Batemans Bay Sailing Club Inc.

Off-the-Beach Sailing at Coila Lake

Emergency Management Plan

Revision 9, 11 Sep 2025

Context

Off-the-Beach yachting races are held at Coila Lake, near Tuross Head NSW, during the warmer months of the year, typically September to May. The races are governed by rules as defined in *The Racing Rules of Sailing* of Australian Sailing and its Special Regulations Part 2 for Off the Beach Boats.

Attention is drawn to rules 1 (Safety) and 4 (Decision to race) of the *Racing Rules of Sailing 2025-2028* and to regulation 1.02 (Responsibilities) of Australian Sailing's *Special Regulations Part 2 for Off the Beach Boats*.

Boats participating in these races are multi-hull and monohull vessels, and each boat is crewed by one, two or (occasionally) three people. All crew wear lifejackets. The boats in general have no source of power other than the wind, though some may carry oars or paddles. They are launched from the foreshore area east of the Kyla Park Recreation Hall.

The racing is normally assisted by two powered vessels:

- the Support Boat, a 4.4m rigid inflatable boat with 30hp outboard motor. The primary function of this boat is to assist sailors in difficulty.
- the Start Boat, which is a 3.75m aluminium boat with 15hp outboard motor. The primary function of this boat is to enable the Race Officer of the day to conduct the racing.

Boat owners should note that neither of these boats is equipped to salvage a catamaran or dinghy in all conditions. Their focus will be on assisting people in difficulty, so boat owners may have to abandon their vessels and return to salvage them at a later date.

This Emergency Plan takes advantage of the natural features of Coila Lake. It is an enclosed body of water about 4km long by 2km maximum width, typically 3-5m deep with benignly sloping shores in most areas. Therefore, an uncontrolled yacht, or a person floating in the water, will be washed ashore by wind and wavelets within a reasonable time.

Aim

This Emergency Plan aims to define an efficient and predictable response to situations of risk, which is understood by racing crew and support crew.

On-Shore Emergencies

In an emergency situation where the affected person(s) are safely ashore, such as a heart attack or broken limb, 000 should be called by mobile phone. The location is known as the Kyla Park Recreation Hall in the Kyla Park Sporting Precinct off Hector McWilliam Drive, Tuross Head NSW 2537.

If the injury is life-threatening, Marine Rescue Tuross Moruya should also be called on 02 4473 8111. They may be able to attend this location with resuscitation equipment quicker than an ambulance.

On-the-Water Emergencies

In the course of racing, a number of mishaps may occur which do not constitute emergencies. For example, yachts may collide, capsize or run aground, and in most cases the racing crew will be able to extricate or right the boat without outside assistance and continue racing. Typically, on observing a yacht in such a situation, the Support Boat will motor over to check that the crew has the situation in hand and, if not required elsewhere, stand by until the yacht is again underway. If the yacht crew is not successful, they may request and receive assistance from the Support Boat such as help in righting their yacht. This still does not constitute an emergency situation.

However it is key to note that the yachts are the visible objects which will attract the attention of the Support Boat, as well as offering flotation for the crew to rest on. Therefore, racing crew should attempt to stay with their boat wherever possible.

An Emergency Response will be triggered when the Support Boat approaches a yacht and determines that either:

- a member of the crew has sustained a serious injury; or
- a member of the crew is not on the yacht, and cannot be readily seen.

In either of these cases, the Support Boat will promptly advise the Race Officer by radio. The Race Officer will then:

- abandon any race that may be in progress at the time (flag N on Start Boat with bursts of three sounds of the horn); and
- return to the Kyla Park foreshore and designate a person (who may be the Race Officer or another) to act as a Communication Person for the Emergency Response.

Serious Injury

The method of handling the injured person cannot be prescriptive as it will depend on the nature of the injury. However:

- the Support Boat will transport the injured person to shore; and
- the Communication Person will call 000 for assistance, as for an Onshore Emergency (paragraph 3 above).

Search for Missing Crew

The search procedure is more prescriptive, as described below, because a consistent response by both racing crew and searching crew is more likely to lead to early success.

The searching team will initially act as follows.

- The Support Boat will commence a search pattern as described below.
- The Communication Person will:
  - contact the Tuross Moruya unit of Marine Rescue NSW by phoning their Base number 02 4473 8111, and advise them of the situation. If no response is received call their Duty number 0455 837 192 or Unit Commander number 0427 743 128;
  - by talking to the competing sailors, determine a best estimate of where the missing crew's boat capsized, and radio that best estimate to the Support Boat.
- If sufficient crew are available, the Start Boat will set off to assist the Support Boat in searching.

Marine Rescue Tuross Moruya will follow its usual practices and procedures on receipt of the distress call, including liaising with any other relevant authority.

Search Pattern

If a member of crew has lost contact with the boat, he/she should attempt to swim to the nearest shore. On reaching the shore, if able to walk, the person should walk along the shoreline towards the boat, as if to meet up with the boat when it washes ashore. The search procedure will assume that is what the person will have done if able.

However the search procedure will first attempt to eliminate the other and more serious alternative, namely that the missing crew is injured and unable to swim to shore.

- The search pattern will commence from the point where the Support Boat has met the disabled yacht and determined that a crew member is missing.
- The Support Boat will proceed upwind along the line of drift of the disabled yacht, looking for an incapacitated person in the water who would be expected to follow the same line of drift.

If the Support Boat reaches the point which is its best estimate of where the missing crew's boat capsized, without finding anybody in the water, it will assume the person has swum to shore. The Support Boat will turn to the nearest shore then follow the shoreline towards the disabled boat, looking for the person stationary on the shore or walking towards the boat as above.

If the Start Boat is able to join the search, it will proceed as follows.

- It will proceed downwind, along the line of drift, until it meets the disabled boat, looking for an incapacitated person in the water.
- After reaching the disabled boat, the Start Boat will turn to the shore opposite to that which the Support Boat has been scanning, and search that shore.
- When level with the point which is its best estimate of where the missing crew's boat capsized, the Start Boat will turn in to the line of drift and repeat the cycle.

If there is not a Start Boat able to join the search, the Support Boat will search the second shore as above.

These search cycles will be repeated by the Support Boat and the Start Boat, widening the search cycle each time, until either:

- the missing person is found; or
- Marine Rescue Tuross Moruya arrive and take charge of the search operation.

Communication

Both Support Boat and Start Boat will inform the Communication Person of their progress, and the Communication Person will relay information to and from Marine Rescue Tuross Moruya.