We have now come to the end of the major regattas for this season. Generally it has been a good season with only the Canterbury Championship Regatta being blown out. The regattas on Lake Ruataniwha have only been possible because of the sponsors and volunteers. We are all very grateful for their assistance and effort. While we look forward to an even more successful season next year, we are well aware of the many challenges we face. Starting from now we have to systematically work on those elements that require attention so that we are in a much better position for the regattas next season. In the following months we hope to be able to detail the work that is being undertaken.

**Rubbish**

This has been the subject of some discussion in recent newsletters with some very good suggestions being made. But before considering any suggestion the problem has to be quantified. During February, as a result of the SICC Regatta and Nationals, over 60 full bins were removed. The cost is over $6000 which equates to over $5 per rower and is included in the amenity fee. This is only the start of the costs but does explain why the amenity fee is high.

**Medical Centre**

Representatives of the Medical Trust raised funds for the new Medical Centre by collecting the gate fee at the National Championship Regatta. South Island Rowing has a very real interest in the Centre as many of those who come to rowing events also use the medical facilities. The picture on the right shows the SIR Vice-Chairman, Pat McQuinn, handing the cheque for $3000 to the Chairman of the High Country Medical Trust (Simon Williamson) during the South Island Secondary Schools Regatta on March 7.

**Meridian SISS Regatta**

This was a big regatta with over 1000 athletes and more than 1700 crews fronting up for the 52 events. The Lake conditions on Saturday were a little trying and Sunday saw the remainder of the regatta cancelled. Except for the finals held on Saturday, the medals were distributed on Sunday, based on Saturday’s heat times.

The picture on the right shows the crowd in spite of the rather unfavourable weather.
Start Issues

Although this was the last regatta of the season, it was most surprising to observe the difficulties some crews had trying to manoeuvre their boats into the start. The level of difficulty was quite unexpected, as the coaches have had all season to teach their rowers. There may be other issues as well, but the net result was over an hour delay in proceedings, which the start team attributed to this factor. Therefore the start team have agreed to put together some tips for crews and coaches in an effort to improve the situation for next year.

AGM 2015

The Annual General Meeting of SIR will be held in Twizel in the MacRae Lounge on Saturday 16th May 2015, 11am preceded by morning tea at 10.30am. With the changed constitution this meeting will be quite different from previous meetings. In particular, the direct involvement of the local associations with the governance of SIR, has resulted in an entirely different mode of operation and this will be reflected in the AGM. It is anticipated this will follow along the lines of the Rowing New Zealand AGM that incidentally is to be held in Christchurch on 23rd May.

There are several very serious issues that will require attention of both the delegates of the AGM and the subsequent Board meeting. It is intended that the next newsletter will detail the various aspects confronting the future operations.

AON NZSS Championship’s 2015

This regatta, which is the pinnacle of secondary school rowing in New Zealand, was held on Lake Karapiro. The reports received suggest that the South Island crews did well and we congratulate them on their endeavours. We also thank all those South Island volunteers who made the pilgrimage to Lake Karapiro to be part of the Race Officials Team. Of course there are always concepts tried at that venue that we could well adopt here and vice-versa. For example, a “Spark” cell tower was observed at the lake (see picture on the right) and inquiries have been made to see what is required at Ruataniwha to facilitate this temporary installation.

Perhaps one of the main things here is the desire to ensure that the regatta becomes an excellent experience for all participants.

We welcome any comments and feedback about improvements that could be made to our venue and in particular how they could be achieved.

Junior Trials

These were held on Lake Ruataniwha in mid April 2015. Reports suggest this was a good trial and the results seem to show the correct choices were made. The weather was somewhat changeable with a storm coming through and very cold temperatures in the morning. The picture at right shows a great day that eventuated.

We have found that rowing is fine as long as the wind is low. There have been several comments about the temperatures. One parent suggested that most of the North Island Crews would have to be told they would need to wear thermals for the MAADI next year.
Course

The course at Lake Ruataniwha can be fully buoyed but is maintained with a skeleton number of buoys throughout the year. This means that from a course perspective, anyone can train on a 2000 metre straight buoys course and any time. However the hardware itself is well aged and we have had a lot of trouble providing a fully buoyed course for regattas. In fact we do not have enough hardware to provide the outside lane wire. The underwater hardware is well over 30 years old and is similarly failing.

The picture on the right shows the line of buoys at the 1000 metre mark. This shows the full 10 lanes positioned across the lake to the marker buoy. There is the obvious need for a lateral to both align the buoys and keep them in position.

Following a lot of research we can report that all the replacement hardware and costs are identified. We are extremely grateful for the financial assistance by way of a grant from the New Zealand Racing Board, that will allow the replacement of the course hardware.

Building Maintenance

We recently signed a building maintenance contract with Mulford Holdings in Dunedin for the much needed maintenance work on the buildings. The first group of buildings to be done this year includes the Lindstrom Lodge where there is an urgency to preserve the exterior integrity.

Theft and Damage

We continue to be plagued by damage to equipment and theft of some items. We are investigating the installation of a comprehensive security system. You can help by reporting any damage or suspicious behaviour you see.

Waste Water Woes

ECAN have advised of an abatement notice being issued to close the ponds where our waste water discharges. This means we have to pump and transport the waste water to the MDC system. We have to connect to the MDC system which is extremely costly (possibly $1M) and needs to be done before the major regattas next year. Failure to have a solution to this problem would see the greatly reduced use of the SIR complex. We are currently completing the design and looking for funding for this project.
SISS Dramas.... and fun!