



WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL OF GEELONG

2016 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The 2016 Wooden Boat Festival of Geelong, in its seventh incarnation since its humble beginning eleven years ago, was an outstanding success.

In excess of 135 entrants and an additional number of special displays, plus a great offering of shore side activities saw crowds exceeding our expectations.

Jessica Watson OAM provided an excellent presentation to kick off the festivities on Thursday night at the Cruising Group Dinner, and our first ever official Opening Ceremony was conducted on Friday morning, featuring a Welcome to Country by the local Wathaurong people.

The Jaguar Car Club and Geelong Street Rodders once again brought colour and the sparkle of metal and chrome together with the roar of engines with their displays, and the Portugese Caravelle replica "Notorious" was a drawcard for many visitors.

The racing program began with the Passage Race from Portarlington to Geelong, and the Ruth Plummer Grand Parade was again one of the

highlights of the Festival, with 90 odd boats a spectacular sight sailing past the marina, led by the tall ships Enterprize and Alexander Stewart.

The inaugural Bote Cote Quick and Dirty Boat Building Competition was hugely popular, with our own Commodore getting into the spirit of things and taking part.

The Presentation Dinner was fully booked with a record number of attendees, and all who were there enjoyed a great night of food, fellowship and an inspiring talk from Tim Jarvis AO.

Our children's activities have become a large focus of the Festival, thanks to Captain Jack Sparrow and his crew who put on a great show and treasure hunt, plus our fantastic face painter. The art competition, open to all Geelong Primary and Secondary Schools made its second appearance at the festival and was a huge success.

We had a wonderful addition to our Festival program this year with the introduction of the St Ayles Skiffs to Geelong. With boats from WA, SA, Tasmania,

Warrnambool and Melbourne, the enthusiasm and passion these people have for the St Ayles concept is truly remarkable and I think it will have a great future. The skiffs being at the festival gave many of our cultural groups through Diversitat an opportunity to be involved and in some cases have their first ever rowing experience. The Spirit of St Ayles Regatta was a huge success and we look forward to seeing the skiffs in Geelong on a regular basis.

Finally, I would like to thank my Committee, all of the volunteers and RGYC staff for their hard work, enthusiasm and support throughout the year. I have again enjoyed chairing this committee and I am extremely confident about the future of Wooden Boat Festival of Geelong.

Stuart Dickson

Chairman

2016 Wooden Boat Festival of Geelong Organizing Committee.

