



**Thursday, 7 December 2017**

## **2018 SOUTHERN 80 SKI RACE LAUNCHES IN ECHUCA**

The 2018 Southern 80 Ski Race was unveiled this morning, with an official launch held at the Port of Echuca.

President of Moama Water Sports Club, John Lomas, was joined by Cr Kristen Munro and Cr Anne Vickers from the Shire of Campaspe, and Southern 80 sponsors and guests, including current World F1 Women's Water Ski champion Chelsea Blight to formally Launch the world's biggest and best water ski race weekend.

*"Over the last six months the Southern 80 organising committee has done an exceptional job in working with the various authorities to further develop and improve our iconic event. We are committed to staging the best possible event and wish to thank all stakeholders for their unwavering support,"* Mr. Lomas said.

*"In 2017 we restructured the Finish Line at Vic Park and in 2018 we will be improving this precinct even more. Along with the local authorities, we are very keen to see the thousands of people who come to Echuca/Moama for the race weekend, make their way to the official finish line, where they will be fully entertained, enjoy all the "live" action on the Giant Screen and experience the race in a family friendly, fun environment,"* Mr. Lomas added.

Mr. Lomas concluded the launch expressing excitement for the 2018 Southern 80, which is sure to be a great success. *"...t's all happening at the Finish Line in February 2018."*

Cr Kristen Munro and the Shire of Campaspe, are looking forward to welcoming the Southern 80 to the region in 2018. *"The Shire of Campaspe is pleased to be here in Echuca today, launching the 2018 Southern 80. The Southern 80 is a very important event to our region, generating over \$20 million in economic impact per year. We look forward to welcoming everybody back in 2018,"* Cr Munro said.

2017 Southern 80 winner Don Gully spoke of how he and his team Merc Force are eager to defend their title in 2018. *"Winning the Southern 80 was the highlight of our Merc Force team's ski racing career. To cross the finish line after a great run and see Merc Force's name at the top of the board as the winner, after starting in 16<sup>th</sup> position, is something we'll never forget. We are very excited about running in 2018. We enjoy the competition with the local boats and will be putting our best foot forward to go back to back,"* Mr. Gully said.

New event ambassador and current World F1 Ski Champion Chelsea Blight expressed delight in returning to the Southern 80 in 2018. *"Winning the World Title after five attempts was a great thrill. I am proud and excited to be in Echuca today launching the 2018 Southern 80 ski race, which will be my 21<sup>st</sup> Southern 80,"* Ms. Blight said.

The Southern 80 is pleased to recognise the continued support of Destination NSW, whose partnership with the event continues into 2018. The 2018 Southern 80 will be the first Victorian Ski Race held for the year, scheduled for the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> of February 2018 and entries for competitors are now open!

Get your Finish Line tickets at [www.southern80.com.au](http://www.southern80.com.au)

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