

Ascot Kayak Club – Vice President Report – Membership year 20-21

Welcome to you all and thank you for your interest in AKC to attend this evening. We finish our membership year in a very fortunate position. I'd just like to take a minute to reflect on our situation and send our thoughts to many of our fellow competitors and paddler friends in Victoria and NSW who haven't had the opportunities, or the freedoms WA has had in the last 12 months. Whilst we can't travel, we can paddle.

While it has been unfortunate that we have been unable to travel to compete, and frustrating for many, there have been minimal cancellations for the paddling community this year. For this we are eternally grateful.

The AGM is one opportunity where we can formally thank the many people who have taken on responsibilities this year and helped develop and support AKC to see some many new programmes, expand existing ones and improve our membership offering.

MEMBERSHIP

There has been a renewed interest in paddling this year, helped by many factors including being one sport that is COVID friendly. The renewed focus on partaking in exercise for mental health benefits and nature-based exercise has resulted in an increased interest in paddling.

Australia wide, CEO of Paddle Australia Phil Jones reported a 16% increase in membership numbers. I am unsure of the breakdown, if this includes direct outriggers or SUP members or growth from clubs. AKC finished the year with an 11% increase on last year with 728 members, which we can report is 4 shorts of our busiest year ever, 2014. We have a 100% increase on junior member number currently 108 – U18 paddlers. Historically we have always put the members who join in August and September in next year's numbers. We had 20 members join from the intro course in July and August (not included in this year).

Thank you to all our volunteers who assist in getting our new members on the water.

Every year we have a 25% drop out rate from the club. AKC is hoping with the introduction of programs for beginner paddlers and increased communication programme the dropout rate will be reduced.

As of 20th September, we have had a 32% membership renewal rate and a 35% renewal rate for boat racks. This is reassuring as we know from experience, paddlers leave everything to the last minute and we still have 8 days to go until the end of the month.

Demographics for end July 21

End Date	Age Cat	Sex	PAD	ASSOC	PEN	Total
30-Sep-21	Adult	M	333	13	18	50% 364
30-Sep-21	Adult	F	210	39	8	**35% 257
30-Sep-21	Junior	M	63			9% 63
30-Sep-21	Junior	F	40			**6% 40
						724

** Opportunities – For the paddling community as a whole – focus on increasing junior girls, females and participation and retention in the sport.

BUDGET

Due to not knowing if there would be any long-lasting effects of COVID at AKC we set a very conservative budget for the 20-21 membership year. We budgeted on a 20% reduction in membership from the previous year (20% reduction = 520 members) and I can say we clearly surpassed the budget. This has allowed us to put funds aside for the extension and more importantly replace aging infrastructure quickly. We replaced a reverse cycle split system and invested approx. \$11600 (plus \$3700 solar rebates) in new technology hot water systems. Thanks for your patience while waiting for the new HWS. I haven't heard any complaints, so I presume we have it right. The running costs of the heat pump technology is significantly lower than previous storage. For the committee in the coming years – setting aside significant sums for replacement and updating infrastructure will be important.

PROGRAMMES

AKC programmes have gone from strength to strength this year:

Junior Programme

Continues to go from strength to strength. We had approx. 80 APP (Ascot Paddle Passport) participants thin the last year. We currently have 108 junior members and run two sessions a week Wed afternoon and Sat morning. These integrated sessions are designed for juniors to develop a love of paddling and skills based. We have started a development squad with the support of funding from the marathon committee. Also there have been weekly white-water sessions with the support of the slalom committee and junior funds.

Slalom development squad and a White-Water girl's session once a week. In addition to the junior development squad. We have had junior paddlers going everywhere.

I'd just like to thank the work the junior coaching team who run the Wed and Sat sessions and the white water discover sessions. This is all the work of volunteers, many of these coaches give up their time for both sessions, for which AKC is very appreciative of and so are the parents. We hope to be in the situation that the programme is sustainable, and coaches will receive a remuneration for their time.

Boat investment is important for the junior paddlers, and we have 6 GK2's coming on the container with the GK4's. Some new ones and some second-hand ones. Paddling team boats is where the kids have fun and learn important skills for individual paddling as they develop.

We have been successful in gaining the WAIS TID sprint programme for 21-22 and this is being coached by Matthew and Nicholas Greed, two original AKC juniors. The induction for this programme is for early October and we are looking forward to seeing more juniors around the club

AKC juniors continue to impress in all disciplines.

Para programme

We have been lucky enough to be successful for \$13000 worth of funding for 2 x Vaá, paddles, high backed seat, stabiliser bars and matting. Incredible support with building of a stand for boats and volunteering. We are aiming to get the coaching and support to a stage that we individual NDIS plans can fund the on-water support and coaching.

Thanks to the team who have be instrumental in driving the para programme. We have 2 para-athletes who competed at the last Sprint Regatta.

Mini Adventure Race Format

This new format that has increased participation – cross sport and discipline participation and now will be a regular on the AKC calendar. The concept was born out of the insurance requirements for Nanga Challenge and minimum policy purchases. Grant Pepper has been incredible and so enthusiastic with the new format and if it wasn't for Grant, it wouldn't have happened. Thanks Grant. The participation levels were beyond our expectations and a great way to participate as families with no paddling experience. All that is required is brain power and a competitive spirit.

Squads

Very successful Ladies Masters programme was run out of AKC in the lead up to the State Sprint Championships.

AKC Junior Development squad – coached by Coran Longwood has been very successful with junior athletes excelling in their disciplines. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Coran for his commitment to the AKC junior programme. For the coming year Coran is turning his focus to being an athlete rather than a coach.

Andrew Crothers is running a Masters squad with participation numbers now at close to 20, even with the cancellation of the Australian Masters Games there is still interest for it to continue

AKC Progressive Racing Group – continues strong – Thanks Terry

Renewed focus on social for Wednesday Time trial –

Beginners, Intermediate and advanced squad – Tuesday recommences at the end of September thanks Peter for organising.

Adult Intro Courses

More popular than ever with 1 day course being run through summer and additional mid-week (4 session) courses through summer. Although we lost Arnold from full time co-ordinating, we gained the services of Tad. AKC is very supportive of the crew who teach paddling skills to beginners. We introduced feedback forms this year and, on every form, we have had back has been so complimentary to the instructors. Thanks to the whole team

AKC Bring and Buy

The inaugural Bring and Buy was a huge success. Thanks to Sharna for co-ordinating and working so hard behind the scenes to ensure it worked. The feedback was positive and because she did such a great job, we must get her to do it again. Thanks to Perth Airport for their donations and to our anonymous donors, thank you so much for supporting our para programme. In the end we raised close to \$1500, enough to purchase a dedicated junior para boat and high back seats.

State Slalom Course

The State Slalom Flatwater Course had practical completion signed off August 21 and the official opening will be 2nd October all being well. A huge thanks to Steve Mueller and project management skills which has resulted in an international class flatwater slalom course. The feedback has been incredible and when I think back it is a little over 12 months ago that we received the grant of \$300K for the course.

A few fun facts

- 200m long
- 52 cross wires
- Provision for 104 gates

- 22 piles driven 6m into the riverbed (minimum)
- Total project costs within kind contributions and real \$'s will be over \$400K by the time the project is acquitted. The last invoice for as constructed drawing is being approved as of September 21
- DLGSCI have been very impressed by the way the project has been managed, which will stand us in good stead for future projects.

AKC Events

The numbers for AKC events have been higher than previous years and a reflection of the focus on local events.

Thanks to all the event and race directors for their contribution to the club.

From the team who cook the club breakfast to the crew who support the Avon Descent and everyone in between AKC has some incredible members who go above and beyond what is required.

A special thanks to Leo, Terry Bolland and Terry Brooke for running the Avon Descent Safety and competency courses on behalf of AKC for the Avon Descent.

As the club grows there will be a renewed focus on engaging many of the members who don't volunteer. The club is only as successful as its volunteers and one of the strengths of AKC is the volunteers. We can only keep our membership fees at the level they are if we have high levels of volunteers. I would like to take this opportunity for you to encourage as many people as possible you know to put up their hand a couple of times of the year to help or we will have no choice but to increase membership fees to cover increased costs.

Social Paddles

Co-ordinated by Robyn once again. Thankyou to Robyn and her assistants. A core group of paddlers have enjoyed various trips throughout the year. It's a great way to meet fellow paddlers and enjoy some areas that you wouldn't otherwise enjoy.

WAIS Support

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ramon Andersson and Jesse Phillips for their support of our junior development squads and the loan of many of the extra boats you will notice. There is a strong relationship with AKC and reciprocal agreement for the sharing of equipment to support paddlers at different levels.

Thanks for the support of our junior programme and assisting Coran with the squad coaching.

Member Support

AKC is committed to improving safety of all our members and recently 15 members completed the first aid course. For the instructors and dedicated regular volunteers AKC funded these positions. We have also funded 12 junior instructors to gain their requalification for the Bronze Medallion. There is another First Aid course being run on the 23rd of October, I urge you to register to join. Part subsidised for all AKC members and if you are a regular volunteer fully subsidised.

Paddle WA

AKC continues to support paddling development and education within WA on many levels. Many of these courses have been run out of AKC, totally approximately 15 days of hall bookings for education purposes.

Expansion plans

Presented at last general meeting – with the redevelopment of Garvey Park AKC has taken the opportunity to reserve a footprint for expansion. We are looking at three stages -

- 1 lean to at the side of the shed to store plastic equipment
- 2 Upgrade change rooms with the capacity for individual cubicles shower, toilet and change area. Currently we have a bottle neck. For junior members – future compliance and safety of junior members.
- 3 This can only happen concurrently with the extension of the boat shed as the proposed development would see the additional change rooms taking place of the gym and there would need to be a space allocated to the gym.

Challenges

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the challenges facing paddling in the coming years and timely to reflect on the future and as a club where we would like to be heading. These challenges include -

- Availability of coaches and coach development as junior programmes have expanded.
- Aging and reduced numbers of volunteers
- Opportunities for juniors to experience all forms of paddling, team boats, moving water, marathon, slalom, down river, and sprint
- Travel opportunities

Opportunities for AKC

- Facilities reinvestment
- Reinvesting in equipment
- Expansion opportunities
- Strategic planning for future development
- Cross discipline strategies
- Increased intra club opportunities
- Improved systems and adoption of technology
- Utilise facilities more effectively

Committee

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of our members and personally, to sincerely thank our committee, Chris, Beck, Lawrence, Peter, Jane and Nina for their hard work and dedication to AKC, it is appreciated by our members. To our co-opted committee members, whom I am always ringing for advice Grant Pepper and Doug Hodson and Michael Leahy. Our ever-hard-working boat bay co-ordinator that does too good a job to ever let him give it up. A huge thankyou nothing is too much trouble for any of you.

To Kylie, who is always at the end of the phone answering members queries, listening to grievances, and picking up the phone when I ring for something. Thanks Kylie.

To the City of Belmont and the maintenance crew thanks for your help in supporting the club in the last year. Our relationship with City of Belmont is valued.

We look forward to next year with excitement and optimism. The future of paddling in WA is strong and its thanks to the commitment and professionalism of many of our members that we can continue to grow the sport for the benefit of all.

Thanks
AKC Vice President
Sue McDougall
22/09/21