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yacht club journal

VOLUME 2/25

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Opinions of contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Board or the Club.

While articles and correspondence are welcomed, the Editor reserves the right to decline to publish.

NEWCASTLE CRUISING
YACHT CLUB



In this edition: Carpark Operational; maintenance remains our operations theme; a very good summer in the Clubhouse; we lose two of our own; and new sailing assets delivered.

CARPARK

The carpark has been operational for over a month

now and I hope you, as am I, are finding it easier to park at your club when you're using it. Anecdotal feedback has been very positive. We will review this in July/August to assess its operation so far.

OPERATIONS

We continue the maintenance work in the club, and on our over water assets continue. The underwater inspection of marina poles is also just about to start. The marina is an essential part of members' facilities, and the oldest sections are approaching 25 years since construction. These works have been financed from free cash flow thus far.

The Clubhouse has returned a profit for the summer period. This is important as we approach winter when we have difficulty doing so due to decreased numbers using the club along with fixed costs that are non-discretionary.

The Bay Sailing Centre has remained difficult to make self-supporting. With this in mind we have gone through the detailed process of acquiring a liquor license. We are now preparing for evening bar trade. Additionally, we plan to refurbish the bathrooms and general appearance of the BSC.

CLUBHOUSE

Overall, club has had great attendance over Summer. This during a pretty bleak hospitality outlook in our area. The challenge is always to make our venue more attractive than the competition. The financial results indicate that Paul and his team have achieved this.

The work on bi-fold partition between the Bridge and the Retreat is complete. This allows much greater flexibility and the ability to host larger functions in a place with greater privacy.

The refurbishment of the downstairs bathroom is complete. I'm sure you'll agree they look much better.

I thought it important that all our members have visibility of our maintenance and renewal programs. It's like painting the Harbour Bridge; when you finish,

"These expenses keep the club fresh and contribute to the overall ambience and experience"

it's time to start again. Here's a quick list over the last few months: additional marquee, additional bar high benches, club house bathrooms, kitchen upgrade, floating stage upgrade, club house bi-fold wall, car park, and renewed first floor furniture.

The total dollar amount is into six figures. These expenses keep the club fresh and contribute to the overall ambience and experience. See my first sentence on the Clubhouse.

MEMBERSHIP

Sadly, we lost founding member John Peschar on December 6. Previous Commodore and current Board member, Steve Rae and I both attended John's funeral to represent the Board. Our thoughts remain with John's family.

We also lost former Australian Sailing Safety Auditor, Board member, Club Captain, and Life Member Ernie Thirkell on 11 March. NCYC was a huge part of Ernie's life and all of us miss him. My thoughts are with another Life member, his wife Gloria along with their family.

We approved 73 new memberships since I wrote to you last time in November.

SAILING

We have taken delivery of a number of assets to enable reliability of coverage for all our sailing activities and regattas.

On the water, we are also investing in our ability to deliver safe and enjoyable sailing to our members and officials. This included a new Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB), motor, trailer, and safety equipment. We also purchased a new boat trailer to replace an existing and ageing one.

The *Jim Holley* (our larger Race Committee vessel) received an inbuilt refrigerator to better serve our Race Officials for the longer days on the water.

MARINA

Marina and fuel revenue have been on, or slightly above budget for the summer. We now enter a lower activity period for the year.



– Barry Kelly



It's been another fantastic summer at the club. There has been some great sailing offshore on both Wednesdays and Sundays for the spring point score. It was pleasing to see our club boats do so well in this year's Sydney to Hobart Race – congrats to all who sailed in a tough race. *Mako* flew the club burgee a few regattas down

south over the summer as well.

Inshore it is great to have the Lasers back and active on a Friday night in the harbour and Sundays in Salamander Bay. The intra-club racing Thursdays in the Elliotts produced great competitive racing. Over the summer we renovated the main bathrooms and modified the wall between the two upstairs function rooms.

The Sailing Academy's learn to sailing programs have continued to grow and diversify its course offerings. The Monday night masterclass series is well attended. The Academy is busy planning the Hunter Youth Keelboat program for Autumn and into competition regattas in Winter, which is hoped to be a gateway program for the next generation of sailors. The Wednesday twilight "Races" on Force 24s has been a big hit with Academy graduates.

The Clubhouse had a record trading summer with a significant increase in functions and events. The Social club helped deliver a great Members Christmas party and NYE celebration. We also had the annual Stinkies v Blowies contest for sporting supremacy – after much controversy the bragging right now belong to the Blowies for the next 12 months.



We also hosted "Yacht Rock on the Dock" and a SOLAS Foundation evening. Margarita month started with a bang – 150 cocktails in the first weekend! The members raffles and members badge draw continue to be well supported. Triva continues to grow, becoming one of the busiest mid-week nights at the club. Wednesday night Jazz has developed a strong following and compliments twilight sailing. And don't forget Sail Away Fridays after work.

Autumn has been a hectic time of year with Easter, SailFest, and Sail Port Stephens. This year's SailFest (21-23 March) again had a strong fleet of TP52s and also included the Asia Pacific Finals of the Sailing Champion League with teams from New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Perth.

Port Hunter Skiff Club also conducted the Cock of the Harbour as part of SailFest. Sail Port Stephens 31 March – 4 May has become Australia's second biggest regatta with the new format spread over three weeks.

– Paul O'Rourke





The recent summer months have been filled with many celebrations and events at NCYC. During December, our members enjoyed Christmas and New Years celebrations among their cruising and racing adventures.

Once again, the good 'buoys' and gals of NCYC were visited by Santa and gifts were donated by members to Newcastle Mission to Seafarers.

A month of music and dining in January culminated with the inaugural Yacht Rock on the Dock Festival featuring live bands and artists.

February was margarita month and commenced with the second annual Stinkies (our powerboat enthusiasts) vs. Blowies (our sailing enthusiasts) sporting challenge held on the first of February at the Tree of Knowledge park.

After their previous defeat on the lawn bowls green, the Blowies claimed their first victory over the Stinkies in this year's cricket match.

Our Swell of Change fundraiser in mid-February raised over \$8000 to support two very deserving charities, the CYCA SOLAS Trust and SurFebruary.

This event featured interviews with local legends Iain Jensen and Tom Slingsby on their Olympic, Sail GP and America's Cup experiences.

Thanks to Iain and Tom for their time and insights and to our sponsors Earp Distilling Co and Leogate Estate.

The first week of March saw the completion of our annual Women's Development Regatta attended by many members and visiting sailors. NCYC was also well represented by many sailors and one NCYC boat, *Neverland*, at the Lake Macquarie Yacht Club She sails regatta from January through to March.

We have welcomed many new members to the club last Thursday for the first New Members night of the year.

As our membership grows, we aim to continue to offer a wide range of social, academy, racing, cruising and community events and we welcome volunteers for

our existing club activities or with ideas for new club activities.

NCYC continues to be a vibrant place to be 7 days a week with Monday happy hour, Tuesday Trivia, Wednesday twilight racing followed by pizzas, Thursday members night, Friday happy hour and live music on weekends.

Many thanks to the wonderful NCYC staff and volunteers who have delivered an amazing number of very successful events during another very busy summer season.



– Janease Graham





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On Wednesday evenings for our twilight season, our races have been all pursuit starts with staggered start times to help get all the competitors finishing close together before they come back to the clubhouse.

Back at the clubhouse we've seen the 'Breeze' jazz band playing every week after sailing

on our floating stage.

On Friday evenings our Laser fleet has been out racing. There are 16 entrants, with 6-10 boats racing regularly. After 42 races over summer, the annual pointscore is now complete. In the lead is first placed Toby Whittle, followed by second place Dean Nissen, and third place Scott Charlton.

On Sundays, we continued our offshore pointscore racing including the Summer Short Ocean Pointscore and Ocean Pointscore

In writing this, we're in the midst of our major regatta season having delivered SailFest Newcastle Regatta, Sail Port Stephens Commodores Cup, and moments away from delivering Sail Port Stephens Performance Racing, and then Sail Port Stephens Bay Series for sportsboats and off the beach classes.

As always, it is a privilege to continue delivering our major events with our volunteer teams. This time of year always has a strong demand for volunteer time and expertise and our team never fails to deliver:

At SailFest, our volunteer teams simultaneously delivered the offshore TP52 and Division 2 windward leeward racetrack, the offshore Cruising Division racetrack, and the inshore Sailing Champions League Asia Pacific racetrack.

A week later, our volunteer team delivered the Sail Port Stephens Commodores Cup and managed 105 yachts competing.



A couple of weeks after that, we were back delivering the TP52 and Division 2 windward leeward racetrack and the offshore passage races for the new Super Racer Cruiser division at Sail Port Stephens Performance Racing.

Then just a week later, we're expecting 100 boats back for the Sail Port Stephens Bay Series based out of our Bay Sailing Centre where our volunteers will deliver two racetracks for the Sportsboats and Off the Beach dinghy classes.

It takes a lot of resources and personnel to deliver our regular club sailing and our regattas. We'll be seeking additional help on mark boats over the next season, so please reach out if this is of interest to you.





ABOVE: *Neverland cracks a wave off Newcastle.*

Summer Short Ocean Pointscore (final results)

PHS Div.1

- 1st - *Summer Salt* (Peter Sinclair)
- 2nd - *Marta Jean* (Steve Rae)
- 3rd - *This Way Up* (James Macken)

PHS Div.2

- 1st - *Neverland* (Kyle Hancock)
- 2nd - *Betty D* (John Burrows)
- 3rd - *Mistress* (Ian Watson)

IRC

- 1st - *Marta Jean* (Steve Rae)
- 2nd - *Summer Salt* (Peter Sinclair)
- 3rd - *KDI* (Joe de Kock)

Ocean Pointscore (final results)

PHS Div.1

- 1st - *Summer Salt* (Tim Gleeson)
- 2nd - *Saltwater Wine* (Tom Woods)
- 3rd - *This Way Up* (James Macken)

IRC

- 1st - *Saltwater Wine* (Tom Woods)
- 2nd - *Summer Salt* (Tim Gleeson)
- 3rd - *Frantic* (Michael Martin)

MARINA REPORT:

As the summer sailing season draws to a close, the winter boating season is expected to see a lot of casual visitors passing through the marina on their way north toward queensland and the whitsundays.

As always, general housekeeping remains important to keep our docks and walkways clear of obstacles and presented at their best for the safety of everyone. The dockmaster team has been waterblasting the docks, washing the bins, and weeding the gardens.

The carpark boomgates have now been operating for several months my observation is that they have made the club and marina precinct more accessible to everyone.

As we see lower tides we'll continue removing growth from marina piles and when the wind is light we'll continue repainting berth numbers on the marina walkways.

The marina team (myself, Hamish, Lachlan and Matt) are regularly out on the dock so we invite you to introduce yourself and to let us know if there's anything of concern for us to keep an eye on or to follow up.

As we sail into the next quarter, let us continue to uphold the spirit of friendship, sportsmanship, and camaraderie that defines our club.

Fair winds and following seas,

– Jack Buchan



It was a fitting finale to the 2025 Sail Port Stephens Commodores Cup, with crews aboard the 105 yachts enjoying the kind of premium sailing conditions that attracts boats from as far as the Gold Coast and Melbourne to this year's event.

For the final day of racing, an 18-knot westerly provided plenty of horsepower for a downwind spinnaker start off Nelson Bay, with sport boats such as the Thompson 920 *Road Runner* soon surfing across Shoal Bay at 18 knots.

David Hamilton's Farr 40 *Seeking Alpha* had, by its lofty consistency standards, a relatively ordinary day on the 16.5 nautical mile course out around Little and Cabbage Tree Islands. But the crew's strong performances across the previous four days of tight racing saw them secure both PHS and ORC honours in Division 1.

"We've enjoyed every single moment, the racing and the hospitality, it's been phenomenal," Hamilton said. A highly experienced yachtsman with international silverware in Farr 40s, Farr 30s and Melges classes in his trophy cabinet, Hamilton was delighted to add a Commodores Cup to his collection.

"It's very technical in the Bay with the tides," he agreed. "I spent a lot of time lake sailing in Switzerland, Italy, France and Germany and it's as technical here as it is there."

In Division 2, Greg Brand and his crew from the Cronulla Sailing Club on *Brand X* won the battle



against fellow Beneteau First 40.7 *Schouten Passage* from the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club. Sail Port Stephens regulars Drew and Pete Van Ryn in their Farr 44 *Sea Hawk*, made it a first and third from Cronulla.

Ataraxia from the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club remained the boat to beat in Division 3 and owner Scott Knights and his crew capitalised on the Jeanneau 3200's strengths to secure PHS honours.

"Even though it was fresh in the first couple of days it was flat water so we were able to put up bigger sails," he recounted. "It's been fantastic," he continued. "The standard of sailing is pretty high and it's fun at the same time, plus it's really convenient for people coming up from Newcastle and Sydney."

After chalking-up two bullets during the first two days of the regatta, Matt Doyle's Beneteau Sense 50 *La Troisieme Mi-Temps* slipped back to third in the

overall Division 3 standings, while David Ashton's Archambault 35 *Absolut* slotted into second.

With a podium result up for grabs in Division 4, Richard Fleck and his crew on *Scuffy* made a strategic call to divest some of the cruising comforts on the Beneteau Oceanis 37.

"We finally decided to get serious," Fleck laughed. "We had hot showers to get the water tanks down a bit, but then we decided to take-off the outboard, the dinghy, two spinnakers and the life raft as well, that was the heaviest item. I reckon we got 150 kilos off the boat," he confided.

Summer Salt, Tim Gleeson's Beneteau First 36.7 from the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club, pushed the *Scuffy* team all week and had to settle for second, with *Slac-N-Off*, Martyn Colebrook's Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 39i, never far behind in third.

With four podium placings from five outings John de Meur's fears of his Jeanneau 30 349 *Elysium* not featuring during the predicted lighter winds weren't realised. John and his crew from the Middle Harbour



Yacht Club in Sydney recorded the most impressive scorecard in the regatta: 1, 1, 1, 5 and a 2 to win the Non-Spinnaker Division.

The pace was definitely on the Super 40 Division with MC38's, a Kerr 40, Mat 1220 *Bushranger* and other serious race boats mixing it on the scenic inshore and offshore courses. But it was Peter "Box" Geddes' Thompson 920 *Road Runner* from the Lake Macquarie Yacht Club that took home the trophy.

Sail Port Stephens Regatta Director Paul O'Rourke rated the 2025 edition as one of its most memorable: "There was a good variety of winds which gave everybody a reasonable chance of doing well in their conditions," he said. "It was a bit wet the first few days but eventually the trademark sunshine arrived. The onshore social events were really enjoyable and the race management team did a great job," he added.

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Sublime sailing weather on Day 2 of the Sail Port Stephens 2025 Performance Series was followed by a ridiculous amount of rain and wind today, with no further racing allowed. It meant that overnight results for the NSW Yachting Championship, TP52 Pallas Gold Cup Act 3, Super RC Series and Rob Hampshire Trophy (ORC) all stood.

Saturday's passage race took all the divisions offshore, with the TPs and RCs heading to a mark off Broughton Island and the Division 2 IRC fleets following a course from the Commodores Cup handbook.

Fanned by an easterly of up to 15 knots, they enjoyed tricky upwind conditions then solid surfing rides under spinnakers. *Wild Oats X* clocked speeds in the high teens as it took line honours for the Super RCs, while *Matador/First Light* and *Highly Sprung/Frantic* both had enthralling running duels to the finish.



Handicap results are what counts in this regatta, though, and *Caol Ila*, *Triton* and *51st Project* filled the PHS podium for the big boats, while *Triton*, *Bumblebee V* and *Antipodes* saluted on IRC.

In the TP52s, also representing Division 1 of the NSW Yachting Championships, it was *Matador* from *Smuggler* and *Koa* on IRC and a reverse order for TPR handicap. First in Division 2 on IRC and ORC was the Bull 9000 *Bullwinkle*.

In the final wash-up, with rain drumming on the roof of the Mavericks bar at d'Albora Marina Nelson Bay, *Hooligan* claimed the overall IRC gong – the third time that owner Marcus Blackmore has etched his name on the State title, dating back to 2011.

Blackmore couldn't sail this year due to some health issues but had a highly capable substitute in Katie Spithill.

"We've had a strong preparation for this regatta," Blackmore said. "A lot of training, a lot of incremental improvements to the boat, and it paid off on the first day when we won each race on IRC."

"*Matador* has always been hard to beat, particularly in light airs, so it was particularly pleasing to see the modifications we made also helped."

Koa won TPR honours in a countback with *Smuggler*, *Matador* finishing third.

Port Stephens yacht *51st Project* took the inaugural Super RC silverware on PHS, edging out *Triton* by a point. Rarely is the Beneteau First 50 dwarfed in its division but it more than held its own in the passage format.



“Sail Port Stephens keeps delivering better and better racing here and I think the Super RC concept is fantastic,” owner/skipper Julien Bell said. “It’s a big surprise to come out on top but we just sailed our own race against the bigger yachts and made some good calls.”

Bumblebee V, a MDB 62, edged out *Triton*, *Wild Oats* and *Antipodes* on IRC, with owner Paul Blakely blown away by the regatta and the location: “We’ve been so warmly welcomed, the organisation has been great, and the offshore racing around the islands is brilliant ... we’ve loved it,” he said.

“Our boat was built for the Sydney Hobart, and was actually a winner, so we’re looking at the 80th anniversary race as our next big event. I’d really support this series next year and hope we see the same format with even more yachts – it suits 60-footers, there’s plenty of water, lots of excitement, and geographically you can access Port Stephens easily.”

Gordon Ketelby threw his IRC campaign together in two weeks as a training exercise and came away with a trophy – winning Division 2 of the NSW Yachting Championship by a mere 0.5pts over rival *KDI* (Joe de Kock).

“I dusted off the old Farr 40, which had been very much neglected over the past seven years, and up she jumped,” Ketelby said. “Joe is also an old sparring partner of ours and pretty hard to get past, but we’ll take the half-point win.”

Dates for the 2026 Sail Port Stephens Performance Series are April 24-26. This year’s regatta continued

on 2-4 May with the Bay Series, comprising J/70 class racing, the ASBA NSW Title for sports boats, and off-the-beach racing with RS Aeros, Finns, OKs, Tasars, 505s, B14s and more.

Sail Port Stephens is supported by the NSW Government via its tourism agency Destination NSW, Port Stephens Council, Pantaenius Australia and subsidiary sponsors.



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Sailfest Newcastle

Light airs, heavy airs, harbour starts, passage races and choppy windward-leewards... that's the phrase that captions the SailFest Newcastle Regatta 2025.

In Division 2 IRC the Farr 40OD *Seeking Alpha* clung onto its overnight lead, beating the Corby 36 *Let's Get it On* by 1pt and the Farr sistership *KDI* (Joe De Kock, Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club) by 2pts.

"A very tricky day," said owner of *Seeking Alpha* David Hamilton. "We'd expected a little more pressure than there was and it was all over the shop, so quite stressful sailing."

The two Farr 40s were rarely separated in the final two races.

"In the last race the local Farr 40 went inshore and benefited from less current but thankfully the breeze filled in and we got the result. Clearly, Joe knows the local waters really well and it was super tempting to follow him, but we invested in the right and believed in it.

Tom Spithill was calling tactics on *Seeking Alpha* and Hamilton had high praise for his crew.

"It was our second regatta with the boat – next up is Sail Port Stephens (March 31-April 5) so we'll see how we get on there."

Peter Farrugia's Bull 9000 *Bullwinkle* claimed both



LEFT: Spectacular harbour start for the TP52 passage race.



wins on the final day after three 4ths on the first day. As consolation, they won the PHS division.

In Division 1, nothing phased the TP52 *Matador* as it took both IRC and TPR honours at the 6th annual SailFest Newcastle Regatta over the weekend.

The result stretched the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia entrant's lead in the 2025 Pallas Capital Gold

Cup, however owner David Doherty says the field is definitely compressing as *Matador* has become the hunted.

"It's getting harder and harder, and the gaps are getting down to seconds," he said. "We lost one by four seconds yesterday and won one by 10 seconds, which is great for the TP class.

"The joy of my boat is that we've kept a very consistent crew, and we just try to do our thing. The boat has always been known as a light air performer but we've also won in 30 knots; I think we've changed its range for the better."

Second place overall in the TP52s went to Gordon Ketelbey's *Zen* from Middle Harbour Yacht Club, a confidence booster ahead of its upcoming Admiral's Cup tilt.

"We spent a lot of time, and lots of money, on the boat but it's paying off," Ketelbey said. "It's super competitive in light airs – we came first across the line



twice today, beating *Hooligan* which is a brand new, state-of-the-art design.

“Mid-range stuff we’re not too sure about, so being competitive in the UK will depend on what turns up, wind-wise.”

In other results, ORC honours went to Let’s Get it On and the Cruising title to the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 44 Ca Va. The Sailing Champions League – Asia Pacific final was won by the Royal Sydney Yacht Club crew of Zac West, Katina Casimaty, Gretel Payne and Garth Bickford.

The F18 *Magical*, sailed by Kyle Amadio and Andrew

Driver, claimed Saturday’s Cock of the Harbour race, eclipsing the Taipan 4.9 *Just Play* sailed by Sam and Saxon Breadon. Third was the 16ft skiff *Kilos*. Yardstick victor was the VS *SFC* sailed by Michael Babbage, Lennon Sullivan and Gabe Turton, from another VS, *Runaway* (Steve Sims, Troy Botting and Jeremy Dodds).

Conducted by the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club, SailFest marked 180 years since the first Newcastle Regatta was held.

The event is supported by the City of Newcastle, Hahn and Bacardi.

DEVELOPMENT REGATTA



SheSAILS@NCYC once again hosted a highly successful 'SheSails Development Regatta' over the first weekend of March. This marked the 9th 'SheSails Development Regatta' since its inception, created by our very own Mary Holley and Jan Howard.

The event brought together a diverse, capable, and positive group of around 30 women, made up of cross and interstate club representatives as well as graduates from our NCYC Women's Sailing Program.

The vision and purpose behind this regatta is to provide a supportive and empowering environment for women who are new to sailing, having completed an introductory sailing course. Participants are given the opportunity to learn sailing rules, develop racing skills, and build the confidence needed to take on the challenge of racing in the club's fleet of Force24 keelboats.

It's also a brilliant way to foster a network of like-minded and passionate women and provide opportunities for future regatta experiences.

The weekend's format includes a day of off-water theory, followed by on-water coaching and practice on an around the buoys course in the harbour. Each crew is supported by a qualified instructor and encouraged to switch positions, helping everyone become familiar with each role and how they interconnect.

This format works exceptionally well, as it allows each participant to gain a holistic understanding of the boat and its operations in a supportive, low-pressure setting. This year's gorgeous weather allowed most crews to hoist their spinnakers and gain valuable experience before Day 2's racing.

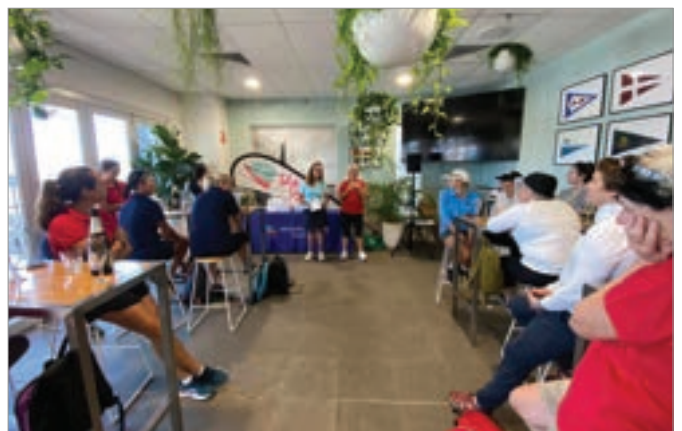


New connections were made as teams travelled from Wynnum-Manly in Brisbane, RPYC in Pittwater, and Port Macquarie Sailing Club, along with individuals from Port Stephens and Lake Macquarie, coming together to form a new community of budding sailors.

At the end of the regatta, awards were presented for categories like "Olympic Potential Award's Coco Chan award for the best dressed," and "Best Boat Handling," all accompanied by celebratory bubbles and food.

RPYC summed up their experience: "It was a fantastic experience, reinforcing the importance of community, confidence and continued learning in sailing."

A huge thank you to all the volunteers, instructors, race officials, and staff who made this weekend such a success. We very much look forward to welcoming crews to our 10th Regatta next year!





RACING AT 42° SOUTH

NCYC member Joe de Kock raced his Dehler 44, *KD4*, in the 2022 Sydney to Hobart Race and since then the Derwent Sailing Squadron (DSS) has been *KD4*'s home. Over the past two years Joe, together with a crew of NCYC and DSS sailors, have explored Tasmania through racing and cruising. This year, the *KD4* team coordinated by Kris Anderson (Race Ready Sailing) has competed in four of Tasmania's iconic offshore races and regattas.

Pipe Opener Series (20-22 Sept 2024)

Hobart provided its finest weather for the 2024 Pipe opener series in September. Mount Wellington was capped in snow and the chilly westerly made for great racing. The weekend commenced with a Friday night passage race from Hobart to Kettering yacht club. We were treated to two days of passage racing from Kettering yacht club and lots of onshore food, drinks and fireside festivities. The regatta was a great mix of fun and passage racing, just like the Commodore's Cup at Sail Port Stephens, only freezing!

77th Maria Island Race (08 Nov 2024)

KD4's next adventure was an eventful Maria Island race. This 180nm race starts at 1900 on Friday night from Hobart then rounds Maria Island to port before returning to Hobart. The first night involved an exciting spinnaker run to Tasman Island in a 25- to 30-knot south-westerly breeze. Richard Hoopers expert steering was only momentarily hampered by the sudden detachment of the starboard steering wheel, but *KD4* was quickly back in race mode, steered exclusively from the port wheel.

On reaching Tasman Island, the spinnaker halyard

system had seen enough of the conditions and let the kite down a few minutes before the planned douse. By the next morning, the breeze had abated, and on the North-West side of Maria Island Harry was sent up the mast to restore spinnaker capabilities.

After a few trips up the mast, the kite was stabilised, and we enjoyed a very pleasant down-wind leg to Tasman Island. The race rhumb line brings boats in close to the Hippolyte Rocks, Tasman Island and Cape Raoul during daylight hours. These iconic land features are spectacular in all conditions. After a 26-hour race *KD4* finished second on IRC to Ed Psaltis and the *Midnight Rambler* team but claimed the PHS title.

King of the Derwent (2 Dec 2025), Australian Yachting Championships (3-5 January 2025)

KD4 changed focus to some short-course racing. As can be expected from a National Championships the competition was fierce, and some exciting racing and intense bar side post-race analysis ensued. The DSS provided excellent hospitality and a great atmosphere.

99th Bruny Island Race (7 Feb 2025)

The 99th Bruny Island race coincided with the 2025 Australian Wooden Boat Festival. Race preparation included a cruise to watch 11 tallships and over 200 wooden boats take part in the Parade of Sail. The race committee's decision to race around Bruny Island in an anticlockwise direction was highly popular for both weather routing and daylight scenery reasons. The team was treated to magnificent views of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, Cape Bruny, and Storm Bay in daylight hours. The *KD4* team finished the southern campaign on a strong note placing second on IRC to the local 66-footer *Alive*.

A SOUTHERN SOJOURN

For the *Mako* Sailing Team, the 2024-25 racing season has been nothing short of extraordinary. From the gruelling Sydney to Hobart to the sun-drenched waters of South Australia, their campaign has been a true test of endurance, skill, and camaraderie.

Sydney to Hobart: A Test of Grit and Seamanship

Preparing for the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race was a massive undertaking. Led by skipper Greg Busch, the crew – Adrian Keily (Navigator), Tim Dodds, Adam Manders, Steve Robinson, Simon Glover, Ethan Ortlipp, Emily Sellens, Sam Wood, and Marcus Busch – undertook extensive preparations, ensuring the crew and boat were well prepared and met the requirements for Category 1 offshore racing.

One of the world's most demanding ocean races, the 628-nautical-mile course from Sydney to Hobart throws everything at its competitors: fierce winds, swells, and unpredictable weather systems. The 2024 edition was a hard slog, with a third of the fleet retiring and two tragic fatalities. Yet, *Mako* pressed on, undeterred by the harsh conditions.

Mako crossed the finish line at 7:38 AM on December 30 after three days, 18 hours, and 38 minutes of relentless racing. Their efforts earned them 31st place over the line and an impressive 2nd in their division. Emily reflected on the challenges: "The first two days were relentless with wind and swell. I did question our sanity at times! At night, there was little moonlight; we sailed by numbers and braced for each wave that hit us. By day three, a welcome dose of sunshine and light winds allowed us to dry out and savour our first—and last – hot coffee. The break in conditions and seeing



land and other boats reinvigorated our spirits. The final push through Storm Bay and beyond was a battle to the line against fellow Newcastle competitors on *Kanreki*, *Wings*, and *Kayle*, with frustratingly light conditions in the Derwent."

Upon arrival at Constitution Dock, family and friends greeted the exhausted crew with the traditional cold beers and scallop pies. Emily and Sam marked their first Hobart finish with a ceremonial dive off the bow into the Derwent River. As for race highlights? Simon Glover summed it up simply: "That moment arriving at Constitution Dock – pure euphoria." The crew then lived up to their reputation, celebrating at Customs





House, Shippies, and the Taste Festival, where they may have depleted Hobart's supply of finest Pinot Noir.

Australian Yachting Championships and Geelong Festival of Sails

With the Rolex Sydney Hobart behind them, *Mako* shifted gears for the Australian Yachting Championships from 3 – 5 January at the Derwent Sailing Squadron. The crew saw a mix of fresh faces, some flown in, others recruited straight off the dock. The three-day event featured superb conditions and fast paced racing.

Next on the agenda was the Geelong Festival of Sails over the Australia Day long weekend. Kicking off with the historic Melbourne to Geelong Passage Race, more than 240 boats and 1100 sailors took part in this iconic event. Onshore highlights included live bands and lively celebrations around the dock.

South Australia: Teakle Classic and Close Rivalries

Mako then set sail for the Adelaide to Port Lincoln Race and Teakle Classic Race Week, hosted over 21–27 February. Competition was fierce, especially against newly forged rivals *Three Cool Cats* and *Clockwork*, with friendly Rum Bucket bets adding extra motivation. *Mako* clinched 1st in PHS Division 1 for the Adelaide to Port Lincoln race and 2nd in PHS Div 1 for Race Week. In addition to the spectacular location, highlights included encounters with seals and dolphins, winning a lucky door crayfish, dodging fish farms, and over-indulging in world-class seafood.

The Journeys Between: Just as vital as the races

For this remarkable team, the journey is just as important as the finish line, and deliveries between events proved to be their own adventures. The west coast passage from Hobart to Melbourne was a standout for Greg Busch and his son Marcus. "Rounding Maatsuyker Island was a daunting task – it's one of the windiest and roughest coastlines in the country," Marcus shared.

"However, we rounded with less than a knot of wind!" With calm conditions for the delivery, they cruised up the jaw dropping, untouched west coast of Tasmania. Greg recalled some challenging moments, "We learned a valuable lesson about not arriving too early at the entrance to Port Phillip Bay, especially with a southeast swell and an ebb tide."

A particularly rough leg from Geelong to Adelaide provided heavy weather helming practice for crew. Coinciding with the Port Fairy Ocean Yacht Race fleet, the crew on shore were left wondering if they should have entered the race officially – looking on via Marine Traffic, *Mako* appeared to be performing well!

Mako is now back in Newcastle, carrying the stories, victories, and camaraderie forged across thousands of nautical miles.

An essential part of any campaign, deliveries also provide opportunities for crew to gain experience and sea miles. If you are keen to join *Mako* on future legs (she's headed north this winter!) – please get in touch with the owners.



It is often wondered when writing for this article, ‘What topics would be of interest to the wide range of readers?’

This edition includes interesting information about two rescues, a term used with caution, Marine Rescue Newcastle has undertaken to

highlight both radio operators’ and rescue vessel crews’ dedication to saving lives at sea.

13.5M YACHT LOSES STEERING IN ROUGH CONDITIONS 18NM TO SEA AND LEADS TO A 5.5 HOUR RESCUE

One incident was conducted mid-February when our State Operations Centre (SOC) in Sydney received a call around 1900 to assist a 13.5 metre yacht, some 18 nautical miles (33km) off Newcastle. The two people onboard (POB) reported complete steering failure in quite rough seas.

At the request of Marine Area Command (Water Police) at Balmain, crew were assembled for Rescue Vessel *NC30* to proceed to the disabled vessel (DV).

A quick synopsis of Rescue Vessel *NC30* : *NC30* is a 10 metre Naiad fitted with twin 300hp Suzuki engines and has a searching ability with an array of ‘state of the art’ radar, FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared camera), four Multi-Function Screens for plotter, depth sounding/sonar/FLIR operations to be independently accessed by various crew at the same time, and if needed, VHF Radio Detection Finding facilities that also detect EPIRB activations.

NC30 departed NCYC at around 2000, with the sea conditions being challenging, and was on scene at 2200.

Both people on board the yacht and their dog were in a good state, as was the yacht (other than its steering and difficulty with furling the foresail).

NC30 crew sent the tow line to the DV which was secured and the long tow back to Newcastle was undertaken. The speed back to Newcastle Harbour, because of the conditions, averaged between 2 and 4 knots, so it was a slow and laborious return journey.

SOC in Sydney kept in contact with the DV throughout the rescue until *NC30* was on scene.

After a challenging tow, *NC30* placed the DV on a mooring near The Basin at around 0115 with *NC30* back at its mooring by 0130. All on board both vessels were very pleased at the safe outcome.



CAUGHT IN OR NEAR THE SHIPPING CHANNEL – CALL MARINE RESCUE NEWCASTLE ON VHF 16 IMMEDIATELY, SO WE CAN CONTACT NEWCASTLE HARBOUR VTS (Vessel Traffic Services).

The other incident occurred in early February when Marine Rescue Newcastle Radio Base received a call asking for assistance from a half cabin cruiser, 2POB's, with a flat battery. Rescue vessel *NC30* was tasked, with the crew of Jason, John and Steve making quick time to the DV (distressed vessel) due to their concerns of drifting and noticing that a Bulk Carrier was exiting the harbour.

Marine Rescue Radio Newcastle operators contacted Newcastle Harbour VTS (Vessel Traffic Services) to advise of the DV and their drifting towards the harbour sector, where VTS monitored all transmissions.

Newcastle Radio Base advised VTS that the situation was in hand once Rescue Vessel *NC30* was on scene.

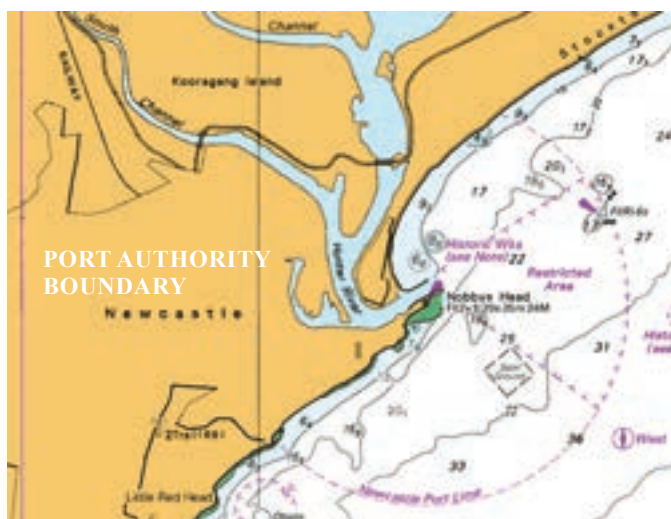


Marine Rescue Newcastle
Community Organization

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To receive up-to-date information on weather warnings, safety tips, boating tips and more.

www.facebook.com/MarineRescueNewcastle



NC30 took control of the DV about halfway between North Reef and the harbour entry.

NC30 passed their battery jump pack to the DV where their engine started and accompanied the DV back into safe waters.

Some items to note here:

The DV (distressed vessel) was very alert and aware of their situations in relation to major shipping and their drifting. All boaters in such situations should always advise Marine Rescue of their concerns and the Radio Operator can then communicate with Newcastle VTS to keep radio watch.

Also, if you do breakdown near the shipping channel, anchor immediately if still outside the lateral markers, or if in the shipping channel, do not anchor and let yourself drift and hopefully you will drift out of the channel, then anchor.

Keep safe on the water and remember to LOG ON with Marine Rescue Newcastle and LOG OFF once you are back at your berth / ramp.

Contact Marine Rescue Newcastle on VHF Channel 16 or 27 MHz Channel 88 or via telephone 49078200 or via the Marine Rescue App on your mobile phone.

If in extreme situations, call 000 for assistance.

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Save the Dates

2025

18 May	Winter Short Ocean PS start
31 May	SheSails Maintenance workshop Spinnaker workshop Annual function
31 May	Keelboat catch-up session
1 Jun	Start Crewing/Start Helming Interclub Challenge NCYC
15 Jun	Interclub Challenge RSYS
22 Jun	Interclub Challenge RPAYC
28 Jun	SSSC Full Course
29 Jun	Interclub Challenge CYCA
5 Jul	Keelboat catch-up session
Nov	She Sails Open Regatta

2026

13-18 Apr	Sail Port Stephens Passage Series
24-26 Apr	Sail Port Stephens Performance
1-3 May	Sail Port Stephens Bay Series

Security Phone Numbers

Emergency

- Police – (02) 4929 0999
- Water Police – (02) 4984 9012
- Fire Department – 000
- Dockmaster – 0408 299 512

Club Directory

- General Inquiries (9am - 5pm)
(02) 4940 8188 – info@ncyc.net.au
- Licensed Club
(02) 4940 8188 – barmanager@ncyc.net.au
- Marina Manager (8am - 4pm 7 days)
0408 299 512 – dockmaster@ncyc.net.au
- Administration (9am - 5pm 5 days)
(02) 4940 8188 – info@ncyc.net.au
- Functions (9am - 5pm)
(02) 4940 8188 – functions@ncyc.net.au

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