

Paddle Australia is writing at this time to update the Slalom community on the status of the 2021 Paddle Australia Canoe Slalom Age Championships. Regrettably, the decision has been made that these National Championships cannot proceed on the proposed dates of 15-17 January, 2021.

In July of this year, Paddle Australia published on the PA website a set of criteria to be considered in assessing whether a particular competition should proceed. Unfortunately the recent re-emergence of COVID-19 in some parts of the country means that several of these criteria are no longer able to be met. Specifically:

- At this time, travel restrictions are in place between parts of NSW and Victoria. As a result and as things stand, some participants would not be able to attend a competition at Eildon, Victoria without a hotel quarantine period. Such a situation is incompatible with PA's requirement that participants be able to travel freely at least six weeks prior to the competition dates;
- Travel restrictions will also limit some athletes' ability to train for the competition. With respect to Canoe Slalom, it is noted that the Penrith Whitewater Stadium is within the 'Greater Sydney' region which is currently affected. Unfortunately we have already seen interstate athletes looking to train at PWS have their preparations severely impacted; and
- Travel restrictions from NSW may also have an impact on the ability of some volunteers to attend Eildon in January. This has the potential to negatively impact the ability of competition organisers to manage the championships.

While there is a possibility that the situation may improve in the coming days and weeks, it is believed that the prudent course of action is to take this decision now, so that paddlers, organisers and their families can plan accordingly. For those paddlers who have already entered the competition and are now unable to attend, refunds will be issued upon request.

The Paddle Australia Canoe Slalom Technical Committee will meet in the New Year to consider alternative plans for the 2021 Paddle Australia Canoe Slalom Age Championships and further information will be provided to the community after these discussions.

Finally, it is noted that the postponement of 2021 Paddle Australia Canoe Slalom Age Championships does not mean that there will be no competition held on the dates of 15-17 January at Eildon. Local organisers are working to ensure that a competition will still take place, the Victorian Canoe Slalom Age Championships, for athletes who are able to travel to Victoria to take part. Enquiries regarding this competition should be directed to vicslalomtechcommittee@gmail.com. Paddle Australia thanks local organisers for their dedication to providing competition opportunities to paddlers during this difficult period.

The decision to postpone the 2021 Paddle Australia Canoe Slalom Age Championships has been a difficult one, coming at the end of a difficult year for both paddling and the broader Australian community. As many of us break for a well earned holiday, Paddle Australia would like to take this final opportunity to thank all of you for your patience, dedication and support in 2020. We hope that 2021 brings with it a brighter outlook as we all work to adapt to the pandemic.