

Fairfield Canoe Club

Timeline

- 1919 Fairfield Canoe Club (FCC) was formed at the Fairfield Park Boat Shed
Land was purchased for a clubhouse at The Esplanade
- 1926 The clubhouse was completed
At the Victorian Championship for C4s at the annual Henley Regatta, competitors had a lot of fun decorating canoes
Mr. De La Rue was President
Prominent names: Harry De La Rue, Claire Williams, Alf Lucky, Bob Burgan, Fred Taylor
Alf Lucky was building high end C2s well ahead of his time
One of the main workers building the club also built the trolley system
The club went bankrupt. There was a suggestion to turn the club into flats but fortunately this was avoided.
A loan of £5,000 was received allowing the club to purchase rowing boats and make the most of this sport, which was very popular. For a time canoeing took second place at the club.
- 1934 The Yarra River was flooded to 60 feet in December of this year
- 1937 Members and crews visited Barwon and Ballarat Regattas in March and April. Crews were not successful at either, although at Ballarat the crew were under difficulties owing to rowing in a leaking boat. However those who made the trips report a very happy time at both Regattas
The Riverview Cup was lost after race at Essendon on Eight Hour Day
Five mile pairs race held on Sat 10 April at Essendon

- 1938 – 1945 Most members went into the Armed Services and Victorian Amateur Canoe Association (VACA) went into recess. The main activity was the Sunday morning paddle / row with fundraising drinks afterwards.
- Early 1940s Fairfield nearly lost everything
New members, The Bear Hunters, joined the club. "A pretty rugged group" said Jim Smith
Due to the rationing of petrol, long paddles up and down the river were very popular
Close canoeing became more popular than rowing
The club mortgage was called in and rowing boats were sold to finance the loan repayment
The club was renamed the Fairfield Canoe Club
Names of the post war era included: John and Jennifer Ohman, Tom Ohman, Frank and Gwen Ettwell, Ken and Margaret Day, Les and Dorothy Hart, The Little Girls (Myra, Ronda and Joyce), Ron Ford, Ted and Essy Pedley, Arthur and Leslie Graham, Rubin and Tom Collins, Ron Yeats, Keith and Ray Tanner, Arthur Holmes, Billy Sith, Gordon Day and Dick McEwan
Jan 27 Fairfield Canoe Club sold it's flagpole which was bought by Rudder Grange Canoe Club
Victorian Amateur Canoe Association (VACA) was formed (approx. 1949)
- 1950s The Yarra River flooded
- 1951 The Australian Canoe Association was formed. Most FCC members were racing C boats
FCC sent a letter to the Town Clerk noting that visitors...'have to walk down the cobbled roadway as there is no footpath' and asks for road surfacing, a footpath to be made on the north side 'where houses are now built', and ornamental or flowering trees to be planted along the edge of the south side of the Esplanade. There is also a reminder of a previous request to address the overgrowing hedge on the corner of Alphington Street and The Esplanade
The Victorian Canoe Association hosted the first Australian Canoe Championships during Easter in Melbourne. The Championships were timed to coincide with Jubilee celebrations
- 1956 The Olympic Games, held in Melbourne was the club's high point to date with Bill and Tom Ohman placed 5th – 1000m and 7th - 10,000m with Green and Brown's bronze medal in the 10,000m K2. These results were

considered outstanding by all observers, as club members had not previously competed internationally. They also beat the highly regarded Canadian and USA paddlers comfortably.
Hungarian Olympian canoeist Zoli Szigeti defected after the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. He later joined FCC

- 1958 Ownership of Rudder Grange Canoe Club property changed; the new owner wasn't as keen on boat building as the previous one, and the club dispersed. Arthur Howard, Jim Smith and others came across to Fairfield Canoe Club and other members of Rudder Grange Club went to Ivanhoe with Ross Chenonith. There was some ill feeling after Ross took all books etc. and bulk of Rudder Grange Club to Ivanhoe. The President of FCC might have been Dudley Crews at the time
The property next door to FCC was offered to same for £500 but the club couldn't afford it and Mr Crews was bought it instead
- 1961 11th Australian Canoe Championships were conducted by the Australian Canoe Federation at Lake Albert, Wagga Wagga, NSW on March 18-19th
- 1964 Olympic Games were held in Tokyo, Japan. Heidi Sager (later Beard) Fairfield (K1/K2) and Adrian Powell (C1) from Fairfield Canoe Club competed. Margaret Buck, Vid Juriskay and Fred Wasner competed. Also mentioned is Fritz Wasner
March 7-8, 14th annual Canoe Championships at Lake Wendouree, Ballarat
- Late 60s John Ohman was President, he was also Secretary for many years.
Tom Ohman was Treasurer for approximately ten years
- 1980 French Olympic paddler, Frank Lambert, migrated to Australia and became a member of Fairfield Canoe Club
- 1981 Fairfield Canoe Club Cooperative Society formed. Previously FCC was an unincorporated club. The Cooperative was decided upon a) to raise rebuilding funds by shareholdings and b) to form a legally constituted club covered by legislation to help protect officials and members and also as a legal entity able to raise funds

- 1982 The old clubhouse was demolished and a new one built
Andrew Kerekes was the first Chairman of FCC Cooperative Ltd.
- 1992 In May, members were asked individually to assist the club financially by making an interest free loan so the club could develop a coordinated and intensive program to complete the building to the specifications and standards required by the Northcote City Council to gain a 'completion of works'. Many club members made pledges of financial support
- 1993 During summer, Fairfield Canoe Club won the Victorian Canoe Association (VCA) Championship
- 1994 This year marked the 75th anniversary of the Fairfield Canoe Club
Fairfield won the VCA Championships for the second year in a row
The Melbourne Moomba Dragon Boat Team, which included Joe Alia, John Golino, Jenny Mayne, John Mayne, Paul Moser, Andy Chapman, Elena Cementon, Alan Mackay, Brendon Kenna, Michael Loftus-Hills and Hilary Royston, travelled to Macau to compete in Dragon Boat races
- 1995 Fairfield Canoe Club launches its homepage on the World Wide Web
Club members Andrew Chapman and Brendan Kenna tackled the Avon Descent, 130 km of canoeing through, 'rapid infested waters' with speed boat and surf ski competitors
- 1999 Club members, Joady Donovan (first time paddling) and Shawn Ramraj, had an encounter with a tiger snake. The snake rammed their boat twice, the second time boarding the vessel. After a very speedy paddle back to the club landing the snake was tipped out and fortunately no one hurt
- 2006 FCC History Day was held to gather information, objects, photographs and documents relating to the club
A members' guest book register was introduced
- 2011 FCC entered four teams in the 2007 Canoe Polo Melbourne competition. The sport is believed to have a lot to offer the paddling community with the option of strong competition or simply the opportunity to learn new skills

2012

Window and trim on street side of clubhouse were replaced after damage from birds. A new system was installed in the boat racks to prevent boats blowing or falling from upper levels