

Country girl

"I should have been a sheep farmer" says Robin King. A real country girl, born in Gnowangerup, she grew up on a farm at Tambellup, in WA's Great Southern Region. But having been hospitalised after a fall from a bike, she decided to become a nurse. Starting out as a midwife, she spent about 12 years flying in and out of the Pilbara but eventually became, and still is, an occupational health nurse. She has three daughters and five grandchildren.

She always loved running, knowing she could *"go and go and go"* – but she wasn't a sprinter. She joined the Marathon Club in 1982 and was usually one of the back markers in races. But in the Pilbara, as a member of the Wickham Running Club and then the Hedland Running Club, she *"learned to run"*. She did all sorts of *"crazy races"* through the red dirt, dodging snakes and dealing with the heat. In addition she took part in races like the Black Rock Stakes, the Corporate Mile, the Golf to Golf relay, Cossack to Wickham and Hearson's Cove half marathon.

When she returned to Perth around 1994 she was a mother and running took a bit of a back seat for a while. She used to do intervals while her daughter was at soccer training. And at one of



In focus

With Christine Oldfield

the runs she met David Roberts who suggested she join the Vets. She had never heard of them but went along and joined. She really enjoyed the friendliness and the characters.

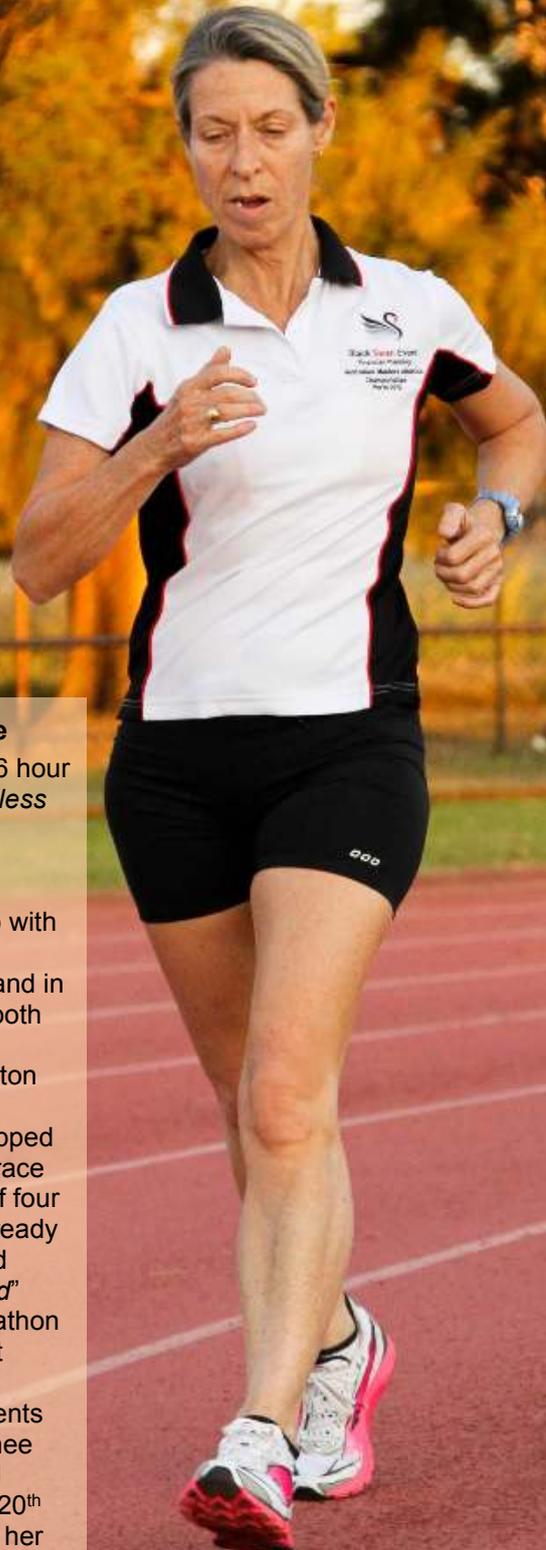
Running 10 kms a day for seven days, her times improved dramatically; so much so that, running with Jim Barnes, she clocked 3:24 in the 1996 Bunbury Marathon. Her aim had been to do just one marathon but she did Rottneest the same year and was first female home.

Her tally is now around two dozen with a best time of 3:08:13 in the 1998 Perth marathon.

Amongst her *"numerous memorable moments"*, her best memories are running with her good friend Anne Shaw, who died in 2003, and *"sloshing nearly ankle deep"* around a saturated track aiming for a sub 39 in one of the John Gilmour 10km races.

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Walking on a high



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AFTER a couple of Bunbury 6 hour races she “*gave up that mindless nonsense*” for World Masters Athletics Championships and Games – she loves attending these events and catching up with the ‘usual suspects’. She competed both out of stadia and in distance races on the track (both running and race walking) in Brisbane, Melbourne, Edmonton and San Sebastian. In Edmonton, in 2005, she lapped all the walkers in the 5000m race and came away with a total of four medals. This added to her already large collection of medals and trophies – the “*most treasured*” being her 1998 Rottneest Marathon Cup when she was again first woman home. She has been plagued by a few health ailments and some injuries and had knee surgery last year. So she had given up marathons until the 20th Rottneest marathon beckoned her in 2013. Her walk/run strategy netted her a time of 4:12.

Her 2013/2014 performances on the track gained her ten mentions for that year’s W55 Club Tops – for five runs (800m – 5000m) and five walks (1000m – 5000m). All the walks and two of the runs were first positions. In the 2014 state championships she won gold in the

1500m, 3000m and 5000m walks, all with times far better than the majority of the men. In 2015 Robin will compete in the state championships and also plans to go to the world championships in Lyon. Looking after her health and having fun is what motivates her to keep going and she is looking forward to Perth 2016.

But she doesn’t limit her participation to athletics. Whilst injured she has crossed over to other sports, doing parts of half Ironman and a full triathlon in Albany in 2014. She says she is not liked by the cycle car as she is too slow – but does make the cut off! She is very familiar with the paths through the Perth Hills, where she now lives, and, further afield, she likes to trek routes like the Bibbulmun Trail, Cape to Cape and the Stirling Ridge.

Being a person who likes to give something back, Robin can be found on track nights, summer and winter, sometimes competing, but more often than not, holding a watch or lap scoring. If someone gets hurt or is ill, she “*gets to play nurse also*”. She really appreciates all her “*masters mates*” who have provided help and comradeship over the years, “*especially those who constantly volunteer their services*”.