

This completes my series of articles which follow the history of the Australasian and Australian racewalking championships (along with other particularly significant races). This final chapter covers the years 2017-2020.

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Our story continues from 2017.

2017 Australian Summer Roadwalk Championships North Adelaide Parklands, Adelaide, Sunday 19th February 2017

With the Australian/Oceania Roadwalk championships following on so soon after the recently completed Supernova Study at the AIS in Canberra, anticipation was high. Apart from the strong Australian contingent of walkers, the 20km fields boasted 18 overseas walkers (14 men and 4 women) from across the world – from Chile, Canada, Poland, USA, Lithuania, Japan, South Africa, Great Britain, Spain and New Zealand. The 7AM start time had been chosen to mitigate against the usually hot summer conditions in Adelaide but it was not needed on this occasion. It was cool and overcast with an expected top temperature of an unseasonably cool 21°C.

The 2km lap in the North Adelaide Parklands was wide and relatively flat, apart from a small downhill at one end. But performances indicated that the walkers coped well with the rise and fall in the course and there were many PBs on the day. Overall, 49 walkers competed in the meet, the best numbers seen for some years.

Immediately from the gun, **Evan Dunfee** (CAN) and **Dane Bird-Smith** strode to the front, with a large group on their heels. The pace was relatively sedate for the first two laps, with 4km passed in 16:22. By that stage, the lead group was down to 8, with **Yerko Araya** (CHI), **Artur Brzozowski** and **Jakub Jelonek** (POL), **Quentin Rew** (NZ) and **Lebogang Shange** and **Wayne Snyman** (SA) all shadowing the leading two. At 7km, Bird-Smith and Dunfee increased the pace, creating a vital break on the others, and by the 8km mark, it was Bird-Smith on his own in front (32:38), with Dunfee 4 seconds in arrears. From then on, it was just a case of how big the winning margin would be.

While Bird-Smith stormed home to win with an equal PB of 1:19:37, the battle for the minor medals was not decided until the dying laps. Although Dunfee looked set for second, he slowed from around 16km, being caught first by Shange (1:21:00) and then by Rew (1:21:12), who stormed home to break his own New Zealand national record, and finally by Brzozowski (1:21:16). Dunfee had to be content with fifth place with 1:21:22.

With a second half split of 38:58, Bird-Smith had too much speed for his rivals. **Rhydian Cowley** was the next best of the Australians in 9th place (1:22:09), just 2 seconds outside his PB and with a time that would guarantee him a spot in that year's World Championships in London. Further back in 12th place, **Brendon Reading** bettered his 2011 PB with 1:24:37 and would now have to decide whether to chase a London qualifier in the 20km or the 50km. The youngest walkers in the field also performed well, with 18 year old **Tyler Jones** (1:27:12) and 19 year old **Adam Garganis** (1:27:27 both recording big PBs. With 10th place recording 1:22:15, it was a high quality race.

Australian Summer 20km Men, Adelaide, Sunday 19 th Feb 2017			
1	Dane Bird-Smith	QLD	1:19:37
2	Lebogang Shange	RSA	1:21:00
3	Quentin Rew	NZL	1:21:12
4	Artur Brzozowski	POL	1:21:16
5	Evan Dunfee	CAN	1:21:22
6	Wayne Snyman	RSA	1:21:26
7	Marius Žiukas	LTU	1:21:27
8	Yerko Araya	CHI	1:21:56
9	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	1:22:09
10	Jakub Jelonek	POL	1:22:15
11	Yamamoto Toru	JAP	1:24:32
12	Brendon Reading	ACT	1:24:37
13	Tadas Šuškevičius	LTU	1:25:01
14	Edward Araya	CHI	1:26:06
15	Mathieu Bilodeau	CAN	1:27:04
16	Tyler Jones	NSW	1:27:12
17	Nick Christie	USA	1:27:24
18	Adam Garganis	VIC	1:27:27
19	Carl Gibbons	NSW	1:32:47
20	Jay Felton	NSW	1:35:56
21	Bradley Simpson	VIC	1:37:45
22	Kim Mottrom	SA	1:38:26
23	Pramesh Prasad	VIC	1:45:21
-	Yuichi Yarita	JAP	DQ

The women's 20km saw 5 walkers quickly clear out – **Regan Lamble** (AUS), **Beki Smith** (AUS), **Alana Barber** (NZL), **Bethan Davies** (GBR) and **Brigita Virbalyte-Dimšiene** (LTU) - and it was obvious that the medals would come from this select group of internationals. By 6km (26:53), Lamble had broken away and already had a 30 second lead, so the win looked settled, barring disaster. And no disasters were forthcoming, as she passed the 10km mark in 44:33 and eventually the finish line in 1:29:57, her best time here in Australia. The chasing women never gave up but it was Virbalyte-Dimšiene who eventually cleared out to take second in 1:30:55, ahead of Smith (1:31:23) and Barber (1:32:23) who broke her New Zealand national record for fourth place. The big improvers had to be Australians **Jessica Pickles** (a 3 min PB of 1:37:56) and **Simone McInnes** (a 7 min PB of 1:40:26). Pickles' time was also a World University Games qualifier.

Australian Summer 20km Women, Adelaide, Sunday 19 th Feb 2017			
1	Regan Lamble,	VIC	1:29:58
2	Brigita Virbalyte-Dimšiene	LTU	1:30:55
3	Beki Smith	ACT	1:31:23
4	Alana Barber	NZL	1:32:23
5	Ainhoa Pinedo González	ESP	1:33:39
6	Bethan Davies	GBR	1:35:47
7	Jessica Pickles	QLD	1:37:56
8	Simone McInnes	VIC	1:40:26
9	Christina Papadopoulous	QLD	1:46:02
10	Brenda Gannon	QLD	1:59:01
-	Zoe Hunt	ACT	DNF
-	Samantha Findlay	SA	DNF

2017 Australian Track & Field Championships Sydney Olympic Park Athletic Centre, Homebush, Sydney, NSW, 30 March - 2 April 2017

The Open 10,000m track walks at the 2017 National T&F Championships closed out proceedings on the Friday evening and both wins were outstanding. **Dane Bird-Smith** had won the 2016 National 10,000m with 38:44.61. In 2017, he improved a further 10 secs with an even faster time of 38:34.23. It was his fourth win in a row in this race. Fellow Queenslander **Katie Hayward**, at 16 years of age, became the youngest ever Australian 10,000m race walk champion with her winning time of 45:51.09. Overall, there were PBs galore, many of them by junior walkers. In the men's race,

Tyler Jones, Kyle Swan, Adam Garganis and Luke McCutcheon were all aged 19 or under and all were well under 44 minutes.

10000m Track Walk Men, Sydney, Friday 31st March 2017			
1	Dane Bird-Smith	QLD	38:34.23
2	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	41:35.60
3	Tyler Jones	NSW	42:01.39
4	Kyle Swan	VIC	42:47.31
5	Adam Garganis	VIC	43:10.27
6	Luke McCutcheon	QLD	43:38.83
7	Jay Felton	NSW	44:51.84
8	Carl Gibbons	NSW	44:58.02
9	Jason Kozica	VIC	45:39.56
10	Jamie McCutcheon	QLD	46:36.70
11	Dylan Richardson	NSW	47:55.68
12	Reese Walmsley	VIC	48:27.73
13	Oscar Tebbutt	NSW	49:42.41
-	Kyle Bedford	NSW	DQ

10000m Track Walk Women, Sydney, Friday 31st March 2017			
1	Katie Hayward	QLD	45:51.09
2	Rachel Tallent	VIC	46:24.07
3	Jessica Pickles	QLD	46:31.34
4	Simone McInnes	VIC	47:11.44
5	Tayla-Paige Billington	QLD	48:32.62
6	Katya Martin	QLD	49:31.49
7	Emily Hamilton	VIC	51:03.39
8	Samantha Findlay	SA	53:32.49
-	Beki Smith	NSW	DNF
-	Rhiannon Lovegrove	SA	DNF

At this time, I became aware of an explosive IAAF email, dated 30th March 2017, advising that on April 14th, the IAAF Council would vote on drastic changes to the Olympic and World Championship race walking distances. I did some undercover work to find out what this was all about. It seemed that

- The 50km event would be deleted in future World Cup/World Championship and Olympics
- The 20km event would also be discontinued in all the above competitions
- These events would be replaced by a half marathon road walk and a mixed gender 4x5000m track walk relay.

This would take effect after the World Race Walking Teams Championships in May 2018. So that would be the last international 50km championship.

This marked the start of a long grass roots campaign to save the 20km and 50km walks. Part of this had to involve the inclusion of a women's 50km walk in the major championships. I won't go into further details here. You can follow the timelines in this ongoing drama at <http://www.vrwc.org.au/save-the-50km.shtml>.

51st Lake Burley Griffin Carnival Stromlo State Forest Park, Canberra, Sunday 11th June 2017

The 51st edition of the Lake Burley Griffin Carnival saw the event move away from Lake Burley Griffin in favour of the Stromlo Forest Park. This was a tough decision for ACTRWC but had been forced upon them by the ever increasing demands of the ACT council. The iconic 10 Miles course around the Lake now had too much motor, cycle and foot traffic to contend with. For 2017, the 10M and 20M would be contested on a 1km loop in Stromlo State Forest Park. 2017 saw LBG suffer another major blow with the Australian Masters T&F Championships being contested on the same weekend in Darwin, thus taking away many of the masters walkers. These two factors meant the smallest carnival fields in recent memory, with the 10 Miles and 20 Miles fields especially effected. The slow times reflected the dearth of top line walkers in attendance. Former Australian international **Darren Bown** turned back the clock with his win.

LBG 20 Miles Walk, Canberra, Sunday 11th June 2017			
1	Darren Bown	SARWC	2:57:56
2	Ignacio Jimenez	RWQ	3:05:52
3	Peter Crump	SARWC	3:20:52
4	Peter Bennett	RWQ	3:26:46
5	Robin Whyte	ACTW	3:38:16
6	Argenis Guevara	RWQ	3:44:22
7	Karyn O'Neill (F)	RWV	3:54:37
8	Val Chesterton (F)	ACTW	5:07:53
-	Terry O'Neill	RWV	DQ

16th IAAF World Championships London, UK, 4-13 August

On Sunday 13th August, all four 2017 World Championship racewalks were staged on The Mall, St James Park, over a flat and fast 2km loop. Crowds were good and the weather was perfect.

World Championships 50km Men, The Mall, London, Sunday 13th August, 7:45AM

The men's and women's 50km walks were first up, being held concurrently, with a start time of 7:45AM. Unfortunately, a late withdrawal by Australia's **Jared Tallent** was a big disappointment for Australians. With Chris Erickson withdrawing a couple of months previously and effectively retiring, it meant no Aussies in the race for the first time in living memory!

But absentees were soon forgotten as World Champion **Johann Diniz** of France strode to the front, as he did in Rio in 2016 and made the race his own. On his sixth attempt, he became world champion on the same course that had left him leaning on a tree in despair five years before at the 2012 Olympics. This time the Frenchman needed no support as he led from gun to tape to lap nearly the entire field. As he basked in the Sunday sunshine, Diniz also became the oldest ever winner of the event, just shy of his 40th birthday. His time of 3:33:12 was a championship record and the second-fastest time in history. He might have been even closer to that world mark had he not high-fived supporters over the last kilometre that served as a virtual lap of glory. He spent as much time first making a scarf out of the tricolour thrown at him as anything else, before brandishing it above his head as he strolled over the winning line. Japan showed its depth with **Harooki Arai** second and **Kai Kobayashi** third, after the pair broke away from the rest shortly after 36km. And a special mention to NZ's **Quentin Rew** who finished 12th with 3:46:29, a 2 min PB and a time that finally bettered Craig Barrett's national record.

World Champs 50km Men, London, Sunday 13th August 2017			
1	Yohann Diniz	FRA	3:33:12
2	Hiroki Arai	JPN	3:41:17
3	Kai Kobayashi	JPN	3:41:19

World Championships 50km Women, The Mall, London, Sunday 13th August, 7:45AM

This was the big one as far as I was concerned – the very first official 50km world championship for women. Only added at the last minute, the event saw Portuguese walker **Ines Henriques** breeze home to become the first women's world 50km race walk champion – and at the same time pocket a handsome \$160,000 for her win and world record of 4:05:56. She had taken the plunge into the longer distance in January to set the initial mark of 4:08:26, but easily reset that by more than two minutes to take gold from China's **Yin Hang** and teammate **Yang Shuqing** on a hot Sunday morning as the seven women rubbed shoulders with the men's race that took place at the same time. Rewind to May and the European Cup in Podebrady, and Henriques was in tears after being disqualified at 20km. This time it was all beams and smiles as she took the finishing line.

World Champs 50km Women, London, Sunday 13th Aug 2017			
1	Ines Henriques	POR	4:05:56
2	Hang Yin	CHN	4:08:58
3	Shuqing Yang	CHN	4:20:49

World Championships 20km Women, The Mall, London, Sunday 13th August, 12:20PM

A dramatic last 100m saw leader **Lyu Xiuzhi** disqualified, leaving Chinese team-mate **Yang Jiayu** to take gold in the women's 20km race walk. A cracking race had come down to just four when the afterburners were lit at 16km, and the order of medals was still undecided with the line in sight. Lyu and Yan put the hammer down to forge a tiny gap between them and **Maria Guadalupe González** and **Antonella Palmisano**.

Of the 3 Australians, **Regan Lamble** finished best, with 22nd place (1:31:30), ahead of **Beki Smith** (38th 1:35:31) and **Claire Tallent** (43rd 1:37:05). There is a footnote for all new mothers wondering if they should get back into sport. Less than two months after giving birth to her first child, a delighted **Claire Tallent** went over to husband Jared after she had finished the race and collected baby Harvey to show off to the TV cameras and spectators on the course.

1	Jiayu Yang	CHN	1:26:18
2	Maria Guadalupe Gonzalez	MEX	1:26:19
3	Antonella Palmisano	ITA	1:26:36
...			
22	Regan Lamble	AUS	1:31:30
38	Beki Smith	AUS	1:35:31
43	Claire Tallent	AUS	1:37:05

World Championships 20km Men, The Mall, London, Sunday 13th August, 2:20PM

The men's 20km was the last of the events to be contested in what was billed as the Festival of Walks. From my own perspective, I thought the single day format was very successful and I would love to see it continue in future championships.

All good things come to those who work and wait, as **Eider Arevalo** discovered in the 20km race walk. A last-lap sprint saw the Colombian create a gap to neutral **Sergei Shirobokov**, then celebrate with his national flag as he approached the finish, albeit keeping one eye on the second placed walker who finished just two seconds back. Aravelo's 1:18:53 finish was remarkable not just for the area record that came with it, but in heat that seemed a lot more intense than the listed 22°C. Behind the pair, Brazil's **Ciao Bonfim** rallied to deny **Lebogang Shange** a brave bronze. Someone who harboured hopes of a medal was Germany's **Christopher Linke**. But after a sizzling year where he won twice in the Czech Republic, the German suffered in the heat for fifth, and this time it was disappointment also for **Dane Bird-Smith** whose breakthrough bronze at the 2016 Olympics was slower than his 1:19:28 PB here for sixth. Australia's only other competitor, **Rhydian Cowley**, finished 56th with 1:30:40.

1	Eider Aravelo	COL	1:18:53
2	Sergey Shirabokov	ANA	1:18:55
3	Caio Bonfim	BRA	1:19:04
...			
6	Dane Bird-Smith	AUS	1:19:28
56	Rhydian Cowley	AUS	1:30:40

XXIX Summer Universiade

Taipei, Taiwan from 19-30 August 2017

The XXIX Summer Universiade took place in Taipei, Taiwan, from 19th to 30th August 2017. **Jessica Pickles** was the only walker to race, but she was disqualified in the women's 20km Walk.

2017 Australian Roadwalk Championships

Wollongong, NSW, Sunday 27th August

The 2017 Australian Roadwalk Championships were held in Wollongong, in rural NSW. The Winter 20km Championships saw wins to **Michael Hosking** (1:25:13) and **Claire Tallent** (1:37:54). For Hosking, it was his first race since March 2016 and marked a welcome return to competition. The men's 20km saw a lot of our junior walkers in action, with PBs to **Tyler Jones** (1:27:07) and **Declan Tingay** (1:28:10) and an inaugural finish to **Luke McCutcheon**

(1:31:52). With spots on offer for Commonwealth Games and World Racewalking Team Championships next year, these walkers were all putting up their hands with good early form.

Australian 20km Men, Wollongong, Sunday 27th Aug 2017			
1	Hosking, Michael	VIC	1:25:13
2	Jones, Tyler	NSW	1:27:07
3	Reading, Brendon	ACT	1:27:13
4	Tingay, Declan	WA	1:28:10
5	Mccutcheon, Luke	QLD	1:31:52
6	Griggs, Matthew	ACT	1:38:24
7	Duncan, Andrew	WA	1:42:09
8	Barendregt, Travis	NSW	2:13:55
9	Durr, Greg	ACT	2:16:09
-	Gibbons, Carl	NSW	DNF

Australian 20km Women, Wollongong, Sunday 27th Aug 2017			
1	Tallent, Claire	SA	1:37:54
2	Barendregt, Amanda	NSW	2:02:50

Australian 50km Championship Fawkner Park, Melbourne, Sunday 17th December 2017

What a difference a fortnight can make. The Australian 50km championship meet, initially scheduled on Sunday 3rd December 2017, had to be cancelled due to catastrophic weather forecasts. Fast forward 14 days and competitors were treated to an overnight low of 17°C and an expected maximum temperature of 26°C, not too bad for Melbourne in summer and definitely a vast improvement! Sadly, the two week postponement cause havoc from a numbers perspective, with only 28 of the original 52 meet entrants, along with one new entrant, actually making it to the start line. The 50km was most effected, with the original fields of 4 men and 1 woman reduced to a single male walker, **Perseus Karlström** of Sweden. He must have felt a bit lonely during the first hour before the 20km walkers joined him on the fast flat 2km circuit in Fawkner Park, but Karlstrom was up to the challenge, with his final time of 3:44:35 bettering the Swedish Record of 3:44:49 (Bo Gustafsson, 1988) and improving his own 2013 PB by an amazing 8 minutes and 8 seconds. The 10km splits from the race tell the story of his race: 45:38, 45:04, 44:49, 44:29 and 44:35. It was a masterful performance. Unfortunately, he could not claim it as a Swedish record as he was the only starter.

50km Men Aust Championship, Melbourne, Sun 17th Dec 2017			
1	Karlström, Perseus	SWE	3:44:35

2018

2018 Australian 10,000m Walk Championship AIS Athletics Track, Canberra, Sunday 14th January 2018

The Australian 10,000m Track Walk Championships were held in Canberra on 14th January 2018, rather than with the Australian T&F Championships in February as a scheduling then would have clashed with the Adelaide 20km. With so many high quality international walkers gathered in Canberra for the annual Supernova study and camp, the races were eagerly anticipated. One of the few imponderables was whether the unpredictable Australian summer weather would come to the party, given that Canberra had been sweltering in very hot weather only a couple of days previously. But come to the party it did, with a cool Canberra morning in the mid teens, along with a blustery wind and occasional sunshine. Sure the wind was a bit tough but it was just about a best case scenario for the assembled athletes.

The women's 10,000m was first up at 8AM, with 15 starters, including Lithuania's **Brigita Virbalyta** and New Zealand's **Alana Barber**. Defending champion **Katie Hayward** was also a starter, hoping to defend her title which she won the previous year with 45:51.09. The view seemed to be that a significantly faster time would be needed to claim victory in this year's race but spectators were surprised by the sedate early pace (9:35 at the 2000m mark and 18:54 at the 4000m mark). Hayward had shared the lead with 2012 Olympian **Beki Lee** up till this stage but it was then Victorian **Jemima Montag** who took over the pacemaking, leading them through the half way mark in 23:25 and gradually put-

ting pressure on what was a shrinking lead group. Just after the 6000m mark, Smith surged to the front and the pace quickened still further. The lead group was soon reduced to four - Smith, Montag, Barber and **Claire Tallent**. With final laps of 1:43 and 1:40, it was Smith who took first place (45:56), some 7 secs ahead of Barber (46:03), with Tallent 46:06) and Montag (46:18) rounding out the top placings.

10,000m Walk Women, Canberra, Sunday 14th January 2018			
1	Smith, Beki	NSW	45:56.00
2	Barber, Alana	NZL	46:03.24
3	Tallent, Claire	SA	46:06.50
4	Montag, Jemima	VIC	46:18.42
5	Virbalyt, Brigita	LTU	47:01.08
6	Hayward, Katie	QLD	47:05.36
7	Lamble, Regan	VIC	47:25.63
8	McInnes, Simone	VIC	47:37.51
9	Pickles, Jessica	QLD	47:44.15
10	Pitcher, Allanah	NSW	50:50.75
11	Huse, Philippa	VIC	51:02.40
12	Pengilley, Teegan	NSW	54:58.75
13	O'Neill, Molly	NSW	56:31.75
14	Goodhew, Chelsea	NSW	56:35.62
-	Myers, Natalie	GBR	DNF

The men's 10,000m championship was up next at 9:25AM, with a big field of 30 starters, of whom 15 were internation- als. The race was expected to between Sweden's **Perseus Karlstrom** and Canada's **Evan Dunfee** and it was no surprise when they led the field through a fast first 1000m (4:01). By that stage, the leading pack was down to five - Karlstrom and Dunfee, along with **Marius Ziukas** (LTU), **Quentin Rew** (NZL) and **Yerko Araya** (CHI), with Australians **Declan Tingay** and **Rhydian Cowley** amongst the chasers. Around the 4000m mark, Karlstrom put in a couple of slightly faster laps and the break was made. From then on, it was a one horse race, with the Swede gradually extending his lead, passing the half way in 19:42 and going on to win with 39:22. Dunfee took second with 40:11, ahead of a fast finishing Ziukas (40:43). Cowley was the first of the Australians to finish (40:59) but he picked up a third red card very late in the race and was subsequently docked one minute as per the pit lane rule. That meant that the second Australian finisher Tingay (a big PB 41:07 at 18 years of age) was awarded the Australian gold and Cowley was relegated to second place. The third Australian to finish was **Adam Garganis** (43:05).

10,000m Walk Men, Canberra, Sunday 14th January 2018			
1	Perseus Karlstrom	SWE	39:22.41
2	Evan Dunfee	CAN	40:11.80
3	Marius Ziukas	LTU	40:43.17
4	Yerko Ignacio Ara	CHI	40:48.94
5	Quentin Rew	NZL	40:51.55
6	Declan Tingay	WA	41:07.88
7	Rhydian Cowley (1 min)	VIC	41:59.33
8	Rafal Augustyn	POL	42:51.07
9	Anders Hansson	SWE	42:54.95
10	Adam Garganis	VIC	43:05.62
11	Rafal Fedaczyński	POL	43:12.43
12	Damian Blocki	POL	43:40.31
13	Brendon Reading	ACT	44:09.48
14	Jakub Jelonek	POL	44:17.57
15	Yamamoto Toru	JPN	44:46.53
16	Artur Brzozowski	POL	44:51.01
17	Tadas Suskevicius	LTU	45:07.98
18	Carl Gibbons	NSW	45:14.20
19	Luke McCutcheon	QLD	45:31.25
20	Edward Ignacio Ar	CHI	45:36.29
21	Mitchell Baker	ACT	45:37.73
22	Oscar Tebbutt	NSW	46:09.92
23	Dylan Richardson	NSW	46:18.95
24	Kyle Swan	VIC	46:19.11
25	Connor Frew	NSW	47:20.78

26	Remo Karlström	SWE	47:46.84
27	Timothy Fraser	ACT	47:54.26
28	Ryan Thomson	NSW	50:15.01
29	Jack McGinniskin	NSW	50:15.23
30	Callum Burns	ACT	50:55.47

Australian Summer Roadwalk Championships North Adelaide Parklands, Adelaide, Sunday 11th February 2018

2018 was the fourth year in a row that Adelaide had hosted this meet, which included Oceania Open 20km and U20 10km roadwalk championships, along with the Australian Commonwealth Games and IAAF World Race Walking Team Championships trials. It also marked the final activity in the AIS based Supernova Study camp and saw a large contingent of international walkers in action. So all in all, the stage was set for a wonderful morning of racing.

The first races to get underway were the men's and women's 20km championships, starting at 7AM in perfect conditions – overcast, still and with a temperature around 15°C. The men's 20km saw the main contenders **Evan Dunfee** (CAN), **Dane Bird-Smith** (AUS), **Perseus Karlstrom** (SWE), **Yerko Cortes** (CHI), **Marius Liukas** (LTU) and **Quentin Rew** (NZL) all part of a large lead group that passed through the first 2km lap in a sedate 8:22. One surprise walker in the group was **Michael Hosking** (AUS) who looked to be setting himself up for a great time. The leaders remained in close formation for the next few laps, with various walkers talking their turns in front. The decisive move came at 9km as Dunfee and Karlstrom broke clear. The chasing group soon fragmented as the laps quickly dropped to around 8 mins. The half way mark was passed in 40:39, with the two leaders gradually stretching their lead. The race complexion quickly changed at 11km as Dunfee was forced to stop with a hamstring niggle, leaving Karlstrom out in front, ahead of Liukas and then Cortes, followed by Rew. By the 17km mark, Liukas had caught Karlstrom and the race looked set for an exciting finish. And that is how it panned out, with Karlstrom winning the final sprint by the narrowest of margins, the times being recorded as 1:20:30 and 1:20:31. Cortes was third with 1:21:31, ahead of Rew who took first in the Oceania championship. Defending champion Bird-Smith was well off the pace, struggling badly with a heavy cold. To his credit, he fought it out to the end, finishing fifth with 1:22:18 to take the Australian title. Hosking was next to finish with a huge PB of 1:23:10, almost certainly ensuring an Australian Commonwealth Games berth alongside Bird-Smith. **Rhydian Cowley** was the next Australian to finish, with 1:24:54, and would have to wait on the selectors re the possible third Commonwealth Games berth. **Adam Garganis** was the best of the other Australians with a big PB (1:26:20), and he looked to have sewn up a World Cup berth with his effort.

Australian 20km Champ Men, Adelaide, Sun 11 th Feb 2018			
1	Perseus Karlstrom	SWE	1:20:30
2	Marius Liukas	LTU	1:20:31
3	Yerko Cortes	CHI	1:21:31
4	Quentin Rew	NZ	1:21:55
5	Dane Bird-Smith	QLD	1:22:18
6	Michael Hosking	VIC	1:23:10
7	Rafal Augustyn	POL	1:23:53
8	Rafal Fedaczyski	POL	1:24:23
9	Damien Blocki	POL	1:24:41
10	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	1:24:54
11	Anders Hansson	SWE	1:25:51
12	Tadas Suskevicius	LTU	1:26:09
13	Adam Garganis	VIC	1:26:20
14	Edward Cortes	CHI	1:26:41
15	Jakub Jelonek	POL	1:27:19
16	Brendon Reading	ACT	1:27:29
17	Artur Brzozowski	POL	1:28:07
18	Carl Gibbons	NSW	1:32:07
19	Toru Yamamoto	JPN	1:32:30
20	Jason Kozica	VIC	1:33:54
-	Tyler Jones	NSW	DNF
-	Evan Dunfee	CAN	DNF
-	Edmund Sim	SIN	DQ
-	Pramesh Prasad	VIC	DNF

The women's 20km race saw a couple of slow opening laps, with **Claire Tallent** and **Jemima Montag** leading a large group through the 4km mark with 18:44. It was not until around the 8km mark that the pace started to pick up and, by the time the 10km mark was reached in 46:15, the leading group had been reduced to three, with **Beki Smith**, Tallent and Montag in control. By 14km, Tallent had dropped off and it seemed a battle between Smith and Montag. Positions remained unchanged until the 17km mark when Smith was able to force a slight break. And that was the way they finished, with little between the three, Smith first (1:31:23), Montag second (PB 1:31:26) and Tallent third (1:31:29), all coming home strongly with big negative splits. **Alana Barber** (NZL) finished a strong fourth with a PB 1:32:19 ahead of **Regan Lamble** (1:33:40), **Brigitia Virbalyte-Dimšiene** (1:33:54) and **Rachel Tallent** (1:35:18). With regard to the Commonwealth Games, the first 3 women now seemed to be in the box seat.

Australian 20km Champ Women, Adelaide, Sun 11th Feb 2018			
1	Beki Smith	NSW	1:31:23
2	Jemima Montag	VIC	1:31:26
3	Claire Tallent	SA	1:31:29
4	Alana Barber	NZ	1:32:19
5	Regan Lamble	VIC	1:33:40
6	Brigitia Virbalyte-Dimšiene	LTU	1:33:54
7	Rachel Tallent	ACT	1:35:18
8	Jessica Pickles	QLD	1:37:13
9	Kelly Ruddick	VIC	1:37:24
10	Christina Papadopoulos	QLD	1:38:54
11	Simone McInnes	VIC	1:39:17
12	Rozie Robinson	NZ	1:51:51
13	Emily Hamilton	VIC	1:55:29
-	Clara Smith	QLD	DNF
-	Sibon Fuzzard	VIC	DNF

The Australian team for the 2018 World Team Championships was announced in mid March. While it was pleasing to see full U20 teams, the dearth of 50km walkers saw Claire Tallent as the only one in the team – no men at all!

Open 20km Women:	Beki Smith (NSW)	Jemima Montag (VIC)	Rachel Tallent (VIC)
Open 50km Women:	Claire Tallent (SA)		
Open 20km Men:	Dane Bird-Smith (QLD)	Michael Hosking (VIC)	Rhydian Cowley (VIC)
	Adam Garganis (VIC)	Brendon Reading (ACT)	
U20 Women 10km:	Katie Hayward (QLD)	Rebecca Henderson (VIC)	Phillipa Huse (VIC)
U20 Men 10km:	Declan Tingay (WA)	Kyle Swan (VIC)	Mitchell Baker (ACT)

XXI Commonwealth Games Gold Coast, Queensland, 4-15 April 2018

The 2018 Commonwealth Games were held on the Gold Coast, Queensland, in April. It was the fifth time Australia had hosted the Commonwealth Games and the first time a major multi-sport event had achieved gender equality by having an equal number of events for male and female athletes. The XXI Commonwealth Games 20km walks were held on a Sunday morning on a 1km course alongside the Carrumbin beachfront in the southern Gold Coast area. Crowds numbering in the thousands lined the course, with vocal support for the various countries represented.

20km Walk Men, 7AM, Sunday 8 April

The men's 20km was first up at 7AM, with the temperature already in the low twenties and quickly building, as the early morning sun made its presence felt. The pace was on from the start, with a first lap of 4:10 followed by laps consistently under the 4 minute mark. Favourites **Dane Bird-Smith** (AUS) and **Tom Bosworth** (ENG) led out, and by 5km (20:07), the leading group was down to 6, with **Ben Thorne** (CAN), **Samuel Gathimba** (KEN), **Simon Wachira** (KEN) and **Manish Singh** (IND) the only other walkers left in contention. It was surprising to see that **Legogang Shange** (RSA) and **Evan Dunfee** (CAN) had already dropped off the pace.

By 8km (32:04), the lead pack was down to 4, with Bird-Smith, Bosworth, Gathimba and Thorne all taking turns to push the pace. The 10km mark was passed in 39:57, with all 4 still in contention. By 15km (59:48), Thorne had dropped behind and it was down to a final three to fight out the medals. Fast forward to 18km with no real change, all three still

looking in control and thinking of a win. It was in the 19th kilometre that the Kenyan finally started to fall back, leaving it to Bird-Smith and Bosworth to fight for gold. It was fitting that the first athletics gold medal would be fought out between Australia and England, the top two countries in the overall medal count.

It was not until the bottom turn in the last lap that Bird-Smith could break free, unleashing a withering final 300m burst to take gold with 1:19:34, 4 secs clear of Bosworth with 1:19:38, a new PB and a new British record. The final lap was 3:41, with most of the pace injected in the final sprint to the line. Bird-Smith was rewarded with a new Commonwealth Games record, beating Nathan Deakes' 2006 winning time of 1:19:55. It was perhaps fitting that Deakes was handing out the medals at the subsequent medals presentation.

Third place went to Gathimba with 1:19:51, nearly a minute clear of Thorne, who finished fourth with 1:20:49. As expected, **Quentin Rew** (NZL) walked a well judged race to finish 5th with 1:21:47, ahead of Singh of India with 1:22:20. **Michael Hosking** and **Rhydian Cowley** both walked solid races, finishing 10th (1:25:35) and 11th (1:26:12). Hosking in particular had gone out hard early with the leading group, passing the 10km mark in a very quick 41:03 and looking on target for a big PB. The second half was tough for both of them but they fought it out to the end.

Commonwealth Games 20km Walk Men, Sun 8th Apr 2018				
1	Dane Bird-Smith	AUS	1:19:34	GR
2	Tom Bosworth	ENG	1:19:38	
3	Samuel Gathimba	KEN	1:19:51	
4	Benjamin Thorne	CAN	1:20:49	
5	Quentin Rew	NZL	1:21:47	
6	Manish Singh	IND	1:22:22	
7	Callum Wilkinson	ENG	1:22:35	
8	Evan Dunfee	CAN	1:23:26	
9	Lebogang Shange	RSA	1:23:27	
10	Michael Hosking	AUS	1:25:35	
11	Rhydian cowley	AUS	1:26:12	
12	Simon Warhira	KEN	1:26:33	
13	Irfan Kolothum Thodi	INDI	1:27:34	
14	Wayne Snyman	RSA	1:28:09	
15	Jerome Caprice	MRI	1:33:12	

20km Walk Women, 9:15AM, Sunday 8 April

The women's 20km, which started at 9:15AM, was a more torrid affair, with the temperature already 27°C and rising. On a course with little or no shade and with the sun now at full strength, it was little surprise to see a very slow first lap of around 5 minutes. But the jockeying for positions stopped there, with **Jemima Montag** (AUS) and **Alana Barber** (NZL) taking the initiative and reeling off laps of 4:37, 4:36, 4:30 and 4:32. By the time the 5km mark was reached in 23:15, the lead pack was down to 7. Within one further lap, the lead group was down to 4, with **Beki Smith** (AUS) and **Claire Tallent** (AUS) the only ones able to stay with Montag and Barber. Montag broke away to a small lead around the 8km mark, and the injection of pace was enough to drop Smith from the group. It was now down to three, with the remaining two Australians and the New Zealander all looking strong.

By the 10km mark, reached in 46:00, Barber had dropped off and was 14 secs in arrears, with Lee some 35 secs further back. Tallent was on two reds so was in dangerous territory, but she did not bat an eyelid, continuing to force the pace alongside Montag. By 12km, Montag had attempted another break and had opened a gap of 2 seconds to Tallent. The lead had extended to 6 seconds by the 14km mark and Montag looked set for gold. Alas, her pace started to slow around the 16km mark, allowing Tallent to slowly bridge the gap. They passed the 17km mark together and the race looked set for an exciting finish. In the next km, it was Tallent who took the initiative, working to a lead of around 15km at the 18km mark. She looked strong! But disaster struck as she passed the start/finish line, with the chief judge showing her the red paddle, confirming that she has picked up her third red. She had given her all in the quest for gold, only to have it snatched from her in the final stages.

This left Montag well in front and she enjoyed the moment, smiling and waving as she worked her way to the finish to win with 1:32:50, only 4 secs outside Jane Saville's 2006 Commonwealth Games record. She would surely have taken the record if she had wanted it but it seemed that the gold was sufficient for the 20 year old Melbourne walker. Barber had walked on her own for the second half of the race but no one was ever going to catch her as she crossed the line in second place with 1:34:18. **Bethan Davies** (WAL) came through to take the bronze with 1:36:08, ahead of **Khushbir**

Kaur (IND) with 1:39:21 and **Emma Bridge** (ENG) with 1:39:31. Smith eventually finished in 6th with 1:41:41, obviously disappointed but still waving to the crowd and smiling. Great sportsmanship!

Commonwealth Games 20km Walk Women, Sun 8th Apr 2018			
1	Jemima Montag	AUS	1:32:50
2	Alana Barber	NZL	1:34:18
3	Bethan Davies	WAL	1:36:08
4	Khushbir Kaur	IND	1:39:21
5	Gemma Bridge	ENG	1:39:31
6	Beki Smith	AUS	1:40:41
7	Heather Lewis	WAL	1:41:45
8	Grace Wanjiru Njue	KEN	1:42:23
9	Erika Kelly	IOM	1:47:29
10	Fadekemi Olude	NGR	1:49:31
11	Lindah Waweru	KEN	1:53:41
-	Soumya Baby	IND	DQ
-	Claire Tallent	AUS	DQ

IAAF Race Walking World Team Championships Taicang, China, 5-6 May 2018

The 2018 IAAF World Race Walking Teams Championships were held in Taicang, China, with 386 athletes from 49 countries entered for what was the year's biggest walks championship. I was lucky enough to be there and was able to watch all the events, including the inaugural women's 50km championship.

World Team Championships 50km Women, 8AM, Saturday 5th May

At the last edition of the IAAF World Race Walking Team Championships, Erin Taylor-Talcott (USA) was the lone woman contesting the 50K, and only after threatening a legal challenge. Two years on, Erin had plenty of company. Thirty-two women sped off at the sound of the starter's gun to tackle the 50km. Whereas Taylor-Talcott's first foray in Rome was in what was then labeled a "mixed" event, the Taicang 50 was contested jointly among men and women, albeit with separate classifications, just as at the London World Championships the previous August.

London's World Champion **Inês Henriques**, who set two world records at the distance in 2017, was the favorite going in, and she led a group of initially seven, then five women for the first half of the race. Her company in this group: London silver medalist **Hang Yin** (China), Yin's teammates **Rui Liang** and **Maocuo Li**, and Australia's **Claire Tallent**. It speaks to the strength of the Chinese Athletics Association women's race walk program that only Yin had been to London 2017. Her other four colleagues were new to the 50km national team.

After 32km, Tallent had to let go of the three Chinese women and it looked like the table was set for an all-Chinese podium. But then the tide turned. Liang's pace was too much for Li, starting in the 41st kilometre. With only five kilometres to go, Li was in second place with two and a half minutes in hand over Tallent. Then Li faltered and Tallent put the hammer down, posting her second-fastest split of the race in the last 5km segment, which was also the second-fastest split for that segment among the 29 race finishers. Only eventual winner Liang would best her, on her way to a new world record of 4:04:36. Tallent's strong finish secured her a podium place. She more than erased her deficit to Li, who dropped back to finish seventh. Tallent also managed to reduce the one-and-a-half minute gap to Yin, falling only 24 seconds shy of earning silver.

World Team Champs 50km Women, Saturday 5th May 2018			
1	Rui Liang	CHN	4:04:36 WR
2	Hang Yin	CHN	4:09:09
3	Claire Tallent	AUS	4:09:33

World Team Championships 50km Men, 8AM, Saturday 5th May

World Champion and world record holder Yohann Diniz and Olympic Champion Matej Toth passed on Taicang to save themselves for their expected duel at the Berlin Euros in August. Andres Choco of Ecuador, Mexicans Jose Leyver Ojedo and Horacio Nava, Finns Veli-Matti Partanen and Jarkko Kinnunen as well as Tadas Suskevicius (Lithuania), Erick Barrondo (Guatemala) and Jose Leonardo Montana (Colombia) all opted to contest the 20km on day 2. Defending

title holder Jared Tallent – nursing a hamstring injury – was present but only to staff the Australian refreshment table. At the other end of the row of tables stood Australian Rio Olympian Chris Erickson, recently retired, to assist Melbourne resident New Zealander Quentin Rew. These three sets of circumstances deprived the men’s race of twelve potential top-ten performers and podium candidates. Despite that, the 59 starters compared favorably to the 60 starters in the 2014 edition of the same race, also held in Taicang, China.

The five Japanese team members established early dominance of the men’s race, making up most of the lead group of seven on the first lap. Only **Perseus Karlström** (Sweden) and **Karl Junghannß** (Germany) were with them. Sixty-seven minutes into the race, **Evan Dunfee** (Canada) had closed to within ten seconds of what had now been reduced to a leading pack of four. Karlström was still up there, together with the three Japanese walkers who walked to silver, bronze and fifth place on London’s Mall last year: **Hirooki Arai**, **Kai Kobayashi** and **Satoshi Maruo**, with **Hayato Katsuki** not far behind. It was indeed a high quality lead group.

It soon became an all-Japan procession, as Arai broke away, followed by Katsuki, with Maruo further back, all clear of the remnants of the chasing pack. Arai, the man who had set the pace all morning long, was not to be denied, and crossed the finish line with 3:44:25, 6 secs ahead of Katsuki, with Maruo a further 21 secs back. Alas, no Australians in this race.

World Team Champs 50km Men, Saturday 5th May 2018			
1	Hirooki Arai	JPN	3:44:25
2	Hayato Katsuki	JPN	3:44:31
3	Satoshi Maruo	JPN	3:44:52

World Team Championships 10km U20 Men, 3:30PM, Saturday 5th May

The men’s U20 10km saw the Australian team of **Kyle Swan**, **Declan Tingay** and **Mitchell Baker** collect team bronze. Tingay has been in the lead pack early and, with a lap to go, was still vying for sixth in the field of 48 walkers. Kyle Swan was not far behind, leading a group of three in pursuit. The sprint to the finish was not kind to Tingay, who was pointed to the pit lane on the home straight. The minute spent in the penalty box dropped him from a potential sixth place down to 14th. But he still walked a PB and helped secure Team bronze for Australia. Tingay’s pit lane visit allowed Swan to pass him near the finish and score his own PB in 41:44 for a top-ten finish.

World Team Champs 10km U20 Men, Saturday 5th May 2018			
1	Yao ZHANG	CHN	40:07
2	Zhaozhao WANG	CHN	40:12
3	José Eduardo ORTIZ	GUA	40:17
10	Kyle SWAN	AUS	41:44
14	Declan TINGAY	AUS	42:01
41	Mitchell BAKER	AUS	46:47

World Team Championships 20km Women, 4:30PM, Saturday 5 May

The women 20km walkers drew the afternoon time slot but that did not seem to bother **Alana Barber**. The New Zealand runner-up at the recent Commonwealth Games set a new national record of 1:31:32 while finishing 23rd out of the field of 84. Oceania’s joy did not cross the Tasman Sea, however, as **Jemima Montag**, fresh from her Commonwealth gold in the event, was shown the red paddle towards the end of the race, while well up. Australia’s only other walker, **Rachel Tallent**, finished the race in 59th spot with a respectable time of 1:36:34.

Up front, defending title holder **Maria Guadalupe Gonzalez** repeated her win from two years ago in Rome, finally bettering her Chinese rivals after a number of key losses to them. A year later, she would be banned for 4 years after testing positive for the banned steroid trenbolone and then trying to cover it up by giving false evidence.

World Team Champs 20km Women, Saturday 5th May 2018			
1	Maria Guadalupe Gonzalez	MEX	1:26:38
2	Shijie Qieyang	CHN	1:27:06
3	Jiayu Yyang	CHN	1:27:22
59	Rachel Tallent	AUS	1:36:34
-	Jemima Montag	AUS	DQ

World Team Championships 10km U20 Women, 9AM, Sunday 6 May

The 50km walkers were lucky to have raced on the Saturday, in fairly cool racing conditions with an occasional drop of rain. Sunday was much rougher, with the heat, humidity and rain making for a tough day out on course. Australian **Katie Hayward** had a great start, leading the 42 walkers through the first half of the race. Even with 2km remaining, Katie was still in fifth place and full of walking. With one km left, she had put herself into medal contention as she moved up to in fourth. But it was not to be. Two red cards in the final lap put her out of the race, which was won by **Alegna Gonzalez** of Mexico (no, not that one, the other one).

Among the junior teams, it only takes two finishing walkers, not three, to score for the team. **Rebecca Henderson** finished in 16th place, exactly one minute ahead of 18th place finisher **Philippa Huse**, to give Team Australia 7th place out of 12 scoring teams.

World Team Champs U20 10km Women, Sunday 6 th May 2018			
1	Alegna Gonzalez	MEX	45:08
2	Glenda Morejon	ECU	45:13
3	Nanako Fujii	JPN	45:29
16	Rebecca Henderson	AUS	49:25
18	Philippa Huse	AUS	50:25
-	Katie Hayward	AUS	DQ

20km Men, 10:10AM, Sunday 6th May

Last but not least, the men's 20km closed out the 2018 World Race Walking Team Championships. Five Australians made for a full team. Hopes were high when Rio bronze medalist and newly crowned Commonwealth Champion **Dane Bird-Smith** was among the early leaders, with **Michael Hosking** also in the lead pack. Alas, Bird-Smith was forced to retire soon after the half way mark with a troublesome hamstring, and Hosking by then had already fallen back a number of places. Hosking eventually fell victim to the judicial red paddle in the last quarter of the race, leaving **Rhydian Cowley** (47th with 1:28:54), **Adam Garganis** (62nd with 1:31:20 and **Brendon Reading** (63rd 1:31:25) to bring the team home. Up front, the lead changed frequently, with the win eventually going to Japan's **Koki Ikeda**, ahead of China's **Kaihua Wang** and Italy's **Massimo Stano**.

World Team Champs U20 20km Men, Sunday 6 th May 2018			
1	Koki Ikeda	JPN	1:21:13
2	Kaihua Wang	CHN	1:21:22
3	Massimo Stano	ITA	1:21:33
...			
47	Rhydian Cowley	AUS	1:28:54
62	Adam Garganis	AUS	1:31:20
63	Brendon Reading	AUS	1:31:25
-	Michael Hosking	AUS	DQ
-	Dane Bird-Smith	AUS	DNF

52nd Lake Burley Griffin Carnival Stromlo State Forest Park, Canberra, Sunday 10th June 2018

As in 2017, the 2018 Lake Burley Griffin Racewalking Carnival was held at the Stromlo Forest Park, NW of Canberra, but with a couple of significant changes. Firstly, the race direction was reversed, with walkers starting and finishing down a gentle incline rather than up it. Secondly, the traditional 20 Miles and 10 Miles distances were changed to 30km and 15km. I had no issues with this change – the imperial distances made sense on an out and back course around the lake, but they were no longer relevant on a short 1km lap.

NSW youngsters **Tyler Jones** (2:21:27) and **Dylan Richardson** (2:31:19) took gold and silver as the first Australians to finish in the newly minted 30km walk, but visitor **Luis Bustamante** of Mexico split them, after battling with Jones for the lead and finishing just over a minute behind him with 2:22:32.

LBG 30km Walk, Canberra, Sunday 10 th June 2018			
1	Tyler Jones	NSWRWC	2:21:27

2	Luis Bustamante (INV)	MEXICO	2:22:32
3	Dylan Richardson	NSWRWC	2:31:19
4	Ian Rayson	ACTW	2:35:33
5	Andrew Duncan	WARWC	2:41:34
6	Peter Bennett	RWQ	3:12:51
7	Peter Crump	SARWC	3:15:59
-	Robin Whyte	ACTW	DQ
-	Carl Gibbons	NSWRWC	DNF
-	Ignacio Gonzales (INV)	MEXICO	DNF
-	Brendon Reading	ACTW	DNF

Australian Roadwalk Championships Lake Kawana, QLD, Sunday 26th August 2018

The 2018 Australian Roadwalk Championships were held in Lake Kawana on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. They say it is beautiful one day and beautiful the next in Queensland, but it rained on the parade on this occasion, with the walkers having to contend with wet and miserable conditions. It took a while for entries to build over the last month of so, but eventually 95 walkers turned out to race in the various events, a reasonable number for this meet. The wet and cool conditions seemed to slow times, with only a smattering of PBs amongst the races. The 20km titles went to **Tyler Jones** (1:33:02) and **Rachel Tallent** (1:36:37).

1	Tyler Jones	NSW	1:33:02
2	Carl Gibbons	NSW	1:37:41
3	Andrew Duncan	WA	1:39:58
4	Ignacio Jimenez	QLD	1:40:14
5	Timothy Fraser	ACT	1:43:53
6	Connor Frew	ACT	1:44:32
7	Travis Barendregt	NSW	1:55:47
8	Adam Patterson	VIC	2:02:27
9	Peter Bennett	QLD	2:03:04
-	Luke Mccutcheon	QLD	DNF

1	Rachel Tallent	VIC	1:36:27
2	Jessica Pickles	QLD	1:47:15
3	Jasmine Dighton	NSW	1:58:20

Australian 50km Championships Fawkner Park, Melbourne, Sunday 2nd December 2018

People who know the volatility of Melbourne's summer weather will not be surprised to hear that while Saturday 1st December 2018 was a horridly hot and windy day and while the Saturday night was stormy, with rain and thunder, the Sunday morning dawned still, overcast and cool. After 2017, when this meet had to be postponed for a fortnight due to horrendous weather expectations, it was with a sigh of relief that competitors arrived at Fawkner Park in what were just about perfect 50km conditions.

The Australian 50km championships kicked off at 7AM, with 4 of the 7 entrants in attendance. Unfortunately, **Ivana Renic** had been unable to obtain a visa in time, while **Jared Tallent** was a DNS, due to a sore toe from a midweek mishap on the homefront. Of those who did start, 3 of the 4 completed the race, with Brazilian record holder **Caio Bonfim** first to finish in what looked like a very comfortable 3:55:24. Australian women's record holder **Claire Tallent** was next with 4:28:52, after that had been an equally comfortable outing. 45 year old **Kelly Ruddick** looked set for around 4:45:00 until cramping badly in the last few laps, eventually struggling home with 4:54:31. But it was still good enough to break the W45 Masters World Record and came only a couple of months after surgery to move her gall bladder, so full marks in my book!

Australian 50km Men, Melbourne, Sunday 2nd December 2018			
1	Caio Bonfim	BRA	3:55:24
-	Andrew Duncan	WA	DNF
-	Jared Tallent	SA	DNS

Australian 50km Women, Melbourne, Sunday 2nd Dec 2018			
1	Claire Tallent	SA	4:28:52
2	Kelly Ruddick	VIC	4:54:31
-	Tracy Feiner	VIC	DNS
-	Ivana Renic	CRO	DNS

2019

The Australian Summer 20km Championships North Adelaide Parklands, Adelaide, Sunday 10th February 2019

With the usual big international contingent of walkers coming off the AIS based Supernova camp in Canberra the previous month, the 20km fields were large and of high quality. Overall, 14 women and 34 men had entered the Oceania and Australian Open 20km Summer Championships, along with 13 young walkers (7 men and 6 women) in the U20 10km Championships. Conditions were perfect (cool and overcast) for the 7AM start time in the North Adelaide Parklands and the cloud cover stayed in place for the duration of the race, ensuring perfect conditions. I noted that, at the end of the race, the temperature was still reading 16°C.

Australian **Dane Bird-Smith**, in his first race for some time, strode to the front, confidently building up to a lead that had extended to 30 seconds by the 6km mark, reached in 24:30. Behind him, a large chasing pack had headed out at a more sedate pace, some 30 secs behind. Soon after the 6km mark, **Evan Dunfee** (CAN) and **Perseus Karlstrom** (SWE) decided the lead was big enough, increasing their pace and gradually drawing away from the large group as they started the long chase. By 16km, it was Karlstrom in front and, from there, he stormed home to what turned out to be a comfortable 30 sec win with 1:20:05, his second in a row in this championship and his 8th straight win on Australian soil. Bird-Smith took second with 1:20:52 while 2017 World Champion **Eider Aravelo** (COL) took third with 1:21:36. The Oceania Championship medals went to Bird-Smith, **Rhydian Cowley** (1:23:33) and **Quentin Rew** (1:23:42) while the Australian Championship medals went to Bird-Smith, Cowley and **Tyler Jones** (1:25:44). Jones was one of a number of young Australians to walk PBs – others were **Declan Tingay** (1:26:22), **Carl Gibbons** (1:29:53), **Dylan Richardson** (1:37:55) and **Kyle Bird** (1:45:52). One name you might miss if you just skim the results is the walker in 20th place – **Jared Tallent** was in his first race for some 2 years, and he finished with a time of 1:27:37.

Australian 20km Women, Adelaide, Sunday 10th February 2019			
1	Perseus Karlstrom	SWE	1:20:05
2	Dane Bird-Smith	QLD	1:20:52
3	Eider Arevalo	COL	1:21:36
4	Marius Ziukas	LTU	1:21:44
5	Evan Dunfee	CAN	1:22:23
6	Ever Palma	MEX	1:23:18
7	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	1:23:33
8	Quentin Rew	NZL	1:23:42
9	Miroslav Uradnik	SLV	1:23:46
10	Mauricio Arteaga	ECU	1:23:53
11	Jose Melendez	PUR	1:24:08
12	Artur Brzozowski	POL	1:24:49
13	Damian Blocki	POL	1:25:04
14	Tyler Jones	NSW	1:25:44
15	Declan Tingay	WA	1:26:22
16	Mat Bilodeau	CAN	1:26:35
17	Edward Araya	CHI	1:26:57
18	Tadas Suskevicius	LTU	1:27:25
19	Rafal Sikora	POL	1:27:36
20	Jared Tallent	SA	1:27:37

21	Jorge Ruiz	COL	1:28:10
22	Toru Yamamoto	JPN	1:29:10
23	Luis Espada	PUR	1:29:14
24	Carl Gibbons	NSW	1:29:53
25	Chun Hung Tse	HKG	1:35:47
26	Jason Kozica	VIC	1:37:18
27	Dylan Richardson	NSW	1:37:55
28	Kyle Bird	VIC	1:45:52
29	Pramesh Prasad	FIJ	1:48:44
-	Brendon Reading	ACT	DNF
-	Yerko Araya	CHI	DNF

The women's race developed differently, with the main contenders **Jemima Montag** and **Katie Hayward** (AUS), **Brigita Virbalyte** (LTU) and **Sandra Arenas** (COL) all close together for most of the race. Unsurprisingly, it was Lorenas who broke clear in the final 3km, going on to win with 1:28:49, but not before Hayward had taken the lead at the 16km mark and made her own dash for home. Hayward, who held on well to finish second, not only won the Oceania and Australian Championships but she shattered the Australian U20 record with her time of 1:29:25. This made her the third fastest Australian ever (behind Jane Saville and Claire Tallent). Montag held on for third with her own PB of 1:30:51, ahead of Virbalyte with 1:31:25. The amazing **Claire Tallent** was next to finish, only 2 weeks after walking 4:12 to win the USATF 50km in Santee. Her time of 1:33:24 also bettered the Doha qualifying standard, making 5 qualifiers in total, matching the men.

Australian 20km Women, Adelaide, Sunday 10 th February 2019			
1	Sandra Lorenas	COL	1:28:49
2	Katie Hayward	QLD	1:29:25
3	Jemima Montag	VIC	1:30:51
4	Brigita Virbalyte	LTU	1:31:25
5	Claire Tallent	SA	1:33:24
6	Alana Barber	NZK	1:36:38
7	Rachel Tallent	ACT	1:38:41
8	Kelly Ruddick	VIC	1:39:52
9	Jessica Pickles	QLD	1:41:10
10	Philippa Huse	VIC	1:41:30
11	Katya Martin	VIC	1:50:17
12	Sau Man Ng	HKG	2:02:46
-	Christina Papadopoulou	QLD	DNF

2019 Australian Track & Field Championships Sydney Olympic Park Athletics Centre, Sydney, 4-7 April 2019

The 10,000m walks, contested on the Friday evening in Sydney, saw perfect conditions. In the men's walk, **Dane Bird-Smith** continued his return to top form, with a personal best time of 38:30.61. **Rhydian Cowley** was second with 40:44.81 and **Quentin Rew** was third with 41:02.24. As Rew was competing as a visitor, the third place in the Australian Championship went to **Tyler Jones** with a PB 41:39.29.

10000m Track Walk Men, Friday 5 th April 2019			
1	Dane Bird-Smith	QLD	38:30.61
2	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	40:44.81
3	Quentin Rew	NZL	41:02.24
4	Tyler Jones	NSW	41:39.27
5	Carl Gibbons	NSW	43:16.99
6	Oscar Tebbutt	NSW	44:14.50
7	Jason Kozica	VIC	47:06.44
8	Dylan Richardson	NSW	47:14.74
9	Benjamin Reid	WA	49:00.20
10	Kyle Bird	VIC	54:14.02
-	Bradley Mann	WA	DNF

The women's walk saw **Katie Hayward** and **Jemima Montag** head out fast, but it was not too long before Hayward broke clear, walking brilliantly to finish with a huge PB time of 43:20.65. This time smashed her Australian U20 10,000m track walk record by 69 seconds (her previous record of 44:29.27 was set in January in Canberra). Montag finished second with 43:51.47, also a PB and a new Victorian record. Further back, a great battle raged between **Rachel Tallent**, **Simone McInnes** and **Clara Smith**, with Tallent just holding out McInnes, 46:10.54 to 46:11.63.

10000m Track Walk Women, Friday 5th April 2019			
1.	Katie Hayward	QLD	43:20.65
2.	Jemima Montag	VIC	43:51.47
3.	Rachel Tallent	VIC	46:10.54
4.	Simone McInnes	VIC	46:11.63
5.	Clara Smith	QLD	46:38.88
6.	Christina Papadopoulos	QLD	47:37.38
7.	Philippa Huse	VIC	49:37.84
8.	Molly O'Neill	NSW	52:41.72

53rd Lake Burley Griffin Carnival Stromlo State Forest Park, Canberra, Sunday 9th June 2019

The 2019 LBG 30km, held at the Stromlo State Forest Park in Canberra, saw perfect winter conditions – cool and sunny with little or no breeze. While the carnival was still the biggest on the Australian calendar, the 30km seemed to be struggling to attract the top walkers, now that it had been moved from its traditional lake course. **Brendon Reading** (2:25:20) outlasted **Carl Gibbon** (2:25:37) to win the race.

LBG 30km Walk, Canberra, Sunday 9th June 2019			
1.	Brendon Reading	ACTW	2:25:20
2.	Carl Gibbons	NSWRWC	2:25:37
3.	Kim Mottrom	SARWC	2:34:27
4.	Dylan Richardson	NSWRWC	2:36:30
5.	Ignacio Jimenez	RWQ	2:40:13
6.	Royrie Upton	SARWC	3:27:10
-	Ian Rayson	ACTW	DNF

30th Summer Universiade Naples, Italy, 3-14 July 2019

The 30th Summer Universiade, held in Naples in July 2019, was Australia's best team effort ever, with 10 medals overall. Leading the way were our female walkers.

First to the women's walk which started at 7AM on Friday 12th July. Conditions were already hot at 7AM (23°C) and it quickly built from there. At the 5km mark (23:20), the lead group had been reduced to 4 - **Katie Hayward** (AUS), **Jemima Montag** (AUS), **Anezka Drahotova** (CZE) and **Wang Na** (CHN). Towards 7km (32:38), Wang and Drahotova started to lose contact and by 10km, the two Australians had a clear lead, Hayward at 46:21 and Montag 5 secs in arrears at 46:26. The two girls extended their lead as the second half progressed, with Hayward crossing the finish line with 1:33:20, ahead of Montag with 1:33:57. As an added bonus, the 16th place finish by **Philippa Huse** ensured the Australian girls won the Teams Gold. It was a wonderful team performance!

World Uni Games 20km Walk Women, Friday 12th July, 7AM			
1	Katie Hayward	AUS	1:33:30
2	Jemima Montag	AUS	1:33:57
3	Anezka Drahotova	CZE	1:35:44
...			
16	Philippa Huse	AUS	1:44:09

The result was not so good in the men's 20km walk, with our sole male walker **Declan Tingay** suffering a DQ. Overall, the men's 20km provided a showcase for the Japanese, with their walkers taking gold, silver and bronze - **Koki Ikeda** (1:22:49), **Masatora Kawano** (1:23:20) and **Yuta Koga** (1:23:35).

World Uni Games 20km Walk Men, Friday 12th July, 7AM			
1	Koki Ikeda	JPN	1:22:49
2	Masatora Kawano	JPN	1:23:20
3	Yuta Koga	JPN	1:23:35
	...		
-	Declan Tingay	AUS	DQ

Australian Winter Roadwalk Championships Adelaide North Parklands, Adelaide, Sunday 8th September 2019

The 2019 Australian Roadwalk Championships were contested in the Adelaide Parklands, Adelaide, on the morning of Sunday 8th September. The venue was the same one used for the Australian Summer Roadwalk Championships each February, but the course was shortened from 2km to 1km, thus avoiding the hilly section at one end. The weather was not kind to the walkers, with strong winds throughout the morning and with rain setting in after the first few races.

28 year old 2016 Olympian **Rhydian Cowley** (PB 1:20:19) was an easy winner in the men's 20km race, breaking away early and walking on his own to a final time of 1:26:28. After 5 silvers and 5 bronzes in Australian 20km roadwalk championships and after 4 silvers and a bronze in Australian 10,000m track walk championships, he had finally broken through for a win! 20 year old **Kyle Swan** walked a 4 minute PB to take silver with 1:31:41, while 21 year old **Adam Garganis** made it a clean sweep for Victoria with the bronze in 1:32:12.

Australian Winter 20km Men, Adelaide, Sun 8th Sept 2019			
1	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	1:26:29
2	Kyle Swan	VIC	1:31:41
3	Adam Garganis	VIC	1:32:13
4	Carl Gibbons	NSW	1:35:24
5	Kim Mottrom	SA	1:35:46
6	Ignacio Jimenez	QLD	1:36:23
7	Dylan Richardson	NSW	1:39:42
8	Alix Harlington	SA	1:45:06
9	Bradley Mann	WA	1:46:40
10	Travis Barendregt	NSW	1:50:00
11	Royrie Upton	SA	2:14:24
-	Tyler Jones	NSW	DNF

38 year old **Claire Woods** was untroubled to win the women's title with 1:44:55 in a very small field but she was very nearly a non starter: *"I was seriously under the weather last night, my two year old (Harvey) passed on a nice little bug to me, which had me up most of last night – so I'm happy to have been out here. Last night when I went to bed I wasn't coming, but luckily we live about 2km from here, so I woke up this morning and got a couple of bits of dry toast into me and fronted up."*

Australian Winter 20km Women, Adelaide, Sun 8th Sept 2019			
1	Claire Woods	SA	1:44:56
2	Tracy Feiner	VIC	1:51:22
3	Amanda Barendregt	NSW	2:00:41

Woods and Cowley were both in the Australian team for the 2019 World Championships. Most of the walks team were already in Europe, so were missing from this particular championship.

17th IAAF World Championships in Athletics Doha, Qatar, 28th September - 6th October 2019

The Women's Marathon on the first day of World Championships competition set the scene for what would be a meet involving ridiculously tough long distance events. The female runner who won the marathon on the Friday morning had the 3rd fastest time in history of 2.17. She won in 2.32.42, second was 2.33.45, 3rd was 2.34, 4th was 2.35. They were each up to 15 minutes slower than their PBs. Further, the event saw only 40 of the 68 runners finish the course, 28 of

them falling by the wayside and withdrawing mid race. Criticism was swift in coming but the IAAF held firm, saying their decision to award the Championships to Doha had been the correct one.

Roll onto day 2, when the two 50km walks were held on a 2km section of highway (known as the Corniche) in inner Doha, with a start time of 11:30PM. The men's race saw only 28 of the 48 walkers completing the course, with Japanese winner Yusuke Suzuki some 25 minutes outside his PB with a super slow (for him) time of 4:04:20. In fact, you had to roll the clock back nearly 50 years to the 1970 Lugano Cup in Eschborn, to find a slower major championship winning time (Christoph Honhe 4:04:35). The women fared better, with 17 of the 23 finishing, but once again, the winning time of Riu Liang was 19 minutes outside her PB. The women definitely handled the conditions better than the men.

50km Walk Men, Saturday 28th September, 11:30PM

History was made in more ways than one in the men's 50km race walk at the IAAF World Athletics Championships. **Yusuke Suzuki** became the first Japanese race walker to win a world title, making a bold move in the early stages to build a lead that largely went unchallenged. Portugal's **Joao Vieira**, making his 11th World Championships appearance at the age of 43, came through to finish second, becoming the oldest medallist ever at the World Championships. And a fast-finishing **Evan Dunfee** took bronze – nearly catching Vieira before the line – to become Canada's first ever medalist in the 50km race walk.

Alas, no Australian competitors, but a special commendation for Melbourne based New Zealander **Quentin Rew** who came in 11th with 4:15:54. He steadily improved his placing throughout the race from 24th at 5km, to 17th at 20km and 18th at halfway. Between 30 and 35km, he went from 17th to 11th which he held over the final 15km.

Just as in Rio in 2016, the men's 50km proved an exciting race and would go down as the most engrossing event of the championships. The fluctuating fortunes, the last lap heroics (once again involving Evan Dunfee of Canada) and the high drama are part of what makes the 50km walk a special event. I could only hope that the members of the now defunct IAAF Racewalking Committee watched it and perhaps had second thoughts about their illogical opposition. History will judge them severely for their lack of support and their cowering to anti-walking forces within the IAAF.

World Champs 50km Men, Doha, Saturday 28th Sept 2019

1	Yusuke Suzuki	JPN	4:04:20
2	João Vieira	POR	4:04:59
3	Evan Dunfee	CAN	4:05:02

50km Walk Women, Saturday 28th September, 11:30PM

The women's 50km race walk went largely to the formbook. China's former world record-holder **Liang Rui**, winner at the IAAF World Race Walking Team Championships Taicang 2018, added another gold medal to her collection by winning the title in 4:23:26. Teammate **Li Maocuo** followed three minutes later to take the silver medal in 4:26:40 while Italy's European record-holder **Eleonora Giorgi** took the bronze medal in 4:29:13. Alas, no Australian walkers in this race either.

World Champs 50km Women, Doha, Saturday 28th Sept 2019

1	Rui Liang	CHN	4:23:26
2	Maocuo Li	CHN	4:26:40
3	Eleonora Anna Giorgi	ITA	4:29:13

20km Walk Women, Sunday 29th September, 23:59PM

Fast forward 24 Hours. After the carnage seen in the women's marathon and the men's 50km walk, organisers delayed the start time of the women's 20km race walk by 29 minutes, to 11:59PM, to "attain the best possible conditions for athletes." Was that really going to make any difference!

Having only just returned this season from a two-year maternity break, 32-year-old **Liu Hong** landed her third world 20km race walk title, looking every bit as dominant as she did when winning her previous major gold medals. It was also the first time one nation has swept the medals in a women's race walking event at the World Championships, as her Chinese teammates **Qieyang Shenjie** and **Yang Liuqing** followed her across the finish line. Australia's **Jemima Montag** came in 10th with 1:36:54 but **Katie Hayward** was put out very early in the race, around the 7km mark.

World Champs 20km Women, Doha, Sunday 29 th Sept 2019			
1	Hong Liu	CHN	1:32:53
2	Shenjie Qieyan	CHN	1:33:10
3	Liujing Yang	CHN	1:33:17
...			
10	Jemima Montag	AUS	1:36:54
-	Katie Hayward	AUS	DQ

20km Walk Men, Friday 4th October, 11:30PM

Japan completed a glorious men's race walking double at the 2019 World Athletics Championships, courtesy of a commanding performance by world leader **Toshikazu Yamanishi**. The bespectacled 23-year-old seized control of the men's 20km between 7-8km and never relinquished his advantage as he tamed the hot and humid conditions to strike gold with 1:26:34. Behind, Sweden's **Perseus Karlstrom** put the hammer down soon after the halfway mark to stake his claim to silver, but he had to eventually give way to a flying **Vasiliy Mizinov** in the final lap. It was the first time since Spain's double triumph in 1993 that one nation had snared both men's race walking titles at a World Championships.

Sadly, the IAAF did not do itself any favours with this tweet which was sent post event: *All racewalking events in Doha have now been concluded and there were no cases of heat stroke.*

It was at best a clumsy attempt to justify the dreadful decision to host these games in a completely inappropriate climate.

No cases of heat stroke? Tell that to the very large number of walkers and marathon runners who flagged and failed to finish, either collapsing completely or being forced to stop, unable to go on. The fate of the two Australian walkers in the men's 20km are but examples of the wider problem that was clearly in evidence to everyone except for the IAAF.

Rhydian Cowley failed to finish. His comment: *Even going out at 90 minute pace was too aggressive as it started to fall apart after 5k. I stopped at 12k when I noticed signs of heat stress manifesting in myself. 32° and 77% humidity for the duration - like walking in a sauna.*

Dane Bird-Smith made a fast start and led through the opening 4km before steadily losing ground in the second half, eventually finishing 15th with 1:32:11 (13 mins over his PB). Soon after crossing the line, he fell forwards onto the road and was taken to the medical tent for observation. A gutsy walk but one that did not reflect his true form of quality.

Good one IAAF!!

World Champs 20km Men, Doha, Friday 4 th October 2019			
1	Toshikazu Yamanishi	JPN	1:26:34
2	Vasiliy Mizinov	ANA	1:26:49
3	Perseus Karlstrom	SWE	1:27:00
...			
15	Dane Bird-Smith	AUS	1:32:11
-	Rhydian Cowley	AUS	DNF

Australian 50km Championships

Fawkner Park, Melbourne, Sunday 1st December 2019

Conditions were picture perfect for the 53rd Australian 50km Championships in Melbourne on the morning of Sunday 1st December 2019. The Australian 50km was first contested in 1952 with Victorian Len Chadwick winning with a time of 5:10:58. A lot of water has flown under the bridge since then. The fast 2km loop in Fawkner Park, South Yarra, had been used since 2008, so this was the 12th occasion on which our 50km walkers had raced in this inner city venue. It was a cool and overcast 12°C when the gun sounded for the 7AM start and, apart from a few windy gusts, conditions stayed good throughout the race, with a weak sun forcing its way through to clouds in the late morning.

Ten 50km walkers took the start at 7 a.m., nine men and one woman. **Perseus Karlström** surged to the front and was leading by the proverbial mile until hip soreness slowed him and he retired at 40km. Germany's **Christopher Linke** had also been well up, but had retired as planned at 30km, reached in 2:16:53. Thus **Rhydian Cowley** eventually inherited the lead, which he then kept till the end, reached in an impressive debut time of 3:52:58. Behind him, 19 year old

Dylan Richardson hung on for second, with 4:22:44, ahead of **Brendon Reading** with 4:28:42, **Jason Kozica** with 4:38:07 and **Carl Gibbons** with 4:44:19. Further back in the field, **Tracy Feiner**, the lone woman, kept her own steady pace, before accelerating on her last lap to break 5 hours and win the Australian women's championship. The final walker, 65 year old **Colin Heywood**, finished with 5:05:34 to better the M65 50km World Record. Alas, only 1 watch recorded his time so he was not able to claim the record. Six of the seven finishers, all except Reading, finished their first 50km, a very interesting statistic.

Australian 50km Men, Mebourne, Sunday 1st Dec 2019			
1	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	3:52:58
2	Dylan Richardson	NSW	4:22:44
3	Brendon Reading	ACT	4:28:42
4	Jason Kozica	VIC	4:38:07
5	Carl Gibbons	NSW	4:44:19
6	Colin Heywood	NT	5:05:34
-	Perseus Karlstrom	SWE	DNF
-	Christopher Linke	GER	DNF
-	Jared Tallent	SA	DNF

Australian 50km Women, Mebourne, Sunday 1st Dec 2019			
1	Tracy Feiner	VIC	4:59:32

As 2019 drew to a close, it was time to reflect on whether the demise of the AIS scholarship program in early 2013 had effected Australian walking. Our argument was that the loss would not be immediately felt, but it would become more apparent over the course of the next 2 Olympic cycles. That has proven true. One has only to look at the fortunes of the men's 50km discipline in Australia to understand what has come to pass. I will let readers judge for themselves: <http://www.vrwc.org.au/tim-archive/articles/After%20%20Olympic%20Cycles%20the%20Demise%20of%20the%20AIS%20now%20bites%20hard.pdf>.

2020

Australian Summer 20km Championships North Adelaide Parklands, Adelaide, Sunday 9th February 2020

The 2km lap in the North Adelaide Parklands had generally produced fast times in the Australian Summer 20km Championships, so the lack of PBs in 2020 was perhaps a reflection of the warm and humid weather early on and the buffeting winds later in the morning.

It was obvious by the completion of the first lap that fast winning times were not on offer in the 20km walks, with **Evan Dunfee** (CAN) leading the men through in 8:30 and the lead group of women passing that mark in 9:40. Dunfee, who led early, was soon joined by **Perseus Karlstrom** (SWE) and **Dane Bird-Smith** (QLD) but Bird-Smith soon fell away and was 10 secs in arrears of the leaders by the 10km mark (passed in 41:24) and 10 secs ahead of **Marius Ziukas** (LTU) who was in fourth place. Positions remained unchanged until the final 2km when Karlstrom put the foot down and swept away from Dunfee, going on to win this race for the third time in a row, albeit with a slower than expected 1:21:57 (last lap 7:32). Although unable to match the pure speed of Karlstrom, Dunfee still finished strongly to take second with 1:22:32, ahead of Bird-Smith with 1:23:01. The Australian and Oceania Championships medals went to Bird-Smith, **Rhydian Cowley** (VIC) and **Kyle Swan** (VIC), with all 3 walkers bettering the 1:28:00 World Team Championships standard set by Athletics Australia. Bird-Smith also confirmed his Olympic nomination by dint of winning the Australian selection trial.

Australian 20km Men, Adelaide, Sunday 9th February 2020			
1	Perseus Karlstrom	SWE	1.21.57
2	Evan Dunfee	CAN	1.22.32
3	Dane Bird-Smith	QLD	1.23.01
4	Marius Ziukas	LTU	1.23.06
5	Rhydian Cowley	VIC	1.24.40
6	Kyle Swan	VIC	1.27.41
7	Quentin Rew	NZL	1:28:18

8	Tyler Jones	NSW	1:28:26
9	Carl Gibbons	NSW	1:30:26
10	Carlos Mercenario	MEX	1:30:38
11	Toru Yamamoto	JPN	1:30:40
12	Tadas Suskievicius	LTU	1:33:50
13	Jason Kozica	VIC	1:35:57
14	Remo Karlstrom	SWE	1:36:42
15	Adam Garganis	VIC	1:37:31
16	Chung Hung Tse	HKR	1:38:32
17	Dylan Richardson	NSW	1:38:44
18	Timothy Fraser	ACT	1:40:59
19	Alix Harlington	SA	1:47:53
20	Bradley Mann	WA	1:53:41

Little separated the top women early on, with **Jemima Montag** (VIC), **Katie Hayward** (QLD), **Beki Smith** (ACT) and **Alana Barber** (NZL) all passing the half way mark together at 47:06. Barber was the first to drop off, followed by Smith, leaving Montag and Hayward to fight out the finish. As in the men's race, the final 2km decided the winner, with Montag storming home with her fastest lap of 9:01 to take victory with 1:33:15. Montag, Hayward and Smith won both the Australian and Oceania medals and all bettered the 1:36:00 World Team Championships standard set by Athletics Australia. Montag also confirmed her Olympic nomination with her win in what was the official Australian trial.

Australian 20km Women, Adelaide, Sunday 9th February 2020			
1	Jemima Montag	VIC.	1.33.15
2	Katie Hayward	QLD	1.34.00
3	Beki Smith	ACT	1.35.06
4	Alana Barber	NZL	1.35.52
5	Simone McInnes	VIC	1.37.32
6	Brigita Virbalyte	LTU	1.37.40
7	Rachel Tallent	VIC	1.40.20
8	Rachelle De Orbeta	PUR	1:43:03
9	Anna Cross	SA	1:53:11
10	Laura Langley	NZL	1:55:36
11	Courtney Ruske	NZL	1:58:25
12	Sau Man Ng	HKR	2:04:37
-	Kelly Ruddick	VIC	DNF
-	Rozie Robinson	NZL	DNF

2020 Australian Track & Field Championships Sydney Olympic Park Athletics Centre, 21-29 March 2020

Who would have thought at the time of the Australian Summer 20km Championships in February that the rest of the year would fall victim to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic! The Australian T&F Championships, which would have hosted the Australian 10,000m track walk championships, were soon cancelled, and subsequent meets and championships then fell like bowling pins.

All the major internationals were either cancelled or postponed to the following year – the Race Walking Team Championships, the Olympics and the World Junior Championships. All we can do at this stage is to wait out 2020 and hope for better news in 2021.

Tim Erickson
Saturday 24th October 2020