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PRESS RELEASE

Macquarie Group Foundation to support 2012 Access Worlds through naming rights and volunteers

Sydney, 30 November 2011 - Middle Harbour Yacht Club, host of the 2012 International Access Class World and International Championships, today announced that the Macquarie Group Foundation will be the event's naming rights supporter.

Macquarie Group Foundation Chairman, Richard Sheppard, said: "The Macquarie Group Foundation is proud to support the 2012 International Access Class World and International Championships. We have a long-standing commitment to disability sailing in Australia and it's wonderful to see that these championships provide the opportunity for sailors of all abilities to compete on equal terms. "

"Macquarie Group staff will also be contributing their skills and expertise as volunteers leading up to and during the event as part of Macquarie's ongoing contribution to the community."

Julie Hodder, Middle Harbour Yacht Club Commodore and Chairperson of the 2012 Access Worlds, said: "Securing the wonderful support of the Macquarie Group Foundation, along with a grant from the NSW Government International Sporting Events Program and other generous contributions has enabled us to plan for this event.

"To run this event successfully, we need both monetary contributions and the assistance of many volunteers. The Macquarie Group Foundation has not only donated to this event, they are also deeply involved with their staff, providing valuable volunteer support."

"These staff will be able to undertake some training prior to the event, particularly in the areas of Disability Awareness, and Access Boats and their equipment." said Commodore Hodder.

Bronze sponsors who have come out in support of the Macquarie 2012 Access Worlds are Estate Master and the Freemasons.

"I'm honoured to not only have a long history with Middle Harbour Yacht Club (MHYC), but also be part of Access Worlds 2012, Estate Master's managing director Martin Hill said. "It's exciting to see the Club hosting this event and to see its members excelling both on the water and in supporting Access."

Malcolm Stradwick from the Freemasons, said they were committed to raising \$5,000 towards the event, commenting: "The Freemasons have been supporting Sailability for many years in many locations and are now proud to sponsor this event and, at the same time, support the Foundation Honorary Member of our Lodge; Lodge Sir James Hardy."



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Top contenders

Some of the world's most highly decorated sailors, among them Paralympians and world, national and European champions, are expected to compete in the Championships, to be held at MHC on Sydney Harbour from 7-13 April, 2012.

Open to competitors of all abilities, making it a rare opportunity for athletes with a disability to compete alongside able-bodied athletes, the Club welcomes spectators to come and view what is sure to be sailing competition at its best.

At the top of those heading Down Under for the event is 53 year-old Zoltan Pegan. An Australian, Pegan now lives in Hungary with his Hungarian wife and sailing partner Eva.

Pegan, who competed at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, has a target on his back, his most recent successes being two titles at the 2011 Access Class European Championships on Lake Garda.

Six wins made Pegan the undisputed European champion in the Access 303 single-person competition, adding to his world title in that class. With wife Eva, he also won the Access 303 two-person title at the same event.

Born and raised in Sydney, the former pilot, who knows Sydney Harbour like the back of his hand and can't wait to be 'home' again, is definitely the man to beat in both single and double-handed classes.

At the other end of the age spectrum is 16 year-old Angus MacGregor, a finalist in the 2009 Australian Yachting Awards who went on to win the 2010 Sailor of the Year with a Disability award for his outstanding victory at the 2010 Access 2.3 World Championship in the UK, where he won seven out of the eight race series.

The Queenslander's sailing career moved into top gear when Angus won the 2008 Australian Access Class Championship and went on to claim victory in the 2009 International Access Class Regatta in Japan. Sailing regularly against able-bodied sailors has made the youngster a force to be reckoned with.

First entry

The distinction of being the first to enter the event goes to Vera Voorbach from The Netherlands. Although she has mucked around in boats for a while, the 35 year old has only raced an Access Dinghy for three years and has taken to it like a duck to water.

"Because of my spinal cord injury, which occurred during my birth, I haven't got much strength in my legs, arms and hands," Vera tells. "My parents always had a sailing boat and my disability wasn't a problem on the boat - and that is how I learnt to sail - not only on my parent's boat, but also in a small dinghy which I sailed with my father."

Voorbach discovered the Access Dinghy four years ago at a Sailability Club, and although initially sailing for fun, the Dutchwoman got hooked on racing in 2009.

"To discover how good (or bad) I was, I went to the French and European Access Championships and achieved second in the Access 2.3 in France and third at the



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Europeans,” remembers Voorbach, whose eighth overall and third in the Full Servo results at the 2011 Worlds has piqued her appetite for better results.

“I expect the competition at the Worlds in Sydney will be hard; there are very good (Access) Liberty sailors from Australia, New Zealand and the UK. My training mate, Wilma (van den Broek) who is also coming, is also very good,” Voorbach added.

More inspiration on hand

In September, MHYC member and Access Class delegate Lachlan Clear, travelled to Gosford to help volunteers from the Gosford Sailing Club relaunch Sailability Gosford after an absence of five years.

Since then, a solid band of volunteers has been hard at work, training an enthusiastic group of sailors in Access 303's, some of whom will compete at the 2012 Access Worlds.

Clear, who is deaf and has cerebral palsy, took his boat 'Deafender' to Brisbane Waters for the day hoping to inspire other people with disability to 'have a go'. “I hope to see some Gosford sailors competing next year,” says Clear, who is currently working hard to promote sailing to the Deaf Community.

Designing Times

Access designer, Chris Mitchell will also be attending the Worlds. A fixture at major events involving his designs, the Victorian is always on hand to tweak boats, make repairs, and generally help out, both on and off the water.

To follow the Macquarie 2012 Access Worlds, go to the official website:
www.2012accessworlds.mhyc.com.au

By Di Pearson MHYC Media

For further information on the event, please contact the MHYC Sailing Office on 02 9969 1244, or email sailing.manager@mhyc.com.au

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