She's got the bug!

By YVETTE McGUIRE

SOUTH Arm fitness fanatic Tina Smit laughed as she recalled her first attempt at jogging.

"I couldn't even run 10 metres," she said of her efforts 10 years ago.

Now the 70-year-old mother of four is a regular on the triathlon scene in Tasmania and competes in state and national masters games.

For most of her life, Smit was not interested in being athletic.

"I gave up smoking and put on a lot of weight – so I decided to go jogging," she said yesterday.

"The first day I ran 10 metres and the next day 20 metres and the next day 30 metres and so on."

Smit competed in her first fun run after a few months of training. She ran the 10 kilometres without stopping.

"I was so proud of myself and happy that I started celebrating with the St John Ambulance people who were at the finish line," she said.

Around the same time Smit was given a bicycle for her birthday. Having grown up in Holland when bikes were the main mode of transport, she was soon clocking up the kilometres.

"I went with some friends to watch a triathlon and then decided to do one," she said.

"My husband John thought I was mad, but now he plays golf and I do triathlons."

Despite finishing last in her first triathlon, Smit caught the bug and now competes regularly.

Tina Smit in training yesterday for theSeven Mile Beach Triathlon. Pictures: RAOUL KOCHANOWSKI.

Triathlete Tina now one of the regulars

She trains for a couple of hours every day and yesterday did a full triathlon in preparation for this weekend's Seven Mile Beach race which will involve a 500-metre swim, 18-kilometre cycle and five-kilometre run.

"I did it [in training] in a bit under two hours, but that didn't count the transition time," Smit said. "I am hoping to still do under two hours under race conditions."

Apart from triathlons, Smit will also compete in this year's Tasmanian Masters Games in Launceston in April in the disciplines of athletics, swimming, cycling, indoor rowing and, of course, triathlons.