
**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC,
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA AT THE SYDNEY/HOBART
YACHT RACE PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY, SUNDAY 1ST
JANUARY 2012**

It is a pleasure to have been invited once again to take part in this prize giving ceremony that always follows the Sydney Hobart Yacht Race. It is also a pleasure as the Governor of the State of Tasmania to extend a warm welcome to all the visitors to our island State. I know that you have already been made to feel welcome by the local yachting fraternity – indeed such is the enthusiasm with which hospitality is extended to our yachting visitors at this time of the year that it makes you think that the crews need more rigorous training to cope with the post-race events than they need for the race itself.

This year 88 boats crossed the starting line on Sydney Harbour to start the 67th Rolex Sydney Yacht Race. Writing before the race began Garry Linacre said, “This year’s race has attracted a great group of yachts with an exciting mix of brand new, recently acquired and well established boats that will provide strong competition for line honours and through the divisions. The race for the elusive Tattersall’s Cup for overall honours will again be absorbing.” His forecast turned out to be spot on!

Although 12 of the 88 starters did not cross the finishing line it's a welcome relief see the race completed without serious injury or loss of life. In this respect I congratulate the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia for there is no doubt that it has had a tremendous influence world-wide in improving race communications and sea safety, maintaining the highest standards for yacht race entry. As to the race itself what a nail-biter it was for first over the line with only 3 minutes and 8 seconds between Investic Loyal and Wild Oats 11. I understand that it is the second closest finish ever and as an ABC Commentator said, "It's as good as it gets demanding tactics, skill, alertness and cunning with every opportunity to steal an advantage taken." And for the crews of Loki and Investic Loyal this race certainly is as good as it gets.

Although a great deal of attention is paid to safety issues, ocean yacht racing is not for the inexperienced or the faint hearted and so one wonders why you do it! Paul Cayard, winning Volvo and America's Cup Skipper, once said "Sydney to Hobart is 610 miles of the roughest conditions in racing. Some call it crazy, others see it as the ultimate CHALLENGE...one of those rare opportunities in life...unforgettable".¹

Craig Gleeson who sailed in the 2008 Sydney Hobart for the first and maybe only time, said it was a dream come true for him. A

¹ <http://www.getaway-sailing.com/adventures.asp>

dream he had had since he was a boy sailing his dinghy in Paramatta. This was how he described the reality of his dream as he crossed Bass Strait, we were “sailing at night with no moon (that’s right NO moon). [He said] It is something you have to experience to appreciate. As the boat surges off one wave onto another and then another at 20 – 25 knots all you see is the white water the boat is making, it is PRICELESS. [He continued] My hat is off to anyone who has the nerve to steer a boat in these conditions”²

Well, it’s not for me Craig I am afraid, but like you, I take my hat off to the courage, the skill, the endurance and the strength of all the competitors in this wonderful Ocean race. And I congratulate Rolex and the other sponsors without whose continuing support this famous blue water classic would not have been possible. My congratulations go to the many people both here and in Sydney who have worked so hard to see that the race was well run. And, of course my congratulations go to all the winners in this, the 2011 Sydney Hobart race.

² http://www.getaway-sailing.com/_about_Testimonials.asp