

The Chairman
Sydney Hobart (RYCT) Committee
Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania
Marieville Esplanade
Sandy Bay
Tasmania 7005

Thursday, February 18, 1999

Dear Mr R Badenach,
1998 Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race

The Radio Communications Committee of the RYCT, having received a number of statements, and observations from Radio Operators who were on duty during the Sydney-Hobart Race, wish to place the following points on record for your consideration and submission to the Review Committee as you see fit.

The Sailing Instructions and Rules published in the Notice of Race are lacking in detail concerning radiocommunication equipment and procedures. Total reliance is placed on the AYF Rules, which are also sadly lacking in this area.

Many yachts suffered radio equipment and battery failure. Reports from a radio surveyor, David Hughes, who was called to repair radio installations after the race, indicate that the radio equipment installation on those yachts was not of an acceptable standard. Reliance on the Australian Yachting Federation (AYF) Rules which states that: "Radio transceivers should be checked annually", is questionable. There is no "standard" to which pleasure craft are surveyed. The AYF set standards in many areas, but sadly, in the case of radio communication installations, the requirements are woefully inadequate. Radio equipment, compared to other items of yacht equipment, is given scant attention in the Australian Yachting Federation Rules.

The reference, under Rules, to "the prescriptions and safety regulations of the Australian Yachting Federation (AYF)", and that "A yacht shall comply with Addendum A AYF Special Regulations Category 1." has little significance when Addendum A states only that:

Marine transceivers shall be fitted with the frequencies/channels specified....

An HF transceiver (shall be) permanently installed.

A marine (VHF) radio transceiver should be provided with a masthead antenna and co-axial feeder with not more than 40% power loss.

An emergency antenna shall be provided when the regular antenna depends upon the mast.

Radio transceivers shall be checked annually.