

Walk right in



KARYN Tolardo *walked* into MAWA two years ago and has become a regular race-walking competitor, both on the track and in the Sunday programme. She enjoys the feeling of being fit and healthy and is constantly inspired by our walker cohort and the athletic ability of all her fellow MAWA athletes.

Karyn was born and raised in Hobart and moved to Perth in the late 80s. She is a midwife at King Edward hospital and has worked night duty for the past 18 years -- which makes training and dealing with sleep deprivation a real challenge. Karyn is married to Mario who runs Osteria Dei Sapori restaurant in Nedlands and they have two teenage daughters, Isabella and Arianna. Both girls are well known to track regulars as they often come along to support Karyn or join in themselves.

Karyn admits she had no interest in athletics or sport in her youth. In fact, she took up running at the age of 42, motivated she says, by the thought that regular exercise would allow her to continue indulging in all the good things in life (chocolate, cakes, and food in general) without the fear of middle aged spread. We can all relate to that! However, Karyn had no idea that she would love running so much and she was soon signing up for every fun run Perth had to offer. She has even completed a couple of half-marathons, including the Cadbury marathon in Hobart.

This event should be on the bucket list of every sweet tooth as not only is it a very scenic course along the Derwent river but when you reach the finish at the Cadbury chocolate factory you are welcomed by people in Caramello Koala suits handing out free chocolates!



In focus

With Carmel Meyer

Well worth a marathon effort! Before you all rush off to enter Karyn does warn that despite the picturesque surrounds and the treats at the end, you are exposed to weather conditions from every season during those few hours! Her love of running faced a major setback when a fall during a mother-daughter netball competition resulted in Karyn needing a knee reconstruction. Karyn hadn't played netball before and her netball career lasted only six weeks before disaster struck! The new direction Karyn was looking for presented itself via her daughters' involvement in Little Athletics. The girls took up race-walking.

CONTINUED – NEXT PAGE

Taking it in her stride

FROM – PREVIOUS PAGE

THE parents generally sat around and chatted while the kids trained but then someone suggested they join in to improve their fitness. So in October 2013 Karyn started race-walking, with the goal of training up to be able to compete in the 2016 World Masters championships.

Karyn is also a member of the WA Race Walking club. It was during a 2012 club event in Wilson that Karyn witnessed her hero Lyn Ventris break her own 10km World record. Karyn says she was honoured to be on the track at the same time as Lyn. Karyn trains with Rose Holloway and credits Rose with providing a wealth of technique and training tips. Race-walking gives a full upper and lower body workout Karyn says, with less impact on the knees compared to running. Core strength exercises are essential and she tries to fit them into her busy schedule in addition to walking or running four or five days a week.

I asked Karyn about her approach to this highly technical event and she replied that you have to keep your concentration the whole time to make sure you're maintaining technique. A paddle from the judges can knock your confidence, but you have to remind yourself to correct your technique and stay focused. Karyn hasn't faced disqualification thus far. It wouldn't be the end of the world. She reminds herself that her main goals are to improve her PB's on each distance. She is, in her words, very slowly chipping away at those. A check through recent monthly results confirms Karyn is in fine form. I was happy to be present at WAAS in January to cheer her on when she achieved her PBA of a sub-30 min 5km.

Since joining MAWA Karyn has enjoyed participating in the State Championships. She also entered the National Race-Walking Championships in Albany in 2014, coming away with a bronze medal in the 10km race. The 10km is Karyn's favourite event although she enjoys all the distances. She doesn't rule out branching out into other athletic disciplines and has her eye on the high jump! Karyn's next big competition goal is the Masters Games in Adelaide in October.

Karyn is well aware that Joe Public can sometimes not appreciate the subtleties of race-walking but says you soon get over that. She has had her share of people trying to imitate her, odd stares and wolf whistles. "Noticeably, conversations stop as you pass people who are out strolling; they are obviously wondering what on earth I am doing."

Karyn takes it all in her stride – literally!

