



Media Alert – 58th Annual Head of the Yarra - Saturday November 26th 2016 The great race continues to grow as Australia's largest!

On Saturday 26th November, close to 2200 competitors, the largest ever contingent of rowers in an Australian rowing race – will complete over the Yarra's gruelling 8.6 km course from Birrarung Marr to Hawthorn for fastest times in the annual "Head of The Yarra".

This year's race marks the 58th running of this rowing classic that is the undisputed favorite on Australia's rowing calendar. From 10.30 am – 3.00 pm, the flotilla of racing eights stretching the length of the Yarra to Hawthorn will provide a wonderful showcase and spectacle for the thousands of spectators and supporters who follow it from the city along the 8.6km course to the finish and post race carnival at the Hawthorn Rowing Club.

This year's event is set to showcase some of Australia's best male and female rowing talent with a record field of 243 rowing eights. Competitors include school students, Olympians and Para Olympians, Club and Masters rowers of both sexes from all around Australia, NZ and even from Japan.

Some Highlight contests to watch include:

- **Elite Athlete eights.** The fastest club crews packed with Olympic and world championship medalists race off in the Open Male & Female sections between 2.15 pm – 3.00 pm. Last year's Male winners Melbourne University Boat Club, and Female winners Mercantile, will have to fend off strong challenges from Sydney University, UTS, Dragons, Sydney and Banks rowing clubs, as well as each others respective crews, all keen to win bragging rights as fastest of the boats for 2016.
- **Club and Masters Eights.** 145 crews from the clubs all around Australia and NZ, plus a crew from Partez club in Japan, will compete for fastest time in their sections. Racing runs from late morning till around 3.00pm
- **The H+ Masters (Crews Aged 70 plus).** 9 crews of Septuagenarians and Octogenarians, from Qld, NSW, Vic, SA and Tas, including some ex Olympians and World medalists, race off at 10.30am.
- **The Mixed 8's (4Male + 4Female).** 33 club crews of male and female rowers from all over Australia and NZ will vie for honors in this hotly contested mixed category around noon.
 - **Para / Adaptive LTA Mixed Eight.** A first time category that sees an Australian Institute of Sport combination of Para athletes from around Australia including 2 of our Rio Para Olympians, Kathleen Murdoch (vision impaired) and Jeremy McGrath (amputee) racing alongside the other 33 mixed eights over the grueling 8.6 km course. Crew will be on the water from around noon.
- **Schools - Boys Eights.** 33 crews including a large contingent from Scotch College, plus Canberra and Brighton Grammars, Melbourne High, Sydney Boys High, Daramalan (ACT), Hutchins (Tas), St Josephs (NSW) and St Kevins, will be in action around 1.30 pm.
 - **Girls Eights.** 20 crews including last year's winners Melbourne Girls Grammar School, racing against Pymble Ladies College (Sydney), MLC, Loreto (Kirribilli), Genazzano, Daramalan (ACT), and Melbourne Girls College. Schoolgirl crews are on the course from around 1pm.

Ends.

Media Enquiries:

- **Media Contact:** Pat Freeland-Small, M: 0418 63 1862
- **Photo shoots & interviews with athletes and crews in training can be arranged**
- **Race Commentary on the Day:** Peter Landy M. 0418 553840 John Stewart, M: 0400 873 531

Crew lists & statistics available at: <http://vic.rowingmanager.com/?events=3456>

Website: www.headoftheyarra.com



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RACE DAY EVENT FLOW AND MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES TIMETABLE Saturday November 26th 2016.

General Race flow:

- All crews muster at boat staging area: Rowing sheds in Melbourne – Boathouse Drive – Near Princes Bridge St Kilda Rd. (Melways Map 2F, Ref K7). Course is 8.6km upstream to the Finish at Bridge Rd, Hawthorn. Bicycle tracks to the north and south of the river carry 1000's of spectators and on-lookers.
- Yarrabank Reserve Hawthorn hosts a large finish carnival with thousands of spectators from 12.00 onwards.
- Fastest crews: Men's & Women's Open start around 2.40pm. Arrive at finish in Hawthorn from 3 pm.- 3.15 PM**
- Photo Opportunities** from Swan St Bridge, Anderson St Bridge and Alexander Ave (1 km west of Grange Rd Bridge – "Big Bend") as crews make way up the Yarra to Hawthorn. Helicopter shots from 12.00pm onwards will capture the Yarra littered with Rowing Eights (Note: 238 rowing eights end-to-end would stretch over 5kms).

TIME:		
9.30 am	River closure	(1 hour prior to race time) Crew Preparations & Boating to river
10.30 am	First of 243 crews start at Henley Judges Box	First crew to start: Men's Masters H+ (Oldest Crews 70 years plus) Fabulous Photo Opportunity from Henley judges box looking west to city skyline just prior to 10.30 am, with about 40 rowing 8's mustering prior to race start
11.07pm (approx)	First crew crosses Finish line at Hawthorn	The first category to start / finish will be the Men's Masters H+ , the oldest competitors in the race. Includes some competitors in their late 80s.
2.15 pm (approx)	Women's Open crews start Feature Race	Fastest Women Open Crews featuring Olympians and world champions Photo Opportunities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Women's Fastest Crews, including Olympians & World Champions in Melbourne & Sydney Universities & Mercantile Boat clubs. Finishing at Hawthorn from around 2.40 pm at Bridge Road Bridge, Hawthorn. Best vantage point for Finish from Hawthorn Rowing Club Balcony.
2.20 pm (approx)	Men's Open crews start Feature Race & Fastest Crews	Fastest Men's Open Crews featuring Melbourne University, Mercantile, Sydney University, UTS, Dragons and Sydney Boat Clubs with a host of Olympians and world champions Photo opportunities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Men's Fastest Crews, with Olympians & World Champions on board, finish at Hawthorn From around 2.45 pm Best vantage point for Finish from Hawthorn Rowing Club Balcony. Contact Pat (0418 631862)
3.00 pm	Last crew finishes	Calculation of race times commences (should take approx 15 mins).
3.15 pm – 4.00pm (approx)	Presentations of winners & trophies and announcement of "Head of the Yarra"	Yarra Bank Reserve (off Creswick St) Hawthorn. (Melways Map 2H, Ref H6) Commences 15 mins after last crew finishes (30 min duration) Photo Opportunity: Winning Crew Presentations at Yarra Bank Reserve, Hawthorn in front of crowd of 8,000 people – Open Crew's & Head of the Yarra winners presented first at approx 3.15 pm
4.00 pm	Winners press release & results posted to Website	Note: Results to assist newsrooms by phoning Pat on 0418 631 862. Full results from 4.00 pm: www.headoftheyarra.com



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