MEDIA RELEASE
Friday 30 October, 2026

Festival Of Sails 2027 Welcomes More Sailors To The Start Line

Five major championships, more ways to race and free January berthing for interstate boats are helping make Festival of Sails 2027 one of the most accessible editions of Australia's historic regatta.

Returning to Geelong from 23-26 January, the Festival is encouraging first time and returning sailors to join the fleet alongside championship competitors, with opportunities for sailors of different experience levels to enjoy one of Australia's most celebrated regattas.

Festival of Sails Chair **Chris Manton** said organisers were focused on broadening participation while maintaining the quality of racing and camaraderie that have made the event a highlight of the Australian sailing calendar.

"*We want more sailors to experience what makes the Festival of Sails so special. Whether you're entering for the first time, returning after a few years away or competing in one of our major championships, there's a place for you at the Festival*," said Chris.

A Taste of Festival of Sails

For sailors keen to experience Festival of Sails without committing to a full racing series, the **Passage Mini Series** offers a two race program for eligible first time competitors and those returning after five or more years away.

For $190 per boat, entrants can join the iconic Melbourne to Geelong Passage Race on Saturday 23 January, followed by a second race on Corio Bay on Sunday 24 January. The package also includes access to the new Sailors Lounge and a welcome round of drinks for the crew.

"*We know there are sailors who have thought about entering Festival of Sails but haven't quite made it to the start line. The Passage Mini Series gives them a chance to experience the Passage Race and enjoy everything that comes with being part of the Festival, in a mini format*," said Chris.

The Festival is also encouraging greater participation by women and younger sailors, with dedicated recognition for female and youth skippers and racing opportunities across the program.

Free January Berthing For Interstate Competitors

Interstate boats entered in Festival of Sails 2027 will be offered **complimentary berthing at Royal Geelong Yacht Club from 1-31 January**, making it easier for visiting crews to take part.

The offer provides greater flexibility, particularly for crews returning from the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, positioning Geelong as an attractive stopover and giving competitors more time to enjoy the region before and after the regatta.

Five Major Championships

The wider January sailing program features five major championships, reinforcing Geelong's reputation as one of Australia's leading sailing destinations.

Headlining the main Festival racing program is the **Australian Yachting Championship**, hosted in partnership with Australian Sailing and Sandringham Yacht Club.

The championship begins at Sandringham Yacht Club on Friday 22 January before the fleet joins the Melbourne to Geelong Passage Race on Saturday 23 January, with racing continuing on Corio Bay throughout the Festival.

The **Australian Sports Boat Association National Championship** and **S80 Victorian Championship** will also be contested during Festival of Sails, while the **Etchells Australasian Summer Championship** and **Etchells Australian Championship** form part of the wider January sailing program, taking place earlier in the month.

"*We're incredibly proud to welcome the Australian Yachting Championship to Geelong. It's a tremendous endorsement of the quality of racing on Corio Bay, along with the dedication of our volunteers, officials and race management team,*" said Chris.

Entries for Festival of Sails 2027 are now open at www.festivalofsails.com.au.

Festival of Sails 2027 is presented by TLC Healthcare and proudly supported by the Victorian Government through Visit Victoria, the City of Greater Geelong and Australian Sailing.

Supporting Content

Images For Publication:

Video: Chris Manton, RGYC Vice Commodore, Talks Festival of Sails 2027

About Festival of Sails

First held in 1844, Festival of Sails is Australia's oldest continuously contested sporting event and the Southern Hemisphere's largest annual keelboat sailing regatta.

Hosted by Royal Geelong Yacht Club on the waters of Corio Bay, the Festival attracts hundreds of yachts, thousands of sailors and tens of thousands of visitors to Geelong's waterfront each January.

Combining championship racing with live entertainment, local food and beverage experiences and community activities, Festival of Sails showcases Geelong as a leading sailing destination while delivering tourism, economic and community benefits to the region.

Festival of Sails 2027: 22-26 January 2027
Melbourne to Geelong Passage Race: Saturday 23 January 2027
Public Festival Program: 23-24 January 2027

More information: www.festivalofsails.com.au

- Ends-

Media Contact
Janet Boland, Festival Of Sails Marketing Lead
Phone: 0409 523 258
Email: janet@passionfolk.com