



Chair's Annual Report

13th August 2015

Introduction:

It is with great pleasure that I present this the 8th Annual report for Aoraki Dragon Boat Association (ADBA). This report is presented at the AGM being held on the 13th August in Christchurch.

ADBA has enjoyed another very successful year bringing dragon boating to its members and the wider community.

The ADBA board this season was:

Chair Meri Gibson
Secretary Noel Anderton
Treasurer Janice Melville
Boats and Equipment Dale Hewinson
Events Rick Smith
Development Andrew Jones
Special Interests Rosalie Mehlhopt
Development Reon Tiweka
Junior Development Caleb Te Kahu

We had two resignations at the end of the 2014 paddling year with Peter Mitchell and Lorraine Flintoft both long standing members of Tu Meke

Dragons resigning and not seeking re-election. We want to thank them both for their huge input into the running of the Aoraki board, both having been members since inception of the board in 2007.

We had Andrew (Andy) Jones join us at the AGM in 2014. He brings a passion for dragon boating that is enormously appreciated by the board. His calm, even manner and fairness of play is welcomed by all. Reon Tiweka joined the board in January 2015. Reon was new to dragon boating through his involvement with Waimak Dragons and he then took that passion for the sport on to set up the Aurecon team.

All other board members have served the board admirably with their knowledge and massive enthusiasm. As a board we remain in very good heart; however we continuously strive to be better and to offer more to our paddlers.

Finances:

We started the financial year with \$22,177.71 and finished the financial year with \$34,043.38

Janice Melville will elaborate further on the financial situation in the treasurer's report. She will outline grants received and tagged funds on hand. We finished the season in a very strong financial position and our prudent fiscal management allows us to have sufficient funds to carry over into the next season with a strong bank balance. Suffice it to say that ADBA remains in very good financial stead and with careful and diligent fiscal management we will continue to do so.

Boats and Equipment:

We have a strong fleet of 10 Champion 20 man boats, 6 ten man Swift boats, all IDBF certified, a chase boat. Our stocks of life-jackets were depleted through theft. We will be replacing these in the new season. Our Champions whilst being carefully maintained by our Equipment Director since purchase are now aging and if we wish to continue to run high standard events and run the Nationals in the South Island we will need to further grow the fleet to at least 15 boats in Christchurch. We are in the process of applying for funding to purchase a further 7 boats to enhance the fleet. This will also allow us to place Champion 20 man boats in the regions, with one going to Nelson and one to Greymouth. Our Equipment Director Dale (Scruff) Hewinson will elaborate further on the status of our assets.

Regattas:

We started the season with our traditional *Icebreaker* in December 2014 at Lake Rua. This event gives the teams an opportunity to see how they are gelling together, and for new paddlers it is a bit of a fun day to try out their new-found sport and to get over those competition nerves.

We continued the season with the now very popular *Akaroa Super 12* on January 18th 2015. Akaroa with the weather, the tide, the running of the day, the volunteers and generally the camaraderie of our teams and supporters makes for an awesome event. What a fantastic day we had in Akaroa. The paddlers love the venue and the Ten Man boats, so this bodes very well for taking the sport forward. We were also very lucky to see an unintentionally but almost

perfectly executed capsized thanks to the enthusiasm of Ridge Riders. We couldn't have played it out better if it had been planned, everyone did everything right and there was far more laughter than anxiety. A good skill for other paddlers to see this "tip" executed so well.

The *Aoraki Open* followed on the 22nd February – this regatta is a serious run for the build-up to the South Island Champs. The regatta was held at Lake Rua, a change of venue, as there was a serious algal bloom on Lake Pegasus necessitating its closure for some weeks. We were fortunate to be able to quickly shift to Lake Rua and with a few tweaks to the race format and turns added into 500m races we managed to run our usual race distances on the much shorter course. and there was good competitive battling out on the water.

The *South island Championships* were held at Lake Hood, with another great days paddling on the 14th March. This is such a good venue and we always have a very good day's racing on good water. And with such a brilliant venue we know that the teams will be very competitive on a level playing field.

For some this signalled the end of the season, but for many others the training continued in quest



of the *National Champs* being held at Lake Pupuke in Auckland on the 28 and 29th March. This signalled a return to Auckland to encourage more entries. What an awesome event this was. Two days of fabulous paddling with the introduction of ten man racing. This bodes well for the growth of the sport with teams taking part enthusiastically over the two days.

Christchurch teams performed so well, with the Girls Schools coming away with golds in all race lengths, and Avonside National Champions. ABOL BC came away national champions with a blistering finish in the 2k, the Waimak women's crew were in the medals and Amazons were in the top five women's crews. Our Premier teams were in the top five also with Tu Meke taking away medals in all events. An amazing result for all who participated.

Waimak Dragons were a very worthy recipient of the *Julian Yee Memorial Trophy* presented to the team that showed outstanding sportsmanship, camaraderie and general excellent attitude at regatta days. Waimak's awesome coach Rick Smith took away the inaugural Coach of the Year award, this trophy was awarded thanks to Peter Mitchell.

Avon/Otakaro:

ADBA has been very much a part of the discussions regarding the future of the Avon River and the desire for a water park in the central city.

Secondary Schools Challenge:

This initiative was launched in February 2013 and repeated in 2014. We elected not to repeat this in the 2014-2015 season as we could not commit to the time needed to train these schools. We will review this in further seasons.

Owles Terrace:

The CCC has finished repairs of the buildings at Owles Terrace, and the NBWSA has organised CEAT earthquake relief funding for the purchase of containers. Noel Anderton has been involved in the on-going discussions re this facility and will expand further in his report.

Conclusion:

ADBA has enjoyed another very successful season with much added value for its members.

We are excited by the future of dragon boating as we continually strive to add additional events and make the sport better for our members. Rick Smith's involvement on the NZDBA Sweep Accreditation Group (SAG) has seen the standard of sweeping improve hugely. We have plans to run coaching clinics in 2015-2016 and further develop the skill base of our volunteers.

I am again thrilled to have been involved with ADBA since its inauguration and I find myself particularly in this past year, with my absences due to work commitments, very grateful for the enthusiasm and dedication of my fellow board members. The camaraderie of my board and the paddlers in the wider dragon boating community make this a fantastic sport to be involved with.

I would sincerely like to thank each and every one of my board members for their dedication and commitment to not only ADBA but also to the sport of dragon boating and its growth within the community. I know that without you all, none of what we have achieved would have been possible.

Meri Gibson
Chair, Aoraki Dragon Boat Association

Secretary's Report

Aoraki continues to operate on a stable footing, while showing a responsiveness to paddler requests and feedback. The organisation responds to ideas and innovations (such as the '848 Race') but there is some risk of overstretching our resources for 'stretch' goals like running Nationals in Queenstown.

Operations and Event Management

Quality improvements continue, notably in the Sweep accreditation, but now in developing some Coaching support and materials, while NZDBA is working on systems to develop people as Race Officials, as well as agreed standards of Race Regatta.

We have seen some changes in the way others operate in supporting events. For example, using Surf Life Saving to provide safety boat support at Akaroa meant we needed to submit safety plans to the National Body, but deal with a nominated local club, with negotiated pricing.

Communications:

As well as the AGM, Aoraki Board had 12 General Meetings over the year: 22-Sept, 14-Oct, 3-Nov, 24-Nov, 18-Dec -14, 10-Jan, 9-Feb, 2-Mar, 9-Apr, 5-May, 9-June, and 14-July-15.

Attendance at General Meetings was as follows:

- Meri Gibson – 7 (including two via phone)
- Noel Anderton – 12
- Scruff Hewinson – 7
- Rosalie Mehlhopt – 9
- Janice Melville – 10
- Rick Smith – 12
- Caleb Te Kahu – 12
- Andy Jones – 8

Others include Toriana Hunt (3) Biff Frederickson (3) and Reon Tiweka (1).

Scruff Hewinson undeniably had the best apology – injured by a bull!

The aoraki-dragons.co.nz website is well regarded, even though it is relatively static. Feedback indicates that it is usable and readable but I suspect we should be making more use of Social Media such as Facebook and Twitter for pushing messages (working bees, training days, event plans and results).

Our Gmail continues to take numerous calls from individuals interested in joining a club, or starting new teams. And we have used [Google Groups](#) to send notification and Newsletters during the season, and a Race Pack is under development for this season.

Owles Terrace Earthquake recovery:

Aoraki continues to take a lead role with flat water sports on the Avon, especially at Owles Terrace. We are one of the 5 key buildings 'tenants' that constitute New Brighton Waka Sports Association (NBWSA) and are working with the Council to make the storage shed safe for storing our boats. As chair of NBWSA we ensure the pontoons, the ramp and tracks are maintained, as well as the waka storage area and sheds. We should now look at how to best use the site and ultimately bring more paddlers into the group. Progress in buying Aoraki's container was slow, but this was finalised before CEAT funding closed.

Avon River Corridor User Group:

Aoraki still has a voice on the Avon River User group, which has now expanded into a Trust that will drive the project to turn Red Zone land into a

very substantial Flat Water Sports and Recreation facility. This is on temporary hold until residential land ownership issues are settled, when we hope that Council can commit to a sports development direction. Aoraki's involvement with the Avon Ōtākaro Group has diminished (although we still are in contact with them), but our collaboration with Rowing, Waka Ama, Canoe and Kayak has strengthened, because this is where our focus is naturally leading.

Lake Roto Kohatu:

We now have 'concrete' progress on setting up a container and shelter at Lake Rua, thanks to good work by Rick and Scruff, with collaboration from the Sailing School. Foundations are laid, and the U-Shaped 'compound' is now established and secured, as shown below.

Noel Anderton,
Secretary



Figure 1 - Aoraki's 40 ft container forms the base of the "U"



Figure 2 - Lake Rua Storage container, with a side entry door



Figure 3 - Part of the work crew who built the elaborate foundation structure

Equipment Director

It has been a relatively quiet year from an equipment point of view. We haven't had any major calamities but the condition of the boats has noticeably deteriorated. We are missing some hatch covers for the 10 man boats and a number of the 20's are leaking into the hull through the join where the tail is attached to the main body of the boat.

Three or four of our drums have holes in the skins and we have looked into the possibility of getting them repaired. It turns out to be cheaper to buy new drums from Champion.

Scruff is carrying out the usual repairs to the bottom of the boats. The sand at Pegasus is very abrasive and the ramp at Kaiapoi is very rough with sharp concrete. We have had to pull off some of the gelcoat in order to fibreglass up the holes before we repair the gelcoat.

On a positive note this is the first season for a long time we haven't had a repair to a sweep oar arm or tail section.

Aoraki Dragons are indebted to P&N maintenance team who were called into action again this year to straighten the arms on one of the trailers after it got snagged in a tree at the SI Champs.

They are also working on fitting the two new hoists we bought earlier in the year. These have a much higher load capacity and will replace the two we have fitted to the current trailers.

Looking ahead to next year we are intending to buy a set of cables to mark out the lanes for use at Pegasus and Lake Rua.

We are also applying for funding to buy six new boats. This will give us 16 to use for the Nationals which will be held at Lake Hood in 2016. We also

have a quotation in hand for a new trailer to carry them on.

Once we have the new boats it is our intention to relocate some to the regions to promote the growth of the sport outside of Christchurch.

Rick Smith on behalf of

Scruff (Dale) Hewinson
Equipment Director

Event Director's Report

Once again we had a fantastic season of dragon boating over the summer of 2014–15. It wasn't all smooth cruising and we had to make some last minute adjustments to our normal schedule but it all turned out well in the end.

A big thank you everyone who helped us out at regatta this season. It takes a lot of physical effort to run a successful event and the help we get from paddlers and in setting up and packing out makes it all possible. We couldn't do it without you.

Special thanks must go to Toriana for being our starter for the whole season. It was so good to have an experienced paddler on the start line who was able to get the races underway with the minimum of fuss.

Our dragon boating year is getting busier and busier. Event organising starts in October with sweep training and followed up soon after with a corporate day in November and the Icebreaker at Pegasus early in December.

The corporate day was a little different this year. Some teams were struggling to get a full team together and we ended up running the event in 10 man boats which proved to be very successful. Our aim of course is to introduce new people to dragon boating with the hope that they will put a team together for the full season. Unfortunately only the Rebuild Rats carried on to form a team for the full season and they folded before they competed in any major events.

In the regular season the Icebreaker was a great way to start. The 1km race is a good challenge and the tug of war is great fun. All the teams were very sporting again this year and the final was played out between the girls from Waimak Thunder and Beca with Thunder being the winners on the day.

Akaroa was great once again. It takes a big logistical effort to get all our gear over there and set up but it is worth it. There is always some improvement to be made and this year our start and finish buoys had a system on them to allow for the change in the water depth as the tide came and went. The Le Mans was spectacular as usual with the Ridge Riders providing extra entertainment by tipping out on the turn. It was a very high tide this year and the run got shorter

and shorter as the morning went on.

The Aoraki open was held at Rua this year because Pegasus was closed due to the algal bloom. The event itself ran like clockwork. We had Huata's people on crew loading and Toriana on the start line. The lake is great for spectators and



the 250m racing was hard fought. The 500m races were held as time trials with boats leaving 30 secs apart. Everyone agreed that we should hold another event there in the coming season.

The set-up for the South Island championships was very challenging. We got off to a late start because the ute we hired didn't have a tow bar. We dropped some of the scaff when we were loading the trailer. We had a flat tire on the other trailer on the way down and scruff's Jag was

overheating. Once we got there the set up went quite smoothly except for when the arms of one of the trailers got caught up in a tree. Special thanks to the members of Ridge Riders who helped us out with transport and set-up for the event. The highlight of the weekend was when Janice ordered the Pizza from Dominos in Ashburton in Melbourne Australia.

The photo finish, the sound and communication systems, the safety boats, the race caller and the food vendors all added to the quality of the event.

We did have a hiccup with the 2k event this year and there was some doubt about the result in the first race. After reviewing all the data available from the photo finish reports and interviewing paddlers and sweeps we still couldn't decide who was second and third in the race. In the end the board decided to award silver medals to both CGHS and Marian. We will have a backup for the photo finish system for the coming season.

There is still one challenge to overcome before we can say that we have it all sorted and that is the pack down after racing finishes before we can head off to the prize giving. It just takes too long to get the boats on the trailers and everything secured in the furniture trailers. This is the time when we really need help from all the crews to get this done quickly.

As board members we can't do everything on our own and we do appreciate the help we get from the teams. Even if you can't help set up or pack up there are a couple of things that all crews can do to make organising events easier. There is always a lot to do in the last few days before a regatta.

- Register for events by the deadline. If your crew won't be there then let us know. This is

especially important for the Ice Breaker and Akaroa. Teams have been left out of the draw because we didn't know they were coming or that they had more than one team.

- Get your photo ID sheets in by the deadline
- Listen to the announcements on race day and get to crew loading in plenty of time for your race

2015 was a great year for South Island dragon boating!

The excitement is already building for another great season coming up.

Rick Smith, Event Director
Aoraki Dragons Boat Association