

Running buzz



In focus

With Christine Oldfield

KEMAL Hassan is known to some as Karl but he prefers to be called Kem. Born in Cyprus, he arrived in Australia as a 3 year old in 1972. He came late to athletics but as a youngster he played lacrosse, rugby league, squash and indoor cricket. After school he went to business college and worked in an office whilst studying accounting part time. That didn't last long and from age 17 – 21 he managed a petrol station. Then, like most of his relations, he became involved with the food industry. For seven years he owned a pizza shop and he followed that, thirteen years ago, with a fish and chips business which he says now *"pretty much runs itself"*, allowing him time to run, travel and play golf. He is married to Melissa (a recent MAWA member who does the Sunday runs and also parkruns) and they have two children, Aiden(13) and Aysha(11).

A few years ago, Aiden started running with Masters at ECAC along with Jamie Leonard whose father, Simon, another MAWA member, was training the two boys. Kem went along to watch and, after a while, decided to join in. Aiden is no longer running competitively but Kem has continued. His main motivation has been to control his weight. About seven years ago he weighed in at a hefty 130kg but these days fluctuates around the 90kg mark. He runs about 30 – 45km a week but admits *"I eat more than I run, hence my size."*

Kem runs almost everything from 100m upwards and features in second or third place in the interim 2014/2015 Club Tops in no fewer than eight track events. But he thinks his biggest achievements in 2014 were in longer races. He got a *"great buzz"* running in the Sunday Road Running Championship, especially the 25km distance, and broke 2 hours in the Perth half marathon. He also ran the Bali half marathon with Kim Thomas. But he says *"Well, actually not with Kim - I was about 40 minutes behind him"*.

Kem seems to have caught the running bug so perhaps, having recently entered the M45 age group, we will see him competing in the 2015 State T&F Championships.