

Albert Sailing Club: Committee Report

Annual General Meeting: May 14 2022

Commodore's Report

I am again privileged to present a report on the activities of the Albert Sailing Club for the year ended 31 March 2022.

This ends my third year as Commodore and I will be stepping down from this position at this meeting. The last three years in the role have been both challenging and fulfilling, with years of low water in my first year, followed by two years of reduced operations due to CoVid. Despite this, the club enters the new financial/committee year with retained membership numbers and a strong financial position. This is a credit to the loyalty and support of our members, and the hard work of the outgoing committee which has worked ceaselessly during these last few years to ensure a strong future for the club. I also continue to be encouraged by the number and enthusiasm of new club members who have joined the club over the last few years, and by the willingness of longer-serving club members to assist when called upon.

The Year in Review

We saw some good sailing numbers during the periods we were open and I'd like to make particular mention of the success of the ASC team, ably led by Hamish Gilsenen, in the Stonehaven Cup, and of the participation of a number of our sailors in State and National regattas over the summer period. Further details in relation to our sailing and training programs are set out below.

However, CoVid lockdowns also saw the cancellation of our regatta for 2021 and our annual Discover Sailing Day. The cancellation of the regatta for yet another year was a real heartbreak, as this was the third year in a row that we were prevented from holding the regatta. This was especially disappointing given that water levels were at a high level at the scheduled regatta time and we had considerable interest from sailors from other clubs. Let's hope that this year's regatta makes up for the last 3 years.

This past year also saw 150 years of dinghy sailing on Albert Park Lake celebrated by the Albert Park Yacht Club, together with their celebration of 150 years as the oldest continually operating inland yacht club in Australia. Our members were invited to join in the festivities and the opening day in February was a great success and enjoyed by all who participated.

Linked to APYC's 150th, however, was the deferral of the vote on unification with the Albert Park Yacht Club, which were originally due in October 2021. The 150th celebrations will now all take place in 2022 and it is likely that any further discussions in relation to a potential unification will also be deferred until such time as those celebrations have concluded. We will keep members advised of any developments in this area.

Sailing Program (Steve Dunn, Rear Commodore)

With Covid lockdowns continuing throughout 2021 and into 2022 our ASC/APYC combined Winter Series comprising a number of on again off again sailing days resulted in effectively 8 out of a possible 16 races abandoned, a cancelled Annual Regatta and no Bill Hooper Series. Effectively there was no sailing on the lake with the club closed for business from mid-July to the end of October with a long awaited Social Sail on the 23rd October for those keen to get back into it.

With sailing starting back slowly due to the uncertainty still prevailing, the Summer series didn't commence until late November with further uncertainty in early January resulting in many class Nationals being cancelled. Given the late start we still managed a credible combined 6 heat Summer Championship and 6 heat Handicap series, and a full 6 race Commodores Series in January.

Early February saw a successful running of the Top of The Bay (ToTB) hosted by Altona with assistance provided from our club due to some confusion over who's turn it was to host the event. Great to see it happen again after a 4-year run of blow outs and Covid interruptions. With the Top of the Bay being an interclub challenge the outcome from the last ToTB meeting decreed that boats from ASC and APYC could combine in order to achieve 10 boats (the

minimum requirement). With just on 10 boats between ASC and APYC, the "Albert Park" team took out the overall first place. Well done to the Albert Park team for bring home the prize.

Results Management

The area of results production, a joint effort between ASC and APYC, has continued to prove challenging over the year. Without the great work by the ASC Tower crew members Sue, Brenda and Lesley, (and Steve Lincoln earlier in the year) week in week out we'd have no results at all, so a big thank you to Sue Brenda and Lesley for always being there. Special mention to Lesley who has stepped up in Steve Lincolns' absence, your efforts are hugely appreciated.

ASC Webcam

Thanks to the work of committee member Graeme Blunt and with assistance from the Rear Commodore and Club Captain Paul a web camera has been installed. This follows a long drawn-out process, and approval for use by Parks Victoria. If members haven't already done so, a real time view of the lake and conditions is now possible from the ASC website. With some 1400 views since going live it suggests many members are making use of the facility. It also has the added advantage of recording the finishers when our club is hosting the days sailing..

Summary

With another disjointed and tough year behind us unprecedented by Covid rules and lockdowns, and with a burgeoning health condition, performing the duty of rear Commodore has been challenging. So I must sincerely thank our Commodore Cindy and Vice Commodore Rod who must both be commended for keeping the interest and enthusiasm going and providing assistance during that difficult time. A big thank you Cindy and Rod for keeping the momentum going and the tireless work you both do in keeping our club running and making it the great club that it is.

Rostering during this period has also been very difficult with the uncertainty and a huge thanks to Ron Lackington for keeping the duty rosters up to date chasing what was effectively a moving target. And all in spite of an unavoidable few weeks of needing to take time out, ensuring sufficient duty crew were always available, even if it meant stepping in himself to make up the shortfall. Well done Ron and thank you for your tireless effort.

Finally, I'd like to recognise the efforts of our Club Captain Paul Farrell, who has once again spent a busy year identifying and fixing all things that necessitate running of races week in week out, such as chasing up our NBN/phone issues with Aussie Broadband, Rescue boat maintenance, maintenance of buoys and flags, and for all the little things like remembering to put out sign on sheets... and the big one, assisting the Rear Commodore... Well done and thanks Paul.

Training/Juniors (Rod Thomas)

The club has had a quieter year for training programs and activities, with most of the activity conducted for junior sailors.

We again hosted the Victorian Optimist Class Association (VIODA) winter coaching program. The six-week block May to June was completed, but only one week of the scheduled eight week Block 2 program due to Victorian COVID19 lockdowns. Thirty five juniors in age range 8 to 13 years of age, from clubs within 80 kilometres or so, participated, with five Albert Sailing Club juniors.

In the November to March period, a full day and a couple of half day training sessions for ASC juniors were conducted, with seven at the school holiday session in January. Victorian Laser Association winter programs at ASC were curtailed by lockdowns, but a 3 day program for Laser adults and juniors was held in November.

No Learn to Sail or junior Green Fleet Saturday afternoon programs were scheduled. COVID restrictions in Spring months and Instructor shortages, in particular at the Boatshed, made programming of these difficult. People seeking a Learn to Sail were referred to the Australian Sailing Albert Park Boatshed, with encouragement to join us at ASC when completed.

The Stonehaven Cup win by the ASC junior team of Hamish, Mietta, Maddy and Scarlett in our club RS Quest against crews from Royal Melbourne, Royal Brighton, Sandringham and King Island was a highlight. The Stonehaven Cup for junior crews under 19 years of age is the longest continuously contested junior one design trophy in Australian

sailing. This was the first entry by a crew representing Albert Sailing Club, and they excelled with wins in the two invitation races and 7 of the 9 short course heat races. Well done to the ASC crew members and the support team of Rod Thomas, Don McKenzie and Jon Rawlings.

Rod Thomas has again been managing the club's class association training programs. Ad hoc training and the junior sessions have been provided by Rod and Don, with this year the addition of top junior Hamish Gilson after he gained Assistant Instructor accreditation. Our club is indebted to them for their efforts. Training in sailboat and RIB powerboats is an area where we need to do more and where more assistance from experienced club members is required.

Commodore's Report – continued

External Relations

We have been active in our interactions with external stakeholders/parties over the last year. We continue to liaise with Parks Vic, principally in relation to water conditions and supply at the lake and through continued input into the weed cutting program. We have also been active in participating in the Albert Park Community Sporting Tenants Association meetings, where we continue to advocate for the water-based clubs and our specific requirements (relative to the requirements of the land-based clubs).

At this stage, however, it appears that there will be further delays in advancing the implementation of the Albert Park Master Plan. Recent advice from Parks Vic indicated that more detailed planning is shortly to commence in relation to the land-based activities around the Park, but that the Lake Management planning will not commence until the land-based planning has been completed. We continue to push for equal considerations of the needs of both land and water-based clubs in the Park precinct.

Social Activities

CoVid again limited the extent of our social activities over the last year, and this is an area where we hope to have more success in the coming year. Our Friday evening Sail and Social events were limited but well attended, and our Festive Season celebrations in December were a great success. Social sailing on the last Sunday of the month has been occurring since we re-opened and mid-week social sailing also proved popular with a small, but dedicated, group of mid-week sailors.

Property and Infrastructure

Our new 'café corner' has proved to be extremely popular with club members. It's a great place to sit and catch up with friends with a birds-eye view of the sailing on the lake.

We continue to investigate options for a lift, all-abilities toilets/changerooms and associated works at the club, and hope to proceed with the deck upgrade over the next few months.

The hot water system is finally fully operational and should be a boon to all sailors during the forthcoming winter months.

Financial Results

The financial results for the year are set out in the Financial Report and the Treasurer's report. Whilst our income for the year was reduced, we also had significant reductions in many of our expenditure areas, resulting in a small profit for the year.

Our financial reserves continue to remain steady, which ensures that the club enters this new period from a position of financial strength and stability and ongoing viability.

Grants

The Club again received a number of grants during the year. Further CoVid support funding was a welcome addition to our finances, including a grant to purchase cleaning/sanitising equipment. A grant to cover the development of a training program in conjunction with Australian Sailing has not been spent at this stage due to CoVid delays and the applicable funds have been transferred for use in the coming period of time. We also obtained a small grant to assist Hamish Gilson in his sailing program, and we watch this young sailor's development with interest. Thanks to Peter Bennell who prepared the applications with support and advice from Don and Rod.

The Future

As we look to the future, Greg Ryan (committee member) is leading a program of planning for the club with a dedicated small group of committee members. This will be done through development of a strategic roadmap for the next few years and will take into consideration the views of all ASC members, including our youth, female, family and senior sailors.

Increasing costs will require careful budgeting over the next few years and it will be necessary for additional income sources to be obtained if the club wishes to retain existing membership fee levels.

The matter of succession planning will also require attention during the coming year to ensure that the committee and the club is continually refreshed by a wider pool of club members taking on a committee position or volunteering to take responsibility for a specific area of club activities. New ideas are always welcome, but the greater need is for club members who are prepared to not only put forward an idea, but to also suggest ways of implementing and advancing the idea.

Acknowledgements

I again reiterate my comments from my report last year: It would be almost impossible to quantify the contribution made to the club by volunteers. Club members and their families do our : boat maintenance; operation of the galley and bar; repairs and maintenance of our clubrooms and yards; operation of the tower each Saturday; compilation of duty rosters year-round; race management and rescue boat duties each Saturday; organising and helping with our working bees; editing, compilation and distribution of the quarterly Mudpuddler; weekly production of Snippets; coordination of our marketing and promotional activities; running of our social events, and a multitude of other tasks. I acknowledge and thank everyone who has contributed to the club either on a regular basis or just once or twice over the course of the last year. Without you all, this club would not continue.

We are seeing some changes in our Committee membership in the coming year, and I thank our committee members who have decided to step aside at this time.

Our flag offices, Secretary and Treasurer work tirelessly for the club. They, together with other committee members, meet each month year-round. They are also invariably at the club each Saturday helping out and, in between, responding to a multitude of emails and other requests as well. I also pay acknowledgement to Jack Woods, who continues in his role as our Membership Secretary even though he is no longer a formal member of the committee.

I must also extend my personal thanks to Rod, our Vice-Commodore. Rod has provided guidance and input on a host of matters throughout the year and his ongoing support to me, and his dedication to our club, requires particular acknowledgement. Thanks Rod.

And finally, to our members. You are the core of our club and the reason for our existence. Your loyalty and ongoing support of the club over the last few years has ensured that we face the future from a position of financial strength and with the opportunity to re-invigorate our club and see it safely into the future. Thanks to each and every one of you.

Cindy Tilbrook
Commodore