

Moira

Whiteside:

a wonderful woman in more ways than one

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The name Moira Whiteside may not ring a bell with many, but after you read this article you will realise that Moira's legacy directly affects most orienteers in Australia today.

How? The short explanation is that Moira left a significant bequest to Orienteering Australia when she died in 2013, specifically to go towards organising the Australian Championships events. In the short term this amounted to \$76,200, and in the long term will constitute 20% of her considerable estate. As each State takes turns to stage the Australian Championships, they have the opportunity to apply for up to \$10,000 to put towards 'taking the Championships to a new level'. Thus, Moira single-handedly facilitated Australia's rapid move towards all major Orienteering events being able to adopt extensive hi-tech O-Lynx radio capture of bush-data, GPS tracking of elite athletes, and results displays that almost instantaneously update, both live at the venue and with the potential for online audiences anywhere in the world to access our results live.

Some background

Moira was introduced to Orienteering in 1975 after a gap of over twenty years since having played cricket and softball and represented NSW at hockey. It did not take Moira long to



understand what the sport of Orienteering was about. As an Inspector of physical education in schools, Moira confessed she was not fit, but she quickly became hooked and moved to improve her fitness. Moira read everything she could about Orienteering. She attended any event she could get to, including overseas when on holidays in the UK and Finland. Moira soon went on to arguably become Garingal Orienteers' most successful member.

The achievement Moira is particularly remembered for, is her W50 win in the 1977 Jan Kjellström International – one of UK's two premier events each year. However, Moira went on the next year to be the W50A Australian Champion for seven continuous years! By the time she was in W60A, Moira had also won the Easter 3-Days on five occasions. Over those years she also won the NSW Championships on five occasions and the ACT Championships on four, plus won in Victoria and Queensland, and represented Australia in several trans-Tasman competitions. If not the winner, Moira typically scored a place. Moira told everyone that her strategy was to 'follow the red line and count paces'. This way she was not distracted by dense track networks, but she did get her feet wet a number of times going straight through marshes.

Moira's work did not lend itself to allowing her to take on the bigger organisational roles, however she never lost sight of the large manpower requirements to put on Orienteering events. Moira is quoted in a Garingal newsletter as saying: "The most important group in Orienteering are the workers who accept office in the organization and who run the events. Nothing is too small for them or too big. A select group form a core that provides small recreational events for all comers to enjoy. The same people prepare highly competitive events at State, National and international levels. An examination of names over many



years reveals who these people are. Because of them the public can discover the joys of being self-reliant in the forests of the world. To put it in a nutshell these workers give their lives to Orienteering. The sport thrives because of them. Without them the sport would wither away. We can never thank them enough."

In 1981, Moira told Dick Ogilvie that it will be impossible for her to repay Orienteering for the pleasure the sport has already brought her (*The Australian Orienteer, Oct/Nov 1981*). Moira always volunteered for Garingal's helper roster and reliably did whatever she could, even into her 80s (despite having to give up going into the bush after a hip replacement at age 64). Her teaching instincts kicked in, and she gave many newbie orienteers, especially the juniors, one-on-one advice.

Perhaps the first inkling that Moira could think outside the square with respect to being 'a helper' was in 1981 when she funded the purchase of a statue, "The Silver Hare", to be awarded annually to a person in Garingal who deserved recognition (be it a junior who had excelled or someone who had contributed significantly to the ongoing running of one of the many facets of our club).

Moira's involvement in Orienteering and her good sportsmanship was acknowledged by her being awarded Honorary Life Membership of Garingal in 2005.

In conclusion

Should we not be surprised then, that Moira has left a portion of her estate to benefit Orienteering? The German Director of SPORTident noted during a visit to a major event in Canberra a couple of years ago, how advanced was Australia's use of Orienteering technology. I believe this has largely been achieved due to Moira's beneficence.

In recognition of Moira's philanthropy, two perpetual trophies are awarded in her name to the M and W21E class winners of the Australian Middle Distance and Australian Sprint Orienteering Championships. And, the Director of every Australian Orienteering Championships Carnival is extremely grateful for Moira's vision!

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XMAS 5-DAYS RETURNS TO THE HARBOUR CITY

Ian Jessup – NSW Marketing & Communications Officer

Sydney's glorious harbour and cityscape will be on full display when the annual Xmas 5-Days returns to the Emerald City this year. Our first foray into an urban Xmas carnival, in 2014, produced record attendances and organisers are hoping for another good turnout.

The 5-Days will offer multiple formats, so there's something for everyone. We also hope the mostly central Sydney locations will lure more Summer Series folk into other Orienteering formats.

Nearly all events are easily accessed by public transport and offer visitors plenty of sightseeing opportunities.



The planned program is:

Thursday Dec 27 (pm): 45-minute Sydney Summer Series score event at Milsons Point.

Right beneath the Harbour Bridge, this assembly area takes in amazing views of the Opera House, the bridge, the CBD, Barangaroo, Luna Park and North Sydney. Iconic Sydney. Will Duncan Currie's course take us past the residences of the Prime Minister (whoever that may be at the time!) and the Governor-General?

Friday Dec 28 (am): Mystery format at Centennial Park.

Sydney's great urban park is a recreational haven between the bustle of the city and the tourist mecca of Bondi. Open spaces and an intricate rocky hillside will make for generally fast orienteering.

Saturday Dec 29 (am): Mystery format at Beacon Hill.

The infamous Clay Pan map has a myriad of single tracks and an intricate BMX network to confound even the most careful navigator. The NSW Stingers are hosting.

Sunday Dec 30 (am): Sprint at the International College of Management at Manly.

This former seminary is a landmark on the northern beaches and we are delighted to christen it as an Orienteering venue, along with St Paul's School across the road. Being a Sunday, public transport is capped at \$2.60 per adult all day. Spend the rest of the day discovering North Head, Shelly Beach, Little Manly, then grab some fish & chips and finish with a dip at Manly Beach.

Monday Dec 31 (am): Sprint at Sydney University.

One of the best Sprint maps in Australia offers a stern navigational challenge to finish our Carnival. Close to Central Station (for buses and trains) so you can make a quick getaway.

The New Year's Eve fireworks are at 9pm at dozens of locations around Sydney, and again at midnight in central locations.