

Henley, here we come!

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THERE will be a second Down Under assault on a very British institution when a rowing team from the northern district bids for the Prince Alfred Challenge Cup at this year's Henley Royal Regatta.

A crew from Macquarie University will be on the river with the best of British from July 2 to 6, hoping to emulate the Aussie team that has just taken top honours at the Royal Chelsea Flower Show.

The local rowers, all former state schoolboys, are now in intensive training on Lane Cove River.

They will be the first Australian team to vie for the cup and also the first Macquarie U rowers to tour internationally.

It has been a long road back for University rowers, whose shed and gear were razed by arsonists two years ago.

"This international tour is one of the key steps that Macquarie's rowing program is taking to become established as an elite-standard club," team spokesman Luke Freeman said.

Success at the Royal Regatta, established in 1839 as a single afternoon race and now the largest racing regatta in the world, would be a major milestone in Macquarie's quest. It is an equally important social event, frequently visited by royals.

The Macquarie crew is self-funded and urgently needs additional financial support and patronage.

A major fundraiser will be their Henley Night cocktail party "an evening of fun, fine food and drink, entertainment, networking, prizes and auctions".

"We can still accept prizes to be auctioned and there is ample scope for sponsorship through signage on our boat, oars, T-shirts, team jackets and hats," Freeman said.

The Macquarie team comprises media student and web designer Luke Freeman, who took gold in the men's eights competition in the 2007 Youth Olympics and missed national selection due to injury; economics student Cadeyrn Neville; finance student Andrew Corbett and business student Ben Smith.

New-to-the-role cox is Zoe Viatos, a marketing student, formerly of PLC Sydney.

Team coach is Sydney 2000 Olympic silver medallist Rob Richards, who is now head coach at Macquarie University.

For more information on the fundraiser and how you can help, visit uatmq.com.au/rowing.



Looking for a right royal coup...Macquarie University rowers in training for Henley at Lane Cove this week. Front to rear are Ben Smith, Cadeyrn Neville, Luke Freeman, Andrew Corbett and cox Zoe Viatos.

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