

2019 ROLEX SYDNEY TO HOBART YACHT RACE
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
HOTEL GRAND CHANCELLOR, MONDAY 31st DECEMBER 2019

Thank you for inviting my husband Dick and me to the presentation of trophies for the 2019 Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht race.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land—the Mouheneener people. I lament the fact that there are no survivors of the Mouheneener, who were driven from their land by the colonial settlers. But we can be so grateful that in the descendants of Mannalargenna's daughters from the Bass Strait Islands we have a thriving contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and who continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

It is wonderful that this year we have, as I understand it, the first Indigenous Australian crew to officially sail in the race, the nine First Nations people in the eleven-person crew of *Tribal Warrior* which includes a 64-year-old elder from La Perouse and a 40-year-old Redfern woman. *Tribal Warrior* crossed the finish line just before midday today.

It is a great privilege to be here at the 75th presentation ceremony. But as we celebrate the race and the New Year, this year our thoughts are also with those who are at risk from the unprecedented December bushfires here in Tasmania, in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales and in particular with the family of Samuel McPaul, who died yesterday in the Green Valley Blaze, the third volunteer firefighter to die in two weeks.

Like so many other Tasmanians I follow the Sydney to Hobart race with great interest every year from the always spectacular Boxing Day start to the end of the race here in Hobart.

In fact a childhood memory of mine is going aboard Sydney Hobart yacht *Boongown* in the early Sixties, a small yacht skippered by Dr Jim Molesworth who was a Sydney friend of my parents. I also remember the embarrassment of my father falling from *Boongown* into Constitution Dock after too much New Year merriment. When I recounted this story at my first Sydney to Hobart

presentation, for the 2014 race, to my surprise I then met son of Jim Molesworth here on the stage receiving a trophy!

The race has changed dramatically since the 1960s and indeed since that first cruise which turned into a race between four yachts in 1945.

Of course, the 75th race is a milestone, with a big fleet of 157 yachts and with just three retirements. So congratulations to all competitors.

As usual, on Boxing Day, we watched the always spectacular and never-without-incident start on television to see who would be first out of the Heads. This year it was it was *InfoTrack* fulfilling owner Christian Beck's dream after an amazing start. It was a great race between the five maxis and while *Comanche* soon surged to the lead, the lead swapped overnight and *Scallywag* was in the lead for much of Friday.

Comanche rounded Tasman Island first but had some nervous moments when something went awry with the rudder and then again when the wind dropped out with just 3NMs to go but a zephyr arrived to get it to the finishing line first. *Info Track* followed and *Wild Oats* just pipped *Scallywag* which had a problem with a shark wrapped around the rudder near Tasman Light.

The beautiful sleek 66-footer pocket maxi *Alive* was sixth across the line, the best of the rest with another great race after last year's big handicap win. Reading Phil Turner's description of sailing at high speed through a pitch-black night with no moon with water spraying over the front of on to the deck sounds to me quite terrifying rather than exciting.

The rest of the fleet experienced a real mix of conditions, leaving the handicap wide open on Saturday night but by Sunday night it was clear that it would likely to be Matt Allen's *Ichi Ban*, handicap winner in 2017, which after zero breeze at Tasman Island and being buzzed rounding Cave Raoul by a locally owned Jet Provost, eventually caught the sea breeze up the river.

Dick and I have had a wonderful time walking around the docks and being part of the welcoming crowd. Sipping a drink at MACq 01 on Sunday evening we watched a group of yachts with red, white and blue spinnakers flying to the finish line, including the beautiful *Kialoa II*, line honours winner of the 1971 race.

And this morning we admired another Grand Veteran, the 115-year-old *Katwinchar*, bought on Gumtree and restored by Bill Barry-Cotter. A special mention too to *SWD Kayle*, skippered by David Pescud and crewed by sailors with disABILITIES, which crossed the finish line 66 out of 157.

We both want to congratulate all of the sailors who have stepped up to compete in the Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht race, wherever they have finished.

To Rolex, sponsor of the race since 2002, I say thank you for your support of this event.

And last, but certainly not least, I must thank the organiser, the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania for their supporting role and all the volunteers and staff who have made this year's Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race such a success. It is an enormous undertaking and I congratulate you all on a job well done.

Thank you again for inviting me to participate in this wonderful event.