

Strategic Plan for Canoe Polo in Australia

Draft prepared by the Paddle Australia Canoe Polo Technical Committee

for consideration by

the Paddle Australia Competition Committee

October 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](#).

This 'Strategic Plan for Canoe Polo in Australia' (the "Canoe Polo Plan") is a complement to the SPPA. It seeks to align the objectives and priorities of Canoe Polo with the SPPA while also recognising that the operational model for Canoe Polo clubs and competitions can be different from the other disciplines.

As the only team focussed discipline within paddling, Canoe Polo provides elements of team spirit, community and fun which are different to those experienced in the other disciplines. These are a strength of our sport. The mission in the coming years must be to grow this community and to provide opportunities for as many people as possible to discover what Canoe Polo has to offer.

WHAT'S IN THE CANOE POLO PLAN

It is acknowledged that there are limited resources available to meet objectives. Accordingly, the Canoe Polo 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 Polo 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

REFRESHING THE CANOE POLO PLAN

The Canoe Polo Plan will be a dynamic document. The Paddle Australia Canoe Polo Technical Committee will meet each year with the express purposes of reviewing progress against the Canoe Polo 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 Polo 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 Polo Plan are welcome via email to polo@paddle.org.au.

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

- There is a growing understanding that ‘introduction to paddling’ products based on Canoe Polo are seen as more attractive than individual paddling programs for school aged children. There is an opportunity for Canoe Polo to promote introductory programs such as PaddleBall which introduce children to Canoe Polo at the beginning of their introduction to paddling.
- We must seek opportunities to allow paddlers from other disciplines to try Canoe Polo.
- Water access and development of infrastructure are issues that already limit participation in some areas. This challenge will continue as population increases. Plans are needed to address this in the medium to long term
- Priority must be given to the development of permanent Canoe Polo facilities. These will provide hubs for the local Canoe Polo communities and reduce the costs associated staging competitions
- Canoe Polo cannot thrive without strong Clubs. A key focus for governing bodies within Canoe Polo must be to engage with and help develop local Clubs

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACPTC Actions	PACPTC Measures/Status
1.1 Implement Paddle Oz, the National Junior Paddling Program, ensuring suitability as paddling offering under the SA Sporting Schools initiative	Full roll out of Paddle Oz and Sporting Schools, partially reliant on digital platform development	Sporting Schools providing \$200,000 in grant support for paddling to schools in 2021/22	Seek to include Canoe Polo targeted programs within the existing Move It Aus funding	Ensure process for accessing funding is promoted to the CP community by end Nov
				Assist Canoe Polo Clubs in lodging applications to deliver PaddleBall programs by end Dec
				Utilise Canoe Polo Clubs to deliver Paddleball programs to 300 children by end June
1.3 Target specific markets and engage actively with target			Investigate opportunities to run competitions with other paddle disciplines	Discuss at November meeting of the Competition Committee

groups including youth, women and older-aged Australians			Develop Schools engagement strategy for Canoe Polo	Confirm status of existing MA school engagement programs by end Nov
				Develop roadmap for developing Schools engagement strategy at next PACPTC meeting
1.4 Develop initiatives to reduce barriers, such as equipment rental and storage facilities	Gather examples of best practice and share amongst clubs and other interested parties	Report developed as basis for next steps	Audit of Club facilities, including storage options	Equipment Officer to liaise with STCs to complete audit by end Feb
			Determine medium term Canoe Polo asset rejuvenation plan	Draft asset management plan by end April
			Determine costs for potential future purchases, including pontoons, for future funding applications to government	Provide costings for permanent pontoons by end Oct
				Complete list of canoe Polo costings by end April
1.5 Press for increased access to water and the development of appropriate facilities	Gather information and share best practice on the development of access to new bodies of water	Report available. Best practice shared on on-going basis	Permanent facilities	costings for permanent field by end Nov
	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	Determine opportunities to access state government infrastructure grants	Seek advice from MAs by end Nov
			Determine whether opportunities exist to partner with state government recreation camps	Seek advice from MAs by end Nov
1.7 Club Development			Draft Club Development Strategy	First draft available for consideration at next PACPTC meeting
			Develop Club Accreditation System	First draft available for consideration by end May

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

- Well-defined athlete pathways are essential not only in encouraging participation and retention but also for the success of our HP program.
- Canoe Polo athletes may start out their paddling journey in a variety of paddling disciplines. Partnership with other paddling disciplines will be to our advantage.
- High performance programs must be strategically implemented and transparently communicated to the community
- A lack of quality coaches is a significant issue that needs to be addressed during the plan period.
- There is a high reliance on volunteers at all levels of the sport. Recruitment, retention, recognition and reward are all areas that require action and, if not addressed, have the potential to impact negatively on our sport

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACPTC Actions	PACPTC Measures/Status
2.1 Develop athlete pathway for all disciplines to encourage more participation, better retention and improved performance	Continue work to develop long-term pathway plans for all disciplines, working across these disciplines to optimise opportunities where appropriate	4-year development plans in place aligned to 4-year RSP	Deliver high performance training opportunities	Confirm program of state based development camps in Qld, SA and Tas by end Nov
				Deliver U21 national training squad program during 2020
			Develop long term calendar for international tours	Finalise 2020/21 calendar by end Apr
2.2 Develop, document and promote clear pathways for officials and volunteers	Encourage and support Australian officials to gain ICF qualifications and to participate in international events	50% increase in number of Australian ICF Technical Officials	Encourage and support Australian officials to gain ICF qualifications and to participate in international events	Liaise with CACSPTC by end of Dec to learn from the development of the Sprint officials' course
				Finalise Australia Canoe Polo Officials Course by end June
				Ensure there are two Australian representatives at the 2021 ICF accreditation course held at Oceania Championships

			Encourage and support the development of Canoe Polo referees	Confirm numbers of referees at each level by end Oct Determine 12 month target for the training of referees by end Dec Hold referee exams at Summer Series events
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	Finalise and promote Level 1 coaching course	Finalise the Canoe Polo specific module of the Level 1 Coaching Course by end Dec
	Ensure that appropriate training and mentoring opportunities are in place for coaches at all levels, including support and resource materials	Quality coach training and mentoring widely available	Introduce coaching requirements for National level competitions	Confirm and promote coaching requirements for a) National Championships and b) Summer Series at next meeting

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

- There is a pivotal role for the PACPTC in leading the development of the sport. Roles and responsibilities must be clarified so that there can be future alignment of objectives at all levels of Canoe Polo
- Good competitions are the lifeblood of Canoe Polo and the development of strong Canoe Polo competitions should be an ongoing focus.
- It is recognised that the operating models for Canoe Polo competitions differ from those of other paddling disciplines. Organisational roles and the delegation of commercial responsibilities must be transparent and understood
- Our major competitions have to be built to promote our sport and athletes to the public, with our core fan base being the paddling community itself. There needs to be attention paid to the promotion of these competitions
- A high standard of technical delivery, and transfer of knowledge between events, is needed to optimise the development of Canoe Polo. We have a heavy reliance on volunteers and need to ensure that the organisation and regulation of competitions reflects this

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACPTC Actions	PACPTC 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	Investigate opportunities for investment in future National Championships	Re-connect with Sports Marketing Australia and provide brief by end Nov
			Engage with ongoing PA project to assess feasibility of hosting multiple paddle events in Tasmania in 2022	Make contact with Lake Barrington to confirm feasibility to host by end Oct
				Engage in PA Competition Committee discussion at November meeting
3.2 Promote our major events to showcase our sport and our athletes	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>	Investigate options around streaming of major competitions	Plan for 2020 National Champs to be presented at next TC meeting

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3.3 Build competition and event capacity to ensure consistent paddling offering	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 Equipment Officer for PACPTC	Develop job description by end Nov
				Advertise position and identify successful candidate by end Dec
			Confirm a NSW representative for the PACPTC	Identify NSW Committee member by end Nov
			Support the development of Canoe Polo in Western Australia	Include discussion at next meeting
			Confirm governance structures for PACPTC	Finalise PACPTC Terms of Reference by end Nov
				Confirm roles for the administration of competitions by end Dec
		Improve communications between PACPTC and state Technical Committees	Finalise communications plan with STCs by end Jan	

4 STRATEGIC AREA: Developing a network that seamlessly connects and delivers services to the entire paddling community

- There is a clear benefit to our community in having standard documents and manuals available to be shared
- It is necessary that communication channels between national, state and local are all open – this is especially relevant for Canoe Polo as it includes national level Club based competitions
- Individual paddlers and local Clubs must feel part of a national Canoe Polo community

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACPTC Actions	PACPTC Measures/Status
4.3 Develop and maintain a 'resource hub' for use by PA, MAs, Clubs and others	Review and promote relevant generic and sport specific information. Agree likely on-going content, structure and platform for 'resource hub'	Structure and information to be incorporated discussed and agreed, with schedule for further populating hub in place	Establish a central repository for Canoe Polo information	Confirm access to Canoe Polo dropbox as well as parameters for use by end of Oct
4.4 Introduce and deliver regular forums for planning, review and information exchange	Formalise arrangements for the review and updating of the 4-year RSP with the engagement of all stakeholders	Annual planning and review process agreed, documented and promoted	Develop Communications Plan for Canoe Polo	Revised plan to be considered at next meeting
	Consider the introduction of a National Conference, addressing content, timing and frequency	Decision taken on introduction of a National Conference	Establish an opportunity for Canoe Polo to come together for strategic discussion	Host community event at 2020 National Championships for discussion of Strategic Plan