

## Cairns Road Runners Barron Gorge Trail Race, March 30<sup>th</sup> 2014

Race Report by Dave OBrien

On Sunday March 30<sup>th</sup> a very pleasing group of 74 trail runners braved the ferocious mozzies at the end of Stoney Creek Road to line up for the start of the third edition of the Barron Gorge Trail Race. All finished, although a small number of 18km runners managed to take a wrong turn(s) despite arrows, maps and route descriptions. They were later recorded with the 11km runners on the results sheets. Results can be found on both our Facebook page and under the Results heading on our website [www.roadrunners.org.au](http://www.roadrunners.org.au)

As in the previous two years, runners had the option of taking an 18km or 11km route but all had to face the gruelling, somewhat slippery, 1.8km climb up the beginning of Smith's Track. Once at the top, there were great views in glorious sunshine down onto Stoney Creek and the Barron River, although many probably didn't notice after the arduous start!

After running along the ridgeline it was an exhilarating downhill run to Toby's Lookout where the field split into the separate 18km and 11km routes. Both groups descended into the refreshing waters of Stoney Creek, with the 11k'ers continuing along Smith's Track before heading north along the Wait-a-While infested Gandal Wandun Track. They later joined some of the fastest 18km runners when turning onto the Douglas Track.

Meanwhile, the 18k'ers had departed Stoney Creek and passed the two magnificent Kauri trees before reaching the logging trail leading to Cadagi Corner and beyond. Eventually this rather muddy and occasionally rocky track led to the bitumen of (Upper) Stoney Creek Road and the welcome sight of the checkpoint at Speewah campground. There, the much appreciated volunteers, Brenda, SiQi and Gareth had refreshments available. Some runners stopped for a much needed rest while the front runners barely paused. Said Brenda (of Rachel Effeney) "she was running so easily".

From the Speewah checkpoint runners took the short Djina-Wu Track before continuing along the Douglas Track and rejoining the 11km runners at the junction with the Gandal Wandun Track. Avoiding the occasional fallen Wait-a-While, runners continued along the undulating Douglas Track, ascending and skirting around Glacier Rock before the knee-jarring, quad quaking descent down McDonald's Track to the finish. A number of runners cooled off in the refreshing waters of Stoney Creek, just metres from the finish line.

Congratulations to the competitors who all finished the race and special mention to the major placegetters; Rob Miller from Outdoor Adventures NQ (great to see you guys joining us and hope to see more of you) who completed the 18kms in just over 2 hours, followed soon after by Julian Oates with the willowy, 50 plus year old David Vance taking 3<sup>rd</sup> place for the men.

The powerful, easy running style of Rachael Effeney (go, girl power!) saw her blitz the women's field and finish 3<sup>rd</sup> overall. Next lady across the line was Jodie Henley with Tenille Farnsworth edging out Laura Whenmouth for 3<sup>rd</sup> place

In the 11km race, Todd Rutherford collected the winner's medal for the men, finishing in 1 hour 26minutes. Ryan Hoskins came in 4 minutes later and Brazilian athlete Naldo Campos took out the bronze medal. The women's division saw a tight finish with Anthea Barrow edging out Susanne Houlihan and Jill Shepherd finishing 3<sup>rd</sup>. Of special note were the strong runs by up-and-coming teenagers Ella Hargreaves and Elsie Stoeckl who were less than 2 minutes from a podium finish. No doubt there will be some merry banter in the Hargreaves household after Ella finished ahead of her mother, Andy.

A huge thank you to all our volunteers. There would have been no race without you; Colleen Harisson for online rego and the inevitable but necessary paperwork (and the bibs!), Christine Bell on timing and mentor to the newbies, Mel Akmentins for organizing the medals and Cozmo Satori who dual-rolled as Race Director and also spent 6 hours slogging around both 11km and 18km courses, marking them the day before the race.

On race day, Caty, Jo van Gorp and Marcelle Kersenboom fought off the mozzies at the Start/Finish with Mark St Amand and others setting up. Thanks also to our cheery Speewah checkpoint crew, Brenda OBrien, SiQi Kramer and Gareth Smith. Although injuries to runners were only slight, Gareth took off more than a little skin after crashing his new bike while doing burn-outs! Nuff said!

Our two Sweeps, Sioux Campbell (11km) and David Elms (18km) deserve a special thanks for bringing up the rear and making sure all runners got home safely. Finally a special thank you to Lorraine Lawson for all the hard work she has put in over the years to lay a great foundation for our races.

On a safety note, it was a little alarming to see how many runners turned up to race without the requisite safety equipment. Please be properly prepared for each race. The Race Information Packs contain details of the suggested and mandatory gear needed for each event.

Speaking of events, the next one on the calendar is the first of the Little Street road race series on April 12<sup>th</sup>, followed by what is arguably the toughest of the trail races...The Blacksnake, on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

Safe running, everyone.