



7<sup>th</sup> February 2018

## **2018 SOUTHERN 80 SKI RACE – THE RACE IS NEAR**

The 2018 Southern 80 will kick off this weekend, with 218 boats and 446 entries set to roar down the Murray River striving to complete their best time in one of the world's biggest ski races.

Southern 80 is run by the Moama Water Sports Club and supported by the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

Member for Murray Austin Evans said the Southern 80 is an internationally recognised water skiing event that plays a significant role in bringing additional visitors to Moama.

"Supporting a wide range of events in our region provides a boost to our local visitor economy while showcasing our rich and diverse history, fantastic food and wine, and exciting attractions. We look forward to welcoming competitors and visitors this weekend for a spectacular 2018 event," Mr Evans said.

Racing action will start on Saturday morning at Five Mile Reserve in Moama, with the Social class teams on the water at 9am. The Five Mile Reserve area which has been recently revamped is the perfect spot to watch the boats start. The first boat will be Dr Evil from Marayla NSW with skiers Shannon Lewry and Troy Hood. There will be 142 teams in the Social classes.

The last of the morning runs will see the Under 10's on the water. The first of those to leave will be at 11.03 am, with the last taking off at 11.18 am. At the finish line, it will be amazing to see the crowd reaction as these skiers, some as young as seven years age, come across the line. These skiers will be putting their utmost into completing in the Southern 80 ski race. These moments are truly unique to the finish line atmosphere and are not to be missed.

The 2.00 pm race and the Top 40 boats in the Expert classes will vie for their starting positions in the main event on Sunday in the Bakers Blitz and the Presidents Dash. Leading the charge down the river will be the 2017 winner, Merc Force towing Kris Knights and Jake Tegart. The other Superclass teams comprising of Superman, Stinga, Sapphire, Pigs Arsenal and The Mistress, will set their best time over the 20 km course.

Temper 2 towing Jake Coaldrake and Lachlan Nix will lead the Presidents Dash field of 34 boats, all with the view of determining their starting position for Sunday's racing.

Sunday racing starts at 8.30 am with Bad Temper first on the water in the Super Social class, followed by another 104 entries in the Expert classes such as; 200HP, Junior Boys, Junior Girls, 70 mph, 60 mph, Weekend Warrior, Sub Junior Boys and Sub Junior Girls.

By this stage the excitement is building at the finish line for the 'Big Boys' with Superclass on the water at 12 noon. Last year Merc Force did a time of 31:10.18 – over the whole course, will he do this again or will someone else take the honours? Following the top 40 boats will be the remainder

of the Expert classes including; 8 Litre Expert, Unlimited Inboard and Outboard, 6 Litre, MOC, SMOC, Stock 6 Litre Expert, 16- Boys and Girls, Open Women and 5.2 Litre & 6 Cylinder.

The best place to capture the atmosphere is the finish line at Victoria Park. Entry is \$35 for a weekend pass or \$25 per day. Children under 15 are free. Plenty of food and drinks will be available at the finish line. A giant screen will be showing all the action of the event at the finish line with live crosses to the start line on both Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are available at the gate.

***"IT'S ALL HAPPENING AT THE FINISH LINE"***

**For further information, please contact:**

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