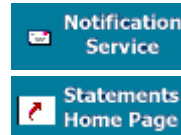


Government of Western Australia
Media Statement



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Portfolio: Planning and Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation

National Dragon Boat Championships to showcase Champion Lakes

16/3/08

Up to 1,000 paddlers from across Australia will converge on the world class Champion Lakes in Armadale next month for the Australian National Dragon Boat Championships.

On site at the State Dragon Boat Championships at Champion Lakes today, Planning and Infrastructure Minister and Armadale MLA Alannah MacTiernan said the new Champion Lakes Regatta Centre and international standard water sport facility offered the best dragon boat racing conditions in Australia.

Over four days in April, nearly 1,000 paddlers will compete for State and club titles including Australian champions and junior, masters and grand master titles.

“This is a brilliant opportunity to showcase the world-class Champion Lakes facilities with a national event attracting competitors from all States and Territories,” Ms MacTiernan said.

The State Government has provided \$10,000 in funding to support the first national competition to be held at Champion Lakes.

Sport and Recreation Minister John Kobelke said dragon boat racing was one of the fastest growing team sports in the world, with over 50 million paddlers in 40 different countries.

“Dragon boat racing provides for a stunning spectacle, especially with the magnificent viewing areas surrounding the Champion Lakes course,” Mr Kobelke said.

“I have no doubt the event will be well-supported by sports-loving Western Australians.”

Dragon boats - the world’s largest flat water racing boats - are propelled by 20 paddlers, a sweep and a drummer and race over 200m sprints through to 500m races and a one kilometer-long distance paddle.

A Taoist priest offers prayers to the spirits of the dragon boats before races commence along with offerings of fruit, jasmine tea, alcohol and rice to appease the spirits of the water and calm them in preparation for the race ahead.

The priest then 'brings the dragon boat to life' by dotting the eyes of the dragon head to make them strong for the racing ahead.

The Championships will take place at Champion Lakes from April 9 to 12, with more than 200 races over the course of the event.

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