

# "Run the Tan 2024: Elite Athletes Shine, Record Broken, and Thousands Raised for Mental Health"

The fourth edition of the annual Run the Tan showcase charity event was held at Melbourne's iconic Tan Track on Sunday 21 April 2024 to help raise much-needed awareness and funds for mental health and showcase our Aussie elite middle-distance athletes.

With more than 2000 competitors and spectators, the event raised over \$68,000 for local mental health charities and has raised over \$135,000 in the past 2 years, with some of Australia's best elite athletes putting on a spectacle to set new all-time records around the iconic Tan Track.

**Michael ROEGER** broke his own all-time Para multiclass record by 2 seconds, setting a new benchmark of 11:01 (MCS% 34.25), **Reece LANGDON** came 2nd in 11:17 (MCS% 33.64%) and **Annabelle COLMAN** was the 1st female in a time of 13:30 coming 3rd overall based on the universal Multi Classification Scoring system with an MCS% of 32.49. Michael took away a nice little prize cheque of \$5,000 for taking the win and breaking the para course record thanks to Myriad Kofkin Global.

**Lauren RYAN** current Australian 10,000m champion took out the win in the Elite Women's race in a blistering time of 11:34 just missing Jess Hull's record by 4 seconds. Lauren uplifted her ranking to top 2 on the all-time leader board. Bronze commonwealth games medallist and newly crowned Olympian representative for 800m, **Abbey CALDWELL** had a strong run with 11:54, and **Shanie LANDEN** snapped up 3rd place in 12:50.

In the men's elite race, Irishman **Andrew COSCORAN** took the win in a time of 10:28 which was only just outside the all-time top 10 fastest times. If he ran a sub-10:26 then he would have knocked 4 guys off the current top 10 rankings. **Seth O'DONNELL** has a massive run coming 2nd in 10:34 and **Dale CARROLL** earned himself 3rd place in 10:36, followed closely by three-time Olympian **David MCNEILL** in 10:37.

The **Battle of the Schools** event continues to go from strength to strength and was another key highlight of this year's Run the Tan running carnival. With 18 schools and over 320 students competing for the Schools Championships, pride was on the line for the All-Schools Participation awards, the atmosphere was electric.

**Wesley College** took out the honours for the School Championship male team for the 3rd consecutive year, with **Ruyton** securing the perpetual trophy for the females. In the All-Schools Participation Awards, it was **Marcellin College** who took out the All-Boys (41), **Ruyton** - All-Girls (27), and **Haileybury** won the Co-ed (38). Overall placegetters for the males were 1st - **Hamish DONOHUE (11:21)**, 2nd - **Oscar GRAY (11:46)**, and 3rd - **Ben HAYES (11:55)**. In the females it was 1st - **Piper GAY (13:00)**, 2nd - **Amelia MORTON (13:12)** and 3rd - **Sophie HALL (13:20)**.

In the open community Fun Run event, **Dezmond CUTTER** was the 1st male across the line in 11:32 and **Caitlin ROQICA** 1st female 14:28.

In the feature event for **Emergency Services**, which was open to all Emergency Services workers, Health Professionals, Australian Defence Force (ADF), Veterans, and ADF civilians, **Daniel WHITE (Ambulance Victoria)** took out the men's race in a very impressive time of 13:35 and **Dee-Ann JACKSON (ADF)** won the women's in 14:01 which also earned her 1st place in her age category 45-49 across the whole Run the Tan event. Nothing like a bit of rivalry between badges!

There were another strong contingent of sporting idols and celebrities participating in the **Celebrity Challenge** and supporting the cause for mental health including; comedian and radio show host **Dave Hughes** (who hasn't missed a Run the Tan event since it started in 2021), **Ash Williams**, **Alicia Loxley** (Channel 9 News), AFL greats Campbell Brown, Steven Baker, Billy Brownless, Essendon's AFLW **Maddy Prespakis**. Melbourne Renegades **Mackenzie Harvey** and soccer legends **Archie Thomson** and **Andy Brennan** also joined the field. **Jason Warne** returned in honour of his late brother, Shane, who was an inaugural ambassador for the charity event. Mental health advocate, and former Miss Universe **Olivia Molly Rogers** also joined for her first run in the celebrity challenge. There were lots of laughs, good times, and positive vibes amongst this group who grows in numbers every year.

There was plenty of action in the 'race within a race' King and Queen of the Hill, which was introduced last year up the infamous Anderson Street Hill and was sponsored this year by New Balance and Up There Athletics. **Declan GALL** took out the title for the fastest male up the hill segment in 1:07 and 800m champion **Abbey CALDWELL** clinched it in the women's with 1:32. Both winners earned themselves a \$500 gift voucher courtesy of Up There Athletics.

In the new **Teams competition**, the **Up There Athletics and New Balance** Community Team took out the title with the lowest aggregate time for their fastest 6 runners of 01:16:53.

Yorta Yorta Elder **Aunty Pam Pedersen** opened the event with an Acknowledgement to Country. She embodies the belief that age is no barrier when it comes to physical and mental well-being. Aunty Pam discovered her love for running in her mid 50's, she felt she was a little overweight and took up running. Shortly thereafter, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and every year committed to participating in the Mother's Day Classic. Now 81, she has experienced firsthand the numerous benefits of regular physical activity, which has become an integral part of her life.

Run the Tan Founder, **Darren Templeton** is a passionate advocate for promoting the benefits of exercise on our mental health and wellbeing. "Run the Tan has not only helped reshape the history books for The Tan Track but has also inspired a new generation of athletes and enthusiasts to strive for excellence, by using movement to help improve mental health," he said.

Leading lender Liberty was the major naming rights sponsor for the event. Other key event sponsors included New Balance, Up There Athletics, Myriad Kofkin Global, Jellis Craig, GMHBA, and McArthur, with additional support from City of Melbourne, Athletics Australia, Athletics Victoria and Bennelong.

The event supports and raises funds and awareness for local mental health charities in Australia. It had 18 mental health charity partners connected to the event this year such as Lifeline, RUOK, Beyond Blue, Blackdog, Ambers White Light, and Its okay not to be okay. Participants could choose to create their own fundraising page to support the work of their preferred charity and the general public can make a direct donation to a selected charity.

**Fundraising** for Run the Tan is still open, so donate today to help support local mental health charities at - <https://runthetan.net/fundraising/>

#### END NOTES //

- External link: <https://runthetan.net/>
- **GALLERY**

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#### **ABOUT RUN THE TAN**

The Run the Tan annual showcase event, supporting mental health charities, has quickly become one of the most popular and well-known running events in Melbourne and Australia. The inaugural event was held in April 2021 between COVID lockdowns. Run The Tan is a not-for-profit organization under Run for Mental Health Ltd, advocating for mental health awareness through promoting an active lifestyle. Its annual showcase event brings together athletes, enthusiasts, and mental health charities in a celebration of physical and mental wellbeing. Founded by Darren Templeton in 2019, the organization provides a central source of truth and governance process for all official recorded run times around the Tan (including the all-time top 10 and top 100 fastest times for men and women). Run the Tan runs a free weekly community run club initiative which sees new runners joining regularly. Held at the Tan Track at 8am every Saturday morning, it caters to all fitness levels and abilities, and is open to everyone in the community.