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# UPDATE REGARDING ON-WATER SAFETY AT SYC

FRIDAY, 4TH JANUARY 2019

4 January 2019

## Update regarding On-Water Safety at SYC

In April 2018, during the conduct of the Association Cup, sailor Max Peters tragically passed away whilst competing for the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria. As the organising authority of the 2018 race, SYC subsequently conducted an internal review to ascertain whether there were any learnings that could be carried forward to prevent future occurrences.

Heading up that review was a panel of three led by Doug King. He was assisted by Luke Reinehr and James Taylor. Collectively they offered a suite of skills, experience and expertise across marine, general boating, sailing, emergency services, legal and medical fields that SYC deemed appropriate and the right balance for such an important undertaking.

As part of that extensive review, fellow competitor Clubs and a wide range of other stakeholders were invited to make submissions. All input was gratefully received and well considered.

Version one of the internal report was concluded in late August and submitted to the SYC General Committee. It comprised a series of recommendations.

One of the first recommendations that was implemented was the setting up of an On-Water Safety Committee (OWSC). The OWSC have been tasked with overseeing and making recommendations to the SYC General Committee in respect of on-water safety and related policy at SYC. It is also within their scope to assist with the implementation of the safety recommendations contained within the internal report. They have actively commenced doing this work and concurrently a number of the SYC standing committees have also made contributions and improvements.

## What Safety Improvements have been implemented so far at SYC?

- > Setting up of an on-water safety committee (OWSC).
- > Implementation of new or updated policies and plans designed to improve decision making;
  - > A new on-water event risk management plan has been implemented
  - > A pre-race risk assessment checklist has been introduced
  - > A new Marine VHF Radio policy has been introduced
  - > An improved inclement weather policy has been adopted
  - > A new life jacket policy has been adopted
  - > An updated on water support policy has been adopted
- > In a bid to clarify governance around on-water decision making, a new policy sets out the Powers of the Sailing Committee and the Race Officer.
- > All on-water safety plans have been updated and are undergoing further review.

- > Emergency Response Cards have been produced in both card and sticker format and are currently being distributed to our racing fleets.
- > To improve our rescue capability we have ordered a new 7 metre rib and we have also installed a diver's door on boonorong (club hard hull). A defibrillator has also been made available for the club boats. With the imminent arrival of the 7 metre rib, once commissioned and resources in place, we will be trialling on-water support during keelboat races, especially so for those events with no other support vessels on the water.
- > We have and will continue to schedule a number of safety related training courses for our race management team.
- > To improve communications with competitors we held a safety information night and 115 members turned up. Presenters included the water police, pfd suppliers conducting demos and Australian Sailing.
- > We have mandated compulsory crew sign on for all keelboat racing, so we know all persons on the water and can access important contact information on any person if required.
- > Safety declarations have been updated to include the strongly recommended use of a water rescue training dummy for MOB recovery. To that end we purchased a second training dummy for member use.
- > We have reintroduced Group K for Saturday racing which restricts certain boats from racing when conditions are not suitable for these boats.
- > We recently hosted a safety audit training course and had a further 5 SYC Members accredited as auditors. We have also committed to adopting Yachtsafe as our IT solution to assist with audits.

Generally speaking we have adopted a more rigorous risk management approach to the planning, preparation and operation of boating events at SYC.

#### **What further work do we need to do to improve on-water safety at SYC?**

Within the internal review, there remain a number of other recommendations that are currently being assessed. This work is ongoing.

The work required to maintain and monitor safety standards, provide information to members on safety and the overseeing of risk management processes will continue to be a work in progress and to that end, we have embedded these annual checks into our calendars.

#### **Coroner, Water Police, Maritime Safety Victoria and the Marine Safety Act changes**

Over recent months we have also been assisting and communicating with both the Water Police and Maritime Safety Victoria. Whilst there is currently not a coronial inquest into the incident, there is an investigation on foot by Police representing the Coroner, who will, in due course conduct an inquest hearing. Should there be any findings, the OWSC have also been tasked with assisting with such findings. We currently await these.

As part of our review, we have also given consideration to the amendments made to the Marine Safety Act 2010 (Vic), which impose duties on operators of 'boating activity events' that came into effect as of 1 July 2018. This legislation is clear on the requirement to do everything that is reasonable to ensure safety of participants in marine events. Additionally, this legislation was to be accompanied by a code of practice which is to set out how Clubs like SYC fully comply. Whilst we await this code, our intent to comply is apparent in the measures we have immediately taken with policy, enhancing our rescue capability and by adopting a rigorous risk management approach.

Whilst our safety improvement work is underway there remains more important work to do.

We hope this interim update is informative and helpful.



Richard Hewett  
Chief Executive

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