

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE PETER  
UNDERWOOD AC, GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA AT THE PRIZE  
GIVING CEREMONY FOR THE SYDNEY 2013 HOBART YACHT  
RACE, WEDNESDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2014**

Well here we are again. Welcome to Hobart, the finish of the 69<sup>th</sup> Sydney to Hobart yacht race. I congratulate everyone on Wild Oats XI on another truly fantastic win and also Dr Hodgkinson and his crew on Victoire for winning a perfectly planned and executed race. The Commodore of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, Mr Howard Piggott introduced this year's race in his editorial for the latest edition of the Club's magazine with this flourish; "A strong fleet of 94 yachts comprising five 100 foot super maxis, 22 international entries, 15 new boats, 36 first-timers, previous overall and line honours winners and many supportive regulars returning this year will take to the start line on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2013 for the 69<sup>th</sup> Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race. Well, it doesn't get better much better than that does it?

What a great mixture of boats it is this year. Commodore Piggott raises the tension that this race creates as he writes about the well-known names that raise the big challenge - *Wild Oats XI*, *Ragamuffin 100*, *Perpetual LOYAL* and *Wild Thing*. He writes of spirited racing between the three Volvo 70's and what he calls the "three new builds that represent the latest thinking in offshore yacht designs." Commodore Piggott refers to the entry of 12 Clipper 70's designed for this year's Clipper Round the World Race and which are using the Sydney to Hobart as one of the 16 legs in their round the world challenge. Then there is *Helsal III* with its multi-national crew coming from six nations and the fabulous Facebook Sailors with disABILITIES and many more. It's no wonder it is called one of the greatest ocean races in the world.

How things have changed since that first race which saw Captain John Illingworth win line and handicap honours in Rani. It took him 6 days, 14 hours and 22 minutes to cover the distance from Sydney to Hobart. This year Mark Richards also won line honours or I should say *yet again*, won line honours in Wild Oats XI but covered the same distance in a mere 2 days 6 hours and 7 minutes!! Interestingly, Rani was the smallest ever boat to win the Sydney Hobart line honours and Wild Oats is the largest boat to win handicap honours.

Although women were quick to join the Sydney to Hobart with the first two women sailing with their husbands in the second race, it wasn't until 1975 that the first all-women crew finished the race in a boat called Barbarian skippered by Vicki Wilman. This year there are a record 151 female sailors in the Sydney to Hobart. Just over a week ago there was a brilliant photo on the back page of the local newspaper of Karen Meyer. It was taken looking down on her as she was high up Wild Thing's mast, looking as cool as the proverbial cucumber and the picture is accompanied by the story that she is a mother of two by day and aims to be the first female bow person to sail to victory in the Sydney Hobart. Well. Karen wasn't the only woman looking for that title this year, but both of them will have to try again next year.

So how things change and yet - as the saying goes - how things remain the same. Ocean racing is still a very tough and sometimes very dangerous sport. It is also a very expensive sport and so naturally the public gaze focuses upon the larger yachts fitted out with the latest carbon fibre sails and the latest technology, but when you are at sea and racing on a handicap, it makes little difference whether you are sailing one of those modern machines or sailing a smaller and more

conventional boat, for it is a high level of seamanship and the discipline and teamwork of the entire crew as well as personal courage and endurance that prevails. So I salute those values in all you who compete in this very tough sport and I hope to see you all back again next year. Ocean racing is all about you, the crew, the boat and how you perform as an individual and how you perform as part of a team against nature.

As I speak about these intrepid sailors let us also pay tribute to their families – husbands, partners, wives, children, mothers and fathers. Every member of every family of every crew member who sails in the Sydney Hobart shares the anxiety and fears that are associated with this race. Further, without the support and encouragement their families it would not be possible for the owners, masters and crew of these racing machines to equip them and train for the race. It is their support and encouragement that makes possible the time and the very considerable amount of money that has to be spent getting ready for this great race and then competing in it. Without that support and encouragement most of the sailors in this race would not be here. I salute them.

Finally, I congratulate all of you who took part in this great race. I thank all the sponsors, especially long-term lead sponsor Rolex for without the sponsors there would be no Sydney to Hobart race. Thanks also go to the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia and the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania and the two hundred volunteers who have worked so hard to ensure that this year's race was a successful one and most importantly a safe one for all those who took part.