

Commodore's Report

Firstly, happy 150th to all members, past and present. We celebrated on our official (our club historian Ruth Plummer researched the date, so it's correct!!) birthday on 8th of June 2009 with a "in club" function which was very well attended. The day culminated with the unveiling of the wonderful sculpture overlooking the marina. This was our birthday gift to ourselves and hopefully this monument will be standing for the next 150 years. We will be hosting a black tie function to enable our members, yachting friends and partners to celebrate in style in early October. I hope all can attend to celebrate this significant milestone.

We welcomed our new club manager Scott Taylor early in the new club year and what a huge contribution Scott has made to club life. One of the first changes was the employment of Marcus Gildon as our chef; this has served as the basis of the revitalization of our catering function. It is clear that this year's catering results have not been what we hoped for but we are now in a position to move forward secure in the knowledge that we now have a good product, a great venue and wonderful staff to move this area of the club into a good long term contributor to the club's bottom line.

Members couldn't help but notice the changes inside the clubhouse: the gas log fire heater, lounges and coffee table, along with the additional bar tables in the main bar. The bulk of these items were purchased by the Regatta Committee (where previously we hired such equipment) making the club a more inviting space to visit.

We thank Harry Farnell and his band of volunteers for their hard work in bringing the new refueling facility into a reality. Our old refueling system had reached the end of its life and had the potential to become an environmental risk for the club, the new system also now also caters for unleaded fuel for both members and visitors alike.

We also now have a green lawn in front of the club, paths to minimize "wear patterns" and we are soon to install a water tank to ensure the lawn will survive the rigors of summer and our annual regatta. The new tiles and improvements to Soos' bar and surrounds have also added to the revitalized club rooms.

New bi-fold doors have been fitted to the northern wall of the members' bar opening onto the wooden deck. This will, in summer, open up the club, creating a wonderful atmosphere for members and their guests to enjoy.

In response to the members' survey in mid 2008, we have, amongst many changes, relaxed the visitor participation for our Wednesday twilight series. Our hope being that through our members sharing our club we will attract new members.

The committee has also authorized our new member management software package "Member Magic." By combining all of the data bases we are expecting to achieve greater efficiency in the office and improve the accuracy of our records.

We must also thank our regatta sponsors for the last six years Skandia Australia, who sadly are no longer trading in Australia. They have been a wonderful partner to the club and we have been fortunate to have them on board for that period. The remaining two years of their contract was paid out and placed us in a great position to take our annual regatta to the next level.

I must thank Doug Jarvis and his team at Rhumblin Marketing for their great work in negotiating the end of one era and in challenging times, introducing a new naming rights sponsor, Audi Australia.

We welcome Audi Australia into our fold and look forward to an exciting future for our iconic regatta.

During my term I have been working with both the City of Greater Geelong and Parks Victoria with a view to the replacement of the Yarra Street pier to afford better protection to the marina from the North Westerlies, safe and secure berthing for the regatta and also the expansion of the marina with the creation of approximately 40 new floating pens. With the agreement of the Committee of Management, I will continue in this role, reporting to the Flag officers.

I must thank the staff, led by Scott. Their professionalism and desire to see the club move forward can only be appreciated by the view from the inside.

To the Flag Officers and the Committee of Management, I thank them for their support and wish them well in their future activities within the club.

The volunteers from within the club are to be applauded. Without your efforts our club would be unable to conduct all of the events and operate as we do. You are the heart of the club, and you are what makes our club stand apart from all others. Thank you.

Lastly my thanks go to Janet, who has supported me through 12 years of committee work.

The AGM in August 2009 marks the end of my second term as Commodore. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve in this capacity for our great club.

Graeme Ritchie
Commodore
Royal Geelong Yacht Club

