

Cradle Mountain Run 2025 Report By Adam Harper

February 2025 saw me complete my #3 Cradle Mountain Run (CMR). Here is my story about the run.

Entry into CMR is limited to only 60 runners and sells out within 3 minutes! You have to be quick lodging your entry and must qualify by completing certain events to be accepted into the run.

I meet my fellow runners who have journeyed up from Hobart, and runners from the Launceston area, who decide to take the bus on the Friday for the 2 hour journey to Cradle Mountain. A mandatory gear check is performed before boarding which I pass. I have refined my packing system which makes this process a lot easier and quicker. A quick 25 minute stopover at Sheffield, then it's onto the Cradle Visitor Centre for a changeover of smaller buses. A list is passed around indicating who is staying at the huts at Waldheim. I'm pleased to find that I'm staying in a small hut with 3 others. We drop off all our baggage at the allocated huts, then it's back to Peppers Lodge for race debriefing and tea. I load up on a potato pizza and a pint of beer for extra carbs. I enjoy listening to the race debrief. Keith, the race coordinator, does a fantastic job, with his no-nonsense approach and sense of humour.



After dinner, everyone else catches the buses back to the huts but I decide to walk the 7 km back to Waldheim, to put my mind at ease and be in my own space. On my walk back I have time to think and plan out my race strategy. Race day is predicted to be hot, so I need to be clever with my race strategy. My goal is to run a time of around 10.30 -1045. I decide to start the run on the conservative side, not too slow, but not too quick. I want to take advantage of the cooler running conditions earlier on, knowing it's going to get very warm as the day progresses. But I don't want a repeat of last year where I went out too fast, didn't drink enough water, battled severe cramping and paid the price.



When I return back to the hut I pack my running vest. I check and recheck that everything is there. Any runner caught not carrying their mandatory gear gets their name put on the blacklist and is never allowed to return! A thorough mandatory gear check at the finish line ensures everyone is doing the right thing. I decide to sleep in my running clothes as this will be one less thing I have to do in the morning. I'm definitely not a morning person so a few extra minutes of rest is good. My fellow roommates decide on a 5 am alarm ready for the 6 am start.

I have a shocking night's sleep, maybe 3 hours in total. I always tend to think of the worst possible scenarios, like rolling an ankle, breaking a leg, and God forbid being helicoptered out! I have a banana, energy bar and drink, then it's off to the start line for the 5:45 roll call. After this I do some brief stretches and a jog, then it's back to the start line for the final roll call. The morning is nice and crisp, with a blanket of fog in the lower valley. Keith, the race director, counts us down and casually says "Off you go".



The faster runners lead off. I decided to slip in around the 15th position. The start of the run is a nice gentle descent on a narrow duckboard. This allows me to fall into a rhythm early and clear my nerves. The climb up Marion's is short and sharp, and I turn around briefly to catch a glimpse of the stunning sunrise. I notice that I'm already dripping sweat off the peak of my hat with the accent up past Kitchen Hut. I don't feel hot and the conditions are ideal for running. I take on more fluids with this in mind. I catch up to some other runners and they somehow know that I'm aiming for around 1030-1045 hours. They fall behind me and I'm pacing them for a short time. They need to refill their water, so I keep running and don't see them again.



I make it into Pelion, the first checkpoint in a time of 4:10 and feeling great. I'm taken aback by the efficiency of the wonderful volunteers, who offer to refill my water and offer me a cup of coke, which I drink quickly. It's starting to get warm, so I quickly apply sunscreen and start running again.



I run by myself for quite a long time. I make it up Pelion Gap. The views from the top are amazing and the run down from this point is really fun. I eventually see another runner ahead and realise it's the legendary John Cannell, who is competing in his 16th event. We chat briefly and he informs me we've just passed the half-way point. He also comments that I'm moving well. It's a huge confidence booster. We both mention how warm it's getting. John lets me pass. I notice there's some salt crusting forming on my top, so I decide to ease up a bit and chew on some pure salt flakes. I stop at every available creek and water source to refill my flasks and soak my hat.

The climb up Du Cane Gap is a hard slog. I'm happy to see the end, as the second checkpoint, Windy Ridge, is not far away. I pass through Windy Ridge at the 52Km mark in 6:55. I find a small creek and bend down to refill my water. As I stand back up and commence running, my entire hamstring locks up and puts a stop to any progress. After a brief moment of panic, I gulp down a handful of salt, which gives instant relief. I'm absolutely relieved that I can run again, so I continue forward. The final checkpoint, Narcissus Hut, is 10 Km away.



It's a great feeling arriving at Narcissus Hut. Any runner that can't make the 5:00 pm deadline must catch the ferry to Cynthia Bay. I swipe my card into the reader and I arrive in a time of 8:17. Again the great volunteers offer to refill my water and I gulp down another cup of coke. The amount of march flies buzzing around is intense. I have a piece of watermelon and away I go. Only 17.5 km to the finish line, or watering hole as Keith says in his race brief.

The trek around Lake St Clair can be touted as tortuous. Most hikers completing the Overland Track opt to take the ferry out. Last year I barely managed to walk suffering from severe cramping and dehydration. I feel good mentally, but physically I'm getting tired. I reach Echo Point with only 10Km to the finish. I catch up to another runner, a young lady who is doing extremely well. It turns out that we were less than 1 minute apart at each checkpoint during the entire run. We chat for about 4 Km which helps pass the time.

We reach the Watersmeet bridge with only 1.3 Km to go. I have energy reserves left so I decide to sprint to the finish line. I can hear the cow bells ringing in the distance and can see the spectators cheering and clapping. I see my wife Lisa, and my daughter Chloe, who cheer me on to the finish line. I swipe my card into the reader and touch the Overland Track

sign in a finishing time of 10:48, 14 minutes faster than last year. I'm escorted to a shady table for a final gear check.



I'm totally spent but still have the runners high. I walk over and stand in Lake St Clair which wasn't cold enough this year. I'm grateful for my wife Lisa, allowing me to run in an event like this. All the training and preparation for this run takes up a lot of time. I'm also grateful to be a part of the 59 other runners who get to run through some of the most amazing scenery in the world. Thanks to the CMR committee and the volunteers who put on this 45th annual world-class event.