



## Clubs and Volunteers

### 1. The Strategy

To support all aspects of delivery of rowing in clubs. This will be achieved through supporting, recognizing and encouraging volunteers, and by support from development and coaching staff.

### 2. The Outcome

The programme will support and recognise the active volunteers in clubs (ARA clubs include open clubs, university clubs and school clubs) to increase their satisfaction and the satisfaction of club members. It will also provide a central source of information and resources needed by volunteers for training, education, and information to support clubs in offering a high quality experience for their members.

### 3. The Rationale

Rowing clubs would not exist at all without volunteers, and we estimate that there are around 6,000 active volunteers in our sport.

Supporting them to deliver a consistent, accessible and high quality experience for members is critical to the success of our programmes.

The expansion and diversity in our activities will also need to generate new volunteers so that the burden does not fall on the same people, and we need to provide opportunities from young people to become volunteers at school and in universities.

### 4. The Evidence – Research Findings

Research into volunteering in sports was undertaken by the Institute for Volunteering Research in 2007/08. It found that -

For young people research shows that there is a marked impact on personal development, self-confidence, social skills and sporting skills when they volunteer (Institute for Volunteering Research).

All the young people said that their performance at school or work has benefited. In addition, participating in sports clubs has encouraged some to consider a career in sport.

There was widespread agreement on the problem of volunteer overload: the dependence of clubs on a nucleus of volunteers, the increasing workload of volunteers and the lack of succession planning for leadership roles.

Most club officers feel volunteers do not receive sufficient training for their roles.

### 5. The Wider Outcomes

More volunteers who have the appropriate training will release long-serving volunteers to return to the activities that first attracted them to the sport. With a wider range of activities there should be something to suit everyone. This will also help people who volunteer to think they will not be landed with a huge work-load indefinitely, and thus encourage more to volunteer.



## **6. Supporting the Strategy – The Coaching & Development Team**

The ARA's Coaching and Development Team's (C&DT) main role is to support ARA members, and in particular volunteers, at club and regional level. Staff are available at times when volunteers cannot be there, and they have expertise in a whole range of sports development and coaching issues that are important to developing the infrastructure of clubs, making contact and working with local and regional sports networks, sharing and spreading good practice, and generally providing support and advice as and when it is needed.

The Coaching and Development Officers (CDOs) have special responsibility for working with clubs on a regional basis. In addition national officers with specialist knowledge in coaching, youth & community development and facilities development are there to provide support and advice to clubs, and to liaise with a wide range of partner agencies.

## **7. Supporting the Strategy – Employed Coaches**

The Club & Coach programme was developed to provide coaching in clubs to introduce people to rowing, provide them with ongoing coaching to encourage them to take part in ARA competitions, and assist clubs in developing their coaching structure through a CPD and mentoring programme.

Coaches have been deployed on a regional basis, working with clubs selected by the regions. The current programme continues until 2011, and we would wish it to continue in principle. Any changes to deployment made in accordance with the success of the programme and in accordance with delivering the planned outcomes and priorities of this plan.

## **8. Supporting the Strategy – Developing Adaptive Rowing**

The ARA is committed to developing opportunities for people with disabilities to take part in rowing. The inclusion of rowing within the Paralympic Games provides an excellent opportunity to profile the opportunities for participation. Clubs will be supported and encouraged to make provision for adaptive rowers alongside and included in the competitions and activities being provided for other rowers. We will support the programme through the employment of a National Adaptive Development Coach.

## **9. Supporting the Strategy – Volunteering is Part of Your Club Membership**

Developing a culture of volunteering for all club members would be very beneficial. It is important that volunteering is not seen as something people do when they have stopped rowing, and it is just as much part of being a club member as being an active rower. This is especially important when introducing people to rowing. All club members could receive a volunteering leaflet when they join, and be asked to join in with specific jobs. This is also a good way to identify skills that are needed by the club.

## **10. Supporting the Strategy -Training**

Training for particular roles is important to provide confidence to people with specific roles about the various policies and good practice that are in place for the sport and how they can educate and pass these on effectively to their club members.



There are excellent opportunities to work with BUCS to increase the number of students volunteering and providing tailored training for them.

We will be providing an annual programme of training, both direct and on-line to suit the needs of clubs and delivered by staff, specialist trainers and experts from within the sport. This will include umpiring water safety, child and vulnerable adults welfare, coaching, event management and organisation, equity, running sport etc. The programme will be coordinated and managed through our regional rowing councils and coaching and development team.

## **11. Supporting the Strategy – Communication & Resources**

It is critical for communication lines to run smoothly throughout the organization, from club members to clubs to competition organizers, to regions, to committees, and throughout the management structure, staff and volunteers.

We have a range of existing communication means, e.g. Rowing & Regatta magazine, the website, club circulars, committee meetings at local, regional and national level etc.

The magazine and website will be expanded to provide frequent and easy ways for volunteers and other members to exchange news, views and good practice. We will also utilize less formal communication opportunities such as social media.

An annual conference for clubs, providing opportunities for more in depth discussions about current issues will be organized, and this will also provide an opportunity to raise the profile of the annual Volunteer Awards.

This work is supported through our Communications Officer and Rowing & regatta Editor.

## **12. Supporting the Strategy – Website, RowHow & Online ARA (OARA)**

A wide range of web-based services has been developed over the last four years, including the launch of a new website to coincide with the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. This will be developed further to become the first stop for knowledge and information for both ARA members and non-members.

The OARA entries system will continue to be developed for event organizers, and will be available to support the new competitions and activities planned. There will also be web-based programmes to promote and support the new activities.

A club management system will be developed to assist clubs in administering and organising their activities, and to make it easy to collect and record data.

The ARA's distance learning system, RowHow, which was launched in late 2007 will be developed to provide an intranet area for different sections to post information and documents, and to take part in discussion forums.

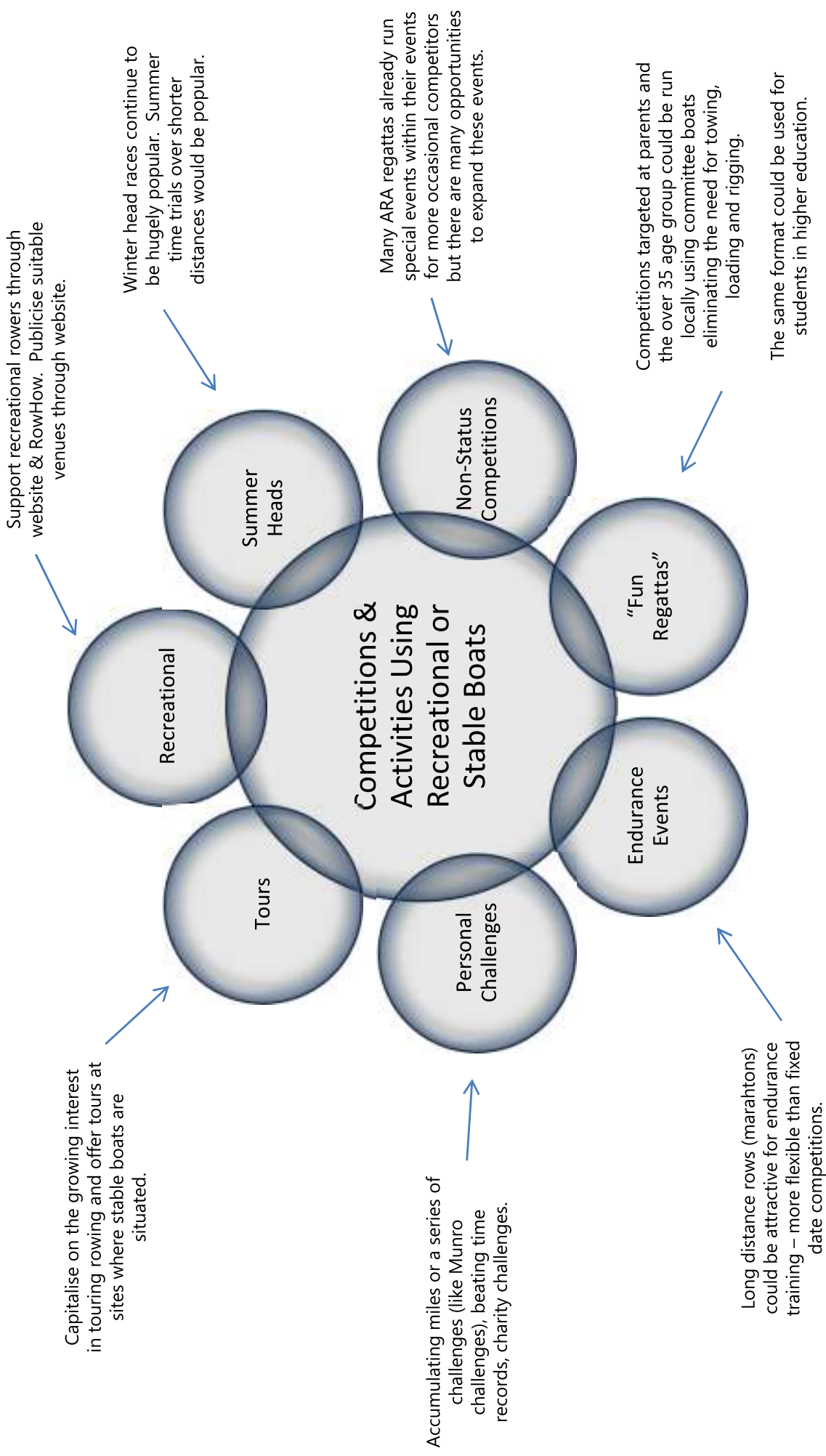
RowHow will also provide a range of on-line and interactive training resources to support volunteers, and to assist them in providing instruction and training for their members.

This work is supported by the OARA Development Manager and the OARA Resources Officer.



# New Competitions & Activities

*Sustain*





## **New Competitions and Activities**

### **The Strategy**

To provide a range of new competitions and personal challenges to engage and retain new participants from the Adult-Learn-to-Row (ALtoR) programmes,, including university programmes, young people graduating from junior rowing programmes, lapsed rowers, and existing rowers who do not have the time or commitment to compete in existing ARA competitions.

### **The Outcome**

The programme will provide activities for the potential 10,000 additional participants to the sport, and increase the satisfaction levels for all club members.

### **The Rationale – We need to be responsive to the needs of our members**

In the past eight years it has become clear that many of our members are seeking new opportunities to stay involved in sport. For those who have the inclination and have the time and commitment to take part in the ARA's national competition programme, this can be both rewarding and satisfying. However there is a growing band of current rowers, ex-rowers and potential rowers, who would like to continue their participation in rowing who need some alternative activities and challenges. There is growth in coastal competitions in traditional boats, indoor rowing, recreational and touring rowing and in rowers switching to other sports and activities seeking similar competitive experiences.

There is so much potential growth as described in our "Row Regularly" document that will rely upon providing a long-term and varied programme of activities to suit the needs of all.

Key themes/messages for 'lapsed' rowers might be –

- "Fall back in love with rowing"
- You can still do it
- Get back in touch with your active side
- Rowing has a great lifestyle to aspire to

For indoor rowers –

- "I want to row for real"