

SAILING

Sailing at RBYC happens week in week out, throughout the year, in a huge variety of ways. For this report, I'd like to describe a few days last November, and the two most recent weekends in March.

Regattas are in conjunction with the core activity of the club - regular club racing is run for Division 1, Div 2, Div C, One Design, OTBs, and Junior training in Optis and Quests, on most Saturdays, Sundays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

'Sail Melbourne' is an annual 4-day regatta for 'Off The Beach' boats, one of the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. RBYC in 2025 was (and will be again in November 2026) the Organising Authority and host club. 330 sailors from 15 countries sailed in 21 divisions over 5 separate courses: Olympians, local club members, Juniors and Youth, in ILCAs, IQ Foils, Finns, Tasers, 2.4mRs, Optis, International Cadets, 470s, 420s, 29ers, 49ers, RS100s and Nacras. Over 200 volunteers from RBYC and 9 partner clubs from around the bay worked together, along with staff from our Sailing Office - they launched and retrieved boats from the beach, spent many hours in Rhibs and power boats on the water and in The Tower, made decisions about courses, conditions and results.

On the Labour Day long weekend, in conjunction with VIODA, RBYC ran the Victorian State Optimist Championships. Over 80 young sailors, from interstate and overseas, competed, and brought with them hundreds of parents, siblings and supporters. Again, volunteers and the Sailing Office were crucial to its success. We look forward to running the Kings Cup regatta in June and are honoured to be hosting the Opti Nationals next January.

The following weekend RBYC conducted the three-day Etchells Victorian State Championship, following on from the Etchells Worlds here last year. 22 boats, again including boats from interstate and overseas, competed at the highest level. I'd like to specifically mention John Bertrand AO, Australian Sailing CEO and past-Olympian Matthew Page OAM, and current Etchells World Champion and Australian Sailor of the Year James Mayo.

RBYC also ran the 96th Stonehaven Cup this year. There were with 82 sailors competing, with varying levels of experience. Sailors, race management staff and volunteers dealt with 40-degree temperatures and 40 knot winds. RBYC successfully took out both the Stonehaven Cup and the Team trophy.

Such regattas bring a buzz to the club and are an inspiration for all who sail. They do place a significant demand on boating and race management staff and volunteers, as well as hospitality staff and our General Manager. And just to let you know, this upcoming weekend RBYC is in charge of the VXOnes State Championship.

We run on-water training for adults and young people, with over 900 participations attending in the last year. Youth make up the majority of these, with 600+ participating in the Opti and Quest programs. In addition, there are formal and informal education sessions, and conversations, happening around the club.

Safe sailing and training require equipment and facilities in good working order. I acknowledge the input of the Thursday working group of volunteers (please feel free to put your hand up, for this or for other roles), the Sailing Office staff of Colin Burgess, Craig Cobbin and Julian Smith as well as the many instructors on staff.

Lastly, my personal thanks to the members of Sailing Committee - Rod McKenna, Paul Pascoe, Glenn Ferguson, Brett Bowden, Geoff Adams, Andy Holmes, Peter Robson, Brendon Jukes, Michael O'Brien and Damon Cook, as well as Immediate Past Commodore Nesje Hees.

March 2026

Marnie Irving, Club Captain