

By Helen Moody, Chair



SINCE its establishment in September 2020 the RSAYS SheSails Committee has been working hard to advocate for women members' interests and needs in Squadron activity. Our Committee has remained enthusiastic over the summer season and has been developing ways of fostering and increasing participation of women, while at the same time being inclusive of all Club members. Part of this has been developing initiatives for input into the Squadron Strategic Plan.

The responses from the inaugural SheSails women's gathering last September are being used to inform strategic planning and operations at RSAYS. At that time, participants enthusiastically responded to the opportunity to provide their thoughts and ideas about what would support their participation in the Club, both on and off the water.

Since this event the SheSails Committee has been extremely busy working with the information to ensure its value is realised. The responses were collated and developed into an initial SheSails Action Plan. This Action Plan was presented to the Management Committee early in 2021. Work is now underway to incorporate themes and activities from the SheSails Action Plan into the broader Squadron Strategic Plan.

The SheSails Committee is looking forward to continuing to work closely with the Management Committee in implementing the Strategic Plan once this has been endorsed, and providing advocacy and leadership around women members' interests at the Squadron.

The Committee has facilitated a couple of well attended get-togethers, with an informal Christmas meal in Jimmy's Bar on 18 December, and a new initiative called 'Something on a Friday' on 29 January. These are short and interesting practical educational sessions and there was quite a crowd at the first event. More than 20 people attended the splicing demonstration provided by Chris Riggs, with some practice afterwards assisted by Adam South. More than 35 people had meals on the Quarterdeck following the session. Watch for advertising of the date and subject for the next one!



SheSails splicing night

Stella Rouge crew sharing the SheSails love...

By Karen van Riet



L to R Nichole Dale, Susan Jovanovich, Barb Beacham, Karen van Riet, Di Hunter

IT was a beautiful night on 8 January for a twilight sail at a stunning location – the Goolwa Regatta Yacht Club (GRYC).

As part of the GRYC SheSails strategy aimed at growing the number of women with confidence and competence in helming, this season the GRYC is incorporating a Women's Helm series within their Friday night Twilight racing programme.

At the invitation of the GRYC, the *Stella Rouge* girls travelled to Goolwa to join other women on the water for the first race of the Women's Helm series. The conditions were somewhat challenging on the night, with winds gusting to around 18 kts at times. Winners are grinners, however, with two *Stella* girls crewing on board winning boats!

We were made to feel very welcome by the GRYC and shared an amazing experience. We're looking forward to the next races!



Sue sailing up the Franklin River, Tasmania

ICAME to Adelaide in 1974 to take up a lectureship in economics at the University of Adelaide. I had had a little experience in sailing dinghies and larger yachts and I wanted to do more of that, so I sought to join the RSAYS.

In response to my enquiries, the General Manager informed me that I could join, but only as an Associate. When I asked what was the difference between Associate and full Membership, he told me that I could not vote at meetings but, and I quote, "You would not want to worry your pretty head with voting, would you?" That was not a great start. He failed to explain at the time that, also, I could not own and moor a yacht at the Squadron unless I had a man as a joint owner.

I took a deep breath and joined up as an Associate, there being few alternatives in Adelaide at that time.

I later attended the AGM in order to learn more about the Squadron, even though I could not vote. The Commodore looked directly at me – one of only two or three women present – and addressed the meeting as 'Gentlemen'.



Sponsors of the Women's Series

By Sue Richardson, AM, Director on the RSAYS Limited Board

Fortunately, I did have a man who would share ownership of a yacht and so began a 48 year history of involvement in sailing and the Squadron.

I had a lot to learn about both the art of sailing and maintenance of a yacht. I asked many questions of the experienced sailors in the Squadron and found nearly all to be generous with their knowledge and time. I skippered the boat in races – mainly inshore but some offshore – and on cruises to Spencer Gulf, and beyond to Coffin Bay and Pearson Island, learning all the time. At that time few women raced, but a number cruised with their husbands and families and were competent and engaged sailors. The cruising fleets were quite large and it was common in summer to be at anchor in some beautiful spot in Spencer Gulf with four or five other Squadron boats, and to share a drink and stories on each other's boats or ashore.

In the mid 1970s, the Whitlam government passed an act that required voluntary associations which had both female and male members to admit them on equal terms. I drew this to the attention of the Commodore with the obvious intention that this should prompt the Squadron to change its membership rules. The Commodore said, "Let's have lunch." We did and I heard no more. But the membership rules were changed in September 1984 and it was no longer necessary to be a 'British Gentleman' in order to be a member and the distinction between the sexes was removed.

While women could now become full members of the Squadron, it has been a long and slow journey to equality in all the aspects of sailing and Squadron life. The job is not finished, but the Squadron is now a much more welcoming environment for women, and women are increasingly enjoying and contributing to the full range of Squadron life, from hard racing to membership of the Management Committee and as Flag Officers, to boat ownership and cruising, and to editing the *Squadron Quarterly*. Oh, that the Squadron that I joined in 1974 had been the Squadron of today!

Editor: The Spring 2019 *Squadron Quarterly* features an article 'When Women Joined the RSAYS Ranks' which gives some more information about this issue.



Sue at the helm of *Femme Fatale*