

RON WHITHAM – AWARDED 1995



Born in 1928, Ron's athletic career began as a Botany Harrier, where he competed at the top level, highlighted with his win in the NSW Marathon Championship in 1942.

Ron was one of those "retirees" who came back as a vet with the Sutherland Club in 1974, not as a runner but as a race walker, and again he reached a very high standard and won a number of "Vets" State titles and placed in Australian Championships. He became an office bearer in 1975, and was President for a number of years, also taking up coaching and encouraging many young athletes. He made Thursday nights at Sylvania Waters the place for the young to get a good grounding in the sport.

Ron was an active member of NSW Vets for 25 years, during which time he was President for 3 to 4 years, and a committee member for 13 to 14 years, during a time of great growth for the Association. The word "active" is a good description of his association with the Vets, be it as President, committee member, competitor, organiser or a motivator.

Ron and local Vet athlete Alex Hutt were two of the people who assisted Yvonne Piper in conducting Club social events. Alex owned the metal fabrication company at Caringbah which employed Ron, and often lent a company truck to transport whatever was required for functions and events. The same factory also manufactured the equipment the club might need to conduct events during Championships, such as flags.

Whilst a very handy athlete, he was also a first-rate official. Clubs generally did not receive much assistance from the A.A.A. of N.S.W, and while there were some fine officials that volunteered whom were accepted with open arms, but most of the Championship Officials both State and Australian came from the athletes ranks, and it was not uncommon to see a "Vet" suddenly hand over his tape, watch, rake or whatever he or she was holding, trot off to their own event, and when finished come back to resume officiating.

Ron was very likeable person, easy to work with, and someone whom you could trust to complete any task you requested him to do, or for which he had already volunteered. Whatever the job, it always got done.

Ron promoted all facets of athletics and was a very worthy recipient of life membership back in 1995.