

Australian Rivers 2x2

The Lane Cove River set the perfect stage for this month's theme "Australian Rivers", offering a serene and picturesque backdrop. Under slightly overcast skies, the morning air was bracing, the river calm and glassy, its stillness broken only by the chirping of birds along the banks, the occasional splash of fish leaping out of the water, and the haunting call of an eagle from its nest. Adding to the magic, millions of jellyfish shimmered under the water's surface further upstream. Lane Cove River seemed to be putting on its best show for us.



This relay saw an impressive turnout of 21 paddlers again, along with Steve and baby Lachlan cheering from the pontoon. Wade generously took on the role of timekeeper, testing out his new timing system. Among the paddlers, two first-timers joined the relay: Ian W. and Daniella T. Ian introduced his cleverly named boat "Bow" a tribute to his "Bow River" team name, while Daniella partnered with Cassy in the Inspiration K2 to get a feel for the 2x2 course. The duo took an unexpected swim but hardly anyone even noticed it.



Some of the teams were preparing for the HCC in 2 weeks. Duncan and Matt at times showed a nice harmony in their K2 while at other times squabbling like a married couple. John T., was paddling solo as team "Darling," tackled the entire 16-kilometre on his own. After the race he shared his significant accomplishment of having paddled 900 kilometres on the River Darling. A surprise came from Tony H., who swapped his usual K1 for a ski in preparation for the HCC, an unusual sight for those familiar with his paddling. Even Tony admitted that it "felt wrong". Tony and Alanna—represented team "Deua River," probably named after a waterway close to their beautiful countryside home.



Spencer was back in the boat with matching outfit with his dad Craig. Tim McN. added a fun touch, donning a fitting Todd River hat. Love your commitment to the themes of the relay Tim!



After the race, paddlers gathered for a well-deserved morning tea. The group received an introduction to standing and running changeovers which we'll all be practicing at the next event. It was a light-hearted reminder that there's always room for more relay skills!



There was a prize for everyone from lavender scented bath bombs and shower gels to illustrated Aussie nature books. But the real highlight (and surprise) was a baby goat on a dog lead casually wandering through the group like it had been on the RSVP list all along.

Report from newcomer Ian W.

On the surface, it sounds pretty easy – paddle 2km, then have a break while your partner paddles 2km, and repeat 4 times for a 16km team total. The shorter laps though means you're perhaps more inclined to have-a-crack and so it was with me! And as a result, I'm feeling a little 'exercised' this afternoon. The handicap start is designed to produce a photo finish – which means that paddlers are keeping tabs on chasers and chasees. I was paired up with Esther in team 'Bow River', suitably equipped with Bow Tie and boat signs indicating Bow (& Stern), but leaving the Cold Chisel at home. We were rather pleased to end up with a 2nd place. Thank you Esther!

It's a very sociable morning – more than the TT provides for, and the morning tea and awards ceremony caps things off nicely. What a great way to launch yourself into a Sunday! I'll be back! Why don't you give it a go?

Here a few more details about our Aussie rivers:

The Murray River – Represented by *Jeff T & Caroline*

At 2,508 kilometers, the Murray River is Australia's longest river. It flows from the Australian Alps through New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, eventually emptying into the Southern Ocean. The Murray sustains the Murray-Darling Basin, one of the most critical agricultural regions in the country, producing significant amounts of Australia's fresh produce. For tens of thousands of years, the river has been central to the lives of the Ngarrindjeri, Yorta Yorta, and other Indigenous peoples who consider it sacred. Its floodplains are home to a variety of wildlife, including the rare Murray cod—Australia's largest freshwater fish.

The Swan River – Represented by *Elke & Anne S*

Flowing through Perth, the capital of Western Australia, the Swan River is deeply tied to the region's identity. It was named after the black swans that inhabit its waters. To the Noongar people, the river is known as *Derbarl Yerrigan* and holds immense cultural significance as a source of food, water, and spiritual connection. The Swan River's estuary provides habitat for marine life, including dolphins.

The Franklin River – Represented by *Kevin M & Andrew P*

The Franklin River, located in the southwest of Tasmania, is a pristine and wild river that flows through the Tasmanian World Heritage. Its rapids, deep gorges, and ancient rainforests make it a favourite destination for adventurers and whitewater rafters. The Franklin gained international attention during the 1980s due to a campaign to stop it from being dammed for a hydroelectric project. The effort succeeded, marking a major victory for environmental conservation in Australia.

The Macquarie River – Represented by *Craig/Spencer E. & Matt S/Duncan*

Originating in the Great Dividing Range in New South Wales, the Macquarie River flows for 960 kilometres before joining the Barwon River. The river is a vital source of irrigation for agriculture in the region, particularly for crops like cotton, wheat, and fruits. It is also home to the Macquarie Marshes, one of the largest and most significant wetlands in Australia. These wetlands provide a habitat for many species of birds, fish, and other wildlife. The Macquarie River has been central to the lives of the Wiradjuri people.

Grose River – Represented by *Chris D., Cassy & Daniela T*

The Grose River originates in the Blue Mountains, carving through sandstone gorges and dense eucalyptus forests. It is a key tributary of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system, which provides drinking water for much of Greater Sydney. The Grose River is part of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and is home to unique flora and fauna, including rare species such as the Blue Mountains water skink. Its beauty attracts bushwalkers, rock climbers, and other nature enthusiasts.

The Todd River – Represented by *Tim McN & Phill G*

The Todd River is a unique desert river that flows through Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. For most of the year, it's a dry, sandy riverbed that only flows after rare and heavy rains. Despite its arid nature, the Todd is home to a range of native plants and animals that have adapted to the harsh desert environment. The river has cultural significance to the Arrernte people. The iconic Henley-on-Todd Regatta, a dry riverboat race held annually in Alice Springs, is a quirky celebration of this unique natural feature.

The Darling River – Represented by *John T (solo)*

The Darling River, stretching over 1,472 kilometers, is one of the longest rivers in Australia and also an integral part of the Murray-Darling Basin. This river has historically been crucial for Indigenous communities and forms part of the lifeblood of Australian agriculture, irrigating crops and sustaining livestock. Unfortunately, the Darling has faced significant challenges in recent decades, including water over-extraction, salinity, and periods of drought.

The Deua River – Represented by *Tony H & Alanna*

The Deua River originates high in the mountains of southern New South Wales, carving its way through the Deua National Park. The river is known for its crystal-clear waters. Its catchment area plays a vital role in feeding the Moruya River, which empties into the Tasman Sea near Moruya.

The Bow River – Represented by *Esther & Ian W*

The Bow River, located in Western Australia's Kimberley region, is a tributary of the Ord River, which supports one of the country's largest irrigation networks, the Ord River Irrigation Scheme. Known for its seasonal flow, the Bow River sustains diverse wildlife, including freshwater crocodiles, and transforms the arid landscape into a lush oasis during the wet season. It also holds cultural significance for Indigenous communities, with ancient rock art sites along its banks.

Team Start Order	Team Name	Paddler 1	Paddler 2	Start Time	Lap 1	Lap 2	Lap 3	Lap 4	Lap 5	Lap 6	Lap 7	Lap 8	Finish Order
1	The Swans	Elke van Ewyk	Anne Skewes	07:25:00	7:41:35 AM	7:56:18 AM	8:12:40 AM	8:26:21 AM	8:43:43 AM	8:57:43 AM	9:14:31 AM	9:27:08 AM	7
3	Franklin River Flyers	Kevin Mulally	Andrew Pearce	07:50:00	8:02:21 AM	8:14:31 AM	8:26:15 AM	8:37:56 AM	8:50:18 AM	9:02:45 AM	9:14:23 AM	9:25:58 AM	5
2	Bow River	Ian Wrenford	Esther Wheeler	07:48:00	8:00:37 AM	8:12:46 AM	8:24:38 AM	8:35:26 AM	8:47:58 AM	9:00:02 AM	9:11:49 AM	9:23:18 AM	2
5	The Murray	Jeffrey Tonazzi	Caroline Marschner	07:52:00	8:04:28 AM	8:16:27 AM	8:28:11 AM	8:39:23 AM	8:51:50 AM	9:03:30 AM	9:15:12 AM	9:26:32 AM	6
6	The Mighty Todd	Phil Geddes	Tim McNamara	07:52:00	8:05:52 AM	8:16:55 AM	8:29:48 AM	8:40:01 AM	8:53:45 AM	9:04:33 AM	9:17:13 AM	9:27:21 AM	8
7	MAC-Fishes River Paddlers	Craig/Spencer Ellis	Matt Swann/Duncan Johnstone	07:58:00	8:09:51 AM	8:20:27 AM	8:31:23 AM	8:41:10 AM	8:52:38 AM	9:03:00 AM	9:13:52 AM	9:23:44 AM	3
8	Deua Duo	Tony Hystek	Alanna Ewin	08:00:00	8:10:00 AM	8:20:51 AM	8:30:15 AM	8:40:42 AM	8:50:40 AM	9:01:57 AM	9:11:22 AM	9:22:04 AM	1
9	Lachlan River	Chris Dickman	Cassie O'Connor/Daniela Torre	08:03:00	8:13:28 AM	8:22:48 AM	8:33:03 AM	8:45:50 AM	8:56:34 AM	9:06:02 AM	9:16:14 AM	9:25:12 AM	4
4	The Darling	John Thearle	John Thearle	07:56:00	8:08:47 AM	8:21:13 AM	8:34:05 AM	8:46:11 AM	8:58:41 AM	9:11:02 AM	9:23:53 AM	9:35:53 AM	9