

AUSTRALIAN CENTURION DETAILS

45. **Karyn O'Neill nee Bollen (27/01/55)**
23:35:56
13-14 April 2002
Coburg Harriers Track, Coburg, Vic

Karyn Bollen's first ultra distance experience was in 2001 when she entered the 12 Hour Run event at the annual Coburg 24 Hour Carnival. She ran only a little way and then walked the remainder of the event in lane 2 – but still managed 79.4 km. Her walking style was good enough for a number of centurions to approach her after the event and plant the idea of attempting the 100 mile walk.

It must have worked as she returned the following year to attempt the 24 Hour event as a walker and she produced the goods, being one of four walkers to reach the centurion goal of 100 miles. For Carol Baird and John Harris, it was a case of once again while for Lyn Lewis and Karyn, it was a first time achievement and qualified them for Centurion membership.

She would in fact have completed the 100 miles in just over 23 hours if not for severe blistering in the last few hours. She was forced to stop with only 6 laps to go and get a full repair done by the First Aid personnel. Then a very slow last 6 laps saw her get home in **23:35:56**. Her style was impeccable and, like Carol Baird, she remained cheerful and in control for the entire way.



Karyn (left) and Carol (right) at the presentations after their centurion walks in 2002

All 4 finishers continued to walk to the 24 hour mark at varying paces and less than 3 laps separated them at the end. The final stats for the four finishers read as follows

1.	Carol Baird	ACT	182.657 km	C39	100 miles in 20:31:34
2.	Lyn Lewis	QLD	164.010 km	C44	100 miles in 22:46:54
3.	John Harris	QLD	163.677 km	C12	100 miles in 23:34:50
4.	Karyn Bollen	VIC	162.843 km	C45	100 miles in 23:35:56

It was a wonderful moment for Karyn, her supporters and the spectators as she crossed the line. She was awarded the Jack Webber Memorial Trophy for the most meritorious walking performance of the day.

The next year, she was back but stepped down to the 12 Hour Walk, recording a good 82.131 km.

2004 saw her keen to try for the walk/run double so she fronted at the Coburg Carnival in the run section, coming third with 140.4 km.

A year later, she was back in the 24 Hour walk, recording 132.988 km. Another 100 mile performance was proving a hard ask for Karyn.

2006 saw her back for another try in the walk and she looked set for a hundred until suffering dizzy spells with about 4 hours to go. She was forced to rest and had to be content with a distance of 154.725 km. Terry O'Neill (C 18), who had not walked an ultra since he did his 100 mile in 1979, also fronted for the walk, powering through the 50 mile mark in under 10 hours to be well ahead of the field but then suffering through to the 100 km mark which he reached in 13:19:08. Karyn and Terry won their respective Australian 100 km titles. Terry and Karyn soon surprised us with the wonderful news that they were getting married.

We had to wait 2 years before we saw any more of Karyn on the track but, in April 2008, she reappeared at Coburg, dominating the 6 Hour event with 46.182 km. She returned for the 6 Hour event the following year, taking second with 45.320 km. She then backed up for the Centurion 24 Hour walk a month later in April 2009, suffering early but toughed it through to 92.478 km before retiring.

Come 2010 and she fronted for the same 6 Hour / 24 Hour walk double at Coburg. Her 6 Hour walk of 44.302 km was reasonable but not outstanding and her 24 Hour walk total of 121.263 km was still well off her best.

2011 looked more promising as she walked to a PB of 46.433 km in the Coburg 6 Hour walk. Would she finally be ready to attack another 100 miler? The signs looked promising 6 weeks later in the Coburg 24 Hour when she flew past the 6 Hour mark with over 45km. Unfortunately, a bad mid-race section set her back and she looked likely to miss out on a centurion finish until she dug deep in the final hours to reach the 100 mile mark in **23:44:26**. It had been a long nine year between centurion finishes and she was understandably over the moon.



Karyn walks to her second centurion finish in 2011

It is wonderful to see Karyn back in business and walking so confidently once again.

Tim Erickson
11 August 2011