

The 20th Crown Series Bellerive Regatta – How it all started

It was over 20 years ago when two well-known Bellerive Yacht Club members, the then Vice Commodore, Robin White and Stephen Keal, came up with the idea of a Bellerive sailing regatta.

The start to the 2003 summer sailing season hadn't been kind. Robin White recalls that the first pennant race was a "shocker, with gale force winds" forcing a cancellation. In those days the sailing calendar was a lot busier than now, so the cancellation meant there were no free days for a re-sail.

To make up for the cancelled race the then Principal Race Officer, Ian "Seaweed" Stewart and his trusty sailing staff conducted two back to back races on the one day, a first for the Hobart keelboat sailing scene. This opened the door for more than one pennant race being conducted per day and was a sign of things to come.

The sailors had really enjoyed the challenge of more than one race in a day. After the race, Stephen Keal sat down with Robin White with a Bundy and said what a great day it had been. After a few more drinks Robin mentioned to Stephen that perhaps the Club could do it again as a special race day and Stephen said "Why not". Spurred on by the Bundy Robin then suggested that perhaps they could conduct a twilight race the night before and Stephen replied "Why not".



Robin wasn't about to stop there. Next, he suggested that they add two more races on the Sunday and make a series out of it and Stephen replied "Fantastic! Do it!" Stephen was excited. He had sailed in many mainland regattas and wanted to bring the excitement and fun he had experienced back to the Bellerive Yacht Club. He wanted a regatta that was about bringing the community together for an action-packed weekend.

That night Robin thought of the perfect name for this amazing venture – the *Crown Series*, after all somebody would be crowned the winner. The next day he rang Stephen and told him the name and Stephen replied "Perfect".

Stephen got busy finding sponsors and he has been a sponsor of the event for all twenty years! He and Robin took the idea to the General Committee. Of course, it was approved! The Sailing Committee suggested that the event include a revival of the Bellerive Regatta and that the Lindisfarne Sailing Club be invited along to conduct the dinghy racing.

The first **Crown Series Bellerive Regatta** was conducted in February, 2005 and was included in the 2004-5 Sailing Fixtures Book as a regatta. The event coincided with the *Clarence on the Water Jazz Festival* running on the Bellerive boardwalk. After racing there was a barbeque, dinner and live music. History had been made and over the next twenty years the **Crown Series Bellerive Regatta** was to become Tasmania's biggest combined Keelboat and OTB sailing regatta.

The final result was beyond both Robin's and Stephen's wildest dreams. Twenty years on and both Robin and Stephen are still sailing regularly and looking forward to the **Banjo's Shoreline Crown Series Bellerive Regatta** to be held on 23rd- 25th February, 2024.