

EMERSON'S DUNEDIN MARATHON

AMBASSADORS GRANT

2026

We are seeking enthusiastic novice runners who wish to push their passion and ability further through a controlled mentorship programme. To qualify, you will have completed a 10k event or, simply enjoy running and are eager to discover your full potential. Applicants should demonstrate a strong commitment to the sport, a willingness to grow, and the drive to embrace new challenges.

Mel Aitken brings a wealth of experience, determination, and leadership to her mentorship role. An ultrarunner and marathoner, boasting a 2:47 marathon personal best and representing New Zealand at elite distance events, she has proven not just her athletic calibre, but the resilience and discipline required to reach the top.

Mentorship by Mel means more than just running advice, it's about nurturing holistic growth: cultivating self-discipline, goal-driven mindsets, and resilience so mentees can unlock and sustain their athletic and personal potential.

The successful applicant will have access to a grant fund of up to \$2,000. Day-to-day expenditure will be managed by the appointed ambassador, with all spending subject to final approval by the marathon committee.

If you would like to be the first recipient of the Ambassadors Grant please see below criteria and send applications to; racedirector@dunedinmarathon.co.nz

Applications are open and close Friday 3rd April 2026

Eligibility Criteria

1. Residency

- Must be a resident of [region/country].

2. Experience Level

- Has completed at least one organized running event (e.g., 5K or 10K) **OR** demonstrates a consistent interest in running (e.g., regular training, local group runs).

3. Commitment to Progress

- Shows a desire to train for longer distances (half marathon or marathon) within the next 12 months.
- Willing to engage in mentorship sessions and share progress.

Selection Criteria

1. Passion & Motivation

- Personal statement about why they love running and what they hope to achieve.

2. Growth Potential

- Clear goals for the next year (e.g., first half marathon, improving endurance).

3. Financial Need

- \$2,000 will go towards race entry fees, some travel costs, shoes, coaching, nutrition and other items at the discretion of the Ambassador.

4. Community Spirit

- Interest in inspiring others (e.g., sharing their journey on social media or local running groups).

Program Expectations

- Be willing and enthusiastic about the programme and attend mentorship sessions.
- Submit short progress updates (monthly or quarterly), that will be posted on Emerson's Dunedin Marathon Social Media pages.
- Participate in at least two organized events during the program, including the Emerson's Dunedin Marathon on 13th September 2026