

BRIGHTON GRAMMAR

- EST. 1882 -

ROWING



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1) Introduction

Welcome to the 2024/25 Brighton Grammar Rowing Program. Many of you will be reading this booklet for the first time, whilst others have been with the program for several years. We hope that the information contained will be useful to you throughout the season. We have endeavoured to answer the most common questions asked by students and parents as well as provide contacts should you need them for the Meliora Club Committee or Rowing staff at the School. Schoolbox and the BGS App will be used throughout the season to provide you with up-to-date information on training, regattas and events throughout the season.

Rowing at Brighton Grammar is a unique experience for students; it is the only sport at the School where a student's skills are wholly developed by the School program, as almost all boys commencing Rowing in Term 4 of Year 7 have never rowed before. We are proud that Brighton Grammar develops the outcomes achieved by the boys over the following years.

Rowing within the BGS Boat Club is a journey. We encourage boys to stay with the sport and the Boat Club from Term 4 of Year 7 until they row in a Head of the River crew in Year 12. Boys will develop amazing friendships and bonds during their time in the program. We believe a boy's development is enhanced through rowing and its value goes well beyond the skill of rowing a boat. Balancing rowing with study, a part-time job, social life, family time and other activities can be challenging but is a skill that helps a boy to prepare for life beyond school.

Rowing is a total body workout; it is one of the few activities that involves all the body's major muscle groups. It is a great aerobic workout and is a low-impact sport on the joints. At junior levels, it is about developing skills while at senior level it becomes more physical, and rowers learn that you must continue when your body is telling you to stop because you are part of a team. Often referred to as the 'ultimate team sport', in rowing you will not find a Best and Fairest award or a Most Valuable Player. Any rower who stands out in a boat will only contribute to it going slower. Rowing is also one of the few sports where you cannot train on the water without all members of your crew present, so it teaches the boys the need to be responsible.

Our students can train and compete at the same venue as Olympians, learn new skills, create strong friendships with their crew members and coaches and gain positive memories that will last forever. We have one of the best fleets of boats in the country, as well as exceptional support from the School and staff. This season we look forward to the boys pushing themselves, building unified crews from groups of individuals, and forging lifelong friendships from their shared experiences.

Go Tonners!

Mitchell Nelson Director of Rowing

2) Brief History of Rowing at BGS

Since the School's entry into the Senior Regatta in 1959, Brighton Grammar has won 11 events.

We were the first of the 1958 'new' Schools to win the Head of the River and our four wins by Second crews put us behind only the big three: Geelong Grammar School, Melbourne Grammar School and Scotch College.

Individually there have been many, many successful Brighton Grammar oarsmen and coxswains, post school. Over 19 young men have been selected to row for Australia in some way, including the Olympics, the King's Cup, World Championships, Henley Royal Regatta, state and national championships and Ivy League Colleges.

But it is not all about success. BGS has such a lot to be proud of but that comes from the efforts of those who paved the way from the very beginning: The coaches and organisers who had to cope with a shortage of boats and equipment; a lack of understanding and unrealistic expectations. Compared to now, where we have the most modern fleet of all schools, and the support given to Rowing by our School Council.

Our first decade had smatterings of promising results without really mounting a challenge.

The next decade was largely disheartening – our most frequently occurring position was tenth. We have never finished eleventh, but tenth in those days was last, and most of those tenths occurred in the decade of the seventies.

The third decade (1980s) saw a rebuilding, our results slowly improved and in 1983 we won our first ever Head of the River. Throughout the 1990s our results were remarkable and often better than almost all the other schools, a great achievement given the number of boys attending BGS compared to other much larger schools. In the 2000s and 2010s, we had been frustratingly close to repeating that significant 1983 victory, finishing generally in the medals but never gold again. In 2018, and 2019, we were second to Scotch at the Head of the River and second to Scotch at the National Schoolboy Championships. Finally, in 2021, we came out on top to win the Fairbairn Trophy as the winning boys' crew at the APS Head of the River. A fitting salute to many years of 'almost', with the BGS boat club finally on top once again.

Since then, the BGS boat club has gone from strength to strength, with many wins in all year levels. Last season BGS, once again, held the Fairbairn trophy aloft at Nagambie Lakes as champions of the APS for 2024. This is our third ever Head of the River title, stamping our credentials as one of the best rowing schools in the country.

With over 100 senior coaches and many, many more who coached at the junior level and who simply cannot be named, we have even more cause for pride given how many of our coaches had been BGS rowers themselves.

 Peter Skelton (Former Rowing Master and Head of Senior School)

3) What does it mean to row?

Speech from Edwin Leader, Head Coach at Yale in 1932

Experience gained in undergraduate competition in such sports as baseball, football, and rowing, as well as that gleaned from many subsequent years spent as a college coach, has convinced me that rowing is the finest, cleanest, and most beneficial of all amateur sports.

It is, to my mind, the finest because of the things which are required of one who would excel in it; because of the undeniable grip it has on almost every man who had come under its spell, a grip which lasts far beyond his active days in the sport, and because I believe these two things: rowing's requirements and its fascination, give to the man who participates in it more real and lasting benefits than any other sport!

For the college undergraduate, it is a long, toilsome journey to a seat in a Varsity shell, but in that long journey the boy learns several things:

- 1. He learns how feeble is individual effort and how strong is united effort.
- 2. He learns the value of teamwork in the sport, which requires it in far greater degree than any other sport the American takes part in.
- 3. He finds he must often give up individual rights and desires for the benefit of all concerned.
- 4. He must have the true spirit of cooperation if he is ever to become a real part of any first-rate crew, and to my mind, there is no denying that fact that some of this spirit on a widespread scale, giving up of petty individual rights and desires for the benefit of all concerned, would go some distance toward solving a great many of the world's problems.

It is my honest belief that you will find in the crew squads of universities and clubs the very highest type of young man.

There is no more unselfish sport than rowing.

For the oarsman, there is no nearby, shouting crowd of admirers.

There is simply the pleasure of the sport for itself and the satisfaction of doing a job well. In rowing, there are no substitutions. When once you sit in a shell at the start of a race, be it four miles or a quarter mile dash in a single, you are there until the end of the race, unless accidents interfere. There is no relief; it is up to the oarsman to prepare sufficiently before the start to be reasonably certain of accomplishing the work at hand. Once started, there can be no quitting. And he must do this himself. No coaching, no other person can help him during the middle of a race. It's up to him. And this is not so unlike life itself when, in our darkest hours with no one to cheer us on, we must screw our courage to the sticking point and press on against defeat.'

- EDWIN O. LEADER New Haven, Conn., March 29, 1932

4) Boat Club Vision Statement

VISION - Our Purpose

 A Boat Club passionate about developing, inspiring, and guiding a boy on his journey to manhood.

MISSION - What we do

- Provide an experience that allows each boy to push his boundaries and exceed his current performance level.
- Feel a special sense of belonging that is derived from being known and valued for your contribution.
- Learn that it is only by working together, developing resilience, interdependence as well as independence, that great things can be achieved.

VALUES – Core priorities

Passion.
For teaching and learning

• Respect. For people and everything around us.

• Integrity. In behaviour and decision making

• Accountability. For our actions, our contributions, and our achievements



5) Rowing Structure

Director of Rowing

Mitchell Nelson

mnelson@brightongrammar.vic.edu.au

0433 337 124

First VIII Rowing Coach

Thomas Creber

tcreber@brightongrammar.vic.edu.au

Teacher in Charge of Year 8

Bryn Humberstone

bhumberstone@brightongrammar.vic.edu.au

Teacher in Charge of Year 9

TBC

Teacher in Charge of Year 10

Sarah-Rose Stoneman

sstoneman@brightongrammar.vic.edu.au

Cooper Club

Head Coach - Mitchell Nelson

First VIII - Thomas Creber

Second VIII - Charlie Catt

Third Crew - Jorge Houridis

Skelton Club

Head Coach - Mitchell Nelson

10A – Joshua Bortolussi

10B - Sam Wyss

10C - Zach Bowen

Wilson Club (Year 9)

Wilson Club Coordinator - Lucas Connell

9A - James Capp

9B - Lucas Connell

9C - Isabel Finch

9D - Jackson McKenzie

9E - Charlie Clarke

9F - TBC

- + Harry Pollock
- + Spencer Kirkham

Wilson Club (Year 8)

Wilson Club Coordinator - Lucas Connell

8A - Hamish Roberts

8B – Ethan Calcatjicos

8C – Finn Watson-Hook

8D - Angus Tragear-Whiting

8E – Hugo Ettershank

8F - Oscar Tilley

- + Lachlan Roberts
- + Patrick Hanley

Wilson Club (Y8/9 2025)

The Wilson Club is where a boy begins his Rowing journey at Brighton Grammar. It is named after two significant members of the BGS Rowing community. Canon Wilson was Headmaster at Brighton Grammar when the school first commenced Rowing in 1958. Canon Wilson coached early crews at BGS and was the School's first Rowing Master. Roger Wilson is also a significant name in the School's Rowing history and for over 30 years he has commentated at most Victorian and many national regattas. Roger learned to row at BGS and was a member of the First VIII in 1961 and 62. 1961 was the first year that BGS entered the First Division.

Year 8 Training

Rowing begins at Brighton Grammar in Term 4 of Year 7. Boys commence a learn to row program in single sculls and Quad sculls (four boys with two oars each and a coxswain). All boys learn how to row and cox a boat. In Term 4, training is held on Monday (BGS) and Wednesdays (Yarra). In Term 1 training is held on Wednesdays (Yarra) and Saturdays (Yarra). On some Saturdays in Term 1, boys will compete in a few friendly regattas throughout the season as well as the Head of the River. Specific dates for Term 4 and Term 1 will be found on Schoolbox under BGS Rowing. You will need to add BGS Rowing Wilson Club to your subscriptions.

Year 9 Training

Rowing for the Year 9 squad commences in Term 4 of Year 8. The boys will transfer over to the Yarra sheds for the duration of the season, which give greater exposure to the excitement and community of rowing along the Yarra River. In Term 4, boys will train two afternoons per week plus Saturdays, along with competing in several regattas. All specific information will be found on Schoolbox under BGS Rowing. You will need to add BGS Rowing Wilson Club to your subscriptions.

Transport

Transport to and from both venues (Albert Park and Yarra River) is by bus leaving from BGS directly following the conclusion of school. In Term 1 of Year 9, the boys catch the train to the Yarra River for training.

Uniform

Boys are required to wear a BGS Rowing singlet whilst racing, along with the white Rowing hat (shown below). Normal sport uniform is required for training. Sunglasses are recommended for rowing on the water in summer.



Skelton Club (Y10 2025)

Peter Skelton became the Rowing Master at Brighton Grammar in 1977, a position he held for 14 seasons until 1990. This was a significant period in the Boat Club's growth with fuller participation, success on the water, and of course, Brighton Grammar's Head of the River win in 1983. Peter became the Head of Senior School and continued to play a passionate and active role in Rowing at the School until his retirement at the end of 2011.

Training

Year 10 boys move from Quad sculls to the Eights and compete in major regattas throughout the season. The boys consolidate their place at the Yarra River sheds moving from the sculling bay to the eights bay. Crews will generally train three times per week in Term 4 as well as Saturday mornings and three times per week in Term 1 (as well as erg/S&C sessions) plus either training or regattas on the Saturdays.

Transport

Boys will catch the train to the Yarra River directly after school and make their own way home. They must wear School uniform to and from the Yarra. The Yarra boat shed is just across the river from Flinders Street Station.

Rowing Camp

The January Rowing camp is an important part of the Rowing Program that enables the boys to acquire rowing skills that would take weeks to master during normal school time. It also provides a time when crew mates and coaches can form bonds and build relationships. The camp is held in Johnsonville from 6-13 January 2025. All further information will be communicated in due course.



Cooper Club (Y11/12 2025)

Andrew Cooper attended Brighton Grammar from 1977-1983. He was Captain of Boats in 1983 and stroked the First VIII to its first Head of the River win. Andrew continued to row after school and was selected to his first senior Australian team in 1986. Two years later he competed in the Seoul Olympics and the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, winning gold as a member of the Oarsome Foursome crew. Andrew also rowed for Victoria five times in the King's Cup for four wins.



Training

In Years 11 and 12, boys continue to develop sculling skills but compete in the Open VIIIs. The training does increase for boys wishing to be selected in the senior First and Second VIIIs. Gym sessions/ergos are also a vital part of the Rowing Program.

Transport

Boys travel by train to the Yarra River after school and must organise their own transport home. Boys must be dressed in School uniform if travelling home on public transport.

Rowing Camp

The January Rowing camp is an important part of the Rowing Program that enables the boys to acquire rowing skills that would take weeks to master during normal school time. It also provides a time when crew mates and coaches can form bonds and build relationships. The Senior Camps are held over the September / January school holidays. The September camp is held in the second week of the September school holidays. In 2025 the January camp will be from 6-13 January in Johnsonville.

6) Regatta Calendar 2024/2025 (Draft)

BGS Rowing - 2024/25 Regatta Schedule						
REGATTA	VENUE/DATE	WILSON CLUB (Y8)	WILSON CLUB (Y9)	SKELTON CLUB (Y10)	COOPER CLUB (YI 1/12)	
Junior / Inter Boys Friday Regatta	8/11/24 (Albert Park)	NO	TBC	TBC	NO	
Melbourne Head Regatta	16/11/24 (Yarra River)	NO	TBC	YES	YES	
APS Regatta (TBC)	23/11/24 (Nagambie)	NO	YES	YES	YES	
St Kevins Regatta	30/11/24 (Carrum)	YES	YES	NO	TBC	
Ballarat Regatta	18/1/25 (Ballarat)	NO	NO	TBC	YES	
Barwon Regatta	25/1/25 (Geelong)	NO	NO	YES	TBC	
Wendouree Ballarat Regatta	1/02/25 (Ballarat)	NO	NO	NO	TBC	
Head of the Schoolboys	8/2/25 (Ballarat)	TBC	YES	YES	YES	
NSW State Champs (NSW)	8/2/25 (SIRC)	NO	NO	YES (10Aonly)	YES (1st VIII only)	
The Geelong College Regatta	15/2/25 (Geelong)	TBC	YES	TBC	NO	
Nagambie Regatta	15/2/25 (Nagambie)	NO	NO	NO	YES	
Australian Henley Regatta	22/2/25 (Yarra)	TBC	YES	YES	YES	
Rowing Victoria State Champs	1/03/2025 (Nagambie)	NO	NO	NO	YES	
Rowing Victoria Schools Regatta	1/03/2025 (Geelong)	TBC	YES	YES	NO	
Scotch Mercantile Regatta	15/03/2025 (Nagambie)	YES	YES	YES	YES	
APS Head of the River	22/03/2025 (Nagambie)	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Australian Rowing Championships (Tasmania)	24-30/3/25 (Lake Barrington)	NO	NO	YES (10Aonly)	YES (1st VIII only)	

7) Code of Conduct

Brighton Grammar Rowers' Code of Conduct

- 1. School rules always apply.
- 2. Treat all teammates, fellow rowers, competitors and officials with respect and courtesy.
- 3. Treat all facilities, property and equipment with respect.
- 4. Maintain good academic standards.
- 5. Always be punctual and correctly attired.
- 6. Ensure a good diet and follow all training advice.
- 7. Be helpful to coaches and always lend a hand in the organisation of the Boat Club including boat trailer loading and unloading.
- 8. Always maintain the highest standard in rowing possible in training and competition.
- 9. Win with humility and if you do not win, recognise and appreciate any competitors who win the final that you are competing in.
- 10. Always communicate positively with coaches and staff.

Members, Parents and Supporters' Code of Conduct

- 1. Support the coaches and assist if requested.
- 2. Parents should not attend crew briefings by coaches unless invited by the coach.
- 3. Be sensitive to your son's pre-race preparations and post-race debriefings.
- 4. Cheer for all BGS crews and not just your son's crew.
- 5. Applaud all BGS crews win or lose and those good performances from other schools.
- 6. Join in with fellow supporters to help create a positive atmosphere at the BGS Marquee at all regattas.
- 7. Help to put up or take down the tents and return them to the boat trailers.
- 8. Do not enter the boat shed without first gaining permission from the Director of Rowing.

8) Rowers Selection Criteria

The purpose of the selection criteria is to provide a transparent process for all the rowers that will lead to the fastest crews competing in all divisions at the Head of the River. Crew selection is not based on any one criterion.

Wilson Club

Junior crew selections are based on the need to keep the crews even and thus competitive. Crews may change from time to time based on the factors listed below and crews/individuals will change closer to the Head of the River to determine in which division they will be entered.

Skelton Club/Cooper Club

A combination of the following factors will determine selection in Year 10 and Senior crews. The faster and more skillfully a rower can move a boat, the better their chance of being selected in a higher crew.

Technique Weight training

Ergometer Attitude

Sculling Application

Coachability Availability

General

All crews are subject to change during the season with crews finalised approximately 3-4 weeks prior to the Head of the River. Crews may be subject to change at this time in exceptional circumstances. Any selection concerns from students should be directed firstly to the coach and then to the Director of Rowing.

Parent Concerns

Any parental concerns should be addressed with the Director of Rowing in the first instance.

9) Uniform

Wilson Club

- Rowing singlet
- White BGS Rowing hat
- Sunglasses (recommended)
- Note: BGS sport uniform (blue shorts / blue top) to be worn during training



Skelton Club

- Rowing suit
- Bucket hat (gifted to rowers at January Camp)
- White BGS Rowing hat (prior to January Camp)
- Tonners top (available via Director of Rowing in Term 4)



Cooper Club

- BGS Rowing suit
- Bucket hat (only one given per student during their Rowing journey)
- Tonners top
- Mercantile Rowing suit (gifted to students in Term 4)



10) Boat Club Leadership

Role of Captain of Boats

- 1. Lead the oarsmen of the Boat Club.
- 2. Set a high standard in performance in training and racing.
- 3. Set an example to the rest of the club and embody the vision, mission and values of the club.
- 4. Be a role model for all oarsmen, especially boys in the Wilson and Skelton Clubs.
- 5. Maintain standards of behaviour and cleanliness of the boat shed.
- 6. Responsible for weekly reports, assemblies and speeches at functions during the season.
- 7. Chair the student leadership group.
- 8. Communicate any issues to the Director of Rowing.

Student leadership group (including Vice-Captain of Boats where appointed)

- 1. Work under the guidance of the Director of Rowing and coordinators.
- 2. Provide leadership for a vertical pastoral system within the Boat Club to develop the rowing culture.
- 3. Lead discussion with boys from all year levels on all aspects of rowing.
- 4. Help set the standards required across the Boat Club.



11) The Meliora Club

The Meliora Club has a long and rich history and is the oldest and longest-running supporters' group at BGS.

Founded by the 1966 1st VIII Crew, it was established in 1968 to support rowing at BGS to provide a means for past BGS rowers and supporters to keep in touch.

The Boaterie, for parents and friends of rowing, was established in 1988 to organise social and fundraising events and functions.

In 2017, the two groups merged and retained the historical name, The Meliora Club.

The structure may have changed over the years, but our purpose has always been clear - to support and promote the BGS rowing program and provide our boys with the best possible rowing experience whilst at BGS.

The Meliora Club Committee is run by a group of committed rowing parents, and we welcome and encourage new ideas and suggestions on what we can do to help achieve our purpose. Please reach out to any of them or your Club Rep if you would like to chat.

Get Involved!

The Meliora Club is about building and supporting the rowing community at BGS. From regattas on the riverbank to sunrise at the sheds to drinks on Lake Nagambie on HOTR Eve, we strongly encourage you to get caught up in the excitement of what being a part of the BGS rowing community is all about.

Regattas

The Meliora Club have a marquee at each regatta for parents and supporters to gather and make some noise as our boys cross the finish line. Simply bring a chair or rug and some snacks, and settle in. Furry mascots are also welcome on regular regatta days (excluding HoTR).

If you've not attended a regatta before:

- The BGS Meliora Club marquee is usually near the finish line. Grab your chair and watch the bovs!
- Attire is casual and relaxed but be prepared for hot, cold or wet weather!
- Sunscreen, snacks and water are essential. Most regattas generally also have coffee and food vans, or there are BBQs run by host schools.

Social Functions

As well as the regattas, the Meliora Club host various events throughout the season for parents and supporters to get together, with the ultimate event being HOTR Day at Lake Nagambie in March.

A save-the-date calendar for the season will be communicated in the coming weeks.

Merchandise

Join the sea of navy and red on the riverbank! The Meliora Club coordinates pre-orders for supporter merchandise each season. Watch your emails in the coming weeks for details or contact Sonya Michele (0408 986 615).

Boat Race Umpires - BRU (previously Boat Race Officials)

BRUs provide backup and support to Rowing Victoria Regatta Officials and allow the event to be staged - you can imagine there is a lot of work required to run a regatta with up to 2000 competitors.

FACT: You don't need to be a rower or know anything about rowing to be an Umpire!

You only need a desire to be in on the action and a current Working with Children Certificate

BGS are obligated to provide a BRU for each regatta otherwise we incur a financial penalty from Rowing Victoria. The Meliora Club Coordinates Umpires on behalf of BGS.

There are four main areas where Umpires assist:

- 1. Finish line judge box to identify the boats as they cross.
- 2. Boat ramp area for safe in/egress.
- 3. Bank Officials to ensure boats are efficiently and safely moving up and down the river.
- 4. Start line marshalling area.

It is a lot of fun to help and see what goes on behind the scenes and get involved and is typically only for a morning or afternoon session that coincides with your son's regatta.

Please connect with David Moreton (0412 151 938) for more information.

Link below Rowing Victoria for details and the online training course:

https://www.rowingvictoria.asn.au/education/umpires

I WANT IN! How do I become a Meliora Club Member?

Contact any of our Committee members below for more information or email bgs.melioraclub@gmail.com

Lifetime Membership is \$120 per family, and you receive a Meliora Club cap to wear with pride – Go Tonners!!!

Meliora Club Committee Contacts

We know the rowing journey can be a bit overwhelming at times, so please reach out to any of the Meliora Club Committee members if you have any questions:

President // Regatta Operations	David Moreton	0412 151 938	
Vice-President // Secretary	Sonya Michele	0408 986 615	
Treasurer	Peter Eyers	0416 112 936	
Communications	Basia Quill	0400 992 165	
Events & Fundraising	Jessamy Shiell	0499 566 387	
Committee Member – Cooper Club	Bre McGrath	0411 228 921	
Committee Member – Wilson Club	Andrew Low	0417 919 249	

12) Rowing Venues

Yarra River

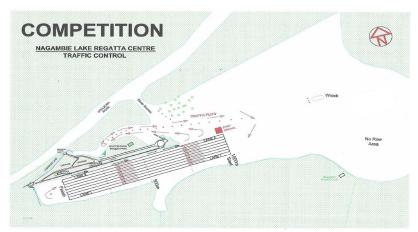
The School's Rowing home is on the Yarra River. We are tenants of Mercantile Rowing Club and the boys row out of these sheds from Years 9 to Year 12. There are also two regattas held at the Yarra River (Melbourne Head / Australian Henley).



Nagambie

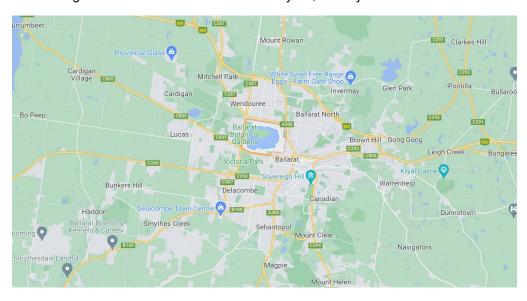
The home of the APS Head of the River. Boys will compete at several regattas at this venue throughout the season.





Lake Wendouree

Several regattas are held at this location each year, for all year levels.

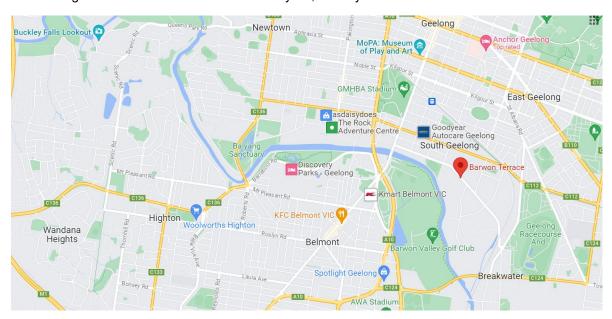


Lake Wendouree, Ballarat: 1,000m & 2,000m - Competition Map



Barwon River

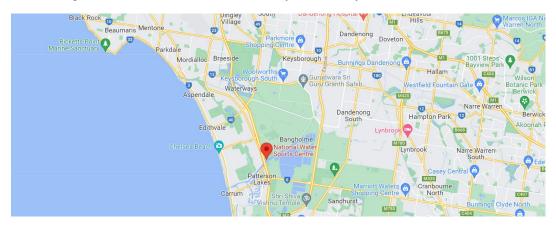
Several regattas are held at this location each year, for all year levels.





Carrum National Water Sports Centre

Several regattas are held at this location each year, for all year levels.



NWSC, Carrum: 1,000m- Competition Map



13) BGS Rowing Video (due to be filmed in Term 1, 2025)

2019: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCSq9uyCBhU&t=1s

2020: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExD1Esi7ngg&list=TLPQMTYwODIwMjAA-FG8b24Y-g&index=2

2021: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBn B6nk9XE

2022: N/A

2023: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCF3GG 4KBU

2024: Brighton Grammar Rowing Film 2024 (youtube.com)