



Hon Reece Whitby MLA
Minister for Environment; Climate Action; Racing and Gaming
8th Floor, Dumas House
2 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

20 July 2023

Dear Mr Whitby,

I am writing to request your support for the expansion of the Wesley College Rowing Shed at Coode St, South Perth, to accommodate Penrhos College and empower our girls' rowing squad.

Penrhos began competitive rowing in 1989 with 16 students. Thirty-four years later, we have over 90 students engaged in rowing and achieved third place in IGSSA rowing this season. Penrhos has produced several State and National representative rowers, including three Olympians.

As we progress towards a more inclusive and equal society, promoting sports and extracurricular activities for young girls is of paramount importance. Rowing is an exceptional sport that fosters teamwork, discipline, resilience, physical fitness, and mental agility. It provides an opportunity for our young women to build leadership skills, self-confidence, and a sense of camaraderie that will benefit them not only in sports but also in their future endeavours.

However, I must bring to your attention the critical situation the Penrhos rowing squad is currently facing. We find ourselves without any viable options for rowing due to the lack of Rowing Shed facilities.

For 25 years, Penrhos was based out of the Canning Bridge Shed. In 2016, the City of Melville, which controls the Foreshore Reserve where the shed sits, notified Penrhos of its decision to only allow the site to be used for local community purposes.

In 2017, Penrhos rowing began co-locating with Wesley in their Rowing Shed on the South Perth foreshore. As we borrow and share this space, it is evident that the shed is not equipped for two schools to share, especially with the growing size of the squads. The current infrastructure poses significant challenges.

In the future, with the Rowing Shed at its current size, it will not be sustainable for Penrhos to co-locate with Wesley. The lack of a Rowing Shed will mean that the Penrhos rowing squad must transport the boats back and forth from the river for each practice session and reassemble them. This logistical challenge at 5am during winter consumes valuable training time and energy, hindering their overall progress and provides a barrier to entry for new rowers.

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Moreover, we face inadequate equipment storage, exposing the boats to damage, theft, and deterioration, making it challenging to maintain the vessels adequately. Now, only a small number of Penrhos boats can be stored at the Wesley facility, with the remainder being stored on the Penrhos College site in our Sports Centre, reducing access for spectators.

Overall, the absence of a Rowing Shed will result in unpredictable training schedules, as the squad must rely on the availability of other facilities. This inconsistency will significantly impact the athletes' development and their ability to achieve their full potential.

As you may know, rowing is a beloved sport in our Perth community, and it has provided numerous opportunities for both boys and girls to develop their skills and talents. However, the absence of a proper Rowing Shed poses a significant hurdle and lack of equality for girls' rowing to practice and compete effectively.

Given these circumstances, I strongly request your support in allowing us to join with Wesley in expanding the current Rowing Shed on the river for our girls' rowing squad. This crucial infrastructure will not only enhance the safety and accessibility of the sport but also empower young women to excel in rowing, fostering a more inclusive and progressive society.

Jointly funding the proposed Rowing Shed (with Wesley) for the girls' rowing squad demonstrates our commitment to fostering gender equality, promoting a healthy lifestyle, and building a stronger, more vibrant community. The benefits extend far beyond the confines of the sport, positively impacting the lives of these girls and inspiring future generations of young athletes.

An expanded facility shared with Wesley will avoid the need for Penrhos to seek a stand-alone site on the river, which would be the best outcome for all stakeholders, including the broader community.

Thank you for considering our proposal. Your endorsement of this project will have a profound and lasting impact on the lives of young girls. I am more than willing to discuss this matter further and provide any additional information required. The entire Penrhos community would immensely appreciate your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kalea Haran', written in a cursive style.

Ms Kalea Haran
Principal