



# CRUISING YACHT CLUB OF AUSTRALIA

*Home of the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race*

For the attention of Members, Rolex Sydney Hobart Race Competitors and Fellow BlueWater Yachtsmen and Yachtswomen

As you are aware, an internal CYCA Inquiry is currently underway into the Flinders Islet Race which resulted in the tragic loss of Andrew Short and Sally Gordon and the vessel PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Although the Committee is still preparing its final report, some issues have arisen which the Board feels it is important to draw to the attention of members competing in any off-shore event, but more particularly the forthcoming Rolex Sydney to Hobart Race. It should be emphasised that these are matters which are still the subject of the Club's own Inquiry and ultimately of the Coroner. The Board highly commends consideration of the following matters but does not intend them to be proscriptive as it is not the Club's function, but rather the function of YA to implement changes to the Racing Rules of Sailing and general safety requirements.

1. Although it is not yet clearly determined, there is a possibility that GPS error contributed to the Flinders Islet incident, and in circumstances where there is need to rely upon a chart plotter, it should not be assumed that the GPS or chart plotter is necessarily accurate to the degree required for safe navigation.

It is for this reason that manufacturers have a disclaimer on GPS and chart plotters referring to the variability of the readings from these instruments and to the fact that they should not be solely relied upon for safe navigation. It is suggested that the position should be verified by other means, including visual reference, visual bearings, depth sounding or reference to relevant maritime charts.

2. A handheld portable spotlight be carried on board in a readily accessible position, as it has been demonstrated that the standard floating torch or equivalent does not have sufficient candle power to illuminate objects at a distance from the yacht, particularly in a search and rescue situation.

3. In the event of complete power failure on the yacht, the yacht's electrical system cannot be relied upon to provide illumination below decks, and it may be useful to have battery powered emergency lights which are easily activated.
4. The same end may be achieved by providing each crew member with a small portable torch for use in the event of complete electrical failure on the yacht or any other emergencies.
5. The Board recommends that owners consider providing a "mini grab bag" that is easily accessible from the cockpit of the yacht containing at least a VHF handheld radio, 2 flares and, if possible, an EPIRB.
6. Although it is not a requirement of YA, the Board commends the use of PFDs, particularly at night time and where there is a chance that the sea state and/or conditions on the boat warrant their use.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all members of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia to thank Rear Admiral Chris Oxenbould AO RAN (Retired), Past Commodore David Kellett AM, and Past Commodore John Brooks for presenting a very thorough and detailed preliminary report.

The final report is due to be delivered by the end of the year, at which time the board will consider the final recommendations and where appropriate share them with the relevant stakeholders for action.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Allen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matt Allen  
Commodore