

# COMMODORE'S MESSAGE



The Royal Geelong Yacht Club Board has had a constant focus on our Club's stated purpose: "To be one of Australia's cornerstone yachting and boating clubs, hosting world class events and home to the nation's best sailors". Our Club is the 2017 Victorian Yacht Club of the Year and the Discover Sailing Centre of the Year! These awards are a very pleasing recognition of all that we have done to develop the programs and activities at the Club. The time, skill and dedication to the Club by so many RGYC Members is fundamental to such success – well done everyone!

The Board has maintained a very strong focus on sailing in regular Club racing and 10 successful regattas for a wide range of yacht classes. The Viper Worlds, Hansa Asia Pacific Championships, State titles in the following classes: Optimists, Laser Masters and Fireballs, the Noelex Australian Championships and our annual Springsail were highlights of the season. Competitors and visitors were pleased with the standard of racing and the friendly atmosphere at RGYC. The skilful work of our volunteers and staff is recognised by every sailor who visits our Club. Congratulations to everyone involved.

RGYC Members have also taken on the challenges in events such as the Cadet Worlds in Argentina (2016) and the Netherlands (August 2017), the Laser Masters in Japan, 49er Worlds in

Canada, many State and National titles and the Sydney-Hobart Race. Well done to all the sailors and their support teams.

The 2017 Festival of Sails was held a week earlier than usual in response to the international cycling event on the waterfront and the funding provided to the Festival. The Festival was an enjoyable event with a positive financial result. The feedback from competitors and RGYC Members was strongly of the view that it should return to the Australia Day focus. The Board was able to make the required change for 2018 with the essential support of the major funding providers. Planning for the 2018 Festival of Sails is well underway and it will be a great celebration of the 175th anniversary of the Passage Race.

Membership numbers are steady and participation in yacht racing remains at similar levels to recent years. RGYC Members agreed to modify the Club Rules to encourage adult Off the Beach sailors to retain their membership and increase participation in sailing. Investment in learn to sail programs has continued so that we grow the pool of future sailors.

The past year has seen us in a strong financial position and the Board has paid close attention to rising costs. Our Club has the financial support of many local and national business partners and their contribution to our successes is gratefully acknowledged. Our major events are also strongly supported by the Victorian Government and the City of Greater Geelong. Thank you.

Geelong Waterfront Safe Harbour Precinct Project (GWSHP) is the master plan for the redevelopment of the Geelong waterfront. It has been a very public project for the Victorian Government and we continue to press our case for funding support. The application for \$3.5 million from the Shared Facilities Fund is in place and we expect a decision very soon. We still

hold funding commitments of \$4 million from the Victorian Government and \$3 million from the City of Greater Geelong.

RGYC has been awarded International Clean Marina Accreditation Level 3, which reflects our dedication to environmental best practice across our entire marina operations. Dredging the basin saw the removal of a very large amount of material. The seaward approach to the basin was deepened as well as the areas not dredged several years ago.

Our community involvement through activities such as Sailability, Sailing for the Vision Impaired, the St. Ayles Skiffs building project and the biennial Wooden Boat Festival is well supported by our Members and appreciated by the many participants.

We are in a period of rapid change in sailing and in our city so the Club has had to adapt to the new circumstances and take opportunities not previously available. It is better for the Club to take control of its future than to be passive and have others make decisions for us. The 2017-2020 Strategic Plan adopted by the Board sets challenging but achievable goals with specific initiatives in the six key areas. I encourage Members to play an active part in the delivery of the Strategic Plan.

Our RGYC staff, led by General Manger Phil Clohesy, have been recognised by the Board for their skill and commitment. I thank all the staff for their support for the Club, our Members and our visitors. They have been major contributors to our success.

I wish the incoming Board every success in further developing the sailing and boating programs, facilities and social events for the wide range of interests of all RGYC Members.

**Chris Williams**

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