



Topics Already Covered in VDL-C 2022 Newsletter No.1 (8th June 2021)

Choices Flooring VDL-C 2022 and the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The Registration Queue.

Safety Requirements: Frequently Asked Questions:

- radio communications,
- insurance *Certificate of Currency*,
- no pets on board,
- a minimum of two experienced crew on board,
- bilge pumps,
- emergency steering,
- AIS

Cruise Documentation.

Transport, Fuel and Provisioning.

Crew Change Possibilities.

Berthing Arrangements.

Onshore Events and Happenings.

Much of the information contained in the Newsletters No.1 and No.2, issued in mid-2020, will be repeated for the benefit of new prospective participants. A black line in the left-hand margin indicates what is new or changed from the 2020 version of Newsletter No.2 (already available on the VDL-C 2022 website).

VDL-C 2022 and COVID-19:

At this stage, the VDL-C Organizing Committee is determined that the *Choices Flooring VDL-C 2022* cruise will go ahead, providing it is legal to do so. Pre-cruise planning continues with this end in view, despite large parts of mainland Australia being in some form of lockdown and from which entry into Tasmania is more or less restricted.

In addition to all the other risks associated with planning a five-week cruise such as VDL-C 2022, participating boats and their crew joining from the other side of Bass Strait should take into account the very real possibility that conditions under which entry into Tasmania and its coastal waters is permitted, or worse may be denied, can change at very short notice due to a change in the pattern of COVID infection in their home state, or in Tasmania. This may prevent a visiting boat arriving in time to participate in the cruise, or a prearranged crew-change during the cruise. Even after the cruise is under way, all crews (including the locals) will risk an arbitrary lockdown preventing the cruise continuing.

In the light of this new layer of risk, the VDL-C Organizing Committee has carefully reviewed its **Refund Policy** (available on the *Choices Flooring VDL-C 2022* website) and has added a seventh item to this policy, spelling out one special exceptional circumstance:

7. *Notwithstanding the above, should the cruise be cancelled after 1st November 2021 due to an external force majeure (such as a Tasmanian Government-imposed COVID-related ban), any fees already paid will be refunded less any expenses incurred by the VDL-C Organizing Committee (pro-rated over all active entries where necessary).*

Please note this *Item 7* of the **Refund Policy** will only apply if the entire cruise has to be called off after 1st November 2021. Any other COVID-induced change in the regulatory environment, including borders closing, that prevents a prospective participant's boat or individual crew members arriving in Tasmania is unlikely to be deemed an 'exceptional circumstance' under *Item 6* of the **Refund Policy** and will be subject to the provisions of *Items 1 – 5* of this policy.

In this context, prospective participants are again reminded of the first two paragraphs of the *Cruise Safety Requirements* (already published in Newsletter No.1 and on the website):

All those taking part in Choices Flooring VDL-C 2022 do so at their own risk and responsibility. Neither the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania nor the Royal Geelong Yacht Club is responsible for the seaworthiness of a vessel whose entry is accepted, nor for the sufficiency or adequacy of its equipment or the competence of its crew.

No member or members of the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania nor the Royal Geelong Yacht Club, nor any other party involved with the organisation of this event, shall accept responsibility for, or be liable for, any accident, injury, damage or personal loss (material or otherwise) to any vessel, participant, or third party, before, during or after Choices Flooring VDL-C 2022.

In summary, this means assessing the risks associated with changing COVID rules and regulations are entirely the responsibility of each boat, NOT of the *Choices Flooring VDL-C 2022 Organizing Committee*. Any reimbursement of entry fees will be subject to the conditions itemised in *Refund Policy*. Thus, the costs of such a risk being realised (of, say, being refused entry into Tasmanian waters or a period of enforced quarantine) must be carried by each participant.

For those prospective entrants intending to join the VDL-C 2022 fleet, information about current restrictions on arrival by sea can be accessed on the Tasmanian Government website. A good place to start is:

<https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/travellers-and-visitors/maritime-ports>.

HF Radio Certification:

As stated in the VDL-C 2022 Safety Requirements, Section 2.3 (Marine Radios), and reiterated in Newsletter No.1, to be eligible to participate in *Choices Flooring VDL-C 2022 Cruise*, **participants must demonstrate they have an HF radio on board capable of using the cruise working frequency of 4483 kHz**. This can be done by calling one of the radio stations listed below from at least 100 nautical miles away. This demonstration can occur no earlier than 1st October 2021 and **must have been achieved no later than 7th February 2022**, two days before the fleet is scheduled to leave Hobart. Only *Tas Maritime Radio* maintains continuous daytime listening watch, so an appointment must be made in advance (see below). Please note that **failure to gain this certification renders you ineligible to join the cruise**.

Before calling, please ensure you have your AIS transponder switched ON, preferably at least half an hour before you begin your HF transmission. This will give the *MarineTraffic* website time to register your signal. As well as establishing from where you are transmitting, this will enable the certifying station operator to check you have a working AIS transponder.

When you call the shore station, the operator will assess both signal **strength** and **clarity**. To be acceptable, on a scale of 1 to 5, on the cruise working frequency of 4483 kHz, your radio must rate at a minimum of 2, preferably much better. The operator will pass on these ratings and whether or not your AIS is working to the VDL-C Organizing Committee.

Some Helpful Hints:

If you currently do not have an HF radio on board, you are strongly advised not to leave its installation until the last minute. Installing a fully functional HF system is something of a dark art and rarely achieved without at least one hiccup.

If you are having trouble achieving the requisite HF radio performance level, here are a some suggestions for improving your HF radio signal:

- Ensure all the cable connections (radio-to-tuner, tuner-to-antenna, tuner-to-earth) are in good order – making good contact, with no corrosion to inhibit electrical connection.
- The cable feeding the signal from the tuner to the antenna has to be unshielded (i.e. not coaxial) and thus should be separated as far as possible from anything that might act as even a partial earth. RF radiation wants to run along the surface of the metal-conducting medium (wire or a copper strip).
This means:
 - the tuner should be as close as is practicable to the antenna so the unshielded cable feed is as short as possible, minimising the chance of RF radiation leakage before it reaches the antenna;
 - if the tuner is below deck, it should have a properly designed through-deck fitting for the cable feed;
 - if your antenna is an insulated backstay, spacers should separate the cable feed from the backstay below the insulator by at least 100mm (and should be located at least that far from anything else).
- Check there is an effective earth connection from the tuner to the sea outside the hull. This is as important as unshielded cable separation on the antenna side of the tuner. If the earth strap is connected to a through-hull fitting or to a keel bolt, be sure to check the contact has not become corroded or too oily (particularly if it is in the bilge). For non-metallic hulls with plastic-encased ballast, a properly designed and weed-free earth plate on the outside of the hull below the waterline is essential. An earth plate is a good idea in any case for all non-metallic hulls.
- Rather than transmitting from a marina berth surrounded by aluminium masts, steel shrouds and many electrically noisy devices that are unlikely to do justice to your transmission's strength or clarity, it is better to conduct your HF certification transmission in open water. Even though HF radio waves bounce off the ionosphere on their way to a their destination, if your antenna is the backstay it isn't a bad idea to point the stern of the boat in the general direction of the receiving station.
- If you have any doubts about the strength of the ship's battery to supply sufficient power, try transmitting with the engine running so that you are drawing power from the alternator, rather than the battery. It will sound noisy to you, but not necessarily to the receiving station.

HF Radio Certifying Shore Stations:

SMITHTON RADIO:

This station is located on the far NW coast of Tasmania more than 100M from SE Tasmania and mainland Australia. It is run by Mary Kay, a long-standing friend of VDL-C cruises whose assistance with HF radio communication relays when ionospheric conditions are difficult has always been much appreciated. Mary no longer runs a daily HF radio sched so it is necessary to make an appointment beforehand at a mutually convenient time.

Contact information: ☎03 6452 2059 & ☎0427 251 936; email: marykay36@bigpond.com.

DOVER RADIO:

This station is located on the shore of Port Esperance some 40M S of Hobart. It is run by Jeremy Firth who has been the communications officer on the radio relay vessel for eight VDL-C cruises. He does not conduct a regular HF radio sched so you will need to make an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

His contact information: ☎0418 126 048; email: jwfirth2@bigpond.com.

< Tamar Sea Rescue is no longer a certifying station. >

TAS MARITIME RADIO:

This station maintains a continuous listening watch from 0700 to 1900 hrs daily on its network of multi-channel VHF base stations covering most of the Tasmanian coast, and on HF frequencies 4125/6215/8291 kHz. Their HF station is on North Bruny Island, some 12M S of Hobart. Their website is www.tasmaritime.com.au and they can be contacted via ☎03 6231 2276 and email: ops@tasmaritime.com.au.

To initiate the certification process, call Tas. Maritime Radio on one of the above HF calling frequencies, explain who you are and what you want, and the duty operator will take you to 4483 kHz (maybe via their normal working frequency 4416 kHz).

Please be aware the operator will be busy running their normal weather and calling scheds for approximately 30 minutes from 0745, 1345 and 1733 hrs respectively. If you call in during one of these scheds, the TMR operator may ask you to wait until the end of the sched.

VHF Radios

Although there is no formal certification requirement for VHF radios, participants would be well-advised to check their VHF radio is operating satisfactorily. Participants will find not having a reliable VHF tranceiver considerably inconvenient, if not dangerous.

On past cruises, emergent VHF problems have included:

- corroded or otherwise faulty antenna connections,
- a faulty antenna,
- a faulty microphone – that has got wet or has otherwise been mistreated (microphones do not like being dropped or banged against anything hard),
- an incompatible microphone – having found a microphone is faulty, someone else's has been borrowed, or a new one bought, that is designed for use with a different model of radio (perhaps with an incompatible impedance rating).

Ensure your VHF radio is set to 'international' frequencies. Among the radio's settings, this is often denoted as 'I' or 'INT' or sometimes 'AUS'.

Chart List

You are well advised to have a set of paper charts and navigational tools (propelling pencil, rubber, dividers, parallel ruler or equivalent) on board. Paper is a lot easier to dry out than an electronic device; remember the latter will only work if you have electrical power!

The following is a list of navigational charts useful for Bass Strait and the Tasmanian coast. The full up-to-date list of charts available for the Australian region can be found at: <http://www.hydro.gov.au/webapps/jsp/charts/chartlist.jsp>. In the list below, an asterisk next to the chart number indicates a new edition has recently been published.

For safety reasons, it is recommended that boats have a set of paper charts as well as electronic versions.

'Big-picture' charts for a perspective on the whole cruise are:

4644 (2010-09-24) *Southern Ocean - Cape Otway to Cape Howe including Tasmania*

487 (2005-01-07) *Bass Strait*

The following AUS charts are essential:

167* (2020-01-24) *Port Dalrymple includes Bell Bay (Edition 2)*

171* (2021-07-23) *Hobart to Norfolk Bay (Edition 2)*

173* (2021-07-23) *D'Entrecasteaux Channel (Edition 2)*

176 (2008-03-14) *Port Davey, including Bathurst Harbour, Bathurst Narrows and Entrance to Bathurst Channel (Edition 2)*

177* (2021-06-11) *Approaches to Macquarie Harbour (Edition 2)*

- 766 (2007-04-27) *Mistaken Cape to Wardlaws Point*
- 767 (2007-01-19) *Wardlaws Point to Eddystone Point*
- 790 (2004-11-12) *Stokes Point to Rocky Cape*
- 791 (2004-11-12) *West Point to Granville Harbour*
- 792 (2008-07-18) *Trial Harbour to Low Rocky Point*
- 793 (2008-07-18) *Low Rocky Point to South West Cape*
- 794 (2008-08-01) *South West Cape to South East Cape*
- 796 (2008-08-29) *Tasman Head to Cape Frederick Henry*
- 798 (2003-02-21) *Eddystone Point to Stony Head (Edition 2)*
- 799 (1996-06-14) *Stony Head to Rocky Cape*

Additional essential charts for the Geelong fleet:

- 143* (2021-05-28) *Port Phillip includes Patterson River, Blairgowrie, Mornington, Queenscliff, Sorrento (Edition 7)*
- 144 (2014-06-20) *The Rip (Edition 2)*

The following charts are recommended:

- 164 (1999-06-11) *Approaches to Devonport (includes Ulverstone and Port of Devonport) (Edition 3)*
- 168 (2002-10-04) *River Tamar: Long Reach to Launceston*
- 178 (2015-12-18) *Plans in Tasmania (Sheet 2) includes Approaches to Grassy Harbour, Grassy Harbour, Smithton, Currie Harbour, Wynyard, Stanley Harbour, Port Latta. (Edition 2)*
- 179 (2011-03-25) *Plans in Tasmania (Sheet 1) includes Franklin Sound, Approaches to Lady Barron, Whitemark, Waterhouse Passage, Foster Inlet. (Edition 2)*
- 795 (2008-08-29) *South Cape to Storm Bay*
- 797 (2008-06-06) *Tasman Island to Mistaken Cape*
- 800 (2002-08-09) *Furneaux Group (including Flinders Island)*

Additional recommended charts for the Geelong fleet:

- 789 (2003-05-16) *King Island*
- 802* (2020-08-21) *Cape Liptrap to Kent Group. (Edition 2)*

Cruising Guides:

- *Tasmanian Anchorage Guide*, 5th Edition – the latest printing will be available gratis to VDL-C participants in their cruise satchel at the beginning of the cruise. Boats travelling to Hobart to join the cruise can obtain a copy earlier by contacting the RYCT in Hobart. Please note the 'latest printing' may not be available much before mid-December 2021.
- *Cruising Southern Tasmania*, 5th Edition (February 2020) – from Wineglass Bay to Port Davey. Published by the TASMAR in conjunction with the Cruising YC of Tasmania.
- *Cruising North East Tasmania*, – a guide to anchorages and waterways from Wineglass Bay to Port Dalrymple, including the Furneaux, Kent, and Hogan Groups. Published by the Cruising YC of Tasmania (2017).
- Marine & Safety Tasmania (MaST) Boating Guides:
 - *South East Boating Guide*.
 - *East Coast Boating Guide*.
 - *Tamar River Guide*.
- *Cruising Tasmania* 2nd Edition by John Brettingham-Moore. This guide has been around for many years but is still a useful adjunct to more modern publications.

Anchoring & Berthing

Located as they are in the roaring forties, Tasmanian anchorages can be subject to sudden, more or less violent changes in the weather. Cruise participants are strongly advised to have at least two substantial, reliable anchors. The anchor size advised for its type and for the weight of the boat should be regarded as a minimum requirement.

The primary anchor warp should be all chain and at least 50 metres long.

It is desirable to have a workable system for reinforcing the holding power of your usual anchor. One oft-used procedure is to slide a substantial weight down the chain to keep as much as possible of the anchor end of the chain on or close to the bottom in stronger winds.

Another method is to attach a second anchor with around 2 metres of chain to the head of the first anchor. Then attach a light line loosely from the shackle on the shank of the second (leading) anchor to the chain just above the first anchor to make it easy to set and retrieve the second (leading) anchor. Expert opinion has it that such an arrangement has greater holding power than sliding the weight down the chain.

If you do devise such a system, make sure it works before you have to deploy it under battle conditions.

In some of the ports where visits are scheduled, boats will be moored to piles or jetties where there can be some surge. It is essential that each boat has an adequate fender-board. Such a board can be placed between fenders and a jetty pile. It is advisable that the fenders located between the board and the hull are close together, else there is a risk of any surge breaking a very strong fender-board.

A minimum recommended size for such a fender-board is 120mm x 40mm and 2 metres long with a hole at each end for the ropes to hang it from the rail. The heavier the boat, the more substantial this board needs to be. Oregon pine or seasoned eucalyptus is good wood to use. It is better to have one as a part of the ship's inventory before embarking on the cruise. It is not always easy to find one at short notice.

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