
Annual Report 2016 - 17



Flatwater Race Competitors – Lake Barrington

Photo courtesy of S. Paine



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The 2016-17 year has seen Canoe Tasmania continue as a strong and sustainable peak body. The year saw a strong competition and recreation program delivered by clubs, a range of education courses delivered by Canoe Tasmania instructors via Canoe Tasmania and within clubs, and some outstanding competitive performances by individual paddlers. The 2016-17 year also saw several clubs implementing substantial infrastructure work to recover from the fire and floods of 2016 and to enhance their club's facilities for members. This has taken up a huge amount of volunteer time and effort, and significant funds, some of it from Grants but also a significant drain on club financial resources.

MEMBER CLUBS

All four affiliated clubs have remained strong and active over the previous year.

Launceston Paddling Club – The newest CT affiliated club, LPC continues to be very active with many of its members paddling regularly from their site on Trevallyn Dam and with regular ocean paddling north of Launceston. Members often travel to compete across the state as well as the club hosting a number of flatwater races.

As with the other clubs the floods last year affected them with their shed at Trevallyn Dam being flooded several times, necessitating emergency evacuation of trailers and skis and boats, and subsequent clean up to remove the mud and debris from the shed. They have also been affected at times by an apparently more conservative approach to flood mitigation by Hydro Tasmania which sees Trevallyn Dam lowered more often in advance of anticipated higher inflows, making paddling at Trevallyn Dam impossible.

In December 2016 Canoe Tasmania contracted Next Level Kayaking to deliver a safety course for LPC members with a mixture of theory and practice covering flatwater, estuary, beach, open water and entry level whitewater skills. In total 17 LPC members attended the course which was subsidised by CT annual Sport and Recreation State Grant, and run at no charge to participants. As a relatively new club this course raised safety awareness at an important stage for many club members and attracted several new members to the club.

Whilst the club started with a predominance of skis, many members have also moved into sprint and marathon paddling with an increasing fleet of sprint boats entering the club. Club Commodore, Mark Rathmell, competed in the 2017 National Marathon Championships at the Sydney International Regatta Centre along with Roz Barber (formerly of LPC and now of DCC). Mark came 9th in his age group.

Derwent Canoe Club – The 2016-17 year has been a very active one for the Derwent Canoe Club with ongoing activities across most of the club, highlights being:

- introduction of new constitution, board structure and undertaking a strategic planning process;
- ongoing success for the Under 3's river trips led by Vicki Bonwick;
- successful running of the Winter Race series, the Browns Races, a flatwater and broken Bridge slalom, and another great season of polo;
- paddle power introduction program offered in three of the four school terms;
- tightening up of the DSS boat storage facility;
- successful representation of club members at the national and world slalom championships;
- participation of members at the world masters' games in Auckland and ocean ski series in Mauritius;
- redevelopment of Brady's Lake slalom course;
- preparation for reinstatement of the Mersey Slalom course and development of the Mersey Whitewater management plan;
- Reconstruction of the Broken Bridge slalom course; and
- Application to Parks and Wildlife to erect permanent flatwater training gates at Margate.

The Brady's Lake whitewater course has been a big focus for the DCC over 2016-17 year. After more than five years of discussions and planning a licence agreement over the site was entered into between DCC and Hydro Tasmania, giving the DCC more control over some elements of the site and enabling them to seek Grant funding for site works. Thanks to previous Commodore Tim Watson for initiating the licence process, and to CT Board Member, Andrew Bennet, for his legal advice and review throughout the process and to current DCC Executive for seeing the project through.

A Grant obtained from the Tasmanian Community Fund and support from Hydro Tasmania enabled major rock works within the canal to improve safety, mitigate erosion and to reduce the water loss along the canal to allow paddling flows to be achieved with less water released from Bronte Lagoon. The works are 90% complete with follow-up tweaking to occur over coming months with assessment of the impact of the works after winter flows and settling.



The club also had to totally re-establish the Broken Bridge slalom site where all slalom infrastructure was washed away by the 2016 floods. Due to repeated flooding and high flows this could not be achieved until after October 2016 and since then the site has been heavily used by their slalom and developing Whitewater paddlers.

In Slalom, Kate Eckhardt and Daniel Watkins were selected onto the Senior and Under 23 national teams. Highlights included Daniel placing 9th at the U23 worlds and 12th at the Augsburg World Cup in Men's C1, whilst Kate won bronze at the U23 Worlds in Women's K1 team, and was 6th at the Augsburg World Cup in Women's C1. Up and coming paddler, Kieran Black, has been selected as a member of the National Talent Squad and placed 3rd at the Nationals in his age group in January 2017. The club also had a team of seven young paddlers at the National Schools Champs in January 2017.

The club also has a large and very active ocean paddling group paddling regularly out of the Derwent Sailing Squadron and closely involved with Ben Maynard's Next Level Kayaking, with many taking part in NLK training programs and group paddling sessions. Competition for this group has reduced in importance over the last few years whilst paddling for fitness, increased skills and recreation has continued at a high level.

To support this the NLK/Hobart College "Paddle Strong" strength & conditioning program (established early 2016) transitioned to the Derwent Canoe Club. This allowed for expansion of the program and increased canoe club member access to gym facilities and professional strength and conditioning advice and support. The very successful program provides participants with structured paddling and age-specific resistance training.

The strength of ocean paddling saw six DCC paddlers (Roz Barber, Richard McMinn, Dave Pinch, John Bamford, Greg Pollard and Alastair Mearns) compete in the Mauritius Ocean Classic (MOC) – a week-long international event of paddling development and ocean racing held annually in the waters around the sub-tropical island of Mauritius. (*See separate report below from Richard McMinn*).

Crossing over from Ocean Racing, DCC paddler Roz Barber also paddled in the Australian Marathon Championships and secured a silver medal in her age group.

The club also continued its winter Canoe Polo with 20 weeks of competition across the year for open and school teams, and the spare space at the pool being used extensively for rolling teaching and practice.

Administratively, the DCC has now implemented its new Constitution and has undertaken strategic planning to guide its development over the next few years.

Tasmanian Canoe Club – At the severely flood damaged Forth site the Tasmanian Canoe Club has made great progress with the huge job of repairs and restoration they faced. Flood recovery grants have assisted in the task of restoring the site which has seen most of the damaged and dangerous trees removed; all the damaged slalom poles and supports removed; many new young trees planted; the walkway rebuilt; and flood debris removed from the river and adjacent paddock and significant bank grooming undertaken to improve access to the water at the northern end of the site. Slalom poles have not yet been restored to the course - this will provide a future challenge if and when there is a need to host events at the site.

Safety repairs have been carried out on the river features to remove foot entrapments with more work to be done on these structures – but this requires more funding. Unfortunately, the club was unsuccessful

with its Hydro community grants application which would have allowed more permanent works on the river features. The club will continue to seek other funding but in the meantime, the club is developing a longer-term plan for river improvements to have a clearer direction and to assist with future grant applications.

In white-water paddling the club has been holding regular trips for the grade 3 and under paddlers. This has been invigorating interest in the club amongst existing, past and new paddlers. For more advanced paddlers last year's Lea Extreme race was a huge success and planning is well underway for this year's event.



Pre-race at Wynyard Yacht Club – Photo: S Paine

The club has also been running an extensive and very well attended flatwater race program with 96 paddlers competing across their race series, and 64 paddlers in the biggest race. They have built on their partnership with the Wynyard Yacht Club to establish a training base for flat-water and ocean racing. The installation of a 40 Foot (12m) container in March 2017 allowed for the storage of sprint K1s, K2s and K4s at the training site.

TasCC paddler, Tom Norton represented Australia in the K2 1000m and K4 1000m at the World Under 23 and junior canoe sprint championships

in Minsk, Belarus. Both crews qualified for finals finishing in 8th place in both races.

Four club paddlers took part in the Australian Canoe Sprint Championship at Penrith at which Tom Norton reached the A final of the Open Men's K1 1000m, finishing in 5th place. He also combined with Olympians Ken Wallace, Lachlan Tame, and Jacob Clear to take the silver medal in the K4 1000m. Evergreen paddler, Jeremy Norton, won three gold medals with 1st place in K1 55+ years 1000m, 500m and 200m and a Bronze in K1 45+ 5000m



Installing the container – Photo: J Norton

In Ocean Racing, Sam Norton and Jeremy Norton competed in ICF Ocean Racing World Cup at Ofir, Portugal in July 2016 where Sam finished 9th in Open Men's and Jeremy 1st in Men's 55+. And closer to home Cameron Taylor raced in "The Doctor" (Rottneest Island to Sorrento W.A. in November 2016) along with paddlers from other Tasmanian clubs.

Tamar Canoe Club – Canoe Polo continued to be the Tamar Canoe Club's big focus providing a social and competition event for around 60 members who play in a very successful roster for 20 weeks over winter at the Launceston Aquatic Centre. The club has an extensive collection of canoe polo equipment and paddlers are continually progressing to improve their skills in this exciting and challenging sport. Club Commodore, Adam Rolls, also contributed to strategic planning by Australian Canoeing's Canoe Polo Technical Committee which is working to revitalise the sport in Australia.

The club also had a very successful winter and spring of white-water paddling. While January to June 2017 has been very dry, the July to December 2016 period had copious rain enabling over 50 trips on the North Esk, which was running right through to December, and for the very popular North Esk Paddle-Fest to be run for the fifth time.

The floods which caused so much damage across the state also made some changes to various major rapids on the North Esk with boulders weighing 10s of tonnes thrown around to create new features and make the lines a bit harder in some places. Consequently, caution is necessary if you are doing the North

Esk for the first time since the floods. A range of other local rivers were paddled by club members including the Nile and Cataract Gorge which also flowed on and off for almost 5 months.

Unfortunately, the Mersey below Rowallan, normally used regularly by Tamar CC paddlers, wasn't accessible until late May 2017 due to floods washing out Mersey Forest Road in May 2016. Club members have since been up and checked the river for new hazards following the floods, and David Bevan of Tamar CC has been leading the design and planning work for restoring the Mersey Slalom Course. Tamar members also checked and removed flood debris and hazards from other popular sections of the Mersey River, notably the Alum Cliffs section.

Flatwater races over summer also continued on the South Esk River at Hadspen to provide some fitness paddling avenues for the mainly white water and canoe polo club paddlers. And in slalom, David Knox continued to perform well in his age group at a national level and was selected to be part of the National Slalom Talent Squad, and club members, led by Jonathan Knox assisted Derwent Canoe Club with site improvements at the Brady's Lake white-water course.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

During the year our Development Officer, Sandra Kent, settled into the job and coordinated a range of education courses, convened a Strategic Forum and an education "think-tank" and supported clubs in a variety of ways in the roughly one day a week our funding allows. Board Member and Instructor/Assessor, Alex McWhirter, has provided invaluable support to Sandra throughout the year as the go-to person for education and qualification queries and for developing and implementing the education program for the year. Work is now underway on this year's strategic forum in advance of our 2018 Sport and Recreation Grant Application.

CANOE EDUCATION PROGRAM

We have continued to provide a wide array of education courses through the Australian Canoeing Award Scheme, helping get people into canoeing in a safe and enjoyable fashion, and providing basic- through to high-level instructor skills to maintain and increase the spread of good canoeing techniques and practices. Thanks to Alex McWhirter and Mark Oates we have further developed and run Pack-Rafting courses which have proved very popular and has attracted interstate interest. Mark is in the process of planning the first Australian Pack Rafting Meet Up for January 2018.

The 2016 Canoe Tasmania Strategic Forum was also very successful and well attended and provided valuable input into planning and delivering the education program and forward calendar for the year.

Frustratingly, the education program's venue options continued to be restricted for a fourth year in a row, previously by rolling dam and generation facility maintenance, and drought, and now due to the impact of the May 2016 floods which made the Forth site unusable due to damage and safety concerns, and washed out the Mersey Forest Road making the Mersey course inaccessible. This created logistical challenges which we again had to work around. Hydro Tasmania has, as always, been incredibly helpful and supportive within the limitations imposed on them by climatic conditions and generation and maintenance schedule considerations.

Education courses conducted in the 2016-17 year include Intro and Intermediate Pack-Rafting, Flatwater Skills, Level 1 Rescue and Level 2 Rescue, Indigenous Come and Try, Ski Safety (with NLK), and Women's Come and Try. The Tamar and Derwent Club's also ran additional Level 1 Rescue courses which is a new initiative. Other planned activities were delayed or not able to be run due to the flood damage at Forth and lack of access to the Mersey course.

FIRE AND FLOOD DAMAGE

As is well known, the Mersey Slalom and Wildwater Course (the Mersey Whitewater Regional Reserve) was badly damaged by bushfires which burned out of control for around a month during January and February 2016. The extensive renewal work undertaken at the course prior to the 2016 National Slalom and Wild-water Championship series was all but totally destroyed including most wires and almost all the brand-new slalom gates. This was followed by floods in May 2017 which destroyed all facilities at the Broken Bridge site; caused major infrastructure and site damage to the Forth site, including destroying all slalom infrastructure and riverside walkways; and washed away access to the Mersey via Mersey Forest Road. The floods also damaged access to the popular Ouse River below Lake Augusta, washing away the exit track from the canal intake to the car-park. Of our developed white-water sites, only Brady's Lake was spared major damage.

FORTH COURSE REPAIRS

The Tasmanian Canoe Club is well advanced with its repair and recovery work at Forth despite being hampered by repeated flooding and high water levels through to late 2016. It is estimated that \$50,000 damage was done with the wooden walkways destroyed, all steel uprights flattened, and all slalom gates and wires take by the floodwaters. To date there has been around 100 hours of donated excavator time plus countless hours of volunteer chainsaw and general clean-up time and effort, plus specialist construction work to rebuilt the wooden walkways along the river bank. The slalom infrastructure is still to be reinstated.

BROKEN BRIDGE COURSE REPAIRS

The Derwent Canoe club has replaced and improved all slalom infrastructure at Broken Bridge and has agreement from the Department of State Growth for the removal of the dangerous section of bridge below the slalom course.

MERSEY COURSE REPAIRS

Canoe Tasmania is currently working with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service on plans for repair of the Mersey site and a long-term development plan. Tamar Canoe Club member David Bevan has been engaged to project manage the design and costing of the initial repairs whilst Paul Black of the Derwent Canoe Club has been leading the work on the longer term development plan. David Bevan, David Borojevic and Daniel Watkins have scoped the full extent of the works and David Bevan has completed design works for the new slalom support infrastructure as we are no longer able to simply hang the gate wires and ropes from trees. PWS are currently undertaking environmental assessments prior to finalising construction and installation of the new infrastructure.



Prototype slalom wire support. D. Bevan

BRADY'S LAKE DEVELOPMENT

As above, the Derwent Canoe Club has signed a "Licence Agreement" with Hydro Tasmania for the site to enable development grant funding to be obtained for necessary course maintenance and continued improvement. A grant was obtained and major works have been undertaken to improve the course.



The excavator moving FBRs, Brady's Lake Course

Photo: D. Borojevic

COMPETITION

Despite the flood issues and challenges throughout 2015-16 all clubs in the state have continued to run a wide array of events, including Canoe Polo, Slalom, Flatwater (Sprint and longer races), Ocean Racing, Wildwater Racing and, Xtreame Racing as well as a wide range of recreational paddling events. Well over 50 competitive events are conducted each year, as well as 20 weeks of Canoe Polo in both Hobart and Launceston, meaning there is rarely a week throughout the year without a competition paddling opportunity on top of extensive training and recreational opportunities.

OCEAN RACING

Ocean Racing has continued strongly with a big selection of races each summer – both twilight and longer sea-breeze ocean races and popular group training sessions. In February 2017 the Derwent Canoe Club successfully hosted the Tasmanian Ocean Racing Championships. These were again held in Fredrick Henry Bay, from Cremorne to Seven Mile Beach in a building sea-breeze.

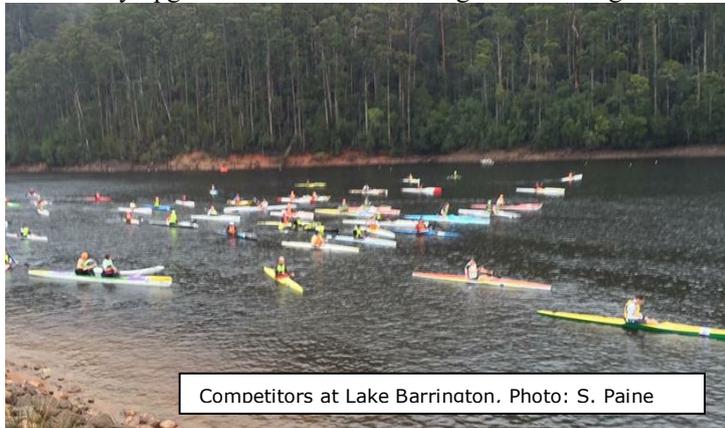
And as detailed elsewhere in the report Tasmanian Ocean paddlers competed internationally in Mauritius, in Portugal at the World Series races, and in Western Australia, gaining good results including medals in several categories.

FLATWATER RACING

Both sprint and 10km races have remained very popular in Flatwater Racing around the state with races run in all regions through Autumn, Winter and Spring. A very strong partnership with Rowing Tasmania is emerging through regular use of the recently upgraded international rowing and canoeing course at Lake Barrington.

Existing partnerships with yachting through the Derwent Sailing Squadron in the South and the Wynyard Yacht Club in the North West, continue to provide extra facilities for paddlers for training and competition.

As mentioned above, Tasmanian Canoe Club paddler, Tom Norton represented Australia in the K2 1000m and K4 1000m at the World Under 23 and junior canoe sprint championships in Minsk, Belarus. Both crews qualified for finals finishing in 8th place in both races.



Competitors at Lake Barrington. Photo: S. Paine



Tom Norton 2nd from left, Silver, K4 1000m Photo: J. Norton

Also, four paddlers from the Tasmanian Canoe Club took part in the Australian Canoe Sprint Championship at Penrith at which Tom Norton reached the A final of the Open Men's K1 1000m, finishing in 5th place.

Tom also combined with Olympians Ken Wallace, Lachlan Tame, and Jacob Clear to take the silver medal in the K4 1000m. Jeremy Norton also had success, winning three gold medals with 1st place in K1 55+ years 1000m, 500m and 200m and a Bronze in K1 45+ 5000m.

XTREME RACING

Xtreme and creek paddling have maintained their popularity across the state. In Xtreme Racing the Lea Race continues after 14 years as Australia's premier Xtreme race, along with its newer cousin – the North Esk Paddle Fest which was hugely successful for its fifth year.

SLALOM

With a strong pool of young paddlers making their mark nationally and internationally the Slalom Development Program continues to produce good outcomes. Primarily located in the south and coached by Peter Eckhardt and David Borojević, Tasmanian paddlers Kate Eckhardt and Daniel Watkins again represented Australia internationally, gaining superior results and David Knox and Keiren Black were both selected for national junior talent squads.

In March 2017 Rohan Borojevic travelled to New Zealand as Coach of the Australian Under 18 development slalom team competing at the New Zealand National Championships, and in April 2017 a team of Derwent Canoe Club paddlers competed successfully in the World Masters Games in Auckland N.Z. (see report below).

CANOE POLO

Canoe Polo competitions continue to be well supported in the north and south of the state with over 20 weeks of roster competition each year and state championships now held in four successive years. Canoe Tasmania remains hopeful that Tasmania will again field teams in the National Championships as it did previously. Adam Rolls of Tamar Canoe Club has continued to support the development of a National Canoe Polo strategy to re-invigorate the sport across Australia.

WILD WATER RACING

Due to the inaccessibility of the Mersey – the main course for Whitewater in Tasmania – the Wildwater Racing scene in Tasmania has been very quiet. Nonetheless, Tom Mountney of the Tasmanian Canoe Club travelled to Europe for the World Cup series as the coach of the Australian Under 23 Team. There is talk of holding the National Championships at the re-opened Mersey course later in 2017 and a National Team selection race at Brady's Lake course. Details still to be finalised.

PACK-RAFTING

The hybrid between kayak paddling and rafting, known as pack-rafting, which uses tough, lightweight inflatable kayaks and kayaking white-water skills continues to grow in popularity.

In November 2016, CT Pack-Rafting Instructors, Dan Hall and Mark Oates, flew to Canberra to run an intermediate course for PaddleNSW after the initial course that was scheduled to be run by Mark and Alex McWhirter in May had to be cancelled due to a lack of water. The November course involved about 15 participants along with 4 PaddleNSW instructor/guides who were keen to learn more about packrafting. It was held on the Murrumbidgee River with participants camping at the nearby scout camp. The second day involved a day trip and the group paddling decent grade 3 rapids on the Angle Crossing to Tharwa section. For further info check out the video at: [youtube.com/watch?v=7kTH-uRyB7w&t=7s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kTH-uRyB7w&t=7s)



Pack Rafters at Broken Bridge Photo: M. Oates

afternoon at Broken Bridge. An evening session was also held at The Hutchins School's Year 9 Campus in Sandy Bay.

Further courses are planned for later this year (dates to be confirmed) with ideally an Advanced Packrafting Course taking place in the North West in spring

In February 2017 Canoe Tasmania ran a weekend Beginner Whitewater Packrafting Course on the Derwent River. Thirteen participants attended including eight from interstate with two CT instructors: Mark Oates and Dan Hall. The Derwent proved to be an ideal venue for a beginner course with Day 1 held at Hayes Corner and the Day 2 morning session at Railway Bridge with the

Over summer the first official Australian Packrafting Meetup will be hosted in Tasmania with the support of Canoe Tasmania. See: <https://australianpackraftingmeetup.com/> for further info. The program is still to be designed however it will be based out of the Arm River Camp from Friday 5th to Monday 8th January. It is supported by Hydro Tasmania and will involve releases on the Mersey and hopefully the Fisher and Ouse Rivers. Depending on levels groups will likely also paddle the upper Mersey above Lake Rowallan as well as the Lea and Leven Rivers.

One of the main objectives of the Meetup is to promote safety and improved technical skills as well as to create a positive social setting for like-minded pack-rafters. CT instructors/guides including Mark Oates, Alex McWhirter, Dan Hall and Todd Blackhall will be heavily involved in the program.



Pack Rafters scouting a bigger rapid Photo: M. Oates

RECREATION

Recreational paddling continues its growth with whitewater, sea, lake and estuary paddling being increasingly popular for fitness and general recreation. The Derwent Canoe Club and Tasmanian Canoe Club having followed Tamar Canoe Club's lead by scheduling regular novice to intermediate "under 3" trips, are providing increased pathways into white-water river paddling.

There are also many, informal paddling groups meeting for regular social and training paddles at many venues across the state. A continuing challenge is maintaining our enviable safety record and somehow reaching the legions of sit-on-top and beginner estuary/sea paddlers who pose risks to themselves through poor skills and potential lack of awareness of canoeing's inherent risks.

STRATEGIC FORUM

Canoe Tasmania again held a strategic forum with over 30 people representing all clubs attending and providing strong input to help guide Canoe Tasmania's planning for coming years. As with previous strategic forums, the unaffiliated Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club was invited to attend and provided strong representation and input. We remain hopeful that at some stage they may chose to affiliate with Canoe Tasmania which would further strengthen the association.

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the year Canoe Tasmania Board Member, Adam Dickenson, has continued to pursue plans for a range of possible white-water venue developments around the state. The vision is to ultimately develop a *white-water trail* – a series of venues or white-water parks which could attract greater numbers of interstate and international paddlers to come to Tasmania for paddling holidays as well as providing greater opportunity for local paddlers. The trail may include short single-feature play-wave type venues and longer courses through strategic modification of existing sites. International white water course designer and builder, John Felton, has been engaged with member club funding, to review initial options and provide some concepts which could assist to gain funding for more detailed feasibility studies.

AUSTRALIAN MASTERS GAMES 2017

In October 2017 the Cradle Coast Region of Tasmania will host the Australian Masters Games. On behalf of the Canoe Tasmania Board, Nic Wilson has been working closely with the Tasmanian Canoe Club's Jeremy Norton and a team of others club members preparing for the Canoe/Kayak/Ski/SUP (StandUp Paddle Board) competitions being held as part of the Games.

Flatwater races will be held at Lake Barrington along with Rowing, and an Ocean Race will be held between Wynyard and Burnie. Planning is well advanced and we look forward to a successful Games.

WORLD MASTERS GAMES – AUCKLAND NZ

In April 2017 a team of Derwent Canoe Club paddlers travelled to Auckland to compete in the slalom at the World Masters Games. The race was held on the challenging and great fun new artificial course at Wero in Auckland's south. Peter Eckhardt and John and David Borojevic were joined by former DCC members, Jon Males (now living in England) and Viv Golding (running a canoeing business in Qld), along with five other Australian paddlers from interstate.

The Tasmanian team was very successful with Peter getting a Gold Medal in C1 in his age group, plus a Teams medal, and Viv and Jon getting various medals. In the final race David and John teamed up with a Russian slalom paddler to take the Gold Medal in the 45+ Men's K1 Teams. A very successful and great fun competition, with friendly people from around the world and great Kiwi hosts.



Peter Eckhardt, World Masters Games, Auckland

MAURITIUS OCEAN CLASSIC REPORT

By Richard McMinn

Six DCC paddlers travelled to Mauritius for the Investec Surf-Ski Week and Mauritius Ocean Classic: John Bamford, David Pinch, Roz Barber, Greg Pollard Al Mearns and me.

The first day we got there we were met by 23 degree water and air temperature and a 4m+ swell breaking over the reef a couple of hundred metres off the beach. This swell was too big for any paddlers to get outside of the lagoon and paddle in the waves and the wind, so we all paddled as a group, with about 60 other paddlers from around the world, from our resort to the finish line for the Mauritius Ocean Classic at Le Morne.

Most days after that were repeats of each other with some of the Tasmanians doing the same paddle as the first day while the others ventured out into the ocean. With 15-17kt wind and 2.5-3.5m ocean swells there were some amazing surfs to be had. We all ended up at Le Morne at the end of each morning's paddle and spent a bit of time surfing on the waves as they broke around the edge of the reef passes before getting on the bus back to the resort to eat our fill of burgers and ice-cream and drink our fill of cocktails (all of which were free of course!).

The afternoons and evenings were filled with a mix of clinics and presentations from the pro paddlers that were there for the race.

On the Thursday, we had the "FTL Sporty's Race". This is a "novelty" teams race with a different format each year. This year was a 1000m(ish) relay with a deep-water remount start for each leg (i.e. the next paddler had to be waiting in the water before they could be tagged). My team, led by Keith Fenn (owner of Fenn Kayaks), managed to take out the win in our first heat, then took out the event overall with a decisive win in the final.

Despite a brilliant opening leg by Roz Barber, her team unfortunately wasn't able to hold onto their lead in the womens' race. Dave Pinch and John Bamford ended up in the same team, who also made it into the final. Al and Polly pushed hard but unfortunately didn't make it into the final.

On the final day we had the big race. Four of the Tasmanian paddlers took on the main race around the outside of the reef, through the famous Le Morne Pass and onto the finish, while Roz and Al took on the Insider race within the reef. Al came second in the Insider race, Roz came 2nd in the women's and a fantastic 4th overall.

In the main race, I had a stunning run, going wave for wave with Keith Fenn and Hein Van Roonyen (Owner of Carbonology Skis) until it was time to come through the pass. Entering the pass, despite taking a more conservative line than the racers in front I had a 2m+ wave break over the top of me. I somehow stayed in the ski, but shortly afterwards I managed to catch some weed on my rudder and lost several places in the final 2km flatwater push to the finish line to finish 28th overall. John Bamford finished 44th, Polly was 57th and Pinchy was 74th.

It was a phenomenal week of paddling - all of the paddlers there are friendly and helpful and everyone is looking out for each other. Even for the less experienced paddlers, it is possible to spend the week paddling within the reef in the flat water and enjoy the sea life, warm water and warm air. Most of the pros are also happy to take less experienced paddlers out in a double to get a taste of the open ocean swells outside of the reef. Roz did this with Hein from Carbonology the day before the race and you could hear her yells of excitement from one end of the island to the other.

I can't recommend it more highly as a paddling holiday.

SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP

Canoe Tasmania continued to receive strong support from the Tasmanian Government through Sport and Recreation Tasmania who again provided a Development Grant, enabling us to employ a development officer and continue to deliver the Canoe Education Program at an affordable price.

Hydro Tasmania also continued their support, assisting not only with scheduling numerous water releases to enable recreation, education and competition, but also in entering into a licence agreement and assisting financially and technically with the canal works at the Brady's Lake course.

Support from and work with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, the new managers of the Mersey Regional Whitewater Reserve, has continued with planning for restoration of the Mersey slalom course well advanced.

As always, we thank the multitude of other smaller supporters who provided event prizes, gear discounts and support in other ways to our clubs and paddlers throughout the year.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Canoe Tasmania and its clubs have had a frustrating year with the Sporting DNA system that Australian Canoeing use for membership and event entry.

Canoe Tasmania has provided extensive feedback about the frustrations experienced and we understand AC is currently reviewing this program and its IT service providers. Improvements are desperately needed to help the clubs more effectively manage their member based services and to reduce the workload and frustrations for volunteer club officials.

BOARD

All seven position on the Canoe Tasmania Board were filled for the entire year with the Board consisting of five *Interested* and two *Independent* Directors.

John Borojevic	Chair (DCC)	Phil Watkins	Secretary (DCC)
John McCausland	Treasurer (Tamar CC)	Alex McWhirter	Canoe Ed (Independent)
Adam Dickenson	Facilities (Tamar CC)	Nic Wilson	(Tas CC)
Andrew Bennett	Independent Member		

Board business was conducted by email and telephone to negate the need for face-to-face meetings throughout the year. David Marshall continues as Canoe Tasmania's voluntary Auditor.

FINANCES

Canoe Tasmania remains in a strong position financially with good membership numbers, a fourth club now affiliated, and discussions continuing with the Tas Sea Canoeing Club. We have kept affiliation fees low again in 2016-17, financially benefiting clubs and strengthening their ability to fund activities and equipment for their members. Clubs continue to be financially strong despite the costly challenges in the repair of key facilities and to have strong membership numbers.

Overall Canoe Tasmania, and particularly the member clubs which comprise it (Canoe Tasmania as a peak body exists because of the clubs and not vice-versa), have achieved a huge amount in 2016-17.

We look forward to a strong and successful 2017-18 with further increases in the number of Tasmanian's paddling, joining clubs, learning canoeing skills, and enjoying the wonderful sport of canoeing on Tasmania's rivers, lakes and sea, and on waterways across the world, whether recreationally or competitively or both.