



Club Captain's and President's Forum – May 2024

CGS Rowing Centre – 21st May 2024 @ 6:30pm

Attendees: Catherine Garrington, Mackenzie Moore (Radford), Alice Arch, Sebastian Lang, Tom Trobe (CRC), Leigh Gordon (BMRC), Vince Townsend (LTRC), Jenny Simmons (BMRC/Red Shed), Tony Frazier (LTRC), Marissa Thomas (Marist), Steve Grzeskowiak (CLRC), Virginia Hayward, Kent Peters, Hugo Ellwood, Sarah Davoren, Caroline Pijpers (CGGS), Sandra Sweeney (CRC), Peter Wright

Apologies: Tobias Wehr-Candler, Jaime Fernandez, Nick Hunter, Gordon Marcks

Minutes

Meeting Opened: 6:40pm

1. *Acknowledgement of Country and introduction around the room*

2. *President's Update*

a) **Funding updates:**

Following the categorisation process last year, of which Alison Chinn, Virginia Hayward and Sarah Davoren did a large body of work for, the ACT Sport and Recreation Department has used this process to change the funding allocations to sporting bodies. Sports will no longer receive money with “no-strings attached” and ACT Government funding needs to be utilised to further develop participation and engagement in our local sporting communities.

For Rowing ACT, this means that a significant portion of funding previously received will no longer be available to us in the previous format. For example, previously, a large percentage of this funding was utilised for administration costs such as staff salaries, something which is no longer allowed. Whilst Rowing ACT is in a strong financial position to mitigate the budget hole, this is a significant blow to our overall position and will impact the board's financial decision making over the coming months and years.

Following the categorisation process, where Rowing ACT received a Level 2 classification, we have been able to apply for up to \$85,000/year over a three year period for a “game-changing” project. RACT has applied for this funding to upgrade and optimize our regatta systems. It must be noted that this project does require a 25% co-investment from Rowing ACT as part of the reporting requirements. Whilst we are still waiting on the outcome, the board is relatively confident that our application will be

M: 0406 376 666 / E: eo@rowingact.org.au / W: www.rowingact.org.au

A: 21 Alexandrina Drive, Yarralumla ACT 2600

P: PO Box 7074, Yarralumla ACT 2600



accepted. If we receive the funding, RACT will work towards upgrading a number of our regatta systems inclusive of timing, BRO technology and infrastructure, supporting infrastructure and live streaming capabilities.

Beyond this grant, Rowing ACT will need to look to additional revenue sources and other methods of ensuring we are covering the deficit from the previous funding.

b) Insurance:

Queries have been raised by a club around the details of the insurance policies under V Insurance. Rowing ACT is awaiting a response from V Insurance and will communicate with the clubs the schedule and appropriate documentation once we have received it.

3. General Updates:

a) Communications (Virginia Hayward/Sarah Davoren)

Following last years Strategic priorities in which communications was a priority across all pillars', Rowing ACT has developed some operational plans inclusive of utilising tools like Mail Chimp to send out the new Catch! Newsletter; Rowing Manager bulk emails for membership or regatta specific updates; website updates; club contact emails and messaging; and social media to convey necessary messaging.

Tom Trobe (TT) and Leigh Gordon (LG) requested that as part of the operational plans to include action items and email recipient descriptors for clubs to help with the messaging. LG also requested that board minutes be updated on the website as soon as possible following board meeting.

b) Rowing Australia and Rowing ACT Affiliation Fees Update (Kent Peters/Hugo Ellwood)

As part of the discussion around RACT budget and revenue drivers, Rowing ACT also discussed the increases to the Rowing Australia Affiliation Fees. A percentage of the affiliation fees that RACT received from clubs and members are allocated to Rowing Australia through the National Sporting Organisation Affiliation Fee. This fee is charged to the State Bodies on an annual basis, and historically has been on charged per Senior (19+) competitive member.

Following an increase to the Senior Competitive Fee in this membership year, Rowing Australia, pending a constitutional change at the upcoming AGM, will also charge the State bodies per Junior Competitive Member (U19). This is inclusive of School athletes. The first year of this change will be a transitional period, and Junior Competitive



Members will be counted by those who compete at a Senior State Championship level. From July 1 2025, the expectation is that states will be charged for all Junior Members.

Rowing ACT has highlighted the fact that this change to the fee structure is not something that RACT can absorb and as such will need to be passed on to our members through the affiliation fees.

TT acknowledged the fact that the fees would need to be passed down, and asked firstly what RACT position on the constitutional change is, and secondly for Rowing Australia and Rowing ACT to consider the value of the affiliation fees to the clubs and their members.

Kent Peters (KP) acknowledged that whilst we may not want to increase the affiliation fee, the change for Rowing Australia and the states was overdue and as such ACT would be supporting the constitutional change. As part of the communications around the upcoming fee increase, Rowing ACT and Rowing Australia are working on a value proposition information package for the clubs.

4. Rowing ACT Strategic Priorities 2024 (Virginia Hayward)

Virginia Hayward (VH) presented the updated 2024 Strategic Priorities from the Rowing ACT Strategic Plan 2022-2027. Each Pillar has priorities that have been revised or added from last year. Key updates include:

- Participation and Growth
 - Focus on delivering the 2024 University Games in Canberra
- High Performance and Participation:
 - Delivery of a High Performance Program review
- People and Culture:
 - Continue to deliver key responsibilities and engagement with the community
- Commercial:
 - Establish a commercial working group to look for additional revenue opportunities
- Governance:
 - Deliver communication updates such as Catch! Monthly.



5. Regatta Updates (Kent Peters/Sarah Davoren/Sebastian Lang)

a) Season Round-Up

A reminder to all clubs to send through their season feedback if they haven't already. This season will look at opportunities to maximise participation whilst also ensuring we weren't adding to volunteer strain. Goals included driving interstate participation, and focusing on particular cohorts throughout the regatta season through alternating regatta programs. Data from the season was presented at the meeting, with the Regatta Sub-Committee and Board to continue to utilise and find data points to support the RSC.

TT highlighted that the season was overall positive and the data presented was interesting, though would be good to see more theory and focus on regattas where particular cohorts are targeted.

Jenny Simmons (JS) noted that planning the calendar around school holidays better may help with participation numbers, especially in the final regattas of the season.

b) Future Season goals and optimizations

Sebastian Lang (SL) noted that the regatta sub-committee would continue to look for ways to optimise our regatta programs, and reminded the forum of the RSC meeting next Wednesday 29th May. The draft calendar was sent out to the RSC and Club Presidents following the conclusion of the forum.

Sarah Davoren (SD) noted that much of the planning around the optimisation of regattas was dependent on the grant application process mentioned earlier, and once the board has heard back, that further discussions will take shape.

6. Safety and Lake User Update (Catherine Garrington/Sarah Davoren)

Catherine Garrington (CG) spoke to the current focuses of the Safety Sub-Committee, with the SSC reviewing all safety reports that come through to consider whether action from the Sub-Committee is required, noting that the committee doesn't get involved in disputes or enforcement of safety regulations. LG noted that it was good to hear that the SSC is actively reviewing all reports and queried on how the SSC might respond to reports such as no lights on boats.

CG also presented to the forum the educational pieces that the SSC had been developing following the last safety officers meeting, including posters to be delivered to every club, increased safety messaging through communication platforms (inclusive



of messaging responding to community concerns such as lights on boats), and the planning stages of safety videos to demonstrate safe practises on the lake.

7. Questions/Other Business

Caroline Pijpers (CP) asked whether any update on the lowering of the lake level has been reported. SD noted that she had been in meetings with the NCA regarding the lake lowering – they have closed the tender process and are in the budgeting stage now, with the NCA to directly contact some clubs regarding access assistance and other clubs to work with RACT and the NCA on finding solutions. Latest update was that the lake would likely be lowered from July at the earliest.

Sandra Sweeney asked whether there was a suitable location for Learn to Row enquiries, particularly noting that there would likely be an uptake in enquiries post Olympics. SD to update the RACT webpage and provide support to clubs where feasible, inclusive of contact points.

Meeting closed 8:01pm