



PRESIDENT'S EMAIL

MAY 2019

Dear Members

On behalf of the Committee I wanted to update you on some exciting developments that we are rolling out to enhance what the Club provides to members.

Sea Trek

I am pleased to advise that Penny Byron has kindly offered to take on the Sea Trek editor role. This is great news and when Penny and I were on the recent Easter Snake Island paddle we talked through possibilities for issues this year.

Basically, the plan is to get a mid-year issue out as soon as Penny has had a chance to come up to speed with the editing process. I anticipate this will be in next 3 months, but it will be subject to availability of trip reports and articles. We then plan to run another issue post the AGM weekend in early November, but before the end of 2019.

So, everyone who has been on an interesting trip recently or is willing to prepare an article of interest to members should contact Penny via the Sea Trek editor email on the website.

As far as communications more generally is concerned, we are going to concentrate on fostering the Club's active Facebook page and these occasional Presidents Emails. If you have not joined the Facebook group you should do so as it is very active and there is a whole slice of the Club's life you are potentially missing out on if not participating (please note though that the FB page is for Club members only, i.e. it is a closed group page and not open to non-members).

New Grading Model and Training

Yes, I know that I keep updating you on this topic, but it is crucial that all members are across developments in this important area.

New Assessors and Instructors – I am delighted to announce that the Club now has two new accredited Assessors and four new Instructors (currently awaiting finalisation of their accreditation with Paddle Australia). New Assessors John and Tina Evertze now join Terry Barry as Club Assessors. The role of Assessors is to approve the awarding of our new grades, with the exception of Sea Kayak Basics,

which is approved by delegated Trip Leaders. New Instructors Katie Pilbrow, Keith Russell, Helmut Heinze and Pete Wilson, together with our Assessors and existing Instructors deliver the skills training for members undertaking skills development ahead of their grading assessment.

This is fantastic news, and a real feather in the cap for all concerned. It goes a long way to sustaining the Club's future by continuing to strengthen paddling skills at all levels. I also want to thank Les Allan from the WASKC, who is based in Victoria for a while and has been volunteering his considerable skills as an Assessor to help with this process. I also want to thank Helmut Heinze who will play a coordinating role for the Instructor Group for the short term, which will include preparation of an annual training plan.

New training section on website – One of the first initiatives of the new Instructor Group has been the creation of a new training tab on the website. The idea here is to provide members with clearer guidance around grading pathways and associated training requirements. The Instructor Group will progressively enhance this new section as developments roll out. Training activities broadly planned for the remainder of 2019 were outlined in my February Newsletter. Information about grading pathways is at <https://www.victorianseakayak.club/training/grading-pathways/>

Sea Kayak Basics – The uptake of this compulsory entry grade for all new members has been fantastic, and this now includes a little blue tag that all SKB graduates are required to wear on PFDs. Keep your eye out for these. You must hold SKB or self assess to this standard in order to participate in Club trips. In the February Newsletter I outlined the process for rolling out Sea Kayak Basics to all existing ungraded members. This process has now commenced and you will be contacted over the next month or so to either be asked to attend an assessment paddle, or self assess. If you self assess, you will be asked for an endorsement from an accredited Trip Leader who you have paddled with recently.

Website Upgrade

The Committee has set aside a substantial budget to fund this upgrade process and confirmed a broad scope of works for 2019. Ray Pilbrow, Club Treasurer will be overseeing this process. Club Webmaster Greg Skowronski will oversee technical aspects. As advised in the last e-News, a member's user group is being established to guide this important functionality upgrade. The upgrade will centre on improving the web interface for trips registration and management, as well as sorting out structural issues in the member database, refreshing the home page with more functionality and a better user interface. We have decided not to progress updating our online payment facility at this time, and will continue to use Trybooking for now. We will likely tackle this task in 2020.

The member user group we have established to support the process will initially concentrate on developing some 'use case descriptions' in order to shape technical requirements. It is worth noting that we are upgrading the website, not rebuilding it. Again, if you want to join the member user group, please contact **Club Secretary, Maggie MacPherson – secretary@victorianseakayak.club**)

Student Membership

The Committee has decided to recommend a new category of student membership for approval at the upcoming AGM. Our target group for this new membership category will mainly be outdoor education students.

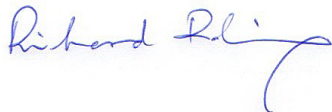
Paddling Activities Members Want To See

Our website upgrade is planned to feature a **Trip Bid and Notification System**. This will mean that members can opt to be alerted by SMS or email when a new trip is posted. As well, we are keen to see a bidding system where members at large can request a trip they want to see happen (eg a Sorrento Circuit), and this will be triaged to current Trip Leaders to schedule. This way we can enable members to more actively shape the trip calendar. In the meantime, if you have ideas or preferences for trips you want to go on, please email Trip Coordinator, Andrew Mueller at trips@victorianseakayak.club with any requests.

New Paddling Protocol Manual

Under the expert eye of Club Secretary Maggie MacPherson, the Committee has almost completed editing of a consolidated listing of all of the Club's guidance notes and policies relating to our paddling activities. This complements our existing Operating Procedures Manual that covers the administrative side of the Club. The Paddling Protocol Manual was initially assembled by Ron Morris (Trips Coordinator, 2018), so a huge thanks to Ron for getting this started. The manual will be posted on the website, and provided to all new members.

very best regards and happy winter paddling!



Richard Rawling
President, VSKC