



ACT ROWING
ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED

ANNUAL REPORT

2008-09
SEASON

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY ROWING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED**

2008-09

Office Bearers

Patron	The Honourable Margaret Reid
President	Brendon Prout
Vice-President	Nick Hunter
Secretary	Patrick Davoren
Treasurer	vacant

Committee Members	Suzie Nermutova Rick Worboys Jaimie Fernandez Mark Halpin
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Association Officers

Executive Officer	Simon Tulloh
Honorary Recorder	David Bagnall

Life Members

P.H. Duncan	M. Kwiatkowski
M.L. Lamb	R.J. Porra
R.C. Freeman	D.W. Walters

Members,

The Committee of the ACT Rowing Association Incorporated is pleased to present its report on the Association's activities over the 2008-09 rowing season.

ACTRA Premiership Competitions

The Committee congratulates Radford College for winning the aggregate points score for the Men's and Women's Premiership Competition (Bill O'Brien Shield) and the Women's Premiership (ACTRA Women's Premiership Pennant). Canberra Grammar School is congratulated for its greatly improved results leading to it winning the Men's Premiership points score (ACTRA Premiership Pennant).

Final point scores are as follows:

Premierships and Aggregate Club Point Score*

Club	Men's	Women's	Aggregate
Radford RC	201	206	407
Canberra RC	144	153	297
Capital Lakes RC	120	153	273
Canberra Grammar RC	224	0	224
Daramalan	117	85	202
Black Mountain RC	78	86	164
Gippsland	108	54	162
Canberra Girls' Grammar RC	0	93	93
ANUBC	57	30	87
Lake Tuggeranong RC	24	55.5	79.5
Shoalhaven	8	21	29
ADFA	14	9	23

* does not include points for masters crews

Representative Rowing

The Association had significant representative commitments during the season. The ACT was well represented at the Youth Olympics Festival at the Sydney International Regatta Centre held from 14-18 January 2009. ACT team members were:

Women: Christabelle Northam, Emily Balmaks, Sorelle Bowman, Imogen Cowan, Melissa Greck, Chloe Mackenzie, Amelia Waldren, Samantha Shaw, Shannon Narracott, Daffyd Gwynn-Jones (coach), Tara Huntly (asst coach), Sarah Cook (asst team mgr).

Men: Nick Barnier, Mathew Barnier, Dane Buchhorn, Dylan Conolan, Clancy Horman, Callum Mackenzie, Angus Moore, Riley Owen, Scott Sheridan, David Wright, Gordon Marcks (head coach), Bob Cook (team manager).

The 2009 Youth Cup 2009 was held at SIRC from 11-13 July 2009. The ACT fielded a full team which performed well through the regatta. Christabelle Northam, Riley Owen and Nicholas Barnier all gained places in their respective sculling events.

The following ACT rowers achieved selection in the 2009 Australian rowing teams:

Junior World Championships, Brive-la-Gaillarde, France

- Bob Cook (ACT) - Manager
- Amy Fowler (CRC / ACTAS) - Junior Women's Quad
- Angus Moore (CGS / ACTAS) - Junior Men's Coxed Four

Amy Fowler and Angus Moore both came second in their A final – an outstanding result.

U23 World Championships, Racice, Czech Republic

- Lauren Burraston (CRC/ACTAS) - U23 Lightweight Women's Quad
- David Wright (CRC/ACTAS) - U23 Men's Quad
- Louise Kilby (ANU) - U23 Women's Four
- Gordon Marcks (ACTAS) - Coach U23 Women's Quad

Lauren Burraston and David Wright sculled in the third placed Australian crews in the A final.

National Talent ID squad

- Ailie McDonald (ACTAS/CLRC) was selected to tour New Zealand in May.

Further details on representative crews are provided in the ACTAS report at Attachment A.

Administration

During the year the Association closed its office at Sports House in view of the considerable cost of this facility and its limited use by the Association. The location of Sports House was a significant factor in this decision as was the preference of the Executive Officer to work from home. The decision to close the office in Hackett produced a saving to the Association of approximately \$7,000 per year.

A far north Canberra location is not particularly suitable for a sport centred on Lake Burley Griffin with significant activity on Lake Tuggeranong. A future office may be established in a National Rowing Centre of Excellence office which is planned to be constructed as an extension to the AIS boatshed at Yarralumla.

The Association had difficulty in attracting a full complement of voluntary committee members during the year. Failure to attract a nomination for the position of Treasurer raised serious issues for the governance of the Association and must be remedied in 2009-10.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our principal sponsor, the Sports and Recreation Program of the ACT Government for its contribution to our administration costs.

Lake Closures

Closures of the Lake during 2009 by the National Capital Authority presented a major threat to the viability of the Association and its affiliated clubs.

Early in the year algal blooms led the NCA to prohibit use of the Lake for water sports. A special dispensation was obtained to hold the Independent Schools Rowing Association annual regatta on 14-15 February 2009 in view of extra precautions put in place to mitigate the risk of algal contamination.

In late April the NCA closed the eastern end of the Lake following detection of elevated concentrations of algae. This action prevented rowing at Kingston by Capital Lakes Rowing Club. Progressively, the entire Lake was closed to rowing, ceasing rowing at ANU Boat Club and, eventually, all rowing clubs. The Lake was progressively reopened from 11 June 2009.

The closures presented a particular threat to Capital Lakes Rowing Club which had the longest period of exclusion from the Lake. During this period, members were forced to relocate to clubs at the western end of the Lake. It was clear, however, that extended Lake closure would cause severe operational difficulties to all clubs, possibly threatening their survival.

The Association was particularly concerned that the closures were not based on a valid assessment of the risk of algae to participants in a non-water contact sport such as rowing. Our response included frequent representations to the Chief

Executive officer of the NCA by the President of the Association, Brendon Prout, and participation in efforts through the Australian Institute of Sport to review the science behind the lake closures. Dr David Bagnall, formerly a microbiologist with CSIRO, is making a significant contribution to this work.

Committee

The Committee met on 9 occasions over the year. Attendance was as follows:

B. Prout	6
N. Hunter	6
P. Davoren	7
S. Nermutova	5
R. Warboys	7
M. Halpin	6
H. Fernandez	3*

(*part year only)

ACT Academy of Sport Rowing Unit

The Rowing Unit of the ACT Academy of Sport is a joint venture of the ACT Government and Rowing Australia funded through broadly similar contributions from both bodies. The Association provides its input to administration of the unit through its position on the ACTAS Rowing Unit Joint Management Committee and welcomes the views of affiliated clubs on how the Rowing Unit might better serve the interests of the ACT rowing community.

The ACTAS program is a critical element in the Association's elite athlete development pathway by providing the daily training environment for the ACT's national squad athletes and identified emerging athletes (elite under 23 and elite Junior). A detailed report on the ACTAS rowing unit is provided at Attachment A.

Masters Rowing

The Association was well represented at the Sydney World Masters Games Regatta at SIRC from 10-14 October 2009 where a number of ACT club crews were successful in winning medals despite fierce competition from Australian and international crews. Due to the distant venue, the Australian Masters Championships at Rockhampton, Queensland were not well attended from the ACT. Nevertheless, the small ACT contingent that attended enjoyed considerable success.

The 2008-09 season saw a greater number of Masters events, based on rowing Australia handicaps. This encouraged the return of significant numbers of masters rowers to Association regattas with an increase in Association revenue.

Unfortunately our efforts to conduct an ACT Masters Rowing Championship on 26 April 2009 suffered a severe setback with cancellation forced by bad weather. Significant planning had gone into this event including the design and production of distinctive medals designed by Canberra artist Caitlin Goodall. We are indebted to Caitlin for the medals which will hopefully be used for a future championship event.

Regatta Administration

The format of the 2009-10 regatta program was finalised through meetings of the Regatta Subcommittee chaired by the Recorder. This process provides the opportunity for all clubs to express their preferences on timing of regattas and the composition of the program of events. Inevitably there is a need for compromise between having a regatta program that includes everyone's favourite event to one which is fairly compact in the interests of effective regatta management by our officials and which promotes competition.

During the year the Association continued to use the NSW Rowing Association regatta entry software in preference to the Rowing Australia-endorsed ROMS system. Our position is that we will continue to use this system until ROMS demonstrates significant improvement in usability. Every opportunity has been provided for such a demonstration.

Infrastructure

Following refurbishment in late 2003, the Association's main asset, our 1800 metre rowing course, is well overdue for refurbishment. Masters rowers, John Simson and Alex Leitch have put in many hours of hard work replacing corroded cables and repairing gaps in buoy lines resulting from collisions with power boats. The Association supports this work by providing a work boat and motor that Daramalan College Rowing Club kindly houses in its boatshed.

All clubs are requested to ensure that their coaches display some common sense in using the course and avoid contact between their boats and the buoy lines.

During the season a boat race officials shelter was erected at the finish line of the course to provide some protection from the sun and the weather for finish judges and other officials at regattas. We are indebted to John Gasson and his company, Construction Control, for assisting with this structure and to the ACT Government (TAMS) for financial support.

It is proposed that in 2010-11 a major refurbishment of the course will proceed jointly funded by ACT Rowing and the AIS, the other major user of the facility. Pending this work, significant maintenance will be required to keep the course in good repair for the 2009-10 season.

During the year the Association wrote a letter of support to the ACT Planning and Land Agency for an application for a boatshed site lease on the north-eastern bank of Yarralumla Bay. This development led by John Gasson will lead to much needed new boat storage capacity being installed at this site in a multiple use (rowing and kayaking) facility. The Association looks forward to continuing progress with this project which offers the potential to strengthen the club base of ACT rowing.

Upgrading Yarramundi Reach Rowing Course

There are few, if any, other sports in the ACT where the main competition venue has no toilets, no drinking water and very limited parking, much of it dangerously located on a busy road. There is no immediate relief to this situation in sight. It is clear the 2,000 metres course project outlined in a National Capital Authority study released in June 2007 will not proceed in the short term due to its cost. This means that, at best, the Association will only be able to achieve only incremental improvements to our present facilities to assist the conduct of local regattas.

This situation continues to limit our ability to attract major regattas to Canberra as the standards expected of such events steadily increase. Our current course is inadequate in terms of number of lanes and finish facilities for us to conduct even a major Masters regatta for Australian competitors, let alone an international event.

Our use of the course is increasingly contested by use of adjacent roads by triathlon events. The Executive Officer has kept in touch with Roads ACT to identify closures of Lady Denman Drive which might impact on regattas.

Yarralumla Bay Redevelopment

During the year, the NCA completed public consultations on options to redevelop Yarralumla Bay and the surrounding land, the site of five ACT rowing clubs and the boatshed for the ACT Academy of Sport rowing unit. As these buildings house the equipment and facilities for much of the Association's membership, this exercise was a major issue for the future of our sport on Lake Burley Griffin.

The outcome has been highly favourable for rowing with the preferred option only involving changes to infrastructure such as road alignments, the Lake edge and water quality engineering. The significant changes to land use to include limited commercial development will not proceed from the current planning process.

Kingston Foreshore Development

This development has relocated Capital Lakes Rowing Club to a temporary boatshed on Jerrabomberra Creek. With completion of the redevelopment the club will be rehoused on the lake foreshore as part of a large recreational facility. Given Lakes significance as one of only three community-based clubs on Lake Burley Griffin the Association is keenly interested in seeing that this relocation takes place with minimum disruption to its activities.

Weston Park Master Plan

The Association was concerned to see that this major planning exercise proceeded with little regard to the interests of water sports on Yarramundi Reach and, in fact, seemed oblivious to their existence.

The process resulted in inclusion of a item on the draft master plan, a Pedestrian Bridge from Weston Park to Black Mountain, that is clearly inimical to rowing on Yarramundi Reach. It is difficult to see how this can be constructed in such a way that it doesn't interfere with the flow of rowing and coaching boats to and from Yarramundi Reach every morning.

Affiliated clubs made their views clear at a public meeting at Yarralumla. It is expected that, even if our views are disregarded, the cost of this further unnecessary bridge will prove prohibitive.

Major Events

In the 2009-10 rowing season the Association will be conducting the Independent Schools Rowing Association Regatta on Yarramundi Reach on February 20-21 with CGGS as the primary host.

Lake Burley Griffin was the venue of the Australian University Games Regatta conducted from 1-3 October 2009.

The Committee sees staging such events as immensely valuable in promoting the sport in the Territory and establishing our credentials for staging major regattas. As mentioned above, significant upgrading of current course facilities would be required before we could compete with other States for these events.

Lake Use and Administration

The Association remains an active participant in the Lake Users' Group where we have been represented by David Bagnall and John Daley. Important issues discussed on the LUG this year have included the NCA's response to algal infestations, the Immigration Bridge and development of Yarralumla Bay.

The Association is opposed to construction of the Immigration Bridge as its supporting structures will seriously impact on the safe movement of rowing boats during training and events such as the Pantom Memorial Marathon. We share the widespread community concern at this unnecessary and aesthetically unappealing development. Our fellow Lake users in the sailing community also have legitimate concerns about the impact the Bridge will have on their access to Central and East basins.

Water Safety

Fortunately, this year there seems to have been a fairly low incidence of collisions between rowing boats, however, issues remain concerning adherence to the agreed

Traffic Flows by rowers at all levels, particularly in East Basin and in the area between Black Mountain Peninsula and Yarralumla Bay. The Committee emphasises the need for higher standard of instruction of rowers and coxswains by their clubs.

Clubs also need to ensure that use of power boats on Lake Burley Griffin is carefully controlled. The Association has assisted in this regard by facilitating licence examinations in Canberra by NSW Waterways and by advising of NCA water safety requirements.

Following the success of a solar navigation light erected by the NCA in Orana Bay, the Association is considering the feasibility of installing similar lights on the tip of Black Mountain Peninsula and major navigation buoys. These would greatly assist navigation during the winter months.

The Committee considers that safety must remain the highest priority in club administration and that clubs should undertake a systematic assessment of the risks in their operations and act to address them. One approach for clubs in addressing safety as a priority issue is to appoint a safety officer to rigorously review all safety aspects of club operation.

Winter Time Trials

The 2009 ACT Winter Time Trial series has been one of our most successful with good competitor support across all five races of the series. Strong entries from Vllls have been a particular feature of this year's time trials and have boosted participation seat fee income for the event.

The competition was conceived in 1986 and administered for many years by Mark Kwiatkowski from CRC assisted by Alison Chinn. Mark saw the need and the opportunity for additional racing in the ACT over the winter months to assist local rowers' winter training and preparation for the main rowing season. Until that time racing in the ACT had been essentially restricted to the summer months, despite the perfect venue (and usually perfect conditions) available on Lake Burley Griffin in winter. In particular, it was recognised that the western reaches of Lake Burley Griffin provided both a picturesque and ideal course (fair and rowable even in poor conditions) for an extended time trial race.

The series has continued to grow in size over the years and now is firmly established as a core part of the ACT Rowing Association calendar, providing a common and valuable competition for rowers from the novice to elite/international level. Mark's foresight and persistence in establishing the Winter Time Trails was recognised by his election as a Life Member of the Association at the 2008 Annual General Meeting.

Union of Boat Race Officials

Mr Geoff Northam has capably led the Boat Race Officials to another successful year of which the highlight was conduct of the massive ISRA regatta in March 2009. Our officials have a deserved reputation within and outside the ACT for efficiency and, most importantly, a courteous attitude towards competitors. Geoff's personal commitment to attendance at regattas and winter time trials is exemplary. A detailed report on the operation of our boat race officials is attached.

Ensuring that the level of participation in the Union of Boat Race Officials is sufficient to meet our requirements for staffing ACT point score regattas remains a high priority for the Association. We have some concern about how responsibility for providing BROs is shared between affiliated clubs. Clubs are again exhorted to remind their membership about the need for more recruits to undertake BRO training.

Obituary

During the year rowing lost two prominent figures in the establishment of rowing in the ACT with the passing of Reg Libbis and Brian Martyn.

Reg Libbis was a founding member of the Association and of the Canberra Rowing Club. In the early years of the Association he was a very active member of the Committee of the Association and of his club as Captain of Canberra Rowing Club. He was also a skilful coach and dedicated boat race official. Reg was a legendary Victorian oarsman from Albert Park Rowing Club with many achievements to his name including a long unbeaten record in coxed pair events conducted in the mid-1950s by the Victorian Rowing Association. He was a member of an outstanding Australian coxed IV which was placed fourth in the Melbourne Olympics.

Reg played a major role in establishing Canberra Rowing Club in its boatshed at Yarralumla Bay. The Association was well represented at his funeral service.

Coming from a strong rowing background in Melbourne, Brian Martyn made a great contribution to the early years of the Association as a coach, administrator and boat race official. He was a highly successful coach of Daramalan College fours in the late 1960s and, by his example, did much to raise the standard of coaching at all levels in the ACT. With the cessation of rowing at Daramalan in the early 1970s, Brian helped the newly established Royal Military College Rowing Club as a coach of its successful lightweight fours.