

# **MERSEY YACHT CLUB INC.**

## **COMMODORE'S REPORT**

### **2013 – 2014 SEASON**

Dear Members,

It is my privilege to present to you the 2013-2014 Annual Report for the Mersey Yacht Club Inc.

Before progressing to a review of activities this year, I would like to record my thanks to the Management Committee for their support and dedication during the year.

The highlight of the sailing year has been the signing of an agreement between The Three Peaks Inc. committee and the Club to host the 2015 Australian Three Peaks Race. Whilst the Three Peaks has traditionally been an Easter event, it has been determined running the event in the March long weekend will provide positive benefits. The 2015 Australian Three Peaks Race will commence in the Mersey River on the evening of Friday March 6th. It will become a complimentary event to the Taste the Harvest Festival organised annually by the Devonport Lions Club, helping to make Devonport the place to be over the March long weekend each year.

Planning for this event is well underway with a number of social events to be held in the Clubrooms during the week prior to the start. We consider that this event will give a huge exposure to yachting on the coast which we hope will reflect in greater participation over the next few years.

The ongoing upgrade of the marina resulted in the replacement of the last "temporary" pontoons with the new steel pontoon structures on the northern end of the inner marina. Unfortunately the old pontoons didn't quite last the distance and sunk before the new pontoon was ready for installation.

This project was completed thanks to a large number of members who volunteered their time to assist in painting, fitting timber, removing the old pontoons and floating the steel pontoons. I would like to express my thanks to all volunteers and to Brian Marshall who took on the role of project manager to ensure that this project was completed within the tight budget imposed by the Committee.

The same crew recently arranged the rebuilding of the slipway winch which is now operational and meets all the current safety standards.

I am very pleased to report that despite the current economic conditions the Club has had a very successful financial year. The Financial Report reflects that despite expenditure of over \$50,000 on marina replacement only a small operating loss of \$5,700 was recorded for the year. Trading income reflected an increase of around eighteen percent over the previous twelve month period. This increase resulted from a very good year of hiring the Clubrooms for functions and functions for members.

While I am aware that some functions can cause inconveniences to members utilising the clubrooms the income they generate provide the funds to maintain the club facilities.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the Social Committee in organising events and I would like all members to support them in any fund-raising and social functions they arrange.

It is with sadness I recognise the loss of life member Carl "Lucky" Johnson. Lucky was a talented and active sailor throughout his involvement with the Club since the sixties. While he sailed on a number of boats over the years he will be remembered best for his time as skipper for Brian Fumage on Race which was full of highs and lows. Lucky's skills as a draughtsman were in constant demand around the Club with a large number of plans drawn over the years. The Club recognised Carl's services when life membership was bestowed on him in 2009. Lucky was a great mate and he will be sadly missed by all around the Club.

The Club submitted an application for a Tasmanian Community Grant to install a passenger lift to access the Clubrooms from the car park level. This is the first step in making the club suitable for persons with a disability, or who have difficulty utilising the stairs. Unfortunately this application was unsuccessful but we will be resubmitting the application when the next round of grants is advertised.

The sailing fleet has continued to experience only limited participation throughout the summer season. The current Marshalls Engineering Winter Series is attracting around eight starters down on the twenty starters a few seasons ago. The sail training sessions on Saturdays has seen a steady increase in numbers with some participants being snapped up for crew on Saturday afternoons.

Despite the lack of starters the long sailing season continues to strain our race officials and all too often this responsibility falls back on the same few people. The Club owes a huge debt of gratitude to Tony Jamieson for his untiring support in manning the "Bailey", setting courses and running the racing throughout the season. Tony has been assisted by a number of members in particular Edward and Kerily Jamieson. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Kerily for her efforts in providing hot food for the sailors after racing on a Saturday afternoon.

The Club has received the support of a number of sponsors throughout the year and we would like to particularly like to acknowledge the sponsorship of sailing events from Sam Hope, Blind Design, Terry Travers, Mersey Pharmacy and Brian Marshall, Marshall Engineering.

It is encouraging to see a number of events organised by the Cruising Division have been reasonably well attended. I would like to extend my thanks to Terry and Denise Clarke for taking on the role of organising these events.

The Dragons Abreast ladies form a very large part of our Club and add a lot of colour around the Club, particularly on Saturday mornings. The maintenance crew are

planning some changes to the northern trailer sailor pontoon to assist the junior sailors and the Dragon ladies launching and retrieving their boats.

In conclusion I would like to give my thanks to the staff of the Club on a job well done, and also the large number of members who volunteer and assist around the Club in a wide variety of roles. The majority of these people and the tasks they perform go unnoticed by many but the Club would not exist without their support. I would like to recognise the work that Life Member and Licensee Gordon "Butch" Horsham performs. Butch's efforts as voluntary barman on Sunday, Monday and now Wednesday evenings allows the Club to remain open seven days a week.

In summary I consider that the Club is on a sound footing in difficult times and commend this 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Report to members.

Tim Grant

Commodore