

Black Mountain Rowing Club - President's Report for 2008-09

Welcome everyone.

I wanted to start by thanking the outgoing Committee.

It is hard to convey the sheer magnitude of the contribution made by Committee members during 2008-09, both in terms of the administration of the affairs of the Club and in their roles as officials or working on sub-committees. Some contributions are more evident because they are critical points of member contact - such as the extensive work undertaken by the Captain and the Vice Captain, the Learn to Row Program and rower registration. However, there are other office-bearing jobs such as those of the Treasurer or Secretary, and other activities, such as fund raising and the development and delivery of coaching, which have required significant commitment without having the same visibility.

The demographics of the Club have changed significantly. In previous years, we had a high level of female juniors and a significant proportion of non-competing adults. There was also an age gap between the masters and junior rowers. Our profile is now more even, it is overwhelming adult and we have a high level of competing members.

We achieved a lot in 2008-09 off the water as well as on it.

- The Club's policies were refreshed and, in the case of the Constitution, modernised.
- One important change was to ensure the boat allocation guidelines allowed for more equitable and pervasive access to boats for training while continuing the more merits-based allocation priority for competition.
- In the interests of greater transparency, a secure membership section was created on the website and members have been able to view the 2008-09 Committee minutes.
- Considerable efforts were made to keep members informed of developments and decisions.
- The financial system was upgraded allowing for the more flexible administration of membership and it will allow, over time, for a more even flow of membership fees.
- We were able to reach a decision, after some effort and a little excitement, on a logo for the Club.
- We had a big year of equipment acquisition and hopefully the Committee will not go down as the last of the big spenders. You will hear more on this in the Captain's report. Importantly, many of the acquisitions were shrewdly sourced both through the alertness of the Captain and some of our Club members.

We have a range of challenges facing us over the coming twelve months and I have not captured them all here.

- I greatly appreciated the work undertaken by a wider group of members during the year at work bees, the annual dinner and other events. However, one of the early challenges for 2009-10 will be to break down tasks into manageable chunks so that they can be distributed more evenly. This is particularly important given that the

new Committee will be forty per cent smaller, consistent with the operation of similar rowing organisations. This means that once we have identified tasks we will need to start tapping the shoulders of members to take them on. It is important that we don't run Committee members into the ground which is not a sustainable model for a community Club.

- We don't have a junior's program although we have a few juniors. A juniors' program has been seen as 'a good thing' for the Club and for rowing but the level of commitment required has not been regarded as sustainable. This is something that is likely to test the Club.
- There is a strong demand for masters coaching of which we only scratched the surface. While this demand will never be able to be fully met we will hopefully be able to address better.
- We will need to reflect on the Club's financial position and the impact of the acquisitions we made during 2008-09. While we toyed with the concept of a formal acquisitions program, this was complicated by the changing demand for equipment and the availability of bargains which do change relative merit.
- We need to continue the Club's long history of acquiring grants and delivering on the commitments attached to them. This allows the Club to overreach the underlying financial capacity provided by member fees.
- We need to translate our Club logo into a clothing range and understand how the logo can be deployed.
- We will be continuing to examine our safety policies. Clearly, if we identify safety equipment that is required for the Club that will be a priority.
- We need to continue to ensure that our membership is maintained or grows, in accordance with the capacity of the Club, with the Learn to Row and Transition programs are important contributors to that.

I intend finalising the Club's history over the next 6 months or so. I left the history as a consultation draft in the hope of further contributions or the possibility that we will be able to access a publishing grant. However, neither has occurred. We will also be seeking to produce an annual report, possibly for the first time, for 2008-09.

I have deliberately avoided mentioning names because of the dangers of omissions but I think members will recognise those to whom I have referred. The Club is a healthy one competitively, financially and socially. It will be the next Committee's job to ensure that it remains so.

Thanks to all of you for your efforts during 2008-09 and good luck to those competing at the World Masters.

Vincent McMahon

09/09/09