



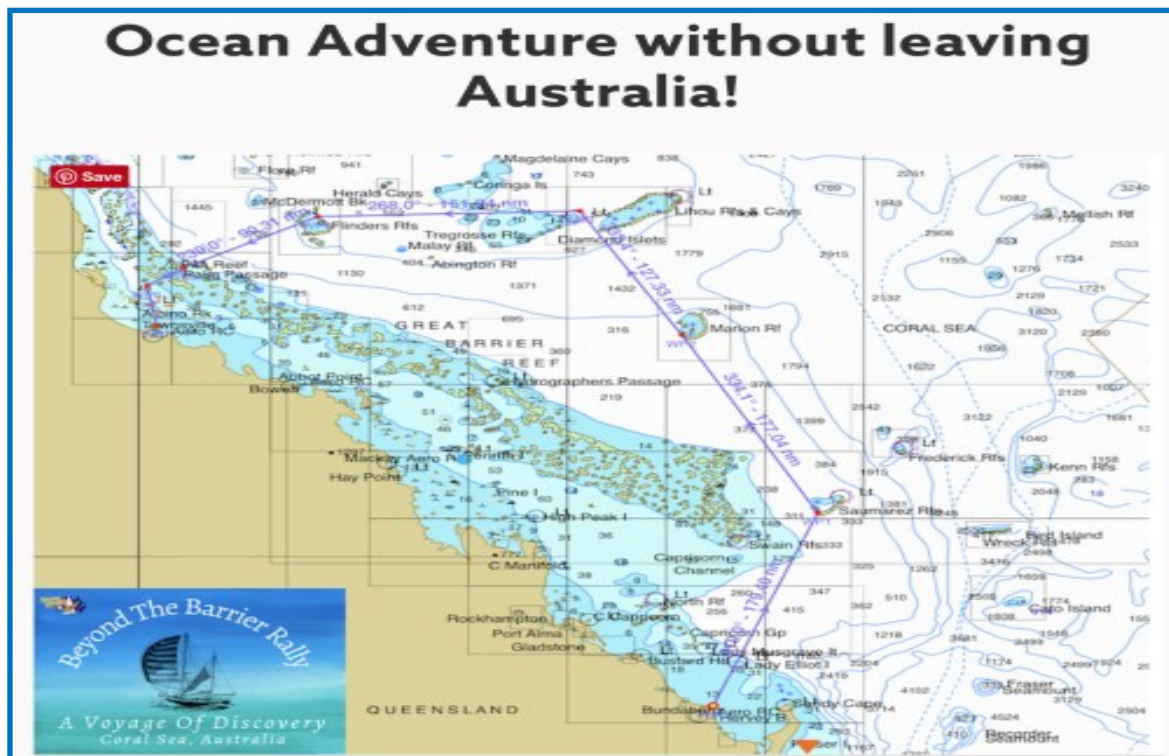
CRUISING NEWS



OCTOBER 2021

Beyond the Barrier Rally An Unplanned Ocean Adventure without Leaving Australia

Brenton and Robina Smith



It all started with Trish and Charles in the laundry at Urangan – “We are heading to Bundaberg for the Beyond the Barrier Rally starting next week!” We had heard of this rally and seen the pictures from the June Rally on Facebook.

They had had wonderful weather, nothing over 15 knots, it had looked idyllic. Then we arrived in Bundaberg where the rally yachts were assembling. Brenton met Duncan in the chandlery – “We are going on the rally and there are still spaces, some boats have had to pull out as they are in lockdown further south!” Hmmm!

The Skipper and the Admiral had a discussion and looked at the requirements for entry. We seemed to meet them all without any extra work except for needing a PredictWind chip for our Iridium Go satellite phone that we hadn’t used for 5 years and some morphine to bring our Medical Kit up to Cat 1. Watermaker, life raft, EPIRB, handheld VHF along with all the other Cat 1 requirements were already on board.

We were becoming interested and decided to contact the organiser John Hembrow of Down Under Cruisers Rallies to see if it was possible before we discussed it anymore. John had just arrived in Bundaberg and met us that afternoon. After an informative discussion in which he was no doubt working out if these latecomers were experienced enough for this adventure, having not done his Preparation for Cruising course or met us before, he gave us a PredictWind chip for our satellite phone and waited for our final decision. Dinner that night had lots of pros and cons lists, were we up for it? We met Kim and Karl from the catamaran next door who were very positive, slept on the decision and decided that this was a Mark Twain moment – ‘Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.’

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The flurry of activity started to reinstate the Iridium Go with email, text messages and phone calls plus all the other jobs to be done to ensure we were in the best condition possible to go offshore.

This was a rally taking us more than 200nm offshore over 18-21 days, the legs were long in open ocean and the anchorages would offer a degree of protection and comfort in light conditions so the weather was going to play a major part in the overall experience. The rewards were going to be visiting reefs, islets and cays that were seldom visited and in pristine condition. The idea for the rally came about as the Rallies organised by John and Leanne Hembrow - Down Under Cruisers Rallies - to the Pacific Islands could no longer be held due to Covid. John had been sent a copy of *Australia Coral Sea Islands and Marine Park* by the author Peter Sayre and consulted Peter as to whether a rally to these remote places but still inside Australian waters was feasible.

As the 12 boats in the fleet assembled over the weekend there were the Meet and Greet drinks and meal and the final rally briefing. The fleet consisted of one 68ft motorboat, Mother Duck aka Cavallino III, with 3 catamarans and 8 monohulls of various sizes. We were one of the smallest boats! Crews were from 4 down to 2 with 6 boats crewed by a couple. Rally HQ with John and Leanne were on Cavallino III.

At the briefing we were given the charts, waypoints, communications and voyage planning guidelines ie what time the 5knot, 6 knot etc boats needed to leave an anchorage to arrive at the next anchorage in the golden hours of 1000-1400 when the sun is high in the sky to be able to avoid the bommies. The weather was discussed with PredictWind Offshore being our guide as it was able to be downloaded via Iridium Go to our laptops. John Hembrow was also getting updates from MetBob, who did the passage planning for Chakana's trip to New Caledonia 6 years ago and was the weather consultant for the likes of Jessica Watson and Lisa Blair.

The rally was scheduled to start on Tuesday August 3rd. The weather was not good for heading off that day with a strong northerly. However, with towns north and south being sent into lockdown due to possible Covid cases no one was prepared to delay leaving for a day and find ourselves locked down and unable to sail the rally. The compromise was to head to Lady Musgrave, wait for the southerly change that night then continue on to Saumarez Reef with more favourable winds.

Chakana left Bundaberg at midnight with several other boats whose cruising speed was in the 5-6 knot range. We met the strong northerly wind and steep seas! It was decidedly an unpleasant way to start as we bashed our way up the coast and tacked out to Lady Musgrave. Arriving at Lady Musgrave with the fleet just after lunchtime it was a welcome relief to put down the anchor and wait for the change in the early hours of the morning.

The change duly arrived and we set off after the 8am fleet sked for Saumarez Reef, 135nm NNE. The previous seas had calmed and we had consistent trade wind sailing with 17-23 knots from the SSW except for a quieter patch in the middle of the night when the engine had to go on. Not a hardship as the batteries needed a top-up. At one point, in the middle of an otherwise empty ocean there were 5 fishing vessels, 12 rally boats and a cargo ship who went through the middle of the fleet. Wonder what that cargo vessel thought! We didn't see any other boats for the rest of the rally. Early morning the wind and waves were up again and our problem was going too fast to get to the reef in the golden hours. At 10:20 (26 hours after Lady Musgrave) our anchor was down at Saumarez Reef in 8m on a sandy bottom.



Saumarez Reef is fully submerged for the top half of the tide with only a shipwreck visible at high tide. The band of reef, bommies and shipwreck are interesting snorkelling with plenty of fish and sea snakes. With no sandy cay to land on we created an inflatable island with the dinghies, on the following day, near the shipwreck for our first of several sundowners. At high tide the anchorage was quite bouncy and lively due to swell coming over the reef. This was repeated at all the other anchorages!

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That evening the 5-6kt boats left at 23:00 for Marion Reef, 182nm NNW. We encountered a 1-2 kt current against us for the first 10 hours which meant motor-sailing to keep our speed up and a rough passage with current against the sea. The current finally released its grip and we had some good trade wind sailing conditions with winds between 17-20kts apart from a patch up to 27kts when we rolled away the furlled genoa and furlled the main. By 11:15 we had arrived at Marion Reef and after following the waypoints in to Paget Cay had the anchor down at 13:15 (38 hours after leaving Saumarez).



Paget Cay is 400 metres X 50 metres, has a height of 3 metres and no vegetation. However the shipwreck on the eastern side and fringing reef were interesting to snorkel, the fisherman among us kept the fleet supplied with fish and the spear fisherman found that the small reef sharks were very interested in their catch, following them right up to the shoreline. With the wind consistently blowing 20kts, the dinghy trip ashore was wet so the dress for those who managed to wrestle their dinghies and motors into the water for very windy sundowners was rashvests and swimmers or wet weather gear. The warmish wind soon dried the clothes! Not all boats attempted this.

After 4 nights at Paget Cay we sailed 9nm, avoiding the bommies, within Marion Reef to Corola Cay which is 500 metres X 50 metres, has a height of 12 metres and also has no vegetation but did have a thriving breeding colony of Booby birds. Brenton and I were the only ones to put our dinghy in the water to explore this cay with its Booby birds nesting on the coral sand and an unmanned weather station.

After a bumpy night in which a squall through in the early hours (one of many throughout this trip, blue skies were a rarity!) we upped anchor at 08:40 to follow the waypoints out of Marion Reef for the sail to East Diamond Islet, 126nm NW. The wind was from behind 19-26kts, the seas were roly but with a reefed main and staysail out we made good time. Too good as once again we had to slow down but still arrived before the golden hour and anchored out with the fleet in 20m of water until the sun was high enough in the sky to see the bommies and anchor closer in.

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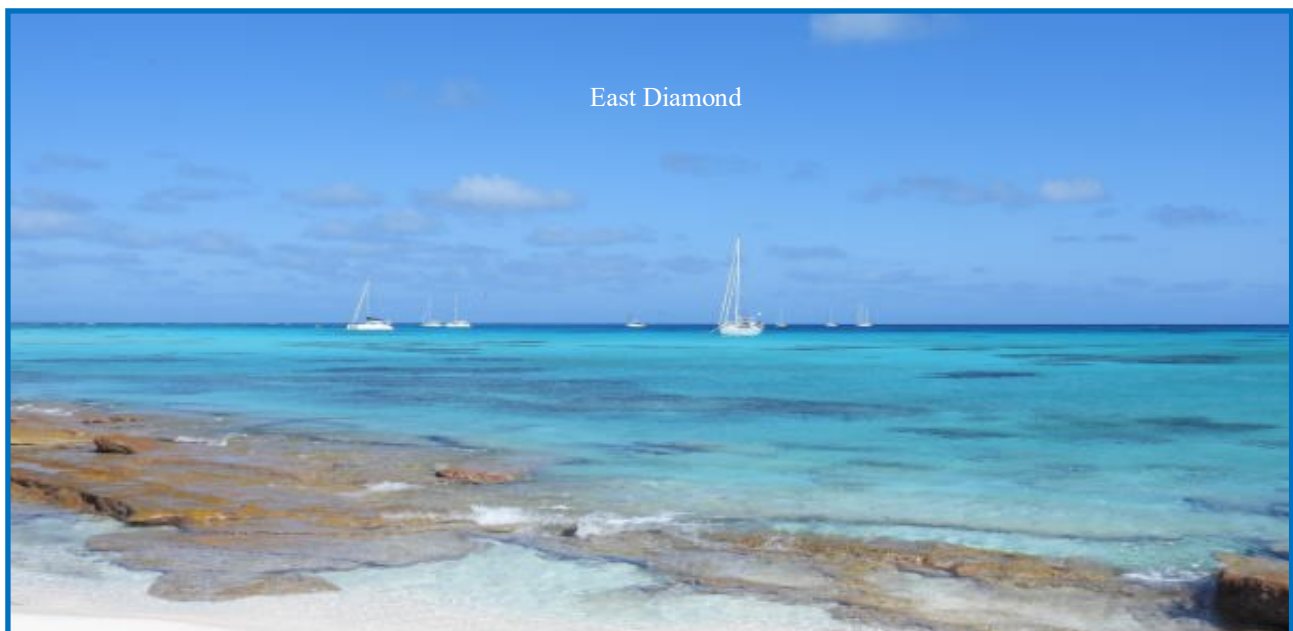
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Our anchor windlass went out on thermal overload at this time so we were a bit delayed in finding a good sandy inner spot to anchor.

East Diamond was really the diamond of the anchorages we went to. It is 0.5nm x 0.2nm, has thick vegetation and a lighthouse on a metal frame and provided some protection from the swell. We were also blessed with some sunshine and marginally lighter winds. A sandy spit was an excellent site for Leanne's morning yoga sessions, landing the dinghy was easy although it went from deep to shallow very quickly and there was a plentiful amount of wildlife to be seen on a walk around the high tide mark – we were asked not to go further into the islet as there were so many birds nesting there. The frigate birds were constantly harassing the Boobies to prompt them to regurgitate the meal they brought back for their chicks so they can then feed themselves and their own chicks! There were two types of Boobies, Brown and Australasian, and three species of Terns There were plenty of crabs and hermit crabs and some were lucky enough to see the Snowflake Eels that attack the crabs.



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Snorkelling was good around the fringing reef and around the bommies in the anchorage, the more adventurous divers and snorkelers (including Brenton) went to the Barracuda Bommie in about 40m of water. The fisherman caught fish although the small sharks often thought that was an easy feed for them. We even had sundowners at the beach each afternoon with all the boats getting their dinghies into the water although the trip could be quite wet still for the boats anchored further out – us!



East Diamond Sundowners



East Diamond



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The forecast for Flinders Reef, our next destination, was not favourable. This would have been another very exposed anchorage. Instead the fleet opted to spend an extra day at East Diamond before the long sail (295.5 nm on the log) back inside the reef to Magnetic Island. We left at 06.30 and powered along with a full main and half a genoa in, you guessed it, 17-23kt ESE winds as we headed west. The skies were grey all day but it was comfortable sailing in the sea-state. In fact the fleet thought that it was our most comfortable passage of the Rally. There was a choice to go through Palm Passage, lit and where the ships pass through and therefore wide, or Magnetic Passage, no lights, a 12nm stretch heading straight into the wind but a much better angle to head across to Magnetic Island. The decision didn't need to be made until lunchtime on the second day and finally Brenton convinced me to do the Magnetic Passage which proved to be a very good decision. We arrived at the entrance just on sunset and started the very uncomfortable 12nm section with tide against the wind and swell. Luckily we were over the worst of it after 6nm and with accurate waypoints from Mark on *Cloudy Bay* we navigated safely through the passage in the dark. We then had a fast, boisterous reach across to Horseshoe Bay where we had the anchor down by 03:30, a 45 hour sail in total. We arrived in the middle of the fleet with the last ones arriving at 10:30, they had gone through Palm Passage!



The coffee shops did a roaring trade that day as the crews went in for their first taste of the commercial world since departing 3 weeks earlier. The farewell dinner had us all dancing to the music as we all unwound from the continual stress of the last 3 weeks. The mood was assisted by the camaraderie that had developed that comes from the shared experience of sailing in remote waters well outside of helicopter range and where we had to rely on our boats, ourselves and each other. It is also where the big fast mother-ship, a Hampton 680, could have been of use.



Book Review :

**“The Forgotten Islands”
by Michael Veitch**

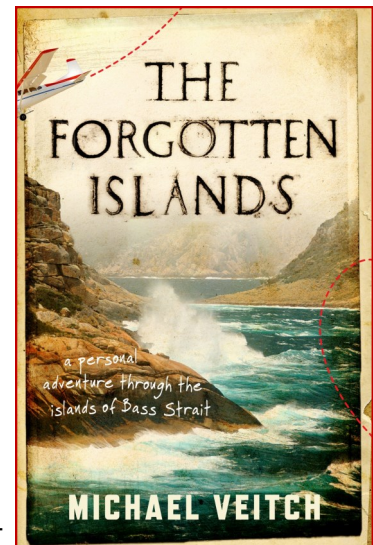
Sue Drummond

Michael Veitch , best known in his role as a comedian on the DGeneration is also an author and having read one of his books already (The Hell Ship, an account of an immigrant clipper which landed in Melbourne in 1852, the crew and passengers decimated by typhus), I was keen to read about travels in our closest open water , Bass Strait.

The author had , from early years , had a fascination with islands, starting with a camping trip to Wilson’s Promontory and looking out over the Glennies. He travelled in the UK in his early 20s and visited many of the islands off the coasts , which were easily accessible by ferries.

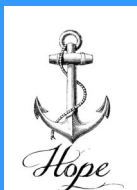
Ten or more years ago he started his ventures out into Bass Strait. He’s not a sailor but the areas he visited will be very familiar to many of us starting with Three Hummock Island and finally , after several abortive attempts , making it to Deal Island. The motivation to visit Deal was to check out a story he had been told about a Lighthouse Keeper supposedly taken by a giant squid! The issue with the Bass Strait Islands is their lack of easy accessibility , even to sailors.

The whole story is written in his quirky, humorous style with historical insights and is a delight to read. I have a copy if any one is interested.



Captains Coxswain's Corner

MORNING STAR



An offensive weapon of the mediaval times consisting of a staff, to which was attached an iron ball covered with spikes. Also, the planet which is near the meridian at day-dawn.

MEMBER NEWS

Our intrepid Cruisers: "Kirra Kirra" Jo and John Walker and "Chakana" Robina and Brenton Smith, are in beautiful warm Cairns at the moment, waiting for a weather window to start heading South. Both have had some amazing adventures, Kirra Kirra made it to Port Douglas, but decided not to go on to Lizard Island. They are now in Magnetic Island. Chakana is also heading south. Since the writing of this member news, Chakan is still in Cairns, and Kirra Kirra is rapidly heading south.

Chakana did a challenging outer reef cruise for 3 weeks. The SE trade winds have been unrelenting, so they will be waiting for small windows to continue their journey south. Summerwind is enjoying the Whitsundays, and possibly heading up to Cairns. Summerwind has been sold.

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"Aquacadabra" Rob and Sue Hurrell

We have continued cruising around the Whitsundays, currently in Port Newry and heading east to outer islands tomorrow. Because we had the car up here (having escaped with 20 minutes to spare from Lockdown #5), we drove up to Port Douglas for a week, that turned into 2 weeks as we loved it so much.



Plan to sail Aquacadabra back to Melbourne for summer starting early Oct. May need to leave her in Brisbane for a while until Qld allows crew to come up and/or NSW allows us to stop at ports on our way down

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Blue sky, blue water and - Grandsons Galore Pam merritt

2021 has been the year for new grandsons for some of our members:
To Rod and Sandy Watson - grandson Kai, born September 4th
To Richard and Marian Johnston - grandson Max, born September 13th
To Rod and Sue Slater grandson Lachlan, born May 21st and grandson Atticus - born July 12th (in Dublin)

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Lyn Bingham

We enjoyed a picnic with Will and Pam yesterday at Rickett's Point, Beaumaris. It was a pleasant day by the sea, comfortable, and be out and actually see friends over lunch.



Lockdown Life Pam Merritt

Over 200 days in lockdown, it now feels like the norm I don't care what I wear as long as it's clean and warm Trackies almost wearing out, messy hair upon my head No need to put on make up, I wear a mask instead

Don't need to tidy up the house, no-one can come inside I used to dust and polish things and take a bit of pride I'd mop the floors and vacuum and maybe clean a shelf But now I read or go for a walk 'cos I can please myself

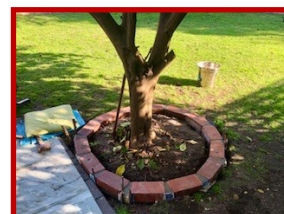
Back before the Covid times gardening wasn't our thing If sun was out we'd rather be taking the boat for a spin Now Andalucia looks forlorn, floating sadly in her pen And the garden looks magnificent - how did that happen?

We weed and mow and clip and trim and sit out in the sun Admiring our handiwork, having far too much fun Even made new garden edges with next door's old red bricks Proving that it never is too late to learn new tricks!

We've walked and cycled and driven around our radius Would love to be with others, but it has to be only us! But now we can meet for a picnic so it's really not too bad Only one other household as long as they've had the jab!

Zooms replace our classes, thank goodness we have these Plans for trips are still on hold, will we ever get overseas? The kids are missing out on school, and no-one's out at night But hey - we've got a couch and telly so we are doing alright

We feel for the lonely and jobless and know how lucky we are The amazing doctors and nurses who give others needy care So hard for many people, will this lockdown ever end? Let's hope it's not too far away - we're going 'round the bend'!



NOTICEBOARD

*****FRIDAY OCT 15th*****

Forum Dinner.

Cancelled

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*****FRIDAY Oct 30— Nov 2*****

Melbourne Cup Weekend

Cruise to Wyndham Harbour, subject weather and to the lifting of VOCID-19 restriction.

Confirm with Cruise Coordinator that you are coming, and event is happening.

Geoff Brewster : trenchtech@bigpond.com

Cruisers will be notified closer to the time.

If the cruise is not possible, possibly a "Social Day Sail" from Brighton.

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*****FRIDAY NOVEMBER 19th*****

Due to the uncertainty of Covid ,a Social gathering is a possibility with out a guest speaker. Cruisers will be advised closer to the 19th.

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*****NOVEMBER END OF MONTH CRUISE*****

27th-28th.

Tentatively scheduled for Melbourne City Marina.

Cruise co Ordinator : Barbara Burns.

barbaraburnstwiss@bigpond.com.

Hopefully we will know more at the end of October.

Melbourne City Marina: <https://> Ph: 9658 8738

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*****SATURDAY DECEMBER 11*****

HARDSTAND PARTY

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*****SUNDAY JANUARY 16th*****

Birthday Cruise to Royals

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*****FRIDAY FEBRUARY 18th**

TITANIC NIGHT

Captures the magic of the Belle Epoque era in 1912. Fabulous costumes, orchestrated music, talented cast, plenty of fun and audience participation. Dress up for First Class or Dress down for Steerage. Come along for a great night of fun and entertainment. Have your photo taken in front of the Titanic's Grand Staircase with Captain Smith. .



All going well we should see easing of restrictions and preparations to evolve out of the lock down soon. It's been a long hard road for all and nothing could be sweeter than being able to get back to our cruising activities.

Coming out of lockdown will mean wearing of masks will still be a requirement and in order to gain entry to the club house you will need to be double vaccinated or show a medical certificate if you have a valid reason for not being able to be vaccinated. It appears that all venues will most likely be adapting this as the Govt. begins trials for a vaccinated economy towards opening up and this will become the Covid Norm.

The Club has had a large array of Solar Panels installed during lockdown which will see big savings in Power usage not to mention our contributions to minimising Carbon Emissions. The Middle Brighton Pier repairs should be completed soon and with long awaited dredging on the horizon things are looking up.

We are hopeful that an end of month cruise can be organised to go ahead for the weekend 27/28 November and it won't be long after until the carols on the hardstand with BBQ will hopefully allow us to reflect on how the past has been and look forward to a brighter future.

I am excited about the Titanic night coming up in February 2022 and advise you all look to re-booking for this event. And, also we hope to organise a Friday night Dinner get together to celebrate coming out of lockdown rather than a forum dinner so keep your eyes & ears open for more information on this.

There are some great times ahead and I am looking forward to celebrating them with you all.



NOTICEBOARD

Victorian COVID Roadmap

Phase A - 80% 16+ Single Dose - Current

Travel no more than 15 km from where you live.

Outdoor contactless recreation limited to no more than 5 fully vaccinated people for no more than 4 hours

Outdoor Social gatherings allowed between 2 persons from two households, or 5 persons from 2 households if all double vaccinated

Phase B - 70% 16+ Double Dose - Indicative date ~ 26 Oct 2021

Lockdown ends, but must not travel further than 25km except for permitted reasons

Up to 10 fully vaccinated people can gather outdoors,

Pubs, Clubs and Entertainment Venues can open to 50 fully vaccinated people outdoors.

Outdoor community sport open for training only (no competition); minimum number required, spectators public gathering limits apply

Changing rooms closed

Community Facilities: Use by fully vaccinated only: Outdoor only, DQ4 50 cap

Phase C – 80% 16+ Double Dosed – Indicative date ~ 5 Nov 2021.

Up to 150 fully vaccinated people can dine indoors, and up to 30 can gather in public outside.

Community Facilities: Use by fully vaccinated only: Indoors DQ4 and 150 cap, outdoors DQ2 500 cap

Phase D – 80% Double Dosed – Indicative date ~ 19 Nov 2021.

Align with National Plan

Sailing Committee Report – (Peter Gebhardt)

- Sailing Committee has completed the 2021-22 Racing Calendar. However due to uncertainty around Covid restrictions, some of the earlier events in the Calendar may not be able to be held. The Racing Calendar will be incorporated into the online Club Calendar once there is more certainty.
- 13 Brighton Championship races (Div I and Div II). A subset of 8 of these races will also have a Div III cruising division (no extras) which will comprise the Ingenue Series.
- Care taken to ensure no conflict between Ingenue dates and the Cruising Calendar.

Ingenue Dates

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2021	2022
23 rd Oct.	29 th Jan.
6 th Nov.	12 th Feb.
4 th Dec.	26 th Mar.
	9 th Apr.

- From now on, all pursuit races, with the exception of Wednesday Twilights, will allow extras.
- Additional webcams and weather station being installed