

New Single Event Membership process

PaddleNSW is making it easier and more rewarding for clubs to process Single Event memberships.

From January 1st 2010, each club will be sent a single event duplicate pad with 50 forms individually numbered. The membership application itself will remain virtually unchanged, with all the information being now on the one page. The original form will be removed and sent to PaddleNSW with a payment of \$5.00 with the balance of \$5.00 to be kept by the club for processing and mailing costs.

There are several good reasons for implementing this change:

- There are many clubs that have processed single event membership forms diligently, and we thank them for this. However, there are a few clubs that will benefit from the new processing incentives at the same time giving their single event paddlers the certainty that they and the club are covered in the event of mishap.
- While the original document is sent to PaddleNSW, the duplicate pad will remain with the club till it is used up, enabling paddler details to be on file for reference.
- There is a financial incentive for clubs and event organisers to process these memberships.

Single event membership application forms will no longer be available on the website, and any copies of the current form should be disposed of...they will not be able to be used after the 1st January 2010.

Grants and Education

You will probably be aware of the recent State Government grants process, and those forward thinking clubs will have already submitted their various requests for programme funding. We wish you all the best, and please let us know of any successes you might have.

PaddleNSW has been very active as well, applying for 3 grants for the following:

- The development of new club coaches throughout NSW. PaddleNSW has applied for funding to assist the training of up to 30 new coaches. Each club can nominate a suitable candidate, who will then take their skills back to their home club.
- The development of 'Start Paddling' senior instructors, who will be responsible for taking the 'Start Paddling' scheme out to clubs, retailers and organisations who are dealing with first-time paddlers. They will be training the presenters, the 'on the water' paddlers who will be actually presenting the course to the new paddler, and participants will also be qualified to deliver accredited flatwater instruction in their clubs.
- A regional assistance package to enable rural and remote paddlers to participate in competition and training opportunities a distance from their home waters.

The effort put in by the committee in developing these applications should guarantee a degree of success, though nothing is certain. I especially thank Lynn Parker who worked many hours on the application direction & content, in addition to the applications she drafted for her own club.

Though these grants will prove extremely useful in assisting us to develop paddler education, we are by no means solely relying on them for our forthcoming education initiatives. They will simply make the job of implementing these schemes that much easier.





PNSW response to the PFD issue.

PaddleNSW is nearing completion of a response to the proposed changes to the wearing of PFDs.

While the efforts of NSW Maritime to improve paddler safety are commendable, and supported in principle by PaddleNSW, the introduction of a mandatory rule for the wearing of PFD's in all offshore situations, and more than 100m from land in protected waters, is controversial.

PaddleNSW makes the following general observations regarding the proposed new regulations:

- Without the benefit of statistics, we are unable to quantify the number of casualties or serious injuries occurring under current regulations. Until detailed analysis of prior incidents is published, there appears no justification for changing them only on the basis of improved safety.
- PFDs by their nature are not designed to prevent drowning, but to support a person in the water. They will not prevent drowning if the wearer is unconscious, nor will they greatly assist someone suffering serious medical trauma such as heart attack. They do assist a person to conserve energy while in the water, and provide additional buoyancy in rough conditions.
- PFDs make swimming more difficult, and for competent swimmers can create a hindrance where self-rescue is a possibility.
- There are many occasions where the wearing of PFD's within 400m of shore is impractical, such as training for competition, and in certain recreational activities.
- A concise summary of current regulations would improve the attitude to the wearing of PFDs. At the moment, there is no concise set of regulations relating to paddle craft, with the information distributed in a haphazard fashion throughout the NSW Maritime boating handbook.

While there are many instances where current PFD regulations are openly ignored, there are an equal number of cases where voluntary wearing of PFDs is observed at all times on the water. In general, most informed paddlers are able to make the decision to wear or not wear PFDs based either on their own experience or the rules of the group they are paddling with.

Many open water paddlers do not wear PFDs on their Ocean Racing Skis, due to the fact it makes remounting the ski more difficult. Paddlers are usually tethered to their skis anyway, providing buoyancy in the event of capsizes. A change in the design of PFD's for Ocean Racing will eventually change this attitude, together with the adoption of International rules for racing which make the wearing of PFD's mandatory (as is the case in South Africa)

Unfortunately, peer pressure and ignorance are two of the most likely reasons some paddlers may choose not to wear them. Inexperienced paddlers may not be aware of the speed in which weather conditions can change nor their ability to swim in less than ideal conditions. And peer pressure, whether overt or not, can influence a decision, especially in younger paddlers.

In conclusion, while the wearing of PFD's in all conditions is to be encouraged, imposing mandatory requirements will have little practical effect. Its main purpose will be to identify fault after the fact, in a situation where there has been an incident. A better solution is to make the current regulations more concise, and educate all boaters about the benefits of wearing PFD's as a matter of course.





Club Rules

Paddle Clubs exist to provide support, expertise and social company for likeminded persons, based around the sport of paddling.

In many instances those who arrive on the doorstep of a paddle club have had no more experience with paddling besides dipping their big toe in the water. They have a range of needs, being primarily how to paddle, what equipment to use, and how to remain safe while doing so.

This explains their first point of entry into the sport being through a paddle club.

Your club needs to develop a policy around introducing new paddlers to the sport, based on:

1. A new paddler will need to be shown how to fall out of a boat and make a successful self-rescue (by swimming the boat to shore)
2. A new paddler will need additional buoyancy to assist them when the inevitable capsize happens, as even if they are experienced swimmers, the new conditions they find themselves in (with a boat full of water) will create additional stress and make swimming more difficult.
3. A club member should accompany or observe the new paddler, offering initial assistance to technique and safety. They need to learn the 'rules of the road'.
4. Prior to entry to the water, the new paddler must indicate if a competent swimmer, and whether they have any underlying medical conditions that will affect their own or other's safety.
5. A new paddler must indicate an emergency contact name and phone number to the club representative.

If a new paddler turns up to a club, it is because they want these things addressed. If not, they could just as easily go off and paddle by themselves elsewhere. A club has the responsibility not just to its own members, but also to the membership of PaddleNSW as a whole to conduct their affairs with a duty of care. It is our (NSW paddler's) collective insurance that will be paying out for a claim of negligence against a club.

Once the new paddler has developed enough personal skills, and most probably joined the club, they need to abide by the club regulations, which will vary from club to club. The regulations should be adopted as by-laws to the club constitution, and be subject to regular discussion and update.

If the club deems their regular activities require the wearing of PFD's at all times, then so be it. Don't like the rules, don't join the club. If the activities comprise mainly sprint training in K1's then PFD's would most likely not be mandatory (except for juniors).

More than one person has fallen out of a Sea Kayak the first time they tried one. For some of us, it is difficult to remember back to the first time we paddled a boat, and how difficult the whole experience could be. We should not let complacency blur our better judgement when to looking after the needs of those less competent than ourselves.

Upcoming State Championship and Series events

The NSW State 1000m and 200m sprint championships will be held on Saturday 30th January 2010. Some may have seen the date indicated on the SIRC calendar as the 31st. This problem has now been rectified. Entries are now open, and must be completed on-line, and prior to the 23rd January.

There will be several world-class officials on hand who are willing to train new officials in the various tasks involved in running sprint races. NSW needs more trained officials to assist their events, both for the longevity of high level competition, and to assist at the NSW sprint series. As an incentive and indication of recognition of the role officials play in our events, PaddleNSW is currently having officials uniforms made for those who have undertaken training, gained their accreditation and volunteered to assist with the running of a PNSW event. Be one of the first to be part of the new team. Let Liz or Bill know you are interested, by emailing admin@padleNSw.org.au





NSW has decided to concentrate the State Championships on the two Olympic distances of 1000m and 200m. There has been an in principle agreement with Australian Canoeing that NSW paddlers seeking entry and selection for National events must take part in their State Championships. There is opportunity to seek exemption if a written request is received by the Sprint Committee prior to the event. Email admin@paddleNSW.org.au for clarification.

NEW CLUBS

PaddleNSW welcomes several new and existing clubs into the association.

Cape Byron Canoe Club

Great Lakes Canoe Club

Hunter Valley Canoe Club

Pacific Dragons & Outrigger

Penrith Valley Canoeing

Sydney Northern Beaches Kayak Club

Te Ika Nui Outrigger Club

PaddleNSW would like to wish all member clubs the very best for Christmas and the New Year, and we look forward to another great year with you on the water in 2010.

