



HEEL & TOE

Online

The official organ of the Victorian Race Walking Club, Inc.
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- ** VACANCY –Club Treasurer

WALKER OF THE WEEK

Ela Uzun (VIC) and Cooper Rech (SA) are joint winners of 2026's inaugural WOTW award, following excellent performances in Saturday's AV and ASA interclub competitions.

Ela, competing in the Victorian AVSL Round 7 2000m walk, gave a daunting display, lapping 22 of the field of 25 to post a PB time of **8:35.0** and break six more VRWC records. Five of these had belonged to Jemima Montag, who is now no longer listed on the table of VRWC 2000m marks. Not that Jemima would mind ... indeed, she'll be watching Ela's progression with a keen interest, as we all are.

The last time **Cooper** won WOTW was in June 2023. Since then, his improvement journey has proceeded with little fanfare but with a newfound consistency. He re-commenced the Adelaide summer season over 3000m with a 30 sec PB time of **13:28.04**, showing he has maintained a disciplined training program over the festive season and has his sights set on some big personal goals with the championship period moving closer. If one of those goals is to clock 12 mins plus for 3000m, he's close to achieving it.

Well done, Ela and Cooper, and all the best for the remaining summer program.



CLUB NEWS and RESULTS

VRWC Club Summer race results, 18 January – Middle Park

While the summer holidays continue, our January races attracted 27 entrants with 23 toeing the start line. **Lily Lambert** was the standout performer, her 5km time of **28:48** a 1:22 improvement and the only PB on the day. **Summer Patten** was an emphatic 2km winner with **Abigail Verity** successfully stepping up for her first go at the distance. The best contest of the day was between **Addison Frenken** and **Indigo Marshall-Moodie**, with Addi's strength prevailing at the finish.

It was unfortunate that the 20km and 15km attracted no entries, but **Jia Wen Heng** kept the endurance colours flying with a solo flight over 10km.

10km Female

1 Jia Wen Heng 1:01:53

10km Male

.. Angus Shuttleworth DNF

5km Female

1 Lily Lambert 28:48

5km Male

1 Colin Heywood 33:20

3km Female

1 Addison Frenken 16:48

3km Male

2 Arthur Robinson 36:06

2 Indigo Marshall-Moodie 16:57

3 Steven Stern 51:26YN

3 Emily Smith	17:14	1 Shaun Lewis	16:15
4 Caitlyn Shipham	19:31		
5 Kobe Lewis	19:42	1km Male	
6 Anna Dubar	19:46	1 Bowie Clarke	5:56
7 Marina Carpinelli	20:08 YN		
8 Emilie Garside	20:58		
9 Heather Carr	22:28		
10 Gwen Steed	23:24		

2km Female

1 Summer Patten	13:09
2 Cory Lewis	14:16
3 Abigail Verity	14:47
4 Merrilyn Reynolds	14:59

1km Female

1 Abby Fowler	6:22
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***Action models:**

Lily, Arthur, Summer, Jia, Bowie, Indigo, Anna, Emily, Colin, Addison, Kobe, Cory

And finally, our usual thank-you to the day's officials and helpers, whose contributions – great or small – helped provide a rewarding racing experience for our walkers:

Manager:

Stu Cooper

Referee:

Tim Erickson

Race check-in:

Stu Cooper

Recorders:

Tim Erickson, Bob Gardiner, Kris Shipham

Judges:

Kathleen Marsh (chief), Gordon Loughnan (bronze), Brenda Felton, Bec Lewis, Tony Doran

Set up, pack up:

Tim Erickson, Bob Gardiner, Stu Cooper, Tony Doran, Kris Shipham

Photos:

Therese Smith

Canteen:

Gwen Steed



From track to climate champion: Rhydian Cowley's mission runs beyond medals

by Sarah Dyce – Victorian Institute of Sport

Rhydian Cowley isn't just chasing finish lines; he's championing a cause. From fierce competitions to climate campaigns, the Victorian Institute of Sport (VIS) athlete has transformed his passion into worldwide recognition, earning a nomination for the 2025 International Olympic Committee (IOC) Climate Action Awards.

For the three-time Olympian, this nomination signals the culmination of a journey that's taken him from the racewalking circuit to global advocacy for change. Cowley now uses his elite athlete's platform to inspire environmental action and empower communities.

"It's incredible to be recognised for work I'm genuinely passionate about," Cowley explains.

The Paris 2024 bronze medallist's commitment to sustainability extends across multiple fronts. An ambassador for the Sports Environment Alliance and EcoAthletes, he has collaborated with his sports organisations, including Australian Athletics and the VIS as a member of the VIS Sustainability Squad, to develop and implement climate action plans, whilst working part-time for conservation organisation Bush Heritage Australia.

His efforts have already garnered recognition, including the IOC P&G Athletes for Good Grant in 2023 and the BBC Green Sports Award in 2024.

But his work at the grassroots level, especially in the VIS

Community Programs, sets him apart. Whether he's delivering school talks or championing sustainability, Cowley inspires young people to get involved with sport and make a difference.

"Being a part of the VIS's community programs has helped me refine and build confidence in how I communicate to audiences, whether it's in a classroom or on a discussion panel at a sports environment summit," Cowley said.

"I like to be involved and say yes to things, so while that does lead to the occasional very full day or week, it comes back to me choosing to do things that I enjoy and give me happiness because I know that is how I get the best out of myself as an athlete and a person."

One moment encapsulates his global reach. While competing in Japan at the recent World Athletics Championships, the Victorian accepted an invitation to visit a local school in person. What had begun as a virtual connection during a Green Sports Day event years ago evolved into something more meaningful.

"A few years ago, I supported Hamamatsu Kaiseikan High School in an online Green Sports Day event, speaking about climate change's impact on sport. With the World Athletics Championships being held in Japan this year, and having kept in touch, the opportunity arose to visit in person after competition," Cowley recounted.

"The students were really engaged and well-researched with their questions. I think we all got a lot out of it. It was definitely a highlight of my trip."



For Cowley, those moments, when a student's eyes light up with the realisation that they have agency, reinforce his passion. The commitment to sustainability isn't a separate endeavour from his athletic career; it's woven into his journey as an athlete and as a member of his communities.

"As an athlete, I'm not in a big decision-making position like a CEO or politician. I do however have a platform to communicate with my community and advocate to decision makers in my community and in my sport," Cowley said.

"When it comes to advocating, teaming up with other people and other athletes who share values on issues is really helpful, so a lot of my advocacy is through joining campaigns and open letters organised through networks like EcoAthletes or Frontrunners."

"I have also found the athlete voice can be really important for driving change in your sport as well. Athlete Advisory groups have a weight behind them that can help steer better outcomes for sports. Together we reach out to where we can influence - whether reach is big or small, it adds up and can make a difference. I have been surprised several times by the impact a conversation has had."

The IOC Climate Action Awards, supported by Worldwide Olympic and Paralympic Partner Deloitte, recognise exactly this kind of leadership. The awards celebrate actions by key stakeholders within the Olympic Movement to address climate change, with applications encouraging innovative projects that actively reduce climate impact and align with clear sustainability goals.

As news of his nomination spreads, Cowley remains focused on what matters most: inspiring the next generation to see themselves not just as observers of climate change, but as agents of solutions.

VICTORIA - METRO & REGIONAL



AVSL - News, results

**** Metro Zone: Round 7, Saturday 17 January – Meadowglen Int. Stadium, Epping**

As has been her habit in recent years, **Ela Uzun** began the new year with a bang, dominating the AVSL 2000m race at Meadowglen and collecting six new VRWC records in the process.

A pleasant blast from the past was the appearance of **Frank Bertei**, having his first walking race of any kind since 2017.

Pl	Name	Club	Age	Time	Points	
2000m						
1	Ela Uzun	(ESS)	F16	8:35.0h	499	VRWC recs U15 to U23, PB 0:12
2	Mya McClure	(WCA)	F16	9:20.7h	453	
3	Havana Ali	(ESS)	F16	10:13.1h	400	
4	Andrew Duncan	(WAM)	M55	11:11.3h	377	First 2000m
5	Trenton Hawkins	(PTN)	M45	11:21.4h	315	
6	Frank Bertei	(ANW)	M55	11:26.4h	364	
7	Bernie Keirl	(DIV)	M60	12:35.9h	333	
8	Kobe Lewis	(WTN)	F14	12:58.0h	289	
9	Donna-Marie Elms	(PTN)	F60	13:29.3h	342	
10	Jack Greyling	(CCA)	M14	13:47.4h	224	
11	Abby Fowler	(WTN)	F14	13:49.2h	258	
12	Stephen Murphy	(RIC)	M60	14:20.2h	260	
13	Janice Hodgart	(WES)	F60	14:22.3h	306	
14	Sarah Papadopoulos	(DIV)	FOP	14:28.6h	198	
15	Heather Carr	(GHY)	F70	14:44.3h	353	
16	Gwen Steed	(GHY)	F70	14:52.4h	348	
17	Jo Moxon	(DIV)	F60	14:54.1h	288	
18	Geoff Barrow	(MEN)	M70	15:04.7h	290	
19	Robert Gardiner	(COL)	M70	15:17.8h	283	
20	Clyde Riddoch	(WAM)	M70	15:22.3h	281	
21	Kim Peak	(DAC)	F55	16:21.4h	217	
22	Brenda Cashin	(WES)	F60	16:31.9h	236	
-	Sarah Bevin	(COL)	F40	DQ		
-	Craig Pilkington	(MUU)	MOP	DQ		
-	Francis Dowdle	(MUU)	M40	DQ		
5000m						
1	Alejandro Stephens	(GHY)	MOP	24:29.8h	354	
2	Emily Smith	(MUU)	F20	29:46.3h	313	
3	John Nottle	(COL)	M70	32:27.9h	384	

**** Bendigo Zone: Round 7, Saturday 17 January – Lar Birpa Athletics Track, Flora Hill**

Bendigo was the only country centre offering walks last weekend, so Ballarat's **Jemma Peart** headed to the rival gold town for a 3000m hitout. No doubt Bendigo will see an increase in numbers with the winding up of the holidays.

1500m					
1	Chris Pollard	(EAG)	M65	11:08.78	244
2	Annette Curtis	(SBE)	F65	12:40.68	250
3000m					
1	Jemma Peart	(BYC)	FOP	16:26.92	343
2	Lachlan Carr	(BGO)	MOP	21:53.51	



AV Championships

The entry portal is now open for the **AV Junior Track & Field Championships**. Entries close at 12 noon on **Monday, 3 February**.



AROUND THE COUNTRY

A.C.T. ACTRWFC results, 17 January – Woden

Ann Jugovic sent through the results of the ACTRFWC's first races for 2026:

1.	Jillian Ryan	10:45.83
2.	Sebastian Ryan	12:01.88
3.	Clare Rice	12:53.56
4.	Madison Hyland	13:41.95

QUEENSLAND QA walks abandoned due to lightning

Robyn Wales reports that there was a walk scheduled at the QA shield meet on Saturday night, but that with just over 1km covered there was a bolt of lightning and all athletes were asked to leave the track. The walk was then cancelled so no results from QLD this week.

I always suspected those Bananalanders were just flash ...

SOUTH AUSTRALIA ASA Interclub results, 17 January – Mile End stadium

Kim Mottrom reports that conditions for SA's interclub resumption were 'a bit warm' (28C), but not enough to prevent a couple of PBs being scored. **Cooper Rech**'s progress continues and he could be the next to join the sub-13:00 union for 3000m.

Open 3000m

1 Kim Mottrom	12:54.59	8 Matilda Rech	18:25.93
2 Cooper Rech	13:28.04 pb 0:30	9 Orlando Grantham	18:25.93
3 Liam Freundt	13:53.72	10 Jessica Clelland	18:57.56 pb 0:01
4 Angelina Legrand	15:42.00	11 Peter Crump	20:29.52
5 Jack White	16:54.69 pb 0:15	12 Alex McEwan	22:54.72
6 Liliana Templer	17:19.43	... Zachery Freundt	DQ
7 Mel Grantham	17:45.49		

TASMANIA Athletics South interclub results, 17 January – Domain AC, Hobart

Results courtesy of **David Moore**:

Result 1500m Walk

1. Adele Woodward	OVA	9:05.70
2. Elizabeth Leitch	TMA	10:26.21

***Tas Masters T&F, January 14, 2026, Domain AC, Hobart**

1. Wayne Fletcher	M78	43:45
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WESTERN AUSTRALIA WARWC Summer results results, 18 January – Perry Lakes

The Westies resumed their walkers' club racing in very pleasant weather, fine with temperature in low 20s, and no breeze. Numbers were still low, still being in the holiday period. Thanks to **Terry Jones** for the results.

10K		
Melissa Lewis.		1:07:36
5K		
Andrew Duncan	29.45	
Wendy Farrow	35.00	
Glenys Duncan	50.08	
3K		
Hannah Clausnitzer	17.50	
Judy Saunders	27.25	
1K		
Joel Lim	7.24	



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

MARCIADALMONDO & O MARCHADOR ROUNDUP

The Portuguese race walking blog **O Marchador** posts news reports and results as they come to hand. The page has dozens of links to articles on race walking, featuring both domestic events and those from abroad.

- Thursday, January 15, 2026 - **Finally, the federal selection criteria for Brasilia 2026.**<https://omarchador.blogspot.com/2026/01/finalmente-os-criterios-federativos-de.html> It sounds tough if you're a Portuguese walker looking for Marathon walk selection ...
- Wednesday, January 14, 2026 - **Ecuadorian David Hurtado wins in Jumilla. Iván López and Laura Vigueras are crowned champions of the Murcia Region, Spain.**<https://omarchador.blogspot.com/2026/01/equatoriano-david-hurtado-vence-em.html>
- Tuesday, January 13, 2026 - **US Masters (Open) Half Marathon Race Walking Championships in Santee, CA - results**<https://omarchador.blogspot.com/2026/01/campeonatos-eua-masters-abertos-da-meia.html>
- Monday, January 12, 2026 - **Karlström wins Marathon Race Walk in Santee, CA. Christie and Michta-Coffey are crowned US America champions.**<https://omarchador.blogspot.com/2026/01/karlstrom-vence-maratona-de-marcha-em.html>

Note: The O Marchador blog is written in Portuguese. To access an English version, open the page in Google Chrome – if you haven't already – at <https://omarchador.blogspot.com>, then right click on any empty space (not on text) on the page. A window will appear with the option to translate the page. Click on it, and the page should reload in English.

**H&T Online - NOTICE BOARD **

VRWC Committee

**Vacancy – Club Treasurer

The Committee invites expressions of interest from members (or their families) who would like to consider taking on this vital role.

The job entails:

- *Overseeing and accounting for all Club income and expenditure;*
- *Presenting a monthly report to the Committee;*
- *Liaising with the Club's auditor in the preparation of an annual financial statement;*
- *Presenting a Treasurer's Report to the membership at the Annual General meeting*

The position would suit someone with experience in finance, business or clerical work, or indeed anyone with an interest in numbers or accounting.

Interested persons should contact Terry Swan, Stu Cooper or Karyn O'Neill (treasurer@vrwc.org.au) ASAP.



WHAT'S UP AHEAD?

AVSL Round Dates – 2025/2026

(NOTE: Venues and race distances are as listed by AV on 15/9/2025. Changes may occur.)

Sat 31 Jan 2026	AVSL Rd8 – Mount Evelyn (1500m, 3000m)
Sun 8 Feb 2026	AVSL – RESERVE ROUND
Sat 21 Feb 2026	AVSL Rd9 – Doncaster (1500m, 3000m)
Sat 28 Feb 2026	AVSL Rd10 – Casey (2000m, 5000m)

*Country venues – **Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong**. Race distances may differ from those of Metro venues.

Victorian & National Key Dates – 2025/2026

Sat-Mon 24/26 Jan 2026	AV Country T&F c'ships – Albury NSW
Sun-Mon 25-26 Jan 2026	AA 10,000m & U20 5000m Walk c'ship/Supernova 10,000m – AIS track, Bruce ACT
Fri-Sun 13/15 Feb 2026	AV Junior T&F c'ships – Lakeside Stadium
Sun 15 Mar 2026	AA Half-Marathon Race walkc'ships – Adelaide SA
Thu-Sun 19/22 Mar 2026	AV U20, Open & Overage T&F c'ships – Lakeside Stadium

International Dates

12 Apr 2026	2026 World Athletics Racewalking Team c'ship – Brasilia, BRA
18-23 May 2026	2026 Oceania Athletics C'ships – Darwin NT, AUS
4-9 Aug 2026	World U20 Athletics Championships – Eugene OR, USA
22 Aug-3 Sep 2026	World Masters Athletics Championships – Daegu, KOR
30 Oct-15 Nov 2026	Youth Olympic Games – Dakar, SEN

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