

## 2014 WCLAC survey results

Below are the survey results and answers to comments that have come out of the survey that was performed in August 2014.

The responses have been formulated by the Vice President, although all of the executive have had a chance to contribute.

We are very thankful for the 96 families that took the time to contribute responses to the survey.

### Q4. Please rate how our little aths centre has been doing in the following areas.

Area	Average score out of 10
Access to your child's results.	8.2
Age group team managers.	8.2
Athlete event variety.	7.7
Canteen Food.	6.9
Coaching.	7.1
Communication from the Centre.	7.0
Competition length.	6.9
Cost of participating.	7.8
How much fun your kid has.	8.5
Listening to feedback.	6.9
Parking.	7.5
Quality of equipment provided.	7.7
Time between events.	5.7
Toilet facilities.	5.8
Website presentation and content.	6.9

Looks like kids having fun is a big plus for our centre, along with the quality of the age group team managers and access to results.

The main area to work on is the time between events.

These responses will be valuable in evaluating whether the changes we make in the running of the centre are improving things in ways that please our families.

### Q5. Please provide a preference for your family on the calendar mix of Friday night/Saturday morning competitions.

We love Friday nights! Make them all Fridays!	26%
We slightly prefer Fridays to Saturdays	24%
50-50 feels right for us	26%
We slightly prefer Saturdays to Friday	16%
We love Saturdays! Make them all Saturdays!	8%

50-50 and “all Friday’s” are the most common responses. There is a clear preference towards Friday nights.

**Q6. The programming of events is always a balancing act. Which of the following best describes your family's view on this?**

We don't care how long it takes; we want a good balance of track and field events.	37%
We don't mind some imbalances in the program if it means we can save a bit of time.	53%
Keep it as short as possible, even if we don't get many distance events or High Jumps.	10%

Finishing early doesn’t seem to be as important as getting a good balance of events.

**Q7. In a couple of seasons our track surface may be replaced and we will not be able to use our track for a season. Which of the following options appeal to you:**

WCLAC joins with another local centre to run together for a season.	42%
WCLAC run by ourselves at another local track on a Saturday afternoon.	20%
WCLAC run by ourselves at another local track on a Sunday afternoon.	10%
WCLAC compete on a makeshift grass track on the field next to the stadium.	28%

There seems to be a preference for joining in with another centre if we lose access to our track.

*Below are responses/comments/questions given in the survey. Our responses are indented and in italics.*

**Event Balance Comments**

More distance races or walking races as it is hard for distance and walkers to accumulate points for the centre as it always cater for sprinters

*Distance events are more time consuming than the shorter events, and as such we can't have every group doing them every week without extending the time to complete the program. We honestly try to put in as many as possible, but there are competing interests to balance here.*

*What we have done is to create a few extra awards for distance runners, walkers, throwers and jumpers, as well as for hurdlers and sprinters. Hopefully this will bring some acknowledgement to the athletes who are better at the non-sprint events.*

On Question 6, the distance events are fine regarding time, however the high jump event is quite lengthy. Maybe each age group can do HJ once every 4 weeks and make LJ or TJ a preferred event to run as they seem to run quicker for a jumps event.

*Cameron has made changes to frequency of the events this season, so it will be interesting to see how this all works out.*

Runners have 2 events each week, jumpers have 1 and throwers have 1, so there will always be an imbalance to individual preferences. Maybe 3 events a session not 4 to shorten time.

Hmmm. There are a few ways to look at this. Some may also say that everyone has 2 track and 2 field events each week. Or walks only comes up 1/3 weeks (last season) or once every 4 weeks (this season). Or hurdles only every second week... We also have other families asking for 5-6 events each week.

## **Time related**

*Before we get to the questions/comments, the following comments should be considered.*

- 1. We spend hours each week trying to schedule the program to run as smoothly as possible, but there can occasionally be hiccups. Often these hiccups are the result of trying to make a change on the fly without thinking it through thoroughly. We do make changes on the fly when we think it will work out ok and not cause issues later in the program. There is nothing worse than throwing a group to a location because it is empty, then finding 10 minutes later that you have 2 discus rings empty and no-one to send there... and then find that your have 4 groups needing to do discus at the same time later on.*
- 2. The time it takes to run the program is a function of (a) the number of kids that turn up on the day, (b) the number of event locations we have to send the groups to, (c) how long it takes to get each groups through each event, (d) how well organized the Comp Director is in the scheduling of the program, (e) What events are being run.  
(a) is not in our control, and we can state quite plainly that for (d) the Comp Director is spending hours each week on the programming of the events.*

*We have been trying to improve (b) with the addition of the Discus 3/SP3 area, and the addition of the OnTrack program for the little tackers. Both of these have assisted greatly in getting through the program.*

*We have also put in place various measures to improve (c). New hurdles that are quicker to move up and down. Numbered markers for Javelin and Discus (so we don't have to measure every throw). We are encouraging our age group team managers to keep their athletes on the ball and keeping the event moving smoothly. We are also encouraging clubs to be well organised and have their officials ready to start the event when the athletes arrive. We are also encouraging better HJ jumpers not to start where all the other athletes start and just come in at a height closer to the PB, which should quicken up that event.*

*For (e) we could save some time by reducing the longer running events like HJ, or dropping walks altogether, but looking at the responses to Q6 above, we can see that most families see event balance as more important than how quick we get through events.*

*Another method that some centres use to speed things up is to run time consuming events in a non-standard way. For example, we could run the 400m's as an unlaned event starting and finishing in the back straight. There was not much support for this.*

Would much prefer 5 or 6 events per comp like other centres do.

The schedule just runs too long. Other centers do 5 events each Saturday and finish in a couple of hours.

*See point 2. above. There are a lot of factors involved. If we had usually 250 attending, and didn't have walks at all, then I'm confident we could do at least 5 events for everyone and finish much earlier. If someone knows of a centre with about 380 athletes attending each week and usually finishing in less than 3 hours while having optional walks and attempting to balance events then we would like to know about them.*

Saturdays drag out... u have other children that want to do other sport and can't cause this takes up most of our day.

*Yes, this is definitely a disadvantage of Little Athletics.*

Please be aware that the schedule on the day may need to change, please don't have any event empty for nearly an hour

*If, for example, we schedule 2 high jumps for a venue on a given day, then there will be a time where it is empty for a while. Trying to squish in an extra HJ (just because it is sitting empty for a while) may cause other groups to wait when they are ready for the event.*

I feel we need to make sure if we are competing on a Friday night that we are getting through the younger children as quickly as we can.

*This has always been our focus on a Friday night.*

I would prefer for competition to start at 9am on Saturdays. Makes it a lot easier for both parents and kids, especially if you have younger kids.

*Hmmm. This used to be the case, but we pushed the start earlier for various reasons. It would be hard to push the start back to 9am now, as we have a fair number of athletes that attend seniors in the afternoon. Many often have to miss an event to get to seniors as it is.*

Don't mind do long as it runs in time. Finishing after 9pm is far too late.

*Some of us can remember our kids being called to an event after 10:30pm, so it can be said that things have improved over the years.*

The person who dose the call outs need to start on time and not wait to long for the next event it gets boring for both families and kids.

*Agreed, however there are a number of factors that need to be in place for this to happen. The age group team managers have to be available and have picked up their folders. The events need to be ready to go.*

Get all the events in and get out ASAP

*Agreed.*

We just want the competition kept even, last season there were to many times that we were waiting for the boys under 10s when other groups were finished.

Have two groups of 8 boys running at the same time. So both groups do shot put at the same time instead group a first then group b sometimes there over an hour gap between events too long kids bored.

Great but some age groups are too big eg; under 8 boys. Need to be spilt into two groups with two managers.

*The larger groups are an issue, and the issue of splitting them is regularly discussed with the age group team managers in charge of those groups.*

It is impossible to satisfy everyone on any given day, so whatever the program is parents and children need to be aware that it will not suit them on a particular day and delays are part and parcel of getting through the day.

*Correct.*

## Track related

Q7: Why can't the track get done out of aths season???

*Little Aths is only one of a number of users of the facilities. While the timing may be disruptive to the Little Aths program, in the larger picture it is the least disruptive option.*

Q7: is Bundoora RMIT an option to run a Saturday competition?

*The report that we have received is that RMIT has only a 3 lane carpet fitness track, so it is not likely to meet our needs.*

Q7: Definitely not on a makeshift grass track Overall am very happy with WCLAC :-)

*There is a fair chance that the track will now be repaired instead of replaced, so the 2015/2016 season may not be affected.*

I wasn't happy with the makeshift discus 3 that was set up last year. To me it didn't feel as if it met athletic standards.

*It's true that it isn't as good a setup as the main discus locations, but it enables us to get through the program quicker so it is something we will have to live with.*

More emphasis should be put on placing athletes in heats that reflect their fastest times. It should be done at every race and not done on preferential choice of athlete. High Jump for the younger athletes should be upgraded. Otherwise great job - keep up the good work

*Agreed.*

## Other

Everyone as a whole, regardless of their position need to remember that little athletics are for the children first and foremost. Leave the petty arguments at the gate.

*Agreed.*

Committee members should only be elected if they have children participating at the centre.

*We need all the help we can get! There are currently unfilled positions at the centre level, so I don't think we want to increase this number by ruling out people with the desire to help us out and with time to commit to our centre.*

Very impressed with the devotion of the volunteers that help to keep the centre running, a lot of them don't even have children competing.

*Thank you! Maybe we need you to have a word with the person that wrote the previous statement...*

Training and coaching should be done at centre level not clubs with specialised coaches why do you think so many athletes train at alternative centres.

*This is being gradually implemented.*

We would like to be able to see the results of all the athletes

*What results are shown has been discussed regularly at a centre level. May don't want any results shown, some want the placegetters shown and some want all results available. Maybe this should be included as a question for the next survey...*

The centre needs to communicate with all clubs and families on what's going on give more info passed on

*Our principle method of communicating is through the centre newsletter, although important information may also appear on the website, Facebook and in Team App.*

My family has enjoyed our 1st season back at WCLAC after a long absence. We came back from another centre because of their Track work and couldn't commit to attending Saturday afternoon session because of other commitments. My daughter has fitted in with very nicely with all the Girls and they have made her feel more than welcome. Because of this we have decided to stay at WCLAC for the remaining of her little Aths Years.

*Great to hear! And we love having you here! 😊*

Overall running of the centre was great. Disappointed with my sons team and the lack of communication we received. The club results were never displayed in a timely manner. Coaching was poor from the club and didn't really focus on the younger children.

*Sounds like there is an opportunity to jump in and help out! The Centre and clubs are all run by volunteers, many of whom are stretched pretty thin. The centre has launched an initiative to offer training sessions for Parents as officials and as administrators. We ran a ranks and records session for clubs a few months ago that was well received and we look forward to extend the program and assist clubs in other ways.*

Looking forward to a new season with a new management group!!!! Also possible to bring back Open Day this season.

*Open day didn't make it in as we did not have a special events co-ordinator for a long time. We'll see if we can get it in next season.*