

## 200 at Pelaw Main.

Two Hundred enthusiastic participants turned out to the tiny hamlet of Pelaw Main, a satellite of the Hunter Valley town of Kurri Kurri, to contest the first of the 2010 Sydney Series events and the concurrently run fifth event in the local Newcastle Orienteer of the Year series. They were greeted by magnificent weather, a welcome alternate to the damp and cold conditions originally predicted during the preceding week.

This was the first foot-O to be contested in this compact area, and only the second orienteering event ever, the first being a MTBO event held during the summer months. This ensured competitors would have little prior knowledge of the terrain they were about to enter. The area certainly provides it's own challenges with a few having trouble with the flatter, less defined areas on the map.

Newcastle elite, Steven Todkill, certainly wasn't one of those, racing around the 7.4 km Long Red/Red1 course in 47 minutes flat, over 5 minutes clear of the next challenger. Karen Blatchford (NCN) was fastest woman over that distance.

Recent Big Foot signing, Eoin Rothery, showed that his massive transfer fee was warranted with an even greater winning margin, over 8 minutes in the 5.5 km Red2 category.

Local runners dominated the Middle Red/Red3 course with Uringa's Dave Lotty being the only Sydney Series competitor to break into the top 10.

After a few years absence from the scene, recently returned Gavin Doyle (NCN) has proven he has lost nothing in the navigation department being fastest over the 3.0 km Short Red/Red 4. Legend Men's, Barry Hanlon (WHN) was a very respectable third placing with Legend Women's Angela Murray (URN) very close behind him in 4th.

Scott Charlton (NCN) was quickest over the 3.4 km Orange, with Aiden Dawson (GON) the fastest of the Sydney juniors. Luke Robinson (NCN) was successful on the 2.5 km Short Orange while Bigfoot's Sam Wilkinson had a relatively easy win on the 2.3 km Green.

The 1.6 km Blue was taken out by Mark Wild (NCN) with Joanna Hill (GON) the best of the Sydney juniors.

Overall the feedback was very positive and while this area was originally considered to be only of use for a Newcastle Club event, it was suggested by many that it would certainly be a great area for a Middle distance style State League in the future.

Many thanks go to the many Newcastle members that helped out with this event, too many to name individually, but mention must be made of mapper and course

setter Denis Lyons and also Greigor Scott who spent many hours out in the field checking and placing controls and offering Denis great assistance and backup.

This event may now be over but there will be no time for a rest as our club has only one month before our State League double header in late July. Expect a rallying call from the organisers very shortly as once again we expect to host a top quality orienteering experience to the punters. See you all there!