



# Dragon Boat Victoria Annual Report 2023



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## Presidents' Report

Dragon Boat Victoria has been making significant strides in promoting the sport of dragon boating across Victoria. The association has 28 affiliated clubs and a membership of 1265 registered members. The membership has been on a steady rise, growing by 14.27% this year alone and over 21% for the past four Covid-ridden years. Furthermore, It's worth noting that, compared to the previous two years, the attrition rate has fallen significantly, with the current rate being 13.88%. This significant growth and retention of membership is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the DBV team, who have been working tirelessly to promote the sport in Victoria.

It's interesting to note that despite everyone getting a year older, the average age of paddlers in Victoria remains the same at 44. Dragon Boat Victoria also has successfully attracted more men to the sport of dragon boating, with nearly 34% of paddlers being recognised as men, just under a 10% increase from 2021/2022.

Whilst the sport of Dragon Boating continues to thrive, it comes off the back of the hive of activity from the DBV Board in conjunction with the Regatta Operations Pathways Advisory Group (ROPAG). Safety and good governance consume most governing boards, but it is one aspect of DBV's modus operandi. DBV & ROPAG believe its key responsibilities are to enhance the paddler's experience and participation in new and creative ways to attract and retain membership. As a collective team, we

1. Challenge the status quo and think creatively about how we manage our regattas regarding locations, rules and categories. For example,
  - Dragon Boat Victoria ensures that most regattas have a mixed 10s category and limit it to one per club. This approach has enabled smaller clubs to compete and grow while providing larger clubs the flexibility to offer more racing opportunities to their members that can be limited at times. We believe this strategy will help us attract and retain more members and make the sport accessible to everyone.
  - We are committed to making regattas accessible for most paddlers by ensuring they're located in our main metro and regional hubs. We have conducted a detailed analysis that revealed that in most cases, 30-40% of our membership base is just a one – two hours' drive away, and 80% is just a little over three hours away. By choosing locations that are easily accessible, we ensure that more paddlers can participate in the sport and enjoy the experience. This is a key driver for retention and growth.
2. Dragon Boat Victoria is committed to enhancing the paddler's experience and making the sport more accessible by constantly challenging the rules of racing.

We understand that most rules can restrict a member's ability to participate in an event, require additional governance, and ensure a safe and level playing field. However, we also recognise that some rules can inhibit our ability to run regattas smoothly. Therefore, we always seek to remove any rule that doesn't impact safety, favour a specific group of clubs or paddlers, or inhibit our ability to run regattas. For instance, the new DBV By-Laws removed rules that were based on gender or age when it came to sweeps and drummers at any Victorian regatta.

3. Dragon Boat Victoria is always exploring innovative approaches to managing our membership base, such as trialling the Second Chance Dragon Pass to attract new and returning members to the sport.
4. DBV is committed to treating all members and clubs fairly and equally, without any bias towards age, gender or proportion of membership. Whenever there are requests from members or clubs, DBV's approach is to carefully evaluate them and ask whether this request can be implemented for all members and clubs without compromising safety or impacting the operations of DBV. This ensures that all members and clubs are treated equitably.

As the outgoing president, I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to represent the great state of Victoria and work alongside a talented team that is dedicated to challenging the status quo and prioritising our members' needs. I have every confidence that future presidents and boards will continue this journey and build upon the excellent work that has been done by the DBV team.

John Cuzzupi  
President  
Dragon Boat Victoria

## Board of Directors

DBV is managed by a Board of seven Elected Directors, with up to two Associate and two Appointed Directors. The Board has the responsibility of ensuring that its members have the necessary skills and expertise to effectively govern and lead critical aspects of the organisation's strategy and operations. Thanks to the Board's efforts, their work has been instrumental in the significant growth of dragon boating in Victoria.

We would like to thank our outgoing committee members, John Cuzzupi, Christine Watson, James Hankin, Zein Benjamin and Stephanie Moncur, for their tremendous contribution to DBV. Their contribution not only helped us steer DBV through challenging times but was invaluable in helping us grow. We wish them all the best.

### Executive Committee



Christine Watson  
Secretary



John Cuzzupi  
President



Steve Arrowsmith  
Treasurer



Kerrie Waworis  
Vice President

### Elected Board Members



Lucienne van Hilton



Jacqui Hillas



Caroline Mulcahy

### Associate Board members



James Hankin



Zein Benjamin



Heather Watts



Stephanie Moncur

### Appointed Board members



## ROPAG (Regatta Operations & Pathways Advisory Group)

The ROPAG has played a vital role in supporting the DBV Board by providing recommendations on improving regatta operations and enhancing paddlers' participation and experience. Their expertise has provided invaluable guidance to the DBV Board in interpreting race rules and formats. Christine Watson, the Chair of the ROPAG, has been instrumental in linking the ROPAG with the Board. The DBV Board expresses their sincere gratitude to the ROPAG for their contribution and unwavering commitment to continually challenge the way things are done, all for the sake of enhancing the paddler's experience.



Serge Cucsua



Philippa McLean



Adrian Stephens



Ulrich Moshhammer



Jen Reilly



Christine Watson

## ROMP (Race Officials Mentoring Program)

Race officials are an integral part of ensuring that dragon boating is enjoyed in a safe, fair, and supported way. Without officials, regattas simply wouldn't be possible. We would like to extend our gratitude to Georgia Parry and Philippa McLean for their tireless efforts in supporting and mentoring both existing and new officials. Their contribution is greatly appreciated.



Georgia Parry



Philippa McLean

## Sweeps Committee

The Sweeps committee is crucial in their efforts to accredit new and existing sweeps, ensuring that dragon boats are safely navigated across different waterways during training and at regattas. Their ongoing and immense contribution is greatly appreciated.



Jim McGoldrick



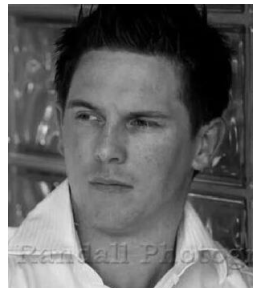
Jen Reilly



David Abel

## DBV Key Staff

Craig Ryan - Operations Manager



Craig's role is to drive the strategy, including priority initiatives by ensuring DBV's four main pillars are met with measurable targets. He also works to enhance the awareness and profile of dragon boating in Victoria, including growth, technology, marketing and media plans.

He works with all the key stakeholders across the state and oversees the grant and funding submissions so that the financial performance of the Association is healthy.

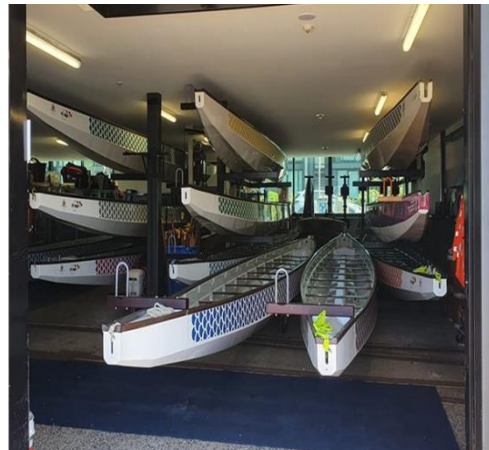
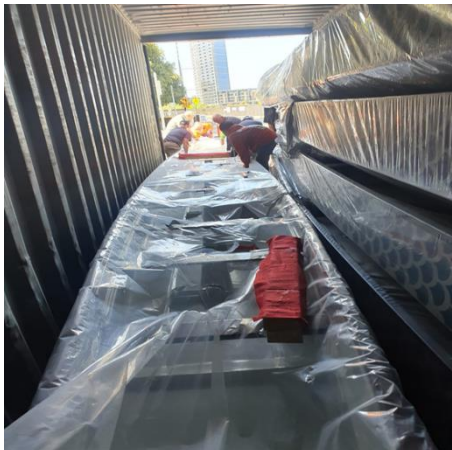
He also acts as the Event Director for all DBV-sanctioned events and regattas.

## New Peisheng Dragon Boats

The DBV Board have taken a significant step toward ensuring the continued growth of dragon boating in Victoria by replacing our old fleet of nine Champion boats with 12 new Peisheng Dragon Boats. The reason behind this decision is simple yet crucial: Our current fleet of dragon boats, while serving us well, shows signs of aging. As we prioritise our members' safety, performance, and overall experience, upgrading to new boats is the most sensible and strategic choice we can make for many reasons.

- Through this upgrade, we're creating a strategic opportunity to support the growth of regional communities by relocating our current fleet;
- Relocating our fleet significantly reduces the expenses associated with transporting boats to events like Falls Creek;
- Furthermore, this upgrade marks a pivotal moment for DBV. It's the first time we'll have a fleet of 12 matching boats, a true benefit during major regattas such as Lunar New Year, Australian Cross Border Championships, Victorian Championships and potentially future AusChamps, as these boats will be consistent with those used in other states.

The funding for the boats has been secured through revenue generated from AusChamps, DBV funds, Peisheng's sponsorship of the Australian Cross Border Championships, and a loan from AusDBF.





## AusChamps 2023

DBV hosted the largest Australian Championships in history at Albury Wodonga, with 3386 attending the event. This exceeded the previous record of 3083 participants. The event featured roaming entertainers, bands, and musicians on the stage, keeping attendees engaged even when they were not paddling. The success of the event was due to the combined efforts of the organising committee, Warriors Albury Wodonga Dragon Boat Club, Brave Hearts Dragon Boat Club, Wodonga Council, Albury Council, State Government of Victoria, fantastic volunteers, officials, suppliers, vendors, and of course, the paddlers and their clubs who participated. The Mayor of Wodonga, Ron Mildren, attended the Opening Ceremony on Thursday, while the Mayor of Albury, Kylie King, presented the awards on Friday afternoon.

### Event statistics:

- 3386 paddlers from all states and territories in Australia, 72 clubs attended
- Percentage of total participants by state: NSW 42.7%, QLD 18.39%, VIC 18.09%, ACT 10.23%, SA 6.85%, WA 2.92%, TAS 1.31%, DAA 0.05%
- Percentage of participants by gender: Female 62.87%, Male 36.83%, Non-Binary 0.30%
- Participants by age percentage: Juniors (U18) = 8.30%, 18 to 24 = 4.27%, 24 to 39 = 13.89%, 40 to 49 = 13.64%, 50 to 59 = 21.39%, 60 to 69 = 28.95% and 70+ = 1.66%
- 323 races ,42.5 hours of racing, live streamed on 'My Sport Live TV'
- Media and news coverage from Win 9 News, 7 News, Triple M, ABC Radio, 2AY Radio, Edge FM, Hit FM, Border Mail, social media platforms and more.



*"I'd sincerely like to thank Dragon Boat Victoria for putting on such a professional and well-run event. A beautiful venue, fantastic facilities, friendly, helpful staff and volunteers and excellent event management from go to whoa. You even succeeded in turning on the perfect weather! All combined to produce a wonderful experience and an extremely memorable few day. **You've absolutely re-set the benchmark.**"*

## Pink Paddle Event

The Pink Paddle event scheduled for Saturday; 4th December 2021, was postponed for 12 months to avoid any concerns relating to covid. This year over 300 paddlers from DA clubs from Australia and New Zealand competed in Victoria in the heart of Docklands on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2022.



### ACHIEVEMENTS:

**300** Registrants

**23** Breast Cancer teams reps

From **NZ, QLD, NSW, ACT, SA, VIC, TAS**

**17** heats.... in 30 degrees

and Memorial race plus Flowers on the Water

**224** Ball goers hitting the dance floor

**8** Boats (**175**ppl) paddling the Yarra River



## Victorian State Team

Congratulations to our Victorian State Team on their highly successful campaign at the 2023 Australian Championships. With this year's event being hosted by Dragon Boat Victoria, it was particularly pleasing to be able to top off what has been nationally proclaimed by many as the 'best AusChamps ever' with pleasing results for our State Team. From 22 events entered, Victorian teams achieved a commendable 10 Gold, 5 Silver and 1 Bronze placing. Special mention must go to our Senior A and Regional squads for attaining a remarkable 4 Gold from their 4 events against strong competition.

DBV would like to thank 2023 State Team Coaches, Palmiro Casasnovas/Amir Yadegari (Premier), Racheal Blake (Senior A), Kathryn Sanford (Senior B), Kerrie Waworis (Senior C), Di Edmondson (Juniors), Lisa Smallbone (Regional), State Team Managers, Christine Watson/Adrian Stephens, category team managers and assistant coaches ensuring Victoria was well represented at the Auschamps. We would also like thank the Divisional team Captains for their support.



## New Victorian Uniforms

The DBV Board this year announced the exciting launch of the new Victorian State Team apparel for this year's Auschamps in Albury/Wodonga. It's been a labour of love, with countless hours of hard work, iteration, and many samples. But now, our uniforms are finally available for members to purchase! And our uniform partner is available to assist members year-round





## Season Statistics

	2021/2022	2022/2023
Total financial members	1012	1265
New members	277	382
Female members %	68.5%	65.8%
Male members %	30.9%	33.7%
Differently identity/non-binary	0.6%	0.5%
Membership growth rates	3.48%	14.27%
Average member age	44	44
Membership attrition	17.75%	13.88%
Regatta participation	1533 at 4 regattas	2725 at 7 regattas (not including Auschamps)
Average participation at DBV regattas	383.25	389.28
Gender split of members at regattas	Female 68.8% Male: 31.2% Non-Binary 0.6%	Female 68.2% Male 31.5% Non-Binary 0.3%

## Accredited Courses and DBV Workshops

During 2022-2023 the following accredited courses and workshops were held.

Course	Month	Location	Number of attendees
AusDBF officials training session	July 2022	Melbourne	23
Revsport Training session # 1	August 2022	Online	22
Revsport Training session # 2	September 2022	Online	10
L2 Sweeps Course	September 2022	Ballarat	13
L1 Coaching Course	October 2022	Melbourne	14
First Aid and CPR	November 2022	Melbourne	11
L2 Sweeps course	January 2023	Ballarat	10
L2 Sweeps Course	February 2023	Melbourne	7
L1 Coaching course	May 2023	Melbourne	7



## Season Regattas

Regatta	Date	Location
Battle on the Barwon	24 July	Geelong
Yarra River Race	20 August	Melbourne
Pink Paddle Power	3 December	Melbourne
Docklands Duel	11 December	Melbourne
Ballarat Regatta	22 January	Ballarat
Lunar New Year Festival	19 February	Melbourne
Victorian Championships	11-12 March	Carrum
Australian Championships	20-24 April	Wodonga

## DBV Strategic Plan, July 2020 – extended to 2025

To provide clarity on the objectives of DBV and lay out a roadmap to achieving them, a 3 three-year Strategic Plan for DBV was developed in July 2020 and launched at the 2020 AGM. The plan was created based on feedback and insights from the 2019-2020 Member Survey, as well as historic DBV regatta and performance data which was synthesised by the DBV Board across a series of workshops. The current Board has decided to extend the existing strategy to 2025 for two key reasons; first, it has been successful in growing the sport, and second, due to the lost years during Covid, the Board felt it needed more time to be fully executed.

The Strategic Plan lays out a clear Vision, Mission and Measures of Success for DBV over the next three years. These provide a “North Star” from which to anchor DBV’s central planning. From this, four Strategic Objectives were developed, which form the framework for guiding effort and allocating resources, each of which are underpinned by a series of priority Initiatives: the practical steps to bring our defined objectives to life.

### The four Strategic Objectives in the Strategic Plan are to:

1. Enhance the awareness and profile of Dragon Boating in Victoria;
2. Grow the membership base, with a focus on the U24, Premier and Seniors categories;
3. Increase the accessibility of Dragon Boating across Victoria;
4. Provide enhanced central support and pathways for clubs, coaches, and officials

Finally, a set of Values were identified as guiding principles for how DBV will operate. The Values are **Inclusion** (embracing and catering to our diverse member base), **Community** (recognising the importance of connectedness) and **Integrity** (acting with honesty, transparency and fairness).

### Developing the marketing strategy for DBV

Over the next couple of months, DBV will initiate some activities around creating a long-term, strategic marketing plan. We will do this by collaborating with member clubs from DBV and setting the agenda for how we move forward.

Our goal will be to increase awareness and, therefore, the profile of the sport, increase the membership numbers of individual clubs, build collaborations with like-minded organisations and potential sponsors, and provide collateral to clubs for them to use in their own marketing.

The “Strategy on a page” below summarises the DBV Strategic Plan for the period July 2020 to June 2023, now extended to 2025.



## Strategy on a page



## Financial Statements

[CLICK HERE](#) to view Financials.