

# ***Strategic Plan for Canoe Ocean Racing in Australia***

***Draft prepared by the Paddle Australia Canoe Ocean Racing Technical Committee  
for consideration by  
the Paddle Australia Competition Committee***

***July 2019***

### BACKGROUND

In October 2018 Paddle Australia released the 'Strategic Plan for Paddling in Australia' (the "SPPA"). This document was developed based on an extensive consultation and collaboration with the paddling community across Australia. A copy of the SPPA is available on the Paddle Australia [website](#).

Canoe Ocean Racing is the discipline most recently recognised by the International Canoe Federation, however its history in Australia is a proud one, with surfskis originating in Australia in the early twentieth century. It is important that this history continues to be recognised and respected as the discipline becomes more aligned with ICF processes and competitions.

This 'Strategic Plan for Canoe Ocean Racing in Australia' (the "Canoe Ocean Racing Plan") is a complement to the SPPA. It also acknowledges that the Ocean Racing community is far larger than simply the number of paddlers who are members of Paddle Australia. While making Paddle Australia membership more attractive is an objective of the Paddle Australia Canoe Ocean Racing Technical Committee, this Plan seeks to support all paddlers and volunteers within the community, whether PA members or not.

### WHAT'S IN THE CANOE OCEAN RACING PLAN

It is acknowledged that there are limited resources available to meet objectives. Accordingly, the Canoe Ocean Racing Plan will not seek to address every component of the SPPA but will rather focus on a smaller number of key, strategic priorities.

The **Activities** and **Actions** that Canoe Ocean Racing will undertake under this plan are broken down into **Strategic Areas**, numbered to correspond with the seven (7) Strategic Areas referenced in the SPPA, as follows:

- 1 Providing participation opportunities for all those wanting to join our community, whatever their age, background or ability
- 2 Promoting and supporting pathways for those seeking to be the best they can be in their chosen area
- 3 Developing our competitions into events that demand attention and involvement
- 4 Developing a network that seamlessly connects and delivers services to the entire paddling community
- 5 Ensuring that our connected community benefits from strong, consultative leadership that adds genuine value

### REFRESHING THE CANOE OCEAN RACING PLAN

The Canoe Ocean Racing Plan will be a dynamic document. The Paddle Australia Canoe Ocean Racing Technical Committee will meet each year with the express purposes of reviewing progress against the Canoe Ocean Racing Plan and considering what changes, if any, are required to its priorities.

This process will align with the rolling nature of the whole of the SPPA, which will similarly be updated annually. Part of the purpose of the Canoe Ocean Racing Plan is to inform these whole of sport discussions and to contribute to the ongoing dialogue around improving the standing of the sport of paddling within the Australian community.

Comments to the Canoe Ocean Racing Plan are welcome via email to [oceanracing@paddle.org.au](mailto:oceanracing@paddle.org.au).

### 1 STRATEGIC AREA: Providing participation opportunities for all those wanting to join our community, whatever their age, background or ability

- We recognise that participation in Ocean Racing will remain linked to participation in Surf Life Saving. There is an opportunity for Ocean Racing to develop introductory programs for young paddlers which teach surf craft to the benefit of both sports
- Given the size of the craft used for Ocean Racing, storage of boats will continue to be an issue. It is a long term objective to help develop solutions for the community

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACORTC Actions	PACORTC Measures/Status
1.3 Target specific markets and engage actively with target groups including youth, women and older-aged Australians	Discuss, agree, pilot and implement a kayak program for young athletes as an introduction to surf-skis, as part of developing mutually beneficial relationship with SLSA	<i>Maybe outside scope of plan due to limited resources.</i>	Develop program to introduce surf ski skills to 11-15 year olds (ie before surf life saving kids are permitted to participate)	Identify potential champions of this program, who are embedded within both surf life saving and ocean racing, by end Sep
				Re-design the former 'Surf to Kayak' program so that it promotes both sports by end Mar
			Increase participation, in particular female, by promoting the Mixed Doubles classification	Ensure that Mixed Double is included in the program for 2020 National Championships
1.4 Develop initiatives to reduce barriers, such as equipment rental and storage facilities	Establish pilots, develop a range of turnkey options to engage local authorities and other funding bodies	4 pilot programs underway based on a variety of options	Produce a template document for use by Clubs nationwide to apply for funding for the purchase of a storage container	Costings for trailer adaption finalised by end Aug
				Template funding document finalised by end Dec
1.5 Press for increased access to water and the development of appropriate facilities	Lead and support initiatives for the development of facilities for paddling generally and slalom and sprint facilities in particular	Facility development guide developed with arguments supporting increased water access	Support Paddle Australia and the state Member Associations in the lobbying of government for improved storage opportunities	

### 2 STRATEGIC AREA: Promoting and supporting pathways for those seeking to be the best they can be in their chosen area

- An understanding of the different athlete development routes within Ocean Racing is essential, given the inter-relationships with other paddle disciplines as well as surf life saving
- The standard of our top athletes is a strength of Canoe Ocean Racing, however the shortage of coaches in the development area of the athlete pathway is a significant issue that needs to be addressed
- Within Ocean Racing, the coordination of officials and the workforce is the role of Race Director. It is important for our sport that we support the development of Race Directors across the country

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACORTC Actions	PACORTC Measures/Status
2.1 Develop athlete pathway for all disciplines to encourage more participation, better retention and improved performance	Work with SLSA and their clubs to ensuring mutually beneficial sprint kayak programs are in place	MOU with SLSA and strong mutually beneficial relationships with key clubs	Assist with the development of this MOU	As required
			Work to amend SPPA to recognise the importance of this relationship to Ocean Racing	Next iteration of SPPA reflects that sprint is not the only stakeholder
2.2 Develop, document and promote clear pathways for officials and volunteers	Review and agree framework and training and mentoring needs for general and discipline specific pathways for officials at all levels	Framework complete with general and discipline specific officials education programs in place	Recognise Race Directors as the key 'officials' within Ocean racing support their development accordingly	Identify top tier of Race Directors in Aust by end Aug
				conduct survey of RDs to determine development opportunities by end Dec
2.3 Focus on the development of coach pathways, education and mentoring program	Review and agree framework for general and discipline specific pathways for coaches	Framework finalised, agreed and fully documented	Develop and promote Level 1 Coaching course	Receive and review Level 1 Coaching core content by end Sep
				Provide Ocean Racing specific content by end Nov

### 3 STRATEGIC AREA: Developing our competitions into events that demand attention and involvement

- Good competitions are the lifeblood of Ocean Racing and the development of strong Ocean Racing competitions should be the focus of the PACORTC in the immediate future
- It is appropriate that Paddle Australia oversees the Paddle Australia Canoe Ocean Racing National Championships, to be delivered as a single competition in partnership with a Race Director and to be governed under a Paddle Australia Event Host Agreement. In the short term these National Championships should be the sole selection event for the purposes of selecting a team to attend the ICF Canoe Ocean Racing World Championships.
- There are numerous Ocean Racing competitions and series conducted throughout Australia, delivered by state Member Associations, Affiliated Clubs and other third parties. It is not the role of Paddle Australia to develop new events of its own. Other than the National Championships, PA's role is to support the growth and improvement of existing competitions to provide challenging, safe and fun opportunities for ocean paddlers
- In addition to the National Championships, it is a priority to have, within three years, ICF confirmation of at least two other races in Australia through which athletes can attain world ranking points
- There are opportunities for Canoe Ocean Racing in the hosting of major international events, including the ICF World Championships, not only as participation opportunities for our athletes but as catalysts for the development of our sport across a number of areas
- A high standard of technical delivery, and transfer of knowledge between events, is optimal in the development of Ocean Racing
- There is a long term goal to make participation in Ocean Racing events more cost effective for paddlers through a Paddle Australia membership and hence to make Paddle Australia membership more attractive to paddlers

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACORTC Actions	PACORTC Measures/Status
3.1 Review the purpose of our major events and align programs and structure to purpose	Align our events with our overall strategic direction, create a long-term event strategy and establishing a clear purpose for all National and State events	A documented strategic direction for our events is in place and regularly reviewed	Develop single competition 2020 National Champs, which will also act as the sole selection event for the 2020 ICF World Championships/selection for WC, window is Feb-Apr	Prepare EOI for 2020 competition to be published by end of Aug. Competition is to take place on east coast in Feb-Apr window, win non-PA members eligible to participate with payment of day membership fee. Age groups and categories to mirror ICF World Championships

## Strategic Plan for Canoe Ocean Racing in Australia

3.2 Promote our major events to showcase our sport and our athletes				Prepare EOI for 2021 competition by end of Aug. Competition is to take place on west coast in Nov 20-Apr21 window
				Confirm host of 2020 event by end Sep
				Ensure competition includes Mixed Double, OC1, OC2 categories
			Develop set of competition standards for National Championships	Standards in place and applied for 2020 National Championships
	Clarify the role of events in our selection processes and publish information on selection as early as possible based on the events that athletes are being selected for	Selection framework reviewed and modified. 4-year strategy in place for Olympic disciplines	Ensure timely publication of selection criteria for ICF World Championships	Finalise selection criteria and distribute same to the community by end Oct
			Long term goal to include three Australian competitions within ICF listing of races which earn world ranking points	Make application to ICF for one current race to be listed by 31 Dec
			Determine paddling competency assessment process, in particular for masters athletes	Draft competency criteria by end Jun
	Ensure continuous improvement through feedback from events, especially from athletes, coaches and officials	Feedback from all national events based on consistent process, allowing comparison across events	Obtain athlete and Race Director feedback from key events	Conduct participant satisfaction survey following 2020 National Championships
	Develop and annually update communication plans with major events as key component, including	Annual Comms plan in place as basis for all Events Communications	Develop communication channels to reach Ocean Racing community	Determine rules around the use of the Paddle Australia Ocean Racing Facebook page by end Sep

	livestream of selected events where this can be financed within budget			Determine viability of live streaming 2020 National Championships by 30 Nov
	Promote major events, particularly using the interest created through Olympic selection and participation to strengthen awareness	Heightened awareness at time of Selection and Olympic Games	Pursue opportunities for hosting 2022 ICF World Championships	Confirm interest from WA local government by 30 Sep
	Identify broadcast partner for major events in Australia, considering broadcast requirements as part of event strategy.	<i>Maybe outside scope of plan due to limited resources</i>	Determine viability of partnering with an Ocean Racing broadcast partner	Determine opportunities for WA state government funding by 31 Dec
				Make contact with Ocean Racing TV by end Sep
3.3 Build competition and event capacity to ensure consistent paddling offering	As part of event strategy, identify risks likely to impact over the plan period and how these will be mitigated	Risks identified and mitigated in event strategy	Investigate the best on water tracking system for future use	Confirm availability for use of AOCRA trackers by end Aug
				Undertake market analysis to determine potential alternatives by end Dec
	Review governance arrangements and clearly identify the role of Technical Committees in the planning and execution of events	Governance and management of events clarified, including role of Technical Committees	Identify new PACORTC members	Confirm identity of state Technical Committee members by end Aug
			Finalise PACORTC Terms of Reference	Identify additional PACORTC so that at least one representative from each state by end Oct ToR finalised by end Oct
	Update or develop comprehensive events manuals covering the planning and execution of all major events, reviewing and updating information after each event	Event Manuals provide transfer of knowledge providing consistency between events and continuous improvement	Construct an Australian Events Manual, incorporating the appropriate sections of the ICF regulations	Assess applicability of South African and AOCRA safety regulations by end Dec

3.4 Working with partners, aim to have a stake in all major participation events	Define requirements for PA and MAs to promote events organised by third parties	Requirements defined and discussed with event organisers	Build national calendar of events to promote existing competitions	Host calendar on Paddle Australia Ocean Racing Facebook page
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### 4 STRATEGIC AREA: Developing a network that seamlessly connects and delivers services to the entire paddling community

- This new membership and events platform is seen as an underpinning requirement for the future of the Australian paddling community generally.
- Our network can play a key role in connecting paddlers to clubs and competitions, but we must better understand the interests of participants to ensure relevant information and services are provided
- There is a role for the Paddle Australia membership and events platform in assisting in the regulation of Ocean Racing, through the consolidation of data around competition participation and paddler competence

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACORTC Actions	PACORTC Measures/Status
4.1 Continuously identify requirements for our digital platform at local, state and national level	Establish working party, with a range of user representatives, to oversee development and implementation of new digital platform	Working party in place with clear terms of reference	Maximise the capabilities of GoMembership to assist in the monitoring of Ocean Racing event participation and the assessment of paddler competence	Provide specs to GoMembership development team by end Aug
				Assist in development work as required

### 5 STRATEGIC AREA: Ensuring that our connected community benefits from strong, consultative leadership that adds genuine value

- It is recognised that Paddle Australia has not historically contributed to the development or management of the discipline. It is necessary that Paddle Australia continue to work towards the building of relationships within the Ocean Racing community to make the discipline as inclusive as possible
- We recognise that the Paddle Australia Canoe Ocean Racing Technical Committee has an opportunity to provide leadership and stability for the sport
- A strong national brand, with all the organisations involved aligned and providing relevant products, services and other offerings, is essential in people recognising the value of an on-going association with what we offer as a community

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACORTC Actions	PACORTC Measures/Status
5.3 Reinforce the role of PA as the 'authority voice' in advocating for paddling	Build a stakeholder engagement plan, focused on those that are engaged in, or have the potential to engage in mutually beneficial relationships with the paddling community	Stakeholder engagement plan documented and agreed.	Develop a stakeholder engagement plan, which includes communications specific to the Ocean Racing community	Stakeholder mapping exercise completed by end Jan
				Stakeholder engagement plan completed by end Apr