



EVENT GUIDE

SUNDAY 31ST MAY

BLACKWOOD

WELCOME TO THE 2026 TRAIL RUNNING SERIES

We can't wait to RUN A LITTLE WILD on the trails together this winter - commencing with race 1 at beautiful Blackwood on 31 May!

Get ready for a season of adventures, fun and fresh air as we visit three wild venues over the next three months. Whether you're a first-timer or a seasoned trail warrior, you'll feel right at home among the trail running community that makes these events so special.

Race 1 kicks off at Blackwood on the Lerderderg River west of Melbourne. We first raced here in 2025 and the courses got a huge thumbs up as they explore the river valleys, historic aqueducts and undulating hills of this picturesque part of the state. Before or after running, Blackwood has everything you need with a friendly village feel including cafes, a classic country pub and a variety of accommodation right on the doorstep of the trails. We're very excited to be returning in 2026.

So warm up your legs, rally your mates and get ready to run a little wild at Blackwood for Race 1.

The Rapid Ascent Team

EVENT SCHEDULE

SUNDAY 31ST MAY

7:00 - 8:45am	Race Registration (race plate collection)
8:30am	START - LONG COURSE (22km)
8:40am	START - MEDIUM COURSE (16km)
8:50am	START - SHORT COURSE (8km)
10:45am	Short and Medium course presentations
11:40am	Long course presentations



Another event by:



LOCATION & CAR PARKING

EVENT CENTRE AND FINISH LINE

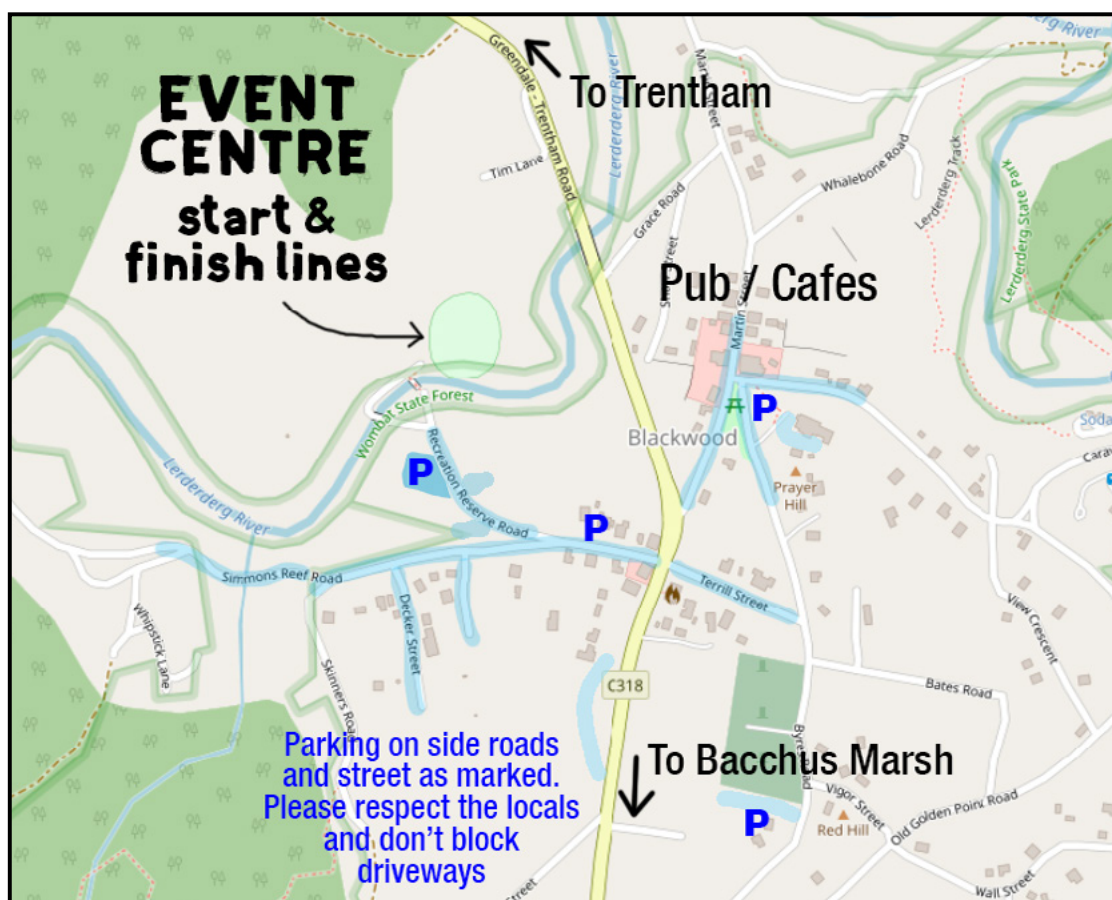
Blackwood Sports and Recreation Reserve – 31 Recreation Reserve Road, Blackwood VIC.
[CLICK HERE](#) for a map link.

If coming from Melbourne you are best to go via Bacchus Marsh and turn off just after Myrniong.

Drive Time: 1hr 20 from the Melbourne city centre, going via Bacchus March.

CAR PARKING:

Parking is limited (so please car pool if possible). Parking is available in a number of open areas and on side roads throughout the village. Allow extra time and be ready to walk 1-2km to get to the race venue (treat it as a warm up!). Please be considerate of locals and don't park across driveways!



THE EVENT CENTRE

The following competitor services and facilities will be set up at the Event Centre, making a welcoming environment for everyone to enjoy whether you are running or spectating:

- The start and finish line for all races
- Race registration and information marquee (from 7:00am)
- Displays by a range of sponsors including:
 - **Free Time** giving away a free can of their 0% alc beer for all runners + sales
 - **La Sportiva** with a huge range of demo shoes to try (and race in!)
 - **Skratch** Hydration and nutrition samples and sales
 - **Beyond** physiotherapy providing free massages
 - **Pro Feet Podiatry** consultations
- Event merchandise sales marquee
- Bag storage area for runners' clothing during the race
- Live music, MC and commentary at the race finish
- Local caterer Rose will be selling coffee and a range of snacks throughout the morning
- Roadshow Coffee with their popular coffee trailer and brunch supplies

COMPETITOR SERVICES @ THE EVENT CENTRE

FREE TIME 0% BEER

Our new partners Free Time (Bridge Road Brewers) will be providing a free 0% alcohol beer for all runners. Brewed with balance and refreshment in mind, it's the perfect post-event beer for sharing stories and soaking up the good vibes. Enjoy great taste, low alcohol, and more time for what you love.



LA SPORTIVA - DEMO SHOES

La Sportiva make some superb trail running shoes and are building a big following within the trail community. They will have a large number of demo shoes for you to try on (and even race in!) so you can learn more about their popular models and give them a test run (we love the Prodigio Max and Pro).



SKRATCH HYDRATION POINT - NO CUPS!!

There will be a hydration station located in the event expo / finish line area that will have water and Skratch hydration sports drink available – but you must BRING YOUR OWN CUPS OR BOTTLES...



BEYOND & PROFEET PODIATRY - FREE MASSAGE + PODIATRY ADVICE

Our terrific healthcare partners Beyond and Profeet Podiatry are back again and will have a Myotherapist, a Physio and a Podiatrist on hand to help enhance your performance and avoid injuries. They'll be providing some free massages and injury advice as well as tips on shoes, blisters, socks and more. Stop past and say hi.

Beyond
Move through life



ONE MORE STEP.

PRODIGIO 2 | XFLOW

Redesigned from kilometres, hours, and meters of elevation on rocks and trails where every step is different. Redesigned in the key areas to ensure continuity, stability, and comfort as the distance increases. The XFlow technology works to absorb and return energy consistently, making progress smooth and natural. The new upper lightens the shoe, with a wider toe box for a more comfortable fit, without compromising precision. Precise fit. Stable structure. Comfort over long distances. Perfected to keep you in step. Find your flow at [lasportiva.com](https://www.lasportiva.com)



KIDS ACTIVITY ZONE

We'll have a bunch of games set up for kids (of any age) to play with during the morning, including Giant Jenga, Corn Hole and Quoits. *"Fun for the whole family!"*

BITUMEN IS BORING BACKDROP

We will have our Bitumen is Boring backdrop with a range of fun placard signs for you to hold up and have fun with. Snap a selfie or grab a photo with some friends to create your own unique event photo.

SOCIAL CHILL ZONE + LIVE MUSIC

We'll set up a social chill zone where you can relax and enjoy your post race vibes with chairs, umbrellas and live music and more. Grab a seat, buy a coffee/food/beer and enjoy life!

BAG STORAGE

We will store your bags and keep an eye over them whilst you're running. Put all items in a closed bag, attach the tear-off bag tag from the bottom of your number plate and hand the bag to the storage area before your run. All care no responsibility.



BYO CLUB MARQUEE

Groups and clubs are welcome to bring your own marquee to set up near the finish line to create your own race hub. Send us a quick e-mail with the details to events@rapidascent.com.au beforehand then set up your home base and enjoy the scene. (Marquees must be weighted down - no pegs at Blackwood - and safe).

PLENTY OF SPOT PRIZES

We'll be handing out plenty of spot prizes during the race and at presentations so keep an ear out for your race number or prize competitions.

**THE
GREATEST
BEER OF
ALL TIMES**

Find some Free Time
at your local bottle shop
or supermarket.



COMPETITOR IDENTIFICATION

COMPETITOR NUMBER PLATE COLLECTION

All runners must collect your number plate from the registration marquee on the morning of the race (other than Gold Runners and those who pre-purchased postage of their plates). So make sure you arrive early enough to collect your plate before your race starts!

ON THE DAY ENTRIES

Entries will be accepted on the day at the event. Please enter via your phone and then show the entry confirmation e-mail at race registration.

GOLD RUNNER FREEBIES!

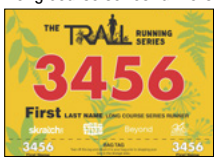
Hey gold runners - don't forget to come past the registration marquee to collect your new Trail Running Series Beanie! (personal request - come after your race when the rego tent is less busy! We won't run out of beanies.)



NUMBER PLATES

- All competitors must race with their number plate attached to the front of their t-shirt / top (and not on your shorts or leggings) so it is clearly visible from the front during the race.
- If you have a GOLD race plate and are doing all 3 races in The Series, you should have received your plate in the post. BRING IT and KEEP IT FOR FUTURE RACES!

Gold Runners plate
Long course series runners



Long Course plate



Gold Runners plate
Medium course series runners



Medium Course plate



Gold Runners plate
Short course series runners



Short Course plate



FINISH LINE MEDALS - AVAILABLE FOR PRE-PURCHASE \$11.50

We provide runners the opportunity to purchase a finisher medal before the race rather than including the cost of the medal in the entry fee for all runners. This is to keep entry fee costs down and to minimise the wastage of making and giving a medal to someone who does not want it.

We will award finish medals to those who purchased them from the Medal Marquee after your race - so if you ordered a medal THEN COME AND COLLECT IT ONCE YOU FINISH!

Medals are made of recycled metal and can still be pre-purchased [via the website](#). We will have a limited number of medals for sale on the day.



Medals from each race combine to create a series trifecta medallion

ITRA WOMEN'S TRAIL DAY

Rapid Ascent are members of the International Trail Running Association (ITRA) and are excited to join ITRA in recognition of Women's Trail Day. This is a global celebration designed to inspire and empower women around the world to get out on the trails and experience the joy of running together.

Celebrated on June 1st but with events around the world on 30 - 31 May 2026, women are encouraged to gather with friends or head out solo for a trail run and be part of this global movement. By running with us at race 1 of the Trail Running Series you're doing exactly that!



THE RACE COURSES

The running at Blackwood is beautiful... and features plenty of variety along each course. Starting at the recreation reserve, the courses follow predominantly single track that winds its way beside the Lerderderg River, along historic aqueduct trails cut in during the Gold Rush and along verdant green valleys filled with life.

The Long course stands out with a solid climb in the middle of the course, whilst the medium and short courses are quite flat and will make for some fun (and fast) running as you slalom between the eucalypts. We really like the running around here and am sure you will too!

RACE DISTANCES (all race distances are +/- 500m)

- Long Course: 22km, includes 570m elevation gain / loss
- Medium Course: 15.8km, includes 330m elevation gain / loss
- Short Course: 7.9km, includes 190m elevation gain / loss.

FINISH LINE SPRINT

We will record and award a special Finish Line Sprint time for each runner as part of your overall race. The sprint will be over the last 100m - 200m leading into the finish line and allows you to show us how fast you can finish at the end of the race! It's all in a bit of fun with fastest male and female sprinters receiving a prize thanks to our sponsors!

PASSING ETIQUETTE

With a lot of runners sharing a narrow trail there are a few points of etiquette when it comes to passing a slower runner. If you are a faster runner who wants to pass a slower runner on a narrow bit of track:

- Let the slower runner know you are there and want to pass – don't barge through
- The slower runner should respond and advise when it's safe to overtake.
- Only pass if you are legitimately faster. If you're pushing at 120% to overtake then stay behind for now.
- Slower runners - you don't have to totally stop when a faster runner comes through, make space but keep trotting along as well.

COURSE MARKING - IMPORTANT!!

The course will be clearly marked with the colours listed below. Note that you need to keep an eye out for and follow the course markings, there will not be marshals along the course to direct you!

LONG COURSE:

- **red and/or orange arrows** (pegged into the ground and fixed to trees or bushes)
- **fluro pink coloured** plastic surveyor's tape (tied to trees or bushes)

MEDIUM COURSE:

- **green arrows** (pegged into the ground and fixed to trees or bushes)
- **green coloured** plastic surveyor's tape (tied to trees or bushes)

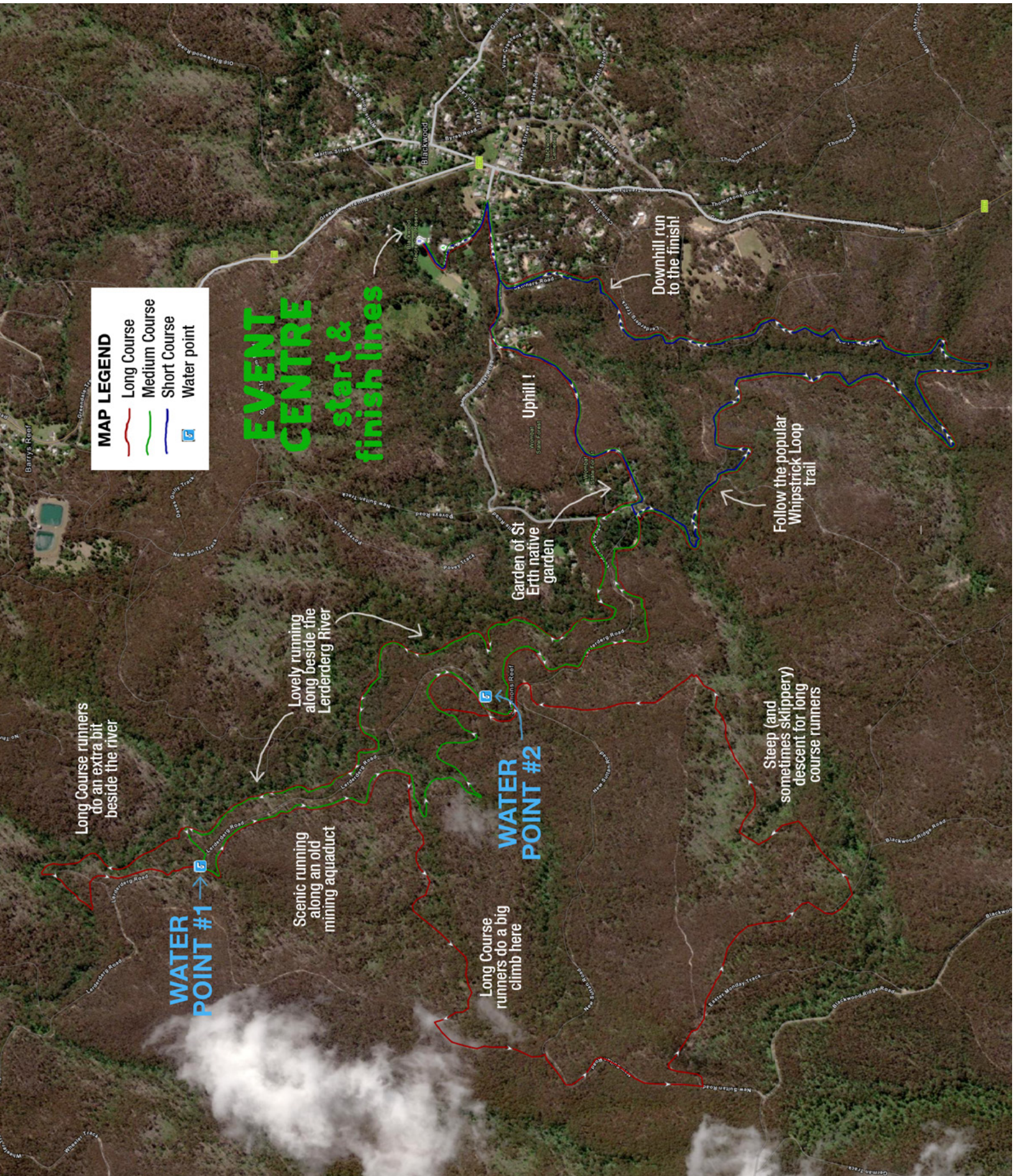
SHORT COURSE:

- **blue arrows** (pegged into the ground and fixed to trees or bushes)
- **aqua blue coloured** plastic surveyor's tape (tied to trees or bushes)

The colours of these course markings match the colour of the race plate for runners in that particular race (except Series Entrants who have a GOLD race plate).

TRACK INTERSECTIONS: Surveyor's tape will be placed immediately following a track junction to confirm you are on the correct track. Unless otherwise marked or directed, competitors should follow the most major track at all intersections. If there is no arrow at a minor track junction then continue along the major track.

BLACKWOOD COURSE MAP



MAP LEGEND

- Long Course
- Medium Course
- Short Course
- Water point

EVENT CENTRE
start & finish lines

Downhill, run to the finish!

Follow the popular Whipstrick Loop trail

Uphill!

Garden of St Erth native garden

Long Course runners do an extra bit beside the river

Lovely running along beside the Lerderberg river

Scenic running along an old mining aquaduct

Steep (and sometimes skipperry) descent for long course runners

Long Course runners do a big climb here

WATER POINT #1

WATER POINT #2

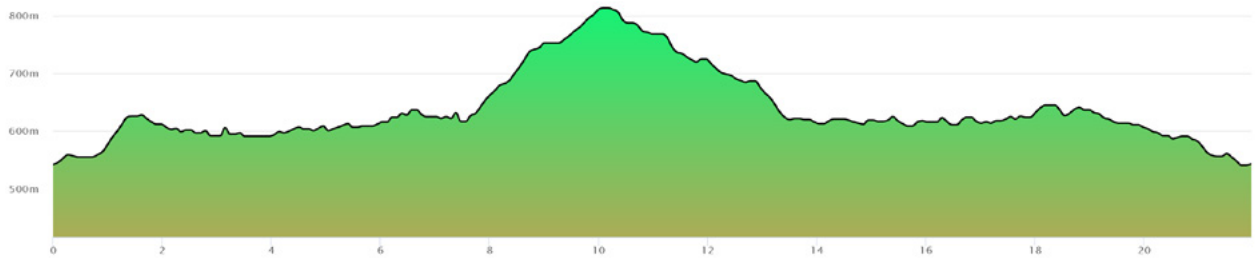
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

LONG COURSE - 22KM Elevation gain: 570m ascent **Water Pts:** 6.5km and 14.5km pts
[CLICK HERE](#) to see the long course route on Strava

Starting at the recreation reserve, runners commence going uphill on a 4WD track and around the edge of the Garden of St Erth native garden. From here there's plenty of beautiful, flowing running on flat terrain beside the Lerderderg River and aqueduct trails.

Things get serious again at the 7.5km pt as long course runners commence a solid climb for a couple of kms before a fast steep descend back to the aqueducts. From here on the course continues along long sections of single track along the Whipstick Trail, with a few smaller undulations before a fast downhill finish back to the Recreation Reserve.

Long Course elevation profile

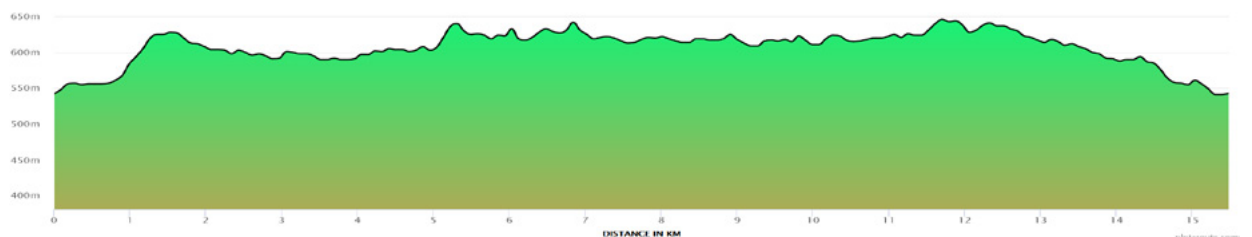


MEDIUM COURSE - 15.8KM Elevation gain: 330m ascent **Water Pts:** 5km and 8.3km pts
[CLICK HERE](#) to see the medium course route on Strava

Medium course runners do a similar route to the long but miss the large climb in the middle! Starting at the recreation reserve, you'll commence going uphill on a 4WD track and around the edge of the Garden of St Erth native garden. From here there's plenty of beautiful, flowing running on flat terrain beside the Lerderderg River and back along some weaving aqueduct trails cut in during the gold rush.

Coming back past the Garden of St Erth, you're following the Whipstick Trail through lush undergrowth and weaving gullies before a fast downhill finish back to the Recreation Reserve.

Medium Course elevation profile

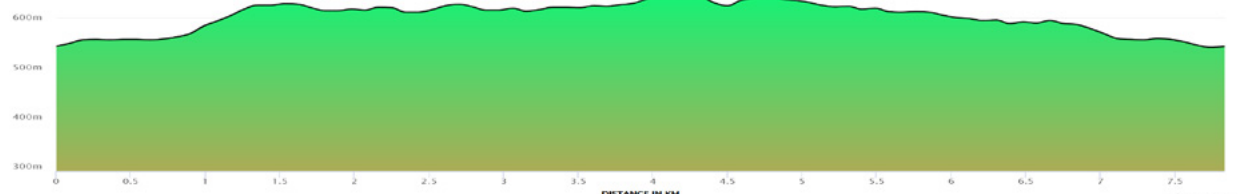


SHORT COURSE - 7.9KM Elevation gain: 190m ascent **Water Pts:** no water points on the short course
[CLICK HERE](#) to see the long course route on Strava

The Short course basically does the first 1km and last 7km of the long course (avoiding most of the hills!) Starting at the recreation reserve, you'll commence going uphill on a 4WD track and around the edge of the Garden of St Erth native garden.

From here short course runners turn left and follow the beautiful Whipstick Loop Trail as it descends through lush undergrowth and along a fun aqueduct trail along the valley. The trail weaves in and out of a few side gullies before a fast downhill finish back to the Recreation Reserve..

Short Course elevation profile



CATEGORIES & PRIZES

ENTRY CATEGORIES

The following categories will be recognised at each race, categories determined by your age on race day.

- Under 15 Male and Female – Short Course only
- Under 20 Male and Female
- 20-39yrs Male and Female
- 40-49yrs Male and Female
- 50-59yrs Male and Female
- 60-69yrs Male and Female
- 70+yrs Male and Female

RACE MEDALS AND PRIZES

Medals will be presented to 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each category in each race distance.

We will be awarding the vast majority of our prizes as spot prizes anyone can win rather than giving them exclusively to race winners.

GOLD RUNNER REQUIREMENTS

To receive an overall ranking in the 2026 Series runners must:

- Compete in all 3 races in the 2026 Series, entering either individually for each race, OR be entered as a 'Gold Runner'
- Runners must compete in the same distance event at each race – eg. all long course events.
- If a runner changes category during the course of the series (i.e. because of a birthday) for the purposes of the series they will be ranked in the category they raced in Race 1).
- Points will be awarded according to your overall place in your category at each race, the runner with the lowest number of points wins
- If points are tied between two or more runners, then the runner with the best result in Race 3 will win.

“Trusted by runners to keep them running”

Proudly working with Rapid Ascent since 2022

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/ Osteopathy
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\$80 Voucher

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Hawthorn/Newtown/OceanGrove/
Windsor-Prahran

MOVE/BEYOND®



BITUMEN IS BORING MERCHANDISE

Share the message that 'Bitumen is Boring' with our range of branded merchandise that says what we all know is true...!

GOLD RUNNERS please collect your free beanie at race 1 at Blackwood.

BITUMEN IS BORING T-SHIRTS \$40

This new addition to our Bitumen is Boring range is moisture wicking, de-odorized, UPF 30 -40, highly breathable and easy care. Designed and printed locally.. Men's and Women's sizes available.



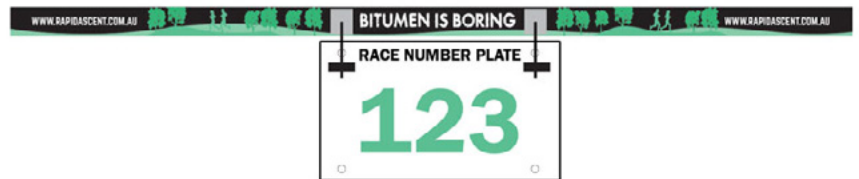
BITUMEN IS BORING HOODIE \$109

This custom designed Bitumen is Boring hoodie is ideal for those cold winter morning before / after your run. It's made of a thick cotton weave with fleecy tunnel pocket at the front to keep your hands warm and fleece hood for extra warmth.



BITUMEN IS BORING SOCKS \$35

These high performance technical running socks are custom made by Geelong based business Steigen. 3/4 length, one-size-fits-all with elasticated midfoot and cuff.



BITUMEN IS BORING RACE BELT \$15

This is an adjustable, elastic race belt to attach your race number to so it's always displayed outside all clothing and doesn't need pins.

RUNNING WAIST BELT \$15

A comfortable, light weight waist belt that fits all sizes of mobile phone and your keys.



RUNNING VISOR \$25

Adjustable size, sports fabric visor that's great for running in.



BEANIE \$35

A limited number of beanies will be available to purchase at the event.



HEAD TORCH \$29

A small but very bright headtorch to keep you on the trails through winter's darkness. 300lumens, rechargeable, 3 light strengths + SOS strobe.



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- drink when thirsty
- don't drink when not thirsty

skratch LABS

hydration

SPORT DRINK MIX

Hydrates faster than water

lemon + lime

90% of electrolytes in sweat is sodium

real athletes.
real food. *always*

We use science to inform what will help **your body perform its best.** We use **nature** to make it taste as good as possible so you'll enjoy it. Nobody knows your body better than you. But nobody knows sports nutrition better than us. The **human body is complex** but the solutions to help it perform aren't. We follow this rule when we create products that **solve problems** and simple ingredients that each have a purpose !!

w: skratchlabs.com.au - p: 02 9417 5755

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- ▶ Exceptional competitor services
- ▶ Diverse, achievable course
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