THE PROGRESSION OF THE AUSTRALIAN / AUSTRALASIAN 50 MILE RECORDS - MEN

The 50 Mile distance has always been a favourite target for ultra distance athletes. Short enough to complete within a day yet long enough to turn the average person pale with trepidation, it remains a benchmark distance. This article will review the progress of the Australian and Australasian records from the early days of amateur athletics until the present day.

The 1800s saw the craze of pedestrianism sweep the world. Like other British colonies, Australia had its share of exploits, recorded in the newspapers of the time and probably, in modern terms, falling somewhere between running and walking. Although these early colonial exploits were certainly valid feats of endurance, they cannot be verified as true walking performances. I take my starting point from around 1890. By this time, amateur athletics clubs had been formed in South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand and amateur sport had become a valid alternative to the world of professional athletics.

April 21, 1896	**James McDonald**	**Melbourne, VIC**	**10:09:40**	**Road**

The first recorded amateur ultra distance walking event was in Melbourne in 1896. It was over a distance of 50 miles and was won by James (Jimmy) McDonald. This was in fact the first Victorian roadwalking Championship ever held. Victorian Track and Field Titles had been held since 1892 but these featured only 1 Mile and 3 Mile Track Walks.
Born in Auckland in 1867, Jimmy McDonald learned rowing in New Zealand and achieved some success with the Ponsonby Rowing Club, Auckland. Once he moved to Australia, he joined the Yarra Yarra club about 1890. He was included in the club's crew that won the Victorian champion eights of 1891-92-93. During this period, the club boasted one of the most formidable eights ever brought together in Australia. During his rowing career, he started in 23 races for 18 wins, 3 seconds and a third. Only once did he finish out of a place.
A versatile athlete and blessed with almost unlimited stamina, he turned his attention to pedestrianism in 1892, joining Hawthorn Harriers and becoming a foundation member of the Melbourne Amateur Walking and Touring Club. He soon gained State honors as a member of Victoria's winning team in a five mile cross country championship in Sydney. But it was in walking that he achieved his greatest heights and this culminated in his great victory in the 50 mile walk in the Sydney Road in 1896 when he established an Australasian record of 10 hrs 9 mins 40 sec.

April 9, 1904	**James McDonald**	**Melbourne, VIC**	**9:43:02**	**Track**

This figure stood unsurpassed until McDonald lowered his own time on April 9, 1904 on the Old Scotch College grass track when he walked 50 miles in 9 hrs 43 mins 2 sec. Reports of the time state that he had a 7 minute refreshment break at the 25 mile mark, and that he was the only finisher. In this event, his intermediate distances for 15 miles upwards were also recognised as Victorian State records.
Amazingly, given the interest in long distance walking overseas, no further similar races were held until the 1920's and thus his time stood uncontested for nearly 20 years.

Sept 18, 1926	**Jack Lewis**	**Sydney, NSW**	**9:20:04**	**Road**

The inaugural NSW 50 Miles Road Walk Championship started at the Clock Tower, G.P.O., Martin Place in Sydney at 6.30 a.m. on 18th September 1926 and progressed to a half way point in Blacktown before retracing its steps to finish back at Martin Place. The race was governed according to the following Definition of walking

Walking is a progression of steps, from heel to toe, in which contact with the ground is maintained, i.e., the heel of the foremost foot must reach the ground before the toe of the other foot leaves it.

This is how the Australian Centurions govern their events today. Although the formal rules of racewalking have progressed, the basic rule of what constitutes 'walking' has not changed.
The race was won by Victorian Jack Lewis with NSW walker Gordon Smith second. The winning time was claimed as a new Australasian record although, being a road event, it could not really be forwarded as an official record. Nevertheless, his road time of 9:20:04 eclipsed McDonald's 1904 time by some 24 minutes.

Oct 30, 1926	**R, Hingston**	**Sydney, NSW**	**9:36:45.2**	**Track**

Not content with a road based 50 mile walk, the NSW Walking Club also put on its own Track Championship over that same distance a month later on a track on Kogarah and it was won by R. Hingston, who had been a well known Sydney walker before the First World War, regularly winning 1 Mile Walk classics at major meets. He also held the Bathurst to Orange walking record – 36 miles in 6hr 34min 3sec. He had retired from walking in 1913 but dusted off the shoes specifically for these long events. His time of 9hr 36min 45 1-5sec was forwarded as a new Australasian Track Record, breaking McDonald's 1904 time by over 6 minutes.

Sept 3,1927   Gordon Smith   Sydney, NSW   9:34:09   Road

The second NSW 50 Mile Championship saw NSW walker Gordon Smith win easily in the new Australasian best time of **9:17:32**. This was the first of a string of 50 mile wins for Gordon, culminating in his successful 100 mile walks in 1937 and 1938. His many performances remain competitive even by today's standards. There were 11 starters of whom 10 were from NSW.

1929   Harry Barrett   Penrith, NSW   9:15:02   Track

The venue for the 1929 50 Mile Track walk was the Speedway in Penrith and H. W. Barrett used the occasion to establish new Australian 50 Mile Track Records for 30 miles (5:06:39), 40 miles (7:12:06) and 50 miles (9:15:02) in addition to new 5 to 9 hours and 50 to 80 km records.

Oct 11, 1930   Jack Lewis   St Kilda, VIC   08:58:07   Road

The 1930 staging of the VAWC Championship, from St Kilda to Frankston and return, saw a record list of 30 nominations (but only 7 started!). The handicaps of the principal walkers gives some indication of the expected placings: J. Lewis and A. Robinson, scr; E. Winstanley, 10 min; W. Kilby, 25 min; J. Oberon, V. Jones, 55 min; H. Cavell, R. Blackley, 60 min; R. Barlow, 80 min.

Although Lewis was the obvious favourite, Ted Winstanley was considered by many as a serious threat. He was a proven distance walker who had taken a surprise 2nd place in the 1923 Victorian 25 Mile Championship as a 19 year old novice walker (with a time of 4:25:27). Since then, he had gone on to win the 1925 and 1926 Victorian 25 Mile titles. Marrying in 1926, he had retired from walking and had only returned to racing early in 1930 and had done well enough to win the Victorian 50 km title that year.

Left – Jack Lewis leads Frank Scully in a 1929 50 mile   Right – Ted Winstanley in action in 1930

At 6.45 am, the signal was given and the 7 contestants set out from the south gate of St Kilda Town Hall. Lewis stood out, dressed in black knickers and a white woolen sweater which showed his admirable physique to good effect. As the title holder, he was the centre of attention.

Winstanley surged through the 25 mile turn-around in a very fast time of 4:22:10 and was leading by about 150 yards from Robinson who was about 400 yards ahead of Lewis. Alas, he soon tired, Robinson retired and Lewis came over the top and won by nearly 10 minutes, in a time of 8:58:07. But there was no doubting that it was Winstanley's game efforts that had led to the new record.

With his win, Lewis become the first Australasian walker to beat the 9 hour mark and his performance set new road standards for all distances and marks from 32 miles onwards. Winstanley, in second place, also broke the old record. Of the 7 starters, only 3 finished.

1. Lewis, Jack   08:58:07
2. Winstanley, Ted   09:07:15
3. Oberon, Jack   09:46:58

"I thought that I would win today," Lewis said after his finished his long walk. The record breaker said that he regarded Winstanley and Robinson as his most dangerous opponents, but that all the same he was content to

play a waiting game, as he had set himself a schedule to break the record for the course which he established last year.

Lewis said that he was very surprised, however, to find that he had also broken the Australasian record for the distance. He paid a tribute to his opponents for their sportsmanship along the road. He was sorry that Wilson, the South Australian, had been forced to retire but said that, in his opinion, Wilson made too much use of his arms for long-distance walking , thus unnecessarily tiring himself.

The winner had only a short preparation for today's big test, but during the last few days has regularly walked 50 or more miles each day around the hills at Warburton, where he is employed as a forest ranger. "If people walked more, even if only for pleasure, they would be far healthier and have less doctors' bills to pay," Lewis said with a smile.

Oct 17 1931	**Jim Gaylor**	**Melbourne, VIC**	**8:49:33**	**Track**

In 1931, the VAWC Championship was held as a 50 mile track walk at the Melbourne Showgrounds. The reason was simple - to allow Jack Lewis to attack his various State records. Ted Winstanley was also in the field and expected to provide stiff opposition. No one gave much credence to young Jim Gaylor who had been talked into participating simply to help Lewis in the early stages of the event. But it was Gaylor who took the lead at the 9 mile mark, held off several strong challenges by Winstanley and eventually won, setting new Victorian records for all distances from 15 miles to 50 miles. His 50 mile time of 8:49:33 beat Lewis's State Track record by a massive 32 mins. Winstanley eventually fell back to third place behind Lewis with all 4 finishers below the previous Victorian track record.

1.	Gaylor, James	08:49:33
2.	Lewis, Jack	09:01:55
3.	Winstanley, Ted	09:04:05
4.	Blackley, Rupert	09:20:27

Oct 15 1932	**Joe O'Farrell**	**St Kilda, VIC**	**8:38:32**	**Road**

The 1932 VAWC Championship, back on the road and over a 10 mile lap in St Kilda, attracted a record field, although inclement weather was experienced. Wind, rain and cold greatly hampered the contestants in the early stages of the race and some entrants were forced to withdraw due to cramps. After lunch, the weather fined and the finish proved most exciting.

Gaylor was expected to win again but on this occasion he was upset by Joe O'Farrell who was better known as a track walker. On his first serious excursion into the ultra distance area, O'Farrell matched it with Gaylor as they led the field and raced neck and neck over the last 20 miles. It was only in the last couple of miles that O'Farrell drew away to win in an Australian best time of 8:38, finishing 6 minutes ahead of Gaylor whose 8:44 was also a personal best time. Third place was taken by Charles Dunning, a veteran English walker and a Mons medal winner.

1.	O'Farrell, Joseph	08:38:32
2.	Gaylor, James	08:44:34
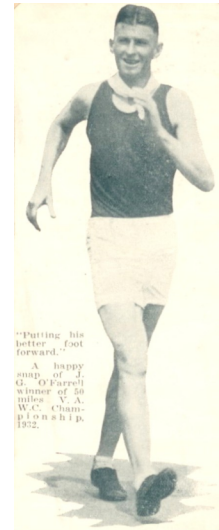
Jim Gaylor (left) and Joe O'Farrell (right) – Victoria's premier long distance walkers in the 1930's

Oct 28 1956   Harry Tetlow (NZ)   Melbourne, VIC   8:25:37   Road

It was not until the 1956 VAWC 50 Mile Club Championship, held over a 2 mile lap around Princes Park in inner Melbourne, that the 8:30 barrier was finally broken and the race went to famous New Zealand walker Harry Tetlow. His time of 8:25 was a new Australasian best. Tom Daintry (one of the founders of the Australian Centurions), then aged 45 and just moved from Queensland to Melbourne, was second in 8:46. Held only a month before the Melbourne Olympic Games, the event attracted a good field. The VAWC Annual Report for the 1955/56 Season reported as follows

This gruelling race attracted five stalwarts who experienced almost perfect conditions for this type of event. The record for the 50 Miles Club Championship was held by Joe O'Farrell since 1932 when he recorded 8 hrs 38 mins for the distance over the old St. Kilda circuler course of 10 miles each lap.
But Harry Tetlow of New Zealand came up with a performance which will take some equalling in the future. Taking the lead around the thirty miles post, he went on to win in the record time of 8 hrs 25 mins 37 secs. A feature of the race was that all starters completed the course.

     1.   Tetlow, Harry (NZ)   08:25:37   **New Australasian Best**
     2.   Daintry, Thomas   08:46:02

2 July 1962   Col Bailey   Adelaide to Murray Bridge, SA   8:37:40   Road

Not to be left out, The South Australian Amateur Walking Club decided to schedule its own long distance walk and 1962 saw the inaugural Adelaide to Murray Bridge walk was held. Unlike the flat NSW or Victorian courses, this course saw walkers climb out of Adelaide and then negotiate the many long rolling hills as they made their way east. It was not a course for the faint hearted. The race officially started from the Adelaide Town Hall and finished at the Murray Bridge Town Hall. Six walkers fronted the start for the 53.2 mile event at 5:35AM on 2nd July 1962 but, of the starters, only Col Bailey and Jim Forrest completed the course, the other 4 dropping out at various points along the way. Final results were

     1.   Col Bailey   9:13:24
     2.   Jim Forrest   9:45:55

Bailey broke several road bests along the way:

- A new South Australian 25 mile best of 4 hours 1 minutes (beating the current record by 9 minutes)
- A new South Australian 50 km best of 5 hours 7 minutes (beating the current record by 9 minutes)
- **A new Australian 50 mile best of 8:37:40**, beating the 1932 record of 8:38:32, held by Victorian Joe O'Farrell.

Col's personal comments from his diary add some flavour to what would otherwise be a dry report.

It was a fine, mild mid-winter's morning and warmed considerably as the day wore on. We all stuck together as a bunch until Glen Osmond and, as we headed up into the hills, the less fitter walkers began to drop back. Jim

Forrest, Peter Whitham and I stuck together until reaching 'the Devils Elbow' and the steep climb began to take its toll. Whitham dropped off and Forrest stuck with me until Crafers where I slowly moved away. (Please keep in mind that this race was entirely on the old road, most of which has now been superseded by the freeway) By the time I reached Stirling I was feeling superb and was by then, well out in front. It was about there I had my last drink until I reached the 40 mile mark in the afternoon, and this very nearly brought me undone. I had moved so far away from the others that the grub waggon had forgotten all about me and concentrated on those remaining, who were up to thirty minutes behind at that stage. As I came out of the hills past Kanmantoo and began walking through the flatter country of Monarto, the heat really built up and, with my face caked with salt, my mouth parched and my body screaming out for water, I was in big trouble. When the chief Judge, Claude Knight, came along I told him I would have to pull out if I didn't soon get water, and within 10 minutes I had my water, right at the 40 mile peg. It was then I learnt of my actual time because up to then I had no idea how fast I was going. I realised that I had blown my pre-arranged schedule to bits and my time was almost an hour faster than I had expected at that stage. I was now in unknown territory, never having walked that far before. I must admit, I was feeling really stuffed by then, I had well and truly hit that fabled wall, but fortunately the water and a few salt tablets got me going again and my mile rate began to pick up. I didn't eat anything because I feared it would upset my stomach. When they told me I was in sight of a 50 mile record I really got stuck into it again. I had no idea what the record actually was, or even who held it, that was never in my mind, but it gave me the incentive I needed to finish strongly. I learnt many valuable lessons from that walk, namely to keep walking through adversity and never give in, and to think positively, not to mention continually reminding yourself of all the darned hard training you put in over many months. The fact that I walked so much of the race alone didn't seem to worry me until the last 10 miles when I began looking over my shoulder, because I had no idea how far Forrest was behind me, but I needn't have worried. I went into the race weighing 122 lbs and finished weighing 114 lbs. Fortunately it wasn't a windy day because good burst of wind and they would never have seen me again.

Col commented recently as follows:

At the time I was living out in the country, 23 miles from Adelaide at a little place called Kangarilla and I did all my training alone on rough, unlit bush roads. I would arrive home from work just before dark and hit the road training - regardless of the weather - in the dark: 10 mile Tuesday, 20 mile Wednesday, 10 mile Thursday, race on the Saturday and a good long walk Sunday. Every third Sunday. I would do a 35-40 mile country circuit, up hill and down dale which took me anything up to seven hours. It was time on my feet that counted and back then you could train reasonably safely on the roads, unlike today. I had an old 1939 Chev sedan at the time and measured all my walk routes thoroughly to know exactly how far I was walking. I did three months of solid, relentless training for that walk; my wife called herself a 'walking widow', because I thought about little else for the whole three months, but in the end it was worth it.

Oct 14 1962	Jim Gleeson	Albert Park, VIC	8:15:19	Road

Col Bailey's new Australian 50 Mile best did not last long. The Victorian 50 Mile walk, held 3 months later in Melbourne on a 5000m lap around Albert Park, saw Jim Gleeson improve his best time by 27 minutes to set a new Australian best time of 8:15:19. It would take 13 years before another Australian would better that time. Col Bailey made the trip to Victoria but was forced to retire after a persistent hip problem sent him lame around the half way mark. Here is how the VAWC "Heel and Toe" reported the race

Showing tremendous grit and determination, Club 50 mile champion Jim Gleeson annihilated the Australian best-time on record by retaining his title in 8 hrs 15 mins 19 secs at Albert Park on October 14th. Jim becomes the first Australian to better 10 mins per mile for the gruelling journey of more than 16 laps of Albert Park lake. The half-way mark saw only two of the seven starters still on their feet, with Gavan Breen retaining the lead he had set up in the second lap. However, after being ¾ mile behind Gavan at 23 miles, Jim's experience in this type of event asserted itself and by the 50 kilo. Mark, reached by Gavan in 5 hrs 3 mins, Jim was only 5 mins down, and was gaining hand over fist. The 36th mile saw Jim stride past the fading Gavan with the fastest lap of the race, and Gavan's ultimate retirement was in the 42nd mile. Jim was after Harry Tetlow's record of 8 hrs 25 mins and held his form splendidly to clock a phenomenal 8 hrs 15 mins 19 secs.
Jim describes the race as his hardest ever, but it must also be his most satisfying. He trained very hard for the event – one Saturday, he walked at least 20 miles in the morning, finished second in a two miler at Mentone, and then set off for another spin in the afternoon. Jim's performance is a fine example to all his clubmates of what can be achieved through patient and consistent hard training.

1965	Norm Read	Hawara to New Plymouth, NZ	7:49:52	Road

Through the Taranaki Race Walking Club in New Zealand, Harry Tetlow and Norm Read organized a series of annual 50 mile walks, from Hawara to New Plymouth, from 1964 until 1970. Norm Read was the dominant walker in these

early events and, in 1965, he reduced Tetlow's New Zealand Best on Record time to 7:49:52. This time still stands today as an Australasian Best. The winners of these 50 mile events were as follows

1964	Norm Read	8:15:58
1965	Norm Read	7:49:52 **(Australasian Best on Record)**
1967	Norm Read	8:41:05
1968	Norm Read	8:24:35
1969	L. Diack	8:32:58
1970	D. Warner	8:55:29

Harry Tetlow and Norm Read in action – New Zealand's first ultra walkers of note in the modern era

18-19ᵗʰ October 1975   Tim Erickson   Clifton Hill, Victoria   8:14:44   Track

The Australian Centurions Club was formed in 1971 and immediately instituted an annual 24 Hour qualifying race. One of the most successful ones was the 1975 event at the George Knott Athletic Track in Melbourne. This was a golden period of walking in Victoria with a large number of active distance walkers and the event saw a large field of 21 starters. Ideal conditions helped all competitors and the race saw the amazing result of 5 finishers and a new Australian record over the distance of 50 miles. The official race report by Centurions Captain, Fred Redman, reads as follows:

From the outset Ian Jack set a very fast pace obviously with the intention of assisting his brother Clarrie and Tim Erickson in their endeavour to crack Jim Gleeson's Australian 50 mile record. Tim and Clarrie pushed each other along for some 35 kilometres where Clarrie was forced to retire mainly due I feel to a very heavy seasons racing, which had sapped his strength rather more than he had imagined. This left Tim on his own to go on in fine style to add to his recent National 50 kilometre title a new Australian record of 8 hours 14 minutes 46 seconds for 50 miles. Congratulations Tim and we look forward in a year or two to welcoming you as a Member. Our President Jim Gleeson was on hand to congratulate Tim at his moment of triumph.

03-04 Nov 1979   Ian Jack   Clifton Hill, Victoria   7:57:57   Track

The 1979 Australian Centurions qualifying event at the George Knott Track in Clifton Hill was one to remember as Clarrie and Ian Jack, identical twins from local Melbourne club Glenhuntly Harriers, went on a record breaking spree with Clarrie setting a new Australian 50 mile record of 7:57:57 and Ian setting a new Australian 100 mile record of 17:59:30.
Clarrie, who was keen to take the 50 mile record of his training partner Tim Erickson, powered through the first 50 km in 5:01:48 to be well on target. He continued on unabated to finish the 50 mile distance in 07:57:57. Once he had retired, attention was redirected to his brother Ian who passed the 50 mile mark in 9:09:50 and then started to speed up. Without any breaks, he just powered on in automatic mode. His 100 mile time was an incredible 17:59:30 for a new Australian Record, breaking the fine time set previously by Jim Gleeson. His second 50 miles had been done in 8:49:40, some 20 minutes faster than his first 50 miles.
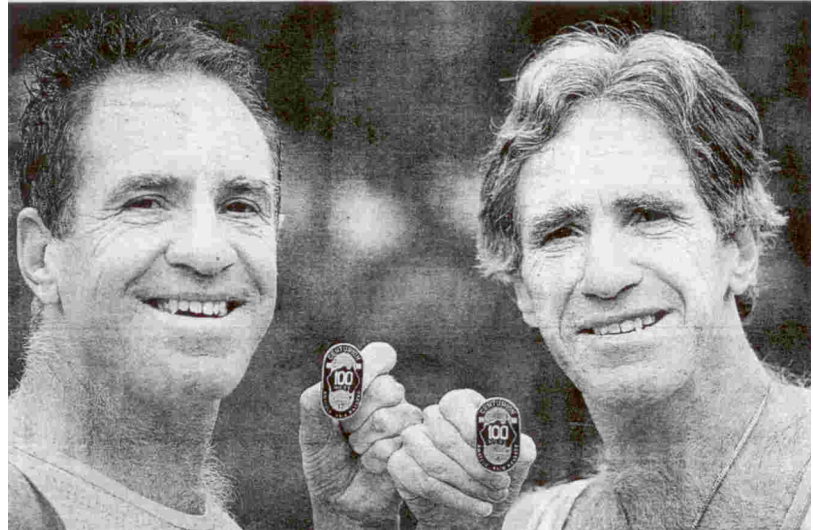
Clarrie and Ian Jack – Australian record holders for 50 Miles and 100 Miles – in 1975 (left) and in 2000 (right)

THE PROGRESSION OF THE AUSTRALIAN / AUSTRALASIAN 50 MILE RECORDS - WOMEN

Unfortunately women do not feature in any of the early ultra distance walking results. The prevalent thinking of the day was that long distances were dangerous for women and they were effectively 'banned' from such events. Although there was an offshoot of the Victorian Amateur Walking Club which was called the Victorian Women's Walking Club, distances were of the order of 880m and 1 mile. There were no opportunities for women to pursue thoughts of long walks.

Oct 15-16, 1938   Mary Stoddart   Bankstown, NSW   12:16:45   Track

The first verifiable long distance walking performance by a women is that of Miss Mary Stoddart who, on 15-16 October 1938, completed 50 Miles in 12 hours, 16 minutes and 45 seconds in the NSW Amateur Walking Club 24 Hour Walking Trial at the Bankstown Oval in Sydney. She remains a lone pioneer in an otherwise male domain.

Oct 8-9, 1994   Carmela Carrassi   Clifton Hill, Victoria   11:52:24.5   Track

Carmela Carrassi came into the 1994 Australian Centurions event as a complete newcomer to the sport of race-walking. With just over 12 months in the sport and one season behind her, she set out to have a go. She had a great support team consisting of her family and fellow members of the East Brunswick Athletics Club. She set off at a pace of just over 3:00 per lap and gradually slowed as she was forced to change from race-walking technique to brisk walking. She reached the 50 mile in 11:52:24.5 but it was apparent that her pace was just not fast enough to reach the 100 mile mark within the 24 hour limit. But that did not deter Carmela. She just kept going!. She had few breaks and maintained an almost continuous presence on the track. From the 300 lap onwards, she was reduced to lap times of over 4 mins - just not fast enough. She also suffered from blister problems and had stomach problems due to having to feed on the walk. So perhaps her inexperience cost her in these matters. However, she set new Australian standards for women in the distances of 50 Mile, 100 km, 24 hours and achieved the greatest distance walked by any Australian woman. Her final tally at the end of the 24 hour period was 148.936 km or 92 miles 992 yards.

April 1-2, 1995   Michelle Curren   Woolongong, NSW   11:32.29   Track

Michelle Curren had tried unsuccessfully in the 1994 Centurions qualifying event and decided to have a second attempt in the 1995 NSW 24 hour track championships, held on April 1-2 at Beaton Reserve in Wollongong. She started well and hung on to record a new Women's 50 mile record of 11:32:29. However, this had taken too much out of her that she was forced to retire soon afterwards. To her credit, she returned to the track later and completed a total distance of 118:84 km (73.85 miles) for the 24 hours to improve upon her previous best of 112 km. So the elusive 100 mile mark still eluded the women but at least the 50 Mile record was starting to tumble.

April 13-14, 1996   Carmela Carrassi   Coburg, Victoria   11:12:20   Track

Those who watched Carmela Carrassi complete 92+ miles in the 1994 Centurions Walk at Clifton Hill were convinced that it was only a matter of time until she made the 100 miles. She chose the Victorian 24 Hour Track Championship at the Coburg Track in Melbourne in early 1996 as her next attempt. As this was a running event, Centurion members were present to verify her performance. On this occasion, she completed the full 24 hours and set new Australian Women's Bests for 50 miles, 100 km, 100 miles and 24 hours. These performances were as follows

50 miles	11:12:20
100 km	14:16:27
100 miles	23:36:59
24 Hours	162.541 km

Weather conditions were atrocious. It rained for most of the 24 hours of the race and during the night, the rain was so heavy and continuous that competitors were forced to fight their way through water that was several inches in depth. Add a furious overnight wind and you had conditions that will be talked about for some time to come. Carmela walked most of the second 12 hours out towards the second lane to avoid the water, thus adding considerable distance to each lap.

April 12-13, 1997	**Carmela Carrassi**	**Coburg, Victoria**	**11:08:04**	**Track**

Carmela Carrassi was back at Coburg again the next year to improve on her record breaking performance of 1996. She walked almost continuously for the full 24 hours (a trademark of her previous performances) and was ahead of schedule at all times. Starting off at about 2:45 pace, she gradually slowed to about 3:00 and was still maintaining 3:40s in the latter stages of the race. She broke all her Australian records on the way and finished with a fine set of results as follows

50 miles	11:08:04
100 km	13:52:32
100 miles	23:09:03
24 Hours	166.600 km

Sept 18-19, 1999	**Sandra Brown**	**Coburg, Victoria**	**09:08:52**	**Track**
	Ann Staunton	**Coburg, Victoria**	**10:52:27**	**Track**

The 1999 Australian Centurions event saw a record field of 23 starters, including 9 overseas competitors. The pace was evident early with Sandra Brown of England setting a cracking pace of 2:30 per lap. Gerald Manderson of NZ (the 1998 winner) was keen to take up the challenge and shadowed her for the first 2 hours. However, he was soon forced to slow and Sandra was left on her own to dominate the race. The 50 mile splits tell the story for the first half of the race with overseas competitors filling 5 of the first 6 places at that stage. Sandra's 50 mile time was a new Australian Open Record and was ahead of her own 100 mile world record split. Jill Green of England, with her 50 mile split of 10:08:00, also bettered the existing record while Ann Staunton from Canberra, having her first ever ultra distance walk, broke the Australian Residential Record for 50 miles with 10:052:07. Behind her, Canberra walker Carol Baird, also broke the record with her time of 10:57:07.

Sandra Brown (F)	09:08:52	**(Australian Open Record)**
Gerald Manderson	09:58:28	
Jill Green (F)	10:08:00	
Robin Whyte	10:15:08	
Herbert Neubacher	10:20:47	
Gerrit de Jong	10:43:04	
Ann Staunton (F)	10:52:27	**(Aust Residential Record)**
Carol Baird (F)	10:57:07	

January 8-9, 2000	**Carol Baird**	**Gosford, NSW**	**10:00:24**	**Track**

The 2000 Coastal Classic 12 Hour event, held on a grass track at Adcock Park in Gosford, saw Centurions Robin Whyte and Carol Baird in action and the final result showed both walkers covering nearly 100km. Carol's final distance of 95.23 km was a new Australian Residential Record and her 50 mile split of 10:00:24 took over 50 minutes off her existing Australian Residential 50 Mile Record.

Robin had this to say about the race:

I was pleased. As usual did not feel that I had prepared for event. I had set a target of 96K - if I could stay on my feet. Carol Baird is quite unbelievable. I gained 4 laps on her between about 2.30 and 3.30 hours but from

then on I feared she would overtake me. She was so positive all the way, whereas I was wondering how I was going to keep going from as far out as 8 hours to go. But somehow as nearly always I managed to keep going at a reasonable pace and in actual fact picked it up quite dramatically in the last hour.

January 6-7, 2001   **Carol Baird**   **Gosford, NSW**   **9:42:06**   **Track**

Carol and Robin were back in action at Gosford the next year but this time it was Carol who triumphed with an outright win while Robin faded to third overall. Carol's final distance of 97.290 broke her Australian Residential record for 12 Hours and her 50 Mile time of 9:42:06 took a further 18 minutes off her 50 Mile record.

Carol Baird, Sandra Brown and Carmela Carrassi

CURRENT AUSTRALIAN 50 MILE RECORDS

I finish this analysis with the Australian Open and Masters records for the 50 Mile distance.

50 Miles Open Records

Men	Clarrie Jack	VIC	7:57:57	Open and Residential
Women	Sandra Brown	UK	9:08:52	Open
	Carol Baird	NSW	9:42:06	Residential

50 Miles Age Group Records Men

Group	Name		Res	Age	DOB	Perf.	Place	Date	Records
35-39	Peter	Bennett	QLD	38	11/11/1955	8:46:39	Clifton Hill, Victoria	08/10/1994	All-Comers
40-44	Jim	Gleeson	VIC	40	14/06/1931	8:31:27	Reservoir, Victoria	23/10/1971	All-Comers
45-49	Tom	Daintry	VIC	45	01/06/1911	8:46:02	Carlton, Victoria	28/10/1956	All-Comers
50-54	Tom	Daintry	VIC	50	01/06/1911	9:15:25	Albert Park, Victoria	15/10/1961	All-Comers
55-59	Robin	Whyte	ACT	57	24/02/1942	9:44:34	Gosford, NSW	08/01/2000	All-Comers
60-64	Tom	Daintry	VIC	60	01/06/1911	9:28:41	Reservoir, Victoria	23/10/1971	All-Comers
65-69	Robin	Whyte	ACT	65	24/02/1942	10:53:50	Gold Coast, QLD	10/08/2007	All-Comers
70-74	Deryck	Skinner	SA	72	27/11/1932	10:23:05	Adelaide, SA	16/10/2005	All-Comers
75-79	Stan	Miskin	VIC	76	31/07/1925	11:40:41	Coburg, Victoria	14/04/2002	All-Comers
80-84	Stan	Miskin	VIC	80	31/07/1925	12:31:26	Coburg, Victoria	23/04/2006	All-Comers

50 Miles Age Group Records Women

Group	Name		Res	Age	DOB	Perf.	Place	Date	Records
35-39	Ann	Staunton	ACT	35	04/11/1963	10:52:27	Coburg, Victoria	19/09/1999	All-Comers
40-44	Carmela	Carrassi	VIC	44	07/08/1953	11:08:04	Coburg, Victoria	13/04/1997	All-Comers
45-49	Lyn	Lewis	QLD	46	14/08/1955	10:46:06	Coburg, Victoria	14/04/2002	All-Comers
50-54	Sandra	Brown	UK	50	01/04/1949	9:08:52	Coburg, Victoria	19/09/1999	All-Comers
50-54	Carol	Baird	ACT	51	15/03/1949	9:42:06	Gosford, NSW	06/01/2001	Residential

55-59	Jill	Green	UK	58	10/10/1941	10:08:00	Coburg, Victoria	19/09/1999	All-Comers
60-64	Jill	Green	UK	63	10/10/1941	10:41:12	Coburg, Victoria	17/04/2005	All-Comers
60-64	Val	Chesterton	ACT	61	16/06/1940	11:49:32	Gosford, NSW	06/01/2002	Residential
65-69	No Claimant								
70-74	No Claimant								
75-79	No Claimant								
80-84	No Claimant								

Tim Erickson
March 2008