

This policy outlines the guidelines and recommendations for the use of rowing boats and oars by MUBC members. The aim of the policy is to provide guidelines that will assist in keeping members safe whilst on the water and minimizing damage to equipment.

Active rowing members are required to follow this policy.

This policy applies particularly to the Yarra River as it is the home training location for MUBC, however the guideline should be followed for all other waterways when both training and racing.

When using club boats and equipment please adhere to the following guidelines:

- All rowers must be familiar with the waterway rules for the locations where they train or race.
- Crews MUST be vigilant regarding staying on the correct side of the river and using the correct bridge arches.
- When rowing in non-daylight hours, crews MUST have operational lights fixed to bow and stern. This includes dawn and dusk.
- Avoid rowing immediately after significant rain when there is increased risk of large debris in the river. This debris is often submerged and not visible and can cause significant damage to the fin or the hull.
- Aim to have a coach accompany your session whenever possible particularly if you are in a coxless boat or a stern coxed boat where the coxswain's view is sometimes compromised.
- For stern coxed boats it is recommended that the bow rower also looks around frequently to assist the coxswain as sometimes the coxswain's view is blocked.
- When rowing in a coxless boat, rowers must continually pay attention to their surroundings and look around sufficiently often to assist in avoiding accidents. In peak times when there is substantial boat traffic this might mean every 5 strokes. This is to avoid other crews, permanent river obstacles such as bridges and temporary obstacles such as litter traps and barges.
- Avoid doing higher speed pieces in areas where there is congestion due to other boat traffic or where there are bridge pylons or other obstacles.
- Make yourself and your crew aware of the peak rowing times on the Yarra (or other waterway) and whenever possible select to train outside these times.
- Make yourself and your crew aware of the variety of other river users particularly commercial ferries and commercial rental boats and understand where they generally operate and what are their peak times of use. Whenever possible select to train outside of these times OR avoid these areas.

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Please also be aware the following rules extracted from:

MARITIME SAFETY VICTORIA WATERWAY RULES FOR THE YARRA RIVER

General River Rules:

Waterway rules govern the safe operation of vessels on waterways. State based laws and rules are contained in the *Marine Safety Act 2010 (MSA)*, and separately, International rules apply on Victorian waters, contained in the *International Regulations For Preventing Collisions At Sea 1972 (COLREGS)*. I draw your attention to the following COLREGS requirements:

- Vessel masters are responsible to take all steps necessary to avoid a collision
- Rowing vessels have no 'right of way' and must follow the same rules as other river vessels
- Keep as near to the right-hand riverbank (when travelling in a forward direction) as is safe and practicable
- Operate at a safe speed that allows effective action be taken to avoid collision with another, or stop as required
- If approaching a vessel from behind, the rear vessel must give way and avoid collision with the vessel ahead; and
- If overtaking a vessel, only do so if this will not cause a collision with another vessel.

Yarra River specific waterway rules – (currently being reviewed):

Current Yarra River waterway rules were prepared at a time when the river was less congested and are being reviewed and updated to reflect changes to vessel traffic and diversity, meet contemporary standards for safety and community expectations. Currently a 5 knot speed limit applies to all vessels operating on the Yarra River (including rowing vessels). Consideration is being given to whether rowing vessels should be permitted to exceed 5 knots on some stretches of the Yarra River.

Bridges:

Bridges on the Yarra River have been the location of more recent collisions between vessels. MSV therefore advises all river users to:

- avoid overtaking other vessels within 100m of any bridge
- avoid stopping under the arch of a bridge
- avoid stopping within 100m of any bridge, unless necessary for safe navigation
- avoid making U-turns within 100m of any bridge (except for upstream or downstream of Princes Bridge), and only do so with extreme caution and if safe to do so, noting that commercial ferries may approach the landing upstream of Princess Bridge from the northern side of the river and
- always operate at a safe speed (noting the maximum permissible speed of 5 knots).

Persons Responsible:

- All river users are accountable and responsible for their compliance with the matters outlined in this letter. This includes rowing coxswains, coaches, or the rower in charge of steering (in coxless vessels), and masters of all vessels (human or mechanically powered).

Penalties:

Significant penalties apply to persons responsible in the event of a rule breaches and/or incidents.

- A **\$330 infringement** applies for exceeding the 5 knot speed limit, or travelling on the wrong side of the waterway.
- A **20 penalty unit (\$3,304.40) fine** may be applied for breaches of the COLREGS.
- A **25 penalty unit (\$4,103.50) fine** may be applied to persons associated with vessel operation, other than the master, for failing to take reasonable care
- A **60 penalty unit (\$9,913.20) fine** may be applied for breaches to masters of recreational vessels or hire and drive vessels for failing to take reasonable care
- The *Crimes Act 1958* prescribes that any person guilty of culpable driving (including of vessels) that causes the death of another person shall be liable for to up to **20 years imprisonment**.

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