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NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN MARITIME COLLEGE

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Racing rats, dynamic decks and serious design: students put engineering theory in action

Budding engineers are putting classroom theories to the test in two hotly contested annual events, the Rat Trap Boat Race and Skateboard Design Project.

The hands-on projects are the major assessments for first-year maritime engineering students at the Australian Maritime College, a specialist institute of the University of Tasmania, and both take place tomorrow.

The day starts with the Rat Trap Boat Race held over a 10-metre course in the model test basin. Eighty five students have been working in teams for weeks to design and build fast, intelligent vessels as part of their dynamics unit – the catch is they must be powered entirely by a rat trap.

This is followed by street performance testing of the Skateboard Design Project entries built as part of the materials technology unit. Eighty seven students were tasked with designing a composite board deck after researching current best practice. Their designs, featuring a wooden core sandwiched between fibre reinforced epoxy resin cladding, were assessed for their strength and flexural properties before undergoing the final test.

National Centre for Maritime Engineering and Hydrodynamics Deputy Director (Students & Education) Dr Christopher Chin said the aim of these projects was to test students' knowledge and also develop their project management skills.

“These hands-on projects provide a platform for students to apply their knowledge and skills to solve practical engineering problems. They are also good team building exercises and the students must ensure their work meets strict guidelines,” Dr Chin said.

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