

Report of the BGCC fleet renewal subcommittee

Summary

The subcommittee worked by identifying the needs that the club fleet fulfils. The specific needs are outlined in more detail below. From these needs the subcommittee developed recommendations about how the fleet should look. The following recommendations are made:

- That once the shed is complete, the club should aim to buy and sell six boats each year, in order to keep the fleet in a good condition. The club should aim for most boats in the fleet to be under 10 years of age.
- That in the short term the club should prioritise the purchase of junior/women's K1's.
- In order to support the progression of members from one boat to another, the club should prioritise the purchase of boats suitable for transitioning between beginner boats and racing boats.
- That the club should sell all TK's and the spirit boats in order to free up space in the shed for these purchases, as funds become available.

The issue

The BGCC has around 60 boats, which are used by its members across all disciplines of paddlesports.

In general this fleet could be best described as old, but serviceable. Many boats are more than a decade old and some substantially older.

Purchasing and selling of boats has taken place in a piecemeal fashion, with an emphasis on bargains. The club has also been operating in a financially limited fashion in order to fund the extension of the existing club shed. It is anticipated that the shed extension will be built during 2017-18 and that funds for the renewing of the BGCC fleet will be available from 2018 on.

The aim of this document is to provide a strategy for the acquisition of boats and ensure that the fleet can stay serviceable and become current.

The process

The subcommittee undertook the following steps in producing this report.

1. Establishing what the current fleet was.
2. Determining the needs that the fleet should meet.
3. Inviting submissions from all club members.
4. Determining priorities and a recommended approach to the fleet.

All submissions received were considered. These covered a wide variety of topics. Many were requests for particular boats to be purchased, rather than submissions about the fleet as a whole.

The outcome

General comments

Paddles, PFD's and other ancillaries.

No specific recommendations are made about the number, composition or other features of these items. The following general comments are made:

- These should be regularly sold and acquired, in the same way as proposed for boats. A budget should be established for this purpose. The number and variety of club paddles should grow with the membership and reflect the needs of the membership.
- The club should strongly encourage regular paddlers to acquire their own paddle, including juniors. Juniors could recoup most of the cost of their paddle by selling onto small juniors when they grow.

Whitewater, SUP and canoe polo boats

The subcommittee has not made specific recommendations about the acquisition and disposal of specific boats, since we do not know this part of the fleet well enough. Instead we have incorporated these boats into the schedule for acquisitions and disposals in order to maintain those fleets at their current number, while reducing their age. Decisions about which particular boats to acquire and to dispose of should be done in conjunction with the relevant convenor.

Boat models

The report gives examples of different boat models for acquisition by the club. These examples should only be taken as indicative of the type of boat required. More important is where the boat fits into the overall structure in terms of stability and profile.

Boat labelling

Another suggestion of the subcommittee is that boats should be colour-coded according to the need they fulfil. If the boats cannot be colour-coded, then the racks should be colour-coded and boats filling the same need should be stored together.

The needs

The subcommittee identified six needs which the club fleet is designed to fill. Five of the needs are met by specific boats. Some boats will meet more than one need. The final need speaks to the quality of the fleet as a whole and does not have any specific boats.

The needs identified by the subcommittee were.

1. To provide an entry point into the various paddling disciplines, prior to the member purchasing their own boat.
2. Sufficient number and variety of beginner kayaks to support "taste of paddling" introductory sessions.
3. Providing craft suitable to support a junior development program.
4. Provide access to team boats and other specialised craft that would not commonly be in private hands.
5. Support members transitioning from one class of boats to another, more difficult, class.
6. Both sustainability and acquisition of the fleet should be to contemporary standards, maintainability over a 10 lifecycle also needs to be considered.

Need 1: Discipline entry point

These boats provide an introduction into their specific discipline. They should be suitable for beginners. We are suggesting regular investment in both the whitewater and canoe polo fleets. In the short term the TC2 should be kept, but in the longer term (5+ years) more emphasis should be placed on expanding the introductory canoe fleet.

Detail Need	Discipline	No.	Type	Replacement plan	Replacement timeframe
Introduction to SUP	SUP	5	Nisco Inflatable sup	Replace with equivalent boat	Retain for 5 years and replace over the following 5 years
Introduction to Canoe	Canoe	1	TC2	Do not replace. Return to the shed and continue to use while it is in good condition.	
Introduction to whitewater	Whitewater	5	Various types	Replace one boat every two years on the recommendation of the whitewater convenor.	Start replacement in 2018-19
Introduction to canoe polo	Canoe Polo	8	Various types	Replace one boat every year.	Start replacement in 2018-19

Need 2: Support “taste of paddling” sessions

These boats also fulfil the need of providing an introduction to flatwater kayaking. In order to support taste of paddling courses, this fleet needs to number at least 10. There should be a combination of sit in and sit on tops in a range of stabilities from very stable to stable.

This part of the fleet is the newest, with most of it under 10 years of age. The subcommittee recommends selling the two spirit creek boats. These boats, while somewhat stable, do not handle well, are difficult to learn and do not reward those that persist with them. While it will bring the intro fleet down to 10, the spaces freed up these boats should be directed to the transition fleet. The Mirage 730 can be used to supplement the introductory fleet.

A word about stability

We’ve given each boat a stability rating. This rating is based on the Nelo stability rating that goes from 1-5. We’ve extended this to allow for sea kayaks and the like, extending the number to 15. The ratings are subjective and are intended to be indicative only

Detail need	Type	No	Stability	Replacement Plan	Replacement Timeframe
Super wide, extra large cockpit. Super stable.	Dagger Estido	2	15	Difficult to directly replace.	Replace if a suitable boat can be identified
Sea Kayak. Stable.	Prijon 470	2	12	Replace with similar.	5 years+
Sit on top. Stable	V8	2	10	Replace with sit on top	5 years+
Sit on top. Plastic. Relatively stable	V7	2	10	Replace with similar.	5 years+

Recreation boat. Stable	Platypus	1	12	Replace with same model as 470 replacement	<5 years
Creek boat	Spirit	2	10	Sell in short term.	Do not replace
Sea Kayak. Medium-stable.	Mirage 580	1	10	Replace with similar.	5 years+

Need 3: Junior development program

Supporting junior paddler development should be a key aim of the club. The club currently achieves this through Guppies and Minisonic junior K1's. The subcommittee thinks that having a clear development path for this group is necessary. We are therefore recommending that the club acquires 6 low-volume K1's over the next five years, to support an expansion of the juniors program as well as better support the development of women in the sport. A mix of K1's and C1's could be acquired instead.

Detail need	Type	No	Stability	Replacement Plan	Replacement timeframe
Junior small K1	Minisonic	3	6	Replace as required	5 years+
Junior medium stability boat	Guppy	4	7	Replace as required	5 years+
Low volume (<70kg) junior/women's k1's & C1's.		0	5	new acquisition of 6 boats	acquire 1 in 2017, 2 in 2018, 2 in 2019, 1 in 2020

Need 4: Team boats and other specialised craft

Team boats and other specialised boats are important from both a competition and skills perspective. The club's current team and specialised boats include 4 K2's and 2 TK2's. This particular section of the fleet is also the oldest. The K2's are more than 30 years old and are not competitive with modern designs.

The subcommittee is of the view that TK2's are no longer a useful competition boat and should be retired when new boats are acquired. The spaces freed up should go to the junior/women's fleet.

In relation to the K4, the subcommittee was of the view that a single K4 is of limited use. The club should aim to acquire at least two, and possibly three in the longer term.

Despite the relative age of boats meeting this need, the subcommittee were of the view that the junior and transition fleet are higher priorities.

Detail Need	Type	No	Stability	Replacement plan	Replacement timeframe
Stable double sea kayak, for Hawkesbury and like.	Mirage 730	1	12	Replace as required	5 years+
Racing double (K2)	K2 - Makker/Regina type	3	5	Replace with masters stability modern equivalents	3-5 years

Racing double (K2)	Advantage	1	4	Replace with more stable equivalent	5-10 years
Racing TK (TK2)	TK2	2	7	Sell in medium term	Move to juniors fleet
Racing C1	Pre-rule change C1	2	4	Replace with modern C1	5 years+
K4	Unknown	1	6	Depends on fleet expansion	5 years+

Need 5: Transition boats

Transition boats are boats aimed at providing a development opportunity from an easier boat to a more difficult boat. Not all members will complete the transition to a more difficult boat. The current transition fleet mostly consists of pre rule-change K1's and TK1's.

It's the subcommittee's view that TK's as a racing class are in serious decline. As a boat the design has been superseded by boats which are faster, more stable and more durable. The TK's should be retired over time and contribute to the junior/women's fleet.

In terms of the transition fleet the subcommittee is recommending 5 boats to act as the transition between the introduction fleet and racing boats. Based on the submissions made to the subcommittee we are suggesting this should consist of 3 surf ski's including the existing v10 and two sit in long rec boats such as a Horizon Flyer or Sladecraft Sonic.

The top end of the transition fleet is the K1's. These should all be large volume, given that low volume K1's are covered by the women's/junior fleet. The subcommittee recommends that all of the K1's should be in the stable to very stable range (for K1's). The boats should be reasonable competitive, but still encourage members to purchase their own boat to gain the highest advantage.

Detail Need	Type	No	Stability	Replacement plan	
Sea kayak to less stable boat. Surf Ski	Epic V10	1	7	Replace as required	5 years+
From intermediate stability towards K1	Mango masters K1	1	5	Replace as required	5 years+
Medium stability K1	Yellow Vadja K1	1	3	Replace as required	5 years+
Low stability K1	Older style K1 - two low volume, one large volume	3	2	Replace with masters to stable modern design K1. Aim at one each of 3, 4 & 5 stability.	1-3 years
Intermediate stability. Moving from high stability to low.	TK1	4	7	Sell in medium term	Move to juniors fleet
Surf Ski	New style Epic V10 or similar	0	7	Acquire two in medium term	Add in 1-3 years.
Sea kayak to less stable boat. Sit in.	Horizon Flyer or Sladecraft Sonic	0	7	Acquire two in medium term	Add in 1-3 years.

Need 6: Sustainability, maintainability and lifecycle

This need speaks to the kinds of boats the club acquires, and how often it acquires them. The experience with the existing fleet tells us much about what sort of purchases the club should make. Some club boats have been far lower maintenance than others. Fittings, rather than hulls have been the greatest area of frustration and concern. Weight is also issue, particularly for smaller paddlers.

The subcommittee has several recommendations in relation to maintenance and acquisition. Boats should be bought with simplicity and maintainability in mind, even when this costs more. Where the club has several boats in the same design it could have specific changes made to the design to emphasise extra strength in those areas where club boats will see extra wear.

Construction wise, the subcommittee recommends plastic boats for beginners, preferably in lighter plastics such as prilite. Racing boats should continue to be fibreglass.

The subcommittee recommends, with very few exceptions, that the club aims for a fleet with boats younger than 10 years. This should be achieved by the regular turnover of boats, rather than savings and large purchases. A budget should be established each year for this turnover of boats.

In selling the boats, the subcommittee recommends that the boats be offered to club members first, before being offered publicly.

Expansion of the fleet

The recommendations made so far assume that the overall club fleet will not change in size. With the club shed extension there is the opportunity to expand the fleet. How much to expand the fleet by is a matter for further discussion.

If the club did decide to expand the fleet the subcommittee recommends the purchasing of an additional K4, which would provide further team boat opportunities and promote competition between the two K4's.

The subcommittee also suggests the addition of C1's and C2's to the fleet. The club should prioritise encouraging this element of the sport. In the longer term, the club should consider reserving up to 10 of the new shed spots for fleet expansion, including up to three K4 length slots.

Purchases

The upshot of the needs is that the subcommittee is recommending the purchase of one new boat this year from the sale of existing boats, then six boats a year, each year when the shed is completed.

For the first six years that looks like the following:

Years	Purchases					
2017	Junior/Women's K1 – Stability 5					
2018	Junior/Women's K1 – Stability 5	Junior/Women's K1 – Stability 4	Men's K1 – Stability 5	Stability 7 kayak	Polo bat	Polo bat
2019	Junior/Women's K1 – stability 3	Junior/Women's K1/C1	Men's K1 – Stability 4	Stability 7 surfski	K2	Whitewater

2020	Junior/Women's K1/C1	Stability 7 kayak	Men's K1 – Stability 5	K2	Polo bat	Polo bat
2021	Junior boat	Stability 12 sea kayak	Stability 15 Sea kayak	Stability 7 surfski	K2	Whitewater
2022	Junior boat	Stability 10 sea kayak	Stability 10 sea kayak	Stability 15 sea kayak	Polo bat	Polo bat