



Board Member Profile - Richard Blurton

My athletics career is really quite normal and uninteresting.

Rugby Union training in my early 20s included a warm up run which I quite enjoyed, so I continued by doing the odd run round the streets, although in the mid 70s people looked at you as if you must be mad. I joined the same athletics club as Barbara in Surrey. In the early 80s it was almost impossible for a 30 year old male to get in the London marathon as it was so popular, so the club would just put in an entry for everyone each year with no likelihood of getting accepted. So it was a shock when I got a December letter saying I was in. But it was fun for the first half of the race with the crowds, the pubs open, and a street band on each corner. Until the Isle of Dogs when they disappeared and you had time to realise your legs hurt. But I did two more marathons – WMA in Buffalo which was far too hot, and the one I really trained for, (Melbourne), but the only one I hit the wall. All three were 3:35 – I must have been pre-programmed not to beat that time.

I have been blighted by milestone targets not quite reached. In my youth I came close, but never quite beat 40m/1:30 for 10k/half marathon. Then much later I seriously trained again to get back under 50m for 10k. The target race was a MAWA handicap – I ran 50:01 but did take home a rather nice trophy for winning the handicap.

My work was as a Project Manager for BP working on major oil and gas projects

around the world. That led directly to Barbara and I emigrating to Australia in 1992. My last project was just amazing – a multi billion \$ gas project at a greenfield site in West Papua. I lived for 3 years in Jakarta and then 5 years at the project site in the Bird's Head region of West Papua. Nothing could beat that so a year after returning to Perth office in 2008 I stopped enjoying the work and retired.

That was just before MAWA needed to start work for the 2010 AMA Nationals. I felt that my project skills were good for the Convenor role so offered my services. The Champs went pretty well and during those 4 days some discussions were held between Stan and Eventscorp in WA about the possibility of Perth bidding for the World Championships.



Manaslu circuit, Nepal

Steve Lance asked me to get involved and so I attended preliminary meetings on putting a bid together with Eventscorp. Although they did most of the work, their policy was not to be the lead in a bid, and so I slipped into the role of Head of the Bid Committee. We presented the bid in Sacramento in 2011 and were awarded 2016. Really so far in advance there was not a lot to do for 2 or 3 years, but I continued in the lead role and held the occasional meeting with Bob and Lynne Schickert and Geoff Brayshaw in our favourite coffee shops.



Fitz Roy, Patagonia

Some 2½ years out from the Championships I started working with WMA on the contract, with Eventscorp on the sponsorship agreement and on putting together an LOC structure. So I really just drifted into the Head of LOC job. No-one ever came to me and formally appointed me, and no-one came and said 'ok now its getting real we need a proper event manager to do the job.' But I do think that managing large industrial projects provides the right skills balance for managing such a large sporting enterprise.

Working with WMA and the AMA Board on Worlds provided a very good understanding of just how masters athletics work, and having an elite athlete wife of course adds a further perspective. Having attended many AMA AGMs I did have some views on how we could improve what we do, so when the Board suggested I might consider the daunting task of following Wilma in the AMA President role, I decided to go for it.

I love being in the mountains. I know the English Lake District intimately and have bagged a fair number of Scottish Munros. I always have my two weeks skiing in the alps in January, and have trekked in the Himalaya, Patagonia, Andes and Atlas mountains. More recently I am hiking the long distance footpaths through the Alps and the Pyrenees.

Pictures of me running are not pretty so enjoy the trekking photos.