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AUTUMN 2024

NCYC regatta previews
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Sydney Hobart recollections



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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.

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In this missive – Sydney Hobart, Clipper Visit and Parking along with my normal general updates. But first, a Happy New Year to all and my congratulations to *Frantic*, *Mako*, *She's the Culprit*, and *Vérité* for their results in what turned out to be a tough Hobart. Yet again, NCYC punched above its weight.

CLIPPER RACE

We had 11 Clipper 70s alongside E- and F-Arm during January as well as dockside activities and social events. This was a very successful event and certainly raised our profile in the city and with Newcastle City Council. Deputy Lord Mayor Declan Clausen attended the prize ceremony along with key personnel from the broader global sailing community.

The next leg started mid-afternoon on January 10 in Newcastle Harbour bound for the Airlie Beach. At Airlie, NCYC Member Bronwen Crosby hopped aboard for the leg to Ha Long Bay, Vietnam.

OPERATIONS

We have been operating in a tough environment with hospitality venues in our area down an average of 20 per cent revenue. As I have mentioned previously, it's the diversity of our income that helps us maintain our strong financial position. We have some significant expenses ahead with some large repair and maintenance expenses in the short to medium term (eg. the travel lift runway and the boatyard tall shed, both suffering corrosion) so some financial prudence is necessary.

Clubs that ignore maintenance and fail to plan these very necessary expenses end up like many bowling clubs, marinas and yacht clubs have in the past two decades; closed and wound up. We must continue our maintenance and repair program to ensure we all can enjoy the benefits of our membership.

Having said all that, we had a good month in December. While it was below last year, we have managed to continue to pay down our loan taken to finance Stage 2 of the Clubhouse. This loan is now effectively a zero balance. With our quieter months ahead, we continue to look for ways to attract more patronage – you may have noticed the “Margarita Month” promotion in February.

CLUBHOUSE

We had a successful month in the Clubhouse in November. This was the first month in a while to be

above budget and that trend was repeated in December which also proved to be a very strong period. We still remain slightly below budget for the financial year (April to March) and are encouraged by the reversal of the quiet periods during winter. We also invested in mobile speakers to benefit our functions business and allow us to be even more attractive to larger scale events.

MEMBERSHIP

We've had another great two months for membership with 76 new members approved at the December and January meetings.

SAILING

There has been a healthy attendance at our Sailing Academy, albeit a little down on average. This is in line with the general economic situation and some people reducing discretionary spending. Our Elliott 6s have been out of the water undergoing maintenance during December.

The large keelboats finished the spring pointscore and undertook the Christmas Pursuit fun race and party in a closed-to-the-public and full club house on December 17. A very good time was had by all!

We hosted and won the small keelboat NSW Sailing League team event (Hunter & Regional Qualifier) on January 21. Large yacht sailing started again (February 4) with the “gift” of a 20-25 nor-easter to test everyone and the twilights began again on February 7.

MARINA

The marina continues to be a reliable revenue source for the club, with occupancy and net profit all slightly above budget.

PARKING

The Club continues to work hard on this project. There are a lot of considerations to ensure we get it right. These include, but are not limited to:

- automated, easy access for members and tenants (automated licence plate recognition)
- reduced free access time restrictions for those that shouldn't be there, but still park long term (the entire workday or multiple days)
- automated time-based credit card charging
- no, or minimal extra administrative work for NCYC staff.



– Barry Kelly



It's been another great summer at the club.

There has been some great sailing offshore on both Wednesdays and Sundays for the spring pointscore. It was pleasing to see our club boats do so well in this year's Sydney Hobart Race – congrats to all who sailed in a tough race. Inshore it was

great to have the Lasers back and active on a Friday night.

The intra-club racing Thursdays in the Elliotts produced great competitive racing, and The Hunter Sailing League resulted with Joe de Kock winning the rights to represent us at the Australian Sailing Champions League in Adelaide. January also saw the Clipper Around the World fleet visit the Club and city and it was a huge success.

Our Members truly embraced the event and offered genuine hospitality to the visitors. Our team of dedicated volunteers and staff put in long hours to deliver a great 10 days.

Sailing Academy's Learn to Sail 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 Clubhouse had a great trading summer with a significant increase in functions and events. The Social Committee helped deliver a great Member's Christmas party and New Year's Eve celebration.

We also had the inaugural Stinkies v Blowies contest sporting supremacy – after much controversy the bragging right now belong to the Stinkies for 12 months.

"Margarita Month" started with a bang – 150 cocktails in the first weekend!

The Members raffles and Member's Badge Draw continues to be well supported. Triva continues to grow becoming one of the busiest mid-week nights at the club. And don't forget Sail Away Fridays after work. The music on a floating stage also proved a hit this summer and will continue subject to weather.

Autumn is a hectic time of year with Easter, SailFest, and Sail Port Stephens. This year's SailFest (April 5-7) will have the biggest fleet of TP52s assembled on a start line in Australia. It will be well worth getting out to watch these grand prix machines racing.

SailFest will also include the Australian Titles which will ensure a strong fleet. Sail Port Stephens (April 15 – May 5) has become Australia's second biggest regatta with the new format spread over three weeks.

We wish all our NCYC boats and crews the best of luck competing at Sail Port Stephens.

Here's to a great regatta season.

– Paul O'Rourke

STEPS TO STAY SAFE NEAR SEAGOING SHIPS

- > Always **keep a lookout** for seagoing ships.
- > **Determine if the vessel is moving towards you** or away from you.
- > Always **keep a safe distance** away from a large vessel.
- > From the ship's bridge it is hard to see smaller boats. Some ships will have blind spots ahead of up to 600 metres. **Stay far enough away to be in sight.**
- > **Act early** so you can move away from these seagoing ships.
- > **Familiarise yourself** with the shipping channels or fairways.
- > **Stay clear** of the channels or fairways when seagoing ships are entering or departing the port and harbour.
- > **Be aware** of wakes of seagoing ships, particularly when the large vessel is in relatively shallow water and moving at higher speeds.
- > Always have your **navigation lights on at night** so other vessels can clearly see you.



- > You **MUST** stay well clear of the shipping channels and large ships and only cross the channel when it is safe to do so.
- > **DO NOT** anchor in a channel or fairway.
- > **DO NOT** block a channel or fairway.

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What a fantastic summer it has been at NCYC, both on the water and around the Club! Starting with the sold-out and very successful Members Christmas Party on December 17, the Club has been abuzz with Members and guests celebrating the festive season, the New Year and the inaugural visit by the Clipper Round the

World Race fleet early in January.

Many local people visited our Club for the first time during the holiday period, and this has resulted in many new Social Memberships.

We hope that you noticed the fantastic Christmas lights display. This large project was designed and created by our very own Jack Buchan and Mark Nugent.

New Years Eve was well attended, and the two-tier offering of a full table service sit-down meal or a less formal canapé cocktail style party worked well. The band was popular and there was great feedback on the delicious food and a great atmosphere.

Large groups of our Members enjoyed the evening as well as many guests, including a number of Clipper Officials who were waiting for the fleet to arrive.

The visit by the Clipper fleet saw a contingent of Member volunteers generously provide their time as boat liaison personnel.

Assistance was provided with 'meet and greet', (including beer and hot pies at all hours of the day and night!), shopping, and general hospitality. Many of our Members joined with the visitors to enjoy the social events organised by the club and they contributed to making the Newcastle stopover possibly the best that the Clipper boats have experienced.

The inaugural Stinkies v Blowies Bowling Challenge was fought out on a very hot day in Carrington and resulted in a resounding victory for the well-prepared Stinkies. Amid the spirited competition, the day became a scene of camaraderie, filled with laughter, refreshing drinks and tasty food. Watch out for even stronger competition in 2025!

At the January Board Meeting the Membership of the Club totaled 1,668. This comprised 37 Senior Members, 272 General Members, 254 Crew Members, 1,078 Social Members, 6 Youth Members, 7 Junior Members, 11 Life Members, and 1 Honorary Member.



– Jan Howard



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This report is an opportunity to update you with some of the highlights from the past quarter.

We've had some big highlights to be proud of and I encourage you to come along and be a part of the Club's biggest moments throughout the next quarter – in particular, SailFest (incorporating the Australian Yachting Championship) and

our Sail Port Stephens regattas.

STAFF CHANGES

I'm pleased to (re-)introduce myself, Jack Buchan, as the new Marina Manager following Matt William's departure in January. I've been part of the NCYC team as Sailing Manager since 2016 and take on this additional role with a boating background and a strong passion for the Club. I'll continue to work with our volunteers and instructors to deliver our racing and training programs on the water, while also overseeing the marina operations and our dockmaster team.

I'm also happy to report that Mark Nugent will be expanding his maintenance role with the Club. Mark has been a valuable member of our team for several years, responsible for maintenance of our Club boats and overseeing the civil works upgrades at our hardstand facility in Carrington. Mark will now expand his role to take care of on-site maintenance of the marina and building assets as well as our Club vessels.

MARINA REPORT:

The marina remains a busy space for the Club with lots of casual visitors and a growing list of long-term occupants. The Newcastle Game Fishing Club tournament in March pushed us to full capacity for the weekend. Housekeeping remains an important requirement to ensure we have clear walkways and minimise impact on access to neighbouring vessels.

On the marina, you'll see our team checking and tightening the marina dock connections and cleaning the growth off marina piles. You'll see maintenance works proceeding onshore too with significant roofing repairs and replacement on some of the older parts of our buildings at the precinct.

CLIPPER RACE STOPOVER:

January marked a momentous occasion for our Club as we welcomed the international Clipper Round the World Race crews and yachts for a memorable 10-day stopover



in Newcastle. In the months leading up to their arrival, our volunteer teams and Club staff put in an enormous effort to ensure that the Club was properly prepared to deliver one of the best stopovers in the Clipper calendar.

With Newcastle as the host port in January, we not only showcased the beauty of our city but also highlighted the warmth and hospitality of our Club Members, volunteers, and staff. The success of the stopover was a testament to the collaborative spirit that defines our Club, and I extend my gratitude to everyone involved in making it a resounding success.

SUMMER SAILING RETURNS

With the arrival of February, we welcomed back our summer sailing with open arms.

Our first event of the year was the NSW Sailing Champions League raced in our fleet of Elliott 6 inshore keelboats. Our NCYC team (Joe de Kock, Karma Randall, Harry Miller) came out on top – making NCYC the fastest club in NSW. Congratulations!

The Pantaenius Offshore Twilight racing on Wednesday evenings has had a mix of weather conditions from slow and calm, to windy and wavey, to wet and wild for our social twilight racing. After the start, we've been recording all the starters and then drawing a boat at random to receive the weekly lucky door prize (three pizzas and three beers).

The Summer Short Ocean Pointscore racing on Sunday



Above: Tom Woods' JPK 1080 *Saltwater Wine* has joined the NCYC fleet.

afternoons has seen some new boats added to the fleet with Scott Knights' Sunfast 3200 *Ataraxia*, Tom Woods' JPK 1080 *Saltwater Wine* and the *Paloma* syndicate testing their skills on our offshore racetrack.

SAILFEST AND AUSTRALIAN YACHTING CHAMPIONSHIP:

This year, our annual SailFest Regatta will be a three-day event April 5-7. The regatta will also include the Australian Yachting Championship sailed under IRC rating.

The regatta will welcome back the TP52 fleet, as well as a regatta full of 30-50ft racers all competing for our annual Newcastle trophy. I wish the best of luck to all of the contestants and look forward to working with our volunteers to deliver another excellent SailFest regatta.

As we sail into the next quarter, let us continue to uphold the spirit of friendship, sportsmanship, and adventure that defines our club. I am honored to serve as Sailing and Marina Manager, and I am committed to ensuring that our Club remains a beacon of excellence in the world of sailing.

Fair winds and following seas

– Jack Buchan




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The heart of hospitality

Our club was the heart of hospitality and versatility, hosting many events, from corporate conferences to lively parties and romantic weddings throughout the past season. However, during the festive season, our venue truly came alive, featuring 70+ Christmas functions, including our standout 300-attendee Members' Christmas party.

This event captured the essence of friendship and holiday cheer, with laughter, joy, and shared experiences filling the evening with joy. From festive decorations to lovely culinary delights, every detail was carefully crafted to ensure an unforgettable experience for all who attended, fostering a sense of community and togetherness that defined the season's spirit.

As we reflect on another remarkable season of celebrations, we look forward to continuing to provide unique experiences that delight and inspire all who grace our doors in the coming seasons.

– Bec Frost







Australia's fastest and foremost racing yachts will arrive in Newcastle early next month to contest one of the premier prizes in offshore yachting, the Australian Yachting Championships, from April 5-7.

NCYC is hosting the prestigious event in conjunction with the national sailing body, Australian Sailing. It will be embedded into the fast-growing SailFest Newcastle Regatta which was relaunched in 2019 but has a proud heritage dating back to 1845.

Undoubtedly one of the signature events is a TP52 division with 11 entries. Included are Geoff Boettcher's orange-hulled *Secret Men's Business*, due to be trucked from Adelaide for the series, and Marcus Blackmore's newly built *Hooligan*.

David Doherty's *Matador*, fresh from winning a closely fought Act 1 of the Pallas Capital Gold Cup for TP52s last weekend, will take strong form into the national championships, as will podium placegetters *KOA* (Andrew Kearnen) and *Quest* (Craig Neil).

Joining them will be at least 11 other entries striving for IRC-handicap honours in the Australian Yachting Championships, including Middle Harbour Yacht Club stablemates *Nine Dragons* (Bob Cox), *Soozal* (Keiran Mulcahy) and the Sydney 36 *Stormaway* (J. Stenning and C. Gunn).

Nine Dragons will square off with Mark Griffith's *LCE Old School Racing* from Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, both being near-identical DK46 sisterships built in 2004. Duelling for home-town honours, meanwhile, will be Tom Woods aboard the JPK 10.8 *Saltwater Wine*, Joe De Kock on his Farr 40 *KDI*, and *Mako*.

Entries remain open for the IRC divisions and the PHS cruising class that is contested as part of SailFest Newcastle. Vessels from Queensland and Victoria are



Above: Australia's best IRC and TP52 yachts will contest the Australian Yachting Championships.

also expected to make the trek to Newcastle to compete in the Australian Yachting Championships.

Windward-leeward racing will be staged off Newcastle's famous beaches and the passage racing will feature an in-harbour start at around 11.30am on Saturday, April 6, marked by a firing of Fort Scratchley's 80-pound gun. It will give spectators on the harbour foreshore a front-row view.

NCYC CEO Paul O'Rourke says: "It's fantastic to bring the sailing community together here in Newcastle. What make these events special is the camaraderie the sailors develop in the Club afterwards. We have always been able to deliver fantastic sailing along our coastline and generous hospitality after, and it's great to be able to share that with a wider group of sailors this year."

Saturday will also see the historic Cock of the Harbour race run by Port Hunter 16ft Sailing Skiff Club, with NCYC Sailing Manager Jack Buchan noting: "The 16ft Skiffs, catamarans and off-the-beach dinghies really bring the harbour to life as they vie for the honour of being the fastest sailing boats on the harbour. There is a colourful, chaotic beauty to the racing that's fantastic to watch."

Families can also get involved on Saturday and Sunday, April 6-7, from 9am to 12pm, as kids aged 6 to 12 can try sailing for free under the supervision of Australian Sailing qualified instructors from NCYC.

SailFest Newcastle Regatta is supported by the City of Newcastle and Transport for NSW. More information: sailfest.com.au



Sail Port Stephens kicks off on April 15-20 with the 'cruisy' Commodores Cup and Port Stephens Trophy regattas running concurrently, forming the Passage Series sailed from d'Albora Marina Nelson Bay.

Included is a first-ever Street Party being staged in conjunction with Port Stephens Council, with a dress theme of 'Coastal Chic'. It's non-ticketed, allowing competitors, visitors and residents alike to purchase street food and enjoy free entertainment in the heart of Nelson Bay's CBD.

The prestigious NSW Yachting Championships (IRC), TP52 Gold Cup Act 3 and Rob Hampshire Cup (ORC) combine from April 26-28 in the Windward-Leeward Series based at The Anchorage at Corlette.



The regatta then invites off-the-beach dinghy classes, sports boats and Windsurfers to contest their own "Bay Series" hosted by the Bay Sailing Centre at Salamander Bay in conjunction with Bannisters Port Stephens. Dates are May 4-5.

The new format was successfully embedded in 2023, its aim being to maximise usage of a finite number of marina berths while spreading the off-water fun across three weekends to provide an unsurpassed sailing holiday experience. Record numbers were achieved, with more than 220 sailcraft taking part.

"It's a wonderful time to be at Port Stephens, with a sailing carnival atmosphere prevailing across 11 days of sail racing," NCYC CEO Paul O'Rourke says.

For the first time since 2017, the Passage Series will coincide with the NSW school holidays, allowing more families to attend and encouraging wider community engagement. Marinas are receiving huge levels of inquiry, promising another bumper fleet for the five-race event.

The TP52 class is expecting up to a dozen starters for Act 3 of its Gold Cup series during the middle weekend of Windward-Leeward racing.

Inquiries are also flooding in for the Bay Series. Back for another year are the J70 class, Windsurfers, RS Aeros and more, while the J24s, Tasars and Lasers have expressed interest.

Sail Port Stephens is supported by Destination NSW, Port Stephens Council, Pantaenius Insurance and more.

International Laser Class sailor Thomas Farley represented NCYC and Belmont 16s at the Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands.

Where did the sailing journey start for you?

I started when I was 10 in 2013 on a Nacra 5.8 with my dad in Forster. From there, we bought two Lasers so we could sail after work and school. In 2021, I moved to Newcastle and joined NCYC and Belmont 16s.

How did you find out you were going to the Sol2023 Pacific Games?

I'd always had the Pacific Games in the back of my mind as an event I wanted to do. My ability to do a campaign for a European season was almost impossible. So, when I received an email from the Australian Olympic Team for the Games, it was such a relief knowing I finally had my shot to represent Australia in an overseas competition.

What challenges did you face in the lead up and while at the Games?

Once I knew I was going to the Games, it lit a fire inside me. I was so focused on my training; I started the season the strongest I'd ever been. I was really clear headed – training smarter, racing smarter, and performing really well. A month before the Games, I won the State Youth Championship which was another big milestone.

I knew for the Games I just had to repeat my processes. Repeat the Youth's result. What I didn't know at the time was that I had an occasional cough that wouldn't disappear. I arrived in the Solomons having done all my processes and started feeling quite unwell. My body started rejecting everything I was eating. I was losing weight and the cough had become so violent that I injured my back in my sleep.

First day of competition was just pain. I managed to fight through it and came away with two second places. I wasn't going to let it hinder my results. In the end, I just have to thank the AOC team doctor and physiotherapist Dr Nicci Drew and Karina Chilman who helped day in day out to manage all my dramas. Without them I wouldn't have gotten through the event.

What has your training regime looked like?

Despite COVID, 2021 was a real turning point for me. I had just come off the Worlds and had enough. A 52nd was a real stab to the resolve and I wanted to put the covers on the boat for good. However, I looked at eight years of progress and decided I couldn't throw it



all away. I decided if I wanted to go for it, I was going to do it properly. So, over the next two years, I was in the gym four days a week, and on water three days a week, focusing on my weaknesses. Getting up at 4am every Tuesday and Thursday to drive to Sydney to train with the team. Just taking every opportunity I had to improve. All the little percentage improvements were starting to show.

What were your main highlights of the Games?

The Games presented so many special moments. However, the opening ceremony was just surreal. Being under all those lights and the sound of 10,000 people in a stadium cheering you on isn't something many people get to experience and to know that your family and friends back home were watching is so special. It makes all the hours of training worth it and obviously in the end to win a medal for your nation. What else could you possibly ask for.

What does the future look like for your sailing?

I've been sailing for 10 years now. I have a strong team of family and friends behind me. Two powerful Clubs and two incredible sponsors, an amazing squad to work with. The occasional opportunities to train with world champions and Olympic medallists.

It's going to be a long journey; I have many goals however, at the end of the road, if I can put in the hard work, win a world title, and give back to the community that gets me there. That would be the absolute dream.

What's your advice for aspiring youth sailors?

Don't give up. No matter what challenges you face, if you have the motivation, you will eventually get to your goal. It may be difficult; it may take longer than it will for other sailors around you. But in the end, you will ultimately reach your goal.



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Brett 'Tubby' Smith looks back on 25 Sydney Hobart races dating back to 1984.

I've been sailing for 50 years now, starting in Taree when I was gifted a Sabot for my 11th birthday, but it wasn't until I moved to Hobart that I began sailing offshore. It was in 1984 that I participated in my first Sydney to Hobart race.

I'd read all the horror stories, so I was expecting the worst. I was on a really good boat with great crew, *Mirabooka*, a Swan 44 owned and skippered by John 'JB' Benetto from Hobart who was equal, at the time, to Tony Cable as having sailed the most Sydney Hobarts.

We had 11 crew onboard with a combined 70+ Sydney Hobarts for only the 40th edition of the race.

That year, 160 boats started and just over 40 finished. It was hard on the nose all the way from Sydney to Maria Island ... in those days, we just had a dial gauge with a pin just before 70 knots. As a crew, we decided that if it hit 70 were going home. We had a day where it was on the 70+ knots pin for most of the day and we pushed through ... it was a bit tough.

One night we were under a storm jib and nothing else, during the day under storm jib and tri sail. I later found out it's not quite that bad most of the time.

We disappeared off the map for two days. The battery switch had accidentally been kicked to "both" during the night and flattened the start battery as well by morning. For two days we had no radio and couldn't report our position. Once things had calmed, we managed to get the engine started with a bit of rope and six guys pulling on it like a lawnmower.

By then, we were well down the Tassie coast and inside the range of the AM radio. The news bulletin said that we had misquoted our position and the committee put us back 60 miles, which upset a few people on board. A plane flew over to take photos of the boats along the coast, and they were able to prove that we were in fact where we had given.

It was the first year that satellite navigation was allowed to be used in the Sydney Hobart, but all we had was a sextant and our dead reckoning ability. Two crew members were proficient in using the sextant, and through their efforts, and after 45 minutes of arguing about how to reduce their sights to a position, they got results within a third of a mile from one another.

It shouldn't have been possible to get within that range of each other given the 20ft swell. All said, we got to Hobart with three tacks and one gybe, with the average windspeed ranging from 30 to 40 knots. It was one of those races that felt like you'd accomplished something.



Above: Bretty Smith's 25-year pendant
Opposite in clockwise order: *Mirabooka*, maxi *Ragamuffin*, *Wax Lyrical*, *Secret Men's Business 1*.

In the early 80s, a comfy cruise boat could be a great race boat. *Mirabooka* was built in 1972, when she placed 4th in the British Admirals Cup team trials, and we were 5th across the line and on overall IOR handicap. In those days, we had roast dinners each night – one night in Bass Strait we had two guys arguing about what kind of white sauce we were going to put on the silverside. Despite waves greater than mast height, we were reasonably warm, dry and well fed.

I still to this day sail with one of the guys from the 1984 Hobart. I used to do races with them when they came to Sydney for the Southern Cross Cup and its successors while JB was still alive.

I was unsure of whether to continue in Sydney Hobarts in the future, but my decision was made after the party. The QLD or Quiet Little Drink used to move from pub to pub back in those days. It was very blokey, not like what we have these days. The party was for everyone, whereas today the line-honours crew has left by the time the rest of the fleet begins to arrive.

I've come in the top 30 to 40 boats, and passed the supermaxis going home north of Tasman Island! Back then, even the maxi sailors were amateurs to an extent. A kid like me, starting on a river, could walk up to a yacht and jump on; four years later, I was on the line-honours winner. It is much harder these days to jump onto one of the line-honours favourites.

The second Hobart I did, I turned out to be the most experienced on the boat. I was 25 years old with a bunch of people who had never done anything like that before. Thankfully it was a fairly easy ride that year.

I was on *Ragamuffin* in 1988 when it got line honours, which is a great memory. It took us four days, arriving at 4am on the morning of the December 30. It is still the biggest winning margin, over 17 hours before the



next boat arrived. We had 11 sail changes on the river. The only person around on the dock when we arrived was one guy walking his dog, and he gave us a mighty cheer. We weren't expected to arrive until after sunrise. Arriving so far before we were expected we had cold showers because no one had turned the hot water on.

In '91, my first year on *She's Apples II*, we won overall IMS. I don't remember much after those results were announced. At the time *She's Apples II* was a hot boat; it fit the IMS rating rule really well, we won pretty much everything that year.

Before the race, a J44 called *Phoenix* that we had been racing closely with, wanted to bet a bottle of rum on the race, which we countered with a case of rum. They beat us across the line, but ultimately we won on handicap. Next thing we knew, they were at the dock with a shopping trolley with the price equivalent of a rum case in beer, wine, bubbles and, of course, rum. All that remained the following morning was two cans of beer, which two of the crew had for breakfast.

We won a lot of major events at the time on *She's Apples II*, but unfortunately never a Southport race. One of the guys on board was from *Mirabooka*, I brought him on board when he moved to Sydney.

Later I did seven Hobarts aboard *Wax Lyrical*, an X50 that was more like a three-bedroom apartment, but seven of the 11 initial crew had all sailed together previously on *Infinity III* (a 65ft Farr). When *Infinity's* owner lost interest, one of the crew bought *Wax Lyrical* and half the crew came with him. At the end of the seven years, we still had four of the crew from *Infinity III*, and five of the initial 11 had stayed on from *Wax Lyrical's* first Hobart.

For my 25th race, the owner of *Secret Men's Business (I)*, David De Coster, made a point of making sure that his ex-partner and I were on board, it was my 25th and it was her 10th and I had been there for all nine of her previous races.

The reason you go back is the people. You sail with the people you trust. You form bonds that you don't make anywhere else. If they're stupid enough to live through that, you get along.

David and I have sailed together on everything from Joggies to 12 Metres since 1985 and I still have many close friends that date back to racing together in the 1980s and '90s.

– Brett 'Tubby' Smith



The crew of *Pickled Tink*.

On Sunday January 14, Lake Macquarie Yacht Club hosted Race 1 of the Lake Macquarie SheSails Tri-Series. It was a great day for women's sailing; 18 of the participating boats had the mandatory female helm, 15 crews had more than 50% female crew, and two boats, *SoFarr* and *Pickled Tink* had all-female crews. NCYC was well represented with 15 women sailing on various yachts.

Despite the unpredictable weather conditions, with the wind dropping out and rain coming in an hour before the race, the keen spirit of the participants remained undeterred. A grouped start, a non-spinnaker format and two laps of Belmont Bay, allowed everyone to relax and enjoy the fun sailing.

LAKE MACQUARIE | JANUARY TO MARCH

Although poor visibility on the course made it a bit challenging finding the marks, everyone had a great afternoon. We congratulate LMYC on initiating and leading this important SheSails event and we thank them for providing great prizes and excellent hospitality. We're also appreciative of LMYC members making their yachts available for NCYC women to sail.

Race 2 of the Tri-Series was held on February 18, hosted by the Royal Motor Yacht Club Toronto. The 3rd race was hosted by Wangi Sailing Club on March 2. Again, we thank both Clubs.

ALWAYS LOOKOUT FOR SEAGOING SHIPS

DO NOT pass within 30 metres of the side or stern of a seagoing ship

- > Before heading out check the **Daily Vessel Movements** at portauthority.com.au/lookoutnewcastle
- > Keep monitoring the **safety broadcast** from Newcastle Harbour VTC [24/7] VHF Channel 09

STAY FAR AWAY TO BE IN SIGHT

> From the ship's bridge it is hard to see smaller boats. Some ships will have blind spots ahead of up to 600 metres. Stay far enough away to be in sight.

BE AWARE IT'S THE LAW

Under NSW marine legislation you are required to never obstruct, restrict or impede access to:

- > any fairway or channel
- > any wharf or other landing place
- > the safe navigation of a vessel
- > the handling of cargo or movement of passengers
- > launching, removal, securing of a vessel.

It is an offence to:

- > fail to comply with the directions of the harbour master or any person acting under the direction of a harbour master
- > operate a vessel in any navigable waters negligently, recklessly or at a speed or in a manner dangerous to the public.

portauthority.com.au/lookoutnewcastle

Disclaimer: The information in this brochure is provided for general information only and it does not constitute legal or other professional advice.

Staff profile: Ali Watt

Keep your eyes and ears peeled for an upcoming photography exhibition from our sailing and clubhouse staff member, Ali Watt, hosted here at NCYC. The photography exhibition will feature our NCYC Club racing yachts.

Profits from any artworks sold at the exhibition will go towards Ali's research undertaken at the University of Newcastle. Support her Honours research project!

Ali is studying the Little Forest Bat of Smiths Lake, which entails seeing how many call the forest home. Part of this study includes using radio-trackers to determine their foraging habits and range.

Currently, there is no baseline data for these microbats, so it is unknown how they are being impacted by the changing climate. Gathering this baseline information is vital for detailed and actionable environmental management plans.

"If you have ever been bothered by a noisy night out camping or by being bitten by mosquitoes, well, you're an instant friend of the Little Forest Bat as these guys feed on moths, beetles, and bugs – including mosquitoes," Ali says.

The Little Forest Bat needs your help!

Ali is raising funds to acquire these radio-trackers. You can become part of the team and help the Little Forest Bat today by donating to her GoFund me page: <https://gofund.me/86dcb47a>

Ali is also selling Bat Crazy Merch where the profits will go towards her research!

Products include:

- Bat Bucket Hat
- Bat Long Sleeve
- Bat Tee
- Bat V-Neck Tee
- Five Panel Bat Cap



LEARN TO SAIL COURSES FOR KIDS

The NCYC Sailing Academy is a registered provider with Service NSW and accepts the \$100 ACTIVE KIDS vouchers.

For further information,
contact our Sailing Academy
Tel: (02) 4940 8188 or
email: sailingacademy@ncyc.net.au

Sadly, there has been an increase in the number of boating related incidents this season. It's important that when out on the water that you always exercise your good judgement.

Good judgement can be something that we take for granted, particularly by those of us who are more experienced boaters. That's why it's important to remember that even the most experienced boaters can face unexpected challenges.

When we talk about judgement, we're talking about knowing your limits, recognising risks, and managing them safely. For the skipper this includes recognising how fast you are going, how much other traffic is on the waterway, your vessel's capabilities, and the weather and swell conditions.

When planning your day out on the water it is your responsibility ensure that there are enough lifejackets and other safety equipment on board for you and your passengers and that they are in good working order.

Good judgement is also ensuring you regularly check the weather and swell, not only before you head out but also during your trip – a good skipper knows weather conditions can change quickly. It's a good

idea to download the BoM app on your phone and set up weather warning alerts, so you are notified when dangerous weather fronts are approaching.

In the event of an emergency or incident, it is vital that as the skipper you ensure both you and your passengers are prepared. There must be a plan of what to do and who to contact if you do run into trouble. Before heading out everyone on your vessel should be wearing a lifejacket that is fitted correctly, should know where the safety equipment is stored and how to use items such as the marine radio and EPIRB.

If you are involved in or witness an incident, you must always stop and give as much help as possible. Always make sure everyone on your vessel is accounted for. Depending on the severity of the incident, you may need to contact authorities.

Before you head out, remember to Log On with Marine Rescue by calling your Marine Rescue NSW base on VHF Channel 16 or by using the free Marine Rescue App.

Visit lifejacketwearit.com.au for more tips on how to stay safe on NSW waterways.

Have you planned ahead for your day out?



You're the skipper, you're responsible. Visit lifejacketwearit.com.au to plan your day and prepare for common risks.



ARE YOU BOAT READY?
PLAN ○ PREPARE ○ PREDICT

Marine Rescue Newcastle



Our biggest event in recent times would have to be the official opening of our \$3million rescue base and training facility at Stockton.

On Friday, December 15, the building was officially opened by The Honourable Jihad Dib, MP, Minister for Emergency

Services along with The Honourable Yasmin Catley, MP, Minister for Police & Counter-Terrorism and Minister for The Hunter, and MRNSW Commissioner Alex Barrell.

In front of many of our wonderful Members and members of the public, Unit Commander Lyn Van Homrigh and Minister Dib cut the ribbon, and Commissioner Barrell and Minister Dib uncovered the official plaque.

All present then enjoyed visiting the various areas of the base, learning about the operational capability of the new Marine Rescue Newcastle facility and partaking in morning tea.

As UC Van Homrigh stated at the time, over the past eight years, MR Newcastle has been using borrowed and rented premises and operating out of just a 'one-room' radio base. With this magnificent new purpose-built base, members can better manage any search-and-rescue events, conduct training and, of course the day-to-day business of assisting and saving people on the water.

The state-of-the-art training room has proven already to be a popular venue for various emergency services to use for their training and conferences, and internal training as well.

The training and conference facility is available to rent



Top: Unit Commander Van Homrigh, Commissioner Barrell and Minister Dib.

to non-emergency service organisations, and there is plenty of parking available.

At the opening ceremony, Minister Dib announced the Minns Government has given Marine Rescue NSW \$73million (over four years) to assist the organisation's growth and replenishment of vessels, buildings, and radio infrastructure.

As the Minister for Emergency Services Jihad Dib said: "Marine Rescue NSW volunteers are the unsung heroes of our waterways, and they play a vital role in keeping people who enjoy our oceans, lakes, and rivers safe.

"Our beautiful waterways will continue to be busy this summer, so it is important Marine Rescue NSW has the resources and facilities it needs to carry out its important role," he added.

"This investment is recognition of volunteers' dedication and an assurance that they will have the resources and support needed to save lives."



facebook

Marine Rescue Newcastle
Community Organization

[Timeline](#) [About](#) [Photos](#) [Likes](#) [Videos](#)

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

New townhouses near the Club

Here's your chance to live within walking distance of the Club.

Harbour Lights are two striking new townhouses in Newcastle's inner city suburb of Wickham that reflect the area's maritime history, while giving a glimpse of its urban future. Their design is an urban take on Mediterranean architecture mixed in with an almost cruise ship like feel.

The interiors are 5-star luxury, with travertine stone, Belgian wallcoverings and designer furniture and fittings. Both properties have 3 bedrooms each with their own ensuite, as well as a fold out sofa bed in the downstairs rumpus room.

A rooftop plunge pool and barbeque area takes in the vista towards the harbour and the city.

Placed within walking distance of Newcastle train station and a stones thrown from Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club makes the location of Harbour Lights very appealing.

Save the Dates

April 5-7	SailFest (inc Aust Yachting C'ships)
April 15-20	Sail Port Stephens Passage Series
April 26-28	Sail Port Stephens W/L Series
May 3-5	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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A couple is seen from behind, sitting on the deck of a boat. The man is standing and holding a rope, while the woman is sitting next to him. They are looking out at the ocean under a bright, golden sunset sky. The boat's deck, with various ropes and equipment, is visible in the foreground.

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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

The restaurant offers a superb a la carte menu, bar and lounge classics and a selection of degustation packages for special family and work occasions

Book online at ncyc.net.au

ON THE RIGHT TACK

Looking at getting your kids into sailing? Tackers is the perfect pathway onto the water. We run programs throughout the school terms on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and condensed programs in the school holidays. Bookings are now open, so get in quick as they sell out fast!

sailingacademy@ncyc.net.au

ncyc.net.au/junior-tackers-sailing-7-12yrs

