



# CLUB SPOTLIGHT - ST GEORGE DISTRICT (METRO)

**St George District Amateur Athletic Club** was formed in 1921 at Hurstville, and the St George District Women's Amateur Athletic Club in 1928. The club has been the home to many athletes ranging from recreational to world champions. Our cross-country home is Scarborough Park (Ramsgate) and we offer competition in Winter (March to August) and Summer (October to February). Our club cross country caters for recreational runners in addition to runners that compete in State and National events and the very elite that compete for Australia.

Our club is very active in Track and Field events and athletes compete at Interclub, State and National events. The club has a history of athletes that have competed at the Olympics, Commonwealth Games and World Championships. Club coaches make our athletes even better and many have progressed to NSW and Australian champions.

St George's uniform is a distinct red and white vertical stripes. You can't miss us - we certainly stand out!

The first race was a 2½ Mile Scratch Road Race from Hurstville to Bexley and return on 2-April-1921. The winner was A. Gainsford in a time of 15 minutes. The first Track Race was held at Hurstville Oval on 13-May-1921 over A Mile Handicap and was won by Ernie Austin off 40 yards, who then won our first State Title over 7 Mile Walk, subsequently representing Australia at the 1928 Paris Olympics. St George Club organised the first Australian Marathon Championships run on 27-Aug-1927 with entrants from all states and New Zealand.

After WWII athletics competition recommenced at Hurstville Oval with International Carnivals featuring Olympic and World record holder Fanny Blankers-Koen. We had attendances of 14,000 and 10,000 at these meetings! 1952 saw Albert Thomas appearing in E. Grade Interclub and little did anyone guess that he would become our club's greatest athlete. Albie eventually broke several Open World Records not only representing Australia at 3 Olympic & 2 Empire Games but also the very first World Masters Championships in 1975. There in Toronto, Canada, Albie won Gold in the M40 1500m and 3000m. Pretty good start to the club's Masters/Veterans story.

To celebrate 50 years the club conducted a 50 Mile scratch track run on Hurstville Oval on 21-Mar-1971. 30 Club athletes started and only 2 finished - Dave Edwards winning in 6:29:41 with John Bowers second in 7:00:23. The first official 50 Mile race in Australia.

St George first reported club athletes competing in State and National Veteran championships for the 74-75 season. An interesting note, the Club has published an annual report every year of its existence and every year it started with "Gentlemen" until 1980 when we saw the introduction of "Ladies and Gentlemen" for the 59th edition. The club will be celebrating our 100th Anniversary in September with a dinner and evening of entertainment at Club Rivers in Riverwood.

Story and photos by  
Peter Murray



St George District Athletic Club Inc.



*St. George Cross-Country Athletes running at Ramsgate, Scarborough Park, probably 1949.*



*ALBERT THOMAS: Triple Olympian, on his way to win N.S.W. 10,000 metre Cross-Country Championship on 27.7.63.*