

Series AMBASSADOR – Hilary McAllister

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself?

Hello! My name is Hilary and I am super excited to be one of the ambassadors for the Trail Running Series presented by MINI.

I'm 30 years old, currently living at my parent's farm in Dja Dja Wurrung country in North Western Victoria. Pre Covid-19 I was working as an Event Designer in Melbourne and now I'm helping out on our family's regenerative farm.

I miss the diverse people, food and coffee of Brunswick, but am very thankful to have plenty of projects to keep me busy and space to roam during this period of lockdown.



2. What is your favourite trail running location and why?

I grew up spending summer holidays in Wadawurring Country on the Surf Coast and still love getting down there to soak up the beauty of the expansive ocean, towering cliffs and scrubby bushland. One run can encompass so many different landscapes and there is a bounty of trails to choose from; there is always somewhere to explore regardless of the weather. The trails around Aireys Inlet amongst my favourite and I always try to do my bit to keep them clean for others and the local wildlife by picking up any rubbish along the way.

3. Have you done the Trail Running Series before and if yes what do you love about it?

I've been following the Trail Running Series for years but have never committed to taking part; excuses such as 'not enough time' and 'not fit enough' have plagued me for too long! In the last six months I've fallen in love with trail running and the amazing community around it and am excited to be involved this year. I am so grateful for events such as these that are pushing forward despite the Covid-19 restrictions. With so much uncertainty around races resuming, I need some virtual events on the calendar to hold me accountable and stay motivated!

4. How is your training going, anything to pass on to others? How have you been training through the Social Distancing measures?

I'm lucky enough to have endless gravel roads to explore and have thrown myself into training. Running allows me some alone time and personal space while being sequestered with my family! I've overdone it a bit though and am negotiating a few potentially injuries, so am trying to mix it up by adding more strength work and cross training. I'm also taking the time to learn more about recovery and rest through online tutorials and podcasts as it will benefit my training and performance long term.

5. What inspires you to run? Why do you do it?

I've always been a keen hiker and after completing a couple of Oxfam 100-kilometre walking events I decided to pick up the pace a bit and get into trail running. I love being outdoors, whether it be to decompress after a day at work or to explore a National Park on the weekend.



The more running I do, the more I am able to find that 'flow state' and really enjoy it, as I focus less on the mechanics and lose myself in my surroundings, thoughts or an engaging podcast.

Trail running has also become a tool for me to tackle longer trails such as overnight hikes, but as a day trip. There are so many amazing mountains, lakes, rivers and gorges that I want to visit and running allows me to take in more with the limited time I have to spend outdoors.

6. You obviously give great consideration to the environment and the earth's sustainability. Why is this important to you and what can we all do to help?

Trail running is a unique sport as it requires as little infrastructure and equipment as possible – the more natural and wild your surroundings, the better! You can do it anywhere, and there are always trails to be found, whether it be along the suburban creeks of Melbourne or in State and National Parks.

Being out amongst nature allows you to witness the impacts human are having on these ecosystems, from individual impacts such as littering to the long-term effects of climate change such as fire and erosion. The more time spent on your local trails, the more you will notice the little changes, whether they be seasonal or man-made.

Feeling a connection to these wild places makes you want to protect them, and more people engaged and taking action in protecting these fragile ecosystems, the better!



7. Can you describe your most memorable run

Earlier this year I participated in takyana Ultra, a 65km race through the takayna/Tarkine region of north-western Tasmania. The event was supported by the Bob Brown Foundation and all participants raised money to help protect the ancient old growth forests against unnecessary logging. The day of the event was wet, wild and windy however nothing could dampen the spirits of the volunteers and runners along the trail.

The feeling of unity and passion for protecting wild places made the leg cramps and numb fingers bearable! The event demonstrated the amazing influence a group of people that are passionate about trail running can have on protecting vulnerable places and inspires me to get more people connected to nature through trail running.

8. What is your favourite post-race food?!

Firstly, an entire watermelon, followed by salt and vinegar chippies!