

Closing Speech – Hansa 2025 World & Para Championships

Good afternoon everyone.

While it's hard to thank everyone, it's easy to begin.

Because I have to start by thanking you — the competitors.

You've come from all over the world, from all over Australia — bringing with you a wide range of experience, abilities, and stories. And yet every single one of you leaves here stronger. Stronger for the experience, stronger for the friendships, stronger in spirit. You've reminded us all what this sport is really about.

To all competitors who have competed this week — prepared, focused, and tried their hardest:

No matter what result you have achieved... you have won.

You have won our hearts.

You have inspired us.

You have shown us your huge spirit.

You have risen above adversity.

You have amazed us with your sailing talent — and just as importantly, with your determination to do your best.

You are truly inspiring.

You've raced hard. You've raced fair. You've waited out the wind and sailed in everything Pittwater could throw at you. You've adapted, you've encouraged each other, and you've lifted this regatta with your courage and camaraderie. Whether this was your first international event or your tenth, whether you finished on the podium or simply crossed the finish line — you are part of something special.

And tonight, we celebrate not just participation, but excellence. We recognise the World Champions who have emerged over this past week — sailors who have shown

extraordinary skill, determination, and composure on the water. Congratulations to each of you. You've earned a place in the history of this class — and in our hearts as champions of the Hansa spirit.

To the staff of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club — I take my hat off to you. Your professionalism and warmth have lifted this club to another level. And at the helm of that team is our General Manager, Jon Harkness. Jon, thank you for your leadership, your steadiness, and for guiding your team through a major international event with professionalism. You've made us proud.

Our incredible staff — from Operations, Admin, Hospitality, the Sailing Office, and our hardworking Waterfront crew — thank you. People like Justin and Michael, who've supported this event for more than two weeks, and who do it with a quiet calm and a steady hand. To Kylie Brown and the operations team, whose months of preparation laid the foundation for everything that followed — you've done an extraordinary job.

And of course, this event didn't start one week ago — the planning meetings began 18 months ago, led with patience and persistence by Julia Hornsby, and supported by a committee that worked tirelessly to overthink, rethink, and fine-tune every element. David Staley who acted as liaison and secretary Thank you.

For those I haven't already met I am Rob McClelland, Commodore of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club. If we haven't crossed paths until now, I can only hope you've felt welcomed and at home here — because that's exactly what we want this club to be: a home for sailors from all walks of life, from every corner of the globe.

To our officials — from World Sailing Hannah Helen Cath Sarah, Thank you, to our brilliant PRO Megan Kensington from New Zealand and our race officers Lou Hutton and Robert Ridley — thank you for running the on-water part of this regatta so smoothly and professionally. Your experience and your calm made all the difference.

A special thank you to our Sailing Office, headed up by Nick Elliott with Andrew Phillips who did an extraordinary job keeping all of the on-water activity — 50-odd races! — running smoothly, safely, and with professionalism. Nick and Andrew your cool heads and deep experience made this look easy. We all know it wasn't.

Our communications team lead by Brendan Orouke and the fabulous Down Under Sail team for all their fabulous images. Amazing amazing amazing.

And now to the heartbeat of this regatta — our volunteers.

Over 80 volunteers.

Under the leadership of Russell Murphy as volunteer CoOrdinator and ably assisted by Michael Lockley, Allen Stormon, Phil Burgess, Glen Powers, Alan Reece, Shaw Russett, Alice Lydement, Di Storey and our fabulous Activities RC Verity Powers and team— and of of course Not to mention the Waterside Workers Union.

You your teams measured boats, greeted sailors, docked them in and out, bailed boats, weighed boats, helped competitors in and out of boats — and did it all with grace, with good humour, and with that ever-present smile. You didn't just go the extra mile — you went ten. And you did it day after day.

Your effort has been unbelievable. The club will never be the same again.

If you want proof of the impact — just look at the competitors' faces. The smiles say it all. The words they've shared with me throughout this week — their gratitude, their joy — are payment in spades for the work you've all done, and for the experience you've helped create.

And if you've felt anything like I have — you'll know this will be one of the most memorable events of your life.

“Ladies and gentlemen, before we conclude with the prizegiving, I'd like to take a moment for for some very special recognitions.”

“Firstly, could I please invite Julia Hornsby to the stage.”

“Julia has been the driving force behind the planning and delivery of the 2025 Hansa World Championships at RPAYC. Her leadership throughout the entire process – from the earliest stages of planning right through to the final race – has been outstanding.”

“What’s more, Julia’s ability to bring people together – from Sailability, the Hansa Class Association, World Sailing and many other partners – has been a key reason this event has been such a success. She’s worked with professionalism, grace, and passion every step of the way.”

“Now, could I please ask Chris Mitchell Jackie Kay to come forward.”

“Chris, we are truly honoured to have you here with us this week. You are not just a guest of the regatta – you are its foundation.”

“As the founder of Hansa Yachts and the designer of the Hansa class boats, you have created something truly extraordinary. Your vision and engineering skill have delivered a fleet of beautifully simple, safe, and accessible yachts – and in doing so, you’ve opened the door for people of all abilities to experience the thrill and joy of sailing.”

Behind every great initiative, there is often someone, usually a woman, quietly ensuring its success. Jackie you have been that person—steadfast, thoughtful, and immensely capable.

As the guiding force behind the founding of Sailability, and the one who brought clarity and order to what must have felt like a million moving parts, your contribution has been nothing short of remarkable and you were previously awarded an AM in recognition for this.

Your work is widely recognised and deeply appreciated. On behalf of all of us—thank you.

“Chris and Jackie on behalf of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, I am proud to present this special award – in recognition of the pioneering design of the Hansa class, your lifelong commitment to sailing without barriers, and your profound impact on the lives of sailors around the world.”

So finally — to all of you:

To the competitors, your families and supporters,

To the volunteers, the officials, and everyone who gave their time, their talent, and their heart —

Thank you.

Sail safe. Travel well.

And please — come back again.

Rob McClelland

Commodore