

2013 Melbourne Marathon Race Report

This is my first, but hopefully not last, race report. I had done 8 marathons prior to this one, including 4 races as a miler. But the outcomes were so woeful that I had been too embarrassed to write about them. Hopefully you will forgive me for this somewhat elongated report. I can't guarantee riveting reading, but I shall try my best to entertain, while providing an insight into just how a congratulatory hug from Licka and Coalminer unleashed quite an emotional display of waterworks. I need to set the context, plus I'd like to give some of you folks a bit of background since I am a relative new kid on the block. One good thing about this report is the lessons learnt, and the long list of what NOT to do if you have any regard for the wellbeing of your body and/or want to run good marathon times ☺ Most importantly, I sincerely hope that it will provide future non-miler readers with some inspiration to join the milers, and not be intimidated and hold off like I did.

Warning: This report is rated 18+ for occasional coarse language and some graphical images!

A bit of background – how I started running

At the start of 2011, I went for a routine health check and my blood test registered a total cholesterol reading of 7.5. My doctor advised me that my risk of a heart attack was around 75%. Instead of opting for being a lifetime slave of the cholesterol medication, I decided to start doing a few runs and see if that made any difference. This was because I had read on the net (Dr Google) that running is great at lowering cholesterol levels. Well, my very first run lasted all of 2.5k (but at a blistering pace of 5:50/k) before I nearly died from a heart attack that I was running to avoid. So much for Dr Google! When the flooding tragedy hit Queensland, I decided that instead of just donating my own money, I would try and get fit while raising more money to help with the poor victims up North by, you guessed it, running a marathon (how bloody original). As if that wasn't tough enough, I made it a sub-4 marathon. Thinking back, just how brave (and insanely stupid/naive) was I given I couldn't even run more than 4k at 6min pace?

Lead up to my first operation and my first marathon run

I was introduced to Rog by a mutual friend of ours and on one of our first few runs together, I remembered telling him that my right foot would get numbed after about 8-10k. He suggested I get it looked at, but I ignored his advice. I mean, what the hell would he know, right? ☺ Anyway, training went on and I was well on track for my sub-4 marathon at the 2011 Melbourne Marathon after running the Run Melbourne Half in 1:38:57. Then the wheels fell off when my right foot started going numb regularly even when I wasn't running, and became progressively worse to the point when I was experiencing severe burning sensations. After various tests, the ultrasound eventually showed a ganglion cyst was compressing on my medial plantar nerve, and would lead to permanent nerve damage if untreated. I was left with little choice but to undergo my first operation in late August 2011.



I couldn't run post ankle operation but I could at least play kick with Lachlan on one leg

So my 2011 Melbourne Marathon campaign was over in an instant. 9 days later, I was back running (hobbling). I'd simply wanted to get back into shape and get the marathon over and done with, so move on with life. However, I then ramped up my mileage too quickly and suffered a major blow with a shin splint that sidelined me for 4 weeks. Once recovered, I decided to try and run a sub-4h marathon in training instead of a race, and donate what I would have spent on race entry towards the flood victims. After some thoughts, I decided I would do a "birthday marathon" (even more bloody original). The venue would be the Lilydale-Warburton Rail Trail.

So on that one fine cool autumn morning in March 2012, Matt Callaghan (good friend of a few milers) and I headed out of Woori Yallock towards Mount Evelyn for 16k out and back, followed by doing a 5k just past Launching Place and back. As luck would have it, the day went so well that I barely struggled for a 3h58. The marathon gods threw out a bait and I was hooked. Another friend of Coalminer and mine, Adrian Lazar, who recently placed 15th in the Western State 100 (mile!!) Ultra and an amazing runner, told me about his plan at the time to qualify for Boston. That conversation somehow gave me an obscene idea that I, the slow crawling snail wannabe runner, should try and qualify too. To those who doesn't know me too well, I am a firm believer in the school of the legendary golfer Arnold Palmer – the more I practice, the luckier I get. So I embarked on this crazy journey to run as many marathons as my body would allow me to do without actually breaking it (I failed the latter abysmally as you will find out later). The following is a summary of the marathon races I ran and how they went, as well as the major illnesses and injuries that shadowed me during those times:

Late March 2012 – My love affairs with tonsillitis and sinusitis started

I went to Malaysia for my annual trip back to visit my dad's grave to pay respect. Had sinusitis (only diagnosed later). Kept running and doing daily sessions. By the time I came back, this would develop into what would be the first of my multiple brushes with tonsillitis – after I went out on a freezing, rainy day to do a 35k run. For those who have never had it, imagine swallowing a razorblade every time you swallow your own saliva (which is a lot more often than one realize). 10 days of penicillin and rest later, I had

recovered (read: I could drink without pain but my body was shot) just in time for the Roller Coaster run which was only 2 days away.

April 2012 – Rollercoaster 43k Marathon (6h27)

Too much beginner's enthusiasm saw me pounded down the first descent from the Skyhigh carpark which half killed my quads within the first 3k. I should have known better seeing I was an experienced veteran of 1 marathon with no trail experience ☺ So to finish the demolition of my quads, I hit the first steep climb at the 6k mark and decided to run up the damn thing when everyone else walked it. By the time I hit the top, I was utterly useless. Luckily, I befriended a rather friendly and beautiful Irish lady who obviously took enormous pity on me (gave her my take of the puss-in-boots look). And we hatched up a plan to walk all uphill and jog all flats and descents as much as we can. At the 24 mark, we were joined by Coalminer and formed the three musketeers (or more like three stooges). We (well, I) had turned this "run" into a photoshoot session while consuming sufficient lollies and soft drinks at drink stops to end up with net caloric gain for the day. To our credit, we did just about enough running not to be swept up by the sweeper. I was enjoying the food so much that I had Nikki Wynd (who was a volunteer support person that day) bouncing her pompoms on my head at the Dongalla station telling me to get off my arse and keep moving ☺ That was the highlight of the run for me ☺

May 2012

For some unknown reason, I suffered a relapse and had tonsillitis AND sinusitis at the same time. My GP suggested it might have been caused by my body being a bit over stressed and suggested I stop running. What drug was he taking to make such an absurd medical advice? Isn't running meant to be the cure of all illnesses (mental and physical)?

June 2012 – My love affair with pleurisy started

Just after I recovered from my brief but whirlwind affair with tonsillitis and sinusitis, I came back from a session one day with a slightly sore back and short-breathed. Thought nothing of it as I probably just pushed myself a little too hard (hard to believe as I am usually so sensible ☺). The pain in the back of my ribs started becoming little sharp stabbing pain and I could barely breath. My heart rate was rocketing through the roof even as I laid on my couch. Next morning, I couldn't breath and took myself to the GP. He diagnosed me with pleurisy and my affection for Naproxen antinflams started there and then. That took me 3 weeks to fully recover – much longer than necessary as I tried to run 4 days after my diagnosis and suffered a terrible relapse. It would come back for two more brief visits in the following 9 months ☹

July 2012 – M7 Westlink City Marathon (3h41)

Beside the runs of tonsillitis, sinusitis and pleurisy, I was in good shape and had the perfect lead up ☺ So I decided to give 3h15 a crack (I'm out of insult for myself already). Matt had travelled to Liverpool to run this with me as my pacer. The plan was simple – hold on to the 315 bus for dear life. The first half of the course was far tougher than the second half. So even though I felt slightly strained at 10-12k, we pushed on. Hit the half in just under 1h37. Then trouble came at 24k. My legs started cramping up and became progressively worse. My stomach soon followed and my pace dropped from the 430s to 530s in the space of 4k. Had to walk 2 or 3k very slowly. Ok, it's a minor setback to the overall progress of the mighty inVINCEble. It was just one of those days (how wrong was I in believing THAT!?).



In a sad and sorry state at around 34k drinkstop flanked by a very concerned Mei and my pacer Matt

September 2012

I FINALLY joined the milers after procrastinated about it from the time Coalminer joined. I mostly kept to myself as I was far too intimidated by the way in which everyone can run so well and effortlessly while I just felt like a giraffe trying to run in a paddock filled with golf balls with his neck in a knot ☹️ Rog advised me to seek some advice from some of the more experienced milers with regards to my upcoming MM run, but I decided I had quite liked the stealth mode I was in, and prefer not to be heard or seen by others.

October 2012 – Melbourne Marathon (3h52)

With a 97:04 at Burnley after being unwell in the lead up, I thought I was surely in good enough shape for another crack at 3h15. Then two weeks before race day, I came down with my third bout of tonsillitis for the year, together with a severe bout of flu. I was again stuffed with penicillin as well as antibiotics. I was still unwell with 3 days to race day and hadn't run much. So I decided I needed a "test run" to see if I was still in good shape. I went out and did 5k of 500s and proceeded to run my 2nd fastest ever 5k – 19:59.

Things got off to a shocking start on race day. I was ill prepared to start off with, and was not helped by waking up late. So the constant search for things last minute, a rushed/shortened breakfast, and then suffering a major brain fade by driving down St Kilda Road (even with all the signs of road closures) saw me arrive at the MCG carpark as a complete nervous/anxious wreck. I managed to get a preferred start, not by any running merits, but simply for being an AV member. The first 6k went as planned. First major glitch during the race – my drink/gel delivery wasn't there. No problem. Mei would surely be there at the 13k point – except she wasn't. No problem. I was still "cruising" in the 430s pace zone. At the turnaround on Beaconsfield Pde, I started to feel the strain. Instead of recognizing the signs and taking into account the absolute shocker of a lead up, I somehow talked myself into thinking all was still hunky dory. So I persisted at the same pace. Hit the half in just under 1h37 but already straining. Finally saw my lovely wife who handed me one bottle with 3 gels. With my body now starting to be somewhat depleted of glycogen, I

proceeded to ingest all 3 gels, one after another (note to self: never ever do that again!!!). 2k later, as I entered the mini turn off at the car park in Elwood, my stomach felt as if the zombies from World War Z were having a picnic on my stomach. Even then, I tried in vain to hang on to my planned pace. I feel like going back in time to give myself a slap (or ten). By the time I saw Mei again at 29k mark, I'd slowed to a jog (read walk) in a hunched over position, barely able to stand up straight (see below).



By the top of Fitzroy Street, I had started to experience severe cramps from neck down. The 330 bus went by as I watched on helplessly. I walked, I stumbled, I cried (involuntarily might I add) as I made my way up St Kilda Rd. I'd wanted to quit, but as I had discovered many times before, I just couldn't bring myself to actually do it. I eventually made it to the bottom of Linlithgow Avenue (not before being trampled over a few times by all the slow half marathoners). Back at the tan, I bent over to take a drink from one of the drinking taps and proceeded to fall over with both legs completely seized up in major spasms. Luckily, there was a St Johns ambo nearby and they sat me down and gave me a saline drip. I was advised (told) to pull out but despite the enormous distress I was suffering, there was no way I was quitting with 5-6k to go. I ripped out the drip from my forearm and proceeded to walk, only to fall over almost immediately. I crawled on all fours going through the roundabout at Governor's Drive as onlookers with disbelief and pitiful expression looked on. I felt utterly humiliated and defeated right to the core of my once-steeled self believe. Right there and then, I was a shattered person inside and out. I swore I would never EVER put myself through such ordeals again. Not only that, I swore I'd never EVER put on a pair of running shoes again. In hindsight, I should have quit. The ordeals that day would haunt me every time I embarked on a long run. I had allowed a stubborn inner demon to comfortably find a cozy home right in the heart of my inner self believe.

For 3 days, I never even looked at my running shoes (which were in the garbage bag waiting to be thrown out). Then I felt I owe it to myself to have one last crack. I also had to deal with a severely-traumatized

wife who felt partly responsible by getting lost. I was upset with her but it was completely unwarranted simply because I hadn't done my homework and be prepared. When rationality returned long after race day, she vowed never to deliver drinks again – and quite understandably so 😊

November 2012 – Portland 3 Bays Marathon (3h38)

This was to be my final marathon if it went astray again. The goal was simple. Enjoy it, and run a strong race from start to finish regardless of the pace. The first half was covered in around 1h46. Then came The Shuffler – a 1.4km ascent that makes Anderson looks like a childplay. I ran about 1/3 of it before walking it, stopping to give my family a quick hug before I kept moving on. At the 30k mark, I kicked on and actually registered the fastest 10k split of the day, finishing the last 1.5k at around 415 pace. Wow, so I can run a marathon without dying of a slow death. My hope for Boston was renewed. I would put my head down and train hard in readiness to have another crack at it at the 2013 Tokyo Marathon. So I booked all the accommodations and flights, and made sure to include a holiday for Mei too as she thoroughly deserved one for putting up with my running rubbish. But life can be so cruel.



Sprint finish with two other guys I met during the Portland 3 Bays Marathon

2 weeks after I booked everything, I felt a sharp pain ripping through my right knee during an easy Sunday trail run along the Yarra River with Coalminer. I knew it was bad as I was barely able to run 200m without hobbling in agony. Despite doing RICE and taking even more Naproxen 250mg antinflams (to give some perspective, voltaren is 25mg) for 4 weeks at the advice of my physio and GP, I was still unable to jog more than 1k. An MRI revealed a severe flap tear in my right meniscus. After seeing the surgeon and being told the first available op is in early March, I told him that I was still going to finish Tokyo with or without the op. Sensing I wasn't kidding, he somehow managed to slot me into an empty slot in early January, giving me a total of 6 weeks to recover. I was told not to run for 4 weeks, but felt ok after 8 days. So I managed to progressively built it up from there to log some 200k between my operation and race day.

Feb 2013 – Tokyo Marathon (4h27)

What an amazing experience this was. Based on my M7 time of 3h41, I was assigned to a 330-340 wave. Although I knew that realistically, I could really only hope for a sub4 at best. With 36000 runners on the start line, I felt a major surge of adrenaline with the gun went off. All went to plan as I cruised around 25k at 530 pace with Dan, another mutual friend of Coalminer and I. But then, I started to feel the knee pain and by 30k, I was dragging my right leg along the ground. To make matters worse, the demons of the past few races also caught up with me yet again. I started to cramp in the legs and abdominal region. Why am I hitting the wall when I am running at such slow pace? It took me nearly 53mins to complete the 5k between 30 and 35 before I found some mental strength to brush aside the screaming pain coming from my right knee and my cramping muscles. Once again, my worst fear in the form of my very own inner demons have come back to haunt me, and I had no idea what was causing it or how to fix it.



Limping along but brave smile for the camera though wasn't smiling on the inside...

May 2013 – Great Ocean Road 45k Ultra (4h41)

I had entered to do this with a whole bunch of good running friends, some of whom I have not seen in a long time. I knew my knee was still bothering me but never mind, I was in better shape than prior to Tokyo and I had only planned on running at the same target pace of around 530-540. Again, first 24k were fine – including the sharp ascent right after Kenneth River. Not long after, the all too familiar feeling of hitting the wall returned. My most feared inner demons have returned yet again, and any slim hope I had of me ever becoming a half decent distance runner went with it.

June 2013 – The Diseased Gallbladder

Just to add insult to injury, I came home one night after work with what appeared to be just a slightly fever. Two days later, I was unable to stand up straight with severe left upper abdominal pain. Two weeks after that, I was lying on the operating table for the third time in the last year and a half having my severely infected gallbladder removed. As I laid there in the post op recovery ward, filled with endone up to my neck but still in considerable amount of pain, I stared at the 4 inch drain tube half hanging out of my stomach and several things changed. One of them would be my perspective on running – no longer did any of my running goals seemed so important after all, including qualifying for Boston.



The supposedly “keyhole” surgery that ended up being four bloody decent size holes 😬

After they had sent my gallbladder for biopsy, it was determined that, as a result of my original cholesterol issue, my gallbladder had suffered several episode of gallstones attack. As a result, it had become so inflamed that it had grown to nearly three times the size of a normal gallbladder. It was also speculated by my surgeon that it had most likely been the primary cause of all my infections which led to the multiple episodes of pleurisy, tonsillitis, sinusitis and even more importantly, possible issue with my body processing food properly. Could this one failed organ really have caused all my running problems to date?

Again, at the utter disbelief of my surgeon, I started running 8 days after my op and never looked back.

June -> October 2013 – Melbourne Marathon (3h14)

This then takes us to my 2013 Melbourne Marathon campaign. I will break this down into three major phases. The “No Hope, Just Run” phase, the “Base Build Gone Nuts” Phase, and finally, the “Confronting My Inner Demons” phase.

“No Hope, Just Run” Phase

After what had been a horrendous year but till that point, I’d pretty much given up on any hope of doing anything special for my running. So having already registered to run MM, I decided to just jog it and not put any pressure on myself. I wasn’t even sure if a sub-4hr was possible. Instead, as I turn 45 just before the 2016 Boston Marathon, it would mean that at the 2014 Melbourne Marathon, my qualification time would go up by 10mins to 3h25, a time which I had considered to be far more realistically achievable for someone of my limited talent at distant running. So with that in mind, I commenced to running as much or as little as I wanted, and as fast or as slow as I wanted. My key objectives were to:

1. Work on form and rhythm;
2. Build up a solid base;
3. Always finish each run faster and stronger than I had started;
4. Enjoy the running, not the stats;
5. Don’t always run at full capacity. Focus on controlled aggression, especially during sessions;

6. Never start a day with a specific target goal or pace in time. Just run until I don't feel like running anymore, if I feel like running at all that is, and;
7. Stay out of operating theatre for at least 6 months.

After nearly 4 weeks of free form running with no strict regimented structure in place, I decided that I can still have a plan to structure my training better while still run based on feel and not be driven by any goals. So I jumped on the milers website and studied every single marathon race report before putting a plan together. I then consulted this with Damo and Rog. The original plan I had sent them can be found in Appendix A.

Rog and Damo both pointed out that various issues with it and suggested some adjustments. Most of it was related to lowering the mileage (ended up running 1510 vs originally planned 1482), avoiding the tempo/SLR combination on weekends (I ended up doing sessions/or tempo every sat), and tweaking the tapering (which I did do). It might look as if I simply ignored their advice, but I respect everyone's time and thought too much to do that. I did make all the amendments originally but increased the load as time went on simply because my body felt like it could deal with it. As with most training plans, once you get into the full swing of things, momentum just carries you along. It's actually harder to run less. Anyway, I basically decided to keep both quality and quantity, with quantity being my higher priority than quality seeing I actually wanted to build a solid base that I haven't had the chance to build at all due to the regular interruptions from the constant injuries and illnesses.

"Base Building Gone Nuts" Phase

I suspect it might have been the change in attitude towards running, but I started to really enjoy running for the sake of running, and not be worried about anything else. I would go out for a 10 and come back with a 16. I would regularly do a 10 warm up before a miler session and despite being a bit tired, still run a decent session and enjoyed it immensely. I would duck out for a naughty short easy run on my day off, much to Rog's annoyance for not resting. I was staggered to see (in hindsight) that I had only taken 7 days off running since the 1st July. I think I ran 36 consecutive days prior to Burnley and 30 consecutive days right after Burnley. Perhaps it was my new relaxed form and a slightly modified stride (shorter length with higher cadence), I was finding very minimum body wear (other than constant muscle fatigue) from one run to the next. Of course I had some niggling pain here and there, but nothing that would put my training in jeopardy. The one routine I had setup for myself was to stretch every night for 30-40mins without fail – focusing on the back, ITB, glutes, hammies, calves and adductors, as well as a steaming hot bath to help loosen up my leg muscles.

All of a sudden, after averaging about 100k per month since the knee op, and a lifetime monthly average of about 200k, I suddenly found myself with a July total of 403, August total of 483 and Sept total of 431. In fact, I felt utterly "underdone" when I had weeks of under 90k. I had become a total running junkie. I knew I was logging some serious mileage when I was logging similar mileage as Woolies and finishing in the top 100 of Strava's monthly mileage challenge. I have included my actual training log, with some colourful running commentary, at the end of the report.

But it wasn't all about quantity. Some other major things I started doing were technique and cadence run. For technique runs, I would either focus on my overall form, or run barefoot on a grass paddock. For cadence runs, I'd simply focus on keeping a cadence of 185-190, and not be worried at all about the pace in these runs. The idea of both of these runs is to promote efficiency in my stride, as well as promote lightness to minimize impact on the body. I'd do regular easy hill climbs on Anderson (suspect I may have

climbed it over 150 times in the last 3 months) with the focus on leg strengthening and technique to “float” up the hills. I also introduced a wide range of tempos to my training after reading Coalminer’s Boston Race Report, but instead of focusing on maintaining race pace tempo, I’d combine short/fast tempo with long/medium fast tempos. I’d agree with Coalminer’s sentiment that I actually dreaded the tempos more than the miler sessions – mainly because I was suffering alone and I had to confront the elongated period of discomfort with no rest period whatsoever.

But the two key runs for me in this campaign were the 2 laps of 500s round the tan and Burnley. Unsurprisingly, both involved a certain renowned distance goat otherwise known as Rog. At the 2 laps of 500s, I was absolutely shot just before the second climb up Anderson and about to pull the pin. Rog somehow talked me into persevering and gave me pointers on maintaining relaxed form and breathing under stress. That single run almost changed my entire campaign. I’d been struggling up till that point but the very next night, I went out for an easy 10 and absolutely smashed it with a mid-430s pace run and felt like I had barely started. That led to a very comfortable 43:49 at Albert Park where I ended the race with way too much in reserve but it didn’t matter. I had found my mojo. One’s misfortune is other’s blessing. In my case, it was the Burnley run. The Sunday prior, Rog and I had decided to be sensible and go for an easy 25k jog along the beach trail. It ended after just 3.5k with Rog severely spraining his ankle over a tree root and an ankle that looked like Frankenstein.



Meet Frankenstein

I spent days and weeks guilty that it wasn’t me who had tripped as he had been in such great form and my year was already in tatters anyway. So when he volunteered to pace me at Burnley despite his injury (and against my advice), I was more than happy to accept his kindness. The week before, I had done a 16k tempo at 4:17 pace on the track (which often measured long). But I knew I was in half decent shape to give 93 a good shake. What transpired at Burnley shocked me, and probably a few others, when I ran a 91:20 with negative splits across all 5k intervals and my last k being my fastest k of 3:51. It felt easy until about the 18k mark when Rog started to kick my arse along to pick up the pace. What started as a game of catching two targets in front of us ended up with us rounding up about 10 runners, and a decent drop in my half PB from 97:09 to 91:20. With that under my belt, the prospect of running a sub-315 arose again, and with it came the inner demons that would traumatise me continuously for first two weeks of October.

“Confronting My Inner Demons” Phase

Despite the fact that I had smashed my 10k PB comfortably in a training run; lobbed nearly 6mins off my half marathon PB; logged more miles in the lead up than I have ever done before by a huge margin; watched my session time tumble (fastest being an 8x400 (55s) done at 3:25 average pace); and so on and so forth, I was completely filled with self-doubt when it came to conquering the sub-315 marathon. My abysmal marathon track record spoke volume even if my recent form pointed to a possible turnaround in fortune. After completing my two longest training runs of 32k and 35k at around 4:55 and 5:03 pace respectively in fairly comfortable fashion, I sought the advice of Tim Crosbie. Tim suggested that I am around 310-315 shape (which was similar to what VDOT and McMillan pace calculator was indicating). He thought I should just go out with the 310 bus, given the lack of 315 bus, and try to hang on for as long as possible while running a smart race by pulling back if needed to. I was highly uncomfortable with the plan but who am I to question the coach? So after consulting with Rog and Coalminer, Coalminer suggested that I should just go out and do a 14k tempo at 310 marathon pace (4:30k pace), and see if I “owned” that number. Unfortunately, the day I went out to do this was the Wednesday before Tan Handicap when wind speed reached up to 60kph. Nonetheless, I managed 14@4:29 although I wasn’t as comfortable as I would have liked in those last 1.5k. So a small amount of self-doubt remained.

Without knowing that poor Dozer was in hospital, I emailed him to seek his advice. After seeing my track record in marathons, Dozer pointed out that I have the pace but not necessarily the endurance to keep up with the 310 bus without risking a major blow up. The last few days of my taper was simply hell. My legs felt dead and heavy when they should have been springy and light. My body was filled with self-doubts and fear and my head full of indecisions. I can seek all the advice, but at the end of the day, I knew it’s my race and I had to ultimately make the call and take ownership of being comfortable with a race plan – whatever that maybe. In the end, I think I simply got sick of thinking and decided to just go with a 310 bus and hang on for as long as possible, but would drop off at any point with the view of being fresh at 30. The logic was simple. I wouldn’t have to worry about pacing, and I have the benefit of being drafted along. The decision was made easier when I found out Licka would be one of the pacers. Even though I didn’t know Licka in person, just the fact that another miler was present made me more at ease with my decision.

Having learnt from the mistakes of my disastrous 2012 campaign, I decided to sought the help of fellow milers for drinks/gels delivery. Once this was kindly sorted by Racer, GG and Thai, I then switched my attention to planning every detail of the 4 days leading up to race day (with help of Rog). You can find out my exact 3 days plan leading up to race day in Appendix C.

Luckily, I had made special effort all week to get to bed early knowing how anxious I would be on race eve. So when Sat night came and I was still awake at 11pm, I didn’t panic like the previous year which ended up with just 1hr of sleep. I calmly reminded myself that tomorrow is just another long run and all would be fine regardless of the outcome. I then picked up Kilian Jornet’s “Run Or Die” book to distract myself. Big idiot! I then tried to go back to sleep except my mind was now filled with visualizing Kilian suffering for 38 hours while he completed the 165 mile around Lake Tahoe. Doh!! Luckily, I somehow managed to doze off around 1230.

On race day, everything went off like clockwork. We were early against everything on our plan. My only concern was that I had in fact overdrunk the day before. This fear would come bite me later in the race with a trip to the bush. I was jogging over to the start line with Rog and Coalminer when we crossed path with the pacers. So I stopped and chatted with House and introduced myself to Licka as well as Chris

Cantor (Crosbie Crew – really nice guy). It's always nice to get to know the pacers a bit, especially when they are a miler.

0-10k (44:48 – 4:30 pace)

When the gun went off, it was just mayhem. The constant jostling for position amongst traffic meant I was repeatedly blocked and then had to accelerate hard to reconnect with the pacers. Once we rounded Flinder Station, it calmed down quite a bit and I was able to chat with Licka and we set off in the mid-420s to make up for some lost times. Hit the 10k spot on pace. Felt comfortable and was cruising. Saw the boys at 7k and it was really nice to see familiar smiling faces on the course. Great touch for GG to jog along for a wee bit to make sure I felt ok.

11-20k (44:49 – 4:29 pace)

Still cruising as we chugged along and the k's continued to tick over at a rapid rate. Saw Smurf in the opposite direction with a slightly distressed look so early on in the race and thought to self – oh dear. All the other boys looked good although I was surprised Coalminer had dropped behind Rog by quite a distance. My only concern at that point was the pressure building up in the bladder and fast becoming rather uncomfortable.

21-30k (44:51 – 4:30 pace)

Still cruising along at a decent pace. However, the bladder issue was rapidly escalating and I asked Licka for advice. So I really only had two options. I opted for the bush option. In order to avoid being dropped too far back, I sprinted ahead for about 300m and made a mad dash into the bush. By the time my bush adventure was over, the 310 bus was at least 250m ahead of me despite Licka intentionally slowing down a notch. At that very moment, I had a huge decision to make and in hindsight, I made the wrong one. I decided to get back onto the train as quickly as I could instead of running solo from there on or at least get back on slowly. I threw in 1.5k at around 415 pace and rejoined within a couple of k's but my HR and rhythm never really recovered from there no matter how much I tried. I had lost my rhythm. Unlike previous years when I would have panicked, I calmly assessed the situation and realized that I had banked myself nearly 6min of time for a sub-315. All I needed to do was to maintain 437 pace and I will comfortably go under 315. In working overtime to get my breathing and body under control, I had ran past GG at 28 without noticing him. Sensing this, GG ran up to me and past me the drinks/gels and mumbled some words of encouragements before I took off again (note: it's quite likely he was speaking clearly and I just wasn't listening that well anymore). As I was about to round into Fitzroy Street, a warm smiling Dozer awaited me and ran with me for about 50m, offering me some short but affirming words not to take the climb up Fitzroy too hard and to keep it under control as much as possible. Fitzroy St was duly conquered without too much issue although the latter part of that hill became a bit overcrowded with the slow half traffic who were completely oblivious to faster marathon runners (can you believe I am describing myself as that?!). Gwables just got faster 😊

31-40k (48:35 – 4:52 pace)

The slow half traffic became hellish. I was rather polite for the first 200-300m of traffic with "excuse me" or "coming through". I think the politeness went out of the window after about the 8th time I was elbowed by a swinging arm. Even with a more brash and forceful approach of making my way through, I had spent so much time and precious energy elbowing (and being elbowed) my way through the traffic that by the time I arrived at the split outside the Cadbury Schwappes building, I was completely stuffed. Again, I found

myself having to fight hard to re-gather my rhythm but to no avail this time. I was slowly falling into the vicious cycle of the losing form and pace while expending extra energy for nothing. I managed to maintain just enough pace to keep my buffer but it was becoming much harder work. I had expected to feel this at 35k mark. And then, my inner demons resurfaced. The mild stitch in my stomach only a few k's ago suddenly became rather acute. I suspect this might have been the result of my 4 gels as my tummy just hates the stuff. So I gulped down 3 cups of water (about 1.5 cup that landed in my mouth anyway) at the 32k water station. That brought the stitch temporarily under control but the fear from past failures had well and truly returned with a vengeance. Paranoia had taken its hold in my head and I am now looking at my watch obsessively rather than focusing on maintaining form.

My mood didn't improve as I merged back in with the half marathon traffic just after Domain Interchange. In some ways, the slow traffic was beneficial as I started to use them as targets to pick off. However, as I was already on the verge of cracking (and constantly berating myself for that surge after my bush adventure), the constant change in pace to accelerate into tiny gaps and then being blocked off when I had nowhere also helped accelerate my fall into the spiral of doom. As we rounded under the bridge approaching the start of Linlithgow Avenue, I had well and truly entered the "one step in front of another" survival mode while still picking off runners by the dozens. Just as I approached the split from the half marathon runners, I received some welcome support from my mum with nephew and niece (Amy's children). However, it was short-lived and I was now in total panic as I look at the buffer on my watch dropping like a dead weight. I knew I couldn't fully trust Virtual Partner as the course would ultimately measure long on my Garmin (as it did last year). So a quick mental calculation reached a conclusion that I had about 5min up my sleeve with 7k to go. Nail-biting stuff. Great for viewers if this was a Hollywood running movie but it ain't, and a fairytale finish is far from assured. It was going to be a close call.

The wonderful familiar face of GG appeared at 35k, but brought little solace. I was in a world of total discomfort and pain, and rapidly losing grip of a run I had been in control of for so long. I threw away the gel as I was quite certain it would be the end of me if I had taken it. Instead, I gulped down the bottle that GG had just passed to me in desperate need to rid myself of this acute pain in my stomach. I slowed enough at the next water station to refill it and then poured 2 cups of water over my head. I remembered reading Racer's drink delivery email that they would be at the 39k mark to deliver drinks if needed (even to pour over our head). It worked a treat as the chilling effect on my body jolted my mental faculty back into action. The slow jog up the tan had cost me about 1 min of my buffer. So, even as I turned down Domain Road (which I had planned to use as a mental positive point), it provided little joy as I realized the equation just became a little tougher given I was pretty much running on empty. About 4min to spare with 5k to go. I clearly remember thinking to myself "Am I about to become the Greg Norman of marathon running?" For some stupid reason, that triggered a memory of a Holden joke (Greg used to endorse Holdens) – what do Holdens and Greg have in common? They both come with an automatic choke 😊 I smiled briefly before my thoughts turned to "oh shit, I am choking!!". I was now in full panic mode.

I tried to get my body to remember all the cadence runs I had done. Short strides with fast cadence. "Helllll No Mister" was the response I received. Ok then, long strides with medium cadence. Same stupid response. Alright then, I guess I will just have to do with the short stride and slow cadence. Never realized my damn legs are as stubborn as I am. I have taught them well – too well. Rounding back onto St Kilda Rd for the final time, I think that's when I saw Tony. I apologise for not remembering but my brains were rather like an ugly bowl of scrambled eggs by then. I tried to use another runner next to me as a running partner but he was fading fast. I was on my own. It was as if the marathon gods were telling me that if I want the Boston qualifying time, I was going to have to do it on my own. Seeing Thai and Slips (I think it

was Slips anyway – brain further scrambled) and hearing their loud encouragement lifted me a notch, and I carried that with me until I rounded Flinders Station.

41 to Da “Geeee” (11:10 – 5:05 pace)

I had expected it to be all downhill for some stupid reason. The climb up towards Spring Street mightn't be that steep (it isn't), but it looked like Airlie Street's little brother had appeared from nowhere. Look down the watch and the equation was just over 2min with about 2k to go. I can surely run faster than 5:37/k pace for 2k right? RIGHT??! I verbally shouted at myself loudly. No answer. Next thought – “F**k it. Stop talking to yourself, you idiot. Just run.” I ran at what felt like flat out sprinting pace, but the buffer was still dropping ☹️ And finally, the entrance to MCG appeared in the distance. I still had no clue how far I had to run to get there. Panic continued. The only time I knew it was in the bag was when I stepped onto the entrance ramp into the stadium. I looked down and knew I had just over 1 min of buffer to make it round the 300m lap. I had finally done it. I knew the clock was ticking but I lapped up the atmosphere for all it was worth. I probably could have run faster but it didn't matter. Well, I might tried a little harder if I had known my time would ultimately be 3:14:01. Let's be realistic about it. My time wasn't special by any stretch of the imagination. But for me, it was the ultimate moment of triumph over 33 months of setbacks and despairs. It was my personal victory.



As Rog rightly pointed out, this picture captures so much of that special moment when it was about to come true...


As I crossed the line, I knew I had finally achieved a goal that I had originally craved so much for, but one that was crushed again and again until I finally gave up all hope on it, only for it to be realised just when I least expected it. It wasn't a smooth run. I had to find the rhythm and maintain a pace for a distance I had never done before. I had to adjust my race plans with my unforeseen bush adventure, and deal with the consequence of the subsequent surge I put in. I had to fight the slow half marathon traffic. Most importantly, I had to overcome my own inner demons. It was a victory for the less talented. It was a


victory for all the obstacles I had to overcome. It was a victory for the perseverance, of persevering through rounds after rounds of brutal crushing blows – mentally and physically. Most significant of all, it was a victory against me – my very own biggest enemy.

I am not quite precisely what happened when Gerry and Garth congratulated me, but I completely lost it. All the emotions that I must have suppressed for so long just exploded in that one instance – mostly of joy and relief I would haphazardly guess. As I said to Rog, it was just as well he wasn't there as I am quite sure the waterworks would have kept on going for a little while longer, and that is not the image I wanted to share with the entire crowd at the MCG.

The Aftermath

In the post-race analysis of my run, I was a little disappointed with the way in which my time really suffered, but was pleased that despite losing 16 places from the 10k to 20k, I made up 95 places from 20k to the finish and finish in the top 100 for my age group (first time I have finished in the top 100 in my age cat – yay!! 😊)

OFFICIAL TIME	Overall Rank	Category Rank	Gender Rank
 03:14:23	535 from 6847 finishers	98 from 837 finishers	489 from 4833 finishers

NET TIME	Overall Rank	Category Rank	Gender Rank				
 03:14:01	543	98	498				
HIDE SPLITS							
	SPLIT			ACCUMMULATIVE			
LOCATION	TIME	DISTANCE	SPEED/PACE	RACE TIME	OVERALL	DIVISION	GENDER
10k	00:44:58	10.0km	13.34 / 4:30	00:44:58	614	112	569
13k	01:02:41	13.0km	12.44 / 4:49	01:02:41	631	114	586
20k	01:29:47	20.0km	13.37 / 4:29	01:29:47	630	118	588
30k	02:14:38	30.0km	13.37 / 4:29	02:14:38	571	111	531
40k	03:03:13	40.0km	13.10 / 4:35	03:03:13	526	95	477
42k	03:14:23	42.2km	13.03 / 4:36	03:14:23	535	98	489

As my emotional finish showed, it is so true that our individual success is measured not against others nor where we are today, but where we have come from. Every runner has a set of numbers that they carry with them, and there is a mountain of history and stories behind each and every number. It is what makes runners, and running itself, so unique and fascinating. It is what enables two total strangers to meet on a long run and create a bond that can potentially last a lifetime. A classic example was on Sunday with Licka and I. Having only met just 3.5 hours earlier, we chatted for quite a while during the race. But what I found rather moving was the video footage showing how Licka excitedly rounded quite a people when he saw me finished to give me a very energetic hug. It is what enables a group of diverse people with opposite backgrounds and personalities to form an amazingly special group such as the milers, with the common goal of lifting ourselves and others to become that little bit better tomorrow.

What The Future Behold

What's next? Don't know. I'm still somewhat in shock to be honest. I'm sure it will eventually sink in that I will finally be accepted to run in Boston. In some ways, seeing I didn't exactly enjoy the perfect race, I would like to think that a sub-310 will be within my reach soon even though I will probably run another 10 crap marathons in between. In the longer term horizon, I would love to follow the footsteps of Coalminer

and run a sub-3 at the 2015 Boston Marathon, if I get accepted to run there that is. In the meantime, I think I have a score to settle with my 5k (19:45) and 10k (42:08) PBs.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I'd like to congratulate all the milers for many great and courageous runs on Sunday, PBs or otherwise. In fact, Smurf's gutsy run is quite inspiring (especially to me as I fully empathise). Amy's sub-4 maiden marathon was a highlight given her recent injury. She will go far. Rog's and Coalminer's amazing PBs given their somewhat synchronized back and ankle issues.

I have mentioned and thanked a lot of special people who have helped me along the way, but the most supportive person and my most cherished supporter is my poor wife. Mei has had to put up with my smelly dirty clothes every day, nursed me in and out of hospitals, watched and cared for me in anguish as I suffered through rounds after rounds of illnesses, listened to all the rubbish running crap I tell her, woke up at insane hours of the day to be at the starting line of every marathon races with me, and on and on the list goes.... All while helping look after our 2 little angels. I truly owe her a big family holiday and an enormous amount of gratitude.

Also like to thank Mei's parents who have babysat our two angels on many occasions (including a 13 day stretch when we headed off to Japan). It's little wonder our kids love them to death.

I would like to thank my gallbladder for finally going over the edge and enabled me to get rid of it for good. It won't be missed. Farewell, and thanks for nothing – and everything! ☺

To the support crew out there on Sunday, you were all simply amazing. What you showed on Sunday was your passion and commitment to the milers family, and demonstrated to all of us newcomers of the camaraderie that reflects who we are as a group. I would gladly return the favour one day at first available opportunity.

As my final parting words in this report, I'd just like to echo Rog's sentiment that having the privilege to be part of the milers family is the best thing that could have happened to me with my running, and I would have written the very same sentence even if I had run a 350 on Sunday.

Appendix A – Original MM Training Plan

MM Training Schedule

Week	Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total	Comment
		Gentle Hills	Speed	Recovery	Speed	Rest/Recovery	Tempos	SLR		Tempos inc 1k warm up and 1k warm down min
1	24/06/2013	10.26 @ 5:10 with 8th k at 3:58	7.06 8x500 45s Rest - 112, 114, 118, 117, 115, 119, 119, 116	16.01 5:19 with fast finishing 3k	16.06 Test Of Manhood - 1k, 750m, 500m, 500m with 250m rest in between x2 405, 413, 410, 415 (505) 419, 418, 414, 405 (615)	0	6.3 5k tempo @ 4:13 - 21:06. Would have gone sub-21 if didn't get chopped by cars - twice.	22.1 Brighton beach trail. Pace was too fast at 5:07	77.79	
2	1/07/2013	5.3 5:10. Wore Brooks. Legs hated it. Cut run short due to minor quad strain	12 8x200 Anderson Hill Sprint - 48, 51, 50, 49, 50, 52, 53, 51 (8:00 jog rest)	16 5.5@ 4:40-4:57, 6.5@ 4:57-5:05, 4@ progressive 4:53 to 4:33. Overall 4:52	16 10 with 5 easy hills 6X3min reps (1min rest) - 420, 415, 412, 414, 420, 403 Aim for 12	0	10 5k tempo 1 - 2.73@ 4:01 Aborted. Not ready for sub20. 5k Tempo 2 @ 4:18. V controlled. 16s -ve split.	21.3 Very tired after Sat's double tempo attempts. Wen out v conservatively and struggled for first 12k before finding some strength. Good finish with 458, 448, 451, 443, 435.	80.6	
3	8/07/2013	16 Gentle Hills - 6 hills + 1lap. Serious struggle. V tired.	14.6 2 laps of 500s (Tan) - 33:44 (4:23)	16	16 6x1014m (2min)	0	12 8k tempo	32	106.6	Take the easy days VERY easy!! Body already v tired after just 80.6k last week.
4	15/07/2013	0	12 4 stage (2k) progressive tempo	12 Winter Romp (8k)	12 Garly - 500, 800, 1k, 1k, 800, 500 (2min between 1k)	0	12 10k Tempo	22	70	
5	22/07/2013	12 Gentle Hills	14 MMM Session	16	14 MMM Session	0	12 10k Tempo	24	92	
6	29/07/2013	16 Gentle Hills	14 MMM Session	16	14 MMM Session	0	14 12k Tempo	28	102	
7	5/08/2013	16 Gentle Hills	16 MMM Session	16	16 MMM Session	10	14 12k Tempo	34	122	
8	12/08/2013	0	12 MMM Session	12	12 MMM Session	0	16 14k Tempo	22	74	
9	19/08/2013	12 Gentle Hills	14 MMM Session	16	14 MMM Session	0	16 14k Tempo	26	98	
10	26/08/2013	14 Gentle Hills	14 MMM Session	16	14 MMM Session	0	18 16k Tempo	30	106	
11	2/09/2013	16 Gentle Hills	16 MMM Session	18	16 MMM Session	10	18 16k Tempo	32	126	
12	9/09/2013	16 Gentle Hills	16 MMM Session	21	16 MMM Session	10	20 18k Tempo	36	135	Peak Week
13	16/09/2013	0	14 MMM Session	16	16 MMM Session	10	25 2k warm up and down, 21k Time Tempo	26	107	21k Tempo will determine pace strategy for MM.
14	23/09/2013	12 Gentle Hills	12 MMM Session	12	12 MMM Session	0	16 14k Tempo	21	85	
15	30/09/2013	12	10 MMM Session	16	10 MMM Session	0	12 10k Tempo	16	76	
16	7/10/2013	0	8 Race Pace	6	6 Race Pace	5	42.2 Meander	66.2		

Appendix B – Actual MM Training Log/Diary

Week	Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total	Comment
		Gentle Hills	Speed	Rcovery	Speed	Rest/Recovery	Tempos	SLR		
1	24/06/2013	10.26 @5:10 with 8th k at 3:58	7.06 8x500 45s Rest - 112, 114, 118, 117, 115, 119, 119, 116	16.01 5:19 with fast finishing 3k	16.06 Test Of Manhood - 1k, 750m, 500m, 500m with 250m rest in between x2 405, 413, 410, 415 (505) 419, 418, 414, 405 (615)	0	6.3 5k tempo @ 4:13 - 21:06. Would have gone sub-21 if didn't get chopped by cars - twice.	22.1 Brighton beach trail. Pace was too fast at 5:07	77.79	
2	1/07/2013	5.3 5:10. Wore Brooks. Legs hated it. Cut run short due to minor quad strain	12 8x200 Anderson Hill Sprint - 48, 51, 50, 49, 50, 52, 53, 51 (8:00 jog rest)	16 5.5@4:40-4:57, 6.5@4:57-5:05, 4@progressive 4:53 to 4:33. Overall 4:52	16 10 with 5 easy hills 6X3min reps (1min rest) - 420, 415, 412, 414, 420, 403 Aim for 12	0	10 5k tempo 1 - 2.73@4:01 Aborted. Not ready for sub20. 5k Tempo 2 @ 4:18. V controlled. 16s -ve split.	21.3 Very tired after Sat's double tempo attempts. Wen out v conservatively and struggled for first 12k before finding some strength. Good finish with 458, 448, 451, 443, 435.	80.6	
3	8/07/2013	16 Gentle Hills - 6 hills + 1lap. Serious struggle. V tired.	14.6 2 laps of 500s (Tan) - 33:44 (4:23)	11 Froze my arse off. 11-10@4:38. First 5 24:31, second 5 22:00. 1 warm down @ 4:53. Best run this year. Need to use this as mental goodies.	11.93 6x1014m (2min) - 349, 350, 357, 358, 358, 356. Started too fast (idiot) trying to run with Biggars (who was doing 4 reps only). Pace also faded on most 2nd lap. Something to remember.	10.01 Hammy were tight after yesterday. Did a really gentle session to loosen them up. Felt much better after. 5:19. Also tried breathing through nose only to control pace for romp. Might adjust romp to 520 pace.	30.26 10.5 slow @5:15, 10.6 fast @ 4:42, 9.2 slow @ 5:12.	7.4 1k warm up and 1.4 warm down. 5x500 on offs - 409, 454, 415, 447, 402, 507, 406, 450, 405, 457. Slowed the offs after yesterday's effort. Well controlled run.	101.2	Take the easy days VERY easy!! Body already v tired after just 80.6k last week.
4	15/07/2013	6.7 No run planned but work drove me nuts today. So went for mad dash between endless meetings and idiots. 4:36 pace round the lake.	21.41 4 stage (2k) progressive tempo - Av 4:35. 11.5 warm up inc 6 Anderson climb. Tempo out short to 6. Had no legs. Too big of a awrm up. 4 warm down.	17.09 Winter Romp (8k). Nominated 5:20 pace for 42:40. Ran 41:50 even tho I slowed to a crawl on last lap. Should have stuck to 41:20 :) Nice run on a gorgoues day tho.	10.5 Ganly - 500 (3:55), 800 (4:07), 1k (4:05), 1k (4:09), 800 (4:09), 500 (3:54) Slight right calf strain and 5th black toe :-/ Reduced total no of k's with session more controlled than normal. V windy. Felt good	0	5.77 Pouring and freezing. Cut warm up to 0.5k (not wise). 5:27@4:15. No rhythm, body frozen stiff and completely out off by car which saw me slammed into the side of it. Took a lot of momentum out.	21.11 Freezing. 2C when started, and windy. Struggled even tho av pace was 5:23. Lack of sound sleep recently has not helped.	82.58	
5	22/07/2013	12.07 6x Anderson Hills. Took larger stride for strengthening with fast finish. 5:07. Felt great.	14.43 Warm up (3 easy hills + 4x250 on off) - 4:59. 6x750 - 258, 252, 255, 254, 253, 255. Warm down 1.8 at 4:37. Best session since return from op.	11.42 Cut run short to 11.4 as body a bit tired. Took it v gentle with fast finish. 5:06	11.07 4 x 500m (on 2min45s) - 201, 158, 153, 155 4 x 250m (on 1m30sec) - 57, 53, 55, 46. Feeling stronger by the day and those sub-4 paces are getting more comfortable by the day. Took it below normal effort ahead of sunday's 10k race. Fun to do one flat out 250 sprint at 305 pace.	10.7 Cut tempo to 4k to rest body for Sunday. Overall distance also cut from 16 to 10.7. Tempo 4k at 4:18. V comfortable.	24.6 3.1 Warm Up @ 5:06 Albert Park 10. 1k @ 4:17 - 43:47. Took forever to get started due to congestions. Ran smart race tucking behind lots of groups in between surges. Felt really comfortable. Probably left a bit out there. 11.4 Warm Down @ 5:08	84.29		

Week	Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total	Comment
6	29/07/2013	16.08	19.63	17.6	14.53	0	11.72	30	109.56	July Total 401.98
		Absolutely stuffed for the first 12k. Legs seriously heavy, so extended run to 16 to loosen them up. Started to feel a bit better towards the end. 5:22.	11.8 warm up @ 5:22. 0.73 jog to start point. 2.65 warm down at 5:27. Mona Fartlek - 4.45 - Rooted. Had no legs or energy. Was tempted to go after the 400 for the month, but may take tmr off now.	11@5:07 with Jacko 6.6@4:59 A few niggling aches - predominantly in the right foot and lower right back. Will do more stretching.	8.18 w/u and 1.84 w/d 6 x 3 minute reps with 1 minute rest - took session easy just to get used to running at 4-4:20 pace. Felt good.	2.22 w/u 8.2k tempo @ 4:11 - in control and felt great. Could have pushed harder and speed was slowed by serious wind. 1.34 w/d	30 with ASIC MM training group. Averaged 5:15 for first 20 or so. 4 in the 420s round the lake felt good, tho legs didn't feel responsive. Ended up with 5:03. Tired but comfortable.			
7	5/08/2013	15	16.47	16.05	15.31	10.1	10	34.01	116.94	
		10 on the roads and 5 barefoot on grass. Hated running in shoes after going barefoot. 5:18 - felt so good I was barely breathing. Only downer was a sore right foot from Sunday's 30.	8.52 w/u - 5:08 4x1500 - 4:13, 4:01, 4:21, 4:06 - Felt surprisingly stuffed after 1st uphill interval. Need more shorter faster sessions. 1.95 w/d - 5:40. Absolutely cactus after session.	Gentle Hills - 9 Anderson and 1 Airlie. Felt very good. 5:28. HR (146) indicates major improvement in aerobic fitness.	8.02 warm up @ 4:55 - progressively increased pace from low 5s to low 4s. Garly session - 500 (3:57), 800 (3:50), 1000 (4:01), 1000 (3:43), 800 (3:59), 500 (3:25) 1.91 warm down @ 4:43. Tired but not too bad. Good sign after tough session.	5:10. Windy and cold, but very easy and comfortable run. Felt extraordinarily strong considering the mileage and sessions I have done this week. 2.2 w/u 6k tempo @ 4:06 1.8 w/d	Ran comfortably at the front of the B group all day. Right foot became a bit sore after about 26. Need to watch that. Did 1.5 laps of tan with Matt running the Tan 50. Felt good the whole way. 5:06			
8	12/08/2013	10.46	16.76	12.09	17.44	10.3	16.1	21	104.17	
		Easy run - and would have been enjoyable if not for the 50kph wind. 5:23.	9 warm up at 5:03. Felt great. Killer Loop Handicap. Set a handicap of +5:40 - 334, 324, 326, 318, 321, 323, 310 - Should have attacked the downhill more and slower on the first few climbs. Need more hills work. Legs were shot on the latter climbs. 2.68 w/d at 5:16.	WINDY easy run with Jacko doing the triple hills treat - killer loop, Anderson and Airlie. Finished off with a 3:01 90m sprint. 5:16. Av HR 141 is encouraging as it's my lowest ever recorded HR at this pace by a long way.	Did Yasso 800s just to see roughly what marathon shape I am in even if it's not a deadset accurate predictor. Good tough session nonetheless. 4.41 w/u 5:06 Yasso (av 307) - 307(310), 305(310), 307(310), 307(216), 306(300), 306(301), 308(301), 309(243), 310(118), 303. Reduced rest time gradually but felt fairly comfy in maintaining pace till the last leg after just 118 rest.	Trialed a bridging run between 2 sessions with a split progressive. In this case, it was 2x progressive 5k run. Couldn't quite achieve second 5k faster than 1st, but still a nice run. May work well. 2x5k Tempo. Originally going for 1x10 but struggled for rhythm. Tempo 1 w/u 2.13 at 4:58 Tempo 1 - 5.47 at 4:10 Tempo 1 w/d 1.89 at 5:18 Strange as I recovered rather quickly during w/d jog. Tempo 2 5.03 at 4:13 Tempo 2 w/d 1.58 at 5:03 Again no rhythm. Perhaps legacy of 3.5 sessions in 5 days with progressive run yesterday.	Slow 15 followed by fast 6. Av 4:58. Av HR 147. Felt good. Windy as hell.			
9	19/08/2013	16.12	14.33	21.5	16.44	6.33	20	21.17	115.89	Sat's 16 tempo together with cumulative mileage has caused major fatigue in the body. With next week being 2nd highest peak week, effort will need to be toned down.
		Steady state recovery run with a 3k progressive finish. 4:58. Av Hr 143 - lowest ever record HR on a sub-5min run. Felt great!! Aerobic capacity must be on the up.	w/u 5.33 at 4:54. Working from home. MM session 6x3min (1min rest) - 345, 348, 346, 348, 350, 347. Av 347. Tough sessions as pushed pace, but remained mostly in control. w/d 3.32 at 4:58.	Cruised around at 5:10 for about 14. Then turned up the pace gradually for the last 7.5. Av pace 5:03. Felt strong and no sign of swollen knee from the day before. Phew!	5.08 w/u at 4:54 (HR 148) 6k tempo @ 4:10. HR 167 (rising throughout. Peak at 174. Signs of tiredness) 5.35 w/d at 5:26. Could barely jog. Day off tmr.	Gentle Recovery Run. 5:17. 2.2 w/u @ 4:57 16k tempo @ 4:18 1.8 w/d	Major struggle. Av HR 138, so hardly doing any work but legs were shot with various niggly pains.			

Week	Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total	Comment
10	26/08/2013	16.19 Felt woeful in the first 5 or so then gradually improved. Felt normal again in the last 6. 5:04	15.76 Woke up with rather sore ankle (pain 6/10). Gradually improved after an hour of walking about. Only decided to do sessions during warm up when it felt ok. Did push too hard just in case... Double Pyramid (250,500,750,500,250) x 2. 3mins b/w sets. (30 sec rest per 250m) 5.3 w/u at 5:11 1st set av 3:50. Second set av 3:46. AV HR 154. Felt v comfortable at these paces. 5.3 w/d at 5:13	21.5 5:06. Perfect condition. Felt tired with slight soreness in left achilles. Took it easy for most of it around 5:15-5:30 pace. Threw in progressive 6k tempo at 4:50-4:20.	11.2 5.3 w/u at 5:15 8x400 (50s rest) - 340, 345, 347, 347, 345, 346, 347, 345. Found the rest period just a little too short, but good workout. Left achilles v tight. 2.4 w/d at 5:10	10.59 Achilles tester	16.62 2.86 w/u at 5:13 10.13 Tempo at 4:12. 10k PB at 42:10 3.63 w/d at 5:10	19.5 Went for easy run along the beach trail. Dave had a major ankle sprain 3.5k into it. Had to sprint back to car to drive him home for immediate icing. Ran 6.35k to his place to deliver strapping and tape (32:19). Run back home was quicker but still comfy (29:55).	111.36	August total 485 Condition report: Right foot nursing sore tendon running from ankle to right big toe. Right knee started hurting a little recently. Left achilles a little tight of late. Right lower back slightly sore in the last week of August.
11	2/09/2013	15.95 10 x easy Anderson Hill Climbs. Struggled a bit in the first 3-4 climbs but became progressively easier. Think the short window between last night's run and this run posed a problem. 5:26.	13.1 7.3 w/u at 5:15 Airlie Tempo - 8 times up, 7 down. Took it a bit easy but still a tough session. 2.5 w/d at 4:55	14.45 3 laps of tan. 5:01. Probably a touch quick. Windy as buggery and just wanted to get it over and done with :)	10.35 4.17 w/u at 5:02 Paced Calvin for 6x500 - 417, 414, 421, 411, 418, 405 - Chatted the whole way. Felt great. 2x250 - 313. 2.68 w/d at 4:49	9.05 Ultra easy run at 5:19	24.24 2.24 w/u at 5:40 21.5@91:20 - Paced by Dave. Smashed PB by 5.5min. Amazing run. Qtrly splits were 22:58, 22:55, 22:52, 22:35. 0.5 w/d at 6:14	87.14	Half marathon time will help determine pacing for MM. New half PB has both VDOT and McMillan pointing to 311-312. With a strong taper period, I think 315 is worth a crack.	
12	9/09/2013	16.25 Easy Run with high cadence but short stride. 5:09. Felt great and strong.	16.6 Decided against Pyralek grass session today as legs still a bit sore.. 11.8 w/u at 5:12 6x200 Anderson Hill sprints pacing Calvin - 410, 425, 442, 451, 431, 409 2.44 w/d at 5:21	16.16 Easy Run With Jacho along Yarra. 5:26. Windy as hell.	12 5.37 w/u at 4:57 - progressive. HR 150 A/B Group - 8 x 1laps with 80sec between reps - 113, 113, 106, 108, 110, 110, 110, 109. Av 3:34. Fastest session ever by a long way. 2.23 w/d at 4:56. HR 148.	11.44 Easy run at 5:16.	7.044 8x400 (50s rest) - 85, 87, 86, 88, 86, 87, 87, 85 (Ave 3:36) - First 5 were cruisy, last 3 were hard.	35.01 First 20 was too fast. So Gerry and I pulled back for the next 10 or so. Spent the last 4-5k pacing Travis who was really struggling. Felt strong though had a few sore spots developing late in the run.	114.504	Peak Week
13	16/09/2013	10.11 5:01. Slightly too fast but comfy.	14 4x1500 on 8min. 409, 351, 410, 349. Painful hard session but maintained consistent split and had reserve at the end when I needed it.	15.1 Yarra Trail. High cadence 185-190. Felt v easy. Had great rhythm going after about 2k. 4:55.	16.24 11.39 w/u at 5:08 4 x 500m (on 2min45s) - 355, 346, 354, 344 4 x 250 (on 2min) - 320, 324, 324, 304 Left meniscus pulled up very sore. Could bare jog back to work. Oh dear. 1.84 w/d at 5:30	10.51 10.51 at 5:00 - Left knee still suspect after 3k but gradually improved.	10.19 Cut short to visit Auntie Barbara in hospital. 1k w/u then progressive 5k tempo (421, 412, 412, 412, 359) 4k w/d. Overall Av 4:31. Knee ok but was very tired.	32.7 First 22 at 4:52 before decided to slow down to finish with overall av 4:55. Didn't want to spend the entire run in junk territory. Pace group leader (Max) is just a show off. Might run with Group B next week.	108.85	

Week	Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total	Comment
14	23/09/2013	12.2	15.3	13.5	7.03	10.21	11.5	21.5	91.24	
		4:59. Probably too fast. Felt v tired at the end which is not a good sign from a recovery run.	7.5 w/lu at 4:41. Had to stretch for 10mins with right hammy tightening up rapidly. OP 2 x 4min (343, 338), 2 x 3min (343, 341), 2 x 2 min (344, 339), 2 x 1 min (332, 323) (half recovery). 2.1 w/d at 5:05	Laps around lake with Dave. Nice and easy though windy as buggery. 4:52. HR145 - took HR reading to help gauge effort as I thought body might be a tad fatigue after yesterday's effort, but all good.	1.23 w/lu at 5:08 Anut Barb's funeral. Mentally drained. Did 8x400 (55s) instead of 8x507 (80s). 83, 83, 82, 81, 82, 83, 84, 81. Av 3:25. 2.36 w/d at 4:38 - felt easy.	Av 4:46. It was too fast even if I felt v strong and the run felt quite easy. As Dave rightly said, need to exercise restraints.	1k wu at 4:51 10 tempo at 4:20. Felt great most of the way though fighting the strong wind down Waratah St was tough in the last 5k. Av HR 157. 0.5 wd at 4:47.	Fast finishing long run. 16.5@457 then 5k at 4:29. Too a while to get going but actually felt better as pace picked up. Av HR 147 is a great sign.		
15	30/09/2013	10.3	11.51	17.06	10	0	12	17.5	78.37	
		5 x easy anderson hill climbs. 511. Windy as buggery. Outside of left lower shin a touch sore to begin with but subsided after about 2k.	w/lu 4.05 @ 5:06 Mona Fartlek - Paced B Group as most didn't know what to do. 4.84k. Av 4:07. (vs 31/7 session 4.45 at 4:30). Felt strong. Have made significant aerobic progress. w/d 2.62 @ 4:45	Changed from easy 10 to 14 tempo as advised by G. Last chance to do such long effort run really as it's 10 days out from race day. This was to determine race pace strategy. The 50kph wind made finding a rhythm impossible. Actually suited my purpose cos if I can maintain 4:30 pace with relative comfort in these conditions, then it should be far easier in clamer condition. 14@4:29 with very even splits. Last 2 were a bit of struggle against persisting wind but generally a success.	Tan Handicap		At the advice of Lurch and Rog, changed the session from 10 tempo to a short session - 8x400 (55s rest). 1.21 w/lu - 5:00. HR143 8x400 - Held back throughout until the last rep. Felt strong. 91, 88, 88, 85, 86, 88, 87, 79. 1.21 w/d - 4:41. HR155	5:00. A bit more struggle than I'd expected given how great I felt yesterday. But gradually felt better as the run went on.		
16	7/10/2013	8	11.14	6.03	7.94	8			46.03	
		Very easy 8. Over before it was even started. Felt stronger as run went on.	2.91 w/lu at 4:31 Pyralek Session on grass 1,2,3,4,3,2,1 minute efforts with half recovery. Absolutely stuffed. Running on seemingly empty tank, not sure why. 5.7@4:10 2.53 w/d at 5:03	Massive stitch developed at after 4.5k. Had to pause for a min or so. Recovered on restart. Not sure why. 4:53.	w/lu - 3.04@4:41 6 x 500m (on 2min45s) - Av 3:50. Felt strong and legs were alive again for the first time this week! w/d - 1.8@4:45	Easy		RACE DAY		

Appendix C – 3 Days Plan Leading Up To Race Day

Thu (8k total – MMM 8x500 on 2:45)

Drink all day

Breakfast: 2 x white toast with jam + 1 chia seed drink, magnesium/zinc tablet

Morning tea: 1 x white toast with honey

Lunch: Don don – chicken teriyaki

Afternoon tea: 1 x white toast with honey

Dinner: Fried rice, magnesium/zinc tablet

Hot bath and stretch

Fri (Easy 7k)

Drink all day

Breakfast: 2 x white toast with jam + 1 chia seed drink, magnesium/zinc tablet

Morning tea: 1 x white toast with honey

Lunch: South Melb market – Chicken and roast pork noodles. Buy ingredients for dinner.

Afternoon tea: 1 x white toast with honey and banana

Dinner – Mushroom risotto + fruits, magnesium/zinc tablet

Supper: : 1 x white toast with jam

Hot bath and stretch

Pack race gear

- Change of clothes

- Compression socks

- Race day clothes with bib

- Charge watch

- Pack watch and hrm

- Sunglasses

- Hat

- Gloves

Sat (no run)

Drink all day

Breakfast: 2 x white toast with jam + 1 chia seed drink, magnesium/zinc tablet

Morning tea: 1 x white toast with honey

Stay off feet

Lunch: chicken rice at Kotaraya

Afternoon tea: 1 x white toast with honey

Dinner (5pm): Chicken noodles paparich

Drop kids off at grandparents

Hot bath and stretch

Lay everything out to wear next morning

2 pieces of white toasts with jam before bed

9pm bed time

Sun

400am wake up

Shower

Brekkie 3pcs of white toasts with jam and coffee

Stuff to bring

House keys

Race bag

Camera for mei

Mobile phone

Course map for Mei

510am leave house –Gatorade and banana on the way.

530am – Pick up Amy

600am arrive at mcg. Meet milers and others for warm up jog. Goto bag drop off and toilet.

645am – final visit to toilet

700am – Run like hell