

LAUNCESTON TO HOBART YACHT RACE PRESENTATIONS

BY

THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC

GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA

DERWENT SAILING SQUADRON

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Here we are again at the prize giving ceremony for the 285 nautical mile Launceston to Hobart ocean yacht race. This is the 7th time this race has been run. 33 Yachts entered the race last year - which is almost exactly double the number that entered the first race six years - ago and this year the number is a record 35 entrants three of which have come from Victoria to be in the race.

On a personal note I was particularly pleased to see that Peter Rae entered his boat Genevieve and skippered it to Hobart. I say that because Peter - who is just a little older than me - and I spent some time in Law School together back in the 1950's and the other morning as I forced myself to go for my daily exercise I thought well, if Peter Rae can go ocean racing the least I can do is go for a swim. Although as I reluctantly forced myself to exercise I decided that there must be a special connection between longevity and ocean racing for Peter Rae is but a lad when compared to Syd Fischer, who is 85 years old and has just driven Ragamuffin at breakneck speed down from Sydney. It was also good to see Tobias Fahey and his boat Sea Quest in the race, after the bad luck that he had at the start of his round the

world venture earlier this year. We all wish him better luck when he sets off again next October

As it says on the race website this iconic annual celebration of racing sees yachts from all three races, the Launceston to Hobart, Sydney to Hobart, and Melbourne to Hobart, battle together up the Derwent Estuary to the finish line and then tie up at the docks in central Hobart to celebrate the New Year and the rich maritime heritage of Tasmania – great fun and a warm camaraderie awaits all competitors.

Volvo Ocean Race CEO Kurt Frostad said with respect to Alicante in Spain, the starting port for the 2011/2012 Volvo: “One of our objectives has been to transform the Volvo Ocean Race into a festival. On the water it’s a race and on land it’s a festival. We’re not a football match where it lasts for 90 minutes and then you go home – the Volvo Ocean Race is something to come to, experience, be seen at and ultimately enjoy.”¹ So it is I think for the port of Hobart and the Ocean Yacht Races. But it’s not just the ocean races. As I speak, the Sandy Bay Sailing Club is hosting the World Cadet Dinghy Championship. Thirty-five boats and cadet crews who have come from Britain, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Argentina, Ukraine and Poland plus 14 of the best junior sailors in Australia are

¹ <http://chictraveller.com/press/2011/10/volvo-ocean-race-alicante/> accessed 20.12.12.

battling for the world title on the River Derwent. All of them surely the next generation of skippers and crews of the ocean racing yachts.

So it's the whole business down here in Hobart at this time of the year; the ocean racing boats from Sydney, Melbourne and Launceston; the characters who race those boats; the junior racing with crews from all over the world, the dangers and thrills of the races and the music and dancing and festivities at the end of the race could all well be described as the Hobart yachting festival and as Herr Frostad said of Alicante in Spain at the start of the Volvo Round the World, the whole experience is something to come to and to be seen at and ultimately to enjoy.

Before the prizes are presented I would just like to congratulate Commodore Ron Bugg of the DSS and his Committee along with the hard working volunteers from the Squadron who, with members of the Tamar Yacht Club, organised and safely conducted this annual race. My thanks go to the Principal Sponsor "Good Guys" and the other sponsors without whose support L2H would not be possible and a final thank you goes to all the crews for it was your participation that made the race the success that it was, and it was your participation that helped boost the wonderful festivities at the 2012/13 Hobart Yachting Festival.