

Quarterdeck

It is nice to be proved wrong, although with a consolation. We expressed concern at the prospect of departing from the long-standing tradition of the Squadron participating in the traditional Easter activities at Port Vincent and, by implication, scepticism at the notion of transferring everything to Outer Harbor. After the first day the weather was beastly. At Port Vincent we would have been dragging all over the place and socialising with difficulty. The large numbers of happy people at the Squadron emphatically confirmed the success of the venture, and we join those who congratulate Bill Strangways, his Committee and all the others who made it such a success. The challenge now is to maintain the momentum to do it next year at Port Vincent, where there is a strong desire to provide a function to mark the seventieth year of the traditional Germein and Correll Trophies.

The Commodore drew to our attention a thought-provoking article in *The Australian* for 7 March 1998. This is entitled *Anaemic boards need new blood*, by David Uren. The topic was companies, but the same principles apply to the Squadron. He wrote, 'The problem with corporate governance in Australia is that the gene pool is too small. It is not just a matter of appointing more women to boards, although that is an important first step. ... The last thing you want to do is to make a sort of Noah's Ark, with seats allocated to every stakeholder or minority group. What is needed is to cast a wider net among people who would bring different points of view to the challenges of corporate direction, whether through their experience, creativity or intelligence.'

Uren quoted a study identifying five key areas for boards to concentrate on. A board should provide a reality check on strategic plans, with particular reference to effectiveness. 'Most strategies that fail do so, not because the concept was wrong, but because implementation was poor.' The second responsibility is to monitor financial performance, both current and over a long-term perspective. The board has a clear role in guiding and evaluating the chief executive. It must ensure a

high standard of both legal and ethical behaviour, and, finally it must cope with crisis and risk management. 'The selection of board members is the first key to good performance.'

In brief, these are concepts for every Member to consider as we come to elect the first Squadron Management Committee under our new constitution. At the very least, we hope to see more diversity, and in particular that women Members will play a more prominent role in the Squadron. We are overdue for our first Lady Flag Officer.

An aspect of traditional Easters was that this was the only occasion when the Squadron raced and cruised as a *Squadron*. The inaugural Cruise-in-Company, led by Commodore Jamie Cowell, balanced nicely temporary abandonment of the old ways for something new. Yachts have often cruised together. Older Members will recall *Gip* (Taylors), *Cooroyba* (Ulletts) and *Spindrift* (Attertons) moving from place to place with large collections of children and dogs. Others out at the same time, such as ourselves in *Kareelah*, would often join them for very happy congregations, like New Year's Eve in Spalding Cove, Bill Jolly's birthday or big mobs in Reevesby Lagoon and Whalers Bay. What made this year's event different was that it was organised by the Squadron, and it is another example of the excellent work done by a succession of enthusiastic Cruising Committees. We await with interest similar ventures, with a plea that they should be as well recorded as was done in this issue by Allan Sinclair.

At its meeting on 14 May 1998, the Squadron Management Committee directed that as a matter of convention, the Manager, Mr DCB Harries, in future be designated as General Manager.

We thank Jack Gamlin for the menu of the Centenary Dinner with its collection of notable signatures.

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