

Report:

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## Lake Keepit Regatta – Boat Delivery Report

11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2011 Queens Birthday weekend

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2 self-draining Manly that have been purchased on behalf of the Wallerawang Sailing Club WSC and the Windermere Sailing Group WSG, through the Associations funding grant, made the 496klm journey from their homes in Pittwater and Port Hacking, to Lake Keepit near Tamworth.

The boats arrived at Lake Keepit on the Saturday morning to replace two (of four) old timber Mark 1 boats. Junior Assistant Trainer Tayla from PHOSC along with Josh, Tahlia and Cody did a rigging demonstration of the 'new' boats and showed the children who had gathered how to use a spinnaker.



The skies were grey, the air was cold and the water was freezing. The regatta being held at Lake Keepit Sailing Club "The Keepit Kool Regatta" was mainly larger skiffs and trailer sailers. There were not many children in attendance and those that were, were crewing on the larger boats for the racing.

With marks borrowed from the Lake Keepit Club a small triangle course was set 100m from the shore for the MJ's. There was not great enthusiasm to 'go sailing' as the weather was not pleasant. Of the six MJ's that were now 'on-site', three braved the elements on Saturday afternoon.

Sean from Wallerawang sailed with Tahlia from PHOSC, Sophie from Wallerawang and Piper from Belmont 16's sailed together. Sally and Penny from Lake Keepit who were learning to sail joined in, sailing a sabot. It was not long before a 'crew change' was required as Sally and Penny struggled in the sometimes gusty conditions. Cody from PHOSC took the helm of the sabot with Sally, while Josh from PHOSC took the helm of the third MJ with Penny.

The breeze was a steady 8-10 knots and provided some sharp little gusts. The MJ's were instructed on 'starting', 'working to the top mark', 'tacking on the whistle', 'reaching', 'follow the leader' and Josh showed Sally how to use a spinnaker. With the weather and the water so cold and with some kids' not wearing booties or warm clothing – an hour was long enough.

On the Saturday evening we stayed for the dinner and the Yabbie Races. A short Questionnaire was distributed to the Commodores of Lake Keepit, Wallerawang and New England clubs. All three responses echo each other in respect of needing more junior members, more trainers, and their struggles with distance. Some Wallerawang members travel 500klm to the club, Lake Keepit members travel 300klms, and New England travel 70klms. Blue-green algae has a big impact on New England sailing.

Another questionnaire was distributed to 15 kids age range 10 – 16, from Lake Keepit, New England, Belmont 16's, Wangi Wangi, Wallerawang, and Speers Point. Again, the same responses were across the board, 'more trainers', 'more kids', and 'more boats'. One response:-

*What do you think would make sailing better for you and your club/community?....*

"Better equipment, boats, more sailing days, and instructors like Kingsley – he was great"

Sunday saw the weather really close in with very grey skies, the threat of rain and a biting wind chill factor. On our arrival the kids from Wallerawang had already rigged their two 'new' boats and had been on the water for an hour. We did not see the need for us to lend any assistance – the fact they were on the water was enough to know that these two little boats have gone to a good home.



When the boats did come back in, the children were frozen to the bone and needed to thaw out. A few hours later Hugh and Shaun from Wallerawang and Sophie and Piper headed back out with Tayla, Josh and Cody watching on from a support boat.

Monday would be our last day and again when we arrived the two 'new boats' were on the water. We said a few good-byes but not before organising for Bill Hoarders (Wallerawang/Windermere) two timber Mark 1 boats to be left with the Lake Keepit Club to help them get kids on the water. Penny and Sally were very excited!

This was an in-kind contribution to the funding grant and many thanks to John and Tahlia from PHOSC for joining us and being a part of the weekend.