

# VicSuper Murray Marathon

404km | 5 Days | 1 River



YMCA

We build strong **PEOPLE**  
strong **FAMILIES**  
strong **COMMUNITIES**

## BACKGROUND BRIEFING

SEPTEMBER 2009



YMCA

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strong **FAMILIES**  
strong **COMMUNITIES**

## **SUMMARY**

The Murray Marathon is a proud, iconic event that has been running for 40 years under the guidance of the Australian Red Cross. YMCA Victoria is very pleased to undertake the challenge of managing the event from 2009 onwards as a major fundraising event for the charitable work that we undertake for disadvantaged members of the community.

The event attracts around 1,000 participants who are supported by an additional 3,500 "land crew". Participants paddle from Yarrowonga to Swan Hill between 27-31 December each year.

The event is largely volunteer based and relies on the assistance of the local Councils and Shires along the journey. The YMCA has appointed a new Independent Chairman to oversee the management of the event and has also forged a strong link with Canoeing Victoria which is the State Sporting Association for the sport.

The event attracts considerable media attention both in metropolitan Melbourne and especially in regional Victoria.

The YMCA has undertaken to reinvest all excess funds from the VicSuper Murray Marathon into the social, economic and environment sustainability of the Murray River Region thus ensuring the longevity of the event within the community.

## FUNDRAISING GOALS

The YMCA will commit all excess funds to the Murray River Region.

YMCA Victoria is a leading Victorian charity committed to helping those in need. In the last two years we have raised over \$1.8 million for our benevolent work and continue to assist people in need within the communities in which we operate.



As a major fundraising event, we understand the importance of clearly defining what the funds raised from the VicSuper Murray River Marathon will be used for and we are also committed to regularly reporting on the outcomes associated with the distribution of funds donated.

We will endeavour to keep the costs of the event as affordable as possible and continue to attract sponsors and supporters to help offset the expenses.

The YMCA will invest all excess funds into the social, environmental and economic sustainability of the Murray Region.

This will involve working closely with leading agencies in the region to:

- assist those facing health inequalities due to their disadvantage;
- help ensure the environmental sustainability of the Murray River;
- help those facing social isolation; and
- assist families facing economic hardship.

We will also endeavour to increase participation in the Marathon by helping disadvantaged groups, schools, and communities with equipment, training and assistance so that they can experience the thrill of the Murray Marathon.

## THE EVENT

The VicSuper Murray Marathon is a unique, community based event with a wide audience. It is an iconic Australian sporting event and has been running continuously for 40 years.

The State Sporting Association, Canoeing Victoria, will be sanctioning the event for the first time, thus giving it official event status that enables national and international promotion.

### The YMCA

The YMCA is one of the most recognised brands in the area of community activity.

We have over 300,000 interactions with Victorians each week with over 60,000 YMCA members in 120 community facilities throughout the state.

We are passionate advocates of active, engaged lifestyles. Together with our partners we transform communities; we intentionally shape lives for the better.

### VicSuper

On 8 August 2009 YMCA Victoria announced a new partnership with VicSuper who will be the naming rights sponsor for the 2009 Murray Marathon. VicSuper is a superannuation fund set up to look after all Victorians, and is the industry leader in incorporating sustainability into its investments and operations.

The fund wholeheartedly supports YMCA Victoria's commitment to reinvesting all the money raised from the VisSuper Murray Marathon into the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the region.

"VicSuper is pleased to be involved with such an iconic event, particularly one that brings so much to the communities living along the Murray" said Bob Welsh, Chief Executive, VicSuper.

"VicSuper's commitment is to all Victorians, and we demonstrate that commitment not only by supporting events like this one, but through our investments and our ongoing presence in regional areas."



VicSuper Chief Executive Bob Welsh (right) with  
YMCA Chairman Superintendent Graham Kent

## Canoeing Victoria

The YMCA has partnered with the State Sporting Association to ensure the event is conducted safely and to the technical specifications of the sport. This will be the first time that Canoeing Victoria has been actively involved in the Murray Marathon and there is a great opportunity to engage the recreational and club paddlers throughout the Canoeing Victoria affiliated Clubs.

## The Participants

Over 4,000 participants and support crew are actively involved with the event. Another 500 volunteers assist in some capacity.



Over 300,000 local residents are involved as the caravan of people migrate along the Murray River. Local service groups such as Rotary and Lions, as well as sporting and community groups are all actively involved in the organisation of the event.

Paddlers come from all over Australia with 77% being from Victoria. Approximately 35% of entrants are female. The age of paddlers ranges from 13 – 70, with the largest groups aged in the 13 – 18 age bracket and 31 – 50 age bracket.

## The Region

The Marathon runs through 5 municipalities. Each is fully supportive of the event and in 2009 they will play an even larger role in the management of the VicSuper Murray Marathon.

The event is a major tourism event for the Murray Region bringing at least \$200,000 to each town along the route.



## Media

The event has traditionally created exceptional media exposure before, during and after the event. There is a wide general interest in the metropolitan areas and very specific interest in regional and local areas.

The YMCA has all of the media reports for the last 3 years for review.

The Y intends to make greater use of technology including video, blogs and social network sites to keep everyone up to date.

## Online Registrations

In order to keep the cost of the event as low as possible the YMCA has introduced online registrations for the first time in 2009.

Participants can register at

[www.murraymarathon.ymca.org.au](http://www.murraymarathon.ymca.org.au)



## Yarrowonga

The campsite on the eve of the race is important as there is a safety briefing and it is the opportunity for all teams to undertake their last minute preparations.

In 2009 the first night has returned to Yarrowonga-Mulwala after being in Tocumwal for the last few years.

Moira Shire Council has expressed its delight at being associated with this event, which promotes a healthy lifestyle, enjoying the outdoors, working in co-operation with others and the existence of the competitive spirit. Moira Shire Council Mayor, Cr David McKenzie said "the return of the first night's stay to Yarrowonga would be a major financial boost to the Yarrowonga-Mulwala area. This event has run for 40 years, attracting people of all ages, from all regions of Australia and from all backgrounds."

"It provides people with a chance to see some of this country's finest river locations while paddling downstream or acting as a support crew member to the paddlers. It is important for the local community to recognise the potential increase in visitors, and their spending capacity, not just during this event, but following it, after they have seen what an enjoyable and inviting place Moira is to visit."

## Chief Commissioner Simon Overland

Victoria Police are entering two teams in the event; Blues & Brothers, a team made up of indigenous youth, elders and Victoria Police members and the Echuca based "Upstream with a Paddle" team in which Commissioner Overland will be participating as a relay member.



Two prospective paddlers in the Blues & Brothers team

"Victoria Police is pleased to be involved in the VicSuper Murray Marathon and I am personally looking forward to competing on the day,' Mr Overland said. "Not only is this a fantastic event, but it is also a great opportunity to meet new people and get into the community spirit."

### A New one-day event

New to the program is the YMCA Murray Challenge. This event gives recreational paddlers a taste of the marathon in a single day; it will span the 63km between Echuca and Torrumbarry, and will take place on Wednesday 30th December.

Beginning in Echuca and ending in Torrumbarry, the YMCA Murray Challenge is a 63km one day event that will take place on Wednesday 30th December 2009.

Created for paddlers who want to experience the VicSuper Murray Marathon but can't commit to all 5 days, the YMCA Murray Challenge is non-competitive so is ideal for beginner paddlers wanting to get a taste for the sport.



The Port of Echuca will be the start of the new One Day YMCA Murray Marathon

Although Echuca has always been a check-point for entrants in the marathon, in 2009 it will feature heavily with the introduction of the YMCA Murray Challenge.

"The VicSuper Murray Marathon is an event of national significance and we are pleased that the YMCA has not only taken over the event, but added to the marathon an additional one day event from Echuca," Shire of Campaspe Mayor Peter Williams said.

### Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement

After five days on the river the paddlers will gather at the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement for their Official Closing Ceremony and presentations, and to celebrate their achievements.

"As a municipality we are so pleased to see the VicSuper Murray Marathon continue and we look forward to working with the YMCA on this signature event," Swan Hill Rural City Council Mayor Cr Greg Cruickshank said.

"The arrival of the VicSuper Murray Marathon coincides with our New Years' Eve celebrations in Swan Hill and we look forward to celebrating the New Year with the YMCA."



## VicSuper Murray Marathon Management Committee

The VicSuper Murray Marathon is managed by the YMCA however it is overseen by a volunteer committee made up of those individuals who are largely responsible for the running of the event.

This Committee has an independent Chairman, Mr Scott Chapman. Scott has a strong management background working in Local Government. He is also a keen outdoor enthusiast, currently also being Chairman of the Outdoor Education Group, Australia's largest outdoor education company placing 24,000 students into the field annually.



## Regional Shires and Councils along the route

The VicSuper Murray Marathon is conducted along the majestic Murray River through some of the most picturesque countryside the Murray region has to offer.

The region is a major area for tourism and the event brings a considerable economic benefit to the towns along the route.

### Moira Shire

Moira Shire is bounded by the Murray, Goulburn and Ovens Rivers and is just 2.5 hours drive north of Melbourne.



The Shire is one of the fastest growing in north-east Victoria and boasts strong agricultural, horticultural and viticultural operations, a thriving tourism industry, affordable housing and access to excellent education, sporting and recreation facilities.

The municipality has four major towns (Cobram, Nathalia, Numurkah and Yarrawonga) as well as 18 smaller communities.

### Berrigan Shire

Berrigan Shire is situated in the Southern Riverina and is predominantly irrigated rural land in nature, with its main pursuits being devoted to the agriculture industry.



It is bound to the south by the Murray River. The Council boundaries encompass the towns of Barooga, Berrigan, Finley and Tocumwal. They offer a range of first class lifestyle opportunities including recreation, health and education facilities.

We invite you to the Shire website and hope you take the time to explore the site and learn more about Berrigan Shire Council.

### Shire of Campaspe

The Shire of Campaspe was formed on 18 November 1994 following the restructure of municipalities by the Victorian State Government.

Located in north central Victoria, the Shire spans an area of 4,517 square kilometres. Its southern border is only 120km north or less than two hours drive to Melbourne.

The main industries within the Shire are agriculture, dairying, tourism, food processing, cereal cropping, tomatoes, sheep / wool, aquaculture, floriculture, vegetables, feed lotting, viticulture, beef cattle and rice.



WELCOME TO THE  
**SHIRE OF CAMPASPE**

### Gannawarra Shire

The Gannawarra Shire is located in the Loddon Murray region in the state of Victoria, Australia and is 3 hours' drive from the state capital, Melbourne. The major regional centres of Bendigo, Echuca and Swan Hill are only around 1 hour away by road.

Gannawarra Shire is one of Victoria's most diverse agricultural regions in the thriving Loddon Murray Region in the north of the state and comprises the towns of Cohuna, Koondrook, Kerang, Murrabit, Lalbert, Quambatook and Leitchville.

*Gannawarra – Small enough to get to know and big enough to share!*

**GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL**

### Swan Hill Rural City Council

Swan Hill Rural City Council is principally an agricultural and horticultural region deriving its income from these industries and the businesses that service them.



The municipality is bordered by the Murray River, Australia's greatest River, for over 300 kilometres and is highly dependent on it for irrigation, domestic and industrial water supplies as well as active and passive recreational pursuits.

Swan Hill and Robinvale are the two largest service centres in the municipality; however a number of smaller towns such as Lake Boga, Manangatang, Nyah, Nyah West, Piangil, Ultima and Woorinen South offer a variety of lifestyles.

# Record numbers Murray marathon to go

## New faces in record marathon

EVENT  
By SARAH DEAN

IT was a cold and early start to the morning, but for a few Border kayakers taking part in the Murray River Canoe Marathon it was well worth the 5am wake-up call on Saturday. Applying their sunscreen and eager to get in the water were Wodonga's Damien Cassidy and Mark Scott. It was the first tilt at the marathon for the brothers-in-law but the fit pair were looking forward to the challenge. "I'm friends with Craig Cleary who



● Crowds cheer on competitors.



SARAH O'CONNOR  
THE annual Red Cross Murray Marathon starts tomorrow with a number of local...

# Marathon bigger than ever

...due to uncertainty earlier in the year regarding its sponsorship. So they decided to get involved again.

"I'm feeling good, pretty excited," she said. "I've picked it up pretty quickly." I've only fallen for business and still a great place to visit," Mr Walsh said. Mr Walsh said he

day four (63km) and finally, on day five from Murrumbidgee to Swan Hill (21 km).

## Police, youths team up for race

POLICE officers will team up with Aboriginal youths when the Red Cross Murray River Marathon begins at Yarrawonga tomorrow.



# River marathon alive

THE YMCA will now host the Murray Marathon, keeping alive one of the world's longest annual canoe races.

The race's future looked uncertain after the Red Cross ended its 40-year commitment to the event.



## YMCA rescues Murray marathon

EARLIER this year the 2008 Murray River Canoe Marathon was shaping up as the last, with the decision by Red Cross to pull its support from the annual fundraising event.

But its immediate future has now been assured with news that



## Paddle event is to stay

By David Wood

The Murray River Marathon has been saved from extinction with the YMCA stepping into the void left

40th anniversary of the Red Cross in July this year would be its last, ending its future.

The decision was good news for Moira and the shire council between the Boxing Day four overnight the race from Wonga to Swanbush. The annual event attracts up to 300 competitors.



# Local Paddler sets marathon record

... continued from page 40  
Mr Loughnan said then have to cart their gear to all paddlers and their boats back upstream to



## 2008 DEMOGRAPHICS

	Paddlers	Percentage
Vic	814	77%
NSW	152	14%
Unknown	33	3%
Qld	27	3%
ACT	22	2%
SA	6	1%
International	6	1%
WA	3	0%
Tas	1	0%

	All	Females	Males
<15	12%	8%	13%
16-25	28%	32%	26%
26-35	15%	18%	13%
36-45	18%	17%	18%
46-55	19%	17%	20%
56-65	7%	6%	8%
66+	2%	2%	1%
	100%	100%	100%

## YMCA VICTORIA

We are passionate advocates for active, engaged lifestyles. Together with our partners we transform communities; we intentionally shape lives for the better.

### How we build Strong People

- o 8.8 million times each year we provide services to Victorians
- o More than two thirds of our members state that they feel happier and healthier due to their involvement with the YMCA
- o We have over 5,000 passionate staff and volunteers
- o Over 100,000 older adults benefit from our tailored programs such as YMCA Pryme Movers
- o More than 150,000 children take part in YMCA AquaSafe aquatic education programs each year
- o The Bridge Project has helped over 50 young people gain employment in supportive environments on their release from youth justice, plus certified workplace training for 100 others. The Project will save the community over \$29 million by 2012.



### How we build Strong Families

Throughout Victoria we:

- o Provide over 40,000 children under the age of 12 with programs each week
- o Partner with State Government for the Premier's Active Families Challenge with over 28,000 family members benefiting in year one
- o Have family friendly policies that support our employees in their busy lives
- o Deliver over 80,000 Aquatic Education lessons (swimming and water safety) to children each year
- o Partner with the Father's Day Council of Victoria recognising a Victorian Father of the Year
- o Celebrate National Families Week each May with activities and celebrations at the many community recreation centres we manage with our local government partners.
- o Run group fitness classes that encourage families to exercise together.



- o Provide healthy and active school holiday programs to help out working families - more than 5,000 children participate each year and Channel Nine's Today Show rated ours "the best value!"

### How we build Strong Communities

We have a unique network of over 100 locations throughout the state that provide the community with opportunities to participate, engage, stay active and healthy in a range of settings. Here is a taste of some of the things we do across these communities:

- o Help make our community safer by supporting youth at risk through our work in the State Government's Youth Justice System – providing them with daily health and fitness, personal development and mentoring programs and opportunities
- o Have partnerships with over 60 community organisations – recognising that together we do better!
- o Reinvest over \$1 million annually in benevolent work across Victoria.
- o Have over 20 community programs led by local volunteers
- o Organise soccer tournaments, at Carlton Baths Community Centre, to keep African youth actively engaged and entertained during Ramadan
- o Run a "Stepping Out" health and fitness program with the indigenous community in Dandenong
- o Growing a legacy forest, at our Lake Dewar Lodge YMCA, to offset our vehicle fleet carbon emissions
- o Kensington Community Recreation Centre have developed a gentle exercise program for older adults that live in isolation in public high rises
- o Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre's Dad's Little Acrobats brings fathers and their children together, through gymnastics
- o Eltham Leisure Centre provides health and wellness opportunities for people recovering from heart attacks through our Heart Health Program
- o Boroondara Sports Complex Men's Only Gym Program aims to reduce incidents of domestic violence within a local public housing estate
- o Rye Youth Centre's Families and Schools Together Program delivers a family strengthening program connecting disengaged families with their school community
- o We have committed to the long term recovery and support of communities affected by the 2009 bushfires.



... And we continue to speak with communities about how we can strengthen and support them.