Lake Macquarie Yacht Club

Issue 44 / October 2026

FORECAST

Monthly Newsletter from Lake Macquarie Yacht Club



COMMODORE'S MESSAGE

FORECAST – OCTOBER 2026

IMPROVEMENTS at LMYC

Regulars to our Clubhouse with have seen the work going on, digging up our car park.
Contractors have been busy laying power cables to the car park light poles. The current car park lighting is solar powered only. When the lights were first installed, they lit the car park quite well, however over time they have deteriorated and in need of replacement. Some of the lights no longer work and others are quite dim. The recent improvement to the club's power supply and distribution has enabled us to provide mains power to the car park lighting.
The new lighting will be installed on the existing light poles, in the coming weeks. Minor patching of the bitumen will occur shortly. Full resurfacing will put the car park out of use for two full days and therefore the club will need to be closed for those two days. We will schedule the full resurfacing in Winter to minimise disruption to our members and club activities.
The board thanks all our members and patrons for their patience and understanding during the disruption to parking.

Swansea Channel Dredging

Just an update on the dredging of Swansea channel. I do not have any official updates; however, I have reports from members observations. The commissioning of new dedicated dredge is underway. The dredge is working in the channel straightening and widening the dogleg between Elizabeth Island and Swan Bay. The sand spoil is being pumped to the beach just south of the golf course. This is excellent news as we all understand the sand dumped on Elizabeth Island just gets washed and blown back into the channel.

It is good to see real progress on the government's promise to set up ongoing maintenance dredging to keep the channel navigable.

Saltwater Wine winter racing success

Congratulations to LMYC member Tom Woods and crew for their many racing successes over winter.

Tom Woods and Saltwater Wine have very recently returned to our lake following a remarkably successful winter offshore racing campaign. I congratulated Tom personally. Tom offered to put a story together for our Forecast with events entered, results achieved and a list of crew members.

See below Tom's report on Saltwater Wine's adventures including a comprehensive listing of results as well as crew from LMYC other local clubs and international sailors who raced with Tom.

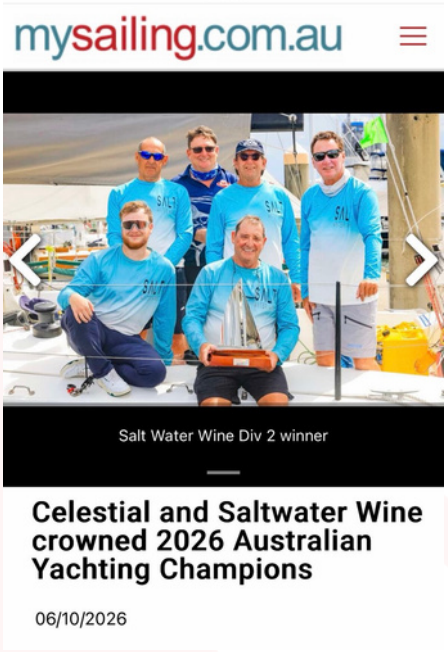
See you around the Club

Geoff Edman
Commodore
Commodore@lmyc.com.au



2026 Saltwater Wine Queensland Racing Tour

Yacht: Saltwater Wine
Owner/Skipper Tom Woods
Design JPK 1080
Sail Number N62
Departed 23/7/26
Returned 13/10/26
10 weeks, 2800 nautical Miles



Event	Results	Crew	Yacht Club Member	Position
Sydney to Goldcoast	3rd Place IRC Division 3	Tom Woods David O'Dowd Clyde Freeman Peter McNeill Kingsley Piesse	NCYC/ LMYC NCYC/LMYC LMYC LMYC RPYC	Skipper Bowman Main Helm Navigator
Goldcoast to Mackay	**3rd Place Overall IRC** **3rd Place Overall ORC** 2nd Place IRC Div2 3rd Plac e PHS Div2	Tom Woods David O'Dowd Clyde Freeman Peter McNeill Kingsley Piesse	NCYC/ LMYC NCYC/LMYC LMYC LMYC RPYC	Skipper Bowman Main Helm Navigator
Airlie Beach Race Week	5th Place IRC	Tom Woods David O'Dowd Peter McNeill Kingsley Piesse Dean Blatchford Nicolle ODonnell	NCYC/ LMYC NCYC/LMYC LMYC RPYC LMYC NCYC	Skipper Bowman Main Navigator Tactics Trim

Hamilton Island Race week	4th Place IRC Div 2	Jamie Woods Tom Woods Dean Blatchford David O'Dowd Kingsley Piesse Nicolle ODonnell	NCYC/ LMYC NCYC/LMYC LMYC NCYC/ LMYC RPYC NCYC	Skipper Main Tactics Bow/Trim Navigator Trim
Magnetic Island Race Week Finished with 5 off 1st Places 5 Points	**1st Place IRC Overall**	Tom Woods David O'Dowd Tim Dodds Kingsley Piesse Sandy Higgins James Turner	NCYC/ LMYC NCYC/LMYC NCYC RPYC Adelaide CYCA	Skipper Bowman Main Navigator Trim Trim
Sail Paradise Goldcoast Australian IRC Championship Finished with 4 off 1st place and 1 off 2nd place	**1st Place IRC Overall** **1st Place ORC Overall** **Australian Champion Div 2** **Queensland Champion**	Tom Woods Dean Blatchford Clyde Freeman Peter Cornford Wayne Kirby Alex Wenger	NCYC/ LMYC NCYC/LMYC NCYC NCYC/LMYC Southport YC Switzerland	Skipper Bowman Main Trim Trim Vice Commodore SYC Bowman

Ihave always wanted to Sail and race the Queensland Winter Yachting season and decided this was the year whilst I had an extremely competitive IRC Yacht and a great group of Sailing mates keen to do it with me. Istarted preparations early this year with a win at Sail Port Stephens in April 1st Place on ORC

The Sydney to Goldcoast and Goldcoast Mackay Races were both hard running downwind and we didn't hoist a Headsail until racing at Airlie Beach.

The Yacht excels in high wind Spinnaker running, we experienced wind speeds up to 34 knots and top speeds of 19 to 20 knots

Hard work with only 5 crew with only 2 crew on watch for each shift. Experience of crew members on board for different Regattas and Races

Dean Blatchford,	I won the 505 Worlds with Dean in 1984 and also numerous Australian Titles
Clyde Feeman,	I have sailed with for over 30 + years who has competed in numerous offshore events including S2H and Admirals Cup
David O;Dowd	David, has raced 505 's and has also won the S2H on Shes the culprit on PHS,
Peter McNeill	Etchells world Champion, I have competed with Peter in Etchells Worlds in Chicago and Ireland where we won the Irish Nationals
Kingsley Piesse	from Perth Navigator and Expedition Navigation Software Guru, doing his 34th the Sydney to Hobart this year on Chutzpah
Jamie Woods	My son, experience in Skiff racing and competed in S2H races. I also race Double Handed Yacht Races with Jamie on Saltwater Wine
Tim Dodds	NCYC member racing on Mako and Skiffs, Great Crew member
Sandy Higgins	505 World Champion 2025 and Tactician on TP52 Yachts
James Turner	Tactician on TP52 Yachts and Skiff Sailor
Wayne Kirby	Vice Commodore of Southport Yacht Club and Owner of 39 foot Race yacht Alpha Tauri
Peter Cornford	Races on Dirty Deeds NCYC and LMYC member

I have completed a very successful and fun filled program,, Most racing was in winds ranging from 10 to 30 knots, averaging 20 knots for most races.We had negligible damage or breakage during the whole program, everyone had a great time and I would recommend this to all, as the best way to improve your yacht racing and ocean experience and knowledge.

The Queensland Race Weeks are great fun and excellent holiday for all family members

It's a long way but well worth it.






SIX
FATHOMS
SALT


SAIL PARADISE
2026
SALTY
DINGO


SIX
FATHOMS
Winners are definitely Grinners!


SEALINK

REAR COMMODORE'S REPORT OCTOBER 2026

VHF Sign On

In December 2024 there was a collision on Sydney Harbour between two yachts doing Friday twilight races which resulted in the death of a sailor. Australian Sailing launched an investigation into the incident. Following that investigation the Equipment Audits for CAT 7 now require CAT 7 yachts to have a VHF fixed or handheld (Special Regulation 3.25.1(b)(iii)). LMYC has long had SI 2.3.1 D which requires competing yachts to carry a VHF and monitor Channel 71 (LMYC) and for Windward/Leewards channel 73 when at Toronto. It is my experience that a lot of yachts had VHF's that for various reasons didn't function properly or were not turned on. (Some people aren't confident about using a VHF though there's nothing to it).

The age of competitors sailing means health issues like heart attacks and strokes, not to mention injuries sustained whilst racing, being more likely. A friend of mine had some issues which caused me to do some research on first aid for a person suffering a stroke. Getting the victim to proper medical attention quickly was all I could find. When it comes to heart issues the answer is much the same, an AED could save the day.

This year, in the Sunday Winter Series, a competitor was sailing the series single handed. One Sunday with stronger winds, we on Equinox had just packed up after finishing, when it occurred to me, where is said boat. It took some finding as this boat was still over the other side of the Lake near Coal Point Mark. Due to the windy conditions, there were few other boats on the Lake that day. Once he was sighted, Equinox then motored west till we encountered him. We then stood by and watched him until he finished and was tied up to the wharf near the "Etchells" crane. The Race Officers assured me they too were watching via binoculars from the Start Box.

To race under Cat 7, it is required by the Special Regulations to have "effective rescue availability", SR 2.01.8. How long would it take to get a rescue happening? Marine Rescue and/or the Water Police might be nearby (good), or they may have to gather a team or may be busy elsewhere. Marine Rescue and/or the Water Police can't be considered "effective rescue availability" all the time. LMYC has boats, Sirius and Sea Breeze but how long would it take to acquire the required equipment and get them out of the marina? As Rear Commodore I had identified some problems, and I could see some fixes for these problems. If I don't do anything, that really is a problem ("She'll be right mate").

What has been done:-

- After that Winter Sunday race, I had a conversation with the Sailing Manager regarding single-handed sailing, things we could do to check VHFs were switched on and having available rescue as required by LMYC racing under CAT 7.
- VHF sign on was introduced – having to state number of crew (POB) to show that the VHF is on channel and transmitting as well as having an accurate POB recorded. It would be even better if we could also check that the crew could hear the VHF.
- LMYC has for some time had an AED in the bar and an AED on the RCV, Sirius on Saturdays. LMYC has now purchased another AED which is on the mark boat, Sea Breeze.
- When races are conducted from the shore Start Box, the mark boat Sea Breeze is now taken from its berth and moored near the Start Box for quick access. First aid equipment and the AED are onboard.
- There are also competing yachts that have an AED on board, thus the use of VHF as a broadcast of an emergency could alert them. Response could be even quicker than the LMYC boat if they are nearby.
- There are medical professionals that sail and help could be nearby, but there must be some way to get their attention. Mobile phones don't do a broadcast and this has been reported as an issue in many major incident rescues. These you can read on Australian Sailing website under "Safety".
- I like sailing my boat by myself (auto pilot helps a lot), racing is another thing. LMYC has a responsibility to all sailors - the solo sailor and the sailors on the other boats racing. Should something happen to the solo sailor there is no plan "B". For the guy in the Sunday Winter Series who is a competent and experienced sailor on a smaller boat, he could tack quite quickly. For me on Equinox it takes a bit of preparation - an emergency tack just won't happen and so there is a danger to other competitors. LMYC Sailing Instructions now require a crew of 2 or more, SI 2.1.8. "All boats shall compete with a minimum of two people on board."

A solo sailor may also have a medical issue or accident & require immediate assistance.

volunteers needed please consider joining



Help wanted at Sailability Toronto Australia. If you have a few hours to spare on a Thursday or Saturday, a wonderful group of people would love to have you join us. Our objective is to provide facilities and personnel to make sailing available to people living with disabilities in the region we serve, doing so safely and giving them an enjoyable sailing experience. A number of our people with disabilities sail by themselves, but most often, volunteer sailors take our clients sailing. We serve both children (from special schools) and adults with disabilities. We need more volunteers, so please consider joining us. Whether you sail or help onshore, it's something you won't regret. Contact Lyn on 0428416660 for more information.

VICE COMMODORE'S MESSAGE

PICCOLO

A Proud Part of Lake Macquarie Yacht Club History

Remembering Lake Macquarie Yacht Club's memorable victory in the 1976 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race

On Boxing Day 1976, a 36-foot yacht named Piccolo, sailing under the burgee of Lake Macquarie Yacht Club (LMYC), set off from Sydney to compete in one of Australia's most demanding ocean races.

Four days, five hours, 30 minutes and 15 seconds later, Piccolo had completed the gruelling passage to Hobart and secured her place in Australian sailing history, winning the race overall on handicap.

For Lake Macquarie, this was more than a major offshore racing victory. It was a triumph for the club, its sailors and the wider local sailing community — a moment of pride that would endure long after the sails were lowered and the trophies put away.

A Race to Remember

The 1976 Sydney to Hobart was a tough test of seamanship and endurance. The fleet started in relatively light north-easterly winds before conditions changed dramatically. By early evening, a southerly of around 25 knots had developed, strengthening to 40 knots during the night.

After a spell of lighter winds, the weather turned challenging again, with strong westerlies reaching 30 knots and gusting to 40 knots. In all, 15 yachts retired — a record for the race since 1970.

Against this backdrop, Piccolo and her crew demonstrated the preparation, judgement and teamwork required to succeed offshore. At 36 feet, she was a relatively small yacht in a fleet of varied designs, making the achievement all the more memorable.



The Yacht and Her Winning Crew

Piccolo was a Bruce Farr-designed, One Ton-class yacht built by Compass Yachts. Measuring 36 feet and carrying sail number M46, she represented Lake Macquarie Yacht Club with distinction.



The seven-member crew
John Pickles
Owner and skipper
Albert Mitchell
Sailing master
Bob Brenac
Navigator
David Powys
Stephen Lamb
John Rowe
Roy Baker

Every crew member had a vital role to play during the long passage south. Offshore racing demands far more than speed: it calls for sound navigation, careful sail handling, good judgement and the determination to keep working through fatigue and uncomfortable conditions.
Piccolo and her crew delivered when it mattered most.



A Hero's Welcome on Lake Macquarie

Perhaps the most memorable chapter of the story came after the finish.

When Piccolo returned to Sydney, the crew discovered that their home club had other plans for them. Lake Macquarie Yacht Club had organised a special welcome and asked the sailors to delay their departure so the celebrations could be ready.

On Sunday afternoon, 16 January 1977, Piccolo made her way into Belmont Bay to a spectacular reception.

Contemporary newspaper reports describe a flotilla of yachts and powerboats escorting the winner home, a clubhouse packed with hundreds of people and a brass band playing on the jetty. The club's commodore, Bob Powys, was to deliver a welcome as the flag-decked yacht moved to her berth.

It was a wonderful expression of what a yacht club means to its community. The victory belonged to the seven people aboard Piccolo, but the pride was shared by sailors, members and supporters throughout Lake Macquarie.

The triumphant return of Piccolo Lake Macquarie Yacht Club January 1977.



Piccolo's Next Chapter — Now Based in Phuket, Thailand

Piccolo's story did not end with her historic Sydney to Hobart victory. Today, she is based in Phuket, Thailand, where she continues her sailing life under local ownership as part of the local racing and charter fleet.

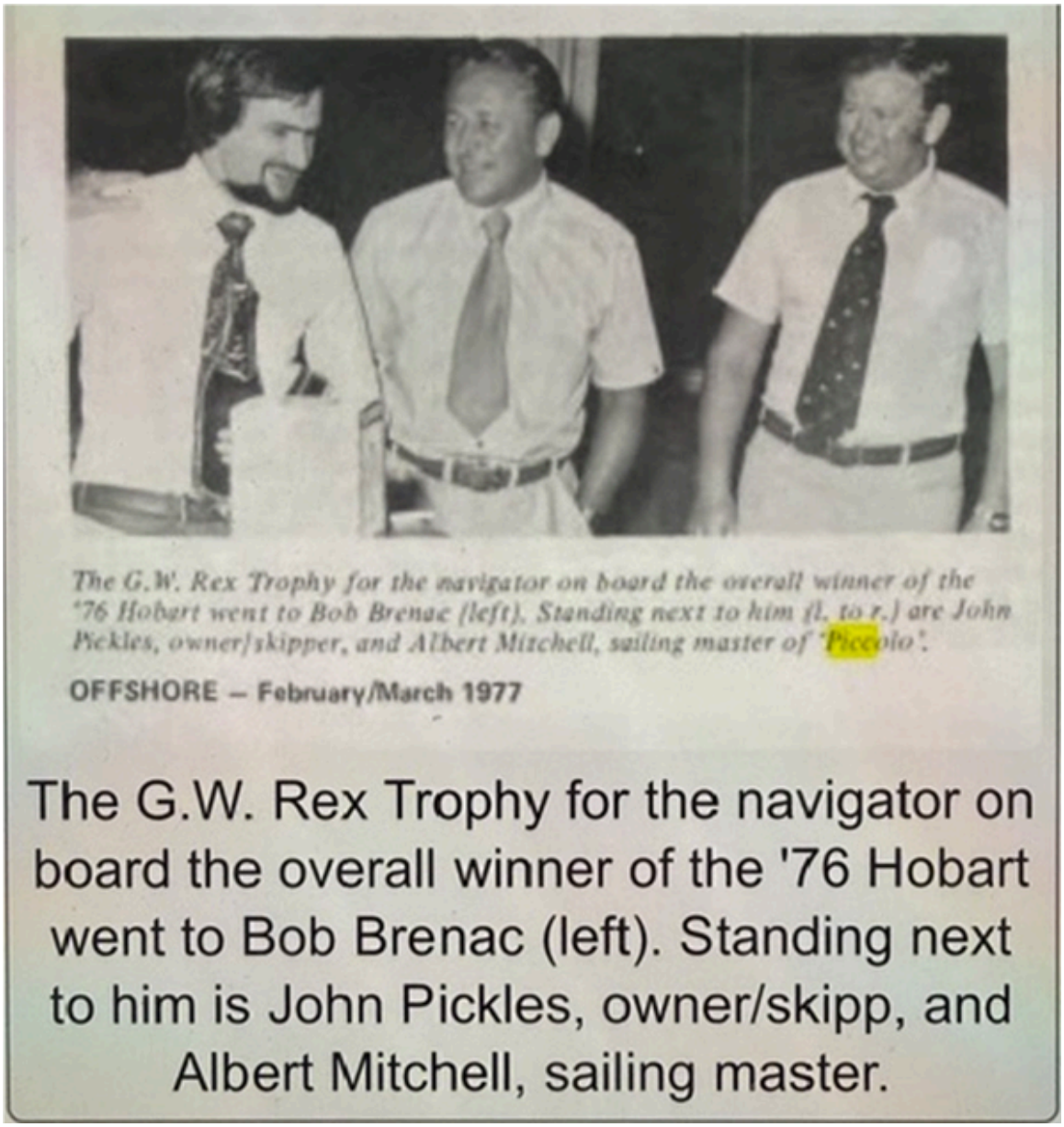
Sailing in the waters of Southeast Asia, Piccolo remains connected to the sailing community through participation in events such as the prestigious Phuket King's Cup Regatta and Phuket Race Week.

It is a fitting next chapter for a yacht with such a proud racing heritage. From her famous triumph representing Lake Macquarie Yacht Club in 1976 to her current life in Phuket, Piccolo continues to be part of the sailing world, carrying with her a remarkable history that began on the waters of New South Wales.

For Lake Macquarie Yacht Club, it is a reminder that the legacy of a great yacht can travel far beyond home waters. Fifty years after her defining victory, Piccolo's story continues to unfold.

A Legacy That Lives On

The 1976 victory remains an important chapter in Lake Macquarie Yacht Club's history. Piccolo was only the second yacht, following Rival's 1961 victory, to claim the prestigious Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race title.
The achievement is also commemorated at the club, where a plaque records the victory and names John Pickles and his crew.
The legacy continues today. In recognition of the yacht's place in the club's history, one of LMYC's sail-training boats has also been named Piccolo, ensuring that a new generation of sailors can learn the name and the story behind it.
For today's members, Piccolo is a reminder of what a strong sailing community, a capable boat and a determined crew can achieve together.
Celebrating 50 Years Since Piccolo's Historic Victory
The 2026 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race marks the 50th anniversary of Piccolo's historic victory.
To commemorate this significant milestone, Albert Mitchell, a member of the winning crew, has been invited by the race organisers, the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA), to fire the official starting cannon for the 2026 race.
This special invitation recognises Piccolo's place in Sydney to Hobart history and provides a fitting tribute to the yacht, her skipper and crew, and their memorable achievement in 1976.
Fifty years on, the occasion offers an opportunity to celebrate their success and the enduring legacy of one of the race's historic victories.
As the Sydney to Hobart fleet heads south each Boxing Day, the story of Piccolo deserves to be remembered. In 1976, a yacht from Lake Macquarie took on one of the world's great ocean races and emerged as the overall winner, bringing home a moment of pride that still belongs to the club today.



The G.W. Rex Trophy for the navigator on board the overall winner of the '76 Hobart went to Bob Brenac (left). Standing next to him (l. to r.) are John Pickles, owner/skipper, and Albert Mitchell, sailing master of 'Piccolo'.

OFFSHORE – February/March 1977

The G.W. Rex Trophy for the navigator on board the overall winner of the '76 Hobart went to Bob Brenac (left). Standing next to him is John Pickles, owner/skipp, and Albert Mitchell, sailing master.



● Piccolo crew who picked up handicap honors in the Sydney-Hobart are (from left) Albert Mitchell, Stephen Lamb, John Pickles, David Powys, Roy Baker and John Rowe.

Garry van Dijk
Vice Commodore
History Committee

DECK BAR NOW OPEN

DECK BAR NOW OPEN

DECK BAR NOW OPEN

FRIDAY TO SUNDAY COURTESY BUS

FRIDAY TO SUNDAY COURTESY BUS

LIVE MUSIC

NOVEMBER

Fridays 6:30-9:30pm | Sundays 1:30-5pm











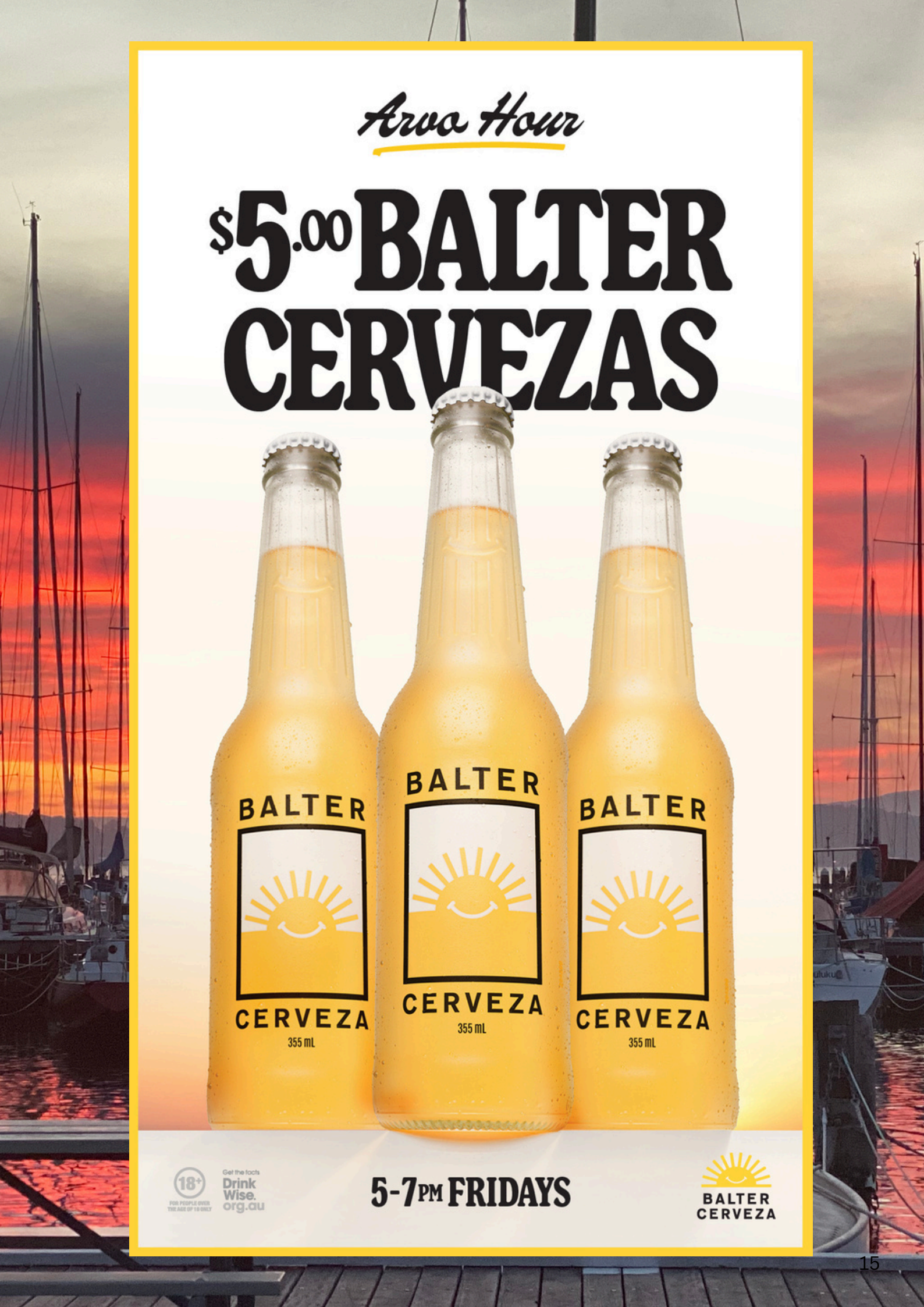








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COURTESY BUS

FRIDAY TO SUNDAY



FOR A PICK UP CALL

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CHRISTMAS PARTY

MON-THURS LUNCH & DINNER

CHRISTMAS BUFFET

3 HOUR DRINK PACKAGE

$75 PP



30 guests min
Room hire not included

LAKE MACQUARIE YACHT CLUB

JOKER DRAW

JOKER

JOKER

DRAWN EVERY THURSDAY

$$$$$$$$

SWIPE YOUR MEMBER'S CARD AT THE KIOSK OR LMYC BAR TO GO IN THE DRAW TO WIN!



LAKE MACQUARIE YACHT CLUB


NOVEMBER
COCKTAIL
OF THE MONTH
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MALIBU
PINEAPPLE JUICE
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CREAM
$18
LAKE MACQUARIE
YACHT CLUB