

## Opening Speech – Hansa & Para World Championships

*Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club*

Your Excellency, the Honourable **Margaret Beazley**, Governor of New South Wales, distinguished guests, sailors, families, volunteers, and friends,

On behalf of the **Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club**, it is my absolute pleasure to welcome you all to the **2025 Hansa & Para World Championships**.

What a magnificent sight it is to see **over 195 sailors from 17 nations** gathered here today, ready to take on the waters of Pittwater. Some of you have travelled **over 20,000 kilometres**, truly embodying the spirit of adventure and dedication that defines our sport.

For many, this maybe your first time in Australia, and I can assure you that you'll find a warm welcome here. Whether it's our **enthusiastic volunteers**, our **dedicated staff**, or your **fellow competitors**, we are all here to ensure that this championship is both memorable and enjoyable.

Now, for those of you who haven't met me yet, **my name is Robert McClelland, and I have the privilege of being the Commodore of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club.** It is an honour to welcome you all to our club, which has a rich history of hosting world-class sailing events, and we are thrilled to be hosting the **Hansa & Para World Championships** this year.

This event is a celebration of **freedom, independence, and inclusivity**—principles that are at the very heart of Hansa sailing **and fundamental to our Club.** The Class has opened the doors of our sport to thousands of people, allowing sailors of all abilities to compete **on a level playing field.**

Of course, none of this would have been possible without one man's vision—**Chris Mitchell.** Chris is the **founder, designer, and driving force** behind the Hansa class, and his dedication has resulted in over **3,800 Hansa boats sailing in 38 countries,** introducing approximately **200,000 people to sailing every year.**

**Chris's** tenacity, innovation, and the friendships he has built around the world have shaped the success of this class and, in turn, made this regatta possible.

To our international visitors—**welcome to Pittwater!** This is one of the most spectacular sailing venues in the world, and we hope you enjoy not just the competition, but also the camaraderie, the local cuisine (perhaps an Aussie meat pie or two), and the unique experiences that Australia has to offer.

And speaking of distances, it's worth remembering just how vast Australia is. **Sydney to Perth** is further than flying from **London to Istanbul or New York to Los Angeles**. Even some of our Aussie competitors have had quite a journey to get here!

But no matter how far you've come, whether it's from the other side of the country or the other side of the world, we're all here for the same reason—to enjoy **tight, competitive racing and the friendships that come with it**.

A huge thank you to our **volunteers, race officials, and club members and staff**, who have worked tirelessly to make this event possible. Your efforts ensure that the true spirit of sailing—**freedom, inclusion, and fierce but friendly competition**—thrives here at RPAYC.

Now, it is my great privilege to introduce someone who has dedicated her career to **leadership, service, and making a difference in our community**—our official guest of honour, our club Patron, **Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales.**

As the 39th Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency has been a **tireless advocate for inclusion, opportunity, and the pursuit of excellence.** Throughout her distinguished career in law and public service, she has championed fairness and equality—values that are deeply embedded in the very spirit of Hansa sailing.

It is a great honour to have Her Excellency here with us today to officially open the **2025 Hansa & Para World Championships.**

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming **Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley.**