

2016 ROLEX SYDNEY TO HOBART YACHT RACE
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AM
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
HOTEL GRAND CHANCELLOR, SUNDAY 1 JANUARY 2017

Thank you for inviting my husband, Dick, and me to present the trophies for the 2016 Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht race.

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.

This is the third year that I have attended this ceremony and I must say it is a great privilege. Like so many Tasmanians and Australians we follow the race with great interest every year from the always spectacular Boxing Day start to the end of the race here in beautiful Hobart.

I have spoken in the past about the history of the race, namely that the Sydney to Hobart race began in a rather off-the-cuff fashion. During 1945 three members of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia — Jack Earl, Peter Luke and Bert Walker—planned a cruise to Hobart in their respective yachts after Christmas. One evening Captain John Illingworth RN gave a talk to the club members, and afterwards Peter Luke suggested Illingworth might like to join the cruise. Illingworth's reply was 'I will, if you make a race of it'.¹

And now over 70 years later the race is internationally recognised as one of the three classic blue-water ocean races — the others being the Fastnet Race in the UK and Bermuda Race along the east coast of the US.

As a Hobartian I have always taken an interest in the Sydney to Hobart but I have to say that being involved in the prize giving event has sharpened my interest. Dick and I were glued to the television for the spectacular start on Boxing Day to see who would be first out of the Heads. It was of course *Perpetual Loyal* followed by *Beau Geste*, *Scallywag* and *Wild Oats*, but at some stage *Wild Oats* took the lead.

¹ <http://stories.anmm.gov.au/sydney-hobart-70/> accessed 23 Dec 15

But on Tuesday and in sight of *Perpetual Loyal*, *Wild Oats* suddenly stopped and heeled over because of a broken hydraulic ram on the keel. Anthony Bell's *Perpetual Loyal* took the lead for the rest of the race crossing the finishing line in record breaking time, early on Wednesday morning, breaking the record by five hours. In fact the record was broken by three boats, *Perpetual Loyal*, *Giacomo* and *Scallywag*. Not only was the New Zealand Boat, Jim Delegat's *Giacomo* second over the line, it won on handicap.

So it was an incredibly fast race with even the smallest boats safely moored on Friday, the day before New Year's Eve, including the oldest and smallest *Maluka of Kermandie* and the second smallest boat *Landfall*.

I am sorry that most of you saw very little if anything of the stunning Tasmanian coastline on the way here, shrouded as it was in sea mist. All the more reason to stay around and do some sightseeing and to return for another race.

Dick and I have had a wonderful time walking around the docks, and being part of the welcoming crowd. And we were there to see *Alive*, the first Tassie boat over the line. It's great to see that all four Tasmanian boats have done so well including *Cromarty Magellan's* win in the Corinthian Division.

It is also wonderful to see so many international crews, eleven this year. It's the first time there have been two Chinese crews and the first all Korean crew on *Sonic*. So many firsts! Another notable one is the first all-Aboriginal crew proudly flying the Aboriginal flag on *Southern Excellence 2*, supported by the Tribal Warriors Association.

I am full of admiration for the courage and persistence of all of the competitors.

So we both want to congratulate all of the sailors who have stepped up to compete in the Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht race, wherever they have finished.

Congratulations to *Perpetual Loyal* for taking line honours, and in record time.

And to Handicap winner *Giacomo*, owner Jim Delegat and his crew. What a fabulous achievement, particularly in the light of the heartbreak of a broken mast in the 2014 race.

To Rolex, sponsor of the race since 2002, I say thank you for your support of this event. Rolex present two of their magnificent chronometers to the winners of the Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race — something that is a fitting and lasting memento of their achievements.

And last, but certainly not least, I must thank all of the organisers, volunteers and staff who have made this year's Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race such a success. It is an enormous undertaking and I congratulate you all on a job well done.

I look forward to presenting trophies to the winners amongst you shortly.

Thank you.