

SIXTEEN SAILABILITY SEASONS

SEASON 2017/2018 will be the sixteenth season of service to sailing provided by the Blairgowrie group of Sailability Victoria. The program began in November 2002 when Commodore Kurt Jaks and Manager Alan Kayser asked the late Geoffrey Watson and his wife Eily to create the program. It used specially designed small yachts suited to people of all ages and ability.

Tuesday has always been Sailability day. This is when groups from local organisations which assist people who have a disability attend between 10 am and 2 pm, some 46 people attend. The 303 yachts are also used on weekends and in holiday times when individuals who want to experience recreational sailing can attend. Up to 100 visitors attend each season. The volunteer group numbers 32, comprising BYS members and community sailors.

Borrowed yachts were used at first and crews struggled through the shallows. Later four yachts on a big trailer were pushed out the jetty to a big crane to be hoisted over the railing one at a time and lowered into the water. Now eight 303s rest on pontoons in A 1 marina berth. They are easily launched and their masts and furled sails are conveniently stored in large tubes nearby.

Changes to the marina mean the activity can be based near the hardstand low landing rather than on the distant end of the marina arm. Buses can be driven to the waiting area. The area south of the marina is a comfortable area for novice sailing and sailors wanting a challenge can venture out into Camerons' Bight! These excellent facilities at BYS provide a perfect setting for this form of supported sailing. The 303 yachts, pontoons, cranes and other equipment were purchased with numerous generous donations from local support bodies, individual members, people in the community and governments, State and Federal.

To see film of the activity on You Tube search:
Access Sailing Blairgowrie and Sailability thanks BYS.

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