

**REMARKS AT THE MELBOURNE-HOBART YACHT RACE
PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY
BY
THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA - MONDAY 31ST DECEMBER 2012**

Well, it's good to be back again for the Melbourne to Hobart Prize giving celebration. For those of you who came down the West Coast of Tasmania this is the 41st Westcoaster that has been run and for the rest who came down the other side of Tasmania it is the fifth time this race has been run. Either way the race is 440 nautical miles give or take a mile or two. According to the Ocean Racing Club of Victoria the Westcoaster is "Arguably Australia's most challenging ocean race" & goes on to explain, "This is a race run for yachters by yachters. It presents an amazing challenge to the participants and is run with a level of spirit and camaraderie not often seen. There are no fat wallet boats here, just great sailors working hard." I am not quite sure what a "fat wallet boat is" but it doesn't sound like a complimentary description to me!! This year saw the running of the Eastcoaster for the 5th time. The ORCV webs site doesn't say a lot about the boats that race to Hobart down the East coast other than it is a popular race and I can't help but think that maybe the webmaster considers the Eastcoaster to be populated by fat wallet boats and sailors who just lie about the deck sunning themselves but of course, if he did he would be quite wrong wouldn't he?

However, I can say that both races provide great sport for participants and spectators. I congratulate all of you who took part in these two ocean races and particularly of course, all those who are to

receive trophies this afternoon; your achievements are inspirational to sailors and would-be sailors around the country. Ocean racing can be a very expensive sport which of course, causes fat wallets to become thin wallets and naturally the public gaze focuses upon the larger yachts fitted out with the latest carbon fibre sails and the latest technology, but when you are at sea and racing on a handicap, it makes little difference whether you are sailing one of those modern machines or sailing a smaller and more conventional boat, for it is a high level of seamanship and the discipline and teamwork of the entire crew as well as personal courage and endurance that prevails. Whether you are an Eastcoaster or a Westcoaster ocean racing is a very tough sport.

Earlier today I spoke at the presentation of trophies for the Launceston to Hobart race and referred to the festivities that mark the end of the Melbourne to Hobart, the end of the Sydney to Hobart and the end of the Launceston to Hobart yacht races and the great fun and a warm camaraderie that awaits all competitors. I referred to something that the Volvo Ocean Race CEO Kurt Frostad said with respect to Alicante in Spain, the starting port for the 2011/2012 Volvo. He said, "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

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

the Port of Hobart and the Ocean Yacht Races. But there is more in Hobart than 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 battling for the world cadet dinghy 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.

So thank you all the crews in the Melbourne to Hobart yacht races for coming to Hobart and thank you for helping to make the yachting festival such a great success. It is really great to have you here and I hope that you all enjoy the festivities as much as the people of Hobart enjoy them.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Heemskirk Consolidated, a Mining Producer, for its long term support as naming rights sponsor of these now two famous ocean yacht races and also to all the other sponsors who together make them possible. Congratulations also go to the Ocean Racing Club of Victoria and the hard working crew at the Derwent Sailing Squadron for efficiently and safely organising and running two very exciting races this year.

I look forward to see you all at the Hobart yachting festival next year.