

By Garry Brown

Carolyn Brereton and I are relatively new members of the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron with only two decades of sailing racing between us! We were both introduced to keel boat racing at the Squadron through friends who were enthusiastic crew members. We have enjoyed the competitive and social aspects of the Club together for seven years and are now changing gears by becoming keel boat owners and novice cruisers.



WHAT a wonderful experience; sailing around Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park with Carolyn Brereton on a Bavaria 50 Cruiser! Our journey so far has been smooth, but we did experience engine failure on our first passage out of Pittwater and there were a few anxious moments when we joined the COVID-19 lockdown zone at Sydney's Northern Beaches. Although the cruising adventure has officially started, we are taking time in the Pittwater region to get to know our vessel before heading north to Queensland for the winter.

We purchased *Cloud Break* in November 2020 and decided to rent a swing mooring at Careel Bay for summer. The sheltered waters of Cowan Creek and the lower Hawkesbury River provide an excellent environment for shakedown trials. *Cloud Break* is a sloop with a furling head sail and in-mast furling main sail. At 15 m (50 ft), drawing 2.1 m, this boat is truly an easy cruising option. We are not quite sure what to do with five power winches, but it is nice to have two extra crew, Ms Auto Helm and Mr Bow Thruster! Carolyn and I now feel comfortable going into berths and picking up moorings.

The plan was always 'Find the Boat, Buy the Boat, Sail the Boat'. The first phase involved many years of dreaming, procrastination, spreadsheet analysis, and unflagging questions of boat owners on the RSAYS Quarterdeck. Choosing the contenders happened quickly, as the number of available boats seemed to thin out. Yacht brokers suggested to us that an unusually high percentage of yachts were

being purchased by first boat owners, who were not able to holiday overseas during the 2020 travel restrictions. We were lucky to have a couple of good options when interstate borders opened up and we were able to drive to NSW for inspections.

The second phase was the most challenging. Without great advice and support from our friends in the Squadron and sailing community (you know who you are!), it would have been difficult to commit to buying the boat. There is a large amount of uncertainty associated with buying a secondhand boat such as *Cloud Break*, and it's impossible to test all of the systems during trials and inspections. After going through the process for the first time we can now smile and accept that a lot of the risk just gets shifted into the maintenance plan.

Cloud Break is in very good condition for a 12-year-old vessel that has had a few owners. Commissioned at Dubai Yacht Club and sailed to Queensland, there are no signs of any hard work. The design has an open feel and it is amenable to the odd cocktail party. There are two electric heads and a separate shower room. The bunk room is amidships and is being configured to hold tools, spare parts and provisions. This allows the forward master cabin and two quarter berths to remain clear.

We made a decision to stay on *Cloud Break* while Avalon Beach was in COVID-19 lockdown and we felt comfortable with the independence that a large yacht with ample provisions can provide. The situation seemed like practice for hiding in some South Pacific bay, waiting for a weather window. In hindsight, we now know that the community at Avalon never had any more cases, as other Sydney suburbs became high risk areas.



As soon as restrictions were lifted, we cast off towards Lion Island, near Barrenjoey Lighthouse. What was supposed to be a test run and day sail became, "Oh bother, our engine just stopped, and won't restart." The prospect of riding the swells into the rocks was not in the passage plan, so we hoisted sails and returned to Careel Bay where we called for some assistance to return to our mooring. As with most mechanical issues the solution is obvious after it has been found. It seems that someone had dropped some tape into the fuel tank, which had become soft and gooey, and the blob then randomly lodged in the fuel line. It is fortunate that we were not trying to cross one of the infamous NSW sand bars.

The Australian East Coast has quite a number of RSAYS members on its shores. We have been fortunate to have the company of Keith and Angela Bates on *Club 56* who shared a lovely spot in Yeoman's Bay with us. The amazing Dwayne and Kelly Turpin also sailed into Pittwater to complete the delivery of *Nomad* to new owners. Rear Commodore Ian Roberts came over for a mini-delivery on *Pohono* and Chris Perry flew over to complete a sea trial on a slick little vessel that might shake up the RSAYS racing fleet. We miss our Squadron friends and the racing, but you should know that we packed some great memories to take with us.

The third phase has only just started. Our rough plan is to sail the boat for a decade, beginning with northern NSW during summer and extending into Queensland during winter 2021. We are not sure when *Cloud Break* will cruise into South Australian waters, but when it happens there will be a party.



Transport to the hospital courtesy of Sea Rescue

ON the evening of 5 February this year I set off in *Crusader* for what was planned to be a four or five week cruise to the West Coast of SA. However, an engine problem developed before I reached West Cape Bay making it unwise to continue to such a remote area, so I amended my plans and decided to explore Spencer Gulf instead.

I had driven to Melbourne in the week prior to my departure, and the condition for my return into SA was to have a COVID-19 test on Days 1, 5 and 12. The tests on Days 1 and 5 were done in Port Adelaide before I left, and I decided to attend a hospital in Cowell for the final test. I dropped anchor in Franklin Harbour a couple of days before the test was due, and then prepared to weather the strong northerlies and the forecast southerly change. When the harbour became

extremely choppy, it was unsafe to attempt to go ashore in my small inflatable with its 3 hp engine, and I became very concerned about my ability to attend the test on the required day.

A phone call to the local VMR Sea Rescue was my salvation, when the person who took the call turned out to be a former Squadron member who was keen to help, and collected me in the rescue vessel – a purpose built RIB with a 315 hp engine and top speed of 37 knots. I was given a high speed tour of the harbour as well as driven to the hospital.

Meanwhile, the very strong southerlies were forecast to continue for at least the next seven days and that, combined with other boat problems, made me decide to give up my extended cruising plans, put *Crusader* in the marina at Wallaroo, and come back to Adelaide by road until things improved. This should have been straightforward until I rang the estate agent who normally handles the marina bookings, only to be told that all the berths had now been sold and none were available to rent. His only suggestion was to log onto Gumtree and see if any were available directly from the private owners. Very fortunately, one suitable berth was listed, and I was able to contact the owner and book it for 14 days.

The ability to make many phone calls, search the internet, and arrange online banking was essential to this process, and I was very lucky to have good communication from my anchorage. On my previous trips to Wallaroo, arranging a berth a few days before arrival was easy. Sadly, this is no longer true.

FACILITIES MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

By Scott Mutton Chair, Infrastructure Advisory Panel

- The four items that stood out in the brainstorming sessions were:
- an upgrade to casual dining/bar areas around Jimmy's Bar to improve amenity, attract younger members and drive revenue growth;
 - improvements to Hardstands to increase amenity and membership;
 - an upgrade of facilities in the North East Corner aimed at improving utilisation for sport boat owners and increasing membership; and
 - new Commercial Buildings to improve revenue.

After consideration of all the ideas generated and other input the Infrastructure Advisory Panel drafted a Plan that was presented to the Management Committee of RSAYS Inc, the Board of RSAYS Limited and to the general membership at the December 2019 Quarterly Meeting. It has been endorsed by all three groups. The Plan is included as the centrespread in this Squadron Quarterly edition.

The intention is that the Plan be a document that is updated annually and that as projects are completed they are dropped off and replaced by new projects, or if over time the relevance of a project to the Squadron's future diminishes then the project may be dropped. The Plan is there as a tool to align the thinking of the Squadron's various governing groups and to inform the members of what the current priority is in infrastructure development.

The Five Year Facilities Master Plan is detailed on the next two pages