

NZIODA AGM 2025

Dear Members

I'd like to begin by thanking all our families, sailors, coaches, and volunteers for another exceptional year in the Optimist sailing community.



Over the past season, we've completed an exciting and busy calendar of events across the country. These included the InterIslander, the South Island Traveller Series, the Kohi Girls Regatta, the Sir Peter Blake Regatta, the Auckland Champs, The North and South Island Champs, Team Racing, the Team Selection Trial, and the Auckland Winter Sprint Series.

Our clinics—such as the May Teams Clinic and the regional North and South Island Clinics—continued to offer fantastic development opportunities for our sailors.

As always, our national committee seeks to balance two key goals: fostering competitive excellence and international representation on one hand, and growing a deep, inclusive, and enjoyable experience for young sailors on the other.

In terms of international competition, it has been a remarkable year. Our sailors have proudly represented New Zealand at IODA events around the world. In 2024, the Optimist World Championship was held in Argentina, and we had strong representation at the European Championship in Italy. North American Championships in Puerto Rico and the Asian and Oceanian Championship in Hong Kong. Our Development Team's planned trip to New Caledonia was relocated to Australia, where they competed successfully and gained valuable experience.

We have teams selected for upcoming regattas including the 2025 Optimist Worlds in Slovenia, the Europeans in Turkey, and the North American Championships (TBC). We also continue to support cultural and friendship-based international events such as the International Friendship Regatta in Japan, the cultural exchange in Qingdao and the Renaissance Junior Gold Cup in Bermuda, with strong Kiwi representation confirmed again for 2025.

Domestically, we've also made strides to grow participation and engagement. This year, we introduced several changes to Green Fleet with a renewed focus on fun, safety, and skills development. We've adapted the Green Fleet race format to be shorter, provide more variety and fun, making it less intimidating for newcomers and helping to reduce the time and financial commitments required from parents. We're working to make the transition from Learn-to-Sail to competitive sailing smoother and more rewarding.

I'd like to give special thanks to Veronica and Sarah for their tireless work in building and maintaining strong organisational infrastructure. Their efforts continue to strengthen NZIODA's foundation and ensure knowledge and systems are carried forward each year.

I'd also like to sincerely thank the OWNZ Trust for their ongoing support—both financially and in spirit—which has made so much of our development work possible.

A special mention and heartfelt thanks go to Barry for his outstanding service as NZIODA Secretary. Barry is retiring this year, and his contribution over many years has been instrumental in keeping the association running smoothly. We are incredibly grateful for everything he has done behind the scenes to support our sailors and volunteers.

We'll continue working to communicate the value of NZIODA membership more clearly and to find ways to streamline processes for families and clubs.

On the committee front, I would like to acknowledge the enormous amount of work that goes on behind the scenes. I warmly welcome any new members joining us tonight and extend heartfelt thanks to those who are stepping down. We continue to encourage regional and gender diversity on the committee, and I welcome anyone interested in contributing to reach out after the meeting.

In closing, I want to recognise the incredible work of our coaching community, whose efforts are essential in supporting our sailors both on and off the water. And finally, thank you again to our sailors and their families—your passion and commitment are the heartbeat of NZIODA.

We look forward to an exciting year ahead, with Nationals just around the corner and a full calendar of clinics, regattas, and international events to come.

Kind regards,

Matt Harker

President – NZIODA