

# Australia's top trail runners take to kunanyi in hope of winning a "golden ticket"

**Saturday 23 March 2024**

Local Hobart mum and top trail runner, Maggie Lennox, showed some of Australia's elite trail runners just how it's done, with a stunning performance in the 25km event of this weekend's kunanyi Mountain Run.

She was joined by a strong contingent of Australia's elite trail runners, who took to the incredible trails of kunanyi/Mt Wellington, in the hope that a strong result would help them win a "golden ticket".

They were among around 350 runners who competed in the Mountain Run 25km event at the kunanyi Mountain Run (KMR) – one of 6 different races that are part of the 3-day trail running and mountain culture festival.

KMR is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year and has had its largest number of entries ever, with more than 900 runners registered to be compete in KMR's six races across the weekend, with around a third from interstate or overseas, including runners from the US, France, Norway and New Zealand.

Tait Hearps from New South Wales finished in a time of 2:11:51, beating the record set by Polish-born (and adopted Tasmanian) Piotr Babis in 2023.

Maggie Lennox led the whole time for the women, and finished in a time of 2:38:20, smashing the record set last year, and used her hometown (or rather, hometrail) advantage).

"I had a thoroughly wonderful time out there, it is my backyard and I love Hobart and I love our mountain. I loved every minute of it," the 31-year-old said.

"I was extremely nervous the last few nights, which is not quite like me. I wanted to come, and I wanted to race well, and I wanted to win."

But another Hobart local, Melanie Daniels, was close on her heels, and finished in a time of 2:47:54.

Tasmanian and former Australian of the Year Grace Tame also performed well, coming sixth.

Lennox now has eyes on the final races in New South Wales and Queensland.

The men's field was extremely competitive, with the top 10 finishers all from interstate. The top 6 men all finished within the previous course record.

"It was a lot of fun, it's a beautiful course," men's winner Tait Hearps said.

The Mountain Run 25km event was the second race of the inaugural Golden Trail National Series, powered by the global brand Salomon, which is being held in Australia for the first time, following its huge success internationally.

Just four events and locations (in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland) were handpicked to feature as Series races, in which Australia's elite trail runners compete for the opportunity to compete at the highest level globally.

Runners are vying for a "golden ticket", which is a fully-funded trip to Europe to compete amongst the world's best trail runners, at the Golden Trail World Series, later this year.

Salomon Australia's Peter Kouppas said the elite performances "matched Hobart's elite hospitality and landscape".

"These course records are testament to the elite athlete group here in Australia that's embracing this brand-new Series for the region," he said.



**SALOMON**

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**WILLIE SMITH'S**  
TASMANIAN



“The volume of elite athletes breaking the previous course record shows we’re ready to match the global standards.

“The level of engagement this weekend, from the runHub to the checkpoints out on the mountain, and the enthusiasm and professionalism of the volunteers, has really made this an elite event for the sport of trail running in Australia”.

kunanyi Mountain Run’s founder and Run Director, Lincoln Quilliam, said the quality of runners this year was impressive.

“We’ve had some very quick runners choose to run with kunanyi before, but this field was next level which made it a very exciting few hours and finish.

“But the large majority of our runners are actually here to experience the amazing diverse landscapes and awesome community that we have here in Hobart. We believe we provide a really unique experience that’s not seen anywhere else in Australia – or the world,” he said.

Records were also smashed in the other event of the day, the Ultra 66km Solo, which was won by Piotr Babis in a time of 7:14:12, and Patrician McKibbin in 8:39:50 for the women.

Babis beat the previous record by nearly 40 minutes, while McKibbin was around 45 minutes faster than the record set in 2022.

The festival continues on Sunday, with around 150 runners competing in the Foothills 9km event, Kids Runs and a range of mountain cultural activities at the runHub at Wellesely Park in South Hobart. The public is welcome to join in, and more information available at <https://www.kunanyimountain.run/>

**Photos and videos can be found [here](#), including the winners of the Mountain Run (at the finish line and also on course). Please use credits as supplied.**

**All 2024 results [here](#)**

**For more information or to arrange interviews, please call Catherine Graue on 0401 808 058. If you don’t reach her, please call Dave Lennon on 0447 375 155.**



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