

Man's 162km grind for charity

A run for other lives

A one-time 100kg father wants to save kids from cancer, **Kirsty Ross** reports

A MIDDLE-AGED man who until recently weighed more than 100 kilograms will next year attempt to run 162 kilometres in 24 hours passing through Newport, Williamstown and Altona.

The Keilor man hopes to raise more than \$25,000 for young people living with cancer.

Brett Saxon, the western suburbs' own Forrest Gump, only recently developed a "real passion" for running long distances, a transformation he finds hard to explain after having never previously been interested in running.

The 41-year-old hopes to complete the extraordinary run – equivalent to four marathons in one day – for CanTeen on 29 March 2008.

The run starts in Keilor Village on the Old Calder Hwy and finishes in the byside village of Indented Head on the Bellarine Peninsula.

Two years ago the 175cm tall father-of-three was heading for a fall.

"In general I was pretty unhappy with what I saw and how I felt, I always felt tired and had little energy," Mr Saxon said.

Working long hours at his electronic security business in Eltham, eating badly and shunning exercise, Mr Saxon decided he needed a change.

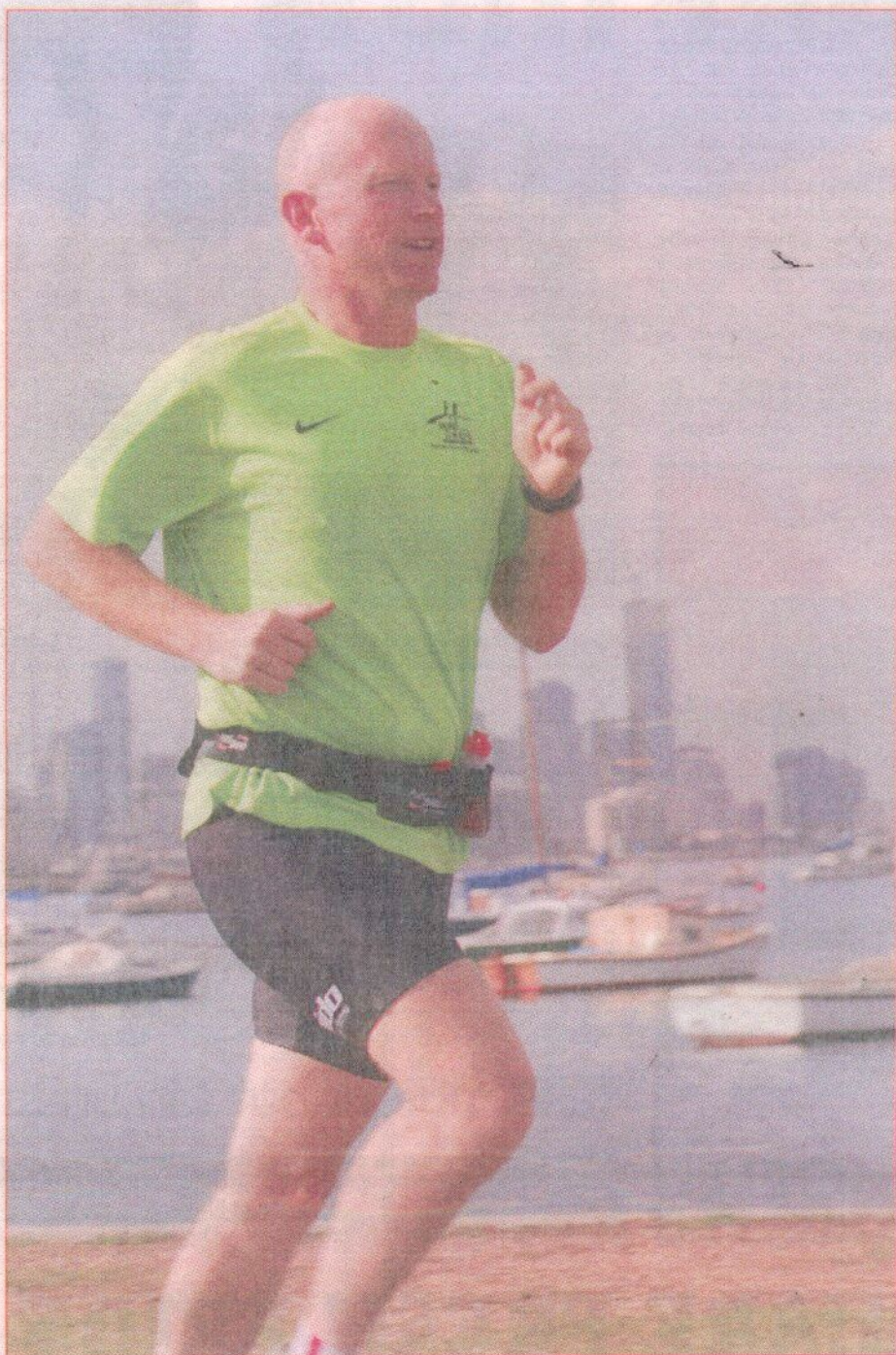
The first month or so was restricted to cycling to avoid injuries, then he gradually tried swimming and running short distances.

"I started feeling a little more energetic and happier with life in general after a few months of training."

Nowadays Mr Saxon is not only about 30 kilograms lighter, he has also competed in five 10km Olympic Dream runs, several half marathons, several 20-55km training runs, and his first full Melbourne Marathon last year.

And just over a month ago he undertook one of the toughest team challenges in the world – the 100km Oxfam Trailwalker – in extreme heat during the day and wet, freezing conditions overnight.

Mr Saxon believes the single defining point



Passionate... Brett Saxon in training on the Williamstown foreshore for the run that will take him from his Keilor home, through Williamstown, to Geelong and beyond.

Picture: GLEN CAMPBELL.

for his running so far has been an inspirational book, *Ultra Marathon Man*, by Dean Karnazes, given to him by his sister Kylie, in 2005.

"Until I read his book, I thought 10km to 15km runs were about my limit," he said.

"It's funny how small things can achieve big results. For instance my sister for giving me Dean's book, our local fruit and vegie man Pat who supplies our fresh fruit and vegetables and his encouragement and support through giving me a training program that got me through my first marathon."

Mr Saxon said that even his neighbours support and encourage him when he is out training.

And he said he couldn't do without his family who patiently support his new addiction, despite

the time-consuming nature of juggling his priorities. "I don't have any children with cancer or know anyone know anyone close with cancer, but my heart is very much touched when I see stories about young cancer patients," he said.

Mr Saxon is training between five and seven days a week, and seeking corporate and individual sponsorship.

His greatest fear is suffering an injury that will render him unfit to carry out this dream.

But if all goes to plan, Mr Saxon in true Forrest Gump-style will pound the pavement with followers who are already promising to run legs of the course behind him.

If you are interested in finding out more about the run raising money for young people living with cancer, see www.brettsrunforcanteen.org.