

THE TORCHBEARER

NEWSLETTER 79 - Oct 2026



Committee:

Patron	Margaret Cochrane	
President	Jim Vallely	Tel 07 40532150
Vice President	Paul Eggers	Tel 0412 240 941
Secretary/Treasurer	Bill Cummings	Tel 0418 871 011
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President's Comments

Greetings once again Torchbearers and partners. It is with deep sorrow that I inform our Club members of the passing of two highly respected Torchbearers, one being John Lowe who travelled up from Innisfail on many occasions to our A.G.M. and Neville Crossley who reached the grand old age of 99. Our deepest sympathy goes out to both members' families.

On the local front, running events have been very popular this year with record numbers taking on the international Iron Man event followed by the Cairns Marathon a short time later.

We have our A.G.M. set down for Saturday the 7th of November. Afterwards we will celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the 1956 Olympic Torch Relay with lunch. As per the 60th anniversary, after lunch all will be invited to proceed to the 56er's monument on the Esplanade to have a photo taken. All members are welcome as it gives us a chance for a once a year get together.

Regards to all and keep the flame burning.

Kind regards
Jim Vallely
President



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

The Club's Annual General Meeting is to be held at the Cairns RSL on Saturday 7th of November 2026 followed by Lunch that will mark the **70th Anniversary of the 1956 Olympic Torch Relay**.

Please see following official Notice of AGM with Lunch RSVP and Proxy Forms.

MACKAY CELEBRATES 70th ANNIVERSARY: INVITATION

Attention all, torch runners, family members, or relatives & friends connected to the 1956 Olympic Torch Relay!

Join us for a special community gathering at the Mackay & District Senior Citizens Centre (58 MacAlister St, Mackay QLD 4740) in the Breezeway on Saturday, 14 November 2026, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm.

Come along to share stories, memories, photographs, medals and celebrate the legacy of the 1956 Torch Relay.

This is a community-organised event and is not associated with the Mackay Regional Council.

Thank you for all your help and I am looking forward to this day to hear all the stories.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on the numbers below.

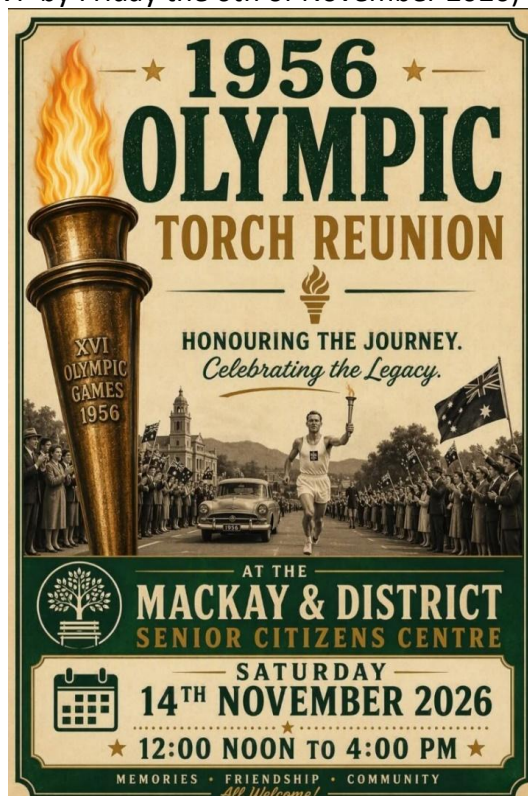
Kind regards

Mrs Majella Daley

Phone: [0417 162 005](tel:0417162005)

Email: jdandjel@internode.on.net

Location: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/SKdz3TkH21DchjLQA>
(RSVP by Friday the 6th of November 2026)



CAMERON MYERS

Cameron Myers is an Australian middle-distance runner born 9th June 2006, born, raised & based in Canberra. Widely regarded as one of the most remarkable distance-running prodigies in history, he first made headlines in February 2023 when he ran a **3:55.44 mile** at just 16 years old—beating Jakob Ingebrigtsen's (Norway) 16-year-old age-group mark and becoming the second-youngest person ever to break the sub-4-minute barrier.

- Jakob Ingebrigtsen **3:58.07** at age 16 years, 250 days
- Cameron Myers **3:55.44** at age 16 years, 259 days

How good is his current mile time?

- **Personal Best (Outdoor): 3:46.06** (set at Eugene).
- **Personal Best (Indoor / Short Track): 3:47.48.** (set in New York, Millrose Games)

He won the iconic **Bowerman Mile** at the Prefontaine Classic in Eugene, Oregon and the prestigious Wanamaker Mile in **New York City** at the Millrose Games. At just 20 years old, Cameron Myers holds **1st in world points rankings** and ranks **4th on time worldwide** for the mile 2026, firmly embedding him in the absolute top tier alongside global stars like Josh Kerr and Yared Nuguse.



Myers leading the open 3000 metres at the 2024 Zatopec Meeting in Melbourne.

Jakob Ingebrigtsen achievements:

- **Double Olympic Champion:** Won Olympic Gold in the **1500m at the 2020 Tokyo Games** (setting an Olympic record of 3:28.32) and Gold in the **5000m at the 2024 Paris Games**.
- **World Champion:** Two-time World Champion over **5000m** (Eugene 2022, Budapest 2023).
- **World Record Holder:** Holds world records across multiple distances, including the **outdoor 3000m (7:17.55)**, **outdoor 2000m (4:43.13)**, and **indoor 1500m / Mile**.

NQ Games Mackay



The Club once again sponsored the 1500 metre men's and women's events at the North Queensland Games held in Mackay May 1st to May 4th 2026 at the **Great Barrier Reef Arena (Harrup Park), South Mackay.**



Great Barrier Reef Arena (Harrup Park)

The morning of May 1st brought a sudden tropical downpour to Mackay, but it did little to dampen the spirits, gathering at Harrup Park later that day. The opening ceremony of the 2026 North Queensland Games generated an exciting community feeling. Accompanied by the steady beat of the Holy Spirit Drum Corps, hundreds of competitors marched into the arena, flanked by local sporting heroes **Tori West** and Olympic gold medallist for Beach Volleyball, **Natalie Cook**. When fireworks pierced the overcast night sky, four days of relentless regional rivalry officially began.



Club representative Bil Cummings with NQ Games Chairperson (Cairns Councillor) Rhonda Coghlan, wife Janet, and other representatives, North Queensland Games Opening Ceremony 2026.



Lighting of the Torch NQ Games 2026.



Club Representative Bill Cummings addressing the opening ceremony about the 1956 Olympic Relay and the 56er's Club games sponsorship.

Across the long weekend, venues from the Mackay Aquatic Recreation Complex to the regional sports grounds came alive. Down on the track, local sprint phenomenon **Damon Brown** from Mackay Athletics Club delivered one of the Game's signature individual moments. Slicing through the humid air in front of a hometown crowd, Brown claimed gold in both the Open 60-meter dash (6.90s) and the premier Open 100-meter final, stopping the clock at a blazing 10.79 seconds.



Club representative Bill Cummings with the open competitor winners donning their medals, holding their trophies and winnings after the presentations.

By May 4th, athletes started packing away boots, medals, and gear. For the thousands who competed and cheered, the 2026 NQ Games in Mackay were defined not just by shattered records, but by the quiet grit and undeniable passion of regional grassroots sport.

2026 North Queensland Games 1500 m Race Times

Boys 1500 m			
Dharman Singh	North Mackay Athletics	05:59.65	U12
Ethan Ford	North Mackay Athletics	06:31.98	U12
Thomas Burke	Mackay Athletics Club	06:44.96	U12
Ben Smith	Keppel Coast Athletics	05:49.22	U13
Perry Ryan	Central Queensland Athletics	06:11.27	U13
Sonny Moon	Mackay Athletics Club	04:59.82	U14
Harry Sleeman	Mackay Athletics Club	05:21.43	U14
Seth Armstrong	Emerald and Districts Athletic	04:31.64	U16
Men's 1500 m			
August Cole	Mackay Athletics Club	04:41.02	U18
Khobi Scanlon	Keppel Coast Athletics	04:26.95	U18
Nate McKinnon	Independent athlete	04:32.13	U20
Alex Shears-Jones	Townsville North Star Athletic	04:24.75	Open
Jared Mackie	Mackay Athletics Club	04:32.75	Open
Liam Mumford	Keppel Coast Athletics	04:52.18	Open
Andrew Pershouse	Independent athlete	04:28.07	Open+
Roland Henderson	Whitsunday Running Club	04:46.22	Open+
Girls 1500 m			
Harper Christison	Independent athlete	05:13.63	U13
Willow Kenny	Whitsunday Athletics Club	05:58.33	U13
Isabelle Hayles	Mackay Athletics Club	06:48.67	U13
Mikaela Thompson	North Mackay Athletics	07:06.06	U13
Maddison Ford	North Mackay Athletics	06:27.66	U14
Alexis Howell	Pace Running	05:12.58	U15
Alexis Wood	Cairns Road Runners	05:08.06	U16
Katie Noonan	Independent athlete	05:22.70	U16
Allegra Clarke	Emerald and Districts Athletic	05:25.93	U16
Women's 1500 m			
Bethany Moore-Kirkland	Darling Downs Athletics Club	05:01.27	U18
Niamh Rodney	Cairns Athletics Club	04:47.33	U20
Ayla Moon	North Mackay Athletics	04:45.52	Open
Millie Groom	Independent athlete	04:46.94	Open
Gail Mackie	Independent athlete	07:26.23	Open+

The NQ Games Men's 1500 m Trophy.



Past Winners Men's Open 1500 m Trophy

Year	Name	City	Time
2004	Wally Plath	Cairns	04:25.03
2006	Antonino Tucci	Mackay	04:35.52
2008	Anthony Craig	Townsville	03:59.28
2010	Mathew Hawke	Cairns	03:54.62
2012	Cameron Clayton	Mackay	04:23.42
2014	Liam Mumford	Townsville	04:07.50
2016	Josiah McCarthy	Cairns	04:17.81
2018	Josiah McCarthy	Cairns	04:32.52
2022	Harry Drovandi	Townsville	04:28.84
2024	Nicholas Fogale	Cairns	04:01.80
2026	Alex Shears-Jones	Townsville	04:24.75

The NQ Games Women's Open 1500 m Trophy.



Past Winners Women's 1500 m Trophy

Year	Name	City	Time
2008	Daina Surka		
2010	Isis Flyn-Pittar	Townsville	04:52.50
2012	Ashlee Scott	Mackay	05:19.57
2014	Montana McAvoy	Cairns	04:48.36
2016	Montana McAvoy	Cairns	04:37.74
2018	Elliana Mitchell	Townsville	05:08.99
2022	Emily Morden		04:37.83
2024	Kately McGee	Cairns	04:54.92
2026	Ayla Moon	Mackay	04:45.52

ANNIVERSARY MEMORIBILIA

Celebrating past anniversaries.



Members of the 56ers Torchbearers Club attending the 60th anniversary lunch with Olympian Jon Seiben (in pink shirt) at the Cairns R.S.L. November 2016.



Left to right- Don Lowe, Bill Cummings, Trevor Keeling, Jim Vallely, John Low, Bill Dickenson, Dennis Stevenson, Margaret Cochrane. Bottom row - Ross Cavallaro, Vern Tomasich. 55th anniversary lunch November 2011.

JOKES CORNER

Went to the bar tonight. Good times. Only a 15-minute walk. But the walk home took 45 minutes, the difference was staggering.

An older couple, well into their 70s, decided it was time to take their health more seriously, especially their memory. They booked an appointment at a renowned memory clinic.

The doctor ran them through a series of tests, puzzles, and recall exercises. Afterwards, he called them into his office to go over the results.

"Well," the doctor began with a smile, "Overall, you are both in remarkably good physical and mental shape for your age. However, to help preserve your short-term memory as you go about your daily lives, I strongly recommend that you start writing things down in a notebook."

The husband nodded thoughtfully, thanked the doctor, and they drove home.

Later that evening, they were sitting in the living room watching television when the husband stood up. "My dear," he said, "I'm feeling a bit peckish. Would you like anything from the kitchen? Maybe some ice cream?"

"Oh, that sounds wonderful!" his wife replied. "I'd love a bowl of vanilla ice cream with some hot fudge and whipped cream on top. But you know how your memory is—you should probably write it down so you don't forget."

The husband scoffed. "Nonsense! Ice cream, vanilla, hot fudge, whipped cream. I've got it completely locked in my head. I don't need to write that down!" He marched off toward the kitchen.

Twenty minutes later, the husband finally returned carrying a tray. He handed his wife a plate loaded high with a massive pile of scrambled eggs, two strips of crispy bacon and half a fried tomato.

His wife stared at the plate for a moment, looked up at him, and sighed.

"I knew you should have written it down," she said. "You forgot the toast."

I went to the doctor with a suspicious-looking mole. The doctor said, they all look that way and I should have left him in the garden.

My 14-year-old nephew, Felix, wanted to caddy for my brother's golf game. "You have to count my strokes," my brother told him. "How much is six, plus nine, plus eight?" "Fourteen" answered Felix. "Okay," my brother said, "Let's go!"



Kind Regards
Andrew Cummings



In January this year Mackay Historical Society has produced a feature story for their website (<https://www.mackayhistoricalsociety.com/>) on the 1956 Olympic Torch Relay. This has culminated in the following letter being produced in support for the 60th Anniversary 1956 Olympic Torch Reunion.

1956, Melbourne Olympic Games Torch Relay - Mackay Visit

<https://www.mackayhistoricalsociety.com/melbourne-olympic-games-torch-relay>



THE FIG
TREE

Planted by
Capt. John Mackay
at Greenmount, 1862.

**Mackay Historical
Society and Museum
Incorporated**

PO Box 1349
Mackay Qld 4740
mackayhistoricalsociety@gmail.com
www.mackayhistoricalsociety.com

Research Centre

Open Thursdays 10am – 2pm
4 Casey Avenue, Mackay

President: Danielle Jesser
Secretary: Margaret Tyerman
Treasurer: Helen Martin

22 September 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

The Mackay Historical Society fully support the application for a grant for the 70th Anniversary Reunion of the Torch Relay for the 1956 Olympic Games the organising committee is applying for.

We have recently researched and published on our website, the Mackay section of 1956 torch relay and this was a major event in 1956 in Mackay, involving qualifying races, dress rehearsal run with a replica torch, and was an important event in the district's history. As it has been 70 years, this could be the last chance for some of the people involved in 1956 to participate in a major anniversary.

All types of sports have always been an important part of Mackay's history, and it is important to preserve this history and remember and celebrate past events.

Yours Faithfully,

Margaret Tyerman
Honorary Secretary