

2016 MELBOURNE TO HOBART YACHT RACE
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AM
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
DERWENT SAILING SQUADRON, WEDNESDAY 31 DECEMBER 2016

Good afternoon everyone. It's a great pleasure for my husband Dick and me to be here at the Derwent Sailing Squadron and for me to have the honour of presenting the 2016 Melbourne to Hobart race trophies and to share with you the triumphs of another successful race and safe arrival of competitors.

May I begin by paying my respects to the Mouhaneener People, their community, and elders past, present and future, as the original and continuing custodians of the land on which we meet.

As I have noted in previous years, this race complements the Sydney Hobart and was created to take advantage of the celebration of racing that goes with the Sydney Hobart race.

This year marks the 44th consecutive Melbourne to Hobart Westcoaster which started at 1230 AEDT on Tuesday 27th December from Portsea Pier in Port Phillip Bay.

It is a race that covers 435 nautical miles and this year had 10 boats participating with 78 crew including 14 women. I note from the Ocean Racing Club of Victoria's Yearbook 2016-2017 it is, "Arguably Australia's most challenging ocean race... a race run for yachties by yachties...run with a level of spirit and camaraderie not often seen."¹

The article goes on to explain that the Westcoaster was initially criticised, I quote, as "it was like Russian roulette with yachts." Despite the fearsome reputation of the west coast of Tasmania, the Westcoaster has an enviable safety record, largely due to the careful management and education programs put in place by the ORCV.

¹ Ocean Racing Club of Victoria's Yearbook 2016-2017.

The reward for competitors taking that route is some of the most dramatic and wonderfully scenic coastline you will ever see – South West Cape and the Friars of South Bruny Island are highlights. ² I do hope that you managed to see all of this; I know that sea mist on the East Coast meant that not even Cape Pillar and Tasman Island were visible to the Sydney Hobart and L2H yachts.

It was a chaotic start to the Melbourne to Hobart race with a couple of little collisions before the boats even crossed the start, but fortunately only minor damage occurred. Apparently videos of the start went viral with about 150,000 people viewing them.

On Tuesday evening the favourite *Cadibarra 8* had a slim lead. On Wednesday night *Cadibarra* and *Lord Jiminy* were locked in a contest for the lead at the front of the fleet. And what a race it was with *Lord Jiminy* leading on Friday morning by about 500m as it passed John Garrow light off Sandy Bay, but *Cadibarra's* crew headed for the middle of the river where it found enough breeze to finish just 7 minutes ahead of *Lord Jiminy* co-skipped by Chris Barlow and Jamie Christensen, one of the two double-handed crews in the race.

The rest of the fleet was caught in light conditions between South West Cape and the Iron Pot and finished in a bunch just before midnight last night and over the next hour and a half. There were just a few seconds between *Double Trouble* and *One for the Road*. But what a race for *Cadibarra* – first out of Port Phillip Bay, line honours and winner on handicap. Congratulations to skipper Paul Roberts and crew – including the very chatty crew member who told me about the race last night!

For Patricia Peart on *Yoko*, it was her 25th Melbourne to Hobart, so congratulations for a great effort. And its skipper Robin Hewitt has done an amazing 35 Melbourne to Hobarts.

As I have in the past 2 years, I again congratulate the sponsors of the event, without whom there would not be a race to celebrate. To all of you who took part in the race and, in particular, all those who are to receive trophies this afternoon, your achievements are inspirational to sailors and would-be sailors and even to never-want-to be sailors around the country.

² Ibid

Finally, I would like to thank all of the officials from the Ocean Racing Club of Victoria and the Derwent Sailing Squadron, the time keepers, marine radio operators and all the volunteers who have been involved in making these races such a success.

And now I look forward to presenting the trophies to the winners of the various categories.

Thank you.