

**SYDNEY-HOBART YACHT RACE PRESENTATIONS  
BY  
THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
ROYAL YACHT CLUB OF TASMANIA  
TUESDAY 1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2013**

The 68<sup>th</sup> Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race has been run. It was a fantastic triumph for Wild Oats XI and we all congratulate Mark Richards and his crew for sailing a brilliant race and securing a place in the record book that will be hard to displace. Over the years since the first race in 1945 this blue water classic has become an icon of Australia's summer sport, ranking, in public interest with such national events as the Melbourne Cup horse race, the Davis Cup tennis and the Ashes cricket tests between Australia and England or should I say Sri Lanka? And I know that I speak for all Tasmanians when I say to those who took part in this year's great race, "You are all very welcome here in our beautiful port." The Sydney Hobart yacht race together with the races from Melbourne and Launceston make the Hobart waterfront a Mecca for people from all over the State, from all parts of Australia and from overseas as well. The arrival of the yachts and their crews turns Hobart into a festive city. Of course, the visitors are good for business too, but money is not the issue. The visitors bring life and vitality to the city and that's really why you are so welcome.

That warm welcome and that friendly hospitality is a part of the Sydney Hobart race just as are the headwinds and storms in Bass Strait and just as are the periods of dead calm on the River Derwent just a few

kilometres from the finish line. What is it about the Sydney Hobart that makes it such a special race, in the minds of, not just those who sail in it, but also in the minds of many who have never set foot in a boat? It has been suggested that the attraction of this great race

“... is the challenge of the wind and the sea, the comradeship of this adventure, the competitive boat-for-boat, tactical encounters and, not the least, the remarkable hospitality that Tasmanians show the crews who have reached their island State. No other similar passage yacht race in the world is accorded such a magnificent start from Sydney Harbour, nor such a huge welcome as is accorded the first yacht that berths at Hobart’s historic Constitution Dock. The Hobartians and visitors from around the world are there in thousands, no matter the time of day or night.”<sup>1</sup>

Volvo Ocean Race CEO Knut 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.”<sup>2</sup> So it is I think for the port of Hobart and the Sydney Hobart Yacht Race. The whole business; the boats, the racing, the characters who race the boats, the dangers and thrills of the race and the music and dancing and festivities at the end of the race could all well be described as the

---

<sup>1</sup>An extrapolation derived from an article published on the Internet: <http://www.sailworld.com/Australia/index.cfm?SEID=2&Nid=40220&SRCID=0&ntid=0&tickeruid=0&tickerCID=0>

<sup>2</sup> <http://chictraveller.com/press/2011/10/volvo-ocean-race-alicante/> accessed 20.12.12.

Sydney/Hobart yacht festival. Just 9 boats lined up at the start of the first Sydney Hobart race in 1945 and although I wasn't there, I doubt very much if any one of the crew of those 9 boats imagined for a moment that 68 years on there would be 77 boats lined up at the start and nor would they have imagined that the race would become as famous and as widely celebrated as it has done.

Ocean racing is dangerous business. Fortunately this year saw no loss of life or serious injury and it is very much to the credit of CYC, but of course, there is always the risk of foul weather as these thorough-bred high tech surf boards scream across Bass Strait and down the east coast of Tasmania. And no one will forget the tragic loss of 6 lives in the 1998 race. The Cruising Yacht Club of Australia is to be commended for its strict safety regulations for the race and its insistence that the skippers adhere to them.

Before presenting the prizes I would like to congratulate all those who worked so hard to make this great ocean race the success that it has become. I refer in particular to the people at the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia and to the people here at the Royal Hobart Yacht Club. I would also like to thank all the sponsors, especially the major sponsor, Rolex, for without the sponsors this race would not be possible. Of course, my congratulations go to all the winners, especially Wild Oats XI, but those congratulations also extend to every single one of the competitors in the 2012 Sydney to Hobart yacht race for each one of you - in the 77 boats that crossed the starting line in Sydney on Boxing Day - the super maxis and the smaller boats - played a part in creating the Sydney Hobart

festival and once again, in making this Blue water classic a world renowned event.