

# Passion motivates

BORN in Messina Sicily in 1951, Giovanni Puglisi moved to Perth with his parents when he was two years old, in search of a better life. And, as is usually the way with Italians, he made good and ended up as a primary school teacher with a career spanning more than forty years. As a teacher he had the opportunity to

coach numerous sporting and athletics teams – and had great satisfaction in leading several

schools to top honours. In 2005 he paid his first and only visit to his birth place but hopes to visit again some time in the future.

His passion was soccer and he was fortunate enough to be a member of Subiaco City's U16 and U18 state champion teams. Living around Subiaco, with its wealth of open spaces, he made good use of facilities with his "*equally sporty mates*". At Claremont Teachers' College in 1970 one of the lecturers encouraged him to join Melville Districts AC. He participated in middle distance events "*with limited success*". Then his country postings as a teacher reduced his soccer activity but gave him slightly more opportunity for athletics.

He married Lesley in 1976 and on their USA/Europe/UK honeymoon they fell in love with Oxford. They renewed acquaintance with that city in 1996 when Giovanni did a Commonwealth Teachers' Exchange there for twelve months. Currently, one of their two sons (both scientists) is based in England and Finland and the other in Perth so in 2013 they purchased a "*little Victorian town house*" in Oxford to enable them to "*be with both chapters of the growing Puglisi clan*".

Sports after he was married were limited to jogging and sailboarding on Logue Brook dam and at Australind. He and Lesley lived in Harvey at the time, teaching, bringing up a young family and also running a small thoroughbred horse stud. One of their stallion's daughters produced the 1999 Melbourne Cup winner, ROGAN JOSH - the last WA bred horse to win the Melbourne Cup.

With just a couple of breaks in membership Giovanni has been with the vets/masters since the early 90s. Middle distance is his forte but he has competed in all distances of 400m and above and also some of the throws and jumps.

M60 Club Tops of 2013/14 show him in the top three in no fewer than nine events and so far, for 2014/15, he is in first place for the 1500m, mile, 3000m and 5000m and second for the 400m.



## In focus

With Christine Oldfield



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# Giovanni's desire

With 200m to go Giovanni is on target to record a 19mins 23.42secs 5000m at the State Championships.



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FOR the past three years he has run David Carr very close for the Patron's Trophy, taking the competition right down to the wire. Whilst he is pleased with the steady improvement in his running – he's disappointed that he is *"still a bridesmaid"*.

Last year was his best year as a Masters athlete. He came first out of 72 starters in the 60 to 69 age bracket in the City to Surf 12km and achieved scores of more than 86%, for the first time, in the 1500m, 5000m and *parkruns*. He has also taken Age Category Records in various *parkruns* both in Perth and the UK. His career highlights with masters are his first places in the state championships cross country in 2013 and 2014 along with the 1500m and 5000m in 2014.

One of Giovanni's strengths is that he is a very motivated competitor and is always looking for ways to bring the best out of himself. He enjoys studying the methods and techniques of successful athletes (both famous ones and WA masters) and hopes that incorporating some of them into his own training might help take him a bit closer to performances of 90%. So he is working on making his training techniques more consistent and varied and improving his flexibility and diet.

Before a race which is of some importance to him he likes to dedicate his effort to a friend or family member to ensure that he puts in maximum effort – this way he says *"I never quit and battle hard right to the end to avoid embarrassment."*

Giovanni is quite passionate about masters' athletics and says *"Often the*

*competition and rivalry couldn't be any fiercer but the camaraderie and friendship couldn't be any more solid!"*

Giovanni and Lesley are currently in Oxford at their *"little Victorian townhouse"*, from where, for the next six months, or more if he is granted a visa extension, Giovanni hopes to build on his steady progress in athletics of the last two to three years. It will be his training base for the 2015 Worlds in Lyon, where he looks forward to meeting up again with his Ozzie running mates. He hopes Lyon will be a *"platform for Perth 2016"* when he will have just entered the M65 category.