

LAUNCESTON TO HOBART YACHT RACE 2020
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
DERWENT SAILING SQUADRON
TUESDAY 31 DECEMBER 2020

Good afternoon everyone. It's a great pleasure for my husband Dick and me to be here again at the Derwent Sailing Squadron and to have the honour to assist in the presentation of the 2020 TasPorts Launceston to Hobart Yacht Race trophies.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land—the Mouheneener people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession and yet who continue to maintain their identity, culture and indigenous rights.

Covid-19 is a sobering reminder that the reason that there are no living descendents of the Mouheneener is largely because of the devastating effects of respiratory disease on the original Tasmanians living on this shore of the Derwent who lacked immunity to the pneumonic diseases brought here by the British.

Covid-19 has of course had a devastating effect on the world this last year with more than 1.7 million deaths world-wide and disruptions to so many aspects of our lives including cancellation of the Sydney Hobart and Melbourne Hobart which this L2H was designed to complement. No longer complementing anything, the L2H became the biggest yacht race in the world this Christmas-New Year.

How lucky we are, thanks to the way this pandemic has been handled on this island, that this race has been able to go ahead. As we celebrate the competitors and the New Year we must also remember those who are suffering from the effects of the pandemic in so many ways.

There was a field of 31 yachts this year for the fourteenth year of this race, the biggest fleet since 2016. This year, a late entry after the cancellation of the Sydney-Hobart, Phillip Turner's 66-foot *Alive*, skippered by Duncan Hine, became clear favourite for line honours. Indeed, it was first past the lighthouse at Low Head in just 35 minutes from the start and headed into Bass Strait

followed by Melbourne yacht the *Dream* and Launceston yacht, *Advantagedge*. Crossing the line at 7.30pm on Monday evening, *Alive* made it inside the race record. Dick and I walked out to Cape Raoul on Monday hoping to see *Alive* pass by. But light breezes slowed its pace and there was no sign of its distinctive black sails as we scanned the sea. Clearly we chose the wrong Cape – our daughter Emily and grandchildren sighted *Alive* from Cape Hauy (north of Cape Raoul) at around lunch time.

The fleet was hammered on the opening night. Sailing east across Bass Strait with a 30-knot westerly and then, as the fleet turned the corner south, it was confronted with a brutal southerly with gusts of up to 40 knots which took its toll on boats and crews, dismasting *B&G Advantage*, forcing the retirement of *Zephr* with rudder damage and *Black Magic* to turn on its motor and head for the calm waters of Triabunna with a seasick crew.

Prima Donna, suffered mast damage, and was also forced to withdraw from the race, but with its motor and a jury rig, the crew enjoyed the trip south and cheerfully docked safely at King's Pier, under its new name, *Stumpy*.

There was a great battle for overall handicap winner with Hobart skipper Scott Broadby's *Detail First*, taking out the honours in a maiden race win. A fantastic spinnaker run past Bicheno, Freycinet Peninsula and through Mercury Passage at Maria on night two gave the boat the boost it needed to finish just after midday on Tuesday – with something like 17 boats finishing between 4am and midday, all enjoying an amazing sunrise and huge schools of dolphins for company.

I would like to offer my congratulations to all the yachts that entered the race in this most difficult year.

And I would like to thank the major sponsor of the event, TasPorts; and to Supporting Partners: Cascade Breweries, Peter Johnston Ship Chandlery, Tasbulk and Tassal.

And needless to say I express my thanks, on behalf of all of you, to the Derwent Sailing Squadron, which conducts the race with the cooperation of the Tamar Yacht Club. It's a big effort putting together an offshore race like this one, particularly with the uncertainties of 2020.

Thank you.