



# Communications Strategy

May 2018

# Contents

Purpose .....	3
Market Research .....	3
SWOT Analysis.....	3
Current Communications Evaluation .....	4
Key Audiences .....	6
Key Messages.....	7
Objectives .....	8
Monitor and Review .....	10

## Purpose

Rowing ACT's Mission is *'To foster, promote and develop rowing in the ACT'*.

The Rowing ACT Communications Strategy has been developed to support the organisation to achieve this Mission by:

1. Promoting a positive perception of rowing and its benefits
2. Engaging the media and broader ACT community
3. Engaging with supporters in a way that provides them with a valuable, enjoyable and worthwhile experience
4. Promoting current events and exploring new events that increase participation, providing broader community interaction

## Market Research

In the 2016/17 season an online survey was developed and distributed via email and social media. The 10-question survey was constructed around the 4 Purposes of the Communications Strategy. 210 responses were recorded from people with varying levels of involvement in ACT rowing. In the 2017/18 season a school leavers survey was conducted to address the drop off in rowers after finishing school.

## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Good pre-existing website traffic as community use the website regularly for registrations and entries
- Established, nationally aligned branding
- Financial position
- Internal open communications structure between staff and Board

### Weaknesses

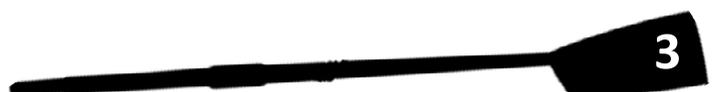
- No direct RACT-members contact
- Limited media relationships
- Lack of marketing material

### Opportunities

- Use of non-traditional and social media
- Sponsorship
- Leverage existing networks
- Publicity driven events
- Establish community feedback channels

### Threats

- De-valuation of the RACT brand
- Competition from other sports
- Public misconception of rowing



## Current Communications Evaluation

Rowing ACT's current communications are based around the website, Facebook, and email.

### **Website**

**Overview:** The Rowing ACT website is the hub of information for the organisation, and regatta entries.

**Positives:** The link between Rowing Manager and the Competitions page provide people comprehensive information on upcoming and past regattas.

All pages are reachable within 2 clicks.

**Improvements:** Formatting of pages to be cleaned up, with the home page to display most relevant information first.

Out-of-date information need to be updated or removed.

### **Social Media**

**Overview:** Facebook is the main social media channel used by Rowing ACT. Other platforms are beginning to gain followers after accounts were setup in February 2017.

Social Media Channel	Followers/Likes (February 2017)	Followers/Likes (May 2018)
Facebook	880	965
Twitter	28	49
Instagram	60	218
Snapchat	40	76

**Positives:** Photos taken at local regattas are popular with the community and inspire a lot of Facebook page visits. The 2016-17 season Photo Competition was popular among the community with over 100 entries. The 2017-18 season Photo Competition had 55 entries, and 3 video entries.

Instagram and Snapchat have allowed for more interaction between Rowing ACT and its followers.

**Improvements:** Coordinated approach across all social media platforms to ensure maximum coverage.

Posting updates at peak times to ensure maximum exposure.

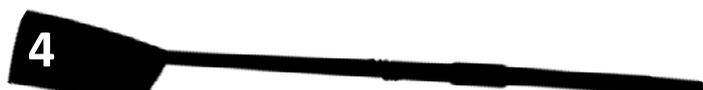
### **Email**

**Overview:** Mailing lists are compiled for ease of information distribution to each of the clubs. Internally, email forwarders are setup to circulate emails within the organisation.

**Positives:** Important information is delivered directly to the inbox of each club's key people.

**Improvements:** Rowing ACT relies on the people it emails to pass on the information around their club themselves.

Project a professional image by staff using Rowing ACT domain email addresses.



## **Branding**

Overview: The Rowing ACT logo and branding is aligned with Rowing Australia's policies.

Positives: Consistent with other rowing State Sporting Organisations and the National Sporting Organisation.

Improvements: Consistency and professionalism.

## **Corporate Profile**

Overview: The elements of a corporate profile exist but are not currently in the format of a single profile.

Positives: Little work needed to create the content of a corporate profile.

Improvements: Create a standalone corporate profile.

## **Media monitoring**

Overview: Rowing ACT does not have any formal media monitoring systems, and relies on word of mouth to hear about public coverage of rowing in the ACT.

Positives: The ACT rowing community feel that they can pass on relevant news items they come across.

Improvements: Signing up to relevant school newsletters and Google alerts. Subscribing to newsletters from other state associations, World Rowing and key rowing countries.

## **Merchandising**

Overview: Rowing ACT does not currently sell any merchandise, but does provide some for free as prizes or part of ACT team uniform.

Positives: The merchandise given away is always warmly accepted and appreciated, showing people are keen to have Rowing ACT branded items.

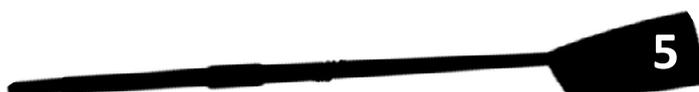
Improvements: A suite of merchandise items for purchase.

## **Community events**

Overview: Rowing ACT does not currently run any community events, however some clubs do.

Positives: The beautiful environment and easy access to Lake Burley Griffin make community events attractive to the public.

Improvements: Partnering with a charity and utilising access to athletes and facilities for a range of community events.



## Key Audiences

### Key Audience 1 – Junior rowers

Junior rowers make up the largest group of Rowing ACT's participants. RACT has traditionally suffered a significant decrease in the number of rowers once they pass school age, a common theme across Australia. Retaining participants from this key audience is vital to the strength of Rowing ACT's participant base, and retaining people in the sport who, as they become older, are involved out of the boat as coaches, BROs and club committee members. A School Leavers Survey was released by Rowing ACT at the end of the 2017/18 season to try and address this drop off in rowers after finishing school, and the results of the survey will be compiled and analysed in May 2018.

### Key Audience 2 – Boat Race Officials (BROs)

BROs are valued volunteers for Rowing ACT. They are responsible for the safe and effective running of regattas, and without them there would be no rowing in the ACT. The number of active BROs has been stagnant over the past 5 years, with the current number below the minimum required for a season's work. The demand on BROs to be available for each regatta, with long days and thankless work make it difficult to attract new BROs. How Rowing ACT markets being a BRO and showing appreciation for this imperative group of volunteers is important in the recruitment of new officials.

### Key Audience 3 – Senior rowers

Senior rowers include Masters and those who are between Juniors and Masters age. Rowing ACT currently enjoys a strong senior membership base. Senior rowers are the backbone of many clubs and provide much needed support at all levels of the sport. Ensuring that senior rowers enjoy their participation in rowing and remain involved is crucial to the longevity of clubs and Rowing ACT.

### Key Audience 4 – General ACT population

Engaging with the wider ACT population will increase the profile of Rowing ACT in the community, which can be leveraged into better grants and sponsorship arrangements. Increasing the number of rowing participants can strengthen clubs and improve the quality of competition across the ACT.

### Key Audience 5 – Non-participant rowing supporters

Non-participant rowing supporters include all the people that support those who row – family, friends, administrators, volunteers, committee members and coaches. This important group of people keep Rowing in the ACT going behind the scenes.

## Key Messages

These are the messages that Rowing ACT endeavours to deliver through how it operates, in the treatment of its members, how it interacts with the public, and its dealings with government and private enterprise.

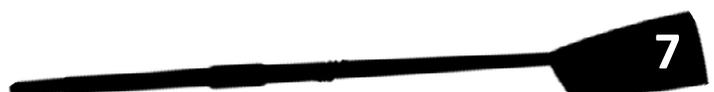
Rowing ACT values all members of their community

Rowing is a sport for life

The Rowing ACT community is great to be a part of

Rowing is a sport for people of all backgrounds

We are a professional organisation



## Objectives

### 1. Engage with the whole rowing community to provide an improved experience

Driver	Strategies	KPI	Responsibility
<b>KRA 1.1:</b> Provide rowers with a wholesome experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social media competitions</li> <li>- Hold social events during the season to encourage interaction between rowers and clubs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2-3 competitions per year</li> <li>- 100+ entries per competition</li> <li>- 2 social events held per season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RACT EO</li> <li>- RACT EO</li> </ul>
<b>KRA 1.2:</b> Maintain a participant-friendly competition model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaboration with the Regatta Sub-Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre and post-season meetings with the Regatta Sub-Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RACT EO</li> <li>- RSC Chair</li> </ul>
<b>KRA 1.3:</b> Assist clubs to facilitate a pathway from school to club rowing programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote club options for school leavers</li> <li>- Organised activities between clubs and school leavers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased year-on-year retention rate of school aged rowers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RACT EO</li> <li>- RACT EO</li> </ul>
<b>KRA 1.4:</b> Ensure all members of the RACT community feel valued and involved in their participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hold open forums</li> <li>- Post-season satisfaction survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1-2 open forums held per year</li> <li>- 1 survey at the end of each summer season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RACT EO</li> <li>- RACT EO</li> </ul>
<b>KRA 1.5:</b> Keep all members of the RACT community informed of news they are interested in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribution of a newsletter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monthly newsletter during off-season, twice monthly in-season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RACT EO</li> </ul>

## 2. Engage with, and show appreciation of, Boat Race Officials

Driver	Strategies	KPI	Responsibility
<b>KRA 2.1:</b> Recruit new BROs	- Development of a BRO Recruitment Plan	- Plan completed by September 2018	- RACT Board - RACT EO
<b>KRA 2.2:</b> Promote being a BRO as a fun and rewarding way to be involved in rowing	- Development and distribution of collateral showing positive aspects of being a BRO  - Use current BROs to share their positive experience	- Material finalised and delivered to clubs in August each year  - 1 BRO profile in each newsletter - BRO profile posted across social media platforms and website	- RACT EO  - RACT EO
<b>KRA 2.3:</b> Actively show appreciation for current BROs	- BRO thank you events  - BRO of the Year award	- BRO Christmas BBQ - End of season BRO Appreciation Dinner - 1 BRO awarded BRO of the Year each season	- RACT EO  - RACT Board

## 3. Increase exposure to general ACT population

Driver	Strategies	KPI	Responsibility
<b>KRA 3.1:</b> Positive promotion of rowing through ACT-wide media channels	- Produce high quality articles promoting rowing in the ACT  - Develop media contacts network for distribution of articles	- 10 articles per year  - Mailing list of ACT media contacts in place by start of 2018-19 season	- RACT EO  - RACT EO
<b>KRA 3.2:</b> Utilise existing networks	- Promotion of rowing via school newsletters	- Send reports of significant achievements to schools for inclusion in their newsletter	- RACT EO
<b>KRA 3.3:</b> Brand awareness and recognition	- Develop branding standards	- Branding standards document in place by August 2018	- RACT EO
<b>KRA 3.4:</b> Merchandising	- Project RACT brand into wider community through merchandise	- Products acquired by end of 2018 WTT Series	- RACT EO
<b>KRA 3.5</b> Community events	- Run a charity event  - Coordinated club Come-and-Try days	- Identify charity to partner with - Identify type of event  - 1-2 Come-and-Try days per year	- RACT Board - RACT EO  - RACT EO
<b>KRA 3.6</b> Promote achievements of local rowers	- Nominate eligible rowers for relevant awards	- Nominate 1+ rowers for CBR Sports Awards per year (if eligible)	- RACT Board

## Monitor and Review

Monitoring and reviewing of the Rowing ACT Communications Strategy will come under one of three actions: Review, Update or New Plan.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Evaluation Type</b>	<b>Responsibility Of</b>
September 2018	<b>REVIEW:</b> Progress against Objective KPIs	RACT Board
October 2018	<b>UPDATE:</b> Any new Objectives and KPIs	RACT Board RACT EO
September 2019	<b>REVIEW:</b> All elements in preparation for developing new plan	RACT Board
October 2019	<b>NEW PLAN:</b> New market research and determination of key audiences, messages and objectives for the next 2 years	RACT Board RACT EO
September 2020	<b>REVIEW:</b> Progress against Objective KPIs	RACT Board
October 2020	<b>UPDATE:</b> Any new Objectives and KPIs	RACT Board RACT EO
September 2021	<b>REVIEW:</b> All elements in preparation for developing new plan	RACT Board
October 2021	<b>NEW PLAN:</b> New market research and determination of key audiences, messages and objectives for the next 2 years	RACT Board RACT EO