

# Report on Lincoln Week Regatta 2023

This report is produced in accordance with World Sailing [Regulation 38](#) and Australian Sailing [Special Regulations Part 1, 2.02.5](#) for Safety Reporting.

Australian Sailing is committed to learning from safety incidents and sharing these learnings with other clubs throughout Australia.

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## Summary

There was a fatal incident on the first day of the 2023 Teakle Classic Lincoln Week Regatta (Regatta) resulting in Andrew McLeod losing his life. Andrew McLeod fell from the yacht *Summer Jewel* into the water during a pre-start manoeuvre. Other sailors and race management responded to recover Andrew McLeod and apply first aid. Andrew McLeod was transferred to shore on a race committee boat where emergency services took responsibility for the incident.

## About the regatta

1. The Regatta was conducted on the waters of Boston Bay and Spencer Gulf in South Australia from Monday 20 February to Thursday 23 February 2023.
2. The organising authority was the Port Lincoln Yacht Club.
3. The Regatta was governed by the [Racing Rules of Sailing](#) and Australian Sailing's [Special Regulations Part 1](#).
4. Yachts racing within the confines of Boston Bay were required to carry safety equipment complying with Category 6 requirements of the Special Regulations. Yachts racing outside Boston Bay were required to comply with Category 5.
5. All yachts entered in the Regatta were required to have a Special Regulations [Audit certificate](#).
6. The key people responsible for conducting the Regatta were:
  - a. Kevin Wilson, Principal Race Officer (International Race Officer)
  - b. Andy Dyer and Steve Kemp, Lincoln Week Committee
  - c. Ross Wilson, Incident Management Team Chairperson (International Race Officer)
7. The race documents including the [Notice of Race](#) and [Sailing Instructions](#) were publicly available on the [Regatta website](#). The Incident Management Plan was included in the Sailing Instructions and provided details and procedures in case of emergency.

## Conditions and context

8. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology's [Access-C Numerical Weather Prediction Model](#) for 20 February for Boston Bay predicted 10 to 12 knots from the east in the morning, with a 24 to 30 knot change from the south in the middle of the day, changing to 15 knots from the east in the mid-afternoon.
9. The warning signal for the first race on 20 February was scheduled for 10:55AM.
10. The start line for racing was set approximately 1.5 nautical miles east of the entrance to the Port Lincoln Marina.
11. At approximately 10:45AM some gusts and an increase in wind strength came through the course start area bringing 25 to 30 knots from the southwest.
12. At approximately 11:00AM the wind then dropped back to 20 gusting to 25 knots from the southeast.
13. The start line area had a very short fetch of approximately 1.5nm. The sea state was quite calm with approximately 0.5m waves and no swell.

## The incident

14. The yacht *Summer Jewel*, a [Solaris 50](#) design of 15.4m in length, 4.55m beam and 15,900kg, owned by Ian Flint left the Port Lincoln Marina at approximately 9:30AM with 9 people on board.
15. Andrew McLeod was considered by his peers to be an experienced and highly competent sailor having competed in yacht racing for many decades. The other crew were also considered to be experienced and competent with "*significant ocean, offshore and local sailing experience.*"
16. Just after 11:00AM, *Summer Jewel* was approximately two minutes prior to starting their first race.
17. The start line area had congestion with yachts from different divisions in the area.
18. *Summer Jewel* had one reef in the mainsail and the number 3 headsail hoisted.
19. At around 1 minute prior to starting, *Summer Jewel* was underway with approximately 8 knots boat speed, on port tack approaching the start boat.
20. Andrew McLeod was sitting in front of the windward steering wheel and operating the winch in front of him.
21. All crew on *Summer Jewel* were alerted by the helmsman Gary Sinton that a gybe was pending and to keep their heads down. Andrew McLeod remained seated at his station.
22. *Summer Jewel* gybed onto starboard tack.
23. The gybe was undertaken, the main winched in as far as normal and the boom travel was restricted.
24. Craig McPhee, crew member of *Summer Jewel* observed that Andrew McLeod had collapsed face down onto the deck. Craig McPhee and Gary Sinton then observed Andrew McLeod slide silently under the lifeline and fall overboard headfirst on the leeward side.
25. Craig McPhee immediately yelled "*man overboard, watch him!*"
26. Gary Sinton alerted the crew that they would tack *Summer Jewel* and appointed an observer to stand beside him.
27. *Summer Jewel* hardened up to windward and tacked onto port and then returned to Andrew McLeod.

28. Approximately two minutes after the gybe, *Summer Jewel* had arrived by Andrew McLeod who was face down in the water. The crew of *Summer Jewel* did not observe any indication of Andrew McLeod being responsive.
29. Gary Sinton asked crew to get the lifebuoy ready to assist with the rescue of Andrew McLeod.
30. Craig McPhee was not wearing a lifejacket, and told crew he was jumping in. Ian Flint and Gary Sinton knew he was doing this and crew assisted to get the lifebuoy to him. Craig McPhee entered the water on the port side of *Summer Jewel* from amidships.
31. Craig McPhee swam approximately 3 to 5m to Andrew McLeod. Craig McPhee attempted to turn Andrew McLeod around and keep his head above water.
32. Gary Sinton then made a mayday call over the VHF radio. The mayday call was acknowledged by some race committee vessels and other competitors.
33. Craig McPhee found that Andrew McLeod was unresponsive, and appeared to be not breathing. Craig McPhee also observed that Andrew McLeod appeared to have large, closed head injuries to his temples on both sides. Craig McPhee called repeatedly for help.
34. The Port Lincoln Yacht Club's race committee boat, operated by Andrew Waterman and Tony Belton, was positioned at the leeward end of the start line, unanchored, and observing race starts. The race committee boat was on the course area to operate as a mark laying and jury boat.
35. The race committee boat was a high sided aluminium vessel having previously been an abalone dive boat, approximately 7m in length, 2.5m beam and 0.7m freeboard. The race committee boat was driven by a single 130hp outboard. There was no backboard at the stern.
36. The operators of the race committee boat were approximately 500 to 600m away from where Andrew McLeod was in the water when they heard the mayday call. They responded to the mayday call and arrived at the scene approximately three minutes after Andrew McLeod fell overboard, and took control of the situation.
37. The operators of the race committee boat could not get Andrew McLeod, estimated to be 1.9m in height and over 100kg, into the boat.
38. The crew from the yacht *Plowking* had heard the mayday call on the radio and observed the attempted recovery of Andrew McLeod.
39. *Plowking*, is a Phuket 8 design of 7.9m length, 2.4m beam and approximately 1,700kg with some hiking straps but no lifelines. All crew were wearing lifejackets.
40. They motored *Plowking* closer and, after discussion with the other four members of the crew, Ben Ashby and Harry Cooper entered the water to assist.
41. Craig McPhee, Ben Ashby, Harry Cooper assisted Andrew Waterman and Tony Belton retrieve Andrew McLeod and get him into the race committee boat.
42. Craig McPhee and Harry Cooper applied basic first aid and CPR to Andrew McLeod.
43. The yacht *Quest* came to the race committee boat and asked if they needed a defibrillator. Andrew Waterman answered that they did.
44. The crew of *Quest* threw the defibrillator to Andrew Waterman.
45. Andrew Waterman used his top to dry the upper part of Andrew McLeod's chest so they could use the defibrillator.
46. Harry Cooper and Ben Ashby applied the defibrillator to Andrew McLeod with Andrew Waterman's assistance. Andrew Waterman tried to deflect the spray coming onboard onto Andrew McLeod. However, it was found that the device had flat batteries and did not work.
47. The operators of the race committee boat notified the race committee that they had a person onboard receiving CPR and that they were returning to the Port Lincoln Marina and needed an ambulance.
48. The race committee called 000 to notify emergency services of the incident.

49. Harry Cooper continued to apply first aid and CPR to Andrew McLeod as the race committee boat motored at approximately 20 knots toward the Port Lincoln Marina.
50. At no time did Andrew McLeod respond to CPR.
51. The operators of the race committee boat were advised over the VHF radio to meet the ambulance at the identified emergency evacuation location at the Marina Hotel.
52. Andrew McLeod was moved onto the public wharf with the assistance of Dr Malcom Higgins who was a crew member of a yacht that had already retired. More CPR was applied and the Marina Hotel's defibrillator was brought down.
53. The South Australian Police and Ambulance service arrived and took over responsibility for managing the incident.
54. The Port Lincoln Yacht Club cancelled all further races on 20 February.
55. The Port Lincoln Yacht Club through Steve Kemp and Andy Dyer offered support to all the sailors and race committee boat operators affected by, or involved in the attempted rescue of Andrew McLeod at the time of the incident. This provision of support was maintained for the duration of the Regatta.
56. The whole sailing community including Dr Malcolm Higgins were very supportive throughout the remainder of the Regatta to both those involved in the rescue and the crew of *Summer Jewel*.
57. The Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron offered professional counselling services to crew of *Summer Jewel* upon their return to the club.
58. The matter is being handled by the Port Lincoln Police Station for the South Australia Police, and a report is being prepared for the State Coroner. It is believed the report will include the post-mortem examination and information about the cause of Andrew McLeod's death.

## Safety equipment

59. [Marine Safety South Australia](#) requires that for protected waters an approved lifejacket be carried for each person.
60. The Marine Safety South Australia [SA Boating Safety Handbook](#) states that in circumstances of heightened risk, all occupants must wear a lifejacket. Examples of heightened risk include when in an area subject to gale warning (34 to 40 knots) or above, issued by the Bureau of Meteorology.
61. Australian Sailing's Special Regulations require for Category 5 and 6 races that each crew shall have a lifejacket complying with AS4758-2015 (minimum Level 50) or AS1512-1996 Type 1 or Type 2, or equivalent or more stringent overseas standard.
62. The Special Regulations recommend that a lifejacket be worn by crew at times when true wind speed is 25 knots or more.
63. *Summer Jewel* had just competed in the preceding Adelaide to Port Lincoln Yacht Race, a Category 3 race under the Special Regulations which require that boats:
  - a. Have their safety equipment audited by an Australian Sailing accredited Equipment Auditor.
  - b. Be fitted with lifelines surrounding the perimeter of the deck with an upper height of 600mm and intermediate height of 230mm, and stanchions placed at intervals no greater than 2.2m.
64. *Summer Jewel* declared in its entry that it complied with safety equipment requirements.

## Incident management planning

65. Incident Reporting advice and the Incident Management Plan were included in the Sailing Instructions. The Sailing Instructions were made available to all competitors on both the website and in hard copy at the Regatta's Official Notice Board.

66. The race committee:
  - a. Conducted a briefing for competitors on 20 February and discussed safety and emergency procedures.
  - b. Conducted a volunteers and race officials' briefing every day of the Regatta, including discussing safety and emergency procedures on 20 February.
  - c. Had a safety equipment list for all on water race committee vessels.
67. The incident reporting advice asked that:
  - a. Any accident or injury be reported to the Principal Race Officer or his alternate should he be uncontactable over VHF or mobile phone.
  - b. The details needed for any situation.
  - c. Other contact details in case of an injured person being evacuated.
68. The Incident Management Plan:
  - a. Included contact details for the Incident Management Team and important emergency services.
  - b. Identified responsibilities in case of a minor, major or severe incident. The levels were defined.
  - c. Identified emergencies that may occur, evacuation locations and response procedures for each.
  - d. Listed Incident Management Team resources.
  - e. Described communication protocols.
  - f. Published maps of sailing areas, facilities and evacuation points.
69. The Regatta website listed Andy Dyer as the Lincoln Week Committee chairperson. The Sailing Instructions listed Steve Kemp as the Lincoln Week Committee chairperson.
70. The Lincoln Week Committee, race committee and Incident Management Team conducted a debrief after the incident.
  - a. The Port Lincoln Yacht Club authorised fitting of a removable door for the vessel involved in the rescue.
  - b. Other safety equipment was found to be in working order.
  - c. The Port Lincoln Yacht Club has a defibrillator in the club house. The debrief recommended consideration be given to purchasing another for on water operations.

## Findings drawn from the incident

71. The race documents met the requirements and guidelines from Australian Sailing as set out in the Racing Rules of Sailing.
72. The inclusion of risk and safety management information and procedures in the race documents, and reference to them in competitor and volunteer briefings was consistent advice and recommendations from Australian Sailing.
73. The use of the 7m abalone dive boat was a reasonable choice of race committee boat for the Regatta and Port Lincoln Yacht Club.
74. *Summer Jewel* met all safety requirements under the rules of the Regatta.
75. Andrew McLeod was not required to be wearing a lifejacket under the rules of the Regatta or the requirements of Marine Safety South Australia.
76. The prevailing conditions were not a state of heightened risk for crew on a 15.4m 15,900kg yacht with lifelines, and it is reasonable that crew were not wearing lifejackets voluntarily.
77. The pre-start manoeuvres by *Summer Jewel* were consistent with any racing yacht in a similar situation and experienced or competent crew would understand the communications from the people in charge of the boat and its changes of course.

78. There were no findings on why Andrew McLeod fell and how he was injured. This is unfortunate as findings could be valuable information that may assist other crews understand how to minimise the risk of this happening. The post-mortem report for the State Coroner is important because it may provide information indicating the cause of the incident.
79. Craig McPhee, Ben Ashby and Harry Cooper entering the water to assist an unresponsive Andrew McLeod and retrieve him from the water were reasonable actions for them to undertake. Each entered the water with full or implicit authorisation, each had some form of flotation assistance, the boats they were from remained close by, and the race committee boat was present and its operators needed assistance.
80. The Race Committee's execution of the emergency response aligned with the Regatta's Incident Management Plan.
81. There were no findings on whether or not a working defibrillator on the water would have had any bearing on the loss of Andrew McLeod's life.
82. Race committee vessels that carry an automated external defibrillator and whose operators know how to use one may be better equipped to handle an emergency CPR situation.
83. Race committee vessels that have systems to retrieve an unresponsive person from the water may be better equipped to handle an emergency situation with an overboard person.
84. The conflicting advice on the Regatta chairman's identity between the website and race documents had no bearing on the incident or execution of the emergency response.
85. An Organising Authority's communications with crews affected by an emergency have an impact on their wellbeing.
86. The support provided by the Port Lincoln Yacht Club at the Regatta and the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron aligned with advice and recommendations from Australian Sailing.
87. That there was a fatality, there may have been a need for support to have been more widely provided, or for a longer time frame after the Regatta.
88. The actions of the crew of *Summer Jewel*, *Plowking* and the race committee boat operators in response to the incident are commendable.

## Recommendations

89. Australian Sailing communicate to clubs the imperative to have appropriate levels of support in place for crews personally affected by an emergency.
90. Australian Sailing communicate with race committees on:
  - a. The importance of a thorough Incident Management Plan and related briefings.
  - b. Systems related to the retrieval of an unresponsive person and how race committee boat operators are inducted on their use.
  - c. How automated external defibrillators should be a serious consideration either on a race committee vessel or within a short distance of the course area, and that people are trained in their use.

This report has been produced by Glen Stanaway with the assistance of the Hon John McKechnie KC, Shane Connelly APM and Will Oxley. The people involved in the incident and the Port Lincoln Yacht Club are thanked for their cooperation and contribution to the report.

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