

Official Opening of the 115th Yachting Season  
Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron Manly  
Saturday 28 August 1999

The Hon Paul de Jersey - Chief Justice of Queensland

Commodore Richard Seymour  
Naval Chaplain The Rev Burt Johns  
Distinguished guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen (Girls and Boys)

Kaye and I are delighted to be with you here today, and I will be greatly honoured shortly to open this 115th Yachting Season.

It is uplifting to be associated in this way with the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, for so long now a most significant and admirable part of the Queensland landscape. Your Squadron is a glowing example of worthwhile, and enjoyable, collective community endeavour. Now in your 115th year, you can rightly boast as many as almost two and a half thousand members; you have most impressive facilities here, at and about the clubhouse; and you enjoy a richly varied annual program of events. The extent of your membership, the marvellous facilities, the frequency and quality of Squadron events: they all stand as fine testimony to the Squadron's vibrant spirit and the commitment of your leaders. I especially congratulate the Commodore on his effective leadership, and the dedicated members of your Committee.

It is incidentally very reassuring to see proper recognition of desirable tradition here; and that is, I suppose, not surprising in a Squadron including, within its membership, families now in their third, and even fourth, generations. In this society of ours which often seems broadly sceptical about the value of tradition, it is good to see people warmly embracing the positive benefits tradition can actually carry. The wide range of ages among the members, from the young to the not so young, further illustrates the axiomatic: all people, in one way or another, love the sea.

As a nation, we began the year struck down by the tragic aftermath of the Sydney to Hobart disaster. But the human spirit is ever buoyant. It was recently excited for many of us in this context, by the visit of the splendid replica of Matthew Flinders "Norfolk", with the bicentenary of his circumnavigation of Australia.

My own direct nautical experience, I have to concede, has been limited to fairly amateurishly sailing a "moth" as a young man, albeit it around this great bay; and I have to say that now as a lawyer, I cannot even profess a specialty in maritime

law. It is very good of you to overlook those limitations today. But as I say, love of the sea, in one way or another, is nevertheless a universal trait.

I repeat my reassurance in noting your effective collective endeavour. That, I suggest is a highlight of the activity facilitated here by the Squadron. We judges regularly identify lack of collective interaction as lying at the root of many of the serious problems we encounter day by day in court. The enthusiastic, warm spirit of the Squadron is therefore both particularly inspiring and reassuring to me.

And so today, as we join together at the eve of Spring, to celebrate with anticipation the continuing delight of "going down to the sea in ships", I warmly congratulate the Squadron; I wish you fair winds and good and safe sailing; and it is with great pleasure that I declare officially open the 115th Sailing Season of the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron.