

# ***Strategic Plan for Canoe Freestyle in Australia***

***Draft prepared by the Paddle Australia Canoe Freestyle 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](#).

This 'Strategic Plan for Canoe Freestyle in Australia' (the "Canoe Freestyle Plan") is a complement to the SPPA. It supports the **Vision** expressed in the SPPA of "a united paddling community" and seeks to reflect the challenges and opportunities for Canoe Freestyle within the language of the SPPA.

Canoe Freestyle is recognised under the International Canoe Federation, including both kayak and canoe disciplines. We are a welcoming and positive community which seeks to grow Canoe Freestyle by finding better solutions to the two main issues for our sport:

- Gaining access to Canoe Freestyle friendly facilities around Australia; and
- Ensuring that the existing facility at Penrith Whitewater Stadium is managed so as to support the future for Canoe Freestyle.

### WHAT'S IN THE CANOE FREESTYLE PLAN

It is acknowledged that there are limited resources available to meet objectives. Accordingly, the Canoe Freestyle Plan will focus on providing an achievable roadmap for advancing the sport, recognising that it is not practical to try and tackle all opportunities and challenges at the same time.

The **Activities** and **Actions** that Canoe Freestyle 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

### REFRESHING THE CANOE FREESTYLE PLAN

The Canoe Freestyle Plan will be a dynamic document. The Paddle Australia Canoe Freestyle Technical Committee will meet each year with the express purposes of reviewing progress against the Canoe Freestyle 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 Freestyle 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 Freestyle Plan are welcome via email to [Freestyle@paddle.org.au](mailto:Freestyle@paddle.org.au).

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

- Participation in Canoe Freestyle is dependent on access to the right water. The PACFTC recognises that to positively impact the future of the discipline in Australia it must work towards creative and sustainable solutions to this question of water access. This must be our focus.
- Plans are needed to address this question of water access over the long term, however there are steps that can be taken now which can help in the development of these plans.
- Penrith Whitewater Stadium is a tremendous asset for our sport and has the potential to be a world class venue. It can be managed in ways that assist or hinder the development of Canoe Freestyle, so key relationships must be established and strengthened.
- Participation numbers throughout Canoe Freestyle need to grow and we are committed to finding ways to welcome more people to our sport.

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACFTC Actions	PACFTC Measures/Status
1.3 Target specific markets and engage actively with target groups including youth, women and older-aged Australians	Seek sources of funding, especially to target women, youth and older-age Australians	<i>Likely outside scope of plan due to limited resources.</i>	Increase female participation within Freestyle	Discuss with Paddle NSW, PVCC and Paddle Australia High Performance to determine opportunities to collaborate by end Dec
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	Deliver a better configuration of the PWS course for Freestyle paddlers	Forward any information already provided to PWS by end Oct
				Confirm optimal Freestyle configuration by Nov 15
				Present proposal to PA Slalom by end Nov

			Formal request to be provided from PA for configuration of main feature over summer months by 15 Dec
			Present request for management of course configuration over winter (post Tokyo) by end Feb
		Develop a river wide beginner wave beneath the slalom course at PWS	Determine proposal for Wrinklies by end Dec - including process for trial and error
		Work to improve relationship with management of PWS	Engage with PA, other disciplines and other users to increase access to water for paddlers, including evening sessions
			Develop Club Night proposal over summer
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	Improve configuration of Eildon River	Engage with Canoes Plus to determine feasibility by end of Oct
		Support proposal for Tumut development	support as required
		Represent Freestyle in any discussions around a Perth Whitewater facility	support as required
		Represent Freestyle in any discussions around a Whitewater facility in South East Queensland	Make contact with Scott Shipley by end Oct
			Ensure that PA represents Freestyle interests in any discussions

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

- The Australian Freestyle community is fortunate to have some of the best human resources in the world. We should look for ways to better promote this fact and to better utilise these resources, not just for Freestyle but for paddling generally
- Athletes aspiring to perform in international competitions should be supported through a centralised development program
- There is an opportunity for the PACFTC to lead the development of a judging qualification which can act as a stepping stone to ICF accreditation

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACFTC Actions	PACFTC 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	Confirm strategy to host development camps for elite athletes	Discuss development pathway for athletes aiming for 2021 World Championships at next meeting
				Draft development funding application after next meeting, to be submitted to PA
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	Develop 'C class'/Australian judging certification, which doesn't rely on ICF involvement	Document Australian Freestyle Judging Qualification by end Dec
				Formalise PA endorsement by end of Jan
				Run next AFJQ session by end of June
Encourage and support Australian officials to gain ICF qualifications and to participate in international events	50% increase in number of Australian ICF Technical Officials	Aim to have two ICF Class judges (A or B) by end 2021	Identify four potential candidates following AFJQ session by end June	

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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	Co-ordinate national coaching clinic	Discuss at next meeting
			Finalise and promote Level 1 online coaching course	Confirm current requirements with PA by end Oct
				finalise Freestyle Level 1 coaching module by end Jan
	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	Find ways to leverage existing coaching expertise to benefit broader community	Confirm RPL process for transfer of existing coaching qualifications by end Oct

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

- We must build a national competition calendar which consists of multiple events and use these to promote the discipline of Canoe Freestyle
- Co-ordination of Freestyle competitions with other disciplines can add value in terms of raising the profile of Freestyle and also facilitating access to water. We will support initiatives to combine multiple competitions in a single location

Activities	Actions	Measures/Status	PACFTC Actions	PACFTC 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 a National competitions calendar which involves more than simply the National Championships	Confirm and promote Christmas Throwdown
			Continue to seek opportunities to align Freestyle with other competitions in other disciplines	Hold 2020 National Championships as part of SIWF
				Engage with PA Competition Committee discussions regarding future multi-discipline festivals
3.2 Promote our major events to showcase our sport and our athletes	Develop and annually update communication plans with major events as key component, including livestream of selected events where this can be financed within budget	Annual Comms plan in place as basis for all Events Communications	Develop Communications Plan for 2020 National Championships	Ensure competition details for 2020 National Championships are available on appropriate channels by end Nov
				Discuss communications requirements at next meeting
	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	Promote 2020 National Championships in advance	Develop library of 2019 images and footage (National Championships and others) by end Dec

	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>	Ensure streaming of National Championships	Determine streaming strategy and plan for National Champs by end Dec
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