

**August 2006**

## **QUEEN'S HONOUR FOR JACKIE**



**S**ydney-based Jackie Kay has been appointed to be a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia, “for services to people with disabilities through the Access Dinghy Foundation and Sailability Australia”. The award was announced today by the Commonwealth Government as part of the Queen’s Birthday Honours List.

Commenting on the award, Bruce Dickson, Chair of Sailability Australia said: “For more than ten years, Jackie Kay has devoted her life to developing opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in recreational and competitive dinghy sailing.

“Despite acquiring Multiple Sclerosis in the mid eighties, and with the restrictions of using a wheel-chair, Jackie has poured enormous energy into breaking down barriers so that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy real freedom on the water.”

Jackie initially worked with Sailability NSW, and as a member of pioneering club Sailability Dobroyd but soon extended her contribution to all other states and territories and eventually thirteen other countries. Her commitment is full time.

Jackie is Chairperson of the Access Dinghy Foundation, which includes being editor of the "Telldales" newsletter, administrator of website and promotion of Access Dinghy sailing around the world. She is a member of Sailability Australia (a committee of Yachting Australia), a board member Sailability World Inc. and a member of the International Foundation for Disabled Sailing (IFDS) Development Committee. She has developed a number of manuals covering disability awareness, volunteers and safety.

# Sailability Batemans Bay

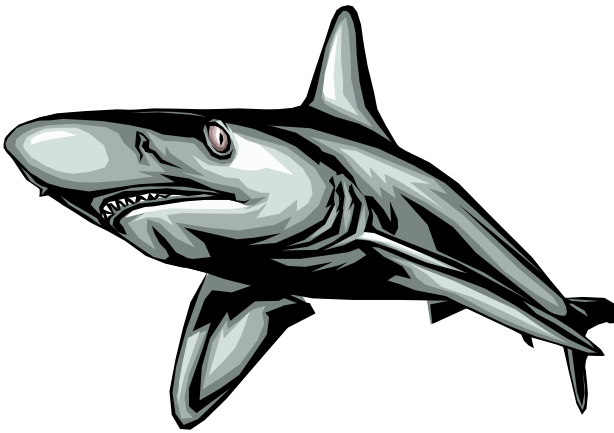


*Left: Batemans Bay Branch support boat "Squirt" is in close attendance as an electric assist access dinghy is sailed past the Princess Highway Bridge by Michael Knezevic.*

*Right: - Electric Assist Access Dinghy provides ease of control to all sailors.*



# Sharks in Lake Macquarie



Commercial netting has been banned in Lake Macquarie for some two years and the fish stocks have improved. Yes, people are catching fish, or so they say. Improvement in the marine environment is one thing but to be faced with a shark is something completely different.

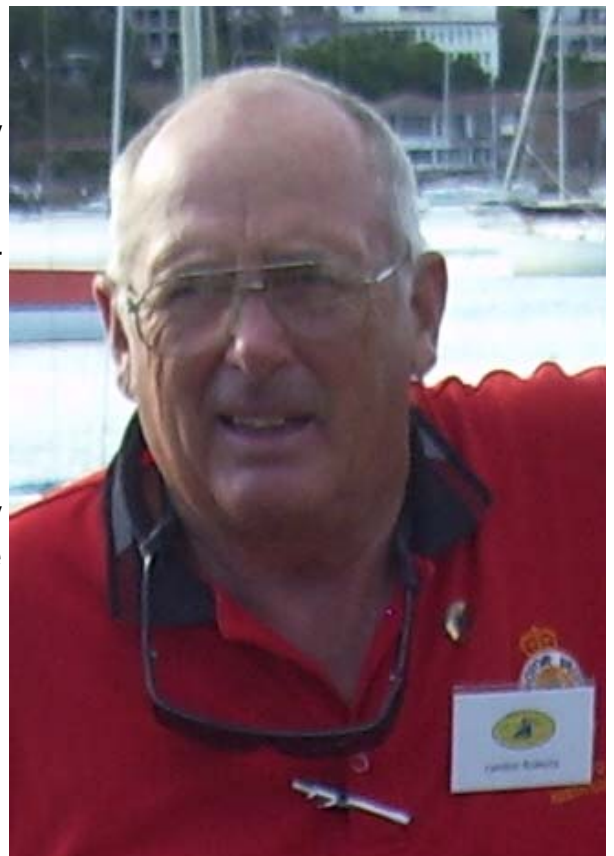
The difference between a SHARK [big black finicus] and a SUNFISH {big black finicus too} is hard to tell when one is in a 2.3 and notices a seagull dive-bombing something in the water about 50 metres away. That thing is black and about 50cm high and is heading my way. Now anything that high out of the water, must have a rather large and possibly hungry body under it.

The rescue boats were dispatched to investigate whilst I called to Wendy Evans, "Armageddon", "Armageddon out of here". Wendy hauled on and I think that she beat me to shore. The upshot of all this was that it was a SUNFISH that had decided that Lake Macquarie would be a nice place to visit.

We do have Sharks in the lake as we discovered recently. Bert Reay and I conduct sailing for High Schools at the Belmont 16footers Sailing Club. The group were out on the water when they started to come in rather smartly. "Why have you come back in soon. "There's a shark out there." YES and a BIG one at that, about 7ft long - (never sounds the same in metric).

Bert kept the rescue boat between the shark and the kids, whilst I got them fixed up on the shore, unclipped sails etc. It was about then that I remembered that my mobile phone was in my pocket and I was up to my waist in water. If the shark had come any closer I think that he would have got the phone rammed down his neck.

Lindon Roberts  
Sailability Belmont



## Australian Yachting Awards winners

Sailability members featured strongly in the Australian Yachting Awards announced last night at a black tie gala dinner in Sydney. The Annual Awards, hosted by Yachting Australia, recognise those who have achieved outstanding success in the sport during the 2005-2006 year, as well as those who have contributed to the sport over many years. The dinner also celebrated the return visit to Australia of the late Sir Francis Chichester's legendary yacht *Gypsy Moth*.

HRH The Princess Royal, Patron of the Gipsy Moth Global Project and of RYA Sailability UK, presented the awards: Male Sailor of the Year: James Spithill (NSW), Female Sailor of the Year: Allison Shreeve (NSW), Youth Sailor of the Year: Kyle Langford and Evan Walker (NSW), Sailor of the Year with a Disability: Paul Borg (VIC) and Don Scott (NSW), Services to Yachting: Lou Abrahams (VIC), Bill Joselin (NSW) and John Kirkjian (NSW), Media: Graeme Adam (NSW)



Winner of Sailor of the Year with a Disability, Paul Borg, from Sailability Gippsland Lakes, Victoria, steered his way to a win at the 2005 International Match Racing Championships for blind people in Italy, with fellow-winner Don Scott, of Sailability Dobroyd,

Sydney. Sailing single-handed, Paul followed up with a win in the 2006 Access 303 (ISAF recognised class) open division in the Australian Access Class Championship in a fleet of sighted sailors. (Paul has more recently won the 2006 International Match Racing Championships for blind people in Italy, with Sailability Perth's Kylie Forth crewing).

---



Over the past three years, Don Scott has crewed his way to many wins including the Homerus Blind Sailing Event in May 2005 and the NSW Access 2.3 Championships. Don also crewed with Wayne Thomson in 2001 in the Homerus. This was the first international event which both Wayne and Don won. So Don had been crew to two different skippers and won with both.

As previously announced, the other finalists in the above category were: Lindsay Dalmon (NSW), Jamie Dunross (WA), Colin Harrison (WA) & Graeme Martin (WA), Colin Johanson (Vic), and Kellyanne Oriel-Price (NSW)

According to the judges, Media Award recipient Graeme Adam, over the past 18 months, has made a big difference in his public relations role for disabled sailing. His voluntary contribution has been of particular benefit to Sailability NSW, and generally across Australia, and to the Australian Access Dinghy Class Association in promoting



competitive and recreational sailing, getting the message across that **“sailing is for everyone”**.

Graeme’s coverage of the sport in both reporting and photography included the launch of the Access Liberty, the Access UD 18 selection as two person craft for the Paralympics, Sailabration Day – celebrating 10 years of Sailability NSW, and the Australian and International Access Dinghy Championships at Docklands.

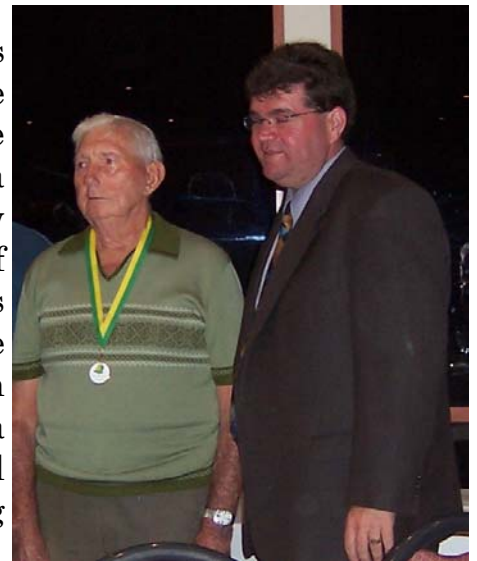
From release issued by Yachting Australia.

# SAILABILITY BELMONT SPORTS AWARDS NIGHT

Lake Macquarie City Council's Sports Awards for 2005 provided outstanding recognition for members of Sailability Belmont 16s at a dinner held at Belmont Golf Club attended by 200 sporting participants.

In the Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability category, four of our Sailability members were awarded finalist's medals for their achievements during 2005.

Eighty year old blind sailor, Ralph Brunskill was recognised for winning his Access 2.3 Doubles class in the Lake Macquarie Games and his third placing in the State Championships. His nomination noted that Ralph was a pioneer for blind people at Belmont Sailability and new techniques, such as fitting bells to the sail to warn him of luffing, were worked out and tested with him. He loves to sail and works very hard on improving his competitive performance. He constantly asks others for advice then spends many hours in training – sometimes three times a week when preparing for the 2006 National Championships in Melbourne. He and his guide dog Ricky take all of the travel involved in competitions in their stride. (Ralph won his class in the Nationals in *Ralph with Matthew Morris MP* Melbourne this year)



Finalist Wendy Evans was selected by NSW Sailability to be part of the Australian Team to compete in the 2<sup>nd</sup> IDFS (International Federation for Disabled Sailors) World Single Person Liberty Championships held in Italy in October 2005. This event is designed specially for sailors with very severe physical disabilities and must be classified by international doctors to enter. Wendy's classification is a 1, which is amongst the most severe of physical disabilities. Unfortunately, 5 days before flying to Italy, Wendy's father took seriously ill and was taken to hospital. At this time, she was unable to leave and compete in this wonderful event. Wendy was also recognised for her second placing in the NSW State Championships' Liberty division and second in the Trans Tasman Games' Access Doubles 303 Class. Wendy was one of four finalists for Australian Sailor of

the Year with a Disability 2005.

At the time of the Awards being selected, finalist Stephen Burns had won Division 3 in the Australian Championships in Access 2.3 class. Also, competing in the Individual Access 2.3 class Stephen won Division 3 in the Lake Macquarie Games and was second in the Trans Tasman Games. His citation noted Stephen's determination in twice a week pushing his wheelchair the three kilometres from his home to the Belmont 16s sailing venue and back again after his training. Stephen also acts as a volunteer, taking new members for a sail and often trains with Ralph using radio contact and acting as his eyes.



Finalist Maryanne Ireland achieved placings in International, National and State competitions during 2005. Among these was her win in the NSW State Titles in the Liberty class and overall first female in the competition. She won the Individual Access 2.3 class in the Trans Tasman games. Maryanne was selected as a finalist for Yachting Australia's Sailor of the Year with a Disability 2005 Award and received a NSW Department of Sport and Recreation Performance Coaching grant.

For the twelve Sailability members (attendance was limited) who attended the Sports Award dinner, the highlight was the award of Sports Administrator of the Year to our President, Bert Reay.

Bert has been a leading force in Sailability Belmont 16s since its formation nine years ago. He is "on deck" on almost every one of the four days a week, 46 weeks of the year that the group sails with some 5,000 trips being sailed each year. His award also recognised the major contribution he has made to the successes of our many competitive sailors, four of whom were honoured at the dinner. Almost invariably, Bert organises and accompanies our competition participants to their regatta venues around NSW. He has been a volunteer rescue boat driver at the Belmont 16 footers Sailing Club for more than forty years and was made a Life Member of the club last year.



Written by  
Mike Peachey  
Sailability Belmont

*Bert showing his awards with fellow member, Mike Peachey*

# *Sailability Coffs Harbour*

**“WE ARE BACK “  
“BIGGER AND BRIGHTER THAN EVER”**

**S**ailability Coffs Harbour has successfully been relaunched. Following five years of inactivity due to lack of funds, inability to attract volunteers, and an isolated sailing venue, *we are back* bigger brighter and more active than ever.



Our original venue was about 15 kilometres from Coffs Harbour itself, which meant we were isolated from many people, sailors, volunteers and sponsors. The three components that are essential to operating a volunteer, non-profit organisation. Originally launched in 1997 our branch was based in Urunga, sailing on the Kalang river. With the low number of volunteers in the area, large centre-board and constantly silting river we were forced to operate on a high tide every second weekend. Having to contend with regular beaching on mud flats, the battle of getting sailors and volunteers to this venue, in the end proved an insurmountable obstacle.

After several attempts to shift into a more accessible, more visible and more ‘user friendly’ venue, in December 2005 we succeeded. Our club is now a fully operational concern, sailing in the beautiful wide-open waters of the Coffs Jetty Harbour. Although we still have access issues, having to launch from the beach, the enthusiasm from sailors, volunteers and onlookers alike is nothing short of thrilling and very rewarding.

We are fortunate to have a very dedicated band of volunteers both with and

without sailing experience. Being ‘out there and seen’ is surely a key to success for Sailability Coffs Harbour. The Jetty foreshore area is a popular area for tourists with a beautiful sheltered beach, historic wharf that takes you out nearly to the centre of the harbour, shady barbecue and grassy picnic areas. Some of our most dedicated and hardworking volunteers have just happened along on a Sunday and joined the team to build real strength into our operation.



With the club growing in size and momentum we are now in the process of building an interactive web site. In this way our members, casual sailors, volunteers and sponsors can easily be informed of club activities. With the facility for sailors to register for a sail, volunteers to register and any general enquiries. We will be promoting our web page to all people involved and the general public. As tourism is a major component of Coffs Harbour’s infrastructure a visitor to the area will be able to find out about us on the internet and register for a sail before they even arrive in Coffs Harbour. As our infrastructure is put in place to more easily accommodate our access issues we look forward to hosting other clubs for inter-club regatta’s and social sailing days.

Although we are not sailing through the winter months the committee are hard at work applying for grants and preparing for our next sailing season. If we are to maintain our volunteers and grow from here we need a better launching solution. Our committee is working hard to resolve this issue. Once dealt with, there will be no boundaries for Sailability Coffs Harbour.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors for their generous contributions: Hi-tech Self Storage, The Deep Sea Fishing Club, Coffs Harbour Podiatry, Jetty Boating, ALMA Technology and The Royal Life Saving Society.

***Peter Johnson***

***Sailability Coffs Harbour***

## Sailability Griffith in Action



**PEACE AND TRANQUILITY ON LAKE WYANGAN**

**S**tudents from Kalinda School have completed a very successful sailing program at Lake Wyangan over term 1, 2006. The school has one Access Dinghy and has been able to use two other dinghies from Sailability Griffith to enable the school to sail each week. Access dinghies are designed for those with a disability and are extremely safe. Terry Metcalfe and Sue Ticehurst with their assistant instructor's certificates were ably assisted by experienced sailor, Hank Veenhuizen. Errolyne Cross and Mike Gow were quick to pick up sailing and this meant that all 46 students were able to sail on each of the first six Fridays. Only the senior classes sailed for the last four weeks.

What a totally different experience for the younger ones, especially those with high support needs. They loved the feel of the wind and the spray on their faces and the rocking of the boat on the water. It was touching to see those little hands dragging in the water and to hear the comments or attempts to communicate their pleasure. Many felt the thrill of steering the boat and trying to hold the sails in place.

Senior students were quick to help rig, launch and then catch the boats and assist others in and out of them. The peer support was excellent. Some senior students were able to take their younger peers out in a boat. Students waiting their turn enjoyed ball games on the lawn or just watching the lake, the boats and birds.

**IT IS SO MUCH FUN!!**



The last month saw a concentrated effort with the senior students. They were shown and then demonstrated how to rig the boats and also how to take them apart at the end of the day. Team building skills were developed through these exercises and unpacking and packing up became a quick job! Safety issues took first place. Discussions about wind direction and speed preceded the boats being launched. Sails had to be furled to the size appropriate to the wind speed. Life jackets had to be worn and had to be the correct size for each one. The rescue boat had to be got out of the shed and on the water with fuel checked and all in place. Each dinghy had to have a bailing bucket and a paddle. Then the business of sailing could commence. They decided which course they would be able to sail depending on the wind direction and how they would have to sail to get back to shore. At first they sailed by themselves with an adult sailor in the boat and then the braver ones took a boat out by themselves or with another student. Seven of the students were able to sail solo.



**HELPING TO LIFT THE CENTREBOARD.**

By the last week, they were going out in

**RENEA, TYSON AND MARY AND COURTNEY SAILING**



pairs and trying to race! It was a very satisfying end to the term to sit on shore and watch the students sail! They will be ready to compete in some Special Olympic or Sailability events by the end of the year. What a boost to self confidence and self esteem this has been to all students. Especially when they are doing what most of the staff are unable to do at this stage!!

**KEVIN AND COURTNEY SHOW HOW IT IS DONE!**



# SAILABILITY MANLY

## VOLUNTEERS PRESENTED WITH NSW PREMIER'S COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

About 30 of Sailability Manly's volunteers had just sat down to a dinner at a Manly restaurant on Saturday evening July 1, 2006, when the local Independent State Member for Manly, David Barr, sprang a surprise on them. He had the pleasant task of presenting to them the NSW Government's Community Service Award in the form of a wooden plaque and a certificate signed by the NSW Premier. Out-going club President, Des Carmody, accepted the award on behalf of all the club's volunteers, past and present.



*David Barr MP and Des Carmody*

Mr Barr congratulated Sailability Manly's volunteers on their hard work and the benefits they brought to members of the community, especially those with some form of disability. As a sign of his support for the club Mr Barr is himself a member of Sailability Manly.

The club's committee arranged the dinner so that volunteers from their Wednesday and Saturday sailing groups could meet each other and to celebrate a very successful year for the club. Incoming President Patrick Alexander was welcomed by those present. Out-going President of Manly Yacht Club, Keith Woodward, presented his club's Graeme Cotton Citizen of The Year Award to Sailability Manly's tireless Secretary Eli Demeny and Sailability's Wayne Black, who suffers from the debilitating after-effects of a stroke, was acknowledged as Manly Yacht Club's Volunteer of the Year for his efforts each sailing Saturday.

Sailability Manly has members and volunteers from all around the Northern beaches and lower and mid North Shore, having started ten years ago at North Sydney. However boat storage and launching facilities were a problem and the club moved to Manly Yacht Club. Using purpose-built two person sailing dinghies which cannot sink or flip over, the club offers the opportunity to people with disabilities of all sorts to go for a sail out on Manly Cove.

**What a Joy!!!**

**Mitchell Reid and Peter Singer**

On any given sailing day Sailability Manly has out on the water sailors with disabilities as diverse as MS, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, vision impairment, brain injury, stroke, intellectual impairment, and so on, each of them relishing the sense of adventure and freedom from an hour on the blue waters. Organisations such as the MS Society at Willoughby, Hornsby Challenge and several others encourage their members to take part, and many individuals make their way with family members, carers or public transport. Members range from youngsters to well into the seventies.



Sailability Manly has an enthusiastic group of volunteer sailors, some themselves with a disability, plus other non-sailing volunteers. Depending on the level of disability and the person's competence, the club encourages its members to learn and develop their sailing skills so that they might eventually be able to sail solo if they wish. The club maintains its own website, [www.manlysailability.com.au](http://www.manlysailability.com.au), with photos and reports on each day's sailing. Sailability Manly is part of Sailability NSW which in turn is part of the world-wide Sailability organisation. Enquiries can be directed to Bob Ronai on 9983 9057.

---

# Sailability Penrith Lakes - Sailing

**“Man** overboard!” the cry went out. Pushing the joystick hard towards the wind we swung the 303 sail boat around and skated back. Hard to wind again, we completed the figure of eight and came alongside our ‘body’. My fellow sailor reached over and plucked from the water a floating 2 litre milk container. Yes! We had successfully completed another segment of the training course.

Seven of us under the guidance of our seasoned tutors, John and Ralph, had finished the morning’s instruction in the lecture room and were now putting theory into practice on the windy Sydney International Regatta Centre lake at Penrith.

The following morning we were in the lecture room again. This time we were learning all the ins and outs of weather maps, safety, navigation lights and buoyage, and how to handle power boats including their use as safety boats.

The afternoon proved a little calmer than the previous day and we fired up two power boats with a group and an instructor in each and set out to perform a number of routines. We found that snaking backwards onto a buoy was quite challenging and completing a full speed U- turn required a certain amount of nerve. Our two younger members had ‘volunteered’ to be rescued in their sail boats, but the wind had dropped away and they had difficulty getting to the reedy bank and getting ‘stuck’.

## **“Sailability Penrith Lakes training course participants and their instructors, John and Ralph, after a long weekend”**

However, we gave them an extra push into the reeds and then proceeded to rescue them and tow them into friendly waters.

Congratulations to John and Ralph for an excellent weekend of training from the volunteers at Penrith Lakes Sailability.

Written by  
Mike Watson  
Sailability Penrith Lakes



## SKATER SET TO ROLL AROUND AUSTRALIA IN AID OF SAILABILITY

**B**ritish man Dave Cornthwaite, 26, is currently preparing for a record-breaking skateboard journey which he hopes will raise a total of over 124,000 AUD to be shared between three charities, including Sailability Australia. In late August Dave will jump aboard Elsa, his bright yellow carbon fibre longboard, and push out of Perth with 6000km of road leading to his destination, Brisbane. It might seem crazy, but Australia is actually the second leg of the BoardFree project, which in addition to its charity work aims to inspire children of all ages and abilities to get off the sofa, get outside and get into sport.

In May Dave warmed up for his world record attempt by skateboarding the length of Britain. This 1450km journey marked the first time anyone had skated the famous John O'Groats to Land's End route, an achievement made all the more remarkable considering Dave only started skating 14 months earlier. In Australia, he will be joined by a 7 person support team who are dedicated to raising awareness of BoardFree's causes by documenting the journey, liaising with the media and organising fundraising events en route.

If all goes to plan the 4-month journey will break the current distance skateboarding record by over 1600km, but despite the massive challenge ahead Dave remains positive. "Myself and the team can't wait for the Australian journey to start," he says, "there is a long road ahead but we're all well prepared and are confident that we'll reach Brisbane before the turn of the new year, we just hope the Australian public welcome us with open arms as we pass through your amazing country."

For more information visit [www.boardfree.co.uk](http://www.boardfree.co.uk), secure online donations can be made from anywhere in the world on [www.justgiving.com/boardfree](http://www.justgiving.com/boardfree)



# Sailability Point Piper

The newly formed Sailability Point Piper (SPP) is a unique concept for Sailability. Through the generosity of well-known Sydney yachtsman, Denis O'Neil and son Ned, SPP has been established to provide all members of Sailability NSW with the opportunity to experience Sydney Harbour aboard *Express*, a beautiful 48ft motor launch. Skipper and crew are available to provide up to eight Sailability members an enjoyable cruise on Sydney Harbour.

The Royal Motor Yacht Club of NSW, adjoining Denis' jetty has provided wheelchair accessible facilities. Because of traffic and parking difficulties at weekends, Sailability activities are restricted to mid week activities only.

All branches and individual members of Sailability NSW are offered the opportunity of utilising the facilities of Sailability Point Piper. Regional members and families are also encouraged to make use of Sailability Point Piper when coming to Sydney for medical consultations, wheelchair appointments etc. With Ned O'Neil at the helm as President, SPP is eager to enrich the lives of all members of Sailability, their family, friends and volunteers.

For more information contact Jackie Kay - [jackiek@sailability.org](mailto:jackiek@sailability.org)





**A BIG WAVE**  
from the Editors

*We would like to apologise for the delay in putting out this edition of Freedom on Water.*

*Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition. There are so many fantastic stories and photos including those from our newer branches, Batemans Bay, Griffith & Penrith Lakes. Congratulations must go to Coffs Harbour, who with the assistance of a great group of people, had to relocate and rebuild their branch into the amazing branch it is today. Well done!!*

*Happy Reading - and till next time don't forget*

*“FREEDOM” is the word.*

*Wendy – Sailability Belmont / Port Stephens  
Janeen – Secretary, Sailability NSW*

---

**Sailability NSW Newsletter**  
**Contacts -**

*Janeen Houghton  
Secretary Sailability NSW  
Ph: 0403 685 506  
Email: [janeenh@optusnet.com.au](mailto:janeenh@optusnet.com.au)*

