

# LOOKING BACK, RATING HIGH: A HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN ROWING

Volume 2  
An Era of International Prominence  
1940–2020

ROBIN POKE  
WITH  
ANDREW GUERIN AND BRUCE COE

with a Foreword by  
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Past President Rowing Australia

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Kim Brennan won the single scull at Rio in 2016.

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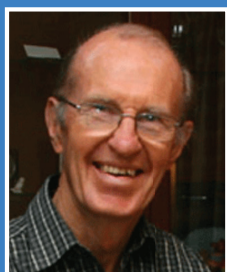


The original Oarsome Foursome became world champions at Lake Barrington in 1990.

competition. The members of the Oarsome Foursome, who first won gold at the 1990 World Championships, became household names. Peter Antonie and Stephen Hawkins, who won Olympic gold in the double sculls in 1992, also enhanced rowing's status.

Women and girls took up rowing in increasing numbers. Adair Ferguson was the first Australian female world champion in 1985 and Kim Brennan was the 2016 Olympic gold medallist in the single scull. By the 1990s, schoolgirl rowing was growing faster than schoolboy rowing.

The sport of rowing now is more visible, inclusive and popular than ever. Rowers with a disability have represented Australia in international competition. Rowing in the Australian and World Masters Games has grown in popularity.



Dr Robin Poke AM was awarded a PhD by the University of Canberra in November 2019 for his innovative thesis, 'A Narrative History of Australian Rowing from 1770 to 2016', which has now been revised and extended and published in two volumes. He has had a long-time involvement in rowing as an oarsman, administrator, journalist and author. He was awarded an AM in 2013 for his services to rowing and the Olympic movement.

Australian rowing became semi-professional during the 1970s when John Coates and John Boulthbee overhauled the sport's administration. The appointment of the first professional Director of Coaching, Reinhold Batschi, in 1979 was an important element of change. Rowing benefited from increased federal government recognition and funding after it was admitted to the Australian Institute of Sport in 1985.

Australia achieved a remarkable decade of success in the 1990s, when it ranked among the top nations in international



Brisbane Boys' College won the Brisbane head in 1993.



Adair Ferguson, world champion in 1985, and her coach Noel Langton.