

# Making the dream a reality

**The Sunshine Coast lives up to its name – and not least with its world-class Marathon and Community Running Festival which has been voted among the six 'Most-Loved' marathon events in Australia.**

Located on the scenic Sunshine Coast in Queensland near to the barrier reef and the late Steve Irwin's iconic Australia Zoo, this not-for-profit event has been timed to make the most of the ideal running conditions during the Queensland winter. Blue skies and temperatures of 22C have graced the event for the last four years. Good weather conditions and a flat course have consistently enabled runners to set fast times.

The festival distances include the Marathon, Half Marathon, 10km, 5km and 2km. Each race follows the stunning coastline of Alexandra Headlands with white sandy beaches and spectacular vantage points alongside the ocean from which to view them. The Half Marathon is a one loop course with Marathon entrants additionally completing a 10.5km loop twice – and in the process making the most of the on-course entertainment and crowds of spectators before a red carpet finish.

With a distance to suit every ability and age group, this community-focused event caters to all those wanting to take part, including families and those with both physical and mental disabilities. The 2km event allows parents with prams and wheelchair entrants to take part and enjoy the festival atmosphere.



# 7 Sunshine Coast Marathon & Community Run Festival, Australia



Race start times are scheduled to allow parents to run the longer distances and finish in time to run with the kids and enjoy all the free fun in the family entertainment precinct. This year there were free pony rides along the beach front, a bouncy castle, facepainting, balloon art and a rescue demonstration by the iconic red and yellow of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service as well as market stalls and BBQs provided by the Surf Lifesaving Volunteers.

All event profits go to charity. The two major beneficiaries are the Ronald McDonald House Charities and The Westpac Foundation. Over \$500,000 has been passed over to charitable causes since the festival was founded in 2009 and a further \$200,000 was anticipated for 2015.

A donation is given to each of the volunteer groups who in total provide more than 500 volunteers to ensure that the event runs smoothly. It serves as a thank-you and a way to give back at a grassroots level.

The festival boasts a world class field of elite athletes and event ambassadors. The event organisers pride themselves on providing an inclusive and encouraging environment for all runners, be it their first marathon or their last 2km fun run. The six thousand competitors that came from all corners of Australia and overseas this year ranged in age from 3 years to 86 years.

With a focus on team entries the event provides the perfect platform for raising funds and awareness for causes about which runners are passionate, supporting on average 70 charities chosen by the participants each year.



This year attracted over 140 team

entries including one of 50 students with disabilities and the biggest team in the race yet with over 270 runners dressed in pink running as 'Rockers for Knockers'. The team was initiated by Ruth D'Hennin, a former Ironman competitor and mother of three, who discovered she had an aggressive form of breast cancer in 2014. Following her treatment and as part of a celebration of her 50th birthday, Ruth ran the 10km event with a large majority of the team in support and a guard of honour to finish.

Another special team in 2015 was 'See Banjo Run'. Banjo was born 16 weeks prematurely weighing only 662gms and spent 150 days in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit fighting to survive. He is now 4 years old and has severe quadriplegic cerebral palsy. Unable to sit, crawl, roll, talk, walk or use his hands independently, his family decided that they would fundraise to achieve their dream of being able to offer their son Stem Cell Treatment and to give Banjo the best chance of achieving his full potential. A team of both runners and non-runners from across Australia entered the event and began fundraising to make the dream a reality. Lifelong friendships were made and fundraising goals reached.

Sunshine Coast attracted two new ambassadors this year who embody the ethos of the event motto: to 'run for a reason':

Ben Roberts-Smith, awarded the Victoria Cross and Medal of Gallantry, is the most highly-decorated member of the Australian Defence Force and a perfect fit with the culture and values of the Sunshine Coast.

Samantha Gash was the first woman and youngest person ever to complete the 'Four Deserts Grand Slam', which requires competitors' to complete four 250km ultra

## RESULT

### Marathon

#### Men

1	Samuel WOLDEMANUEL	ETH	2:18:30
2	Dion FINOCCHIARO	AUS	2:29:01
3	Andrew KIMANTHI	KEN	2:30:21
4	Clay DAWSON	AUS	2:38:08
5	Justin WHITLEY	AUS	2:45:36
6	Leif MAWSON	AUS	2:46:33
7	Alan DAVIDSON	AUS	2:48:47
8	Ralf HAMANN	AUS	2:52:38
9	Kevin MULLER	AUS	2:54:51
10	Ray CRILLY	AUS	2:56:18

#### Women

1	Fiona KUPRESANIN	AUS	3:00:59
2	Sally MATSUBARA	AUS	3:02:37
3	Kerri HODGE	AUS	3:03:27
4	Belinda MURRAY	AUS	3:06:13
5	Rebecca PHILIPP	AUS	3:06:19
6	Kate JUHASZ	AUS	3:11:35
7	Anna MENDES	AUS	3:20:48
8	Emily ROBERTS	AUS	3:24:48
9	Angela BURGESS	AUS	3:27:02
10	Tanya REED	AUS	3:27:24

### Half marathon

#### Men

1	Alastair STEVENSON	AUS	1:09:06
2	Patrick NISPEL	AUS	1:10:08
3	Nathan BAXTER	AUS	1:11:55

#### Women

1	Malin OLSSON	AUS	1:23:57
2	Sharon RYDER	AUS	1:24:15
3	Ursula TOWNSEND	AUS	1:25:17

marathons across the driest (Chile), windiest (China), hottest (Sahara) and coldest deserts (Antarctica) on earth. Her journey was captured for the big screen in the award winning film 'Desert Runners'. Samantha also ran 222km across the Himalayas and 379km across Australia's Simpson Desert. Receiving national attention, the run took 3.5 days and nights to complete and raised over \$32,991 for Save the Children, Australia.

The values and passion of the ambassadors aligned so strongly with the vision for the 7th Sunshine Coast Marathon that this partnership is set to continue.



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■ Next event: 21 August 2016

■ For more information visit:  
[www.sunshinecoastmarathon.com.au](http://www.sunshinecoastmarathon.com.au)