

VIPER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2017

Presented by Rex Gorell Land Rover as naming rights sponsor, Royal Geelong Yacht Club hosted the first Viper World Championship to be sailed in Australia. The competitors had a great nine day event, starting on Saturday 7th January and concluding on Sunday 15th January.

Whilst the fleet size was down on the initial expectations, the two person crews on the twenty two competing boats enjoyed some close racing in near perfect conditions on most days. There were competitors from five different countries and four different states of Australia. Of the scheduled fifteen race series, eleven were completed with four cancelled due to strong winds.

The championship was won by NSW sailors Jack Felsenthal and Shaun Connor. An important feature of this event and indeed this class is that it very much has a youth

demographic. Whilst there are some more experienced sailors competing, the majority were under 25. The impacts of this on the sport of sailing include the experience gained by young sailors and from an event perspective, each youth crew brings parents, siblings and other supporters to the venue. Based on estimates of people in and around the club, the additional visitors to Geelong, Victoria and indeed Australia exceeded 100 for the duration of the event. Given that all need accommodation, feeding and entertaining, the economic benefit derived from this event is unquestioned.

From an event management perspective key aspects were;

- More than 30 volunteers assisting across the entire championship
- Visit Victoria financial support and involvement

- City of Greater Geelong financial support and involvement
- Sponsorship and support from Rex Gorell Land Rover, Gill & Goodall Design

This was a fantastic lead in event for the Festival of Sails which kicked off a few days after the end of the Rex Gorell Land Rover Viper World Championship. The strong & positive feedback from competitors and race officials is validation of the approach the Club takes to hosting World Championships and will be referenced when bidding for future World Championship events.

Peter Stephens

RGYC Past Commodore and Viper World Championship Chairman

