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newcastle/cruising
yacht club journal

VOLUME 4 / 2025

Ladies of the Sea regatta
Racing Los Angeles to Hawaii
New Sail Port Stephens events



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the right to decline to publish.



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In this edition: Superyacht Marina – now for the hard bit; the never-ending story (maintenance); we welcome Operations Manager Cameron Burns; and carpark survey results.

MARINA DEVELOPMENT

We have had several meetings with the stake

holders – marina builders, Newcastle City Council, Honeysuckle Development Corporation, and other approval authorities to progress this important piece of infrastructure.

The overlapping government and private authorities make this a complex process, but we are determined to get this done within the contractual time constraints the NSW Government placed upon us with the award of our grant.

Just looking at a map of the overlapping responsibilities in the over water area that the Superyacht Marina will be built hints at the approval complexity.

We are convinced we can get this done, but it will also require timely discussions, problem solving and decisions by all parties.

OPERATIONS

Just like you at home, NCYC still has expenses all year round. Recently we have repaired our bar fridges (condenser), replaced an air-conditioning unit and some administration computers.

We are also in the process of replacing the structural columns around the Commercial Centre (next to the Mariners' Apartments) due to age and environment induced corrosion.



CLUBHOUSE

I'm very pleased to welcome Cameron Burns as our Club Operations Manager. Cam started in late September and brings a lot of hospitality experience with him. Please welcome him if you have not had a chance to do so already.

Financially we are just coming out of our traditionally slower period. The next six months result in the earnings that allow us to invest in and grow our revenue streams for the benefit of all our members.

MEMBERSHIP

The Board approved 31 new members over the period. NCYC now approaches 1,800 members.

The results of the carpark survey conducted in September after 6 months of operation are overwhelmingly positive.

One key take away from the survey is that it would appear not all members were aware of their entitlements and/or have not registered their vehicle.

All members are entitled to 4 hours per day free of charge regardless of membership category.

SAILING

The Sailing Department is ahead of budget overall. We have commenced the Spring Short Offshore Pointscore and the longer Ocean Pointscore.

MARINA

Marina Occupancy and revenue has been mixed over the period. While occupancy is seasonally down, fuel revenue has been up.



– Barry Kelly



We are excited about another great sailing season starting at NCYC.

Whatever your flavour, you'll find an event for you. There are a great balance of sailing and social events and activities planned on the calendar for 2025/26. Make sure you are receiving the weekly newsletter to keep up to date.

The sailing calendar has undergone some changes with Laser Sailing moving to Thursday. On Tuesday and Thursday, we have our Open and 18-35 Elliott Leagues, Wednesday Twilight sailing, Laser sailing on Thursdays, and offshore point scores on Sundays.

SheSails has been busy planning events with their Open Regatta held in August instead of the usual November. Instead, they will be hosting their first offshore race on November 23.

The Hunter 100 is coming up on 6pm Friday 21 November. This will be a great opportunity for our Ocean Point Score fleet to extend their skills, for our Hobart fleet to get some training in, and for us to promote offshore sailing to the wider community. This race has also been added to the Australian Offshore Racing Championship list.

The Sailing Academy has continued its unprecedented demand, and we've been named the #1 keelboat program in Australia. Jacqui's efforts have been recognised by Australian Sailing, being named their Sports Professional of the Year for NSW/ACT and is one of two finalists at Nationals in November.

Also recognised at the NSW/ACT Australian Sailing Awards were Ken Semple for Official of the Year (also moving on to Nationals), Ted Anderson was given a Lifetime Achievement Award, and Mark Rothfield was one of three finalists in the Sports Promotion Award.

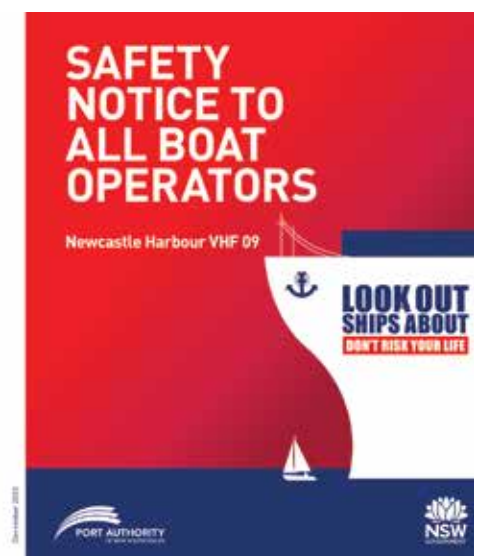
We've welcomed Cameron Burns as Operations Manager in the Clubhouse, and our members can expect a number of changes to be implemented over the summer, including a fresh and light summer menu. Dockfest 2025 proved to be another huge success with another event scheduled for the Australia Day long weekend, keep an eye on the newsletter for the lineup.

Our Members Christmas Party has gone live for ticket sales and they're flying out the door. We are looking forward to another great celebration of the season. Make sure as always to book early to avoid disappointment, however, with 300 seats available and 1,800 members, we can't accommodate everyone. We ask that everyone is respectful to their fellow members when booking these events.

As we head towards the festive season, our calendar is full of Christmas celebrations and the biggest sailing event on the Australian calendar – the Rolex Sydney to Hobart. This year, in its 80th iteration, we will have six vessels representing NCYC. Mick Martin's *Frantic*, She's the Culprit Syndicate's *She's the Culprit*, Mako Syndicate's *Mako*, Paul Beath's *Vérité*, Joe de Kock's *KD1*, and Dick Lees' *Freyja*. Dick and *Freyja* also turn 80 years old this year, marking a special reason for participation.

I hope all our members can enjoy sailing and boating activities over the summer.

– Paul O'Rourke



Club Captain's Report



It's spring and our sailing and social activities are in full swing.

The opening of the sailing season was celebrated with a boat parade and the blessing of our fleet by Rev Gary Dodd.

Dockfest was again a success this year with the club at capacity both Saturday and

Sunday over the October long weekend of live music and festivities.

Over the previous weeks, many humpback whales and their calves have been making the journey south back to the Antarctic.

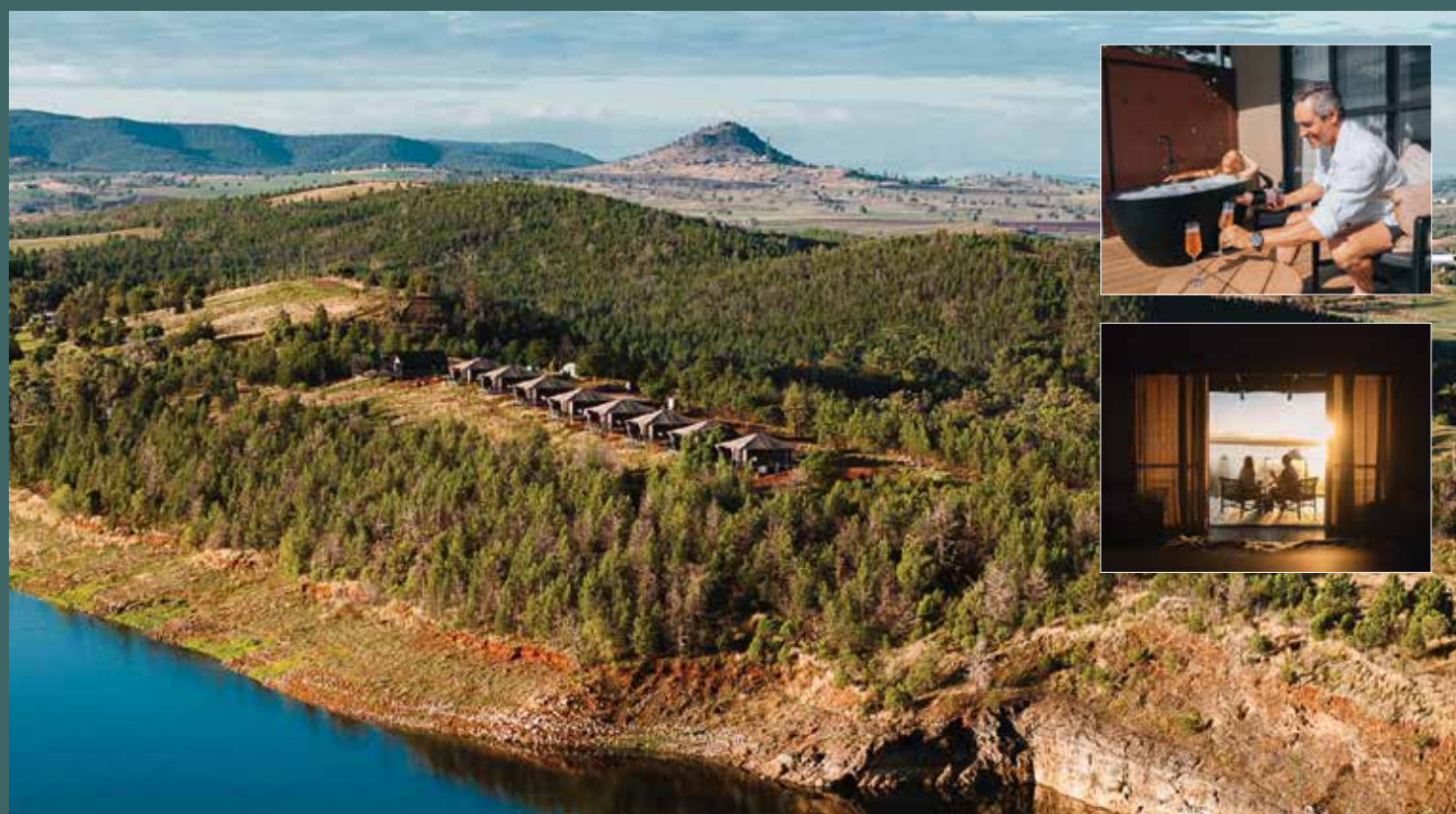
Aurora, our club yacht, also migrated south, but stopped in Sydney, enabling crews to participate in the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron Ladies of the Sea (LotS) regatta, Sydney twilight races, and the Balmain Regatta before returning to NCYC.



At the time of writing, we are looking forward to a fabulous Melbourne Cup day party on November 4th and Christmas party on 21st December.



– Janease Graham



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SAILING REPORT

The new sailing season has well and truly kicked off, and there's been no shortage of activity both on the water and around the club.

We began with NCYC's Season Opening Day, which saw around twenty yachts and powerboats from the marina participate in the annual Blessing of the Fleet.

Reverend Garry Dodd from Mission to Seafarers joined us to bless the fleet as the boats paraded in single file, led by the start boat *Jim Holley*, through The Basin, past the clubhouse, and along the Newcastle foreshore to Nobbys. Creativity was on full display with *Aurora* taking out "Best Dressed" honours as The Wiggles, alongside equal Best Dressed winners *This Way Up* as Egyptians, and *Mako* with their Hawaiian-meets-shark theme.

Our Spring Short Ocean Pointscore is now halfway through, with a mix of moderate to fresh conditions providing some great racing offshore. Twilight racing has also returned with daylight savings featuring pursuit starts.

The Elliott Leagues have been a real highlight this season:

- Tuesday nights host the Elliott 6 Super Series – an open series for members to race against each other in the club's Elliott 6 fleet.
- Thursday nights see the return of the hugely popular Elliott 6 Contiki Series, aimed at 18–35-year-olds looking to meet new people and enjoy fun, social racing



after work. Each team includes at least one experienced sailor, paired with newcomers to the sport. The series regularly fills to capacity and wraps up each week with dinner, drinks, and a live DJ in the clubhouse.

This year, our Elliott racing program is fully sponsored by club partners, meaning participants don't pay race entry fees – but in return, every team is expected to ensure their boat hits the water each week.

The Ocean Pointscore began with the Anna Bay Race – a light start that turned into a test of endurance, as boats beat home into a 30-knot southerly to finish off Newcastle. The next two legs will be the Newcastle to Port Stephens Race on Saturday 8 November and the Port Stephens to Newcastle Race on Sunday 9 November.

We've also introduced a new "Cruising in Company" initiative for members who prefer relaxed coastal cruising rather than racing. The first cruise will accompany the offshore fleet to Port Stephens over 7-9 November, followed by planned trips to Broughton Island in January, Lake Macquarie in March, and Pittwater and Vivid Sydney in June.

Looking ahead, the Hunter 100 Offshore Overnight Race returns on Friday 21 November, starting at 6:30pm. The 100-mile course will take competitors from Newcastle around Bird Island and Cabbage Tree Island before finishing back at the harbour – a true test of endurance and navigation.



MARINA REPORT

The marina has remained a hive of activity with a steady mix of local boaters, visiting yachts transiting north and south, and vessels arriving or departing by ship transport.

Early spring brought a run of extreme weather events, with strong southerly and westerly fronts testing lines and fenders. The dockmaster team maintain a close watch on all vessels, especially in rough conditions, and it's been reassuring to see how secure most boats have remained.

We did, however, contact a few owners after adding extra mooring lines or noting loose covers or clears – a timely reminder to check your vessel regularly, especially during changeable weather.

We've recently installed new SuperFenders at the fuel wharf, replacing the older, worn fenders. These will provide better protection for vessels during refuelling operations.

In addition, we'll be installing bird deterrents to improve cleanliness around the fuel wharf area.

On the safety front, lithium battery awareness remains a growing priority. While much of the discussion focuses on main battery banks, we're reminding berth holders not to overlook smaller lithium-powered items – such as phones, tablets, e-bikes, battery vacuums, and power tools.



Many onboard fires have been linked to these devices, particularly when using cheap or non-compliant chargers. Please only use certified chargers, avoid charging overnight or unattended, and store devices away from heat or moisture.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of the marina team – Dom, Hamish, and Matt – who are on the docks daily ensuring everything runs smoothly. We encourage all berth holders and visitors to stop by, say hello, and let us know if there's anything you'd like us to check or follow up on.

Fair winds and following seas,

– Jack Buchan



Above: Sail Port Stephens is expecting a record fleet. Below: A new 'Cat Stephens' series is being added.

Sail Port Stephens 2026 will be the biggest and best in the regatta's 18-year history, with new events set to further spice up the racing format.

For the first week, 100+ yachts will contest the iconic Commodores Cup Passage Series on the sparkling waters of Port Stephens.

Jewel in the crown for Week 2 is the grand-prix 3-day regatta including a brand new Interclub 40 teams challenge, an Australian Invitational Challenge with Elliott 6 keelboats and a sportsboat/J70s series. Alongside this event is the NSW Yachting Championship featuring IRC racers and TP52s.

Finally, the focus turns to the all-new Super Series. Joining it will be the premiere of 'Cat Stephens' for cruising multihulls, along with an international series – once again using the Elliott 6 racers – and a Super Racer Cruiser division for luxury yachts over 50ft that start and finish off Nelson Bay, while off-the-beach dinghies sail out of the Bay Sailing Centre.

For the entire duration of the event, the regatta base of d'Albora Nelson Bay will be home to a dedicated race village and regatta headquarters on the marina forecourt, along with vendor stalls and kids' entertainment. The nearby breakwall will have enhanced viewing opportunities with a grandstand and live commentary.

Ashore after sailing, sailors can expect daily results, live entertainment, daily media and leaderboard, and local hospitality scene. One of the cornerstones of the social calendar is the Sail Port Stephens Street Party by Port Stephens Council on Wednesday October 15 connecting Sail Port Stephens to the local community.



Regatta Director Paul O'Rourke said: "We're always looking to enhance the experience for our participants while engaging the local community. The Race Village and Spectator Grandstand will do both, cementing Sail Port Stephens as one of Australia's leading destination events."

The new catamaran and inshore divisions will provide more opportunities for competitors, with Racing Manager Jack Buchan saying: "Adding more divisions can be challenging with limited berthing but by introducing inshore sailing, we can boost on-water activity and encourage greater local participation."

Competitors will be able to join the Sail Port Stephens WhatsApp to receive regular event announcements including daily briefings, course information, and social schedule.

Registrations are now open for Sail Port Stephens 2026. See sailportstephens.com.au and follow the links under the racing tab.

"Life's better outside" – when you're sailing!

NCYC's Tackers kids learn-to-sail program is back up and running again this summer. The courses are filled with fun, games, and plenty of smiles as kids discover just how exciting sailing can be.

Supported by Reflections Holidays, Tackers learn-to-sail courses are designed for ages 7–12, with no experience or club membership required. All boats, lifejackets, and equipment are provided, and every session is supervised by qualified instructors.

There are three course levels that kids can progress through, each level involves around 20 hours of participation. Each course is focused on having fun, playing games while learning the basics of sailing.



Upcoming School Holiday Courses

Week 1: Monday to Friday - 05 to 09 January 2026 - 9:00am to 2:00pm

Week 2: Monday to Friday - 12 to 16 January 2026 - 9:00am to 2:00pm

Week 3: Monday to Friday - 19 to 23 January 2026 - 9:00am to 2:00pm

Book online through the NCYC website, or call the Sailing Academy to enquire on (02) 4940 8188.



Reporting from the rail of *She's the Culprit*

Sixty-one boats lined up for a single start off Point Piper, with Clarke Island creating a tricky obstacle behind the line at the pin end. We started toward the western end without too much drama, though things got tight as the fleet compressed.

Working our way up the western side of the harbour, we cut across at Sow and Pigs – that ever-inconvenient rocky reef that always seems to be in the way. We made it out the Heads ahead of *Mako* and just above *KDI*, so spirits were high early on.

Going Wide

The Bureau of Meteorology forecast forced an early decision: go wide or hug the coast. We opted to head wide, knowing it meant higher winds and rougher seas. From the Heads to the finish, we stayed on port tack the entire way.

For the first 24 hours, we experienced a steady 23 knots with gusts up to 30. The next 12 hours eased slightly to around 17 knots, gusting 25, as we closed in on Ballina.

Without sea temperature data, we couldn't track the East Australian Current directly, but Trent – our navigator – pulled off some clever calculations comparing speed over ground and through the water to determine when we'd crossed it and when to head north.

Life Offshore

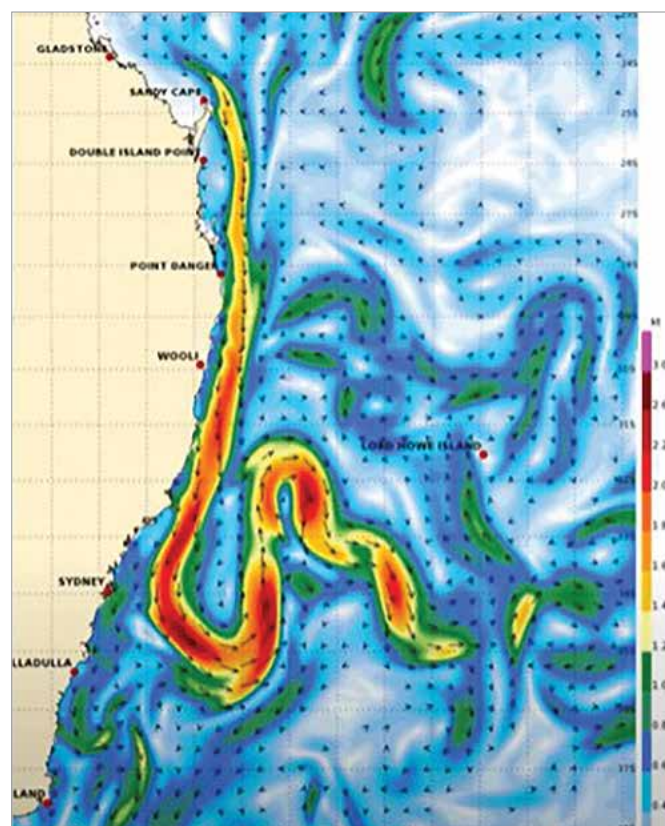
The seascape was far from pleasant – choppy and confused rather than large, but uncomfortable all the same. Seasickness took its toll, leaving most watches short by one or two crew, which added to fatigue for the rest.

Being so far offshore, we had no mobile coverage and couldn't access fleet positions. With no one in sight for long stretches – unusual for a Gold Coast Race – we assumed we'd made a tactical error by going wide. (A note for next year: maybe it's time for Starlink.)

When Trent (pictured right) finally gave the nod to head toward shore, we reached the coast near Ballina and were relieved to hear we were still in the mix. Spirits lifted.

The Chase

Soon after, we spotted *Pretty Woman* and *Wine Dark Sea*. With flatter seas and 15 knots gusting 20, we shook out the reefs and pushed hard to stay ahead. Both passed us at Byron Bay.



As evening fell, the breeze dropped – sometimes to 10 knots – and we saw *Pretty Woman* and *Wine Dark Sea* stay in close near Tweed Heads, where they appeared to park up. We took the bolder option to head wide again, swapping headsails a couple of times to suit the conditions. The gamble paid off – we slipped past both boats unseen.

But *Pretty Woman* noticed and altered course toward our line. By Currumbin, they were back in sight, and suddenly it felt like the race had restarted. Trimming black sails in the dark – without giving away what you're doing to the opposition – proved tricky.

The final two hours were intense, *Pretty Woman* closing the gap constantly. We managed to hold them off, crossing the line around 10pm ... not by much, but enough for plenty of rejoicing on board.

Post-Race Reflections

After docking and a quick clean-up, we celebrated with a few well-earned beverages at the club, greeting the *Mako* crew as they

came in. Most of us watched the sun rise from the bar as a fitting end to a long, hard race.

In the end, we placed 3rd in IRC Division 1 – an excellent result for our first outing in the new boat. The



Sydney boats took notice, and a few have already said they'll be watching us more closely next time.

The race also gave us a good list of improvements to make, both in layout and systems. One clear success was the oven – hot meals at sea made a world of difference.

We're looking forward to campaigning *She's the Culprit* throughout the season – and yes, Tac's already got the whipper snipper out.

– David Edwards

Above: Freshly repainted white, *She's the Culprit* continued its long and successful racing career with new owners, placing 3rd in IRC Div 1 after a long and bumpy race to Southport.



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LotS to like about NCYC's performance in Sydney

Two local yachts – club boat *Aurora* and *Neverland* – recently ventured to Sydney to participate in the Ladies of the Sea Regatta (LoTs).

The all-female coaching regatta, hosted by the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron in Kirribilli, draws over 100 sailors annually with wonderful coaches, including our own NCYC members Peta Rose and Lindy Hardcastle, travelling from various locations across Australia to volunteer their time.

The event offers both on-water and off-water coaching, with afternoon races to test newly acquired skills. Participants can register individually and choose to sail on a Squadron Elliott club boat, crew on a participating keelboat, or bring their own vessel. No matter how many times you attend this regatta, there's always something new to learn – especially when it comes to race starts and rules. The off-water coaching is truly invaluable.

Aurora was skippered by Bronwen Crosby, her first time leading a regatta, supported by 2IC Caoimhe Lalor. The crew was a mix of LoTs newcomers and graduates of NCYC's Transition to Yachting course: Lynn Hulston, Annette Cross, Kirsty Duffy, Sharon Lovell, Sarah Howard, Matilda Corbett, Robert Pegora, and Sarah Gamble.

Neverland was helmed by Lisa Callaghan (MYC), with crew members Aimee Hancock, Danielle O'Brien, Taylor Parkes, Belinda Parkes (MYC), and Melissa Gavenlock (MYC).

From the beginning, *Aurora*'s skipper Broni set the tone: "Girls, we're going to have some fun, laughs, learn stuff, and get around the course safely"—and that's exactly what we did. The weather delivered a pleasant 8-13 knots, with windward-leeward races on the northern side of the Harbour and a passage race on Day 2 to the east.

Some memorable moments for our newly formed crew included flying the spinnaker at the end of Day 1 and gybing it on day 2. We aimed to be competitive, raising a few eyebrows on the start boat one race when the gap closed in on us – we bailed early and came around again, then on another race had an individual recall.

If only we had a few extra seconds! One race featured a last-minute granny tack – thanks to Caoimhe's quick thinking – when a boat flying an asymmetric kite blocked our clean run to the gate. That boat had our own Peta Rose coaching onboard, urging them not to let us in.



What the experience meant to some...

"The joy of sailing on Sydney Harbour as skipper on the boat I learned to sail on, with a crew of 10 Newcastle ladies, blew me away. Such a privilege – thank you NCYC." – Broni

"Sailing on Sydney Harbour for the first time was a dream come true. NCYC fosters an environment of belonging and growth for all. I'm proud to be part of this community." – Roberta

"It was such an incredible experience to sail on Aurora. I'm truly grateful for the opportunity and the support of NCYC and the many people who made this happen – amazing!" – Kirsty

Day 2's passage race took the fleet to NP (S), then SM (S), and finally to the finish.

Unfamiliar with the Harbour, we reached out for the sailing instructions – only to discover the paper copy had gone overboard the day before (one crew member sheepishly confessed).

Phones and internet saved the day: the mark was Nielson Park.



With limited local knowledge, we followed a local boat and then spotted the mark – we were sorted.

The final race was a fast one-lap dash with 20 boats on the start line and Caoimhe at the helm. *Aurora* finished strong, taking 1st place in that race.

Overall, *Aurora* placed 5th in the spinnaker division and won 1st place for an all-female crew. *Neverland* finished 10th. But the weekend wasn't just about results – it

was about building skills, confidence, friendships, and having fun.

Special thanks to NCYC for the opportunity to take *Aurora* to Sydney, to Janease Graham and Peta Rose for initiating the adventure, to the delivery crew, and to Kyle Hancock for diving *Aurora* on Saturday.

– Sarah Gamble



Savusavu raises the bar

Fiji Yachting Association, World Sailing and the Savusavu Sailing Club just proved that world-class officiating development doesn't require marble conference halls – just crystal waters, committed sailors and one exceptional instructor.

The World Sailing Race Officials Clinic held October 10-12 in Savusavu wasn't your typical box-ticking exercise: it actually delivered.

Savusavu, Fiji's hidden gem on Vanua Levu, provided the backdrop for what participants are calling the best regatta the region has seen in years. The Grand Epic Conference Room hosted Friday's theory session – nine hours of rules, procedures, and judging standards that somehow managed to be "very informative" rather than mind-numbing. Perhaps that's what happens when you've got Newcastle's Damien Boldyrew, World Sailing International Umpire and Instructor, at the helm.

But here's where theory met reality: Saturday and Sunday threw participants straight into the deep end during the 2025 Fiji Sailing Nationals Championships. On-water assessment isn't for the faint of heart, but this is where officials learn what rulebooks can't teach: how to make split-second calls when boats converge, how to maintain authority without ego, and how to keep your cool when everyone else is losing theirs.

Sixteen participants attended, representing clubs and

sailing groups from across Fiji and Sāmoa.

For Raema von Reiche, President of Sāmoa Sailing Association, the clinic hit different. "These clinics are very important in raising our regional judging and race official standards within Oceania," she noted, cutting through the usual platitudes with refreshing directness. Because let's be honest ... Oceania's vastness is both blessing and curse. Building officiating capacity across thousands of nautical miles of ocean requires exactly this kind of focused, face-to-face development.

The welcome dinner and bonfire at Wina Estate on Friday evening set the tone for building connections that would outlast the weekend. And when both the instructor and participants describe the same event as exceptional, something genuine transpired.

The three days covered substantial ground: classroom theory that didn't feel like a slog, practical sessions that married real racing with real learning and, perhaps most crucially, the space for officials to develop confidence.

The clinic provided what Boldyrew called "an excellent opportunity to apply learning directly on the water during the national regatta, combining theory, discussion and practical judging experience". That integration (learning and doing in the same breath) is what separates meaningful development from checkbox exercises.

Officiating development in sailing all boils down to thankless work that's absolutely essential. Good officials are invisible until you don't have them. Bad officiating can poison a regatta faster than you can say 'Protest!'. And

in Oceania, where resources stretch thin and distances stretch thinner, every qualified official counts double.

The clinic model, embedding training within actual competition, sidesteps the perennial problem of abstract learning. You can memorise the Racing Rules of Sailing cover to cover, but until you're calling a port-starboard incident with real stakes and real sailors, you're just shuffling mental furniture.

The clinic drew support from beyond sailing circles. Cathy Wong, President of FASANOC (Fiji Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee), offered her congratulations to Fiji Yachting Association ahead of the event, noting that "it is indeed great to see these continuing training and education been offered in Fiji".

Fiji Yachting Association, in partnership with World Sailing, understood the assignment. They created conditions for meaningful learning: Experienced instruction, real racing context, and a cohort of engaged participants from across the region.

Sometimes development programs feel designed by committee for compliance officers. This one felt designed by sailors for sailors.

What Happens Next?

The true measure won't be the glowing testimonials, though those help, but whether participants return to their home waters with enhanced capability and confidence. Whether protest hearings run more smoothly. Whether sailors trust the officials. Whether the next generation of race officers looks at this as a career path worth pursuing.

Boldyrew mentioned he'll be submitting a report to World Sailing and requested feedback from participants.

For Oceania sailing, that matters. The region as whole tries to shine internationally, but sustainable success requires infrastructure as well as funds to run and attend the training venues. For clinics like Savusavu's build networks, establish standards, and create a shared language around fair competition.

With her other hat as OSAF Vice-President, Raema von Reiche put it with characteristic economy: the clinic was "very important in raising our regional judging and race official standards within Oceania". No fluff, just facts. And in a region where distances conspire against collective development, that achievement deserves recognition.

Here's hoping Savusavu 2025 becomes a template rather than an outlier. Because Oceania sailing needs more of whatever this was, less talk, more walk, and officials who can call a race with confidence and competence.

– Oceania Sailing Federation

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Los Angeles to Hawaii

In late 2024 we received an email from a Polish friend, Jacek, who was assembling an amateur crew of friends to do the 2,225nm Transpacific Yacht Race from Los Angeles to Hawaii.

Steve had joined Jacek's team in 2019 to do the Rolex Sydney Hobart Race aboard *Maserati*, so he was keen for another adventure. They were chartering a Volvo Open 70 named *Noah's II*, formerly *Southern Excellence II* and *Ichi Ban*.

As I had done a return on *Maserati* in 2019, Steve dared to ask if I could join. Jacek said yes!

We boarded our flight to America on June 27 after navigating a logistical maze of insurances, waivers, certificates, permissions and ESTA applications. Jacek was the supreme organiser and had full details and timelines clearly outlined, so we knew exactly what was required. We had also bent Janease Graham's ears as she and Meike Wright had done the race in 2023 aboard the Dehler 46 *Wings*.

The Transpac Yacht Club is actually a virtual club next to the Long Beach Marina precinct in California. Most of the smaller yachts in the race were berthed in Long Beach, however, larger keeled vessels only had sufficient depth at San Pedro Marina, several miles north. On our first sighting of the yacht, we noted we were in esteemed company with *Lucky* (a 27m Juan K), *Pyewacket* (an Andrews 70') and *Aragon* (a Marten 72') on the same marina arm.

The crew comprised 12 men and three women from varied occupations, all European other than Steve and myself as the token antipodeans. For the next few days we familiarised ourselves with the boat, trained together, bonded with the other team members, remembered some Polish vocabulary, and learned the nuances of hoisting, lowering and trimming on *Noah's II*.

For owner and skipper Johannes, it was his first time on the boat and he had us test the entire wardrobe of sails during this period.

We provisioned on the day before the race, allowing for approximately nine days at sea though we were all hoping for seven. All meals were going to be made fresh rather than preparing freeze dried food.



The race has a staggered start, the smallest vessels started on July 1, the second fleet on July 3 and our start was on Saturday 5 – 58 yachts started the race, 12 were in our division. Pre-race webinars included tactics and weather so we were prepared for the strategic manoeuvres required around Santa Catalina Island, which is the only mark of the race and approximately 24 nm off the coast. Some yachts get sucked in by the various eddies and wind funnels and were becalmed at nightfall. We tacked out early to keep in the breeze and once we cleared the island it was a broad reach until we settled into the trade winds.

We initially had a three-hour shift rotation with everyone coming together for a 6pm dinner. Johannes was navigator and tactician and floated between shifts. Steve and I were on opposite watches, which meant we



could conveniently share a hammock bunk with our sail bags stored under. We were furthestmost aft and the heads were in the bow. In a choppy seaway the 25 or so metres were very challenging at times!

As soon as the wind came around to our aft quarter, we hoisted the A4 spinnaker which we had hoped to carry to Hawaii. We changed to four-hour shift rotation as this was preferred for the rest of the race. Most crew were onboard with a competitive spirit but they also wanted the opportunity to helm. The dark nights meant steering was particularly difficult and tiring and the possibility of broaching with a challenging swell, was ever-present.

The feeling below deck was quite surreal, lying below in your bunk the boat would be lifted by a wave then almost flung forward, accelerating for what seemed like hundreds of metres until it gradually slowed waiting for the next wave to catch.

Around Day 4 we were woken to concerns regarding the heads. It was blocked. The thought of using a bucket for the remainder of the race was less than appealing and a fire fighter crew member took on the job of clearing the plumbing. Later that evening one of our fittest and strongest crew began experiencing debilitating back pain. Fortunately, we had a doctor on board to administer analgesia and monitor him.

The following morning in about 22 knots of breeze the A4 ripped, and it was all hands-on deck to retrieve it and rehoist another kite. We'd been trucking along for more than 48 hours with a full main and staysail and the A4 which was perfect for the conditions, but unfortunately the kite was well past its best. The A6 was sturdy but not ideal for the conditions as it was a bit small and we were just too shy and overpowered to put up the A2.

By Day 5 our injured crew member had deteriorated and developed concerning neurological symptoms. Our

doctor and skipper were liaising with the race organisers and Coast Guard for advice and support. We were literally halfway between Los Angeles and Honolulu, too far from shore for a helicopter retrieval and the nearest container ship could take a day or more to reach us. We had no choice but to sail on and keep the boat as level as possible – a makeshift spinal back board was also used to support and immobilise him.

There were days that passed without sight of anything other than the movement of the clouds. It really was the middle of the ocean and we were extremely thankful our injured crew was managing so well given his severe discomfort and restrictions. The wind was relatively constant for most of our crossing; we saw generally 15-20 knots from the north-east, but this occasionally rose to 25-27 knots or sometimes dropped off to 10-12 knots.

By Day 9 we sighted land and that was such a good feeling. Phones pinged with messages and news from home as we came into mobile phone range.

As we sailed through the islands at sunset the lights of Honolulu beckoned, it was a beautiful sight. We passed the finish line at 23.35 hrs on the July 14 to our own loud cheers, a warm Aloha and congratulations from the race finishers and some small tears of emotion knowing we had made it and had given it our best.

After a short hospitalisation and physiotherapy, our injured crewmate made a full recovery. We'd covered almost 3,000 nautical miles, made good friends and completed one of the top seven yacht races in the world. We finished 5th overall in our division with *Lucky* taking line honours and *Aragon* in 4th. Be sure to keep your eye out at our NCYC marina as *Aragon* and *Noah's II* will be berthed here prior to competing in this year's Rolex Sydney to Hobart Race.

– Maureen Rae



Welcome back to another edition from Marine Rescue Newcastle! This time, we're giving you a behind-the-scenes look at the rigorous training our boat crew members undergo to stay sharp, compliant, and ready for anything - meeting the

standards set by both Marine Rescue NSW (MRNSW) and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).

Training & Competency

MRNSW is a Registered Training Organisation, which means we are authorised to deliver official Units of Competence (UoC) across various crew levels. Whether you're a Crew Member, Coxswain Restricted, Coxswain, or Master Coxswain, you must complete:

- Formal UoC training delivered by qualified instructors holding a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.
- A rigorous operational assessment, where trainees must demonstrate not just competence—but confidence—on our advanced rescue vessels.

AMSA Requirements

AMSA, the federal body overseeing commercial maritime operations (and responsible for search and rescue across nearly a quarter of the globe!), requires



annual requalification for all Marine Rescue boat crew. This ensures our teams are up to date and prepared for emergencies including:

- Fire & Smoke
- Collision
- Grounding
- Person Overboard
- Flood



- Abandon Ship
- Pollution
- Injury / Medical Emergency
- Master Incapacitated
- Loss of Steering
- Adverse Weather
- Incident Reporting
- Advanced CPR Skills Refresher

Over several weeks, our Coxswains lead crew through these scenarios, reinforcing protocols and ensuring everyone knows exactly what to do when things go sideways. Because let's face it – learning how to use a flare after an emergency is not ideal. We train so our crews are ready before it happens.

Sea Survival & Firefighting

Every trainee must also complete a one-time Sea Survival & Firefighting courses, typically hosted at specialised venues. With training and support from MRNSW trainers and assessors, trainees:

- Learn and practise fire extinguisher use
- Get hands-on experience extinguishing small fires
- Train with flares and survival gear
- Complete a 50-metre swim fully clothed
- Deploy and board an inflatable life raft – no easy feat!

Stay safe out there, and give us a wave when you see us on the water. We're proud to serve, and even prouder to train hard so we're always ready.

Marine Rescue Newcastle – Professional. Prepared. Proud.



To receive up-to-date information on weather warnings, safety tips, boating tips and more.
www.facebook.com/MarineRescueNewcastle



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Save the Dates

2025	
15 Nov	Academy Development Regatta
23 Nov	SSSC Full Course/Practical
23 Nov	SheSails Offshore Race (TBC)
21 Dec	Club Christmas Party
2026	
15-18 Jan	Broughton Island Cruise
28 Feb-1 Mar	SheSails Development Regatta
6-8 Mar	Lake Macquarie Cruise
21 Mar	Youth Development Regatta
13-18 Apr	Sail Port Stephens Passage Series
24-26 Apr	Sail Port Stephens Performance Series
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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The NCYC's Nautica Dining is a fresh culinary experience in every sense, with award-winning Executive Chef Luke Carpenter leading an eclectic and dynamic kitchen crew

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