



ON THE RUN: Kristen Wyatt has fond memories of running in Japan, the prize awaiting two local runners this weekend.

Photo: REG RYAN

Scenery makes for road worth travelling

BRADLEY GREEN

KRISTEN Wyatt fondly remembers her experiences at the 2006 Senshu International Marathon in Japan.

"It was one of the most amazing experiences of my life," Wyatt said yesterday.

"The crowd was huge and you were treated really well."

The Ocean Grove runner was chosen to represent the City of Greater Geelong and was actually the second female across the line in a time of two hours and 55 minutes from a field of about 4500 runners.

"I just remember that throughout the whole race I

wasn't focused on the pain or how far it was because you had people cheering you all the way.

There was just thousands of people lining the course, which was great. The marathon is one part of it but experiencing the people and culture and the scenery is an amazing experience."

A trip to next year's Senshu marathon is on offer for the first female and male City of Greater Geelong resident in this Sunday's 45km Great Ocean Road Marathon between Lorne to Apollo Bay.

Unfortunately, Wyatt is not eligible to win the prize this year because the rules stipulate it must be at least seven

years since a runner has represented Geelong in Japan.

Instead the 31-year-old — who is contesting the full Great Ocean Road marathon for the first time — said she was focusing on her time and using the race to give her a solid fitness base for other events later in the year.

"I had some time off last year where I went away overseas for three months and since I've got back it's been a goal that I've had to try and get fit again," Wyatt said.

"It's a challenging event to set me up for the rest of the year. I just hope to get through in one piece but it would be nice to be in the top five (women)."

Wyatt contested the half-marathon last year and said she enjoyed the experience.

"It is challenging running up the hills but you also get to run down as well," she said.

"So you've got to do the hill work and I'd done a lot so I felt that the hills weren't too difficult, but the scenery makes up for it.

"It's so beautiful so I think you've got to take the time to have a look to the left and appreciate what's there.

"It's a special event because you don't get to run a marathon in your own backyard that often and it's along the Great Ocean Road."

More than 3500 will run this weekend.