

Commodore's Report

I'm honoured to present the Commodore's Report and in doing so provide an overview of our operations for the half-year ended March 2025.

Firstly, I'd like to begin by thanking the General Committee, Sub-Committees, Volunteers, donors, the General Manager and all employees for their hard work and assistance in providing a high quality experience for members and guests.

One of the highlights of the year to date has been the completion of the forecourt redevelopment including the construction of the driveway and portico, landscaping and re-painting of the office area. This development has transformed the appearance of the Club giving it a strong and welcoming presence on the Esplanade. The Club is now easily accessible to all members and guests and many have commented favourably on the development. Apart from the agreed variations and taking a little longer than expected, the project came in largely on budget and I'd like to thank all involved including the Past Commodore, the forecourt development sub committee and the Club architect Scott Shelton who managed the project on behalf of the Club.

On the water, the Club hosted the Sail Melbourne regatta and the trilogy of regattas associated with the World Etchells Championships. The Sail Melbourne Regatta, hosted in conjunction with Australian Sailing, brought together over 200 elite local, national and international sailors to our Club. The Club is committed to hosting this regatta and apart from showcasing our wonderful Club, it provides an opportunity for our sailors, young and old, and our race officials to broaden their skills. It was a similar case with the Etchells where 46 yachts competed in the three regattas with the highlight being the World Championships. Sailed over five days, Port Philip turned on some of its best sailing conditions providing the fleet with some challenging conditions and rewarding those that made the right decisions and/or the least number of mistakes. In both regattas the Club received numerous favourable comments surrounding race management and off the water support activities but the overwhelming comments was the warm friendly welcome and hospitality provided to competitors and visitors. I'd like to thank all the volunteers and staff who contributed to the success of these regattas and reinforcing RBYC's reputation as a world class sailing venue. Also congratulations to our Stonehaven Cup team and all members on their results in the numerous sailing events held over the Christmas New Year period.

The Club's financial situation remains in a good position with a similar outcome to last year. Detailed financial information can be found in the Honorary Treasurer's report but I want to highlight a couple of things. At the end of June last year, the Club's hospitality operations were performing poorly. The General Committee, based on recommendations from the Honorary Treasurer, agreed to a four-point plan to improve the situation. The plan involved a targeted reduction of the cost of goods sold, a focus on improving rostering of hospitality staff, a localised marketing to Brighton and surrounding suburbs to increase the number of patrons and to improve number and profitability of functions. There has been good progress made on the first three items, while the latter was hampered by the forecourt redevelopment. The other item was the significant increase in maintenance costs as the Club sought to address many of the outstanding items requiring attention. This work has continued into the second half of the year with a focus on improving the

appearance and cleanliness of the Club, following up on your comments in the last year's survey of members.

Membership levels remains steady with a continued growth in new members replacing the members lost at the beginning of the new financial year. This is normal and I suspect that, given the number of new members myself and other GC members have interviewed that last year's record levels will be surpassed. It is pleasing to see the continued growth in Intermediate and Youth members. Sailing participation, while strong at the OTB and one design level remains strong, it's disappointing to see the small keelboat fleets. Our sailing calendar offers a range of sailing opportunities and I know our world-class race officers work hard each week to provide you with best possible sailing experience. All that is required is for you to join in and if you're short of crew there are plenty of suitably trained sailors waiting to join boats. Many of the yachts sailing today have been willing to give these people a go and in most cases they have become regular crew.

The Icebergers have been very active in the Club with a range of swimming events and social activities. Icebergers old and new have in their own way expressed what a joy it was to be part of the club and how the cold water swimming contributed to their overall health and wellbeing and it is truly moving to hear people talk of becoming an Iceberger and being part of the RBYC. In the water, members competed in Winter Solstice Swim (thanks Sam Paynter) and the Olsen Hooper Swim in December, while on Friday night's sees Icebergers connecting with all members at the Club. The Icebergers Christmas lunch is growing in popularity with over 60 people attending.

The Club faces a few immediate challenges.

First, the dredging of the Marina has had to be delayed until next winter. All the preparatory work has been done and the permits issued but there remains a lack of dredging contractors. Following a tender process in 2024, a preferred dredging company was selected but due to an additional dredging contract they were unable to dredge our marina in the May-September dredging window. At the moment, we are exchanging letters of commitment with a view of dredging in 2026.

Secondly, I remain concerned with the level of member engagement, in sailing, volunteering or social events. The GC, Sub-Committees and yacht club staff are all working towards providing members a range of events on and off the water. As mentioned, everyone is addressing the issues in the members' survey but I also welcome suggestions from the members on areas where we can approve.

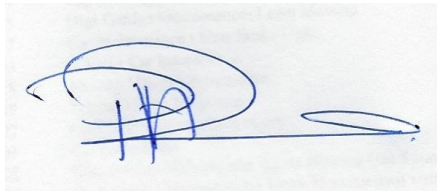
Finally, a couple of extreme weather events in November exposed a number of issues.

On Sunday, 17th November 2025 many of the clubs around the Port Philip, including our club, were impacted by the strong winds around 11.00am. At RBYC we were running the One Design regatta for 2.4mRs, VX Ones and Etchells and as the storm hit many boats capsized while others were semi-submerged rendering them unusable and many sailors were rescued and a couple of people required medical treatment. The Club responded appropriately and organised post race debriefing sessions for all involved. Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement and a report has

been prepared for the Sailing Committee who will forward their recommendations for improvements to the General Committee.

Ten days later, the Club was hit by a thunderstorm cell resulting in damage to a number of boats in the marina and hardstand. With storms becoming more frequent and of increased severity, boat owners need to ensure that mooring lines are of the required strength and in good order and sails appropriately furled. On the hardstand, the storms provided a timely reminder of need to secure boats so as to prevent them from moving during an adverse weather event.

The next six months will be the highlight of our 150th celebrations with the 150th Regatta to be held on 29th-30th March followed by the 150th Celebration Ball on 9th May. A lot of planning has gone into both events to make them accessible to **all** members and I look forward to your participation in these events and Club activities in general.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Peter Demura', written on a light-colored background.

Peter Demura
Commodore
Royal Brighton Yacht Club
March 2025