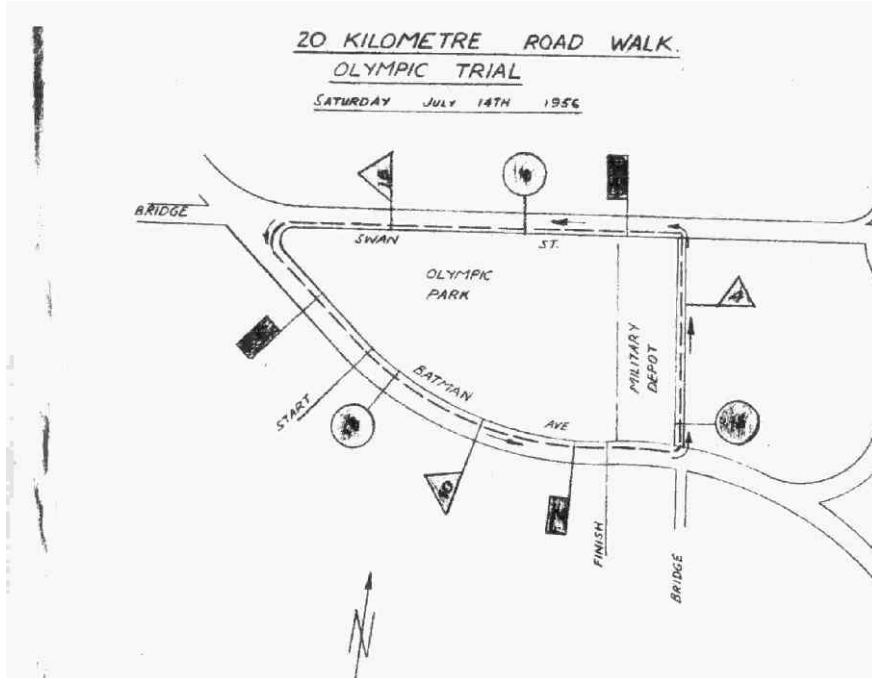


1956 AUSTRALIAN OLYMPIC 20 KM TRIAL, SAT 14 JULY 1956, MELBOURNE

The Amateur Athletic Union of Australia chose Saturday 14th July as the date for the trial to select the 20 km contestants for the 1956 Olympics. Since the Games would be held in Melbourne, the venue was obvious – a shortened version of the projected Games course in inner Melbourne, on the bitumen sealed roads and footpaths encircling Olympic Park. The following map shows the route taken by the walkers.



The race started at 2:33PM and was conducted by the Road Events Sub-Committee of the Olympic Games, for the Victorian Amateur Athletics Association. The first 3 placings would have a very strong case for Olympic selection and all the top walkers were in attendance.



Don Keane and Ted Allsopp, the two top 20 km walkers, in a track event in the early 1950's

The two top walkers for the past 4-5 years had been Ted Allsopp and Don Keane and they did not disappoint, clearing out early and definitively taking the first two places. In fact, Allsopp's time was a new Australian and Victorian best ever time for the distance. But the battle for third place was wide open and young Victorian rising stars Harry Summers and Bob Gardiner looked set to battle it out at the 10 km mark, slightly in front of Ray Smith and Norm Read and well clear of anyone else. As the others faded slightly, Harry looked to have it sewn up by the 16 km mark but he did not

bank on NSW walker Ron Crawford who finished like a steam train, overtaking him in the last 1 km and ultimately taking third place, 17 seconds ahead of him.

For Harry, it was a devastating blow and it would not be until 1981, when in cold windy conditions at Fishermans Bend in Melbourne, he finished 3rd in the Australian 50 km title in 4:33:11 that he made his first Australian team for the 1981 Lugano Cup team, He rates this selection as the "*personal highlight of my career*". He was the oldest athlete, at 46, to represent Australia. He had finally gained his first international selection after 29 years of competitive walking.

In the trial, 17 year old Noel Freeman had come 9th in 103:00, a best ever Victorian Junior time but well outside contention. But only weeks later, he recorded a fantastic 20 km track time of 1:36:47, nearly 1 minute faster than Ron Crawford's third place time finish. There was some discussion about whether Freeman or Crawford should be awarded the third Olympic 20 km walk berth but the selectors went with Ron and Noel had to wait a further 4 years for his chance.

1.	Edward Allsopp	W'Town	9:14	18:32	27:58	37:30	46:50	56:03	65:20	74:34	84:18	94:26.6
2.	Don Keane	G'Huntly	9:14	18:32	27:38	36:45	45:59	55:14	64:40	74:20	84:34	95:26.0
3.	Ron Crawford	NSW	9:19	19:09	29:33	39:28	49:34	59:30	68:59	78:42	88:22	97:52.0
4.	Harry Summers	Preston	9:14	18:37	28:23	38:20	48:16	57:56	67:49	77:48	87:52	98:09.6
5.	Robert Gardiner	C'wood	9:20	18:58	28:50	38:36	48:16	58:02	68:05	78:15	88:10	98:29.0
6.	Ray Smith	Coburg	9:29	19:12	28:55	38:42	48:39	58:36	68:48	78:59	89:13	99:33.6
7.	Norm Read	NZ	9:14	18:54	28:37	38:31	48:30	58:34	68:45	78:59	89:34	100:25.2
8.	Les Hellyer	B'wick	9:26	19:34	29:40	39:48	50:03	60:27	71:02	81:37	92:08	102:27.7
9.	Noel Freeman	F'cray	9:17	18:50	28:50	38:52	48:59	59:11	69:36	80:15	91:19	103:00.8
10.	Tom Daintry	QLD	9:33	19:32	29:54	40:23	51:06	61:30	72:06	83:13	94:35	106:21.2
11.	Eddie Folland	SA	9:32	19:32	29:33	39:28	49:34	59:34	70:09	81:04	93:40	109:39.0
12.	Harry Tetlow	NZ	10:34	21:33	32:33	43:36	54:45	66:02	77:23	89:00	101:14	114:49.4
13.	Ted Edwards	NSW	9:38	20:17	30:35	40:59	51:25	61:45	72:25	85:48	100:50	116:06.5
	Dave Melzer	QLD	9:14	19:01	29:20	39:46	50:30	61:30	73:35	Retired		
	Colin Frazer	P. House	9:38	20:17	30:48	42:08	53:32	64:31	Retired			
	C. Walker	NSW	9:30	19:34	29:33	39:46	50:07	61:33	Retired			
	Bernie Cloughton	W'town	9:59	20:25	31:29	42:41	54:13	Retired				
	Harry Larchin	R.A.A.F	9:37	19:54	Retired							
	L. (Peter) Waddell	NSW	Retired									

Scratched: D. Thomson (NZ) and E. Kirby (NSW)