

**ROLEX SYDNEY TO HOBART YACHT RACE 2021**  
**SPEECH BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA,**  
**FEDERATION CONCERT HALL, FRIDAY 31 DECEMBER 2021**

Thank you and good afternoon.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

May I acknowledge among us:

- The Honourable Jacqui Petrusma MP, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management; also for Prevention of Family Violence; and also for Parks
- CYCA Commodore Noel Cornish
- RYCT Commodore Richard Bevan
- And Benoit Falletti, General Manager Rolex Australia.

Well, what a wild race the 76<sup>th</sup> has turned out to be! The Bureau of Meteorology accurately predicted harsh southerlies and confused seas from the first afternoon and that prediction resulted in nearly half the fleet retiring, with injured crew, damaged rigging, hulls, rudders and engine problems among others.

I know that all of us here will have thoughts of and commiserations for the 37 yachts and their crews that won't be making it to Hobart this year. That is an extraordinary level of attrition for a single sporting event. No wonder the media have been using terms like "carnage", "pummelled", "brutal bashing", "treacherous" and "horrible" – although, I note Noel Cornish used the comparatively sedate, "very tough".

Let's try and encapsulate those feelings of disappointment with one example. The two-hander *Maverick* was the 34th boat to retire from the race.

Co-skippers, Rod Smallman and Leeton Hulley, explained what happened: "We hit something heavy. Part of the deck was also shattered. We were the furthest east in the current and thought we were in good shape. We are gutted."<sup>1</sup>

The other side of these pains is the thrill of the challenge of competing in the world's premier blue-water classic, the Great Race, returning to our waters after the cancellation last year of what would have been the 76<sup>th</sup> edition of the Sydney-Hobart.

Who would have thought that such an iconic annual event would grow from its humble, if mischievous beginnings, in 1945. That year, 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. Afterwards, Peter Luke suggested Illingworth might like to join the cruise. Illingworth's legendary reply was "I will, if you make a race of it."<sup>2</sup>

Ladies and gentleman, every sailor is to be congratulated for competing in the Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht race, whether or not you have completed or will complete this year's race. Remember, it is your rising to the challenge each time, or for the first time, that ensures the Sydney to Hobart maintains its status as a fantastic world event of skill, luck, bravery and above all, camaraderie.

Warmest congratulations to *Black Jack* skippered by Mark Bradford and every one of your crew for taking line honours. From the start cannon in Sydney to the hooter at Castray Esplanade, you did it in two days, twelve hours, 37 minutes and 17 seconds.

The fact that that is the slowest time since 2004 is a badge of honour in its own way because it's a measure of just how tough and complex this year's race has been.

And to *Black Jack* owner Peter Harburg, well done. You call this race the "grand prize of yachting in Australia" and now – although you weren't aboard this year – this wonderful supermaxi has done the job twice, taking line honours in 2009 as *Alfa Romeo*.

And to Handicap winner *Ichi Ban* skippered by Matt Allen and your crew, well done, an outstanding achievement.

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<sup>1</sup> [Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race 2021](#), accessed 28 January 2021.

<sup>2</sup> <http://stories.anmm.gov.au/sydney-hobart-70/> accessed 23 December 2015.

While commiserations are due to *Celestial* skippered by Sam Haynes and your crew, for the upheld time penalty.

To Rolex, sponsor of the race since 2002, thank you for your support of this event. Rolex present two of their magnificent chronometers to the winners of this Great Race — precious objects that are lasting mementos of our winners' achievements.

Finally, on behalf of all who love this event, I heartily 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. I congratulate you all on a job well done.

Thank you.