of some 60mm of rain over the Saturday night/Sunday morning and walkers and officials were caught in the middle of it. Interestingly, the same thing happened with the 2008 Australian 50 km championship. Both events saw long periods of hot dry conditions broken by huge downpours. What are the chances of that!

Amazingly **Jared Tallent** was able to negotiate the adverse conditions and powered to a PB time of 3:38:56, with his last 10km (done in ever increasing rain intensity) his fastest. Unfortunately the other medallists, **Tom Barnes** and **Duane Cousins**, had another 30+ mins to go at that stage and the rain intensity was so great by then that the course flooded in a number of places and they were literally wading through lakes of water. Thus their final times were not a true reflection of their efforts.

Aust 50km Championship, Melbourne, Sun 22nd Nov 2009

1.	Jared Tallent	AIS/VIC	3:38.56
2.	Tom Barnes	VIC	4:12.05
3.	Duane Cousins	VIC	4:14.58
-	Adam Rutter	AIS/NSW	DNF
-	Luke Adams	AIS/NSW	DNF
-	Darren Bown	SA	DNF
-	Andrew Jamieson	VIC	DNF

Athletics Australia was quick to announce a full team of five 50km walkers for the 2010 World Racewalking Cup, to be held in May the following year in Mexico. The team of **Jared Tallent**, **Luke Adams**, **Chris Erickson**, **Tom Barnes** and **Nathan Deakes** had huge depth and talent and we would be right up there in the Teams category if all goes well. The other World Cup spots (20km Open and 10km U20) would be announced after the trials in Hobart in February 2010.

2010

Australian 20km Summer Championships

Constitution Dock, Hobart, Tasmania, Saturday 13th February 2010

A large summer training camp had been held at the AIS in Canberra, with a number of overseas walkers in attendance. Most opted to stay on in Australia and contest the annual Australian 20km Summer Championships in Hobart. Their presence and the presence of a New Zealand team made this a huge event in so many ways:

- An IAAF Category C Racewalking Challenge Event (for IAAF Points and \$10,000 prize money)
- Australian Open and U23 20km Championships
- Australia U23 vs New Zealand Match Race
- 2010 Commonwealth Games 20km trials
- 2010 Racewalking World Cup Open 20km trials
- 2010 Racewalking World Cup U20 10km trials

And just to top it off, the venue was perhaps the best ever for an Australian championship, right in the middle of the Hobart tourist and restaurant district and right alongside Constitution Dock. Wow – just how much can you fit into one evening!

First to the men's 20km event which boasted the winners of the last 3 IAAF Racewalking Challenge Series – **Eder Sanchez** of Mexico (2009), **Jared Tallent** (2008) and **Luke Adams** (2007) - as well as **Nathan Deakes** (2007 World 50km champion) and a whole swag of world class internationals including Mexicans **David Mejia** and **Adrian Herrera**, Japanese **Isamu Fujisawa** and **Yuki Yamazaki** and Swedish walker **Ato Ibanez**. Add into that mix our other two Berlin reps last year in **Adam Rutter** and **Chris Erickson** and our many fine up and coming younger walkers and it was the best field assembled on Australian soil since the 2000 Olympics.

Tallent was fired up and ready for a big performance, following on from his 3:38 PB time in winning the Australian 50km event in November 2009. Coming straight off a 3 week stint in the AIS altitude house (as was the case for his 50km walk), he burst to the front from the gun, dragging the lead group through for a sub-8 min first lap. His pace was

relentless, ticking off a whole series of 7:50 laps to reach the half way mark in a super fast 39:07. The leading group was spread behind him – Sanchez, Adams, Deakes, Rutter, Erickson and Ibanez.

Around the half way mark, the complexion of the race quickly changed as Deakes fell off the pace and then retired, to be almost immediately followed by Rutter. The remaining top liners pushed on towards the finish, with Adams now clear in second place, and Ibanez and Erickson fighting out third spot. Ibanez proved the stonger, taking third behind Tallent (who recorded a PB time of 1:39:15) and Adams (1:22:07), with Erickson only a few secs behind in fourth. They were followed by the two Japanese walkers and then the first of the U23 Aussies, **Ian Rayson** and **Brendon Reading**, both lads doing excellent times.

While Deakes may not have secured a finish, he did enough to show that he was back in business. To have the confidence to go with Tallent from the start and to then hold on for 10km showed that his comeback was on course. A couple of months short of full fitness, he looked set for a strong race in the World Cup 50km in May.

This was of course a big trial with some obvious outcomes. Adams earned automatic Commonwealth Games selection and joined Tallent who had been preselected already. Erickson and Rutter both had Commonwealth Games A qualifiers under their belts and Deakes was on the comeback trail so the third spot would be fought out between them. Given that, Erickson's strong walk had certainly not done his chances any harm. Talk about a tough decision for the selectors!

It was also a World Cup 20km selection trial and Ian Rayson bettered the 1:28:00 qualifying standard so he looked likely to be added to the World Cup 20km team, along with Adam Rutter who was an automatic selection as a Berlin team member.

Aust 20km Summer Championship, Hobart, Sun 13th Feb 2010			
1.	Jared Tallent	VIC/AIS	1:19:15
2.	Luke Adams	NSW/AIS	1:22:07
3.	Ato Ibanez	SWE	1:23:30
4.	Chris Erickson	VIC/AIS	1:23:37
5.	Isamu Fujisawa	JPN	1:25:13
6.	Yuki Yamazaki	JPN	1:27:12
7.	Ian Rayson	NSW	1:27:53
8.	Brendon Reading	ACT	1:28:08
9.	Tom Barnes	VIC	1:33:06
10.	Derek Mulhearn	NSW	1:33:34
11.	Duane Cousins	VIC	1:35:08
12.	Quentin Rew	NZL	1:35:16
13.	Scott Nelson	NZL	1:39:16
14.	Daniel Payne	VIC	1:43:41
15.	Darren Purcell	SA	1:45:36
16.	Mike Parker	NZL	1:46:52
17.	Eric Kemsley	NZL	1:52:40
18.	David Sim	NZL	1:56:30
-	Adam Rutter	NSW/AIS	DNF
-	Nathan Deakes	VIC/AIS	DNF
-	Darren Bown	SA	DNF
-	David Mejia	MEX	DQ
-	Eder Sanchez	MEX	DQ
-	Adrian Herrera	MEX	DQ

The women's race was a close one for the first half, with **Claire Tallent**, **Cheryl Webb**, **Jillian Hosking** and **Kellie Wapshott** walking together, the first 10km passed in a little over 46 mins. Eventually, Wapshott fell off the pace, with Hosking following suite soon afterwards, leaving Tallent and Webb to fight out the finish. Tallent kept applying the pressure and eventually Webb also fell back, leaving the way open for a family double. For Wapshott in particular, this was a big race, her first serious outing since the 2008 Olympics, and she performed well.

All four girls broke the World Cup qualifying standard of 1:36:00 so were now all in line for World Cup team selection. Tallent and Webb both broke the Commonwealth Games A standard of 1:34:00, thus securing berths for Delhi. With Jess Rothwell, also a Commonwealth Games A qualifier, out injured at the time and due to come back the following month, there might have been one final spot left in each team for her, depending on what the selectors had to say.

Nicole Fagan had been expected to also be in the final mix but stomach problems ruined her chances and she was restricted to a time of 1:41:35. **Megan Szirom**, the only other Commonwealth Games A qualifier, struggled early on and

was forced to retire. Unfortunately a series of niggling issues had stopped her from reaching full fitness for this all important race.

Aust 20km Summer Championship, Hobart, Sun 13th Feb 2010			
1.	Claire Tallent	SA/AIS	1:32:40
2.	Cheryl Webb	NSW	1:33:28
3.	Jillian Hosking	ACT	1:34:13
4.	Kellie Wapshott	VIC/AIS	1:35:23
5.	Nicole Fagan	NSW	1:41:35
6.	Kate Newitt	NZL	1:47:52
7.	Rosie Robinson	NZL	1:51:24
8.	Lauren Bourke	NSW	1:55:35
9.	Alana Barber	NZL	1:58:58
10.	Tamara Attard	VIC	2:02:57
11.	Kelly Mabbett	NZL	2:05:26
12.	Caitlin Brunton	VIC	2:11:53
-	Beki Lee	NSW	DQ
-	Megan Szirom	SA	DNF

The event also doubled as an Australian U23 vs New Zealand Open Match. With the New Zealanders resplendent in their national colours and with the young Australians in the green and gold, it was indeed a wonderful sight. Nicole Fagan, Ian Rayson, Brendon Reading and Derek Mulhearn all earned big points for Australia and ensured that Australia won what turned out to be quite a tight contest – 27 points to 17 points. We also presented a perpetual shield which would now be contested every 2 years – so the next contest would be in 2012.

In mid March, Athletics Australia announced a team of 18 walkers to contest the 2010 World Racewalking Cup. With all 10 AIS walkers in the mix, it was our best possible team with one exception – ACT walker Brendon Reading could count himself unlucky to have missed selection in the Open Men 20km team by a miserly 8 seconds. In a pleasing sign, the team included walkers from around Australia (9 VIC, 4 NSW, 2 SA, 1 ACT, 1 QLD and 1 WA).

20km Men: **Ian Rayson** (NSW), **Adam Rutter** (NSW/AIS)
50km Men: **Luke Adams** (NSW/AIS), **Tom Barnes** (VIC), **Nathan Deakes** (VIC/AIS)
Chris Erickson (VIC/AIS), **Jared Tallent** (VIC)
10km U20 Men: **Dane Bird-Smith** (QLD/AIS), **Rhydian Cowley** (VIC), **Sean Fitzsimons** (WA/AIS)
20km Women: **Jillian Hosking** (ACT), **Jessica Rothwell** (VIC), **Claire Tallent** (SA/AIS)
Kellie Wapshott (VIC/AIS), **Cheryl Webb** (NSW)
10km U20 Women: **Beth Alexander** (VIC), **Paige Hooper** (SA), **Regan Lamble** (VIC/AIS)

Deakes, Wapshott, Hosking and Hooper would all eventually withdraw from the team, Hooper to concentrate on the World Junior championships for which she was also selected and the other three the victims of interrupted preparations. **Rachel Tallent** was added to the team to replace Hooper, taking the final team number to 15 walkers.

24th IAAF Race Walking World Cup Chihuahua, Mexico, 15-16 May 2010

The 2010 IAAF Race Walking World Cup was always going to be a challenging meet, given the altitude of Chihuahua and the expected hot weather. The Russians had been expected to dominate once again but, for a change, they finished mainly outside the medals, and there were no subsequent drug busts at the top of the fields.

IAAF World Cup 50km Men, Saturday 15th May 2010, 8AM Start Time

The 50km event was a superb race in very tough conditions. The sun was out from the start as it quickly heated up towards the expected top of 32°C. To make matters worse, the 2km course had no shade whatsoever and a hot strong wind kicked up in the second half of the race and really blew a gale in the final stages of the event.

Once again, Nathan Deakes was a non-starter, still not ready to race. But the Australian team was a good one on paper, and **Jared Tallent**, team captain **Chris Erickson** and **Luke Adams** all prominent in the lead pack, while **Tom Barnes** was walking at a more measured pace back in the main field. It was not until home town favourite **Horacio Nava** kicked the pace down after 10km that the front group started to split. Even though Nava passed the 20km mark in a pedestrian 1:34:39, it was enough to break the race apart and he had a 30 sec lead over the next best, fellow Mexican

Christin Berdeja with Tallent in third not far behind, and Erickson and Adams in the lead pack, both filling top 8 places.

Unfortunately conditions took their toll on Adams and he eventually retired at around the 30km mark with stomach problems, having lost contact with the chasing group and fallen back into the main field. Erickson was having a better race but two forced pit stops (at around 20km and again at around 30km) meant that on each occasion he lost contact with the chasing group and had to work hard to get back onto level terms with them. While all this was going on behind him, Nava continued to lead, forcing the pace and looking fantastic. Tallent was never far behind and had nearly bridged the gap when, as he passed under the finish banner at the 30km mark, he was violently sick for some 30 secs. I thought that would be the finish for him but somehow he got going again and, to my utmost surprise, eventually caught Nava around the 40km mark. But the effort had been too much and he then dropped back again into second place.

With all this going on at the front, Erickson finally recaptured the chasing pack after walking alone for more than 10km in the hot windy conditions and he passed the 40km mark in 10th place, in a group of 8 covering 5th to 11th place - this group included Slovakian walker **Matej Toth**, the eventual winner. It was at this stage that the group put the hammer down and Erickson, having worked so hard to bridge the gap, was dropped again.

Toth was unstoppable, surging right up to Tallent and passing him, then bridging what had looked like an unbeatable gap to Nava in the final kilometre. His final 5km split of 21:44 was easily the fastest of the race. Nava held on for second while Tallent took third with 3:54:55, his first ever World Cup medal and one that added to his growing reputation as a big time walker. Erickson ended up 15th in 4:03:56 for his best ever World Cup placing, but one done in extenuating circumstance. Barnes was our third finisher with 4:16:17. There was only 1 DQ and only 4 DNFs, very surprising given the torrid conditions. None of the Australians had any reports against their names.

IAAF World Cup 50km Men, Saturday 15th May 2010			
1.	Matej Tóth	SVK	3:53:30
2.	Horacio Nava	MEX	3:54:16
3.	Jared Tallent	AUS	3:54:55
	...		
15.	Chris Erickson	AUS	4:03:56
33.	Tom Barnes	AUS	4:16:17
-	Luke Adams	AUS	DNF

IAAF World Cup 10km Junior Men, Saturday 15th May 2010, 5PM

The expected Russian charge from the gun saw all three of their walkers past the 2km mark in 8:33, with a small lead over a chasing group of around 12 walkers. Just before the 5km mark, the chasing group closed the tiny lead and immediately the pace picked up again, with a breakaway group of six crossing halfway in 21:06 - amazing, considering the 35°C temperature that was battering them. At the bell (8km in 34:00) it was a race of 3 - **Zelin Cai** of China, **Caio Bonfim** of Brazil and **Eider Arevalo** of Colombia. But little did the Brazilian realise that three red cards had already appeared next to his name and, although he powered on, the 19-year-old was living on borrowed time. Once Bonfim was taken off by the chief judge, Arevalo pounced with a devastating final attack and it was all over for Cai who had to be content for second place. A tiring **Valeriy Filipchuk** made sure Russia got at least one medal although it was only a bronze. Australia did not fare well, with **Sean Fitzsimons** and **Dane Bird-Smith** both disqualified. That left **Rhydian Cowley** as our sole finisher and he looked pleased with his relatively high final placing of 15th. Given the torrid conditions, his final time of 46:57 was good.

IAAF World Cup 10km Junior Men, Saturday 15th May 2010			
1.	Eider Arévalo	COL	42:13
2.	Zelin Cai	CHN	42:22
3.	Valery Filipchuk	RUS	42:58
	...		
15.	Rhydian Cowley	AUS	46:57
-	Dane Bird-Smith	AUS	DQ
-	Sean Fitzsimons	AUS	DQ

IAAF World Cup 20km Women, Saturday 15th May 2010, 6PM

The women's 20km start time of 6PM meant that the sun was low on the horizon and the long shadows cast some shade at times. This certainly meant less radiant heat than the 50km men had experienced but the temperature was 32°C early

in the race so it was still hot, hot, hot! Conditions cooled as the race progressed and this allowed for some fine performances overall.

A big pack led early, with a slow first 2km, before a group of 4 of the favourites - **Anisya Kirdyapkina** (RUS), **Vera Santos** (POR), **Vera Sokolova** (RUS) and **María Vasco** (ESP) - took control, increasing the tempo to reel off a few 4:30 km splits. This soon broke the field and they passed the 5km mark in 23:29 with a good lead over the rest. **Jess Rothwell** was the best of the Australians in 16th place but **Cheryl Webb** had already been DQd so we were out of the teams competition.

As the contenders gradually dropped off, it came to a final faceoff between Santos and Vasco. Every time Santos surged, Vasco responded, and a 4:30 lap to the 18km mark showed that neither was going to give an inch. Vasco, a notoriously fast finisher, somehow found an extra gear and surged past Santos just before the 19km mark and from there, she was unchallenged, winning with a time of 1:31.55, 11 secs clear of her Portugese rival. Although Rothwell had briefly moved up into 7th place, she was overtaken in the final stages by a couple of walkers, finishing 9th with 1:35:04, a great debut into the senior ranks after her 5th place in the Junior 10km in the last World Cup. This now guaranteed her the third spot in the Commonwealth Games women's walk team. **Claire Tallent** walked her usual gutsy race to finish 19th in 1:39:08, her best placing ever in major international competition.

IAAF World Cup 20km Women, Saturday 15th May 2010

1.	María Vasco	ESP	1:31:55
2.	Vera Santos	POR	1:32:06
3.	Inês Henriques	POR	1:33:28
	...		
9.	Jess Rothwell	AUS	1:35:04
19.	Claire Tallent	AUS	1:39:08
-	Cheryl Webb	AUS	DQ

IAAF World Cup 10km Junior Women, Sunday 16th May 2010, 9AM

Like the Saturday, the Sunday was sunny but, at 9AM, not yet too hot. All bar a couple of the 31 starters formed a large pack early on, the 3 Russians menacingly near the front but content to let others take the pace out. By the 2km mark, reached in a slow 10:03, the pack had split, with the first two Australians **Regan Lamble** and **Beth Alexander** both still in contact but **Rachel Tallent** now trailing by some 10 secs. It was not long before Italian **Antonella Palmisano** of Italy laid her cards on the table, with a series of surges that were too much for all but the Russians and Chinese. Her relentless pace ensured the win, finishing 5 seconds clear of the Chinese **Qin He** with 47:52. **Beth Alexander** finished 12th with 50:56, **Regan Lamble** finished 15th with 51:16 and **Rachel Tallent** finished 27th with 56:19.

IAAF World Cup 10km Junior Women, Sunday 16th May 2010

1.	Antonella Palmisano	ITA	47:52
2.	Qin He	CHN	47:57
3.	Anna Lukyanova	RUS	48:00
	...		
12.	Beth Alexander	AUS	50:56
15.	Regan Lamble	AUS	51:16
27.	Rachel Tallent	AUS	56:19

IAAF World Cup 20km Men, Sunday 16th May 2010 , 10:10AM

The final event of the weekend started at 10:10AM with 76 starters and 17 teams in action. The temperature in Chihuahua was now 24°C and would continue to rise as the race progressed.

Ivano Brugnetti of Italy and **Eder Sanchez** of Mexico led them through the 1km mark but the field was closely packed and the elite walkers seemed comfortable with the early pace. **Adam Rutter** was sitting on the right hand side of the large pack while **Ian Rayson** was walking his own race further back in the field. Brugnetti, the 2000 Olympic champion, continued as the pace setter, taking the field through the half way mark in 41:28 but he was soon to fall back through the field. It was at this stage that Rutter retired from the race.

At the 17km mark (1:10:21 - 4:07 last km), Colombian **Luis Lopez**, with 2 warnings against his name, decided to throw caution to the winds and go to the front - the small group of 5 that remained consisted of Lopez, **Eric Tysse** of Norway, **Andrey Krivov** of Russia and the Chinese walkers **Hao Wang** and **Yafei Zhu**. As expected, it all happened in the final 2km lap, with the 2 Chinese walkers surging away to take gold and silver ahead of Krivov, with Tysse fourth and Lopez

fifth across the line. **Ian Rayson** finished in 47th spot with 1:31:21, a good performance at altitude. Rayson justified his selection with this effort.

IAAF World Cup 20km Men, Sunday 16th May 2010			
1.	Hao Wang	CHN	1:22:35
2.	Yafei Zhu	CHN	1:22:46
3.	Andrey Krivov	RUS	1:22:54
	...		
47.	Ian Rayson	AUS	1:31:21
-	Adam Rutter	AUS	DNF

By late May, the Commonwealth Games walks team had been finalised, Jess Rothwell taking the final spot.

20km walk Men: **Luke Adams** (33, NSW), **Chris Erickson** (28, Vic), **Jared Tallent** (25, Vic)
 20km walk Women: **Jessica Rothwell** (20, Vic), **Claire Tallent** (28, SA), **Cheryl Webb** (33, NSW)

44th Lake Burley Griffin Carnival Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, Sunday 13th June 2010

A record 420 entries by just over 300 competitors made a new record attendance, as the LBG carnival continued to get bigger and bigger. After an overnight temperature of -5°C, it cleared into a beautiful sunny day. The 20 mile race saw only a small field as, on this occasion, most walkers chose the 10 mile distance. The race went as expected with **Jared Tallent, Chris Erickson** and **Ian Rayson** walking within striking distance of each other for nearly the whole way. With a few km to go, Tallent pounced, walking to an easy victory, his fifth overall and his fourth in a row.

LBG 20 Mile, Canberra, Sunday 13th June 2010			
1.	Jared Tallent	VRWC	2:26:35
2.	Chris Erickson	VRWC	2:27:59
3.	Ian Rayson	REGAL	2:28:13
4.	Darren Bown	SARWC	2:39:53
5.	Stuart Kollmorgan	VRWC	3:06:07
6.	Colin Heywood	ACTRWC	3:06:47
7.	Peter Crump	SARWC	3:14:36
8.	Duncan Knox	VRWC	3:27:42
9.	Robin Whyte	ACTRWC	3:37:41
10.	Bill Starr	SARWC	3:58:12
11.	Val Chesterton	ACTRWC	4:47:54

Australian 20km Winter Championship University of Queensland, St Lucia, Brisbane, Sunday 22nd August 2010

The annual Australian Roadwalking Championships were held in conjunction with the RWA Second Carnival once again in 2010, alongside the Brisbane River in St Lucia. The course was a bit challenging, being only 1km in length, with a tough little hill up to the top turn and a downhill start, but the walkers showed their fitness and preparation and most mastered it well. It was only in the shorter event groups that the DQ's mounted as the younger walkers, perhaps more used to walking on the flat, found it challenging to handle the ups and downs and keep within the rules.

Chris Erickson led the men's 20km from the outset, winning convincingly with 1:24:45, just under 2 minutes ahead of **Ian Rayson**, with **Darren Bown** a long way back in third. Joining Erickson atop the dais, **Claire Tallent** was just as dominant in the women's 20km, taking line honours in a time of 1:33:30, almost six minutes clear of **Zuzana Schindlerov** (CZE) (1:39:31), with **Kelly Ruddick** (1:42:32) further back in third.

Aust 20km Winter Championship, Brisbane, Sun 22nd Aug 2010			
1	Chris Erickson	AIS/VIC	1:24:45
2	Ian Rayson	NSW	1:26:41
3	Darren Bown	SA	1:32:01
4	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	1:35:47
5	Ignacio Jimenez	QLD	1:44:42
6	Daniel Payne	QLD	1:46:02

7	Ian Jessurun	NSW	1:49:44
8	Peter Bennett	QLD	1:52:44
9	Peter Crump	SA	1:53:56
10	Aaron McDonough	VIC	1:58:57
11	Jim Seymon	NSW	2:15:40
12	Paul Lindenberg	QLD	2:20:59
	Brendon Reading	ACT	DNF
	Robin Whyte	ACT	DQ
	Quentin Rew	NZL	DQ

Aust 20km Winter Championship, Brisbane, Sun 22nd Aug 2010			
1	Claire Tallent	AIS/SA	1:33:30
2	Zuzana Schindlerová	CZE	1:39:32
3	Kelly Ruddick	VIC	1:42:32
4	Lynette Ventris	WA	1:46:27
5	Roseanne Robinson	NZL	1:55:06
6	Alana Barber	NZL	1:59:25
	Nicole Fagan	NSW	DNF

IAAF Race Walking Challenge Final Beijing, China, Saturday 18th September 2010

One additional event deserves some discussion. The 2010 IAAF Race Walking Challenge Final in Beijing lived up to all expectations, with superb times across the board. In fact, the men's 10km roadwalk race exhibited the greatest depth ever seen at this level.

Wang Zhen's winning time of 37:44 was the equal second fastest of all-time and the first 12 were all under 39 minutes, something never seen before. The four Australians completely rewrote the Australian ranking lists, with **Jared Tallent** 8th with 38:29, **Luke Adams** 9th with 38:41, **Chris Erickson** 11th with 38:59 and **Adam Rutter** 15th with 39:20, all huge PBs. Rarely did we see a single Australian break 40 minutes but on this occasion our top 4 walkers all did the deed. It omened well for the Commonwealth Games 3 weeks later.

In the women's 10km race, **Jess Rothwell** aggravated her hamstring and had been forced to take it very easy to finish with what was for her a slow 46:03. The even worse news was that Rothwell was now forced to withdraw from the Commonwealth Games team.

Commonwealth Games Delhi, India, 3-14 October 2010

Delhi was a controversial choice for the 2010 Commonwealth Games and the pre-Games fears proved well founded. The Games Village was an uncompleted shambles, the weather was atrocious, the health and hygiene risks were great and the organization was wanting. 10 years later, international companies are still fighting in the courts to try to get the monies owed to them.

20km Walks, Saturday 9th October 2010

The early morning start times of 6:30AM (men) and 6:45AM (women) ensured that conditions were optimised but it was still humid and warm. I was trackside but found the experience a frustrating one due to the heavy military shutdown of the area. My requests to get closer to the action to get some footage of the race fell on deaf ears and I was forced to watch from well back in what could only be described as a poor viewing position. But it was a small hiccup in the big picture as **Jared Tallent** (gold), **Luke Adams** (silver) and **Claire Tallent** (silver) all collected medals on a triumphant day for the green and gold.

The men's event was an exciting one with Tallent, Adams, local favourite **Harminder Singh** (IND) and **David Rotich** (KEN) locked together for the first two thirds of the race. Coming up to the 14km mark, Tallent and Adams started applying the pressure and it was soon the two of them out the front and matching it stride for stride. Just before the 18km mark, Tallent was able to make the decisive break as Adams stumbled over a section of raised concrete. He made the most of the hiccup and stormed home to win in 1:22:18, with Adams a gallant second in 1:22:31. Alas, not all the Australians had good days and **Chris Erickson** was devastated when he found the tank empty right from the start. If only

we could figure out the magic formula to always get it right! For Erickson, who struggled to finish in 8th spot with 1:28:35, it was the one hiccup in an otherwise superb year.

Commonwealth Games 20km Walk Men, Sat 9th Oct 2010			
1.	Jared Tallent	AUS	1:22:18
2.	Luke Adams	AUS	1:22:31
3.	Harminder Singh	IND	1:23:28
4.	David Kimutai Rotich	KEN	1:25:29
5.	Inaki Gomez	CAN	1:27:09
6.	Evan Dunfee	CAN	1:28:13
7.	Josephat Kipchumba Sirma	KEN	1:28:15
8.	Chris Erickson	AUS	1:28:35
9.	Baljinder Singh	IND	1:29:18
10.	Luke Finch	ENG	1:29:37
11.	Tom Bosworth	ENG	1:30:44
12.	Sylvanus Wekesa Karani	KEN	1:32:00
13.	Alex Wright	ENG	1:34:26
14.	Lo Choon Sieng	MAS	1:35:29
15.	Teoh Boon Lim	MAS	1:36:45
-	Panucha Babubhai	IND	DNF

In the women's 20km event, **Claire Tallent** claimed her first medal at a major international meet with silver, in a time of 1:36:55, behind winner **Jo Jackson** (1:34:22) while the bronze went to Kenya's Grace **Wanjiru** with a time of 1:37:49. Significantly, Jackson's win broke Australia's 20-year stranglehold on the event. Until Delhi, an Australian had won the Gold in each edition of the Games since the women's walk came in as a 10km event in 1990. **Cheryl Webb** had to be content with fifth, after her preparation was severely interrupted by a foot injury in July. But she did make it to the start line and walked well considering everything.

Commonwealth Games 20km Walk Women, Sat 9th Oct 2010			
1.	Jo Jackson	ENG	1:34:22
2.	Claire Tallent	AUS	1:36:55
3.	Grace Wanjiru Njue	KEN	1:37:49
4.	Lisa Kehler	ENG	1:40:33
5.	Cheryl Webb	AUS	1:42:03
6.	Emily Wamusyi Ngii	KEN	1:49:01
7.	Sandhya Kakkuziyil Jolly	IND	1:51:44
-	Deepamala Devi Leimapokpam	IND	DNF
-	Rani Yadav	IND	DQ

2010 Australian 50km championship Fawkner Park, Melbourne, Sunday 12th December 2010

Ideal weather made for some great racing at Fawkner Park in Melbourne on Sunday at the meet that had now been successfully built around the Australian 50km Championship. As usual, the meet attracted a good crowd who had gathered to witness our top walkers in action.

The races kicked off at 7AM with the 2010 Australian 50km championship. While the field might have been small, it was an intriguing race, with AIS walkers **Jared Tallent** and **Luke Adams** going head to head once again. As expected, Tallent went out confidently at a pace of 8:20 per 2km lap while Adams took a more conservative approach, pacing himself with a slightly slower cadence. By the 20km mark, passed in around 1:27:30, Tallent had built up a lead of over a minute and looked in control. At around the 34km mark, Tallent started to slow and then surprisingly, at the 38km mark, he stepped from the track, indicating to his coach that he had had enough for the day. That propelled Adams into the lead and he continued on in fine style, showing no real distress as he coasted to a great winning time of 3:47:34. It was a tough ask for both Tallent and Adams, coming so soon after their Delhi Commonwealth Games 20km and at the end of a long racing year, and Adams certainly deserved his first ever Australian 50km title.

Attention then turned to **Ian Rayson**, just over one lap back, as he powered home to take silver in 3:59:43 after negative splitting with a faster second half (first half 2:00+, second half around 1:59). It was a strong performance and came after his second place in the Australian Winter 20km championship in Brisbane in August. Alas, it was just outside the IAAF World Championship A standard of 3:58:00 but Rayson did enough to show where his potential lay – we had now found another top line 50km walker. **Peter Crump** was now the only man left on the track – all the 20km and 10km

walkers had finished by now and he had only just passed the 40km mark – would he be able to hold on and break 5 hours. Yes he could! With a supreme effort, he kept the laps ticking over regularly and came home to take his first ever national medal with 4:59:14.

Australian 50km Championship, Melbourne, Sun 12th Dec 2010			
1.	Luke Adams	AIS	3:47:34
2.	Ian Rayson	NSW	3:59:43
3.	Peter Crump	SA	4:59:14
-	Jared Tallent	AIS	DNF

2011

Australian 20km Summer Championships Constitution Dock, Hobart, Saturday 19th February 2011

After a day of solid rain, the skies cleared in the final hours leading up to the 6:15PM start time in Hobart on the Saturday evening and competitors were faced with quite humid but overall good conditions for these long awaited championships.

With the Open 20km and U20 10km events starting concurrently, over 40 walkers lined up, with a large crowd in attendance. **Jared Tallent** went straight to the front, completing the first 2km lap in around 7:55, some 5 secs in front of **Luke Adams, Dane Bird-Smith** (U20) and **Chris Erickson**, then a small break to **Adam Rutter** and another small break to **Nathan Deakes** in his comeback race. The large contingent of international walkers then came through together, with **Brendon Reading** and a good group of the U20 men tucked nicely into the group.

From then on, it all went pretty much as planned as Tallent extended his lead lap by lap, passing the 10km mark in 39:33 and working hard in the second half to win in 1:20:19. This was his 4th win in a row in this event and his winning times read impressively – 1:19:41, 1:19:42, 1:19:15 and 1:20:19. Adams also walked up to form, taking second 1:21:00, with Rutter in third place with 1:22:25, his best walk for some time. With the first 3 walkers all under the IAAF A qualifying standard of 1:22:30, they now looked to have booked themselves trips to the 2011 IAAF World Champs in South Korea. Erickson held 4th place for 9 of the 10 laps but could not hold off the fast finishing group of internationals, slowing to finish in 1:25:29, just ahead of Deakes 1:25:38. Behind them, **Ian Rayson** 1:26:56 and Reading 1:27:30 both beat the World University Games standard of 1:28:00.

20km Summer Championship Men, Hobart, Sun 19th Feb 2011			
1.	Jared Tallent	AIS/VIC	1:20:19
2.	Luke Adams	AIS/NSW	1:21:00
3.	Adam Rutter	AIS/NSW	1:22:25
4.	Inaki Gomez	CAN	1:24:38
5.	Ato Ibinez	SWE	1:24:55
6.	Chris Erickson	AIS/VIC	1:25:29
7.	Nathan Deakes	AIS/VIC	1:25:38
8.	Perseus Karlström	SWE	1:26:20
9.	Ian Rayson	ACT	1:26:56
10.	Brendon Reading	ACT	1:27:30
11.	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	1:29:07
12.	Stuart Kollmorgen	VIC	1:34:42
13.	Mathieu Beurion	FRA	1:41:34
-	Jamie Costin	IRE	DQ
-	Tom Bosworth	ENG	DNF
-	Kyle Malone	NSW	DNF
-	Alex Wright	ENG	DNF
-	Daniel Coleman	TAS	DNF

The women's 20km race saw **Claire Tallent** and **Jo Jackson** (the Commonwealth Games champion) clear out to pass the 10km mark in 46:00, some 15 secs clear of **Regan Lamble**, with **Nicole Fagan** another 45 secs in arrears. Soon after this, Jackson retired, leaving the 3 Australian girls in control. From there, the places remained unchanged as Tallent recorded her second win in a row with 1:33:38, Lamble took second in a big PB time of 1:35:08 and Fagan took third in a huge PB time of 1:35:55. This guaranteed Tallent a berth in the 2011 World Championship team as she already had 3 A qualifiers. Lamble was outside the A standard of 1:33:30 so she would probably race in the Chinese leg of the

IAAF Challenge to try to capture one of the remaining two spots. Fagan was well under the 1:38:00 qualifying standard for the World University Games so she had probably sealed team selection to that event with her walk.

1.	Claire Tallent	AIS/SA	1:33:38
2.	Regan Lamble	AIS/VIC	1:35:08
3.	Nicole Fagan	NSW	1:35:55
4.	Cheryl Webb	AIS/NSW	1:36:55
5.	Beki Lee	NSW	1:38:16
6.	Caitlin Brunton	VIC	2:02:48
7.	Stephanie Stigwood	TAS	2:04:28
-	Tanya Holliday	SA	DNF
-	Johanna Jackson	ENG	DNF
-	Zuzanna Malikova	SVK	DNF
-	Mari Olssen	SWE	DNF

Dudinska Patdesiatka Walking Meet Dudince, Slovakia, Saturday 26th March 2011

While Jared Tallent and Luke Adams had been granted automatic places in the 50km team for the 2011 IAAF World Championships, the third team position was up for grabs, and it was decided that **Chris Erickson, Nathan Deakes** and **Ian Rayson** needed to race off to decide the spot. The choice was made – they would all travel to Slovakia and compete in the Dudince 50km race in late March.

Always a huge event, the 2011 50km edition saw nearly 80 entrants. Near perfect weather on the Saturday morning meant that big times were on the cards and the walkers did not disappoint. 2010 World Race Walking Cup 50km winner **Matej Tóth** went in as a clear favourite and he was in a class of his own, delighting the crowd by going to the front immediately and quickly building a convincing lead over the chasing pack. At 40km, he was on target for a time around 3:37 and it was only the strengthening wind in the dying stages of the race which forced him to slow, his final time still a PB and a new Slovakian national record. Behind Tóth the next four men home, all from Poland and racing in the concurrent Polish championship, were more than six minutes adrift but the quartet all still set personal bests.

Deakes and Erickson were in the main chasing group which went through the half way mark in around 1:55:00, The next 10km was much faster, around 44:10, causing major fragmentations, with many of the main contenders losing contact. Erickson also succumbed finally and fell off the pace at the 38km mark but Deakes, in his first 50km since winning the 2007 World Championship, was still there and looking comfortable. It was only his lack of racing that eventually saw him slow to finish 6th in 3:48:02. This performance almost certainly gave him selection in the Australian team for the IAAF World Champs.

Erickson faded a little in the rising wind, but still finished 11th in a PB 3:54:53. The first 11 places all recorded IAAF A qualifiers. Rayson made the tough decision to retire around the half way mark once he started to fall behind his schedule. Such was our depth that a walker who walked 3:54 had failed to make our World Championship team!

1.	Matej Tóth	SVK	3:39:46
2.	Rafal Fedaczynski	POL	3:46:05
3.	Rafal Sikora	POL	3:46:16
	...		
6.	Nathan Deakes	AUS	3:48:02
11.	Chris Erickson	AUS	3:54:53
-	Ian Rayson	AUS	DNF

In mid May, Regan Lamble, still only aged 19, was added to the women's World Cup 20km walk team, following her strong 1:31:39 performance at the IAAF Race Walking Challenge in China the previous month. The Australian walk contingent now read

10km Men: **Luke Adams (NSW/AIS), Adam Rutter (NSW/AIS), Jared Tallent (VIC/AIS)**
 50km Men: **Luke Adams (NSW/AIS), Nathan Deakes (VIC/AIS), Jared Tallent (VIC/AIS)**
 20km Women: **Regan Lamble (VIC/AIS), Claire Tallent (SA/AIS)**

It was an all-AIS team. One spot remained in the women's team but time was fast running out and the place might well remain unfilled.

45th Lake Burley Griffin Carnival Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, Sunday 12th June 2011

2011 saw a smaller overall carnival size (around 270 competitors) but the racing was as competitive as ever. VRWC and Bendigo clubs combined to form a new Federation entity called Racewalking Victoria, thus ensuring an even stronger Victorian team than usual.

The 20 Mile championship was watched with even more interest than usual, given the presence of our top seven men - **Nathan Deakes** (VIC), **Jared Tallent** (VIC), **Luke Adams** (Regal), **Chris Erickson** (VIC), **Adam Rutter** (NSWRWC), **Brendan Reading** (ACT) and **Ian Rayson** (Regal). All seven were Canberra based with the top five AIS based. It was no surprise to see them hit the front from the start and soon clear away from the field. By the half way mark, Tallent and Erickson had gained a handy lead over the others but we know that it all happens in the second half of such a race, and so it was, with Tallent putting the foot down soon after and leaving Erickson in his wake. He quickly built up a winning lead to record his 6th victory in the impressive time of 2:18:59. Adams stormed home to finish only 47 secs behind Tallent, his time of 2:19:46 less than a minute outside his best, and he was making big inroads into Tallent's lead in the final few miles. Deakes continued his comeback with yet another strong performance to take third ahead of Erickson and Rutter. This was an identical time to that done by Deakes in 1998 in his only other excursion over this tough course. How's that for an interesting stat! Erickson 2:24:37 and Rutter 2:25:55 rounded out the top five with further impressive times. This was the first time we had seen 5 walkers under 2:30 and it was nearly 7 as Reading and Rayson came tantalisingly close with their times of 2:31:10 and 2:31:31. We also saw 4 women competing and all finished. The best of them was 2008 Olympian **Cheryl Webb** with 2:52:53.

LBG 20 Mile, Canberra, Sunday 12th June 2011			
1	Jared Tallent	VIC	2:18:59
2	Luke Adams	REGAL	2:19:46
3	Nathan Deakes	VIC	2:21:50
4	Chris Erickson	VIC	2:24:37
5	Adam Rutter	NSWRWC	2:25:55
6	Brendan Reading	ACTW	2:31:10
7	Ian Rayson	REGAL	2:31:31
8	Cheryl Webb (F)	NSWRWC	2:52:22
9	Stuart Kollmorgen	VIC	2:53:07
10	Ian Jessurun	NSWRWC	3:01:34
11	Kim Mottrom	SARWC	3:02:25
12	Colin Heywood	ACTW	3:04:34
13	Peter Bennett	QRWC	3:06:24
14	Peter Crump	SARWC	3:10:28
15	Michelle Thompson (F)	VIC	3:29:14
16	Robin Whyte	ACTW	3:33:33
17	Robert Osborne	REGAL	3:53:10
18	Mary Willis (F)	NSWRWC	3:57:02
19	Karyn O'Neill (F)	VIC	4:00:21
20	Bill Starr	SARWC	4:11:52

World University Games Shenzhen, China, 11-23 August 2011

Athletics Australia had selected 30 athletes (15 men and 15 women) for the 2011 World University Games, held in Shenzhen in China in mid August. The Australian walks contingent consisted of **Brendan Reading** and **Beki Lee** in their first major internationals, along with **Ian Rayson** and **Nicole Fagan** who had previously been members of Australian World Walking Cup teams.

Conditions were hot and humid, around 30°C with 80% humidity on both days, although probably the women had the worst of it with more sun on the course during their event. The course was flat, very smooth, and with some shade.

In the men's 20km, Reading perhaps started a little too hard in the tough conditions and slowed early on, but then rallied well to come home steadily and finish in 15th place with 1:30:26, while Rayson struggled to get into a rhythm, was on two reds from about half way, eventually falling foul of the judges not far from the finish.

In the women's walk, Lee and Fagan both started well, although Fagan was troubled early with cramping. Smith remained strong, maintaining her rhythm when the pace quickened, eventually finishing 10th with 1:41:54. Fagan was able to get back into her stride and eventually finished in 14th place with 1:48:02.

Australian 20km Winter Championships Weston Park, Canberra, Sunday 21st August 2011

The 2011 Australian Winter Roadwalking Championships were held in perfect conditions in Weston Park, Canberra, in late August, with nearly 150 walkers competing in events ranging from U10 1km to Open 20km. Unfortunately, most of our top Open walkers were in Daegu for the World Championships but their absence opened the way for others to medal. Times were slow due to the tough hilly course. I was unimpressed!

The day started at 8AM with the Open 20km events where **Chris Erickson** won the men's title for the second year in a row and **Tanya Holliday** claimed her first national women's crown. While Erickson's win was clearcut, Holliday's win was not without drama, as **Jess Rothwell** reached the finishing line first, only to be disqualified as she was about to cross. Holliday's win came in her first ever 20km and the time of 1:37:54 was a great first up performance that signaled her return to the ranks of our elite walkers.

Erickson 'rocked the cradle' as he crossed the finish line in 1:29:01, indicating it was his first race as a father. *"It was my first race since becoming a father 9 days ago to little Oliver. It's been a whirlwind week and I'm a little bit sleep deprived. It's always nice to get another national title under the belt. It was good to have this race here in Canberra this time of the year. It gives you something to aim for in the middle of the year. When we've got our 50km trial in December, I'll be ready to go. It was perfect conditions out here. The course is a little bit undulating and I headed out at a pretty good tempo. I sort of decided I'd ease back a bit and walk with one of the other AIS guys for a bit. Then he dropped off and I just kicked home in the last couple of kilometres."*

Aust 20km Championship, Canberra, Sun 21st Aug 2011

1.	Chris Erickson	VIC	1:29:01
2.	Darren Bown	SA	1:30:29
3.	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	1:30:54
4.	Derek Mulhearn	NSW	1:41:22
5.	Andrew Jamieson	VIC	1:41:27
6.	Ian Jessurun	NSW	1:46:29
7.	Dean Nipperess	QLD	1:47:41
8.	Peter Crump	SA	1:54:17
9.	Anthony Albanese	NSW	2:02:56
10.	David Smyth	WA	2:06:16
11.	Robert Osborne	NSW	2:08:00
12.	Tony Psarianos	NSW	2:23:19
-	Sean Fitzsimons	WA	DNF

Aust 20km Championship, Canberra, Sun 21st Aug 2011

1.	Tanya Holliday	SA	1:37:54
2.	Kelly Ruddick	VIC	1:39:56
3.	Kirstin Shaw	VIC	2:09:47
-	Cheryl Webb	NSW	DNF
-	Jessica Rothwell	VIC	DQ

IAAF World Championships Daegu, South Korea, 27th August - 4th September 2011

The 2011 IAAF World Championships in Daegu was similar in size to previous years, with 1848 athletes from 204 countries competing in 47 events. The walks were held on a loop course starting and finishing at Gukchae-Bosang Memorial Park.

20km Walk Men, Sunday 28th August 2011, 9AM

The men's 20km was yet again a Russian drugs fuelled procession, with Valeriy Borchin first, Vladimir Kanaykin second and Stanislav Emelyanov fourth. Justice was eventually served when all 3 were retrospectively banned and stripped of their medals, Borchin and Kanyakin in 2015 and Emelyanov in 2014.

That meant the gold was eventually awarded to Colombian **Luis Fernando López** (1:20:38), ahead of Chinese **Zhen Wang** (1:20:54) and Korean **Hyunsub Kim** (1:21:17). Australia's main hope **Jared Tallent** finished well back in 27th place with what was for him a very disappointing 1:25:25, while the only other Australian starter, **Adam Rutter**, retired from the race soon after the 15km mark. **Luke Adams** had been selected as part of the 20km team but withdrew the week before to concentrate on the 50km event next Sunday.

World Championships 20km Men, Korea, Sun 28th Aug 2011

1.	Luis Fernando López	COL	1:20:38
2.	Zhen Wang	CHN	1:20:54
3.	Hyunsub Kim	KOR	1:21:17
	...		
22.	Jared Tallent	AUS	1:25:25
-	Adam Rutter	AUS	DNF

Women's 20km walk, Wednesday 31st August 2011, 9AM

Like the men's 20km, it was a Russian procession, with Olga Kaniskina first and Anisya Kirdyapkina second. Again, it was a long wait for justice but it finally came with them both eventually banned (Kaniskina in 2016 and Kirdyapkina in 2019) and disqualified from this event. Disappointingly, the third Russian, Vera Sokolova still shows as having come 9th. She was eventually banned in 2015 but managed to keep most of her previous results.

History now shows the results as **Hong Liu** of China first (1:30:00), **Elisa Riguardo** of Italy second (1:30:44) and **Shenjie Qieyang** of China third (1:31:14). **Regan Lamble** and **Claire Tallent** walked excellently to finish 12th and 18th respectively. They had maintained position within the lead pack for the first 7km but, as the morning humidity and temperature and race tempo increased, they were amongst the many who dropped off the pace. 19-year-old Lamble crossed the half-way point in 46:39 but came home strongly to finish with 1:33:38. Tallent also chased athletes down in the latter stages of the race to finish with 1:34:46.

World Championships 20km Women, Korea, Wed 31st Aug 2011

1.	Hong Liu	CHN	1:30:00
2.	Elisa Rigauda	ITA	1:30:44
3.	Shenjie Qieyang	CHN	1:31:14
	...		
12.	Regan Lamble	AUS	1:33:38
18.	Claire Tallent	AUS	1:34:46

Men's 50km Walk, Saturday 3rd September 2011, 8AM

Hmm...Russians once again, with Sergey Bakulin first, **Denis Nizhegorodov** second and Igor Erokhin failing to finish. Again, justice was served with Bakulin eventually banned and stripped of his gold in 2015 and Erokhin banned in 2013. That gave to gold to Nizhegorodov. In 2016, Nizhegorodov was under suspicion of doping, with his B Sample yet to be tested, after his A Sample had tested positive. I never quite heard the end of it all but he seems to have escaped unscathed. He remains to this day one of the very few top line Russian walkers to still have a clean sheet.

The race was a fascinating one from the Australian perspective. **Yohann Diniz** had taken the early lead, challenged by **Nathan Deakes**, until Diniz was surprisingly disqualified. Deakes continued to lead by as much as 30 seconds over Bakulin, before he began to falter with hamstring problems. Eventually he was passed by Bakulin and then dropped out. Bakulin had stretched out to an almost 2-minute lead, between 40km and 45km. Only **Jared Tallent** looked like he had a chance, gaining several seconds per kilometre but not really enough to make a dent in the huge lead. Tallent paid for the extra effort trying to chase the leader, slowing considerably on the final 2km lap and being passed by Nizhegorodov.

Tallent had been left demoralised a week before when he finished well back in the 20km walk, but he turned that into motivation for the 50km event. *"I was just really annoyed with myself. You train so hard all year and you don't expect to come 27th so that fired me up for today. I was feeling very tired last week but I came out here to get a medal today and I'm really, really satisfied with that. I probably went a bit to hard early going for the gold medal because the last two laps were hell. I wish the race was 46km today instead of 50km."*

Australia's third competitor, **Luke Adams**, also finished strongly for 4th place (3:45.31) and would also be rewarded with automatic nomination for the Olympics. Adams revealed he had sustained a hip injury a month ago and had battled to get to the starting line. *"It's been a very stressful month. It would have been nice to be top three but I am happy to be top five. I knew there was going to be pain. It was pretty good for 20 or 30km, the last 10km it was really sore but not sore enough to stop me."*

Deakes' coach Craig Hilliard said the former world champion was "pretty devastated" that another hamstring injury had ruined his return to championship racing. *"He's been out for so long (after hamstring surgery that ruled him out of the 2008 Olympics) but he's such a competitor, he wasn't coming here just to get a medal, he was coming here to win. It's a new injury but it's the leg he had surgery on, he stirred it up about a week ago. But he's proved to himself and me today that he can compete at this level again. It's going to be hard to beat the Russians next year but we are not that far behind and we have beaten them before."*

World Championships 50km Walk, Saturday 3 rd Sept 2011			
1.	Denis Nizhegorodov	RUS	3:42:45
2.	Jared Tallent	AUS	3:43:36
3.	Si Tianfeng	CHN	3:44:40
4.	Luke Adams	AUS	3:45:31
-	Nathan Deakes	AUS	DNF

Just as in the 2009 World Championships, Russians had won gold in all 3 walks and all had eventually lost those golds as the drug testing procedures gained in sophistication and their old samples were retested.

I finish this discussion with a review of the distribution of red cards from Deagu that I published in my newsletter the following week.

Women's 20 km walk: 50 starters, 6 DQs, 9 red cards for loss of contact and 29 for knees
 Men's 20 km walk: 46 starters, 4 DQs, 10 red cards for loss of contact and 18 for knees
 Men's 50 km walk: 43 starters, 12 DQs, 5 red cards for loss of contact and 47 for knees

I am always perplexed by the relative calling for loss of contact and for knees. I find it impossible to believe that the most highly trained walkers in the world so blatantly and consistently fail the knees rule and yet look so good from a contact perspective when the publication of photos from top races hardly ever shows anyone with bent knees and yet consistently shows walkers pushing the absolute limit in terms of contact.

Obviously the small number of red cards for loss of contact can be pretty easily explained - the very rapid turnover at high speed makes it very hard for judges to see lifting unless it is blatant. To put it simply, the faster a walker goes, the more fluent he/she looks. This is why a walker will often get their contact red when they are doing their slowest lap of the race.

The red cards for knees are harder to understand. Do our judges, even top ones, fail to realise the difference between a straight leg and a straightened one? Do they have the necessary understanding of biomechanics to really understand what they are seeing? Who knows! I just know that the balance is not right and something is not working as it should. Perhaps it is time to review the current rules to fix this anomaly. The rules of walking are not set in concrete. They have been changed in the past and will be changed again in the future.

With the 2011 winter season now completed, walkers were looking toward the 2012 World Cup and Olympics. Athletics Australia had gone with the IAAF 'A' and 'B' standards for all Olympic events except the marathon. But for more than one athlete to be entered in any event, all athletes had to attain the IAAF 'A' Qualifying Standard in the Qualifying Period. Effectively, this meant that our walkers would have to achieve the following Standards within the specified qualification periods to be considered for Olympic selection:

Men 20k walk	1:22:30	Qualification Period: 1 May 2011 to 8 July 2012
Women 20k walk	1:33:30	Qualification Period: 1 May 2011 to 8 July 2012
Men 50k walk	3:59:00	Qualification Period: 1 January 2011 to 14 May 2012

For the World Cup, the required times were more lenient

20km Men	1:28:00
50km Men	No standard

10km Junior Men 46:30
20km Women 1:36:00
10km Junior Women 50:00

Australian 50km Championship Fawkner Park, Melbourne , Sunday 11th December 2011

The 2011 Australian 50km championship, held at its usual venue in Fawkner Park, Melbourne, was a very significant race, being the official Olympic Nomination event, and it attracted all our top contenders except for Luke Adams who has already been pre-selected. After torrential rain all Saturday evening and night and continued drizzle early on Sunday morning, it finally cleared just before 7AM as the 50km walkers were doing their final preparations.

The event developed as expected with **Jared Tallent**, **Nathan Deakes** and **Chris Erickson** clearing out and walking together, while **Ian Rayson** and Irish walkers **Jamie Costin** and **Robbie Heffernan** worked together as a second group some distance in arrears. Somewhat surprisingly, the leading three were still together at 20km, then at 30km, then at 40km and it was not until the 44km mark that Erickson finally started to slow, and Deakes was able to take what looked like a winning break. Tallent, who had only intended to walk 30km (as he has also been pre-selected for the Olympics) had decided to continue on in the race to help his training partner Erickson, so he stayed with him for a further 2km as Deakes extended his lead. Eventually Tallent decided the time had come and he effortlessly increased his pace, bridging the gap to Deakes in less than a lap and going away to win by just over a minute with 3:49:33. Deakes and Erickson both gave it their all, knowing that the third Olympic 50km spot was being decided with this race and it was Deakes who won out, finishing second with 3:50:34. Erickson was next to finish and what a valiant effort, his time of 3:51:57 a 3 minute PB and a time that propelled him right up the all time rankings. Fancy doing a time like that and missing out on an Olympic berth! With all the attention being focused on the leading group, people perhaps forgot about Rayson but this was soon remedied when it became obvious that he was also in line for a PB and his own Olympic A qualifier. His final time of 3:57:55 further cemented his place as the next in line after our top echelon. That now made 5 Olympic A qualified walkers for the 50km (Tallent, Adams, Deakes, Erickson and Rayson). What a standard!

Australian 50km Championship, Melbourne, Sun 11th Dec 2011			
1.	Jared Tallent	AIS/VIC	3:49.33
2.	Nathan Deakes	AIS/VIC	3:50.34
3.	Chris Erickson	AIS/VIC	3:51.57
4.	Ian Rayson	NSW	3:57.55
-	Simon Evans	VIC	DNF
-	Jamie Costin	IRL	DNF
-	Robbie Heffernan	IRL	DNF

2012

Australian Summer 20km Championships Constitution Dock, Hobart, Saturday 25th February 2012

The 2012 National 20km, held in Hobart on the evening of Saturday 25th February, was certainly an event that we will all remember for many years. There was a lot riding on it as it included our Olympic and World Cup 20km trials, an IAAF racewalking challenge event and the biennial Oceania Racewalking Cup between Australian and New Zealand teams.

The forecast during the week had predicted a temperature of 35°C but on the day it was even worse, peaking at over 38°C (around 101°F) and still sitting at that temperature at the 6PM start time. The sun was still high in the sky and most of the race was walked in full sun with no respite whatsoever until around 7:15PM that the evening shade finally provided some relief - but the damage was well and truly done by then, with an attrition rate of around 50%. There has been some talk of whether it should have gone ahead at that time, been delayed for half an hour or even delayed until the next day. While I can understand the concerns, realistically the only viable alternative would have been to delay the start for 30 mins and finish the event in semi darkness. I believe that AA tried for this but it was not possible as the road closure times had been agreed with the surrounding restaurants and businesses and signed off.

In such extreme temperatures, it is a case of making sure you prepare properly and have as low a core temperature as possible at the race start. The AIS contingent showed how it could be done, professionally and with little fuss. They had ice baths and ice vests for all their athletes and it is a fact that every walker who had an ice bath before the race then

went on to finish it. Sure they were all highly trained athletes but it is the extras that can make the difference between success and failure on days like these. I noted Jared Tallent's quote on the AA website post race: "*I have to pay tribute to my coach Brett Vallance, he's been doing a lot for us to get ready for today's hot weather with the pre-cooling and ice vests.*"

The pace in the men's race was conservative early as nearly all of the main contenders shadowed **Jared Tallent** through a first 2km lap of around 8:20. He soon kicked it down and was then on his own for the rest of the race while the others battled it out for the minor medals. His winning time of 1:23:01 was slow by his high standard but, with a race in Mexico the following weekend, it was probably a case of making sure he won without doing too much damage in the conditions. **Chris Erickson** broke away from the pack around the 10km mark and stormed home to finish just over 1 minute behind Tallent with 1.24.12 – it was an impressive performance and one which gave him the inside running for the second Olympic 20km spot provided he could better the A standard at the IAAF Challenge meet in China the following month or in the World Cup in May. The third Australian to cross the line was **Adam Rutter** and he was now in a good position re the Olympics, already having one 20km A qualifier under his belt.

Australian 20km Championship, Hobart, Sat 25 Feb 2012

1.	Tallent, Jared	AIS/VIC	1:23:01
2.	Erickson, Chris	AIS/VIC	1:24:12
3.	Gomez, Inaki	CAN	1:24:46
4.	Dunfee, Evan	CAN	1:25:17
5.	Rutter, Adam	AIS/NSW	1:26:04
6.	Bird-Smith, Dane	QLD	1:28:12
7.	Rew, Quentin	NZL	1:30:01
8.	Rayson, Ian	NSW	1:31:57
9.	Cowley, Rhydian	VIC	1:42:41
10.	Malone, Kyle	NSW	1:45:38
11.	Jones, Graeme	NZL	1:46:57
12.	Nelson, Scott	NZL	1:54:57
-	Coleman, Daniel	TAS	DNF
-	Dewar, Nick	QLD	DNF
-	Dewar, Brandon	QLD	DNF
-	Donahoo, Mark	VIC	DNF
-	Fitzsimons, Sean	WA	DNF
-	Gustaffson, Andreas	SWE	DNF
-	McDonough, Aaron	VIC	DNF
-	Mulhearn, Derek	NSW	DNF
-	Parker, Michael	NZL	DNF
-	Reading, Brendon	ACT	DNF
-	Wright, Alex	GBR	DNF

Claire Tallent was outstanding in the women's event and left the other walkers minutes behind. In fact, her time of 1:32:58 was the only Olympic A qualifier done on the day. Behind her, fellow A qualifiers **Regan Lamble** and **Beki Lee** took the next two Australian spots and seemed to have now done enough to warrant their Olympic berths. The biggest casualty was **Tanya Holliday** who went in as one of the favourites. She suffered early and just could not go on with it in the oppressive conditions.

Australian 20km Championship, Hobart, Sat 25 Feb 2012

1.	Tallent, Claire	AIS/SA	1:32:58
2.	Lamble, Regan	AIS/VIC	1:36:52
3.	Schindlerova, Zuzana	CZH	1:37:34
4.	Lee, Beki	AIS/NSW	1:39:16
5.	Fagan, Nicole	NSW	1:48:30
6.	Ruddick, Kelly	VIC	1:51:47
7.	Robinson, Roseanne	NZL	1:58:38
8.	Sunderland, Nyle	NZL	2:00:56
9.	Steele, Allegra	SA	2:03:34
-	Alexander, Beth	VIC	DNF
-	Cantwell, Lesley	NZL	DNF
-	Holliday, Tanya	SA	DNF
-	Olsson, Mari	SWE	DNF
-	Shaw, Kirstin	VIC	DNF
-	Stigwood, Stephanie	TAS	DNF

Australia won the biennial Oceania Racewalking Trophy in both divisions but the NZ team were to be congratulated on their efforts in such horrendous conditions. It was also a Tallent family celebration, with Jared and Claire winning the Open races and Jared's younger sister Rachel winning the U20 women's 10km.

The following week, Athletics Australia announced the first tranche of Olympic nominations, including some walkers:

20km Walk Men **Jared Tallent** (AIS/VIC)
20km Walk Women **Claire Tallent** (AIS/SA), **Regan Lamble** (AIS/VIC) and **Beki Lee** (AIS/NSW)
50km walk Men **Jared Tallent** (AIS/VIC), **Luke Adams** (AIS/NSW) and **Nathan Deakes** (AIS/VIC)

Two further spots remained in the men's 20km and the front runners seemed to be Chris Erickson and Adam Rutter based on times done thus far. As usual, it was an all-AIS affair.

25th IAAF Race Walking World Cup Saransk, Russia, 12-13 May 2012

The 2012 IAAF World Race Walking Cup in Saransk was the biggest yet, with a record 62 participating countries and a record 465 competitors. And we were all mugs, thinking what a wonderful choice it was to hold it in Saransk, the capital city of the Mordovian Republic and the centre of racewalking excellence in Russia, the world's racewalking superpower. Huge billboards adorned the city and a newly laid bitumen road surface had been specially prepared to ensure fast times. I was roadside for all the races, part of an estimated 30,000 strong spectator crowd that lined both sides of the entire 2km course. It was definitely the largest group ever seen at a walking event. The volume of barracking from the excited Russian audience was so loud that it was almost overwhelming. Now that is really something!

The last time this championship had been held in Russia in 2008, Russians had won 8 of the 10 gold medals (4 individual and 4 gold) but a lot had changed in the intervening period. Would the emergence of new racewalking stars from around the world ensure that this time around the Russians would be tested on their home ground? Conditions over the weekend were expected to be hot and sunny and the long 750m climb in each 2km lap promised to be significant - just how significant remained to be seen!

Day 1 - Junior Men 10km, 4PM, Saturday 12th May 2012

The Junior Men's 10km was the first event, starting at 4PM, and it was Colombian **Eider Arevalo** who returned to hang on to the crown he claimed in Chihuahua two years previously. His time of 41:17 saw him well clear of Russian **Alexander Ivanov** 41:42 and Mexican **Jesus Tadeo Vega** 41:56. The Australians performed superbly, all doing PBs in the oppressive conditions - **Blake Steele** 17th with 43:15 (12 sec PB), **Jesse Osborne** 24th with 44:15 (15 sec PB) and **Nathan Brill** 32nd with 44:52 (8 sec PB). Brill, at 15 years of age, was the youngest walker in the field, so his performance deserved special mention.

World Cup U20 10km Men, Saransk, Saturday 12 th May 2012			
1.	Eider Arevalo	COL	41:17
2.	Alexander Ivanov	RUS	41:42
3.	Jesús Tadeo Vega	MEX	41:56
	...		
17.	Blake Steele	VIC	43:15
24.	Jesse Osborne	AUS	44:15
32.	Nathan Brill	AUS	44:52

Day 1 - Junior Women 10km, 5PM, Saturday 12th May 2012

The Junior Women's 10km was the next event to get underway, at 5PM and it turned out to be one of the best races in World Cup history, with the lead switching numerous times in the last few laps. From the half way mark, the medals were clearly going to be decided between four walkers - but would the win go to Russians **Nadezhda Leontyeva** or **Ekaterina Medvedeva** or to Colombian **Sandra Arenas** or to Mexican **Alejandra Ortega**. First Leontyeva and Ortega cleared out, only to be caught by Arenas. Then the two Russians broke clear, only to be caught once again by Arenas who then opened a decisive break which she then held to the finish, crossing the line first in 45:57. A fast finishing Ortega came through for second with 46:00 and the two Russians were relegated to third and fourth place. **Rachel Tallent** finished 21st with 50:24 and **Kristie Goznik** finished 30th with 51:26 - both good walks in tough conditions.

World Cup U20 10km Women, Saransk, Sat 12 th May 2012			
1.	Sandra Arenas	COL	45:57
2.	Alejandra Orgega	MEX	46:00
3.	Nadezhda Leontyeva	RUS	46:02
...			
21.	Rachel Tallent	AUS	50:24
30.	Kristie Goznik	AUS	51:26

Day 1 – Open Men 20km, 6:15PM, Saturday 12th May 2012

The final event of the day was the Open Men's 20km walk, starting at 6:15PM. By then, much of the course was in shadow and conditions had eased but the race was by no means a cake walk, with walkers collapsing throughout the race due to the combined effects of the relentless pace, the ambient temperature and the long rise to be negotiated each lap. And once again, the Russian juggernaut was upset, this time by a lone Chinese walker in **Zhen Wang**. Walking for nearly the entire race surrounded by a phalanx of Russian singlets, he burst clear with 3km to go, winning with ease in a time of 1:19:13. As is customary for such races, the second half saw a huge negative split after a relatively even paced 40:11 for the first 10km. Four of the next 5 places were taken by Russians but justice was eventually served, with third placed Russian Vladimir Kanaykin and 5th placed Russian Sergey Morozov purged from the results as the drug testers caught up with them in the years following. Andrey Krikov who took second, was one of the few Russian senior walkers to never test positive. Was it a case of clean or just plain lucky!

There was great excitement in the Australian camp as **Chris Erickson** stormed home in 18th place with 1:22:20, a 33 sec PB and an all important Olympic A qualifier. **Adam Rutter** was two places in arrears, finishing 20th with 1:22:54. The performance of these two walkers ensured the final two Olympic 20km berths were now firmly in their grasp. **Luke Adams**, already selected for the Olympic 50km team, was next to finish, crossing the line in 1:23:28 for 24th place. These finishes ensured that Australia finished 3rd in the Teams Championship, a very good result in what was one of the biggest walking fields ever assembled. 19 year old **Dane Bird-Smith** came in 41st with 1:25:41 after suffering through a very torrid race and **Rhydian Cowley**, who also had to dig deep, completed the team result with 87th place in 1:32:28.

World Cup 20 Men, Saransk, Saturday 12 th May 2012			
1.	Zhen Wang	CHN	1:19:13
2.	Andrey Krikov	RUS	1:19:27
3.	Ruslan Dmytrenko	UKR	1:20:17
...			
18.	Chris Erickson	AUS	1:22:20
20.	Adam Rutter	AUS	1:22:54
24.	Luke Adams	AUS	1:23:28
41.	Dane Bird-Smith	AUS	1:25:41
87.	Rhydian Cowley	AUS	1:32:28

Day 2 – Open Men 50km, 8:30AM, Sunday 13th May 2012

The Men's 50km was the first of two events for the Sunday, commencing at 8:30AM in bright morning sunshine and a rapidly rising temperature. As expected in such conditions, the attrition rate was huge with one third of the field failing to finish. However, the small and select group that peeled off the front were unfazed, reeling off lap after lap at a consistently fast pace. The group was high quality indeed – defending bronze medallist **Jared Tallent** of Australia, Chinese **Jianguo Zhao** and former IAAF World Champion **Sergey Kirdyapkin** and his Russian team mates **Igor Erokhin**, **Sergey Bakulin**, **Ivan Noskov** and **Mikhail Ryzhov**.

When Zhou dropped after 20km, it was left to Tallent to fight it out with the sea of red Russian vests. With the halfway mark reached in 1:49:20, the group was reduced to three – Tallent, Bakulin and Erokhin. Kirdyapkin soon bridged the gap and surged to the lead. The group was soon down to three once again as Bakulin flagged and thus it stayed until the 41km mark when the Russians applied the screws even further, dropping Tallent bit by bit. It all came down to a final sprint between Erokhin and Kirdyapkin and it was the older Kirdyapkin who won out by the narrowest of margins, 3:38:08 to 3:38:10. Tallent walked through strongly to take third with 3:40:32, a superb time in the conditions. **Ian Rayson**, the second Australian in this event, was one of the many who found the going tough, withdrawing in his case just before the 30km mark.

Of course, the Russian celebrations were not to last, with Kirdyapkin (1st), Erokhin (2nd) and Bakulin (5th) eventually all purged from the results, as the drug testers caught up with them. That meant that Tallent was now the gold medallist, Si from China was the silver medallist and Linke from Germany was the bronze medallist. Justice was served!

World Cup 50km Men, Saransk, Sunday 13th May 2012

1.	Jared Tallent	AUS	3:40:32
2.	Tianfeng Si	CHN	3:43:05
3.	Christopher Linke	GER	3:47:33
	...		
-	Ian Rayson	AUS	DNF

Day 2 – Open Women 20km, 1:20PM, Sunday 13 May 2012

The final event of the weekend was the Open Women's 20km Championship which kicked off at 1:20PM in bright sunshine and a temperature around 30°C. Australia had high expectations with a strong team of four and it looked promising as **Claire Tallent** started aggressively, the only foreigner to challenge the Russian juggernaut. She had walked a wonderful 1:28:53 (a 3 minute PB) in Taicang, China, the previous month, and was in superb form. At the 5km mark, it was a group of 6 – Tallent alongside the 5 Russians and making the pace. At the 10km mark, passed in 44:33, Tallent was still part of what was now a group of 4 and walking an inspired race. There was great disappointment in the Australian camp when she was disqualified just before the 14km mark when holding 4th spot and well clear of any chasers.

It was left to the Russians to fight out the final placings with favourite Olga Kaniskina suffering a surprise defeat at the hands of team mate Elena Lashmanova, 1:27:38 to 1:28:33. Spanish walker **Marie Poves** came through strongly to take third in 1:29:10. The only other walker to break 90 minutes was Chinese **Xiazhi Lu**. Of course, the retrospective drug tests changed this, with second placed Kaniskina eventually purged from the results. Sadly, Lashmanova shows as the winner of this race, a travesty, given her subsequent drug bust.

Regan Lamble was the first and only Australian to finish, finishing strongly to take 23rd with 1:34:34. **Beki Lee**, like Claire Tallent, was disqualified and **Nicole Fagan** was forced to retire around the 8km mark after collapsing in the conditions. Overall, conditions took their toll with only 88 finishers from the 109 starters.

World Cup 20km Women, Saransk, Sunday 13th May 2012

1.	Elena Lashmanova	RUS	1:27:38
2.	María José Poves	ESP	1:29:10
3.	Xiuzhi Lu	CHN	1:29:55
	...		
23.	Regan Lamble	AUS	1:34:34
-	Claire Tallent	AUS	DQ
-	Beki Lee	AUS	DQ
-	Nicole Fagan	AUS	DNF

After the qualifying performances from Chris Erickson and Adam Rutter in Saransk, they were quickly added to the Australian Olympic walks team which now read as follows

Women's 20km **Regan Lamble** (VIC/AIS), **Beki Lee** (NSW/AIS), **Claire Tallent** (SA/AIS)
 Men's 20km **Chris Erickson** (VIC/AIS), **Adam Rutter** (NSW/AIS), **Jared Tallent** (VIC/AIS)
 Men's 50km **Luke Adams** (NSW/AIS), **Nathan Deakes** (VIC/AIS), **Jared Tallent** (VIC/AIS)

It showed the worth of the AIS as a tool for developing walkers. All 8 Olympic spots had gone to AIS walkers. It was also a case of well done to AIS walks coaches Brent Vallance and Craig Hilliard for their superb job in developing and guiding their charges to the Olympics.

46th Lake Burley Griffin Carnival**Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, Sunday 10th June 2012**

Around 260 entries ensured another large carnival in 2011. After an overnight temperature of -3°C, it cleared into a beautiful sunny day which was deemed to be as good as any. The 20 Mile walkers had to negotiate a long section of black ice on the track near Black Mountain but this was deemed to be a rare occurrence. The 20 Mile field was strong, with 3 of our 2012 Olympic walkers (**Jared Tallent**, **Chris Erickson** and **Regan Lamble**) on the start line. As expected, they took the first 3 places with Tallent untroubled to win his 7th 20 Mile title with an excellent 2:18:00. Erickson took second with 2:26:36 while Lamble walked an astonishing 2:32:17 to take third and shatter Kerry Saxby's course record by nearly 9 minutes. Further back in the field, **Robin Whyte** recorded his 43rd finish and Bill Starr recorded his 34th finish! The strong RWV team took both gold and silver in the teams events.

LBG 20 Mile, Canberra, Sunday 10th June 2012			
1	Jared Tallent	RWV	2:18:00
2	Chris Erickson	RWV	2:26:36
3	Regan Lamble (F)	RWV	2:32:17
4	Ignacio Jimenez	QRW	2:59:42
5	Peter Crump	SARWC	3:02:19
6	Peter Bennett	QRW	3:09:17
7	Simon Evans	RWV	3:12:26
8	Terry O'Neill	RWV	3:31:32
9	Robin Whyte	ACTRWC	3:34:16
10	Duncan Knox	RWV	3:48:38
11	Karyn O'Neill (F)	RWV	4:01:16
12	Lachlan Wilkinson	ACTRWC	4:02:05
13	Bill Starr	SARWC	4:03:45

2012 Olympic Games

London, GBR, 27th July - 12th August 2012

I was trackside for all 3 of the 2012 Olympic walks in the Mall in London. I was a little apprehensive as I did not have any event tickets and was not sure how the free spectator area would turn out, but there were no issues and I was able to position myself roadside in great spots for all 3 races. The only negative was the lack of any big TV screens in the free viewing area but the on-course commentary was spot on and quite audible from the closest loudspeakers. The crowd was huge and the support for all competitors was great.

Olympic 20km Walk Men, The Mall, London, Saturday 4th August 2012

First to the men's 20km walk where China, having never before won an Olympic medal in race walking, took two medals, as **Chen Ding** became the youngest ever winner of a race walking Olympic title aged 19 years and 264 days, and **Wang Zhen**, the Asian record holder and winner of the IAAF World Race Walking Cup, came in third. Having broken away from his pursuers with 2km to go, Chen completed arguably the most entertaining lap in the history of race walking as he acknowledged the crowd and clapped hands with the crowd all the way through the course! Pumping his chest and throwing his fist in the air in supreme confidence, Chen walked the final stages of the race smiling away to the crowd and to the TV cameras. Another piece of Olympic history was written when 21-year-old **Erick Barrondo** crossed the finish line in second place, winning Guatemala's first ever Olympic medal in any sport. To underscore their dominance at the event, fourth place also went China's way courtesy of **Cai Zelin**.

The race was billed as a China vs Russia affair but Russia was decimated with Kanaykin disqualified 16km into the race, Borchin collapsing in the final stages and failing to finish, and Andrey Krivov finishing back in 37th place. Good riddance, I say!

Jared Tallent finished 7th in a season best of 1:20:02. He was in the mix for 15km before falling off the pace in the closing stages. To quote: *"It is a bit disappointing but ... I've been working a lot harder for the 50km. It was good to have the hit out today and I'll be a lot stronger next week and hopefully be in the medals there. The course is very fast and it will be pretty fast over 50km if we get good weather like this."* **Chris Erickson** finished 38th in 1:24:19 after qualifying in the World Cup in May with 1:22:20. I suspect that his many months of trying to gain Olympic selection, first with the 50km and then with the 20km, took a toll on him. His comment: *"It was a bit disappointing. I was found wanting in the second half of the race. I didn't quite have it out there today. I'm 30, so I think I still have another Olympics in me ... But I will be looking more at the 50km - that's my event. We just happen to have three great guys doing it right now!"* **Adam Rutter** was well up early but fell back as the race progressed, obviously working very hard but having a bad time of it. He retired in the second last lap.

Olympic 20km Men, London, Saturday 4th August 2012			
1.	Ding Chan	CHN	1:18:46
2.	Erick Barrondo	GUA	1:18:57
3.	WANG Zhen	CHN	1:19:25
...			
7.	Jared Tallent	AUS	1:20:02
38.	Chris Erickson	AUS	1:24:19
-	Adam Rutter	AUS	DNF

Olympic 50km Walk Men, The Mall, London, Saturday 11th August 2012, 9AM

In late news, defending 50km champion Alex Schwazer of Italy was out, having failed a drugs test. This did indeed change the complexion of the men's 50km race. Sergey Kiryapkin was now the man to beat, having won the IAAF World Race Walking Cup in Saransk in May. He did indeed cross the finish line first, shattering the existing record of 3:37:09 with a decisive victory. Behind him **Jared Tallent**, with a remarkable recovery particularly in the last 6km, claimed the silver medal for a second successive Games and also did it stylishly, lowering his PB from 3:38:56 to 3:36:53 when it looked as if he might miss out on a podium finish. Then came China's **Tianfeng Si**, whose injection of pace after 35km initially sorted the men out from the boys until Russian teamwork and Tallent's late charge saw him relegated to third.

Of course, the results did not stand, with all the Russians - Kiryapkin (1st), Erokhin (5th) and Bakulin (6th) - eventually purged from the results due to retrospective testing in later years. That meant Tallent was eventually upgraded to gold, a medal which was presented in Melbourne in 2016, Si to silver and the fast finishing **Robert Heffernan** of Ireland bronze.

Olympic 50km Men, London, Saturday 11 th August 2012			
1.	Jared Tallent	AUS	3:36:53
2.	Tianfeng Si	CHN	3:37:16
3.	Robert Heffernan	IRL	3:37:54
...			
19.	Nathan Deakes	AUS	3:48:45
23.	Luke Adams	AUS	3:53:41

From my own perspective, it was the highest quality 50km race I had ever witnessed - with the first 7 walkers under 3:40. In fact, **Yohann Diniz** was also in the sub-3:40 mix but was disqualified after the event for taking a drink outside the feed station area. So we actually had 8 walkers under 3:40 for a while. We also saw National records to Robbie Heffernan (IRE), Chilsung Park (KOR), Aléxandros Papamiháil (GRE), Emerson Hernandez (ESA), Basanta Bahadur Rana (IND) and Marc Mundell (RSA).

And what of our 3 Australian reps. I have already talked about Jared Tallent's wonderful performance - a gold medal and a time of 3:36:53 which was a PB by just over 2 minutes. **Nathan Deakes**, in probably his last race before retirement, was not going to die wondering. He put himself on the line for all to see, going out with the leaders and mixing it with them until the 35km mark, passed in a super-fast 3:32:34 before slowing to eventually finish 19th with 3:48:45. With that performance, he showed why he was the IAAF World Champion and world record holder - to be able to perform like that after nearly 4 years out with serious injuries was truly amazing. **Luke Adams**, also returning after a serious leg operation, also put himself on the line, going out hard and lasting in the lead group for 25km (passed in 1:49:27) before slowing. Like Deakes, retirement was not an option and he gutsed it out to finish 23rd in 3:53:41.

Olympic 20km Walk Women, The Mall, London, Saturday 11th August 2012

The women's Olympic 20km walk was held on the same day as the men's 50km but with a late afternoon start time of 5PM. Sadly, it became a race which showcased Russian drug taking at its best, Olga Kaniskina fighting it out with Elena Lashmanova, way out in front. While Lashmanova's gold medal performance stands, justice was served with the subsequent purging of the results for Kaniskina (2nd) and Kiryapkina (5th). The results now show Chinese walkers **Shenjie Qieyang** and **Hong Liu** as the minor medallists. It had been a wonderful games for the Chinese walkers.

Olympic 20km Women, London, Saturday 11 th August 2012			
1.	Elena Lashmanova	RUS	1:25:02
2.	Shenjie Qieyang	CHN	1:25:16
3.	Hong Liu	CHN	1:26:00
...			
15.	Regan Lamble	AUS	1:30:08
26.	Beki Lee	AUS	1:32:14
-	Claire Tallent	AUS	DQ

And what of our 3 Australian competitors. **Claire Tallent** was sitting in a group of 3 walkers occupying positions 8-10 when she was disqualified at the 13km mark. She had powered through the 10km mark in a 36 sec PB time of 43:43 and looked on target for somewhere around 1:28:00. I did feel so sorry for her as she was walking superbly. **Regan Lamble** and **Beki Lee** also walked inspired races, going through the 10km mark in PB times of 44:22 and 45:39 and finishing 15th with 1:30:08 (a PB of 1:31) and 26th with 1:32:14 (a PB of 0:55) respectively.

Australian Winter 20km Championships
Adelaide Parklands, Adelaide, Sunday 26th August 2012

After a week of rain, the weather cleared just in time for the annual Australian Roadwalking Championship meet in Adelaide, allowing perfect racing conditions on a fast 2km circuit in the parklands alongside the Torrens River. With around 150 walkers in attendance, it was a successful carnival in every way.

The first events to kick off at 8PM were the Open 20km championships. We were very excited to see Olympians **Jared** and **Claire Tallent** on the start line but on this occasion it was Claire who provided the highlight, winning the women's title with an excellent 1:31:12, some 7 minutes ahead of **Cheryl Webb**, with **Lyn Ventris** taking the bronze with 1:40:41 and breaking her own W55 World Record. Jared was happy to just participate, racing in third place for some 12km before stepping off the track. By that stage, **Dane Bird-Smith** and **Rhydian Cowley** had cleared out and they stormed home to take first and second places with 1:23:28 and 1:24:34 (a big PB).

1	Dane Bird-Smith	QLD	1:23:28
2	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	1:24:34
3	Brendon Reading	ACT	1:30:42
4	Nick Dewar	QLD	1:31:35
5	Kim Mottrom	SA	1:31:50
6	Brandon Dewar	QLD	1:31:56
7	Daniel Coleman	QLD	1:33:38
8	Kyle Malone	NSW	1:37:23
9	Andrew Jamieson	VIC	1:41:52
10	Derek Mulhearn	NSW	1:42:42
11	Justin Hill	SA	1:43:16
12	Simon Evans	VIC	1:45:33
13	Peter Crump	SA	1:51:41
14	Anthony Albanese	NSW	1:58:22
15	David Smyth	WA	1:59:51
16	Robin Whyte	ACT	2:04:57
17	David Best	WA	2:19:38
-	Jared Tallent	VIC	DNF
-	Jason Kozica	VIC	DQ

1	Claire Tallent	SA	1:31:12
2	Cheryl Webb	NSW	1:38:41
3	Lyn Ventris	WA	1:40:41
4	Michelle Laufer	VIC	1:50:05
5	Sarah Brennan	VIC	1:53:07
6	Kirstin Shaw	VIC	1:58:38
7	Allegra Steele	SA	2:13:00

Australia had fared poorly overall in the 2012 Olympics and much soul searching was undertaken by the various local sporting administrations. For its part, Athletics Australia decided to terminate its AIS scholarship program, opting instead to setup a different funding model. For the AIS based walkers, it was a savage blow. Their program would be terminated in early 2013 and they would then be thrown back on their own devices. The obvious thing for most was to move back to their home States and source part time work to fill the financial gap. A number acted immediately.

AIS walks coach **Brent Vallance** terminated his AIS coaching role at the end of the year after a 10 year spell (2003-2012). He moved to Melbourne and took up a senior teaching/admin role with Maribyrnong Secondary College in that city.

Nathan Deakes announced his racewalking retirement. With a new baby in the family, he was ready to move onto a new life. He had been an AIS athlete since the late nineties.

Adam Rutter also announced his retirement, terminated his walks scholarship and moved back to Sydney. He had come to the AIS in January 2003, the same year as Vallance and they would both leave at the same time.

Chris Erickson terminated his AIS scholarship and moved back to Melbourne. With a 14 month old son, the time was right for he and his wife to return to their home town and move closer to their respective families. From a personal perspective, I was excited and I dusted off the bike, drink bottles to the ready. Erickson had been at the AIS for 6 years (2007-2012).

Jared and Claire Tallent terminated their scholarships and moved to Adelaide, where Claire's family lived. Jared had been at the AIS since 2004.

A number of walkers decided to hang in on scholarship for the remaining time, as the program was wound down - **Luke Adams, Blake Steele, Beki Lee, Regan Lamble, Jess Rothwell** and **Rachel Tallent**. They had until April 2013, when the program would be completely closed down.

It was a disappointing time and history has now proved the folly in this decision. Eight years later, our walking stocks are vastly depleted, from both a quality and a depth perspective. We are no longer the racewalking power that we were during those heady times. Nor do I see signs of a change in our fortunes any time soon.

Australian 50km Championship Fawkner Park, Melbourne, Sunday 9th December 2012

The 2012 Australian 50km championship was held early on the morning of Sunday 9th December in Melbourne after a 37°C Saturday. Thank goodness, the Sunday morning was cool and overcast with the occasional flurry of wind, just about perfect for the walkers who assembled for the 7AM start time at Fawkner Park.

The result was an interesting one, with **Luke Adams** winning in an A Qualifying time of 3:57:24, thus ensuring a spot beside Jared Tallent in the 2013 World Championship 50km. **Ian Rayson** staked a claim for the third and final spot after crossing the line second in 4:00:39, also an A Qualifying time. The big loser from the race was **Chris Erickson** who was forced to withdraw at 36km, meaning he would need to chase a 50km time somewhere else if he was to stake his own claim for the third World Champs spot.

Australian 50km Championship, Melbourne, Sun 9th Dec 2012			
1.	Luke Adams	AIS/NSW	3:57:24
2.	Ian Rayson	NSW	4:00:39
-	Simon Evans	VIC	DNF
-	Andrew Jamieson	VIC	DNF
-	Chris Erickson	VIC	DNF