



CLUB SPOTLIGHT - WOLLONGONG (COUNTRY)

Athletics Wollongong was formed in 1958 under the name of the Southern Flame Amateur Athletic Club. Local competitions were held at Beaton Park, reclaimed industrial land that had come to be considered too close to the growing Wollongong CBD to continue operating as a Cokeworks. Club reps were first to carve out a track there and this close stewardship over the grounds continued across the years, ultimately helping deliver a synthetic track to the City: The Kerryn McCann Athletics Centre. Australian Distance Running Legend Kerryn McCann was a past member of the Club, along with other Olympic and Commonwealth representatives: Peter Gandy, Adrian Hatcher, Petrina Price and Jaimee-Lee Starr.

In Para athletics, multiple T36 World Record holder James Turner, recently had a precipitous journey from competing at Athletics Wollongong Club Meets to collecting gold medals at the Rio Paralympics and the 2017 & 2019 Para World Championships.

Local competition has always been an important element of Athletics Wollongong. Club Meets are held on Wednesday evenings, appealing to social athletes who would like their weekends free, as well as serious athletes who choose to compete at ANSW events. Kicking off at 5:30pm, the vibe is very relaxed, social and encouraging. It's an environment that seems to particularly appeal to families and Masters athletes. Some weeks may see up to 20 of these latter competitors, as they contest a full program of athletic disciplines across the season, as well as some handicapped and fun events. Athletes from other clubs are welcome to participate also (so long as they hold competitive membership with an ANSW-affiliated club); just show up!

Athletics Wollongong may be ANSW-affiliated, but they hold close ties to NSW Masters. These are largely due to former club Vice President Stuart Gyngell, who helped bring the Australian Winter Throwing Championships to Wollongong; which the club has continued to help deliver from 2016 to 2021.

As part of Athletics Wollongong's recent 60th anniversary celebrations, athlete profiles were written on past members. Several of these largely by virtue of their performances in Masters competition: Stuart Gyngell, Marie Kay and past AW member Mary Thomas

Tremendous Masters performances aren't only in our past however, there are many current NSW State Masters Champions from Athletics Wollongong:

Alissa Webster (50-54) - Anthony Howlett (50-54)

Christine Shaw (60-64) - Montse Ros (40-44)

Natalie Heywood (45-49) - Rebekah Power (40-44)

Rodney Tebbut (45-49) - William Tyler (60-64)

Ron Simcock missed the State Championships but was awarded the NSW Masters 'Thrower of the Year - Male' trophy.

AW athletes photos courtesy Michael McLelland

by Michael McClelland
AW Club President



Ron was also nominated for the Multi Athlete of the Year, as was Christine Shaw in the Jumper of the Year category.

2020 was quite challenging but, per last season's figures, Athletics Wollongong was the second largest Country club in NSW, which perhaps places us in a more favourable position than many others. What is for certain though, is that our Masters athletes are super keen for Championships Season.

Best of luck to all Masters athletes in attaining their goals, and: **Go Athletics Wollongong!**

