

# MEDIA RELEASE



## HAT TRICK NICK? Melbourne runner takes aim at race record

Brunswick resident Nick Earl has his sights set on breaking a record at Puffing Billy's Great Train Race in May, running for his third win in a row – something that has never been achieved in the event's 38 year history.

Registrations are now open for the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Great Train Race, which will take place on Sunday 5 May 2019. Nick will join around 3,000 runners as they take to the Dandenong Ranges to race Puffing Billy to the finish line, negotiating one of the most unique courses on the Melbourne running circuit.

In 2018, Nick crossed the line in 42 minutes and 56 seconds, shaving 14 seconds off his 2017 winning time of 43 minutes and 10 seconds. He beat Puffing Billy train by over 10 minutes, with the train finishing in 53 minutes and 39 seconds.

Nick said completing the hat trick would be really special, especially in such an iconic race.

"I love the Dandenongs and holding the Great Train Race Champion title is definitely one of the most coveted on the Melbourne racing calendar," Nick said.

"The pressure will be on to secure my third win in a row. Local running legend Craig Appleby always runs well over those hills and has also won the race twice in the past. You can never underestimate him on his home turf."

"I've got some good preparation ahead of me. I'm heading to Japan in March to run the Lake Biwa marathon and have pencilled in the Canberra marathon in mid-April. Fingers crossed my legs will recover in time for the Great Train Race," he said.

Puffing Billy Railway Events Manager, Matt Collopy, said the Great Train Race presents unique challenges for runners.

"Despite the race being relatively short in distance at 13.5km, the three hill climbs in the first 10 kms certainly test the runners, with the final 3-4km being run at a fast pace on a soft, downhill trail," Matt said.

"Hearing Puffing Billy's whistle, but never knowing if you are ahead or behind the train creates an added layer of excitement among the runners as they traverse the varying landscape of bush terrain, sealed and dirt roads," he said.

The Great Train Race is one of the oldest and most popular events on the Australian running calendar, attracting competitive runners and to those who simply want to challenge themselves in a unique landscape.

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The Great Train Race is a major fundraiser for Puffing Billy Railway, which is a not for profit supported by over 600 volunteers.

## **EVENT DETAILS:**

**Date:** Sunday 5 May 2018  
**Time:** 9:30am Race Start – Bayview Road, Belgrave, Victoria  
Finish Line, Emerald Lake Park, Emerald.  
**Entries:** Early Bird registrations OPEN: 5 Feb – 1 Mar 2019  
Register online at [www.greattrainrace.com.au](http://www.greattrainrace.com.au)

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