



Department of infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development and Communication

24.02.2022

To Whom it May concern,

Rowing ACT would like to express their concerns with the proposed changes to the Australian Capital Territory National Land (Lake) Draft Ordinance. Importantly, we do not consider seven days an adequate time period to provide detailed analysis of the document and would like to request an extension of time. Please see below for our initial feedback, pending an extension.

Although Section 32 (see below) does not deviate too differently from the existing lake ordinance, in speaking with the NCA it is our understanding that there will be more consideration for power boats to be used on the lake than what is currently in place.

### **Page 22, Section 32**

#### **Other use of power boats**

*(1) A person may apply to the Minister in writing for authorisation to operate: (a) a domestic commercial vessel on a lake; or (b) any other power boat on a lake for a stated purpose*

The current system allows sporting clubs that require power boats for safety reasons to operate on Lake Burley Griffin. If this is expanded to all members of the community being able to operate power boats, the traffic on the lake will increase considerably. Rowing ACT would be interested in whether caps/limits will be implemented on the number of power boat authorisations issued each year.

Current operators of power boats eg. rowing coaches are very aware of the safety issues posed by power boat use around unpowered boats, including safe management of wash and traffic flow requirements. This is well communicated and education is provided within the rowing community. Further, Rowing ACT is included in all Lake User Group meetings and correspondence and is kept up to date with other organised activities on the shared lake. Rowing ACT would like to understand how individuals who are given permission to drive power boats will be educated around traffic flows, minimising wash, and organised activities on the lake eg. rowing regattas.

Rowing ACT would like some awareness of how the use of power boats on Lake Burley Griffin will be monitored and patrolled. Although the Water Police has a presence on the Lake, Rowing ACT is concerned this will not be enough to deter dangerous behaviours that will put our rowers at risk of collisions and capsizes.

The NCA is responsible for maintaining the buoy line of the Regatta Course on Yarramundi Reach. Rowing ACT would like to understand if power boat use not associated with rowing-related activities would be permitted to drive on this part of the lake. Driving across the buoy lines cuts the lines and

causes buoys to float away. Rowing ACT has a small number of dedicated volunteers that assist the NCA with the maintenance of the buoy lines and there is great concern that this will become unmanageable. The absence of buoys presents safety hazards to training and racing crews, increases time and financial burdens on volunteers and the NCA and presents a poor image to visiting rowing clubs.

Rowing Australia's Men's National Training Centre (NTC) is based at Yarralumla Bay. When considering options of water ways around the country, Lake Burley Griffin was chosen because of the restrictions on power boat use. Having the men's NTC on our lake is an important part of our sport, directly contributing to the medal winning performances of our athletes at international and Olympic events, most recently Tokyo 2020. It would be devastating if the program were to be relocated due to these proposed changes. Having an increase of motor boat traffic on LBG will likely result in the National Training Centre moving interstate. Currently the Australian Government invests several million dollars in the Australian National Rowing NTC in Canberra both in facility and in personnel. Their presence in Canberra provides 25 full time athletes to the ACT population, 15 staff and numerous others in part-time training camp arrangements. Losing the NTC from the ACT will not only be a huge loss for the rowing community but be an economic loss for Yarralumla and ACT.

Lake Burley Griffin is known in the Australian rowing community for being an excellent stretch of water for rowing with minimal power boats. For these reasons (and others) interstate clubs and schools choose to come to Lake Burley Griffin to compete in local regattas and run rowing camps out of the existing rowing clubs. Opening up for regular public power boat use will severely impact that perception, and consequently will reduce Rowing ACT's revenue from interstate competitors, our member club's revenue from hosting interstate clubs, and ACT tourism from interstate rowers.

Below are some changes we would like to see to the proposed Lake Ordinance

**Page 5, Section 5, General Safety Equipment (d):**

Change from *"if the boat has a covered bilge or a closed under-floor compartment..."*

to *"if the boat has a covered bilge or a closed under-floor/**deck** compartment..."*

This is because in a rowing the airtight void space is under the bow and stern decks, not the floor of the cockpit area.

**Page 22, Section 31:**

Change from *"10 knots"*

to *"12 knots"*

A racing men's eight travels at up to 12 knots. Umpire, safety and coach boats need to be able to legally keep pace with them.

**Page 33, Section 58 (1):**

Add an additional line: *"Persons who are rescuing capsized or swamped boats are exempted from this requirement"*

Reason: in a rescue situation there might not be a line to secure the towed boat available. Rowing boats are not built with a tow line anchor point.

**Page 40, Section 72 (2) and (3):**

Reduce the minimum visible requirement for a masthead light to 1.5 nautical miles

Reason: The longest line of sight from a boat to any point on Lake Burley Griffin is 2.5km (1.35 nautical miles). To reduce the light requirement to 1.5 nautical miles to cover all LBG line of sight distances will make it easier for small boat lake users to comply. (NB: the current Ordinances' requirement is 1.5km (0.81 nautical miles))

**Page 43, Section 75:**

Add an additional subsection (4): *"Notwithstanding 75 (3), it is considered acceptable for a light to be partially masked so as not to interfere with the vision of the vessel's occupants, provided at least one light is visible from any direction"*.

This brings the Section into line with the NSW Maritime Regulation. It was the intent in the 2019 ACT Regulation to align with the NSW regulation. However, ACT's regulation drafter reworded the NSW regulation in a way that can lead to misinterpretation, particularly in the matter preventing lights from interfering with a rower's vision in the dark. Adding this additional subsection, which is directly copied from the NSW Regulation, resolves this and, at the same time, is still consistent with the ACT Regulation in practice.

Rowing ACT proposes the addition of the following:

**Page 20, Section 25:**

Add a subsection (4): *"For areas of the lake that are hosting NCA approved events that don't require lake closure, lake users will respect the right of the event organisers to run their events safely and without interference, and will follow the directions of the event organiser if requiring passage through the event area. The event organiser will make reasonable efforts to accommodate any reasonable requests for passage through the event area"*

Rowing ACT would like the opportunity to work through the policies that would enable safe lake use and look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Sally Clark

Executive Officer

E: [eo@rowingact.org.au](mailto:eo@rowingact.org.au)

M 0406376666

