

THE POETRY OF THE CRADLE MOUNTAIN RUN 2025

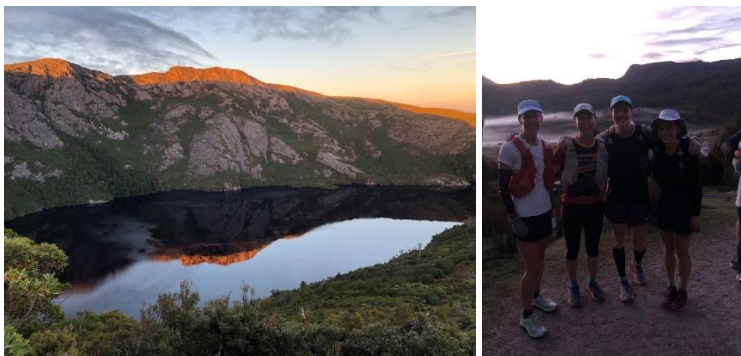
I stand once more at the start line of my favourite event – Cradle Mountain Run,
A mixture of nerves, excitement and joy inside,
For Cradle has called me back again,
To run through its mountains and valleys, so scenic and wide.

Two years ago an arctic freeze cut deep,
Rain and fog clouded the views of Cradle from my sight,
I battled through cold and freezing conditions,
Vowing to return to run it again, this time without frostbite!

Last year I ran it with my friend Ngan on a perfect sunny day,
The sun shone and views stretched as far as we could see,
We stopped for photos, laughed and talked,
But missed the 60km cut-off by 3 minutes, painfully.

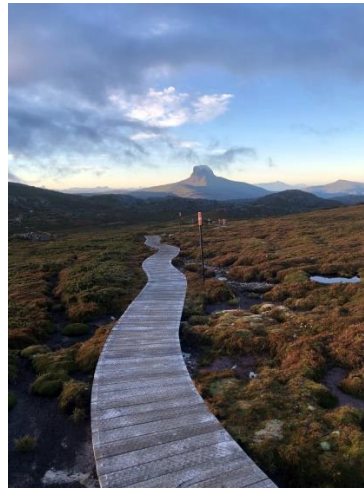
Yet here I am, the third time round,
This wild terrain and world heritage area keeps calling out to me,
I love the challenge of the rugged, raw, exposed and vast landscape,
A place of beauty, so wild and free.

On the bus from Launceston to Cradle the runners swapped insights,
Of technical trails and which streams are best to drink,
Connecting with old friends and making new ones too,
We shared our hopes for the run, our anticipation in sync.



It was a sleepless night before the morning finally came,
At roll call I felt all the mandatory gear weighing heavily on my back,
As my Garmin watch struck 6am we fell in line,
Taking our first steps upon the boardwalk to start the Overland track.

A long day of 80 kilometres lay ahead,
The sun rose and through the mist Cradle came into view,
I ran along boardwalks, and hiked over rocks and tangled roots,
Taking an unsteady trip or two.



The other runners seemed to float with ease,
Like mountain goats, they pulled away,
The heat started to set in as I scooped up water from the streams,
To keep hydrated, fight the cramps, and last the day.

Past Barn Bluff and Mount Ossa I continued on,
Passing hikers who cheered me by,
No time to chat for the dreaded cut-off loomed,
So onward I ran, telling my tired legs to comply.



At 35kms I hit the first checkpoint at my target time,
I quickly refuelled and put on my headphones to listen to a song,
I encountered four large tiger snakes upon the trail,
A rush of fear surged through my body and spurred me quickly on.

At 60km I reached the checkpoint with 14 minutes to spare,
After close to 11 hours exhaustion and nausea were taking their toll,
I felt deflated that the winners had finished hours and hours before,
Yet I still pressed on with a determined heart and soul.

The final 18km stretch along Lake St Clair,
Is like Narnia's woods, the trail twisting left and right,
Each step was now very slow but brought me closer,
To cross the finish line before it got to night.

As I got close to the finish area I expected no-one to still be there,
Yet I heard cowbells and cheers from so many runners who had finished long before,
They stayed to see me beat that cut off and claim that finish,
Their support and camaraderie made my spirits soar.

My husband flew from Melbourne to see me finish,
Caroline, another runner, embraced me, our happy tears shone bright,
I was relieved to get to the finish line I'd visualised over the past year,
I thanked the runners for staying to cheer me on before retiring for the night.



With morning came a shared breakfast, although I had no appetite,
We swapped stories as we collected our wooden medals with smiles that we had got it done,
Then off to Bruny Island, Steve and I ventured for 3 days,
To rest, to eat, to swim, to relax and have some well earned fun.

The Cradle Mountain Run is a unique event I would highly recommend,
It not only tests your strength but shapes your soul and mind,
It challenges you with every stride,
Leaves you with new friendships and memories that last a lifetime.

