

**PRESS RELEASE 12 March, 2019**

**First entries in for 29th Australian Women’s Keelboat Regatta**

Entries are open for Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron’s (RMYS) 29th Australian Women’s Keelboat Regatta (AWKR) and Victorian competitors are throwing down the gauntlet; many will come fresh from competing in the 2018/19 Port Phillip Women’s Championship in Melbourne, ending on Sunday 28 April – and two have been quick to enter.

To be held from 8-10 June 2019 and open exclusively to women’s’ crews from Australia and overseas, committee chair Kristen Buckland has a good feeling around the increasingly popular event, “I am confident that we will have over 30 boats competing from across Australia and New Zealand this year.”

First in for the AWKR, founded by a past RMYS Commodore and past entrant Gai Clough, were RMYS members, Nadine Huels and Aurelie Chabrol with their Archambault 32 Remedy. They were quickly followed by Royal Yacht Club of Victoria member, Margaret Goddard, and her Cavalier 30, Balderdash.

“The crew said, ‘come on enter, enter’, so I went home and did it straight away. Aurelie and I were happy to be the first entry,” Nadine Huels said.

 “We enjoy the regatta; it’s a great event every year. I love that a lot of the women get together to practice beforehand and that some women go on to buy their own boats. That’s the motivation for me.

“It’s great camaraderie and I love meeting the girls from up north (Queensland), the Tassie girls and others from the different places. And I love the competitiveness of the regatta. You have a couple of days to get into it and to gauge your improvements before the final day. It’s all of those things,” the Victorian yachtswoman remarked.

While it goes without saying that Victoria will field the largest numbers, strong contenders will also come from Queensland, South Australia, NSW, Western Australia, Tasmania and as far away as the Northern Territory. The Aussies will be joined by possibly three from across the ditch in New Zealand.

Among the Victorian skippers also committed is last year’s Division 1 runner-up, Monica Jones (RMYS club captain), owner of the Adams Salamander III. And she is just as committed to helping women reach their sailing potential as she is on performing at the top level.

Consistently on the podium in open competition and at women’s events, Jones is highly rated by her opponents. She will be joined by others who have been in winning form at the PPWCS; Marnie Irving, winner of February’s Jennifer Goldsmith Trophy with her Cavalier 395, Cavarlo and Leo Eeckman, who sailed the Southern Ocean 31 Le Cascadeur to victory in the Val Hodge Trophy.

The AWKR is Australia's premier and longest running all-female women's keelboat regatta. The 29th running was launched earlier this year at RMYS by Wendy Tuck, winner of the 2017-2018 Clipper Round the World Race. Tuck is the first and only woman skipper to win an around the world yacht race.

The Sydney sailor has since received many honours, including being named Australian Female Sailor of the Year and inaugural Offshore Sailor of the Year for 2018. A finalist in the Rolex 2018 World Sailor of the Year, she is in high demand on the speaker’s circuit.

If you are looking for crew, want to crew, or looking for a boat to borrow, go to:<https://www.awkr.com.au/crew-noticeboard> or contact Allicia Rae:awkr@rmys.com.au or (03) 9534 0227

In advance of the AWKR, a series of lectures has been organised by the AWKR at RMYS. For the benefit of interstate competitors, these lectures will be live streamed on the AWKR Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianWomensKeelboatRegatta/> Dates will be advised in due course.

In the lead up, RMYS is hosting an AWKR upskill day this Sunday, 17 March. It is a women’s only event of practical workshops that includes a sail repair and boat preparation and the cost of $20 covers a BBQ lunch. Tickets are essential and can be purchased at: [AWKR Upskill Day Bookings](https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/awkr-upskill-day-women-only-tickets-57679126821?fbclid=IwAR2tzQP8PPqGn-iZZnlkZYZBLH2YtlsGfclxi9td2NYc8QuF-noLSpuz2aM)

Entries for the AWKR close at 1700 hours on Friday 31 May, 2019. However, late entries may be accepted at the discretion of the event’s Race Committee.

Enter online and view Notice of Race at: <https://www.awkr.com.au>

**By Di Pearson/AWKR media**

\*\*\*Ends\*\*\*

**Please credit photos as attached**

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