



VAN DIEMEN'S LAND CIRCUMNAVIGATION CRUISE 2024

Newsletter No.1

2nd Edition – 6 May 2023



The Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania welcomes your participation in the 2024 Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation Cruise (VDL-C 2024).

The primary means of communication with prospective participants is via these newsletters. They, and other reference material are available on the *VDL-C Cruise 2024* website: <https://ryct.org.au/vdl-c-cruise-2024/>, are worth reading carefully because they contain essential information that will help you to comply with safety requirements and give you other information useful for planning your participation in the cruise.

Taking Responsibility:

Prospective participants are reminded of the first section of the the *2024 Cruise Safety Requirements*:

All those taking part in the 2024 Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation (VDL-C) Cruise do so at their own risk and responsibility. The Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania takes no responsibility for the seaworthiness of a vessel whose entry is accepted, nor 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 any other party involved in the organization 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 the 2024 VDL-C Cruise.

THE SAFETY OF ANY PARTICIPATING VESSEL AND HER ENTIRE MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING INSURANCE, IS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OWNER OR SKIPPER.

Owners and skippers are urged to assess their capabilities and those of their crew and their vessel before entering, starting, or continuing to participate in the 2024 VDL-C Cruise.

... which means that, providing a boat satisfies the various pre-cruise requirements (and continues to do so), the Organizing Committee makes no recommendation as to whether or not a boat or its crew should join, or continue to participate in, VDL-C 2024.

THE DECISION TO JOIN OR TO CONTINUE ON THE CRUISE REMAINS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OWNER OR SKIPPER.

The Registration Queue:

There is a limit on the fleet size of 45 boats, only five of which may be sailing catamarans. This is because of the difficulty in accommodating such a large number of boats in anchorages, ports, marinas and at functions around the Tasmanian coast. In the lead-up to some cruises, the number of provisionally accepted registrations has considerably exceeded this limit. However, participants with an initial **Q** number greater than 45 should not be disheartened. Boats drop out for all kinds of reasons. Historically, nobody who really wanted to come has ever been left behind.

The registration process is structured so that prospective participants are encouraged to register early, and be provisionally accepted on payment of the \$200 deposit. It is also structured to enable a boat to withdraw from the cruise without penalty until 1st November 2023. After that, withdrawal becomes increasingly expensive as time passes. The full *Refund Policy* is available on the *VDL-C Cruise 2024* website.

This policy is also designed to encourage prospective participants that subsequently decide not to join VDL-C 2024 to withdraw sooner rather than later, thus enabling those waiting in the queue to have certainty of acceptance as soon as possible so they can complete their preparations in good time.

Safety Requirements:

Most of the pre-cruise safety requirements are designed to make the cruise as enjoyable and, most importantly, as safe as possible. They have been guided by *Marine & Safety Tasmania (MaST) Regulations* and the *Australian Sailing 'Blue Book' Special Regulations (Part1)*.

In January and February 2023, the *VDL-C Safety Requirements* were reviewed and restructured by the Organizing Committee to follow more closely the framework used by *Australian Sailing* for their racing categories. Apart from a few minor tweaks, the basic requirements remain substantially the same as for previous cruises. Two appendices have been added: *Appendix 1: Safety Requirements Check-List* and *Appendix 2: First Aid Kit – Suggested Contents*.

Each participating vessel is required to sign a declaration that the specified safety and other requirements have been met, and to re-affirm this every time there is a crew-change during the cruise.

In general, these requirements are not negotiable, and exemptions to them are rarely entertained. Participation in the cruise depends on them being satisfied and remaining so throughout the cruise.

Conforming to the requirements is largely self-managed. The VDL-C Cruise Organizing Committee is not resourced to police the many and varied recommendations and requirements. **However, if a vessel is found not to conform during the cruise, she may be requested to leave the fleet.**

Safety Requirements – Frequently Asked Questions:

Below is discussion of some of the cruise safety requirements, about which questions have been raised by prospective and actual cruise participants:

- **Radio Communication**

In times of emergency, it is essential that broadcast communication between any boat and all other boats in the fleet be possible, no matter the location and distance between them. It is particularly important that communication remain possible at all times with the Radio Relay vessel and with Cruise Commodores' vessels (there are two of them, one for the fleet leaving from Hobart, and the other for the fleet leaving from Queenscliff). The only feasible means for this 'party line' communication is for each boat to be equipped with a working SSB/HF radio.

To participate in VDL-C 2024, every boat must demonstrate the effectiveness of their HF radio by talking with a designated station more than 100 nautical miles away on the cruise frequency of 4483 kHz with a strength and clarity of at least 2 (on a scale of 1 to 5), or preferably much better. This demonstration must occur no earlier than 1st October 2023 and no later than 7th February 2024, two days before the fleet is scheduled to leave Hobart. Details of how this can be achieved will be given in a subsequent Newsletter. A new requirement for this cruise is this demonstration must be conducted with the boat's AIS turned on so it is possible to independently verify from where the vessel is calling. (If the receiving station cannot 'see' the transmitting station on *marinetraffic.com* then the demonstration will be deemed to have failed.)

HF radio installation and fault-finding is something of a 'dark art' and participants are strongly advised to organize their radio as far in advance as is practicable. Expert technical advice becomes increasingly difficult to obtain over the summer holiday season.

Although obviously useful in its own right, *please note a satellite phone is not an acceptable substitute for an effective HF radio.*

There is a very effective ship-to-shore VHF marine radio network run by **Tas. Maritime Radio** (www.tasmaritime.com.au). This is a voluntary organization largely supported by annual membership subscription, but with considerable government financial assistance with procurement of communications and other equipment. Coverage of the Tasmanian coast is almost complete, unfortunately with a few significant 'black spots'. Participants are encouraged to join and obtain an RG number. At an annual fee of \$35.00, it is money well spent.

- **Insurance Certificate of Currency**

Such a certificate should show the participating vessel has current insurance for at least the duration of the cruise. The policy must include insurance against third party liability of at least \$10,000,000.

A copy of this certificate must be lodged with the RYCT by the Tuesday 6th February 2024.

- **No Pets On Board**

Many of the anchorages are within the boundary of a national park where it is illegal to have animals of any kind on board; this includes dogs, cats, birds, reptiles and anything else that breathes air. Parks and Wildlife rangers can inspect a vessel at any time when it is located in a national park; they can impose fines or enforce expulsion from the park.

- **Lifejackets**

A life jacket, Level 100 or above that meets or exceeds Australian Standard 4758.1 shall be provided for each person on board. MAST will also accept life jackets of different standards for interstate entries provided they meet their state or territory requirements. If the life jacket is acceptable to MAST, then it is acceptable on the VDL-C Cruise.

Each inflatable lifejacket shall have been checked and serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

It is compulsory to wear a life jacket in a recreational motorboat or motor-propelled tender under 6 metres long while under power. For children under the age of 12 years it is compulsory in a vessel of any length while under power.

Boaters are not required to wear a life jacket while they are within a deckhouse, cabin or secure enclosed space. When on passage, a lifejacket shall be worn by each member of the crew when on deck between the hours of sunset and sunrise. It is strongly recommended that a lifejacket is worn when alone on deck, when wind speed is 25 knots or above or when visibility is poor.

PLEASE NOTE: The current Australian Standard AS4758.1 for life jackets was introduced in 2010. From 1st January 2021, older life jackets with AS numbers AS1512, AS1499, & AS2260 are no longer compliant with AS4758.1.

- **A Minimum of Two Experienced Crew On Board**

At no stage during passages made during VDL-C 2024 shall there be less than two experienced crew on board each participating vessel. The required experience is specified in:

Safety Requirements>Crew Experience>Specific Requirements (Section 8.03):

Within the crew, at least two adults shall:

- *Have completed an overnight passage of at least 100M and be capable of helming and operating their vessel in all conditions. Although not mandatory, an offshore skipper's certificate is prima facie evidence of this.*
- *Be proficient in coastal navigation. Although not mandatory, a certificate of proficiency in coastal navigation is prima facie evidence of this.*
- *Be proficient in the use of both the vessel's VHF radio and HF radio. At least one crew member shall have a Restricted Operator's Certificate of Proficiency or equivalent.*
- *Be proficient in first aid. Although not mandatory, a current first aid certificate is prima facie evidence of this.*
- *Know where to locate and be able to use all safety equipment.*

A significant part of this cruise will be in off-shore waters exposed to the full force of Southern Ocean westerlies, and in the often treacherous waters of Bass Strait. In recent years, weather forecasts have become more accurate but they are never 100% reliable. Please note the caveat that the Bureau of Meteorology attaches to all its marine forecasts:

Wind and wave forecasts are averages. Wind gusts can be 40 per cent stronger than the forecast, and stronger still in squalls and thunderstorms. Maximum waves can be twice the forecast height.

This can and does happen on the W and S coast of Tasmania and in Bass Strait. VDL-C participants must be prepared for, and have necessary experience on board, to deal with such an eventuality.

- **Bilge Pumps**

It has been said the most effective bilge pump is a frightened person with a bucket. The second most effective (and safest) way is to have at least one efficient manual bilge pump available in all conditions. Practicably, this means there must be one accessible on deck. Electric pumps connected to a battery won't work if the battery is in an already flooded compartment.

Hence **Safety Requirements>Fixed Equipment>Bilge Pumps** (Section 5.04) states:

A vessel shall have at least two bilge pumps, including one manual pump operable with all cockpit seats, hatches and companionways closed. Bilge pump handles shall be secured to prevent accidental loss.

Two buckets of stout construction each with at least 8 litres capacity and with a lanyard shall be provided.

- **Emergency Steering**

Safety Requirements>Portable Equipment>Emergency Steering (Section 6.11) reads:

An emergency tiller capable of being quickly fitted to the rudder stock where the normal method of steering is other than by a strong tiller fitted directly to the rudder stock shall be provided.

An electromechanical autopilot is not an acceptable alternative because it relies on an external source of power – hydraulic, electric, or a combination of both. It can fail due to loss of engine or electrical power, failure in the electronic components, hydraulic failure, or because mechanical linkage to the rudder stock or quadrant fails or otherwise becomes disconnected. Quadrants have been known to collapse or more commonly to detach from the rudder stock.

Many cruising vessels have an aft cabin layout that makes it difficult to fit an above-deck emergency tiller. Although not ideal, a tiller that can be operated from below deck is acceptable.

- **AIS**

Attention is drawn to **Safety Requirements>Fixed Equipment>Automatic Identification System** (Section 5.09) that each boat must be equipped with (at least) a Class B **Automatic Identification System** (AIS) transponder, and that it shall be switched on at all times when under way.

The associated MMSI number should have been supplied on your boat's *Expression of Interest* form. If not, please ensure it is lodged with RYCT Reception before commencing the cruise.

Cruise Documentation:

Much of the pre-cruise information is available online as PDFs on the VDL-C 2024 website (www.ryct.org.au/vdl-c-cruise-2024/). This includes:

*Notice of Cruise,
Expression of Interest form,
Cruise Plan,
Route Map,
Refund Policy,
Safety Requirements,
Current Provisional Entry List.*

Entries with a registration queue number greater than 45 form a waiting list of boats that can join the fleet if and

when boats already accepted withdraw their entries. A PDF of each *Cruise Newsletter* will be sent to the contact email address given on the EOI form and will also be available on the VDL-C 2024 website.

Two other documents will be issued with other pre-cruise material (including pre-ordered polo shirts, bow stickers, brag flags, etc.) at pre-departure briefings:

- **VDL-C Cruise Manual**

This is a compendium of information for the exclusive use of VDL-C 2024 participants. It is planned for a first edition to be available by mid-December 2023 to enable boats joining the cruise from further afield to have access to information contained in it while *en route* to join the VDL-C fleet. Some, but by no means all, of the information contained in it will have already appeared in these Newsletters.

Between the first and final editions of the *Cruise Manual*, there will be minor updates, appropriately annotated as such; the aim is to ensure the final edition is as up-to-date as possible prior to the VDL-C fleet's departure from Hobart. There is a PORT INFORMATION section containing up-to-date information as to what can be found, and where, in each port along the way.

- **Tasmanian Anchorage Guide**

This popular cruising guide was originally developed for the VDL-C cruises and is now a 'must have' for visiting cruising boats. The latest printing of the 5th Edition (with minor updates and amendments) will be issued to all participants, the cost of which is included in the entry fee.

Transport, Fuel and Provisioning:

The following table is a summary only – more detailed and updated information will be given in the PORT INFORMATION section of the *VDL-C 2024 Cruise Manual*.

	FOOD	FUEL	WATER	MEDICAL	ELECTRICAL	MECHANICAL	CHANDLERY	LAUNDRY	SHIP-WRIGHT	SLIP/T-LIFT
Hobart	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Triabunna	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		
George Town	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Beauty Point	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓
Launceston	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Devonport	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Stanley	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		
Strahan	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		
Southport	✓		✓							
Dover	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Cygnet	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Kettering	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

Some facilities are also available at **Coles Bay** on the W side of Freycinet Peninsula. **St Helens** is a possibility but is not recommended – access is over a dangerous bar then via a channel full of shifting sandbanks which should not be attempted without local knowledge. It should only be attempted in settled conditions, in daylight, and with local knowledge. **Wynyard** on the NW coast is also a possibility, although the entrance to the Inglis River is only negotiable at high tide and is not for the faint-hearted in easterly weather. **Stanley** is a tourist-oriented town with a supermarket but not much else. In **D'Entrecasteaux Channel**, there are various places other than **Dover** and **Cygnet** – particularly **Kettering**. At **Port Huon** further up the Huon River, there is a small marina and travel-lift, but it is a 4 km walk to the Geeveston shops.

In **Hobart**, both petrol and diesel fuel at the RYCT fuel dock is available 24 hours/day, 7 days a week using a credit/debit card via an unattended machine - no cash sales.

Reliable dockside refuelling options along the way are quite scarce. **Triabunna** and **Strahan** have credit card-operated bowsers adjacent to a wharf. **Dover** has recently upgraded to a similar facility with a long hose but as of April 2023 it is not yet operational.

Port Dalrymple at the mouth of the Tamar River is the only location where formal arrangements will be made for refuelling the VDL-C fleet. More or less convenient outlets are available at the other re-provisioning centres mentioned above, but they involve use of jerry cans and vehicular transport.

Public land transport is possible to all the above towns, with more or less convenient bus services.

Hobart, **Launceston**, **Devonport** and **Wynyard** (Burnie) are the primary airports for interstate travel to Tasmania. There is no scheduled air service to **Strahan**, although there is an airport suitable for small planes. Public transport (a bus) to **Strahan** from **Burnie** takes 4 hours and most of the day from **Launceston**. There is no direct bus service from **Hobart** to **Strahan**.

There are no roads to the Port Davey area on the SW coast. Only one company flies small planes from Hobart into the airstrip at **Melaleuca** near the SW corner of Bathurst Harbour. It caters for the bushwalking fraternity, tourists wanting something different and crew changes for visiting boats. Although there are no formal timetables, in summer months there are numerous flights each day. How numerous depends on demand and the weather. Booking can be done online via the Par Avion website www.paravion.com.au or ☎03 6248 5390.

Crew Change Possibilities:

With your own transport arrangements, it is possible to rendezvous at almost any of the coastal towns, including:

Port Arthur, Triabunna, Coles Bay, Bicheno and possibly St Helens (not recommended);
Beauty Point, Launceston, Devonport, Wynyard, Stanley;
Strahan, Melaleuca (by light plane), Southport, Dover, Cygnet, Port Huon or Kettering.

Except for Melaleuca and Southport, there are public bus services to all these places, but it can be more or less arduous and time-consuming to use them. For example, to get from Hobart to Strahan by bus takes two changes and a whole day or more. Beauty Point at the mouth of the Tamar and Strahan on the central west coast divide the cruise approximately into thirds in time, if not distance. These have been popular places to change crew.

Beauty Point is relatively close to Launceston Airport but Strahan is quite inaccessible by public transport. When the VDL-C fleet is in the Tamar River or Macquarie Harbour *ad hoc* car-sharing arrangements to and from Hobart usually emerge, often facilitated by cruise officials (with no promises or formal commitment).

Berthing Arrangements:

In Hobart, VDL-C participants who want a berth before or after the cruise, should negotiate necessary booking arrangements (including fees) with the RYCT Office ☎03 6223 4599, email: ryct@ryct.org.au. The first 3 months of any calendar year are among the busiest, with many visiting boats, so it would be wise to make berthing arrangements sooner rather than later.

The RYCT has an excellent slipway. Participants in VDL-C 2024 can avail themselves of this facility at RYCT members' rates. These are quite cheap by mainland metropolitan standards. Arrangements should be made well ahead with the RYCT bosuns ☎0419 885 420. Slipways in other places visited by the cruise are really only for emergencies. In Beauty Point and Devonport there are slips run by the Port Dalrymple YC and the Mersey YC respectively. The Tasmanian Port Authority (TasPorts) runs commercial slipways at Lady Barron (Flinders Is.), Currie (King Is.) and Strahan.

The Tamar YC marina at Beauty Point is always very crowded, but the TYC bends over backwards to ensure the VDL-C fleet is accommodated. There is a modest per diem fee but bookings, including payment arrangements must be made in advance. For the 2022 VDL-C Cruise the berthing charge was \$1.60 per metre (LOA) per day.

There are limited berthing facilities at the Mersey YC marina at East Devonport. Berthing is also limited at Wynyard and in the Stanley fishing harbour. Only the NE end of the town wharf at Strahan is available for public berthing alongside. Berths inside the fishing dock are all privately leased although it is sometimes possible to negotiate with leaseholders to moor alongside another boat. Care must be taken not to interfere with the local fishing fleet or tour vessels.

Onshore Events and Happenings:

In the somewhat vain hope of keeping a VDL-C fleet together, various onshore events are scheduled in the *Cruise Plan* (available on the VDL-C 2024 website). When, and indeed if, they happen at the planned time and specified place is very much weather-dependent.

Ad hoc beach barbecues are *de rigueur* on the cruise. A VDL-C cruise travels with a set of portable gas-fired barbecues distributed among 'volunteer' boats. In previous cruises, more formal functions have been staged in Beauty Point and in Strahan. The form these may take this time has not yet been confirmed.

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