



An updated history to commemorate
the 40th Anniversary of the rebirth
of the YWCA Rowing Club

95 YEARS OF ROWING AT THE 'Y'

Many people think of the Y as a modern Rowing Club growing out of the Women's Liberation era of the late 1960s, but that was only the beginning of our Modern Era.

Acknowledgements

To all past and present committee members for their contribution to the Annual Reports sourced for this History.

To those whose photographs I have used.

October, 2005

I apologise, before you even begin to read, to all those who I have overlooked, or for any mistakes made in compiling this updated History. The Y Rowing Club appreciates the contribution made by all members and committee. The club would not have survived the early years of male domination of the sport or got through the drought of recent years without the loyalty and support of its members. This History is a testament to all past and present Y Rowing Club members. *Barendina Beedle*

IN THE BEGINNING

Girls began rowing at the Y in the 1910-11 season when Mrs F J Cato, a Melbourne Y Board Member, encouraged the Y Sports Department to offer rowing as an activity suitable for young women. Through her husband's notable involvement with Wesley College Boat Club, she felt women should have the same opportunity as men to gain the benefits offered by sport, although the Y rowed as an outdoor activity, not a competitive sport at that time.

It was not until 1920 when Mrs T Pitt, Melbourne Y Sports Secretary, and Mrs Cato gathered together a group of 25 young ladies to be coached in the finer points of rowing that rowing was instituted as one of the Y's regular sports. Members at this time who really set the Club on its feet were Robin Dockerty, Alice Greening, Stella Stevens, Elsie Sutton and Flo Curtis. In these early days the Club owned no equipment and hired skiffs from Harmans on the lake for Saturday afternoons.

In 1925 the Australian Women's Rowing Championships were held for the first time in Victoria hosted by the Albert Park Ladies Rowing Club. At this time the Y was not affiliated with the Victorian Ladies Rowing Association, however, a special event in tub boats was staged at the Championship Regatta for the Y girls. Another event witnessed by the large crowd at the regatta was a flying boat landing then taking off from the Lake!

The Championship Regatta awakened interest at the Y for racing boats and competition and after some earnest fundraising, they purchased their first shells, a secondhand Four and Pair for £40 from the Albert Park Men's Club. Then in 1927 the Y joined the Victorian Ladies Rowing Association.

1929 saw the Club move its quarters from the west side of the Lake to Parkins Boatsheds on the east – next to PowerHouse and Wesley – and plans were drawn up to start the building of a YWCA Boatshed nearby.

On May 10, 1930 a long-awaited event took place at the Wesley College Boathouse – the Y's first new racing boat was christened the **Robin Dockerty** by Melbourne Y President, Mrs F J Cato. The new boat was made possible by a portion of the cost being allocated from YWCA general funds, this being the first direct financial help the Rowing Club had received from headquarters.

Bans and a boathouse

Mixed rowing was frowned upon by both the Melbourne YWCA and the Victorian (Mens) Rowing Association, so in 1930 THE Y GIRLS were banned from rowing with men in combination races and women's events were eliminated from all VRA regattas which was to remain the case for the next 40 years. Competition for

The YWCA Rowing Club 1936 - 37



Presented to the YWCA Rowing Club by Nancy Ferguson, nee Grinlington, (second from right) May 1996

Victoria's oarswomen was confined to Women's Regattas and Invitation Events at country club regattas away from the VRA's direct influence.

The YWCA's Boathouse was finally opened in 1933. It was a single-gabled weatherboard structure with an earthen floor. During that year, volunteers from the Essendon Ladies Rowing Club helped YWCA members and friends build a wooden landing over the lake. The hardwood floor went into the boatshed during the forties.

Victoria celebrated the State Centenary in 1934 and the first women's eights race was to be a feature of a Women's Aquatic Carnival on the Yarra. The Y borrowed a shell from Wesley and trained for the historic race against Essendon and Albert Park. They finished a close second and some of the members of that crew were, Eddie Fiddes, Eunice McKay, Kitty Reid and stroke Doreen Loreback.

Prior to 1937 the Club had not been successful in senior championship racing, the YWCA advocating that participation was more important than winning. However, on February 13, 1937, the Y broke that tradition and a record as well. In the Victorian Senior Fours Championship, Y defeated titleholder Essendon by three lengths in 3 minutes 2 seconds for the half mile on the Yarra. The crew stroked by Kitty Reid,

averaged 59 kilos and was selected to represent Victoria at the Australian Titles in Brisbane where they finished third behind Tasmania and Queensland.

Y won the State title again in 1938 and went on to represent Victoria at the historic International Australian Championship Regatta in Sydney. The race was won by the touring British women's crew in fine style from Tasmania and NSW.

World War II

World War II took its toll on all women's rowing clubs with girls going into the forces and factories, and many Victorian clubs, including the Y never really got back to full strength although Y joined Preston, Dimboola and Albert Park when competition resumed in 1948, winning the State Fours Championship in 1949. However the following year the Melbourne YWCA Sports Department decided to close the Rowing Club and concentrate its Netball, Hockey and Cricket teams at the Boathouse.

THE MODERN ERA BEGINS

The ending of an era for the Albert Park Ladies Rowing Club was the beginning of a new era for the YWCA. In 1964 the Albert Park Ladies Club, founded in 1907, closed its doors and some of the members joined with Margaret Agnew MacKenzie to form the Melbourne Ladies Rowing Club. Margaret had come to Melbourne after successfully rowing with Sydney WRC and was a seven-time Australian Fours champion.

Margaret, along with Judy Gallagher, Margaret Graham and Ann Shaw, approached the YWCA to lease the Lake Boatshed. At the suggestion of Physical Education Director, Glory Bain, and the sanction of the Board of Directors, the Melbourne LRC became the New YWCA Rowing Club in 1965, thus beginning the modern era of women's rowing in Victoria.

During the next ten years, the Y totally dominated Victorian and Australian women's rowing. Y members brought the Victorian Ladies Rowing Association to life by providing many of its active executive and they took their enthusiasm to start new clubs and revive old ones.

Guided by Margaret Agnew MacKenzie, the Y started its climb to the top with the NSW Senior Lightweight Fours title in 1966 (Kath Suhr, Barendina Engelbert, Jenni Collier and Syliva Bartlett, coach Barbara Barnes (photo right). That year a new Four shell was purchased for \$1,000 from club funds and christened **Killara**. Plans were drawn up to renovate and extend the Boatshed. In the following season the Y twice downed the long-standing state champions Nestles from Warrnambool,



In the tank at Sydney Rowing Club

and earned the right to represent Victoria for the first time since 1938.

June 1967 saw the opening of the 'new' Boathouse. A new boat storage bay was added, with brick veneering and improved amenities costing \$15,000. It made a fine sports centre which were shared with the Y Hockey and Netball Clubs.

In 1968 the Y again won the State Fours title in a then 1000 meter record of 3 minutes 34 seconds. Y also won the first Lightweight Championship and represented Victoria in the Australian Titles held in Melbourne, winning the first Interstate Lightweight IV Championship for the Victoria Cup. This was a triumph for Club president and coach, Margaret Agnew MacKenzie, who stroked the crew of Helen Negri, Caroline Judd, Helen Rossi and coxed by Alf McLaren. The first National Womens Club titles were part of that regatta and Y rowers won three of the six titles.

More State and National Titles

In 1969 the entire State team were Y girls and the club raised their expenses for the trip to Adelaide. The Heavyweight IV of Kath Bennett, Pam Barnbrook (Murray), Nan Geer, Pauline McGregor, cox Alf McLaren and coach Margaret MacKenzie, won the Interstate IV Title in a record time of 3 minutes 35 seconds. This was only the sixth win for Victoria since the first race in 1920 and it was the first time a woman had coached the winning crew. The Y girls also won 4 of the six National Club titles.

During this highly successful period, the active membership of the Club had grown from six to thirty. New and second-hand equipment purchased entirely from Club fundraising included six Fours, a Tub Pair, a Racing Pair, Scull and oars. Several old Tub boats left from the 1940s proved sturdy and 'character building' for beginners.

Throughout those first ten years the Club was severely hampered with lake weed or droughts, forcing the Club to move to the Yarra for extended periods. The generosity shown by the Melbourne, Richmond and Yarra Yarra Rowing Clubs, who defied a males only tradition, kept the Y afloat.

In 1971 Sylvia Ford, Kath Bennett and Cox Co-coach, Alf McLaren were selected in the State Lwt IV, winning the interstate title on the Brisbane River. The following year, Marie Cox, Sandra Deer and coach Lance Gallagher, were selected for the State Hwt IV, which they won well in Canberra. The Club won three National Club titles, including the Junior IV, for the fourth successive time.

Australia selected a Lwt IV for the first time in 1973 to race New Zealand at the Kings Cup Regatta at Murray Bridge, SA. Y members, Marie Cox and Kath Bennett were in that crew which defeated the Kiwis.

One of the personalities who contributed to the Club and VLRA, particularly in an administrative capacity, was Caroline Judd, who held nearly every executive position at one time or another and her contribution to rowing was recognized by the VLRA in awarding a Life Membership. Also during this period the Y was instrumental in the formation of the Melbourne University and Monash University Ladies Rowing Clubs, which added great depth to Victorian competition.

By 1974 the prospect of women rowing in the Olympics spurred on a more intensive training regime and the Club commissioned a special Women's Racing IV to be built by Jeff Sykes, this was christened **Aroona**.

Y at the World Championships

In 1975 the outstanding Y Elite IV of Wendy Alexander, Pam Murray, Viv Matts and Sally Withers with coxswain, Jan Coxhead and Coach John Bennett, made a clean sweep of State and Australian Hwt Titles and were selected as Australia's first Fours crew to contest a World Championship. Their eighth placing at Nottingham Worlds in a field of 14 was a creditable first-off performance and set a new standard in Australian women's rowing.

Over the past nine years, Club members had won 19 National Club Titles (only 7 events were then contested), 6 Interstate Championships and were selected in two National Teams.

Private girls schools started to take an interest in rowing by 1977 and the Y found themselves coaching or boating crews from MLC, Lauriston, St. Catherines and Kilbreda along with the first girls training for the Inter-Banks Regatta.

The Y returned in strength to Lightweight competition in 1978 with a three length win over the reigning Australian Champions at the State Titles. Three Y girls and

their coach, Kath Bennett were selected for the State Crew which went on to win the Interstate Title in Tasmania. They continued training thru winter with other club members in preparation for test races to make the Australian Team for Worlds in New Zealand. Disappointingly, the AWARC voted against adding further crews to those already selected.

With the new season came a new Racing IV **Aroona II**, a new Boat Trailer (our first) and a Lightweight Crew fit after a winter's hard training. The crew was unbeaten in Lightweight and Senior events all season, they were selected unchanged after the Australian Titles to be Australia's first lightweights to represent outside of Australia, and Kath Bennett became the first woman to coach an Australian Rowing Team.

The crew was Mary Lou Johnstone, Christine Betremieux, Michelle Foulds, Marie Cox with cox Jane Davidson. Emergency Leslie Dankbar of Adelaide trained with the crew in Melbourne. They were to contest the USA titles in Detroit, however the grounding of DC 10s threw International airline schedules into chaos, no less the Australian Lightweight Rowing Team. The trip was delayed several weeks and the crews packed their bags for Royal Canadian Henley at St Catherines, where they would race most of the lightweight crews they were to meet in the US.

Convincing wins in Canada by both the Y Four and the Monash/Corio Pair established a tradition of Australian successes in that premier lightweight womens International competition and paved the way for the introduction of such events in World Championships.

No story of the Y Rowing Club during the 1970s could be complete without the mention of t-shirt printing, a phrase that prompted some of the most imaginative excuses in an endeavor to escape that dreaded task, nevertheless, many boats and oars were purchased from its proceeds.

1980s and new initiatives

The eighties saw the club take on some diverse initiatives, and while the Y's success attracted many rowers to the Club, most were unable to reach the same high levels of their forerunners. The notable exceptions were Jo Guest (Dickson) and Gayle Toogood. Jo won State selection in the Hwt IV in 1982, 83 & 84, winning the Interstate title on each occasion. She then shed many kilos in 1986 to win selection in the State Lwt IV which went on to win the Australian title for the tenth successive occasion. Gayle Toogood was selected in the State Lwt IV for the first time in 1982 which Victoria won and Gayle went on to Melbourne University and continued a distinguished Lightweight rowing career.

In the mid eighties the club introduced its first program for Handicaped Rowers. The project to teach visually impaired young people to row received financial

assistance from the Department of Sport & Recreation and the Bicentennial Authority.

The visually impaired program was extended to meet the needs of the hearing-impaired with the assistance of member Rae Hynes, a fluent signer, who organised a pilot project with the nearby Victorian School for the Deaf.

Other successful daytime programs were – Rowing for Mums and Never too Old, the latter in conjunction with Prahran City Council. These led us to apply for a VicHealth Grant to run an Active for Life project in 1995. Although run during the winter, it proved very popular with mature women and we now have regular Wednesday morning casual rowing for the over 35 age group.

Another community service is our Sunday morning Come & Try and Casual Beginners Sessions, which have grown in popularity over the years. Prior to 1990 the average group of Beginners on a Sunday was 6. But as other rowing clubs have lost interest in teaching, we find ourselves with groups of 15 to 20 and three coaches rostered to teach girls and women ranging in age from 12 to 60.

In addition to schools who book regular rowing classes during school hours, we have added weekly Casual Schoolgirls Sessions on Wednesdays after school due to demand. During school holidays we run Holiday Rowing Clinics over three days and these are usually booked out.

All these programs are a source of new club members and the cash flow covers day to day running costs of the club. It is also putting to good use equipment which would normally lay idle during the daytime and gives the general community opportunities to try rowing.

Masters and a empty lake

Masters rowing for women, not just former rowers, has grown in popularity since the Y put a team together for the first Australian Masters Games in 1987. Eleven members collected medals in five events at beautiful Lake Barrington in Tasmania. At each masters since the Club has been well represented.

We are now finding that at least half of the beginners who come to the club are women over thirty and they are becoming valuable club members who assist in our organisation and provide leadership for the younger members.

Chemical treatments which had controlled the Lake weeds were stopped in 1991 by pressure from environmentalists, turning training sessions into obstacle courses around the weeds and forcing the Annual Regatta to use only a 700 meter course. Melbourne Parks & Waters and the Government decided to fix the weed problem by dredging the sediment from the Lake floor. So in May 1992 the Lake



was drained and the Y moved into Caulfield Grammar Shed on the Yarra. Our absence was to be for only six months, with dredging to be finished by Christmas. One of the wettest winters on record saw dredging hopelessly behind schedule, but we could not stay at Caulfield as school rowing commences in Term 4. We were a rowing club without water. To our rescue came the Footscray City Rowing Club, not exactly on the side of town where our members lived, but they offered rack space for a number of boats which would enable the Y to stay in operation.

The stay at Footscray extended for the entire rowing season as more dredging problems were encountered. During this time we christened a new IV, **Pekin Boloke**, meaning Dry Lake, and our Annual Regatta was staged on the Maribyrnong. Activities did not return to Albert Park Lake until May 1993 although only half the lake was open. During our absence most of our Schoolgirl members were lost and so was our cash flow from classes, no new members were recruited, but importantly, we did not lose Senior members who competed regularly, winning a number of races.

A lake without weed was a boon, new members came flooding through our doors and the 1993-4 Season proved the most successful for over 10 years with crews winning Novice and Intermediate races regularly.



The Y on the Murray

A fabulous last year in the old club house

We were able to farewell our old clubrooms with a fantastic result on the VRA 1994-95 ladder. The YWCA Rowing Club finished the season in second place after attending 23 of the 26 regattas.

The Victorian Institute of Sport selected Natalie Attrill to attend a Talent Identification Development Camp at the AIS in Canberra. Kath Bennett was nominated Squad Manager and took seven girls to Canberra. Attendees had lectures, coaching sessions and various tests. Natalie was the top performing female at the camp and as a result received a special trophy.

Natalie made her way into Women's Intermediate Sculling and Grace Maglio into the Women's Senior Scull ranks. Ingrid Peerson broke through to the Women's Intermediate Sculls. The Women's Intermediate Four+ of Fiona Constable, Fiona Bishop, Michelle Giles and Tania Maglio, gave other clubs a run for their money. Tania Maglio and Sarah Bennett represented the Club with wins in their first races. The U16 girls showed us that determination is rewarded when they won their first victory at Horsham.

Our Annual Regatta was again a credit to all who pitched in and many rowing successes thanks to coaches – Margie Coe, Roger Cook, Donna Greig-Butler and Kath Bennett.

In November 1994 our Veterans took two Four-oared crews to the 100 Km Murray Marathon and they were the only female, or male, crews to complete the distance without changing crew members.

The staging of the Masters Games rowing on our own Lake in 1995 gave our Masters a great focus and they gathered former rowers from everywhere and trained beginners through winter, so that the Y contingent numbered 29 and everyone of them collected a medal, some several.

Y members served on the Organising Committee and generally contributed to success of the two-day event.

Since the Lake dredging, the Y has gone from strength to strength, placing in the top three of the VRA Clubs Premiership for 1994, 95 & 96, the latter with a record 34 wins. Active membership has steadily increased nearing one hundred.

Our First Eight

To mark the 60th anniversary of our first Eights crew, it was decided to lease an VIII, the crews were undefeated winning 7 events including the Novice/Intermediate VIII double at our own Regatta, back at the Lake. The Club finally purchased its own Eight in 1995 – a pre-raced shell named *Melburnia*, and it has won a number of races since joining our fleet.

The official announcement

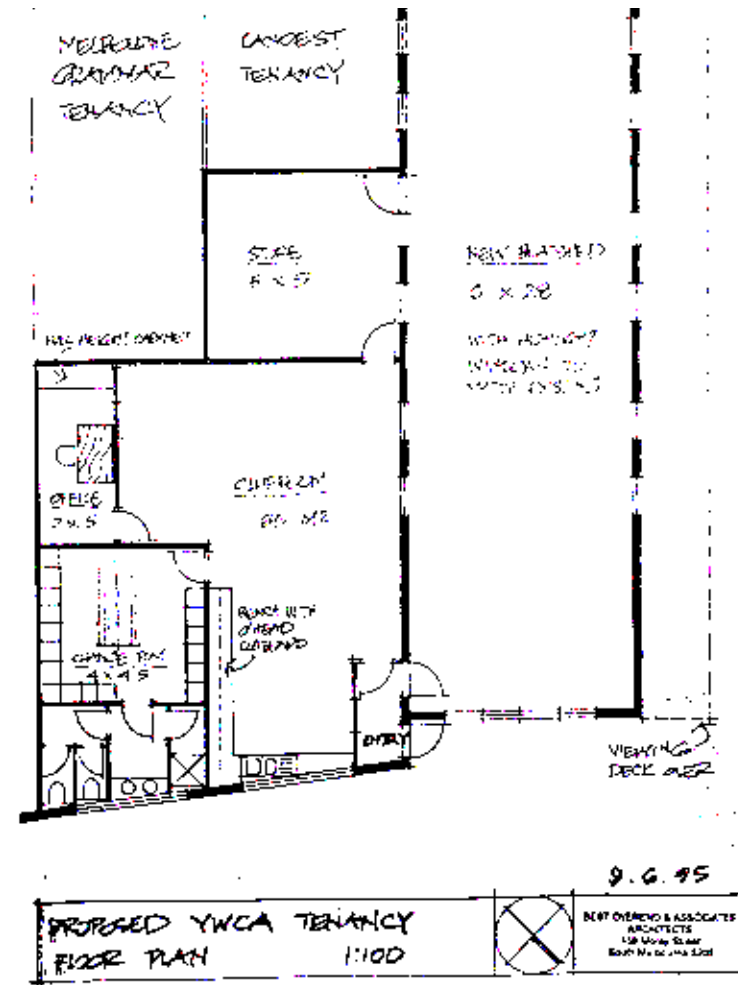
On April 27, 1995, Jeff Floyd, Director of Melbourne Parks & Waterways, announced that, in line with the Albert Park Master Plan to reduce the number of small and mostly older buildings in the Park, the preferred option was to locate rowing into one precinct based at the Powerhouse. MP&W had funds available to extend and refurbish the building to the north for a self-contained area for YWCA and extend south over Wesley for the other schools and clubs. To reduce congestion, a second option was favoured, and a boathouse for Albert Park and South Melbourne Rowing Clubs was also built at the city end of the Lake.

Farewell to the old boatshed

The major renovations to Powerhouse started at the end of October 1995 and our concrete slab was poured before Christmas. With the contractors working 7 days a week, we finally received notification to move out of our old boatshed on Tuesday February 6th, 1996. Demolition would start on the old shed on 13th February. We are most appreciative of MP&W effort to relocate the YWCARC into excellent new facilities at no real cost to the Melbourne YWCA.

The big move started at 8am on Sunday February 11. There was a great turn out. Everyone lost count of the number of times they walked the 100 metres from the old shed to Powerhouse with everything from a microwave to lane buoys in their arms. But in a mere two hours, there was little left in the old shed. It was a drizzly morning, but by 10am there were 18 beginners queuing up for a row. So in typical YWCA style, it was business as usual, all beginners were looked after and then in turned helped out by carrying the boats into our new boathouse.

While lacking the character of our old shed, which was built in 1929 and renovated in 1968, there was unanimous agreement that the new rowing Centre was a vast improvement and would serve us well for another 66 years. It is hoped that we will not have to wait that long for a new landing to be built. The YWCA built the landing over the lake in front of the old shed and expect the equivalent to be provided as part of the agreement to move into Powerhouse.





The 1995-6 season was surely one of the most exciting season in the club's history. Relocation, Australian Masters Games rowing at the Lake, our own Annual Regatta and we maintained our top three Club premiership position.

For the winter regattas we had entries in Novice Fours – 2 crews, Novice sculls – Susannah Jones and Patrice Lovell, Intermediate Four and scullers -- Natalie Atrill and Ingrid Peerson and a Novice Quad. Nicole Saxton, Kate Carey and cox Susan had their first race and Patrice Lovell competed for the first time in a scull. The schoolgirls won their Novice Four heat but had equipment trouble in the final. The Intermediate four had a neck'n'neck battle with Melbourne in the heat and went on to win their final. First win for Anya Lloyd-Smith in the two seat with Fi Constable, Michelle Giles, Liz Patrick and cox Sarah Bennett. Our sculler did well, Ingrid Peerson winning the Intermediate race and Susannah Jones the Novice and Patrice the Seconds final. Dimboola/Horsham saw wins for Liz Patrick and Fiona Bishop, Desiree Lovell and the U16 four, Amy Bennett, Asha Martin, Rebecca Mackenzie and Pippa Whiting.

Two Novice crews did well at Henley on Maribyrnong along with a new veteran crew of Sandra Dean, Vienna Kayha, Rosemary Guyatt and Wendy Morgan having their first taste of competition. Patrice Lovell won her U16 and Novice Scull events.

More wins for the club at Australian Henley, a win for our Eight at Barwon and scullers at Footscray. A great rowing season thanks to parental support with the cooking and driving of hoards of giggling girls around on the weekends.

Take the spirit of an Olympic Games, the fun of a festival, the camaraderie of 10,000 participants and you have the main ingredients of the VicHealth 5th Australian Masters Games.

YWCA rowing Club helped stage the VicHealth 5th Australian masters Games at Albert Park lake. Not only did we organise crews, we also organised the venue.

With 25 eager members willing to take on the challenge, we rowed and trained until the event. Melbourne didn't give us its best weather especially on the first day of rowing. The lake was more suitable for surf boats. We won, we lost and some of us sank. We also had successes at the indoor rowing events taking home many medals for our efforts. It was certainly

a thrill to row in the club's own Eight purchased just prior to the games. We enjoyed the hospitality of the games, the opening celebrations in the city and the closing party where we danced the night away at the Glasshouse.

The success of the games reinforced the desire of older women to row . . . but the issue continue to be raised that was it fair that vets with little rowing experience should compete against experienced crews of the same age as catagories were age-based. The idea of modified rules to encourage participation in sport as in schools had been introduced, so why not for rowing. The idea didn't gain traction until Kath Bennett, Kathy Wilmot, and Barendina Beedle were on the organising Committee for the Melbourne Australian Master's Games and the Master's Novice Category over 500m was born for people who had never competed previously.

Grand Opening of the YWCA Rowing Centre

There was a great roll-up of over 90 current and former members and rowing officials on the 5th of May to witness the official opening of the new Rowing Centre – much too luxurious to be called a boat shed.

With an impressive drum roll from Elizabeth Beedle, Melbourne Y President, Janet Powell declared open the new YWCA rowing centre unveiling the brass plaque now mounted next to the main door. The plaque reads as follows:

YWCA Rowing Centre

The original YWCA Rowing Club boathouse was built in 1929 and stood to the south of this site. The YWCA Rowing Club was founded in 1910 to provide girls and women with the opportunity to enjoy the sport of rowing in a safe and friendly atmosphere. This building was opened on 5th May 1996 by Janet Powell, President of the YWCA Melbourne.



Active for Life program

We were successful in obtaining grants in successive years from VicHealth for our **Rowing for Older Adults** programs which have been nominated as Best Practice Projects. Over 500 adults in ages up to 65 have visited the **Come and Try** sessions over the two years and nearly half of these enrolled in the **Introduction to Rowing** programs.

Mature adults can be reluctant to try a new sport which is perceived as vigorous or requiring great strength. Fear of falling into a cold Albert Park Lake was considered by many of the women to be their main concern. Our experienced and supportive coaching staff quickly allayed these fears as participants gained confidence and enjoyed rowing in crews with new friends . . . all without a single swim.

That lived-in feeling and more space

We had now spent a year in our new home, gradually re-arranging it, hanging historical photos and filling it with new equipment, including an Eight Station Universal Weight Gym, two new fours and two pre-owned pairs, so much in fact, that we had to investigate another boat storage bay.

Membership was maintained at around 100 with 68 members actually representing the club in competition. We placed 6th in both the VRA Club and Junior Premierships and two of our scullers won State Championships.

To facilitate entry to the boathouse to our growing membership, a Pin Pad Access Control Lock was installed on the lakeside Drive door. This eliminated the need for costly security keys. The combination is changed annually and only issued to financial members.

We learnt that Parks Victoria had \$25,000 in the budget to extend the landing in front of our boat bay. It would not be soon enough – it's a long work when the lake level is low.

Our new Sykes Honeycombe racing four arrived in October. It was christened **Yammacoona** (women's spirit which rules the waterways) by patron Claire Brooks. We also added the **Mulloka II, Arratye, Caloola** to our fleet.

Competition

Four of our scullers took part in the Winter Sculling Series on the Yarra with Trice Lovell winning the tub scull sprint and Alissa Lloyd placing second in the 6-race weekly series contested by 18 scullers.

First win of the season to Asha Hibbert, Rebecca McKenzie with cox Jane Evans in a Novice 2+. Rachael Allsopp won the Novice Sculls Championship at Warrnambool going on to win the U16 sculls.

At Carrum a first-ever win for the Beginners 4 of Shelly Phillips, Bronwyn Murray, Lynette White, Kate Miller and cox Heidi Nelson. Allisa Lloyd won the Novice Sculls final and the Novice 2+ won again and again at the Banks Regatta.

Trice Lovel won the Champion Schoolgirls Single Sculls over 2000 metres. An win for the Novice 4, Amber Nelson, Ciar Foster, Melanie Szydzik, Lauren Underwood, Heidi Nelson and Heidi Joy Coach, in the Victorian Universities Regatta.

The first win for the Novice 8 at Scotch Merces for Louise Stevens, Amber Nelson, Shelly McCormack, Ciar Foster, Lisa Higgins, Melanie Szydzik, Lauren Underwood, Suzanne Keneally, Heidi Nelson cox with coach Donna Greig-Butler.

At our own regatta on the lake a win for Trice and Nat in the Intermediate Double Sculls. The Novice eight won yet again.

At Barwon more wins for the Novice 8 and Four. At Essendon the Novice 2+ of Amber and Suzanne, the Intermediate Single Scull Trice Lovel and the Novice 4 won their events.

And the last regatta of the season at Footscray saw a win for Trice in the Intermediate Sculls and a first win for a new Intermediate four of Emma Matlock, Michelle Giles, Fi Constable and Kathy Kordes.

Members represented the club at Nagambie, Mildura and Wentworth Regattas. At the Head of the Yarra and the Australian Masters Championships.

Again the Olympics gave boost in numbers at the school sessions. However there was a fall-off in numbers when girls found the lifting, and actual rowing, not quite as easy or 'oarsome' as watching it on the television.

The Veterans have a name change

Now official 'Masters' they travelled to the Murray for the Queens Birthday Weekend Regatta at Wentworth. 12 gold medals were won.

Our thrill-seeking masters again ventured to the Murray for the Royal Flying Doctor Service Rowathon. Then in January to Rutherglen with wins for the Novice pair, Mixed 8 and the Beginners 4 and the Novice 8.

The term Fast Sport (as in Fast Food) has been coined to describe the future of recreation. Many people are prepared to pay for a quick recreation experience and are not interested in joining a traditional

So we eventually acquired the second boat bay in 1997 and spent more money on equipment for members.

Wins again for many members while some moved on to other endeavours.

Our membership numbers were maintained at around 90 with the fall-off in Junior numbers compensated by an increase in Masters.

Active Australia

The Australian Sports Commission decided to assist those clubs which were willing to access resources and improve their ability to provide good sporting facilities and management for active Australians.

It set up a program whereby clubs which meet certain standards would be publicly recognised as Active Australia Providers (the process is comparable to Quality Recognition). The YWCA Rowing Club committed to this process.

A Working Group was set up to go through the step-by-step project of recognising what needed to be done in order to meet the required standards.

The Mission Statement and list of Objectives included in our Annual Reports are the result.

National Club of the Year Award

The 1999 National Club of the Year Achievement Award was presented to us by Rowing Australia. This was certainly the season's highlight and a special reward for the members who took part in gaining the Active Australia Provider status.

The YWCA Rowing Club was nominated by the Victorian Rowing Association for embracing Active Australia for implementing a number of successful initiatives designed to increase participation in rowing and to promote the sport to a wider range of target groups.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Y Rowing Club operates as a division of YWCA Victoria. It aims to provide a safe and friendly environment for its members to learn and develop their rowing skills and, if desired, to achieve competitive success.

OBJECTIVE

- To operate constitutionally, safely and efficiently to further the sport of women's rowing and to advance the interests of its owners, members and other stakeholders.
- To behave creditably as a division of YWCA Victoria and to ensure that it can be proud of its Rowing Club.
- To ensure women of all ages can associate productively to develop their rowing skills and to encourage members to compete at regattas.
- To maintain membership of Rowing Victoria Inc and aim to win the annual Women's Premiership.
- To continue to organise the Annual Albert Park Lake Regatta.
- To conduct effective liaison with Parks Victoria, who operate the Reserve, and to be represented on the Albert Park Advisory Committee (APLAC).
- To co-operate in recreation programs of the City of Port Phillip Council and with those schools and organisations wishing to use our services.
- To finance our own operations in an economic and self-reliant manner, utilising the club's assets to gain income which can be used to keep the fleet and equipment in good repair.
- To provide members with the opportunity to practice their social and leadership skills, and to enable them to learn and develop coaching skills.
- To act fairly at all times, and to demonstrate that association with this Club, in whatever capacity, makes for a positive and enriching experience.

The Y Rowing Club is an ACTIVE AUSTRALIA PROVIDER

In the process, the club demonstrated a systematic approach to planning with a strong orientation to strategic thinking, expanding its fleet of boats and catering especially for the needs of beginners.

It has developed a number of new programs to accommodate changing life styles, work patterns and recreational interests.

While many rowing clubs have adopted one or two approaches similar to those of the YWCA, the noteworthy aspects are the scale and comprehensiveness of the club's activities and the deliberate provision for women of all ages. As a consequence a range of programs has been devised to meet the specific needs of particular target groups.

YWCA Rowing Club has clearly demonstrated a willingness to respond to a rapidly changing environment in innovative ways that challenge established practices and position the club for a bright future. The sport of rowing is stronger and richer as a result.

Boats and winners

\$38,500 was spent on new equipment including a Kevlar Honeycomb Racing Eight christened **Kath Bennett**. Also purchased was a training four and three concept C ergos. Other boats were refurbished.

Presbyterian Ladies College commenced a rowing program with us in March, hiring equipment for their early morning rows.

Many of our crews had successful races. Our masters section now had two new winning crews. At our regatta, the masters class was won by a composite crew of Kelly Steward, Melanie Smith, Louise Stevens and Michelle le Noury, trained by Roger Cook. They also won the Beginners category.

We also taught a group of dancers from the Australian Ballet Company to row. Roger Cook and Marsha Roberts instructed six men and four young women from the company over a course of four lessons

2000 saw more new boats including a regulation 4 – the **Kallaroo II** a new tub scull and tub pair. The **Tumbarumba** was christened by Hon Sheryl Garbutt, Minister for the Environment and conservation. The rub pair **Wirrabilla** changed colour during refurbishment and the red tub pair became a **tubble** (tub double scull)

Our membership grew to over 130.

Kath Bennett

Life Membership of the YWCA Victoria

Kath Bennett's contribution to the YWCA over many years was recognised in February 2000. Kath is already a Life member of our rowing club and the Victorian Rowing Association.

Janet Powell, President of YWCA Victoria, presented Kath with her Life Members Pin at a crowded AGM in February and congratulated her for the way she has distinguished herself in her sporting field. Her expertise in administration and coaching has influenced hundreds, if not thousands of girls and women, not only at the Y but at other clubs. Under her guidance, the club has led the way with Masters rowing for women through promotion, teaching and competition.

In 1983 the Australian rowing Magazine had described Kath as 'without doubt the chief architect of women's rowing since the 1960s.

Competition

Kathy Wilmot came in second overall for the Ramsbottom Trophy in the Winter Sculling events for open boats over 800 metres.

This year was the 36th Annual YWCA Albert Park Lake Regatta was held in the first week of February, and again this contributed to lower entries.

Beginners sessions saw 623 bums on seats with a number of them continuing on to do the Intensive Coaching Program (ICP).

Our Masters competitors capped the season with the Victorian Championships in Open Eight and Novice Pair on the 20th May on the Yarra. In the competitive arena they have been active this year. At Essendon the Novice 4 had a win, At the Easter Henley on the Murray and Darling saw sixteen trophies brought home to Melbourne.

The 2000-2001 season saw a change in emphasis in our competitive membership as most of our competitors were schoolgirls with Patrice McClellan winning the State Championships for Year 10 Schoolgirls. Our Seniors and Masters aimed for fitness and recreational rowing.

Our membership numbers stayed steady at approximately 130 with increases in both Juniors and non-competitive rowers. Star of the Sea College students, with support from their school, made a significant boost to Junior Membership. Temporary Enrolments (ICPs), casual visits and attendances at daytime programs remained stable in numbers and revenue.

Computerisation

Rowing Victoria introduced a mandatory software package which clubs were required to use for entering regattas. It would also keep track of membership, financial and status records. With this and other administrative requirements, the committee decided to appoint a professional Administrative Officer as these tasks now required continuity and more time than most volunteers could be expected to give.

Korowa and PLC

Korowa AGS and PLC continued to enlarge their school rowing programs utilising some of our equipment on a lease basis. However, PLC took a major step to operate independently in the 2001-2002 rowing season. Both schools have purchased boats and engaged their own coaches.

YWCA appoints professional coaches

Some rowing clubs had started to levy members for coaching fees while at others members pay coaches personally. To date we had managed to provide excellent equipment, professional coaches and management while still keeping membership fees at bargain prices.

After advertising the position of Professional Head Coach in May last year, the Committee re-considered the job description, deciding the workload could be too great for one person to fulfil to members' satisfaction. As a result two Senior Coaches were appointed – Steve Higginbotham, responsible for Juniors and Senior Bs, and Frank O’Gorman responsible for Senior As and Masters.



Recreational rowers in all categories would be divided between both coaches based on rowing schedules.

Patrice McLellan won the State Schools Year 10 Single Scull Championship at Carrum. Patrice, Lauren Richardson and Tilly McKay won their year’s sculling event at the Rowing Victoria Schools No 3 Regatta. Alissa Lloyd and Fiona Green won in the Intermediate Coxless Pair at our regatta.

Preparation started many months prior to the regatta negotiating with the Grand Prix Corporation and Parks Victoria to regain our traditional late February date, however this was not possible So we were again programmed in first week of February which again contributed to lower entries. There were 57 events contested by 260 competitors from 10am to 3.15pm.

Steve resigned after the Head of Schoolgirls in March due to ill health and Frank’s contract ended at the end of April. The Committee readvertised.

Masters

The open rowers took up selected challenges including the Head of the Yarra from Princes Bridge to Hawthorn in 38° heat headed off on the 18k row to Hawthorn and back. It took its toll on various crews, but Y women are made of sturdier stuff and thoroughly enjoyed the row. Due to flooding the Royal Flying Doctors Murray Marathon was held on the Darling River and many members participated yet again.

YWCA was well represented at our annual Albert Park Lake Regatta and the Victoria Masters Championships also on the Lake.

Head of the Yarra crew 2000



The Tom Rodda Award

Kath Bennett's contribution to the YWCA, Victorian and Australian Rowing over many years was recognised this year when she was presented with the Tom Rodda Award. Kath, already a Life Member of the Y Rowing Centre, YWCA Victoria and Rowing Victoria Inc, is the first woman to win this notable annual award for outstanding service to rowing. Ted Woolcock, President of the Oarsmen and Oarswomen's Association of Victoria, presented Kath with a fine Silver Salver at our Annual Regatta.

Increased sessions for schools

Several schools increased the number of sessions so that students had a better experience. MacRobertson Girls High have added Year 10s increasing from two to three sessions per week in Term 1 and Star of the Sea took additional sessions. The following schools also did Introduction to Rowing programs with us –

Korowa AGS	Princes Hill Secondary
Santa Maria College Northcote	Kilvington BGGs
OLSH College, Bentleigh	Brentwood Secondary College
St Peter's, Cranbourne	

After School Casual Rowing

This program continued to be popular with girls from non-rowing and rowing schools alike. Numbers at these sessions held twice weekly were good although many girls are unwilling to commit to regular training.

Intensive Coaching Program

The Intensive Coaching Program provided the quick sport fix that many people are looking for in a series of 4 set 90-minute classes in crews of the same four people, (female and male) with the same coach. These continue to be embarrassingly popular during Summer and Autumn as a result of publicity and demand from Sunday Beginners wishing to achieve higher standard of rowing. Thirty-eight groups (152 people) graduated from this program in 2000-2001, some then becoming members.

Holiday Clinics

Numbers were down on the previous due to no clinics being held in the Olympic holiday period and very poor publicity for the summer program. All our coaches volunteer their time with help from our schoolgirl members. The Clinics generated approx \$4,000 so the Clinics are not only an excellent fundraiser but a source of

new members. There is a good mix of students who are rowing with their schools and want more coaching and girls who are completely new to the sport.

Council of Adult Education continued their contracted Beginners Rowing Courses based on our Intensive Coaching Program. We conducted classes for 29 people from which the CAE had excellent feedback.

Changing Participation Patterns

It was acknowledged that changing work patterns were causing a decrease in participation in competitive and traditional sports, with people increasingly unwilling to commit for a whole season although becoming more demanding of the activities they undertook. To remain viable, sports bodies like ourselves must provide quality programs which include coaching, equipment, facilities and programs to tap this market.

2001-2002

The appointment of Sandy Mitchell the new Head Coach saw an immediate surge of activity at all levels. Sandy put his coaching expertise to work with both competitive and recreational rowers.

Forty-two members represented the Club at 23 of the 31 Rowing Victoria Regattas, scoring a very creditable 10th place in the Women's Junior Premiership covering Intermediates, Novices and Beginners. We placed 10th in the Masters category



Back: Left to right: Meaghan, Sandy, Zoe, Bianca, Emma, Miriam and Ildiko. Front: Teresse and Joanne.



Teresa in the single scull.



Sandy, Meaghan and Miriam, Ildiko and Bianca in front.



Christening the *Belabula III* at our annual regatta



Y Annual Regatta

and 12th in the overall Club Premiership which combines both men and women. These results placed us in the top 12% of Clubs in this state.

A new rowing club formed and took up residence next to us in the Lord Sommers Camp & Powerhouse complex. We welcomed the Melbourne Argonauts, the first new rowing club in Melbourne for 10 years, and have been pleased to help them get crews on the water.

Strategic Planning Workshop

The committee gathered at the Hotel Y in October to spend a day looking in depth at the operations of the Club, reviewing activities and performance over the past 6 years. We were assisted by Mary Maddocks, YWCA Victoria Board Member, and Janet Powell, Past President of YWCA Victoria and one of our valued Patrons.

Planning

The key themes that emerged were:

- A focus on youth, particularly the 12-15 age group which sees many young women drop out of sport. To support this objective, initiatives to 'update' our branding with a name change, new logo and uniforms are underway;
- Active asset management to ensure the high quality and availability of our fleet continues to attract members. During the year, the Club replaced two Regulation Fours and purchased a training scull. Efforts to optimise the utilisation of our assets through school and corporate programs continue;
- Engagement and influence to encourage women to pursue wellbeing, friendship and competition through rowing. We have received good local media coverage this year and plan to gain greater visibility within Rowing Victoria and identify opportunities to support other programs operated by YWCA Victoria.

Immediate Action

We increased the price of the ICP and Beginners Programs to reflect market conditions, followed by a redesign of our logo and website to reflect a younger more modern image. Finally a change to our name would require an amendment to the Constitution and an Annual General Meeting of members.

Rationale for a name change

The YWCA Rowing Club recognises the significance of its identity as a sporting and physical recreation department of the Young Women's Christian Association [now YWCA Victoria]. It does not intend nor does it wish to disassociate itself from this organisation. The Rowing Club appreciates that it is part of an organisational



family with a rich tradition of empowering and supporting women in Australia. The Rowing Club also recognises that the YWCA in this new millennium continues to be an affective association that strives to meet the needs of young women in a progressive and challenging world. Shifting trends in the recreational needs of young and mature women have been identified by the rowing club and club objectives have been adapted where necessary to enhance these needs. In this regard the club believed it presented itself as a contemporary sporting club with excellent facilities and opportunities to learn and enjoy the sport of rowing. To reflect this mission the rowing club sought to modify its name from YWCA Rowing Club to Y Rowing Club.

So accordance with Clause 28 of the Constitution, and the support of the members the Y.W.C.A. Rowing Club became the Y Rowing Club.

The drought takes hold

And what a season it was with frantic activity and training during the winter leading up to the World Masters Games in October, then watching in despair as the water level of our lake dropped by the day, leaving our landings nearly a metre out of the water.

By January we were forced to cancel our annual regatta and move boats to the Yarra.

Fourteen members represented the Y in the World Masters rowing with loads of enthusiasm; six of these had been rowing less than a year.

Our squad joined with rowers from Wesley Collegians, Melbourne, Hawthorn and the Argonauts to form composite crews to take on the World at various age levels. Not too many medals but loads of fun and satisfaction.





Head of the Yarra – Saturday 30th November

The crew of Monica (bow), Julie, Ildiko, Miriam, Sue, Emma, Jo, Suzanne (stroke) and Renee (cox) completed the race in 36 minutes, 32.86 seconds, rowing well despite having difficulty with three very sharp turns on the course.

Recreational rowing on the move

In the first half of the year all our programs were ahead of the previous year, which was just as well seeing many of these activities, plus Sunday Beginners,



Beginners on the Yarra



In the tank at Powerhouse on the Yarra



The move the Brighton Grammar boathshed

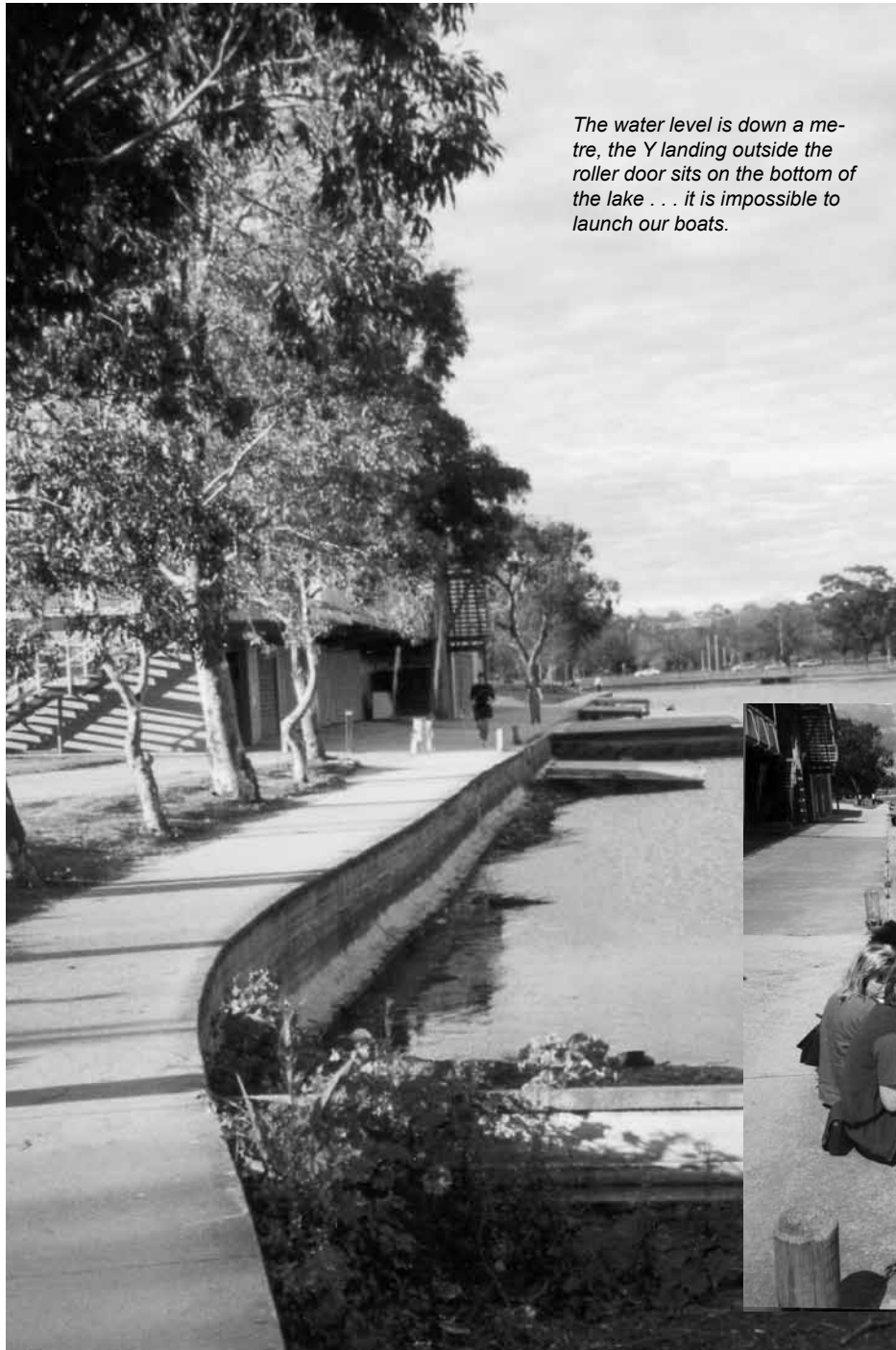
had to be cancelled after Christmas. Income was down by \$29,000 and membership numbers at its lowest for 10 years.

In January we were able to secure racking on the Yarra at Power House Rowing Club. This was an expensive option and not sustainable in the long term, but it kept the club rowing until we received the generous offer from Brighton Grammar School to use their boathouse vacated for the winter. We greatly appreciated this gesture and moved at the end of April.

The ever decreasing water level at the lake made ASquad and beginners challenging in terms of boat handling and unfortunately we had to suspend our weekly Sunday Beginners late in 2002. The end of daylight saving in February saw ASquad change to Sundays, then another move to the Brighton Grammar shed in the heart of Boatshed Parade.

Whilst the changes created a lot of administration and boat moving, most people saw this as an opportunity to enjoy the new scenery.

It was also decided to introduce a better system of transition from beginners to club membership status. Based on feedback received from members, Beginners would be on the first Sunday of each month. Intensive Coach Program (ICP) crews would then be formed and coached for four weeks. Once the this period finished, ICP crews were offered one free month if they become a full member. Early stages yet, but so far this process is working very well.



The water level is down a metre, the Y landing outside the roller door sits on the bottom of the lake . . . it is impossible to launch our boats.

Albert Park Lake Advisory Committee (APLAC)

The lively debates at the APLAC meetings have shown the concern of all lake users regarding the water level and resulting problems. Rowing and sailing clubs moved to different venues to enable their members stay active. All clubs lost money, members and found it difficult to function. Even the general public no longer walked around the lake. The lake had a neglected feel and at times smelly and badly littered with the debris appearing as the water level recedes. There was no shortage of bird life. A Clean Up Day has been organised in conjunction with the lake clubs for July 2003.

At a special meeting the engineer from Parks Victoria, explained the various options available to improve conditions at the lake. Because of the drought Parks would no longer supplement water levels with drinking water as had been done in the past. The possibilities:

1. Upgrading three stormwater drains to increase flow into the lake
2. Recycle plant located on Albert Road
3. Piping water up from Port Phillip Bay
4. Cowderoy Street drain upgrade

Adding salt water to lake has, for the time being, been put aside . . . it would create environmental difficulties . . . and it is also very expensive.



The recycle plant which had been operating near Albert Road moved on . . . it was a prototype only with limited production. A larger unit would be too expensive.

The Cowderoy Street drain at our end of the lake would now be investigated. Because it runs lower than the lake, pumps and a holding pond would need to be established making this project expensive . . . however, depending on the success of the stormwater drains, this would be the next option.

Some real action

Finally three stormwater drains were upgraded enabling water to run into the lake where previously it flowed to the Yarra. Special adjustable steel plates were located in the drain to prevent the lake flooding during the winter. This solution, of course, depended on rain. . . but it was a good start. The pollution ponds at both ends of the lake would now have to be upgraded to cope with the extra water flow, hopefully without increasing the their size.

For every 10mm of rain the lake level will increase by 30mm due to the upgraded drains.





The Y Landing

After regular appeals for assistance, Parks Victoria offered a temporary solution to our boat launching problems. The pontoon will be moved to a position in front of the concrete landing . . . then attached with steps constructed from the concrete landing to the pontoon. This would be completed within the 4-6 weeks.

We kept our fingers cross for rain . . .

and we waited . . . the situation did not improve

As the year progressed and the water level dropped at an alarming rate, we met with Parks Victoria's head ranger in an attempt to find some solution that would render our pontoons usable in the changing conditions. One suggestion was that we install floating 're-locatable' pontoons and another was that 'low impact' landscaping take place so that a gradual slope would allow us to walk the boats into the water. After much effort, it became obvious that Parks Victoria were neither interested in our plight or our pontoons.

We found our own small solution in turning our only existing floating pontoon around. Although now launching the "8" was impossible, the smaller boats were able to come and go with ease. Members learned to be flexible and developed ingenious new ways of launching and landing the boats. Many of us are grateful for the helping hand offered by the members of the Argonauts, who continued to row in less than desirable conditions.

2003/04

We were now back on the lake permanently although the drought continued to create difficulties for us. Our membership hovered around 50.

Membership slowly increased due to the hard work of committee and members. As some members have been unable to commit to the allocated Sunday Beginners Coaching sessions, the committee decided to change the weekly sessions to the first Sunday of the month. To this we added the barbeque to create a 'club atmosphere'.

The lack of members had a 'knock-on effect' through the club. . . less income from beginners, fewer beginners to participate in ICPs, therefore less prospective members. The club finances were supplemented by our association with Korowa, Shelford and the Argonauts and an increase in membership fees.

The development of Advancement Squad (Asquad)

After the Intensive Coaching Program, new members could now join a revamped Asquad or Advancement Squad to nurture new members.

And from Asquad into a crew. As members get to know each other, crews are developed, coached and supported by the club for competition if so desired.

Head Coach Meredith Williams coached a winning Masters four, a national champion and a Ramsbottom Trophy winner Peta Caroll. Two members represented the Y in the Winter sculling series. It made all the logistics worthwhile to see a Y member's name, after so many years, placed back on the trophy amongst all of the other great Y women who had gone before.



Head Coach Meredith Williams (left) and Club Captain/Hon. Secretary Alex Bradley

Sue and Suzanne could regularly be seen in the pair and now an Eight on the water every Saturday morning with many happy club members benefiting from Max's coaching.

Many beginners' sessions led to successful ICPs that in turn led to Asquad numbers increasing. Asquad has provided many new crews including our new Master Beginners crew who took our first place on only their second endeavour at the Melbourne Masters Regatta.

Our schoolgirl members Amelia Nurse and Eloise Mills have represented the club at numerous regattas.



Millie with her Victorian Year 10 Single Scull medal

Amelia (Millie) Nurse won the Year 10 Single Scull at 2004 Head of School Girls Regatta, Geelong, believed to be the largest all female regattas in the world with over 2,000 girls from Independent and Government Schools in Victoria participating. Millie won the final by 2 1/2 lengths from a strong field of 10 scullers, she qualified by winning her heat, then Semi Final.



The Kath Bennett Award

We were pleased to see the continued development of rowing at Korowa Anglican Girls School and their successes.

The Kath Bennett Award was established in recognition of Kath's contribution and support to school rowing. This year it was won by Kylie Yapp.

Again there was not enough water in the lake for our Annual Regatta as the one and only pontoon to launch boats would not cope with the numerous crews from clubs and schools attending.

Water access

As rain wasn't always forthcoming, we, in conjunction with Parks Victoria, applied for a Marine Safety Victoria grant to build a suitable pontoon. All users operating

out of Powerhouse would contribute while approximately 80% of the cost of a Parks Victoria approved pontoon would be covered by the grant. We waited. Some months later we were advised that we had failed to obtain the grant. We would re-submit an application for the next round of grants.

The improved drainage into the lake, combined with improved rainfall, although not enough to break the drought, enabled us to remain at Albert Park throughout the season, improving our income from all sources, and reducing our rental expenditure. Notably, the income from schools and programs has increased beyond that of the previous year, due to the indomitable efforts of Kath Bennett.

However, access to the water will continue to be a problem whenever the rainfall slows, and so in December the Committee voted to put all income from Beginner's sessions into a "Pontoon Fund", with the hope of purchasing a floating pontoon in the future. Once again, we were unable to host our Annual Regatta.

Nagambie Rowing Camp

A very intensive weekend under the guidance of coach, Maxi, took place at Nagambie with 20 members taking the trek up the highway. The weekend consisted of lots of rowing, laughter, rowing, wind, rowing and more wind. All members honed their rowing skills, and just as importantly got to know each other.



Rowing Camp

Back home

In an endeavour to offer members for choices in methods of achieving fitness, we set up a Boot Camp, two nights a week for four weeks. These sessions consisted of running, jumping, running, stretching, running, laughter, sprinting and more running. All of the achievements/improvements made, including some members never thinking they could run



a lap of the lake without stopping (try wiping the smiles off those faces) was made possible in the greater part to the encouragement of their fellow boot campers. Through the guidance of Maxi, many members accepted the challenge and tried new combinations and disciplines. Sculling school proved very popular with some Monday nights not a free scull to be found. As well as the many techniques and safety skills discussed the most important one, due to our ever reducing water level, was getting in and out of the boat or how to convince a jogger trying to break the 4 minute mile to stop and lend a hand!



The New Zealand All Blacks row out of the Y

Wow, everyone had a ball, it was just a great session and the players were lovely boys, Michelle, Murf, Nicki & Ildi were in Rugby heaven.

Boat Users Group (BUGs)

A new committee was formed called BUGs (Boat Users Groups) comprising boat users out of the Powerhouse building. As the Y already has a modern facility, we were able to offer expertise and historical information to help the process and therefore hosted the meetings where the discussion centred on building improvements for those in the remainder of the Powerhouse facility. We hope to show a united front in an effort to improve changeroom amenities and put forward a plan to improve the use of space in the shed area. This of course will be done in association with Powerhouse Lord Somers and Parks Victoria who also attend the meetings.

Water Levels

After the stormwater upgrade last year, the water level of the lake improved. The sailing clubs were again hosting their regattas but for the rowers conditions, although improved, were still not good enough for our annual regatta.

Rowing has ceased completely at the southern end of the lake. We fared better with the use of Parks Victoria's pontoon. The condition of the water has at times been of great concern – more weeds, bacteria and rubbish. Parks Victoria organised harvesting of some weeds and have also taken water samples for analysis. Litter traps were replaced during the year.

The recycling plant and the use of salt water to increase water levels were not been pursued . . . too expensive and environmentally damaging. The three upgraded stormwater drains were considered sufficient for the time being. Of

course, stormwater relies on rain. Boons were placed around the overflow outlet at the northern end of the lake to stop water escaping on a windy day.

As predicted the yachties were not impressed with a line of bouys down the centre of the lake . . . north to south down the middle of the narrows. It was therefore decided that three bouys only would be laid. Two already in position, southern end and one near the island opposite Aquatic centre with the other inbetween. A different colour than orange was suggested so that it would be seen to be a rowing bouy and not a yachting bouy. It was hope that this would create a safer rowing environment on the water. . . and that crews would now stay on the appropriate course.

School Foster Program

Shelford Girls School approached us to assist with equipment for their fledgling Rowing Program and the committee agreed that the small Shelford Team join us on the Boat Lease per Row Program, but without access to our change rooms, ergos etc. The 10 students under Head Coach Kate Delany worked hard and were rewarded by making the finals at Head of Schoolgirls.

The Korowa AGS has continued to grow in numbers and successes. Ten of their 14 crews made finals, with one recording the schools first ever Head of Schoolgirls win, and many taking placings.

2004-2005

The most noticeable change around the club as been the club spirit, it rose with the water level. With the upgrade of the stormwater drains, Albert Park Lake was again usable for rowers and sailors alike.

New Equipment

In accordance with club policy, we refurbish or sell boats as they get older and with this in mind, we sold the **Kallaroo** and replaced it with a new regulation four In keeping with our theme of aboriginal names, it has been called **Toora** or 'Woman'. The ergos were also sold and four new ones purchased. They are quiet, run smoothly, and as a 'train' are very impressive adding a new dimension to indoor rowing.

Rowing Victoria updated computer system

For those that do not know about the module, it is the computer software system that Rowing Victoria wants all clubs to use as a data base for entering regattas. The system hasn't always worked . . . but then that's computers and that makes for a very frustrating job. There is a more reliable revamp underway.



New Coach and the Y is again competing

During the year Heidi Winnen was appointed club coach restoring enthusiasm of the members for competition. Programs, squads have been set up to help new members improve their skills. With Heidi's expertise, new information sheets for the various stages in our rowing programs have been recreated, for example . . . for Sunday Beginners . . . information for the instructor on the ergos, another for the instructor on the yellow sub and another for the instructor/cox on the water.

We are starting at the beginning in an effort to bring membership back up to the numbers of the past. In

time, it is hoped to have continuity in rowing technique, terminology and general boat knowledge throughout the club.

The Best Coach for 2005 Award was presented to Heidi Winnen by Rowing Victoria at a function after a seminar at the Victorian Institute of Sport. The YRC committee nominated her in appreciation of the renewed rowing spirit she had developed in our members.

The first regatta this season (beyond the great efforts of Bennie Pringle in the scull) was on 13th February 2005 at the Midsumma Regatta, the first regatta run by the Argonauts. We boated a novice pair and a novice four and won a heat in each event. By the Yarra Yarra Regatta, on 26th February, we raced in 21 seats including Novice Eight, Novice Four, Pairs, Quad Scull, Single sculls. Again, we had success in the heats, including a great heat win in the Eight which helped put the Y back on the rowing map. Attending the third regatta in a month at Footscray, YRC raced in a novice pair, novice four and quad, again winning in the heats. We even had a win at the Hawthorn Rowing Club "Club Races", on St Patrick's Day, with one Y member in the winning crew!

Bonny long from the competitive squad was appointed to assist with the coaching of our Recreational & Training Squad, a bridge between Asquad and club rowing and a place for non competitive members to receive regular coaching.

Rowing programs at the Y

Programs include:

- Beginners
- Intensive Coach Program (ICP)
- A (Advancement) Squad
- Wednesday Squad
- Recreating and Training Squad
- Competitive Squad
- Sculling School
- After school casual rowing

and of course our schoolgirls programs with the following schools:

- Star of the Sea College
- PCW Windsor
- OLSH College Bentleigh
- Mount Scopus College
- School foster Program of Shelford and Korowa

Bookings pour in

As word spread that there actually was water back in the Lake, general enquiries and ICP bookings picked up. Our website also generated more and more bookings.

Our regular schools for Daytime bookings in Term 4 came rushing back.

Publicity has been quite good with city-wide Leader Newspapers carrying our listings. Committees and sub-committees made up of lake users and members of the public have been set up in an effort to cover all aspects of park. Various forums were held during the year to discuss issues with all concerned, ie Parking, Commonwealth Games, etc. Parks Victoria is now informing everyone on everything . . . well we hope. The park has a history of neglect; let's hope that at long last this will change.

The monthly meeting of this committee (APLAC) has been changed. It now meets every three months under new title of APLUG, Albert Park Lake Users Group. As with previous meetings it is a good opportunity to discuss directly with Parks any issues that the YRC might have. Our concerns were mainly weeds, rubbish, water level and the standard of the Powerhouse facility.

We have seen some action:

- annual harvesting of the weeds continues, the committee felt, however, that the last harvest was inadequate and requested that Parks check the work when being done (the harvester missed a lot of the weed)
- water quality continues to be inspected. A lot of the algae is seasonal and not harmful to humans and birds
- Parks begun to manually collect rubbish out of the lake (plastic bottles and other junk coming into the lake via the stormwater drains) – the acquisition of a boat in November will enable them to collect the floating weed as well
- The pollution ponds will be upgraded. The present ponds are unable to cope with the stormwater now flowing into the lake
- extensive upgrade of paths around the lake, including the waterside of the Powerhouse building
- we are, however, still awaiting the new signage.

The Cowderoy Street drain project, much discussed last year, has been put into the too expensive basket for the time being. It is still on the agenda to help stabilise water levels but as money is currently being spent on upgrading all the sporting fields with state-of-the-art drainage systems, the lake wall repairs and the paths, this project will remain in the background for some time.

The Y Rowing Centre to get a pontoon at last!

Its has been a long time coming, ever since we moved from the now car park to our present position attached to the Powerhouse complex. Money for the pontoons has come from grants from Victoria Water Safety and Parks Victoria via the State Government. There will be two, one opposite our main roller door the other out from the middle of the concrete landing to be in place by the end of September. The 'finger' pontoons will be maintained by Parks Victoria. We will celebrate in style on 6th November 2005 with a 40th reunion, champagne and a row.

The future

But what people want from a club if, in fact they want a club at all, has changed over the last few years. A sporting facility like ours has become a service. Not all women have the time or a wish to commit . . . they want to row. Over the last year we have streamlined our programs to make them more flexible. More emphasis on what happens after a beginners session, after an Intensive Coaching Program to make people more aware of what we have offer. Sessions are now specific, skill orientated – one thing at a time, a session in a pair, a session in the eight, a session in a scull or on the ergo. The Committee's challenge will be to sign these



YEAR	President	Vice Presidents	Captain	Junior Captain	Honorary Treasurer	Honorary Secretary	Minute Secretary	Membership Secretary
1990-1991	Kath Bennett	Maria Klivanek Loretta Webb Glory Bain Kathy Wilmot	Robyn Helms Margaret Downes	–	Roger Cook	Judy Neutze	–	–
1991-1992	Kathy Wilmot	Loretta Webb Gloy Bain Kath Bennett Jenny Gardiner	Claire O’Driscoll Robyn Helms (Vice)	–	Roger Cook	Andrea Hovey	–	–
1992-1993	Kath Bennett	Glory Bain Jenny Gardiner Dorothy Ryecroft Kathy Wilmot	Kathy Kordes	–	Tracey Bode	Andrea Hovey	–	–
1993-1994	Kath Bennett	Margie Coe Jenny Gardiner	Kathy Kordes	–	Cathy Black (r.09/03) Claire Franklin	Andrea Hovey	–	–
1994-1995	Kath Bennett	Margie Coe Barendina Beedle Kathy Wilmot Denise Davey	Kathy Kordes (r10/04) Donna Greig-Butler Adele Van Rosmalen (vice)(r.11/94) Grace Maglio (Vice)	–	Claire Franklin	Andrea Hovey	–	–
1995-1996	Kath Bennett	Barendina Beedle Amy Bennett Denise Davey Kathy Wilmot	– Donna Greig-Butler (Vice)	–	Sharon Lovell	Andrea Hovey	–	–
1996-1997	Kath Bennett	Claire Franklin Andrea Hovey Barendina Beedle	Fiona Constable Fiona Bishop (Vice)	–	Sharon Lovel	Andrea Hovey	–	–
1997-1998	Kath Bennett	Fiona Constable Louise Stevens	Suzanne Kennealy Fiona Jefferies (Vice)	Emma Matlock	Sharon Lovell	–	–	–
1998-1999	Kath Bennett	Donna Greig Louise Stevens	Suzanne Kennealy Fiona Jefferies (Vice)	Jess Pettigrew	Janet Matches Sandra Dean	–	–	Sharon Lovell
1999-2000	Kath Bennett	Donna Greig Louise Stevens Suzanne Kennealy Janet Matches, Fiona Jefferies	Julia Bayliss	Jess Pettigrew	Janet Matches Sandra Dean Leah Fechner	–	Shirley Schanssema	Robyn Hammond





YEAR	President	Vice Presidents	Captain	Junior Captain	Honorary Treasurer	Honorary Secretary	Minute Secretary	Membership Secretary
2000-2001	Kath Bennett	Louise Stevens Julia Bayliss	Julia Bayliss	Lauren Richardson	Candice Charles Chrissy Henshaw	–	–	Robyn Hammond
2001-2002	Kath Bennett	Louise Stevens Julia Bayliss Donna Greig Robyn Hammond	Ildiko Nagy	–	Candice Charles	–	–	Robyn Hammond
2002-2003	Kath Bennett	Robyn Hammond Barendina Beedle Ildiko Nagy Monica Burns	Emma Hardy (r.03/03) Alex Bradley Fran Holgate (Vice)	Lauren Bartley W. Buxton	Candice Charles	Alex Bradley	Fran Holgate	–
2003-2004	Barendina Beedle	Kath Bennett Candice Charles Ildiko Nagy	Alex Bradley Peta Carroll (Vice)	–	Fran Holgate	Alex Bradley	Leanne Gunnelson	–
2004-2005	Barendina Beedle	Kath Bennett Andrea Hovey	Lisa MacKenzie (j.02.05)	–	Christa Riedacher	Leanne Gunnelson	–	–
2005-2006	Barendina Beedle	Kath Bennet Andrea Hovey Anne Michelaides Christine Heath	Leanne Gunnelson	–	(out sourced)	–	Committee	Andrea Hovey

Life Members

Margaret McKenzie, Kath Bennett, Kerry Sidaway and Kathy Wilmot

Patrons (over the years)

Glory Bain	Doreen Lorbach
Claire Brooks dec'd 03.03)	Eunice McKay
Nancy Ferguson (dec'd 03.02	Justice T. Nathan
Alice Mynet	Margaret O'Driscoll
Norma Bennett	Pauline Stevens
Gwen Allsopp	Janet Powell
Don Cochrane	Roger Cook
Jessie Ferguson	Dianne Barkas
Eddie Fiddes	Julia Bayliss
Claire Kinder	Candice Charles
Maude De Zoete	
Leonie Durrant	