

**NEW NORFOLK ROWING CLUB – DERWENT VALLEY BOATHOUSE  
SPEECH BY  
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
NEW NORFOLK ROWING CLUB, SATURDAY 23 JANUARY 2021**

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to officially open the New Norfolk Rowing Club's new Derwent Valley Boathouse.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land—the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and who continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights. And I mourn the fact that there are no living descendants of the Oyster Bay or Big River people who used reed and bark canoes on this wonderful river for 4000 years.

And may I acknowledge among you:

- Peter Nichols, NNRC President and John Shoobridge, Patron;
- Senators Claire Chandler and Johnathon Duniam;
- Minister Mark Shelton;
- Ben Shaw, Derwent Valley Council Mayor.

This has been a community-inspired project for a significant community benefit, and so to that extent I also want to acknowledge and thank every individual who has been associated in any way with the development of the new boathouse and clubroom facilities, including the construction companies, volunteers, the many organisations and persons who provided letters of support, and the Council. I want to particularly thank Peter and Carol Nichols for their tireless work, from funding submission to completion.

As we know, funding enabling this development has been local, state and federal: a high-profile mix of resources. And there was never any doubt about entrusting that diversity of funding to the NNRC.

The New Norfolk Rowing Club has itself contributed in excess of \$300,000 to the project. This club has such a long history – it was established in 1928 and fundraising for the first rowing clubs sheds date back to 1921 when a total of £8 was raised for the construction of the New Norfolk Rowing Club sheds<sup>1</sup> and, rather intriguingly, those early funds were raised through a fancy dress football match!<sup>2</sup>

There are so many reasons why Dick and I are especially pleased to be here today. As many of you know, Dick particularly has been keenly interested in following the development of the project and together we're thrilled, as long-time New Norfolk residents, to be able to be part of this fabulous result.

Furthermore as residents we have long been aware of the growing concerns over safety of the old location of the Club's sheds on the north side of the river with Rocks Road/Boyer Road running between the sheds and the launching pontoons on the river. This has seen several near misses by trucks, cars and motorcycles as crews attempted to get across the road with boats.

In fact as long ago as 1968, a senior eight crew was carrying their boat across the Boyer Road after training when a car crashed into the boat, smashing it in half.

Following the decommissioning of the railway, the road has become increasingly busy with log trucks and heavy traffic. This has led to some Hobart clubs relocating their training to safer locations.

Aside from safety, another reason for welcoming the new facilities is the boost it will give to the New Norfolk Rowing Club with its inclusive culture. School rowing has long been dominated by private schools and is inaccessible for many government school students – a particular concern because rowing is a sport in which young people can excel even though they might lack hand-eye coordination skills. NNRC has traditionally supported student rowing at government schools including at Ogilvie, New Town High and Elizabeth College.

Many outstanding rowers including Olympian medallists and world champions such as Kate Hornsey, Kerry Hore and Anthony Edwards have been members of this club at some stage of their rowing career.

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<sup>1</sup> The Mercury, 21 Nov, 1921

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/23519835?searchTerm=New%20Norfolk%20Rowing%20Club>

<sup>2</sup> The Mercury, 25 Oct, 1921

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/190248748?searchTerm=New%20Norfolk%20Rowing%20Club>

One of the many positives about this Boathouse is that the facility is not just for rowers but will be available for dragon boat paddling and kayaking – providing healthy physical activity for all ages. The Derwent here at New Norfolk is such an ideal stretch of water for boating.

Enhancing facilities at the Esplanade is another of the Boathouse's advantages – here we have from the Esplanade up the cliff path to Turriff Lodge and then down to the walking track along the Lachlan River to the town, a really delightful short walk which should be better known and appreciated by visitors to a town which now boasts a great restaurant, antique shops and other little shops that are attracting more and more visitors to the town and, for overnight stays, diverse and charming accommodation options.

It is wonderful to witness the growing pride in this community and the commitment to it shown by all of those who have worked to achieve the construction of the Derwent Valley Boat Club.

Thank you.