

A growing club in Yarrowonga Mulwala



Brea Roadley and Kayla Whinray will join the Australian Canoeing Marathon Team in Oklahoma this year.

Established in 1975 the Yarrowonga Mulwala Amateur Canoe Club (YMACC) is a not-for-profit organization managed by people who enjoy kayaking and canoeing.

The club was initially formed to provide a base for local people wanting to participate in the iconic canoe race the Murray Marathon.

In past 40 years the club has produced many champions and record breaking athletes in marathon or ultra-marathon racing along with various Australian representatives in Championships.

More recently two of the club's female paddlers have qualified for the 2013 and 2014 Canoe Marathon World Championships (pictured right).

Paddling is a great way to increase cardio vascular fitness, increase muscle tone and have fun at the same time while enjoying the great Murray River environs.

YMACC provided member with various equipment to participate in the growing recreational sport.

Club 'Come and try' sessions and other events

The club holds 'come and try' sessions every Wednesday night during the Day Light Savings period (excluding the first 3 weeks of January). The sessions are undertaken in various locations to provide safe and interactive learning for new paddlers and those progressing into more challenging boats.

Those members that are interested in racing can participate in the Canoeing Victoria Summer Series which includes a number of events in our regional area including Yarraonga-Mulwala.

The Canoeing Victoria winter series is also another excellent racing opportunity and predominately held in locations in around the Melbourne and southern areas.

Paddlepower Program

In February 2014 the YMACC embarked on a campaign to attract young members of the community to become involved in the sport of canoeing through the Paddlepower Program.

Introduced by Canoeing Victoria Paddlepower is an exciting scheme that has been designed to support a young paddler's introduction and to progress through the different levels of paddling, including the value of exercise and healthy eating.

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Originally the plan was to have one group of 6-8 students between the ages of 8 and 14 join the program via advertising in the local school newsletters. Due to the overwhelming interest the club had to run an additional session. The success of the program led to the canoe club successfully being selected to conduct the Australian Sports Commission Active After School Communities program for year 3 and 5 students at Sacred Heart Primary School in April and May, 2014.

The Paddlepower Program originally started with three-time Olympian Warwick Drapper providing a presentation to one of the local schools recalling his experiences at the Olympic Games and an outline of the Paddlepower program to

encourage students to join up.

On the 5th of March the first session was held in the local outdoor pool other sessions were then held on an enclosed lagoon on Lake Mulwala. This finally progressed to the Murray River where members of the group were able to paddle down the Mighty Murray River. As well as students we also had parents try the sport of kayaking at the clubs 'come and try' session that immediately followed the Paddlepower Program.

The Paddlepower and Active After School Communities programs attracted local media coverage with the Yarrowonga Chronicle coming along to a number of sessions. An excellent photo and article appeared on the front page during the program. As a follow up to these junior programs the club held a Paddlepower Family Day on the 25th of May, 2014 that attracted over 40 people to have a paddle on Lake Mulwala, with many parents also joining in to have a paddle with their children.



PROGRAM	PARTICIPANTS				
	Junior	Siblings & Friends	Adults	New 2013-14 Members	Potential 2014-15 Members
Paddlepower	13	3	2	6	8
Active After School	14	0	0	3	6
Paddlepower Family Day	22	2	10	0	14
Murray Quad	0	2	4	3	2
Total New Paddlers	49	7	18		
New Members				12	
Potential New Members					30

Table 1: Participants in the YMACC Paddling programs

Benefits of running programs and events

Both the club and members benefit immensely from running programs and events.

Alongside running the Paddlepower Programs YMACC hosted the 2014 Murray Quad. A new multisport event that included a paddle leg alongside, a run, bike and swim legs. This also attracted new paddlers to the club so they could learn how to paddle and participate in the event.

The benefits for YMACC was an increase in membership with a number of people joining the club for the last three months of the season or taking up the June membership offer that Canoeing Victoria offered at the Paddlepower Family Day. Other participants are also planning to join the club for the 2014-2015 season.

The club will expand these programs to once again run at the start of the summer season as well as offer the next level of the Paddlepower Program and to continue to work with local schools to offer the Active After School Communities Program in term 4, 2014.

At the beginning of 2014 the Yarrowonga Mulwala Amateur Canoe Club had 16 paid up members. Following the introduction of these programs the club now has 28 members which was an increase of 75% including 9 junior members.

The Paddlepower Program along with the success of the club's other 'come and try' sessions it is hoped that the club continues to have more members representing them in events such as the Murray Marathon, the Murray Quad and state and national championships, to build on the success of the club's two young female members that are currently in the Australian Canoe Marathon Team to compete in the 2014 ICF World Canoe Marathon Championships in the USA. All these programs have been self-funded by the YMACC with the support of Canoeing Victoria.

The success of these programs is not only judged by great participation numbers but by the response and comments from the kids involved, this may be more important than numbers, some of the comments have been;

- "I don't like paddling - I love paddling"
- "That was the best thing I have ever done"
- "When can I come back?"
- "My dad's having as much fun as me"

The kids involved in these programs have been encouraged to come up with names for exercises, ideas for games and even a name for their group, which led to them naming themselves the Poddlers and they even came up with their own logo which we have since had professionally designed. They believe they look like peas in a pod when they are paddling in their kayaks so hence the name Poddlers.



Figure 4: Paddlepower Poddlers Logo

Future Plans

Now that these pilot programs have started and have been successful the club plans to continue and build on this success and incorporate it into the GMKIDS (Goulburn Murray Kayak Instructing and Development Squad) that the club has been working on training paddlers for competition not only in Yarrowonga but other areas in Northern Victoria, along the Murray River and in the Goulburn Valley.

As the club increases its membership and attracts more people to paddling they are also going to introduce a minimum skill standard for all new paddlers with the introduction of a basic skill course for all new paddling members. As

well as introducing paddlers the club will also be holding training days to get more instructors and coaches for their club and neighboring canoe clubs.

These programs will give a pathway from learning to paddle right through to representing Australia at World Championships or even the Olympics Games.

The Pathway



The Active After-school Communities and the Paddlepower Poddlers programs are aimed to introduce children from the age of 8 up to 15 to the sports of paddling.

Club Pods will be involved in further levels of the Paddlepower Program and attend Canoeing Victoria races or regattas. The plan is to expand the program to other areas in the Goulburn Murray district with the program to start in Shepparton in term 4.

GMKIDS training days will lead to members of these programs one day paddling at state and national competitions. This program gives kids a new activity to participate that is designed to meet the needs of young people that can lead to Olympic Games or just enjoy the natural environment that this area has to offer.

To continue these programs YMACC will be looking at grants and sponsorship for new equipment such as life jackets suitable for juniors, a purpose built trailer that can transport the small sit on top kayaks and other equipment to the various locations for paddling around the district.

If you would like further information please contact Tim Roadley (YMACC Coach and Secretary) on 0417373376 or email timroadley@gmail.com.

Paddle Power to the kids. During the past four weeks Yarrowonga Mulwala Canoe Club Coach Tim Roadley has successfully guided a group of students through five levels of paddlesport in a fun and flexible program. See story page 7.

Yarrowonga Mulwala Canoe Club Coach Tim Roadley is pictured with the students at Chumanna's Island lagoon in May.

10000 children participating each summer. The AASC program provides children with the opportunity to try a wide variety of sports and other structured physical activities through a positive and fun experience. In doing so, the program aims to encourage children to develop a love of sport that motivates them to join a local sporting club and get participants and their families active for life. For more information about the AASC program visit www.aasc.org.au/participating/aasc