

2023 Cradle Mountain Run – Report

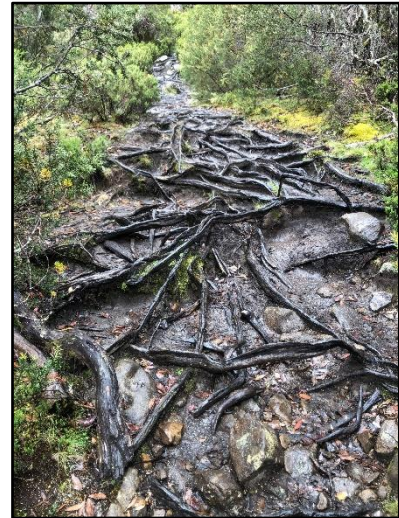
Barb Eastwood

I was very lucky on Saturday to participate in the Cradle Mountain Run in Tasmania with 55 other runners. The 80km single trail traverses the length of the Overland track, starting at Cradle Mountain and finishing at Lake St Clair.

You run through wild, beautiful and untouched World Heritage Areas, where you need to navigate through technical, rocky, steep, tree rooted tracks, where the mud sucks your shoes off, and the conditions are harsh.

We were lucky enough this year to be exposed to the joys of an unpredictable Tasmanian summer, with an Arctic front hitting the night before making the conditions very wet, cold, slippery and challenging! Unfortunately, due to the poor weather conditions, we were unable to see the iconic Cradle Mountain, Barn Bluff, Mt Ossa and other incredible landmarks (an excuse to go back and do it again!).

I wore my thermals, raincoat and gloves and was still cold! My fingers were numb making it hard to open up the zips and pockets on my pack to grab nutrition or take many photos.



Unlike other runs I've done there is no opportunity to see a support crew or loved ones where they can look after you, give you food, drink and motivation. On this race you are in remote wilderness where you fill up your water from rivers and carry everything you need on your back for the duration of the run. There is also an extensive list of mandatory equipment you need to carry, on the off-chance you get injured and need to survive the elements overnight before being rescued! I was not used to carrying such a heavy load which was made all the more challenging when the straps on my pack broke and I had to hold and carry my pack across my chest for another 7 hours!

I had to dig deep to tackle this run. I ran a majority of the run by myself, as the field quickly spread out and I found myself in last position for the first 6+ hours of the run. That played a bit on my mind as I questioned my ability but then I redirected my energy to the task ahead and remembered my Hubbie telling me to embrace the journey. I finally came across another runner and we ran and chatted together for quite a while which helped pass the kilometres away, and ride the highs and lows.

This run was something I had dreamt about doing for years and finally set my mind and my training on experiencing this year. And what an incredible, unique, inspirational adventure it was from the get-go. The race director and crew were so welcoming, the other runners were friendly - many have completed the run multiple times (with one guy doing it 18 times) - were also so humble and willing to share knowledge and insights, and the volunteers battled the conditions to ensure we got to the finish line!

My incredible husband Stephen Eastwood flew in on the day and drove to Lake St Clair to celebrate and cheer me on in the rain as I crossed the finish line 14 hours and 11 minutes after starting.

To participate in these events takes massive support from family to allow you the time and opportunity to train, buddies to run with and chat with about all things running, friends and colleagues who pretend to listen to you endlessly chat about running, a daughter who challenges you that you can go on a holiday and not go running 😊, an incredible crew at Bayside Therapy Group who keep me mobile by massaging away my aches and pains, and YOU... especially if you have read this far!

So thankyou!

My heart is full, my legs are throbbing and my Cradle Mountain dream has come true!

Xx - Barb Eastwood



Me with fellow VUR Matt Crehan

