

Dear Members,

I wanted to start by thanking our families, sailors, and volunteers for an amazing sailing year.

As a community we have completed some incredible events, the InterIslander, the South Island Traveller Series, the North Island and South Island Camps, the Kohi Girls regatta, the Sir Peter Blake regatta, the Auckland Champs, the Auckland Winter Sprint Series and the upcoming Nationals. We have also hosted the North Island and South Island clinics and May Teams clinic.

An enormous amount of effort goes into organizing these events and I would like to again thank all the clubs, the families and volunteers that have made these many events so enjoyable and memorable for our sailors.

As a national committee we attempt to balance on one side the competitive aspects of the fleet and providing support to our top sailors to compete internationally, and on the other side our ambitions to cultivate a love of sailing in as many young people as possible in an environment that builds respect and friendship. We would like to grow the fleet, especially in the regions and with our female sailors, we also want to ensure sailors find their time in optimists enjoyable with natural pathways to other sailing classes and hopefully a lifelong interest in sailing.

In the first area I am happy to report that NZ optimist sailors have successfully participated in a number of international regattas over the last year, and we have a strong development pipeline for our up and coming young sailors. Our competitive sailors have participated in IODA events in Spain, Greece and Abu Dhabi as well as the Renaissance Junior Gold Cup in Bermuda. The Development Teams attended the Noumea Ludik Cup Championship in October. We have had sailors attend regattas where the emphasis has been on making new friends and having fun on the water which included the Polynesian Regatta in Tahiti and the International Friendship Regatta in Japan.

Our challenge as a committee is how to better support the second area of bringing more sailors into the fleet and ensuring they stay sailing post our fleet. To this end we continue to work on providing great guidance materials and improve the diversity of perspectives around our committee table. I personally believe we need to consider how to make the sport less financially and time onerous for new parents. This may mean shorter regattas and shorter races with more focus on the fun.

As I mentioned last year an important ongoing workstream of the committee is improving the institutional knowledge and continuity beyond just the current committee members and I am very happy with the progress that our two tireless admin staff, Veronica and Sarah have made in building a robust document library and world class set of educational resources on our website. In addition to thanking Sarah and Veronica, I would also like to thank the OWNZ trust which has provided significant financial support to these endeavors.

I would also like to thank the many coaches around the country headed up by Sam Mackay and the enormous efforts they have put into supporting our sailors. As an association we recognize supporting our coaches is key to supporting our sailors.

I am also pleased to report that our membership has grown by 84 members this year to date. We currently have registered 98 in green fleet, 113 in open and 24 in white fleet.

I would like to welcome Chris Xiong (RAYC), Matt Dunn (WBC) and Doug Sommerville (HSC) who have joined our committee this year. I would also like to thank Nick Gaites who resigned from the committee earlier this year for his service both on the committee and to the fleet. We are also currently looking for more regional members, preferably female, for the committee. Please contact me after the meeting if interested.

In closing, we have a busy year ahead (including the upcoming nationals), so I wish everyone smooth sailing.

Kinds Regards

Matt Harker
President – NZIODA