



PRESS RELEASE

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Sandringham Yacht Club offers easy 'try before you buy' schemes

Sandringham Yacht Club (SYC) has stepped up its campaign to get more bodies on boats of all kinds in Victoria, by looking at the bigger picture and offering ingenious ways of enticing people onto the water without it costing an arm and a leg.

It can cost a bomb to join any sporting club, and for newcomers, joining and annual fees can be daunting when you are not sure if you will stay in the sport for the long run, or even in the short term.

'Sandy', as it is known to locals, has found an uncomplicated and affordable way to help potential new members, both children and adults, to try sailing and the Club's facilities without having to immediately take up full membership. It provides 'Day' and 'Season' passes at a minimal cost, allowing users to sail and to use its clubhouse facilities post-race.

Day Pass membership allows for up to a dozen uses and entitles the user to a reduction in the nomination fee when converting to annual membership. The first six days cost \$15 per sail (Thursday Twilight Sailing – no charge) and the remaining six days are \$35 per sail. Should users wish to continue, they will need to become an annual member. On average, this successful scheme has produced 700-800 annual users to-date.

Proving just as successful is the Season Pass, a one-time introductory pathway option for those new to sailing, or transitioning from the Club's Youth Academy or the Day Pass scheme. It is an ideal way to have your cake and eat it too.

Users are entitled to one year's unlimited access to all Club Marine SYC Boating Academy courses, a card allowing access to: club racing, member facilities on the days of your courses and crewing days, a mentoring/buddy system, personalised service, and a complimentary 'Discover Sailing' experience for four people. At the end of the 12 month period, the nomination fee is waived should you transition to 'Crew' membership.

SYC's Training and Development Manager, Michah Shuwalow says, "The Season Pass is doing everything that we set out to achieve – developing the students' skills and knowledge while increasing the Club's racing participation."

Shuwalow adds wryly: "We've also bucked the trend of sailors being 'male, pale and stale.'"

One of many contented customers making the transition to full membership this season is Patricio Sepulveda, whose Pass had led to buying into a J24.

"I got my Season Pass last year," Sepulveda says. "My only sailing background was windsurfing. Before October last year, I had never been at the helm of a keel boat or a dinghy, but I have a friend who sails, so we sailed a bit on his father's boat. I enjoyed it so much, I decided I wanted a boat, but I had no idea about which boat or how to do it.

"I told my friend, 'find me a boat, and I'll buy it' - so he found one, a J24 (he named it Baile De Luna which translates to 'Moondance') – and now I own a boat! Then I told my wife, 'We

have a boat now, so I need to learn to sail, so I can take us out,'” Sepulveda remembers, laughing.

“I went to Sandringham to see about lessons and keeping my boat there (it is now kept on the Club’s large hardstand) and I saw about their Season Pass and got one. From September to December I did three keelboat, two dinghy and one radio operator’s course there!

“In the first week of January, I skippered my J24 at the Nationals (held at SYC, he finished 19th with a best result of 13th) – I would not have been able to do that without the courses at Sandringham Yacht Club,” he says proudly.

“The J24 community at the Club is very close – I made a lot of friends. On the water, everyone is very supportive,” he ends.

Sandy’s Day and Season passes lead to very affordable membership options. Interested parties can easily buy a Day Pass instantly, using the Club’s app – search for ‘Member Point’ – where you can also find membership, race information, sign on and off when racing, update member details, club news and alerts and more – all in once place. See more here: <https://syc.com.au/smartphone-app/> or just visit or phone the Club.

Discover Sailing – the easy way

Over the last five years Sandringham Yacht Club has hosted in excess of 3600 visitors at its Discover Sailing days - 1200 alone attended the most recent one in November, up 450 from 2016 - eclipsing the previous record by 200.

That is approximately 1300 trips/rides utilising five large keelboats, five J24’s, three of the Club’s Beneteaus, six Pacers, four Stand Up Paddleboards, four large powerboats and two RIBS, equalling 100 volunteers and 270 lifejackets!

Discover Sailing days is the perfect way to test the water. It costs nothing, you meet likeminded people and the Club is a friendly one. If you find boating to your taste, the next step is made easy with the Day or Season Pass options.

Of course the beneficial flow-on effect of these programs is that they are giving boat owners more crew options and more competition. While some will buy their own boats, others will be happier coming to the Club to crew for others, equating to a wide talent pool for both dinghy and keel boat sailing via the Club’s crew register.

For further information, please contact Richard Hewett, SYC CEO at: ceo@syc.com.au or phone: (03) 9599 0999 visit the SYC website at: www.syc.com.au



Kids enjoying a morning on the water off SYC - SYC pic



Learning on the Club's Beneteaus - SYC pic



Patricio Sepulveda's Baile De Luna on the race track - Luis Ferreiro pic

Di Pearson/SYC media

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