



Star (Greater Dandenong)

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Braveheart

By Nicole Williams

A HEART attack nearly cost Greg White his life after last year's Melbourne Marathon but the Dandenong school principal couldn't wait to pull the sneakers on again this year.

Mr White, who is principal of St Mary's Primary School, suffered a severe heart attack only 30 minutes after completing the Melbourne Marathon last year and was lucky to survive.

A year later, not only was he back - he recorded a personal best time.

"I walked outside the MCG and had a cardiac arrest," the 57-year-old remembered.

"I hit the ground like a sack of potatoes and have no memory of it at all."

"It was a silent heart attack - there were no symptoms."

Mr White was lucky it was a busy area, with two doctors and the St John Ambulance nearby - who literally saved his life.

"The bottom line is I wouldn't be here without St John Ambulance and those people who assisted me at the time."

He had blockages in the four main arteries to the heart and required a quadruple bypass.

But even that did not deter him from trying to beat his time in Sunday's Melbourne Marathon.

He underwent a rehabilitation program, including walking and cycling, to get back into shape and quickly started running again.

"I was quite determined to run the half marathon again, if I could," he said.

"When I had my six-monthly check-up, I asked what the possibility would be and the doctors said I was sitting well and there was no reason why I couldn't."

Mr White was in such good shape that he beat last year's time, of two hours and six minutes to record a personal best.

"It went really well," he said.

"I did the 21 kilometres in one hour and 59 minutes which is a bit quicker than last time."

After completing the race, St John Ambulance organised a reunion with those who helped Mr White a year earlier - and they helped fill in the blanks of what happened.

"We had a reunion and it was excellent," he said.

"I didn't realise until later that it was pretty traumatic for them too."

For one of the people who treated him, a 19-year-old medical student, it was his first revival.

"I didn't realise the degree of impact I had on him," Mr White said.

"He was a good guy - he said I had good veins!"

Mr White said he needed to thank the volunteers from St John Ambulance and the hospital staff who helped him recover.

"St John Ambulance are the silent

heroes who just go about their work at major events and are just there when people need them," he said.

"I will always remember the people who helped me."

Ironically a man also suffered a heart attack after Sunday's marathon only 20 metres from the spot Mr White collapsed a year earlier.

He was resuscitated and is recovering well.



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Greg White thanks St John volunteer Dr Iain Nicolson for saving his life after last year's Melbourne Marathon.