

# **DRAFT Minutes of Yachting New Zealand's 71<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting**

**Held at Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron and online**

**10am on Saturday, 15 November 2025**

**Present:** Debbie Aldred, Steve Armitage, Jenny Armstrong, Murray Brown, Kyle Bryant, John Butcher, Nick Gillies, Raynor Haagh, Ingrid Harder, Angela Jordan, Murray Kelway, Stephen Knights, Greg Knowles, Evan Langley, Cameron Le Sueur, Anne Marett, Gill Moore, Sarah Morgan, Mike Pigneguy, Nigel Richards, Colin Rickett, Andrew Robertson, Dominique Roos, Eduan Roos, Garry Scarborough, Mark Sigglekow, Colin Sykes, Alasdair Tarry, Alisa Torgersen, Barry Ward.

**Online:** Sarah Bacon, Dean Barker, Harold Bennett, Graham Berry, David Brandts-Giesen, Nik Burfoot, Owen Cambridge, Ian Gardine, David Gillies, Nick Hanson, Nicola Harrison, Vaughan Hunt, Luke Jenkins, Irene Muirhead, James Quaid, Liz Schoff, Mike Smithies, Helen Spencer, David Stringer, Bridget Winstone-Kight.

## **1.0 Welcome**

Yachting New Zealand Board Chair Greg Knowles welcomed attendees to the 2025 Annual General Meeting, introducing Yachting New Zealand board members and staff. He thanked the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron for hosting the AGM and confirmed that a quorum had been reached. Knowles welcomed Yachting New Zealand's new chief executive, Steve Armitage, who was attending his first AGM in the role. Doug Elder was appointed as independent adjudicator to ensure that voting during the AGM was conducted fairly and transparently. Knowles was appointed to exercise the proxy vote for Charteris Yacht Club.

## **2.0 Apologies**

Knowles noted that apologies had been received from Des Brennan, John Faire, Jenna Hansen, Reuben Miller and Jim Park.

## **3.0 Obituaries**

Knowles paid tribute to those members who had passed away during the previous 12 months: Gary Craig, Mark Gibbs, Rob Heath, Peter Lester, Jim Mackay, Matt Mitchell, Monty Montgomery, Tim Moriarty, Shaun Oliver, Don Topliss, and Mike Webster.

## **4.0 Chair's address**

Knowles thanked members for attending the AGM and expressed the value of returning to an in-person meeting after several years online. He highlighted Armitage's early focus on engaging with and being open to feedback from across the wider sector. Knowles also noted David Abercrombie's departure in June after 14 years of service.

He outlined the strategic refresh following the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, including a comprehensive review of Yachting New Zealand's strategy, with input from Sport New Zealand and other stakeholders. The renewed vision aims to grow sailing and boating, inspire more New Zealanders to participate, and emphasise accessibility, relevance, and inclusivity. Knowles reaffirmed that clubs remain the sport's backbone, with strengthened pathways from grassroots to elite levels. He also noted the reshaping of membership services and the regional development manager programme to provide greater value and support.

On high performance, Knowles discussed ongoing ambitions at Olympic and world levels, particularly after two medals at Paris 2024. He reported on Project Arotake, the independent review led by Kereyn Smith, noting that over 50 interviews were conducted, all recommendations accepted, and an action plan was being implemented. He also acknowledged the establishment of the Athlete Leadership Group (ALG) and the High-Performance Advisory Group (HPAG) over the past 12 months.

Knowles addressed integrity and wellbeing issues, including challenges raised with the Sport Integrity Commission. He confirmed that Yachting New Zealand is fully cooperating with the investigation and has already taken steps to strengthen culture and support systems, with initiatives such as a new People, Wellbeing and Performance Lead, and a continued focus on fairness, respect, inclusion, safety, and care.

He noted that Yachting New Zealand has retained the Sport New Zealand Governance Mark and remains in a strong financial position to execute its strategy.

Knowles concluded by thanking the board for its commitment, acknowledging outgoing board member Jenna Hansen for her significant contributions, and expressing gratitude to sailors, parents, volunteers, and club members.

## **5.0 Chief executive's address**

Armitage opened by thanking the Yachting New Zealand board and staff for their work in preparing the AGM, and he acknowledged clubs for attending both online and in person. He stated that it is a privilege to step into the CEO role and lead the organisation through its next stage, noting that relationships with clubs have not always been in the best health and that a renewed focus on serving and listening to clubs is required.

He emphasised that his time is best spent in the community, engaging directly with members and hearing their views. Armitage outlined plans to spend three days in Christchurch next week before visiting other parts of the country. A key focus will be on membership and ensuring Yachting New Zealand's value proposition aligns with club needs and affiliation fees.

Armitage drew on his experience leading Hospitality New Zealand to highlight the parallels with clubs as pseudo-hospitality enterprises, noting his intention to explore ways to help clubs strengthen in this area. He stressed that supporting club success is as important as maintaining top-level sailing performance.

He also highlighted the importance of broader engagement with regions to understand the factors impacting yacht clubs and the sport, underlining the need for an evolution that aligns with club requirements.

In closing, Armitage expressed his enthusiasm for working with clubs, elevating their impact through storytelling, and building stronger connections across the New Zealand yachting community.

## **5.0 Confirmation of minutes**

*It was proposed that the minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting on 12 November 2024 be accepted.*

## **6.0 Reports**

### **6.1 Chair's report - taken as read**

### **6.2 Chief executive's report - taken as read**

### **6.3 Financial report**

Audit and Risk Committee member Nik Burfoot reported that Yachting New Zealand recorded an overall surplus of \$412,000 for the year ending June 2025, compared to a deficit of \$476,000 in 2024. The surplus was primarily due to the timing of cash flows and grants in the high-performance area.

Participation and development showed a surplus of \$22,000 on revenue of \$1.47 million, up from a surplus of \$18,000 on revenue of \$1.42 million in 2024, with the accounts balancing overall except for high-performance variances across the Olympic cycle.

Burfoot recommended the reappointment of HLB Mann Judd as auditors for 2026.

In discussion, Andrew Robertson (Milford Cruising Club) queried the reported loss during the Olympic campaign and how the shortfall was covered. Burfoot explained that the current surplus offsets this expenditure, noting that Olympic years involve significant cash outflows, while grant income is spread across the year. Knowles emphasised that member funds are never used to cover high-performance costs, as Sport New Zealand funding for the four-year Olympic cycle is ring-fenced and requires board approval for any use.

Robertson also sought clarification on the cost of member services training, and Knowles advised that he would provide that information subsequently.

### **6.4 Annual report**

*It was proposed that the 2024/2025 Annual Report be accepted.*

Garry Scarborough (RNZYS)/Colin Sykes (Ponsonby Cruising Club)

Carried

## **7.0 Appointment of auditors**

*It was proposed that HLB Mann Judd be appointed as auditors for the coming year.*

Sykes/Mike Pigneguy (Gulf Harbour Yacht Club)

Carried

## **8.0 Affiliation fees**

### **8.1 Club affiliation fee**

Mark Sigglekow (Devonport Yacht Club) raised the issue of the club affiliation fee increase, which had been a concern at the previous AGM, and asked what action had been taken over the past year. Knowles acknowledged that the issue had not yet been addressed and stated that a comprehensive review of the affiliation model was now required.

Armitage confirmed that the review is a priority, emphasising the need to demonstrate value and provide clarity on the application of fees, and noted that clubs would be closely involved in the process.

Knights queried whether the member services surplus of \$22,000 could offset a proposed fee increase. Knowles explained that membership levies account for less than half of Yachting New Zealand's income, and that variations in grant funding and other costs impact the organisation's ability to deliver programmes and services.

Robertson sought clarification on the funding of the regional development manager programme and the broader use of affiliation fees. Knowles explained that affiliation fees contribute to personnel, premises, overheads, and general operational costs.

Gill Moore (Hobsonville Yacht Club) and Sykes expressed concern that little progress had been made over the past year regarding affiliation fees.

*It was proposed that the Yachting New Zealand club affiliation fee for the 2026-2027 season will be the club affiliation fee for 2025-2026 plus an increase of the annual New Zealand government Consumers Price Index (CPI) as of 30 June 2025 (2.7%).*

- *From \$32.20 plus GST to \$33.07 plus GST for every club individual person*
- *From \$79.82 plus GST to \$81.97 plus GST for three or more members in a family*

Moore/Sigglekow

Carried

## **8.2 Other affiliation fees**

*It was proposed that the Yachting New Zealand affiliation fees of the following amounts be accepted:*

- *Class association fee: \$168.68 plus GST*
- *Non-commercial maritime fee: \$168.68 plus GST*
- *Commercial maritime fee: \$562.27 plus GST*
- *Individual member fee: \$89.96 plus GST*

Knights/Murray Kelman (Weiti Boating Club)

Carried

## **9.0 Election of board member**

Knowles informed members that Hansen would be leaving the Yachting New Zealand board by rotation. As a result, there is a vacancy, and two nominees have been put forward to replace her: Nick Gillies and Anne Marett.

Knowles introduced both candidates.

Gillies is a litigation lawyer, managing partner at Hesketh Henry, and an experienced sailor and sailing parent. He has been involved in both grassroots and high-performance yachting, including New Zealand's 2024 Olympic 49er campaign.

Marett is a chartered accountant with over 35 years of governance experience. She is a former commodore and current finance convenor of Waikawa Boating Club, as well as an active sailor committed to supporting regional clubs and grassroots sailing.

Gillies and Marrett both addressed the meeting, before Knowles opened the floor for voting.

## **10. General business**

A general discussion was held regarding the affiliation fee model and Yachting New Zealand's plans to review it in the coming year.

Robertson stated that after several years of questioning the affiliation model, the time is right for a comprehensive review.

Armitage confirmed that involving clubs in the process is essential and emphasised Yachting New Zealand must be more responsive to their needs. He proposed the establishment of a working group to consult with clubs on the affiliation fee review, noting that this would be a significant project over the next 12 months and thanking clubs in advance for their support.

Armitage undertook to provide updates on Yachting New Zealand's workplan at future AGMs and stressed the importance of working closely with clubs to better understand their needs.

Pigneguy highlighted the value of Yachting New Zealand's RŪNĀ programme in Gulf Harbour Yacht Club's efforts to establish a marine sciences resource facility and expressed interest in collaborating with other RŪNĀ clubs in Auckland. Raynor Haagh suggested several clubs that Yachting New Zealand are working with on the programme, including the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, Ponsonby Cruising Club, Wakatere Boating Club, Hobsonville Yacht Club, and Bucklands Beach Yacht Club.

Dean Barker (Murrays Bay Sailing Club) asked about the implications for clubs if Yachting New Zealand adopts the Sport Integrity Commission (SIC)'s integrity code. Knowles explained that adopting the code would give the commission greater powers to intervene within any national sporting organisation, and that all member clubs would be required to adopt the code as well. He noted that the vast majority of NSOs are yet to adopt the code, and that the commission has advised clubs not to rush into it. Robertson acknowledged the complexity of adopting the code, particularly in the event of a dispute at a club, and highlighted the risks in terms of child protection and safeguarding.

Knowles informed the meeting that all proposed motions had been passed, and that Gillies had been elected to the Yachting New Zealand board. He thanked members for attending both in person and online and encouraged them to provide feedback on the meeting and voting format.

11.45am: Meeting closed.