

## RON WHITHAM – AWARDED 1985



Born in 1928, Ron's athletic career began as a Botany Harrier, where he competed at the top level, highlighted with his win in the NSW Marathon Championship in 1942.

Ron was one of those "retirees" who came back as a vet with the Sutherland Club in 1974, not as a runner but as a race walker, and again he reached a very high standard and won a number of "Vets" State titles and placed in Australian Championships. He became an office bearer in 1975, and was President for a number of years, also taking up coaching and encouraging many young athletes. He made Thursday nights at Sylvania Waters the place for the young to get a good grounding in the sport.

Ron was an active member of NSW Vets for 25 years, during which time he was President for 3 to 4 years, and a committee member for 13 to 14 years, during a time of great growth for the Association. The word "active" is a good description of his association with the Vets, be it as President, committee member, competitor, organiser or a motivator.

Ron and local Vet athlete Alex Hutt were two of the people who assisted Yvonne Piper in conducting Club social events. Alex owned the metal fabrication company at Caringbah which employed Ron, and often lent a company truck to transport whatever was required for functions and events. The same factory also manufactured the equipment the club might need to conduct events during Championships, such as flags.

Whilst a very handy athlete, he was also a first-rate official. Clubs generally did not receive much assistance from the A.A.A. of N.S.W., and while there were some fine officials that volunteered whom were accepted with open arms, but most of the Championship Officials both State and Australian came from the athletes ranks, and it was not uncommon to see a "Vet" suddenly hand over his tape, watch, rake or whatever he or she was holding, trot off to their own event, and when finished come back to resume officiating.

Ron was very likeable person, easy to work with, and someone whom you could trust to complete any task you requested him to do, or for which he had already volunteered. Whatever the job, it always got done.

Ron promoted all facets of athletics and was a very worthy recipient of life membership back in 1985.

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MAY 1985 "The Waratah"

## Life Membership

The following letter was received from Patron and Life Member Logan Irwin.

The President  
N.S.W.V.A.C.  
2/6 Oatley Ave  
OATLEY

Dear Norm,

I wish to nominate Ron Whitham for Life Membership of the NSWVAC. Ron has been an active member of the club for 25 years, during that time he was President for 3-4 years and was a member of the committee for between 13 and 14 years, during a time of great growth. The word "active" is a good one word description of his association with the Vets, be it as a President, Committee Member, Competitor, Organizer and as a Motivator.

Life Membership should be earned as it bestows an honour on someone who has given just that little bit extra to assist a club to achieve it's aims. Ron more than qualifies for Life Membership. The original constitution of the Vets had as its aim to promote all the facets of athletics and on this basis alone Ron is still worthy of Life Membership.

Ron's athletic career started with the Botany Harriers where he competed in the top bracket highlighted with his win in the 1942 N.S.W. Marathon. 50 years later to mark the anniversary he again ran a marathon. Ron had a break from athletics coming back in the 70's with the Vets, this time concentrating on walking and again competing above average, a tribute to that competitive spirit which never seems to die. We have all known of his performances as a Vet with numerous places in the N.S.W. and Australian titles. When Ron did come back he came back with the Sutherland Club where he has given great service and even now trains with and encourages many young

athletes be they walkers, runners, etc. He has made Thursday night at Sylvania Waters a place for the young to get a good grounding in the sport.

I could go on writing things about what he has done and is still doing for athletics, like:-

His assistance to Alex Hutt in transporting equipment to races in the early hours of the morning.

His assistance to me and others in conducting special events such as 100 1 mile relays.

Personally I have met few nicer people. He has been a great friend, obliging and one I would not hesitate to call on for assistance.

Let us hope we have Ron around for a long time and may his example be a lead to all Vets. A club like the Vets can only go on to bigger and better thing if it has more like Ron and all those others who through hard work, enthusiasm and can make a club work.

Just a note of caution, the club should not be too slow to bestow Life Membership on those who deserve it, because at our very mature age, being Veterans, we don't get any younger.

I hope you give this nomination your favourable consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

Logan Irwin  
Patron and Life Member.

*Ron has been an active member of the club for 25 years.*