

AUSTRALIAN CENTURION DETAILS

48. Graham Watt (28/08/76)

23:59:23

17-18 April 2004

Coburg Harriers Track, Coburg, Vic

We Victorians went to the ballot boxes on Saturday 21st November 2010 to elect a new State Government and it saw a loss to the incumbent Labor Party and a win to the opposition Liberal Party. Amongst the many new Liberal MPs was **Graham Watt (C 48)** who won the Melbourne metropolitan seat of Burwood in emphatic style. Graham is a long time Liberal Party member and his persistence to the cause has been rewarded. You can read all about his convincing win at <http://whitehorse-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/state-election-burwood-back-in-liberal-hands/>.

Graham, who originally hails from Western Australia, is a former VRWC member and a pretty good track walker, regularly excelling in A Grade for Box Hill from the mid 1990s up till around 2003. I competed against Graham (a case of young vs old!) on a number of occasions before family and work commitments forced him to focus his energies elsewhere.

One of his greatest athletic achievements was to secure his Centurion membership by the smallest of margins in 2004. He had failed 5 times in a row: 1998 - 54.8 km, 1999 - 66.8 km, 2000 - 60.0 km, 2002 - 97.2 km and 2003 - 100.8km.

On the first three occasions, he had reached exhaustion point in the 50-60 km range but on his fourth attempt in 2002, he managed to get to the 97.2 km mark before stopping for a massage and a rest. Unfortunately, he could not get going again after this and had to call it a day. In his fifth attempt, he improved slightly further to 100.8km. Graham had been a last minute addition to the field but showed maturity in his walk, moderating his pace early and hence getting further overall.

His 2004 100 mile time of **23:59:23** is the closest shave of any attempt, beating the 24 Hour limit by just 37 secs! But what makes it even more amazing is the fact that he passed the 50 mile mark in 12:20:33 and looked to have lost all chances of reaching the required milestone. His second 50 mile split of 11:38:52 was over 40 minutes faster and set up an awesome finish as he pulled out all stops to beat the final gun. He covered 23 laps in the last 2 hours – easily the fastest period of his race. He was unable even to walk after the finish, such was the effort he had expended. His performance is one that will stick forever in my mind.



Graham Watt (C 48) and Bob Lee (C 47) - successful centurions in 2004

Graham returned a year later for another Centurion walk but was content to stroll through the early stages and retire after completing 60km. It is fair to say that the efforts of the previous year had taken much more out of him than even he expected.

Since then, he has turned up at most of our annual events to support those who are walking but he shows no signs of ever wanting to revisit his past victory. For the foreseeable future, his time will be fully committed to his young family at home and his budding political career.

Sometimes it takes determination and perseverance to gain what you want and Graham is a prime example of how to keep striving. Well done Graham. May your time in Parliament be all that you hope.



Graham then and now: getting his centurion badge in 2004 and now a successful politician in 2011