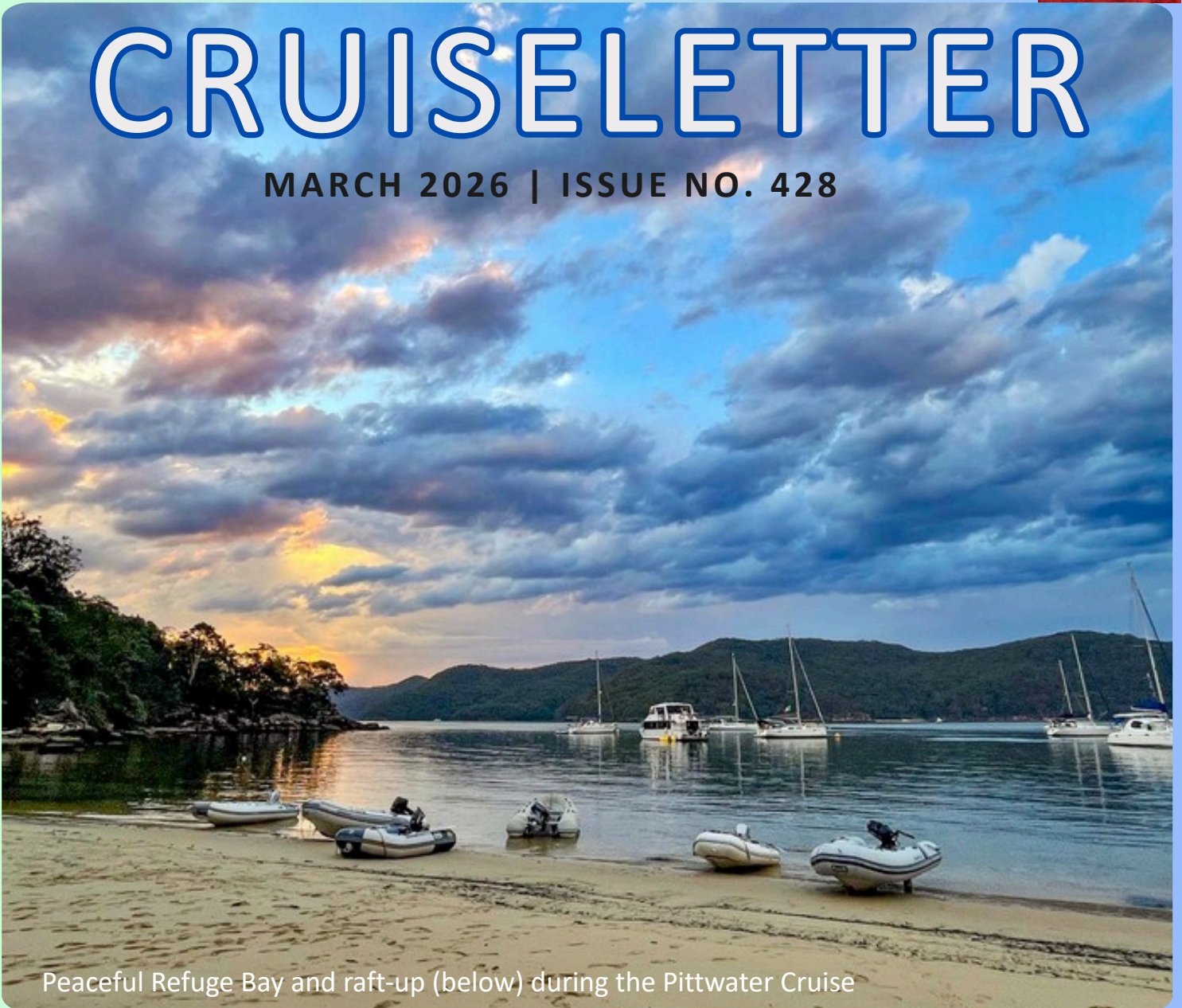


LAKE MACQUARIE YACHT CLUB CRUISING DIVISION



CRUISELETTER

MARCH 2026 | ISSUE NO. 428



Peaceful Refuge Bay and raft-up (below) during the Pittwater Cruise

What's on this month

- **General Meeting: 9th March 2026, 7:00 pm; Bridgedeck Room**
Guest Speaker: Dean Gaine, Gas Fitter & Plumber
4:30: Liferaft Demonstration
- **Lake Outing: 13th-15th March.**

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SKIPPER'S REPORT

Greetings Fellow CD Members! It looks like 2026 is going to be yet another great one for the CD. We continue to recruit new members and our activities ashore and afloat are well attended. The highlight for February had to be the annual Pittwater Cruise organised by 'Marco' and Carolanne Clement. They did a great job organising a program that nicely mixed the traditional and the new. Despite some weather challenges (Eh, Marco – you makka it too hot!!) everyone had a ball and the Italian Theme worked wonderfully. We look forward to hearing a presentation on the event at a future General Meeting.



TONY AUSTIN

Our guest speaker at the February general meeting was Cheryl Stone who spoke on the Women Who Sail Australia program. This is an amazingly successful organisation that has really got the committee thinking about how we can better support and encourage our women members to confidently undertake more roles on their boats.

The weather has been quite challenging over the past few months with often marked local deviations from the 'official' BOM forecasts. This has resulted in what appears to be an increasing number of vessels either breaking their moorings or sinking *in situ*. The boat 'breakers' at Rathmines have been kept very, very busy. It behoves all of us to constantly check our boats and mooring apparatus to ensure that we stay safely in place.

We have Dean Gainey (Gas Fitter and Plumber) to make a presentation at our next general meeting. Dean is well known to many of us and is highly experienced in all things boating. Simon Turpin was not available for the March meeting and will now be presenting in April.

Prior to the March meeting we are doing something we rarely get a chance to do – we will be deploying a real life-raft and running a 'hands on' session on how to use one safely. Even if you do not own a life-raft there are several scenarios where you might need to use one so why not be prepared!! Come along and have a giggle as you discover how crowded they can be!!

As always, the CD Committee seeks your feedback on how we can best meet your cruising needs and make the CD even better. Please do not hesitate to give any one of us a call.

Wishing you safe sailing, Tony.

What's Happening at LMYC?

- Members should be aware that membership renewals for the LMYC are now due. You can pay on-line. Likewise, membership of the CD is also due for by May. In both cases, you can opt for a 3-year membership at a discounted rate.
- LMYC recently hosted the 2026 Adams 10 National Championships.
- Repairs to the southside of the car park will commence in April.
- The LMYC Sailing Administrator, Ross Aherns, is retiring at the end of March.
- Also enter these 2026 dates into your diaries:
 - **Friday 8th May:** Trivia Night for LMYC Discover Sailing Centre.
 - **Tuesday 26th May:** LMYC AGM.
 - **Friday 12th June:** Degustation with Crusoes on the Lake.
 - **Friday 24th July:** Christmas in July Long Table Dinner.
 - **Friday 7th August:** Commodore's Ball, raising funds for Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie.

Download the latest editions of "**Forecast**" to catch up with all the entertainment and other activities you can enjoy at your Club.

Lake Matters

Ross Shirtley and I attended the last LMCC Aquatic Services Committee meeting on 19 February. Unfortunately, there were no representatives from either Maritime or MIDO so we did not get updates on the proposed Swansea Channel dredging programs. Council officers advised us that everything seems to be progressing well with the 'enduring' program – the dredge is ready to go, and they are getting final approvals for the installation of the sand distribution system (pipeline out to Blacksmiths Beach just south of the Belmont Golf Club). We could not get an update on the 'interim' dredging program scheduled for late February(!) or early March. Suffice to say most vessels are still able to safely navigate the channel.

Council is supporting two reviews proposed by ASC members – the first on the management of dinghies etc stored on public lands around the lake shore. Hopefully this review will help better manage derelict dinghies and offer more storage options in areas of high usage. The second is the provision of sewage pumpouts around the lake. We will be reviewing the distribution, serviceability and ease of access by deeper draft vessels.

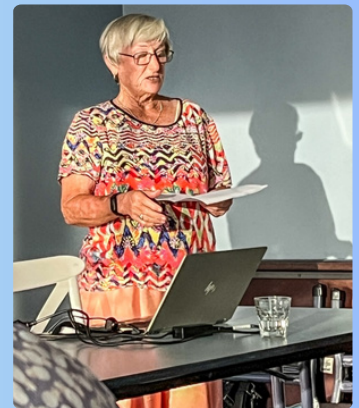
Catamaran and large boat owners will be very happy to hear that Empire Marina (Lake Mac) has finished the upgrade of their travel lift and can now handle boats up to 50T and beam up to 6.5m. For many this will mean they no longer need to leave the lake to get work done on their boats.

Finally, work has recommenced on the replacement of the Belmont Public Jetty. It is hoped that this will be completed in late June or early July. Tony.

February Meeting's Guest Speaker - Cherylle Stone

Cherylle outlined her sailing experiences of some 50 years. She is a very active member of the Women Who Sail Australia (WWSA) organisation and a regular participant in the annual Gathering On The Bay (GOTB) workshops.

She outlined the program for the upcoming gathering at Nelson Bay from Friday 27th to Sunday 29th March, 2026.



Women Who Sail Australia Annual Gathering on the Bay

Women Who Sail Australia (WWSA) will be holding their annual 'Gathering on the Bay' (GOTB) on the weekend of 27th - 29th March 2026, just prior to 'Sail Port Stephens'. A group of interested LMYC Cruising Division women will be driving to the bay to attend the Saturday sessions on 28/3.

This gathering is really inspirational and also a great opportunity to network with like-minded women. There are a few spare seats available, so if you'd like to join the group for an enjoyable day out, please call Eleanor (0416258461), Natalie (0410649543) or Angela (0408479228).

See the GOTB website for further details: <https://www.womenwhosailaustralia.com/gotb>

Registration details are here: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/wsa-gathering-on-the-bay-2026-tickets-1982325093718>

Cost for the day: \$91.31 (Lunch & Morning Tea included).

CD Merchandise for Sale:

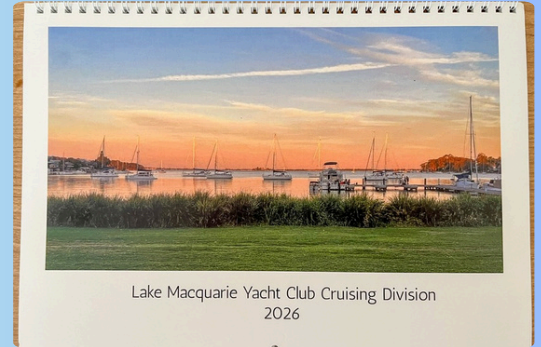
The CD has some “MUST HAVE” items for your Club boating needs so avail yourselves of these most desirable items while stocks last!



CD Shirts as modelled by Ralph: \$30 or 2 for \$50.



CD Pennants \$10.



CD Calendars. These are not only very functional but a great keepsake. \$15.

For the purchase of any items, contact our Treasurer Ralph. Shirts can now be purchased at the LMYC club front desk, and all items are available at Club Meetings. You can now also pay using your Credit or Debit cards.

Ball's Pyramid, Lord Howe Island

This photo was taken by Peter Bakewell (Margarita) on a recent cruise to Lord Howe Island. Ball's Pyramid lies 23 km to the SE of LHI. At 551 m it is the world's highest ocean stack, and is in the final stage in the life of a volcanic island that was once 12 km in diameter.



Safety Snippet

It is an unfortunate truism that the greatest advances in sea safety only come about after a critical review of a recent disaster. For recreational sailors the most obvious such event was the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. Six people died and 55 had to be rescued either from life rafts or from their vessels. In all, five yachts sank and seven were abandoned.

While there were many important findings from the coronial review, the two I want to focus on are those of crew training and standards for liferafts. I have to be very upfront here in that as a military medical practitioner, training is the very cornerstone of everything that I do. It doesn't have to be a formal course but I really want to know that I can make the right decision and undertake the right action when needed, especially if it is time critical and bad things could happen. I have seen far too many situations where preventable deaths and injuries have happened!

One of the major recommendations from the 1998 race was a greater percentage of the crew needed to complete the 'Safety at Sea Survival Course'. This is an outstanding course and I cannot over emphasise its importance, but it is expensive and you need to do a refresher every three years to remain 'current'. For those of us who do the occasional coast trip under highly controlled conditions it is probably not so important, BUT you can gain similar skills and confidence by undertaking as many 'hands on' activities offered by the CD as possible. A case in point is our highly successful flare demonstrations held every few years at the Club.

While most CD members do not have a liferaft on their vessels there is still great benefit in getting some experience in how they should be used and what is in them. You could easily find yourself on someone else's vessel (recreational or commercial) fitted with a liferaft or, in rare circumstances, have AMSA do an airdrop to deliver one to you. Being able to use the liferaft and attached equipment safely could be critical to survival.

The CD has a time-expired liferaft (kindly donated by Rob and Karen Black (KRACKT)). We will be conducting a 'dry' training activity prior to the General Meeting on Monday 9 March starting at 4.30pm so come along and learn everything you need to know if you are ever unlucky enough to need to use one. Tony.



LA DOLCE VITA PITTWATER CRUISE REPORT

17th February. Tuesday (Martedì).

Although the official first day of the Dolce Vita Cruise was 18th February, the crews of 2Dream, Beyond Cool, Equinox, Elara and Stoked took advantage of the beautiful, calm waters and made their passage on Tuesday the 17th arriving safely to La Baia de Pittwater to begin the Italian adventure. Moondance had arrived a few days earlier. Beyond Cool, Elara, Stoked and Equinox spent Tuesday night at Towlers, 2 Dream at Smiths Creek while Moondance enjoyed the tranquility of Refuge Bay.



18 February. Wednesday (Mercoledì).

Rio and Kimberley Dreaming joined the fleet on Wednesday evening for the official launch of the cruise at La Bacino. The Señora's were presented with the official cruise flag by Cruise Director Marco, followed by a truly Italian sundowners beautifully prepared by Carolina and Maurella.



19th February. Thursday (Giovedì).

Thursday morning was a slow start due to a few early showers but by 12 o'clock we had blue skies and all went ashore at La Bacino for a picnic lunch and games afternoon where a lot of luck, skill and fun was involved.

The crew from Rio, Moondance and Stoked hosted our potluck dinners where everyone enjoyed a wonderful night. It was a great way to end day two of the Dolce Vita cruise.



Games ashore: Ralph hits the pins...



...while Fred has a collapse!!



Crews from Elara, Rio and 2Dream share a meal

20th February. Friday (Venerdi).

After a relaxing start to day three of our cruise we all caught the ferry over to Palm Beach and enjoyed lunch together at the Palm Beach RSL club. Another ferry ride back to the boats at La Basino before the fleet made its way to Bay d’America for a more secure anchorage for the night.



Palm Beach RSL for lunch.



21st February. Saturday (Sabato).

Saturday dawned bright and clear with mirrorlike waters providing perfect paddling conditions for the crew of Elara and Kimberly Dreaming.

With the Dolce Vita beach party planned that evening the fleet made it its way to Baia d’ Halletts where swims, coffee, visits to Cottage Pt kiosk and decorating the beach ensued.

As dusk embraced the bay (and thunderclouds gathered overhead) loaded tenders took the revellers ashore to enjoy an evening of fine food, wonderful company and, despite a few drops of rain, a night of much mirth and tall stories! (photos below).





The PWC crews in their finest “Dolce Vita” gear having an obviously fantastic beach party. Present are (L-R): Mike, Jeanette, Joe, (Kevin, Joe’s friend), Carolanne, Selma, Mark, Fred, Lisa, Geoff, Marion, John, Eleanor, Ralph, Phil, Angela and Maureen.

22nd February. Sunday (Domenica).

Today saw a first for the PWC as we made way to Dangar Island (or today Isla de Ponza) for a comprehensive (and sometimes tricky) observation trail around the island. Cruise coordinator Marco had gone to great trouble to research and compile 38 questions - which occasionally had both participants and residents intrigued!

Following a picnic lunch at the bowling club (supplemented by the odd cooling ale) the scores were collated with the crew from Rio, Geoff and Losa) taking home the trophy! (Photo below).

The return trip home courtesy of Beyond Cool and Equinox followed by a cooling dip at Halletts ended a very enjoyable day.



23rd February. Monday (Lunedì).

With the fleet moored in Yeoman’s and Castle Lagoon it was only a short motor around by dinghy to Cottage Pt kiosk for a delicious lunch.

Crews enjoyed a couple of hours of relaxation before gathering on board Beyond Cool, Rio and 2 Dream for a trivia quiz on ‘all things Italian’.

Four teams were vying for the fabulous first prize with Capri triumphing over Prego, O Solo Mio and Truffato by an margin of just three points!

Host boats provided the nibbles, Rio supplied the music and Quizmaster Extraordinaire Marco kept us all totally entertained! Fantastico afternoona!





Rio, Beyond Cool and 2 Dream rafted up for the trivia Quiz



24th February. Martedi.

By 9 am the beach was swept clear of all debris, flags were flying in the breeze and the mighty Pontza Island Golf Championship was ready to roll! Tee-off at 10:30 saw teams fearlessly take on the rather challenging sand bunkers and water traps with a final play-off being held between equal first place getters of Beyond Cool, Moondance and 2 Dream.

Obviously Ralph & Angela have been in training as not only did they emerge victorious but Ralph also took out 'nearest the pin'!

After a delicious morning tea supplied by Elara, Moondance and Rio the infamous Rat Races were run with John (Moondance) and Maureen (Stoked) proving they were the champion Rat Catchers for 2026!



25th and 26th February.

With two free days crews were at liberty to spend their time exploring the beautiful bays and creeks of the lower Hawkesbury.

When we regrouped on Friday afternoon for our cocktail party the experiences people shared were many and varied.

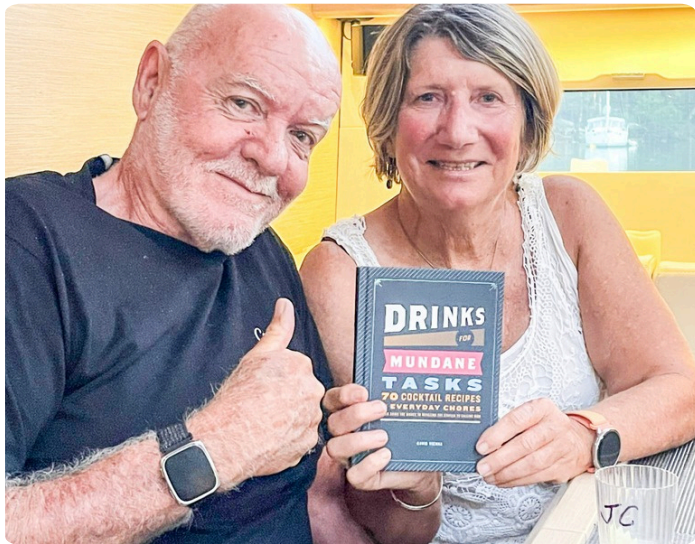
Some delighted in seeing lifeforms and shapes in the rocks in Smith Creek; Beyond Cool and Rio had a fantastic afternoon of cards; aboriginal artwork was discovered in a rock overhang; a huge sea eagle nest was spied atop an enormous gumtree in Stingray Bay; catfish mottled and well camouflaged were seen in the shallows and 2 Dream and Elara both had an encounter with the ADF - the 'boys in black' doing exercises in conjunction with the army. Many wondrous jellyfish were seen as was a turtle called Spot!

The team of Rio walked the Berowra track and Ralph and Geoff paddled to the very top of Smith Creek. Grunting fish were heard one evening and some interesting activity on Fisherman's Beach was also noted!

27th Friday, Venerdì

We gathered on Beyond Cool for a fabulous Isola Di Ponza Cocktail Party despite rain. Each boat came up with a different cocktail and we had to score on presentation, appearance and taste. There was much laughter and discussion about cocktails.

Moondance won the competition. Marion and John were presented with a book on 'cocktails' (below).



28th February, Sabato

Dawn breaks on Castle Lagoon and Yeomans to the sound of early bird calls. As we glide along amazing weathered rocks on the shoreline, the low tide gives way to tiny mud crabs scampering over muddy rocks. Cormorants sit watchful. Previous rain gives the sound of babbling waterfalls hidden by lush vegetation.

By 11:15 all boat crews are on board Beyond Cool ready for our trip to Bobbin Head. Anchoring places BC in mud, so a move to a mooring is needed. Rio and BC transfer us to shore and a successful lunch is held at the impressive Art Deco building - Bobbin Head Cafe.

To stretch our legs, we went on a walk to cable bridge, where we do the staccato dance to avoid a goanna who darts in various directions to escape the crowd.

We are spoilt with afternoon tea with Carolina's 'bad banana boat cake' yummy. Elara moves to quiet Smiths Creek, only to find a 'Ship' anchored there! The rest of the fleet move to the basin in readiness to depart early next day.

1st March, Domenica

In the dark of early morning the fleet drop moorings. The ocean is floppy and uncomfortable.

A warning goes out as a yacht has upturned on the Swansea bar so to be alert for debris. Elara returns Monday also with a floppy sea plus a strong NE headwind and an ocean void of any other craft.

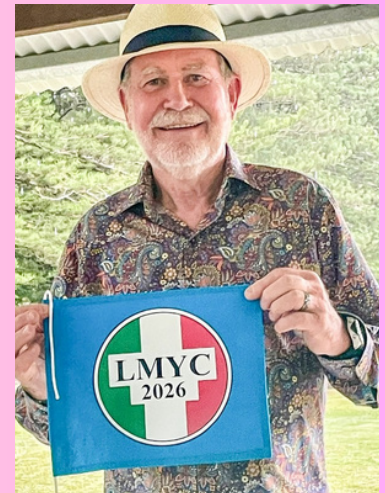
Thankfully all boats have returned safely to Lake Mac.

A HUGE thank you to Marco and Carolina for a wonderful Pittwater 2026 Dolce Vita Cruise 🇮🇹

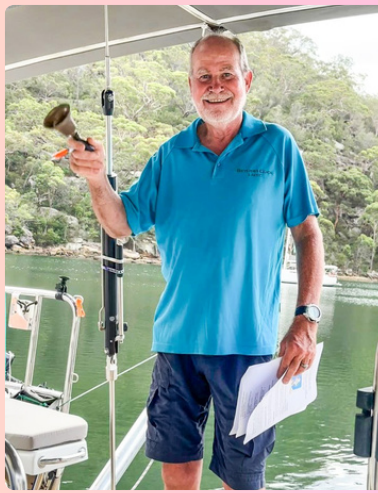
Notes by: *Maureen, Angela and Selma.*



The success and enjoyment of the cruise was due to the huge effort put in by Cruise Coordinators, Carollanne and Mark. 10



These two pages of photos from the cruise were taken by various members and indicate the obvious enjoyment that they all experienced.



Carolanne waves "hello" as BC is finally back in the Lake.

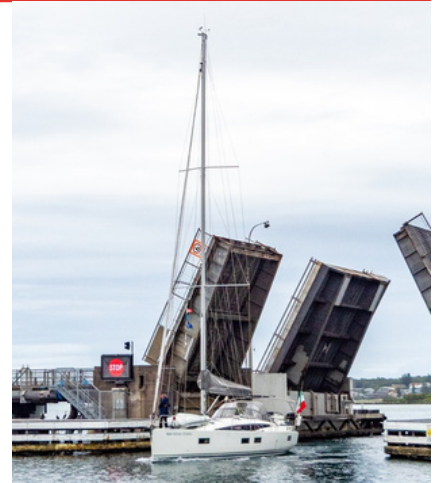
Contact Details

Executives:

Skipper: Tony Austin 0416 266 947
 Secretary: Richard Masson 0422 347 875
 Treasurer: Ralph Asquith 0409 318 230

Committee:

Eleanor Cunningham (LMYC Board Rep) 0416 258 461
 Phil Cunningham 0416 078 461
 Ken Archer (Cruiseletter Editor) 0428 785 459
 Angela Asquith 0408 479 228
 Mark Clement 0400 716 756



GENERAL MEETINGS - Bridgedeck Room

The General Meetings will start at 7pm in the Bridgedeck room. A table will be booked for dinner from 5:30pm onwards for those wishing to share a meal prior to the meeting. Our meetings are a great way to find out what's happening and to get to know fellow CD members.

For Your Calendar

March: General Meeting: 9th

-Guest Speaker: Dean Gainey - LPG gas safety on boats.

Outing: 13-15th Mar

**-Life Raft Demonstration at 4:30 pm.
 -Lake Cruise. Tony Austin Coordinator**

April: Outing: 3-6th April

-Easter Outing, Richard Masson, Coordinator.

General Meeting:13th

**-Guest Speaker, Simon Turpin;
 Discover Sailing Program, LMYC.
 -Guest Speaker. TBA.**

May: GM & AGM*: 11th May

-Guest Speaker - TBA

Outing: 15th-17th May

-TBA

***This is a non-election year.**

THANK YOU!

Many thanks this month to Mark and Carolanne Clement for organising and running this year's Pittwater Cruise. By all reports, it was a wonderful experience. Also, thanks to Maureen, Angela and Selma who contributed notes and others who took the great photos for the PWC report.

CRUISELETTER EDITOR

Any articles for the Cruiseletter can be sent to the Cruiseletter Editor, Ken Archer, preferably in MS Word format at archerken90@gmail.com (M: 0428 785 459) by 25th of each month.

Please address all letters for the Cruising Division to:

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