

# THE BEACON

The Ronstan Regatta

## McCRAE YACHT CLUB: OFF THE BEACH SAILING AT ITS BEST!



### COMMODORE'S COLUMN

Happy New Year and I hope everyone enjoyed Christmas and the beautiful weather we had over January.

The club was well and truly alive and pumping. The Taipan Nationals kicked off in early January and with glamour sailing conditions full racing was achieved.

A short break and we were back at it for the Ronstan Regatta, and what a spectacle that was. The club was buzzing, and the excitement was certainly heightened by the presence of the 470 Australian sailing team. No doubt you will have seen some of the spectacular videos and photos that were taken by Photographer Beau Otteridge.

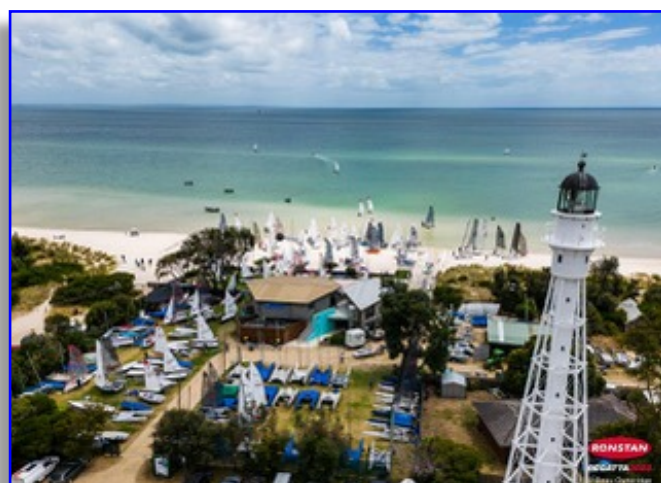
The amount of effort time and organization that goes into running these Regattas really taps our volunteers and committees and I just wanted to say a massive thank you to everyone who made these events possible. Hopefully we will see some good revenue come through to keep the club buoyant.

I am coming to realize how many unexpected expenses pop up. Many of you may know we had to replace Bunurong' engine which we were not expecting to do. These types of unexpected big-ticket items certainly put pressure on our finances, so Regatta revenue is vital.

I look forward to the rest of the season and fingers crossed the weather gods keep smiling on us.

See you around the Club,

**Bronwyn, Commodore**



 **Bendigo Bank**  
Bigger than a bank

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The Club volunteers who made the 2023 Australia Day-Ronstan regatta an outrageous success - and there are more with a few missing from the photo...



### TRAINING CENTRE REPORT

The Training Centre has been very busy over the last few weeks. Here is an outline of what we have been up to:  
Tackers Summer Program successfully run. We ran two weeks of the Tackers Summer Program in the second and third week of January which were well attended, with 14 participants in the group for week 1 and 10 in week 2.

The program was led by Evelyn Floyd along with Ollie Zielezna, Finn Loader, Milly Evenden, Jasine Evenden and Ollie Bulka as instructors.

The weather was fabulous and the feedback from the participants was very positive, so much so that seven of the Tackers kids have signed up for the regular Saturday morning program!

#### Adult Start Sailing courses:

We currently have 8 adults learning to sail on Sunday mornings, once again led by Evelyn Floyd and ably assisted by Ollie Zielezna and Milly Evenden.

The current four-week course will finish on the 12 February and we propose to run another one beginning on the 26 February, which will also run for four weeks but will exclude the long weekend in March.

We are asking for expressions of interest from adults or older teenagers. Please direct enquires to Murray O'rien on 0400 552 642.

#### Saturday Morning Program:

The regular Saturday morning Learning and Development Program recommenced on Saturday 4 February but was blown out by a strong cold front which have delivered rain, thunder, hail and gale force winds the night before. There was a slight abatement in the wind in the morning, but the strong winds soon returned and our early decision to keep activities shore-based was validated.

There were lots of games and quizzes and all who attended certainly appeared to enjoy the experience as well as the opportunity to reconnect with friends!

Thanks to our fantastic group of instructors and assistants who so enthusiastically helped out!

**Murray O'Brien, Training Centre Principal**



...and the Race Officers who direct operations on the water

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The winner is Victoria! ILCA Vic win the ALCA teams trophy - our young sailors, with coaches Rhett Gowans and Brody Riley and team leader Casey Imeneo, bring the Batten's Trophy home to Victoria.



McCrae YC sailor Casey Imeneo (far right) had a breakout event finishing 5<sup>th</sup> overall. The other four women on the podium represented their respective countries at the Tokyo Olympics.



The Vic Team were supported by two fantastic coaches: VIS coach and McCrae sailor, Brody Riley (L) and ILCA Head Coach, Rhell Gowans (R). Brody is holding the Batten's Trophy.

### ILCA FLEET NEWS

At the 2023 ILCA (Laser) National Championship held on Botany Bay Victorian sailors performed exceptionally well to finally defeat the mighty WA team that included current Gold Medalist Matt Wearne plus four other Australian Sailing team and squad members. WA have owned this trophy for the past 10 years.

The Batten's trophy is awarded to the best performed State in all 3 rigs (ILCA 4, 6 and 7). As expected, WA dominated in the Men's ILCA7, but they could not match the stellar performance of the VICS in the ILCA 4's and 6's. Multiple Victorian clubs had sailors on the podium. Indented Head, Sorrento, Blairgowrie, McCrae, Mornington, Davies Bay and Albert Sailing club.

**John D'Helin, ILCA Rep.**

### CD Motor Group

Ferntree Gully Vic 3156

Tel: 03 9753 1888

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### THE LEGEND OF THE BATTENS TROPHY

In the early 1970s Rob Mundle (renowned yachtsman and author of 19 Maritime books including Cook, Bligh, Flinders et al.) imported the first Lasers to Australia from Canada.

The class grew quickly and a fleet of about 80 assembled in 1975 for the inaugural Australian Championship held over Easter at Holdfast Bay SA.

From the official regatta report, in the understated format of the time, quote- **"here was a bit on that day, causing some difficulty in launching and retrieving boats"** A bit on? An eyewitness reported the wind was variable between 30 knots in the lulls and 40 in the squalls.

The legend concerns a sailor known as 'has for Tas'(possibly Charles Blundell-unconfirmed).

This 'Chas for Tas' was no faint heart. He knew what he had to do. Confronted with 200 metres of wild surf between him and the safety of the beach he sprang to action. Locking feet under toe straps and moving to the rear of the cockpit, he hauled the tiller towards him and eased the sheet. The boat took off. The first wave reportedly threw Chas and boat almost clear of the water. Next there was a series of barrel rolls. The second wave broached him busting the top section and shredding the sail. Miraculously the boat rolled upright with Chas still aboard locked in and holding the tiller. With no sail control, the boat...

*(Continued on page 4)*

**CRAFT FOR SALE**  
**Arrow –'It's Magic'**

14 foot catamaran, race ready, recently updated.

\$2100 ONO

Jess - 0411-124-231

(If you have a boat for sale and you want it advertised in the next edition please email the details to The Editor: cv.miles@bigpond.net.au, add a photo if you wish to.)

**NEW MEMBERS AT THE CLUB**

Lachlan Imeneo has come back sailing from childhood Philip and Georgia Bannister and kids Thomas and Evelyn

Julia Sides – A new Junior doing the Learning to Sail Saturday program.

*Please make our new members welcome.*



(Continued from page 3)

**The Batterns Trophy**

...broached again, this time ramming the lower mast section so hard into the sand that it burst through the bottom of the hull. A mighty twisting force wrenched the deck clean off the hull leaving poor Chas with nothing but the tiller in his hand. Chas and bits of broken Laser eventually washed up on the beach.

Rob Mundle collected the broken sail battens, took them back to PSA in Sydney and made the Batterns Trophy. Forty-eight years later it is still awarded to the best performing Australian State at the Nationals.

Interesting fact: The trophy weighs 7kg.

Next year the Laser Nationals will be in Adelaide and I hope the young McCrae Laser sailors will be there to help Victoria win The Batterns. 2024 is an Olympic year, the ILCA 7 Worlds will follow in Adelaide after the Nationals. All the best men's Laser sailors in the world will be competing in the Nationals.

**John d'Helin**



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## A STELLAR SET OF SUMMER RESULTS

It's been another big summer of Nationals (and Worlds) for McCrae sailors. An impressive **55 individual members** travelled around Vic, Qld, NSW, Tas and WA to compete in 15 championships, in addition to the club members who played a critical role managing and delivering Nationals around the country.

At the end we have one World champion, three national champions and a further four entries finishing top 3. Reflecting the depth of talent at McCrae, we had 23 sailors who finished top 3 in at least 1 race! Oh – and the World land speed sailing record thanks to Glenn's patience at Lake Gairdner in SA.

It's not just the sailors who deserve to be celebrated. Equally important are the Race Officers who put the racing on. And did not our in-demand crew do a stellar job for the Taipan Nationals? but Life Member Peter Merritt also headed off to Sydney as the Principal Race Officer for the 2023 Oceania and Australian Laser Open and Youth Championships.

Key highlights from the results:

We were best represented in the A class (7 boats), Taipan 4.9 cat (6 boats), Taipan 4.9 sloop (5 boats), I14 (5 boats) and Paper Tigers (4 boats).

Casey Imeneo competed against the top Olympic women in the ILCA 6 in Sydney. While she came 5<sup>th</sup> overall (and 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian), she again demonstrated how fast she is improving by winning the final two heats of the championship. This was an open fleet with men and women racing and it was awesome to see the top 7 places taken by female skippers.

Mark Bulka is now a 4x World Champion winning the Contender Worlds and Nationals. Mark put in a remarkably consistent performance across wildly varied conditions (5-30 knots) – his worst place was a 5<sup>th</sup>. It's worth adding that Mark and son Ollie also sailed in the Tasar Nationals just beforehand where they placed 5<sup>th</sup> among a fleet of many past world champions.

Luke Stout pulled off a solid 1<sup>st</sup> in the Paper Tigers in big swells on the Gold Coast. The first race was a little shaky, but Luke settled into top 3 in every race thereafter.

He might have been benched with a crook leg until mid-December, but Andrew Vize showed his world-champion form in taking out the Taipan 4.9 cat rig National championship at McCrae. The heavy breezes may have favoured him early in the regatta but he held on as the breeze dropped on the last day.

We love seeing our younger sailors compete on the big stage and we loudly applaud Jazz Evenden, Josh Baker, Lachlan Vize, Ada Dynes, Ollie Bulka and Joel Prime for jumping into their Nationals with full gusto. We also applaud their families for supporting our future champions!

A special mention must go out to Joey Randall who enjoyed sailed in championships in THREE classes! His best individual heat results included a 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Taipan 4.9 Sloop and a 3<sup>rd</sup> in the A Class (foiling). But nothing will beat a 1<sup>st</sup> in heat 5 of the Contender Worlds. We're pretty sure Peter Randall will be proud to see Joey continuing a family tradition of excellence in the Contender.

While on the topic of Contenders, we also have to mention the final heat of the Contender Worlds was all McCrae with Mark, Jeff Owen and Joey taking out 1,2,3. A beautiful finish!

Another special mention goes to a lucky kid called Josh Baker who spent his entire summer holiday windsurfing almost every day with board makers and professional windsurfers at all the best spots on the WA coastline. He has some very cool stories (and scars) to share with us soon. His trip was organised by the indefatigable and very kind Russell Morris (who many of you will remember is the son of Ralph Morris). Thanks to their amazing parents, both Josh Baker and Lachie Vize have been living in a dream windsurfing and windfoiling all over the country the last couple of months. I am deeply, deeply envious.

### Our National/World placegetters include:

- Contender (Worlds and Nationals) – Mark Bulka – 1<sup>st</sup>
- Paper Tiger – Luke Stout – 1<sup>st</sup>
- Taipan 4.9 cat – Andrew Vize – 1<sup>st</sup>
- Taipan 5.7 – John Newman and Peter Bartlett – 1<sup>st</sup> (and last!)
- Taipan 4.9 sloop – Rohan and Roellen Gilmore – 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Windsurfer LT – Josh Baker – 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth
- A Class (foiling) – David Brewer - 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Taipan 4.9 sloop – David Parker and Ross Berryman – 3<sup>rd</sup>

*We'd like to pass on a huge congratulations to everyone who drove a tractor, ran a canteen, cooked a sausage, crewed a rescue boat, coached a kid or ran a race or sailed a boat in a Nationals somewhere this summer. As a passionate Off-the-Beach racing club, every one of you does us proud.*

Stay tuned for the Club Champions night when we'll acknowledge our Champs will share their best stories and some of their secrets.

Happy sailing!

**Scott Watson (Vice Commodore and Chair – Sailing Committee)**