

**Exposure Draft: Australian Capital Territory National Land (Lake) Ordinance
SUBMISSION**

I have been a dragon boat racer for 19 years and have represented Australia at three Dragon Boat World Championships. I have also raced nationally and internationally with my club, including at five Club Crew World Championships. The ACT has produced many championship paddlers and clubs and is well represented in the Australian teams that represent us overseas.

At the same time, dragon boating is a very inclusive sport, with paddlers in every age group between 12 and 90. It has a high proportion of women participants and is suitable for both young and older participants.

One of the joys of dragon boating is training and racing on Lake Burley Griffin. Many times, out on the lake during a training session, I have thought how lucky we are to have this venue for our sport. This view is shared by my paddling colleagues and visiting paddlers.

I am very concerned that the proposed changes to the ACT National Land (Lake) Ordinance will significantly limit the use of the lake by dragon boats. The limit of 200m from shore will mean a much more restricted range in which to train and race. There are currently 11 dragon boat clubs in the ACT with several boats out on the water at once during training sessions. Dragon boats need plenty of room. We will likely spend more time trying to avoid each other than seriously training.

Not being able to cross the lake will mean our current practice of paddling to the parts of the lake where the water is calmest and most suitable for training will be limited to the side of the lake closest to our training base. In addition to the impact on our ability to train, we will lose the pleasure of going to different parts of the lake to train.

Not being able to cross the lake would also mean that dragon boats returning to base from a training paddle would need to turn and travel back on the same side of the lake as they went out. This would mean going against the normal traffic flow on the lake (the requirement to keep to the starboard side) and risk collision with other craft travelling the correct way.

Long distance racing will also become dangerous as the boats would need to turn around and race back on the same side of the lake rather than crossing the lake to return on the other side. That would risk running into other boats competing in the same race but not yet at the turn point.

Given that paddle boarders, rowers, kayakers etc will continue to enjoy the lake without this restriction, it is puzzling that the sport of dragon boating has been singled out to be constrained in this way. If it is to make other lake users safer, it will have the opposite effect. Recently, a dragon boat crew rescued a kayaker who had capsized (for reasons unrelated to the dragon boat) and was unable to get back to his craft. Dragon boaters are always very mindful of other lake users and look out for rowers, kayakers etc.

Being able to go out onto the lake is one of the chief attractions of dragon boating. That will greatly diminished if we become a shore-hugging sport dodging each other and other craft.

I am Membership officer with Dragon Boat ACT but this submission is in my personal capacity as a long-time dragon boater.

I am happy to provide further information on these issues.

Sue Pidgeon PSM