

P5 PLUS



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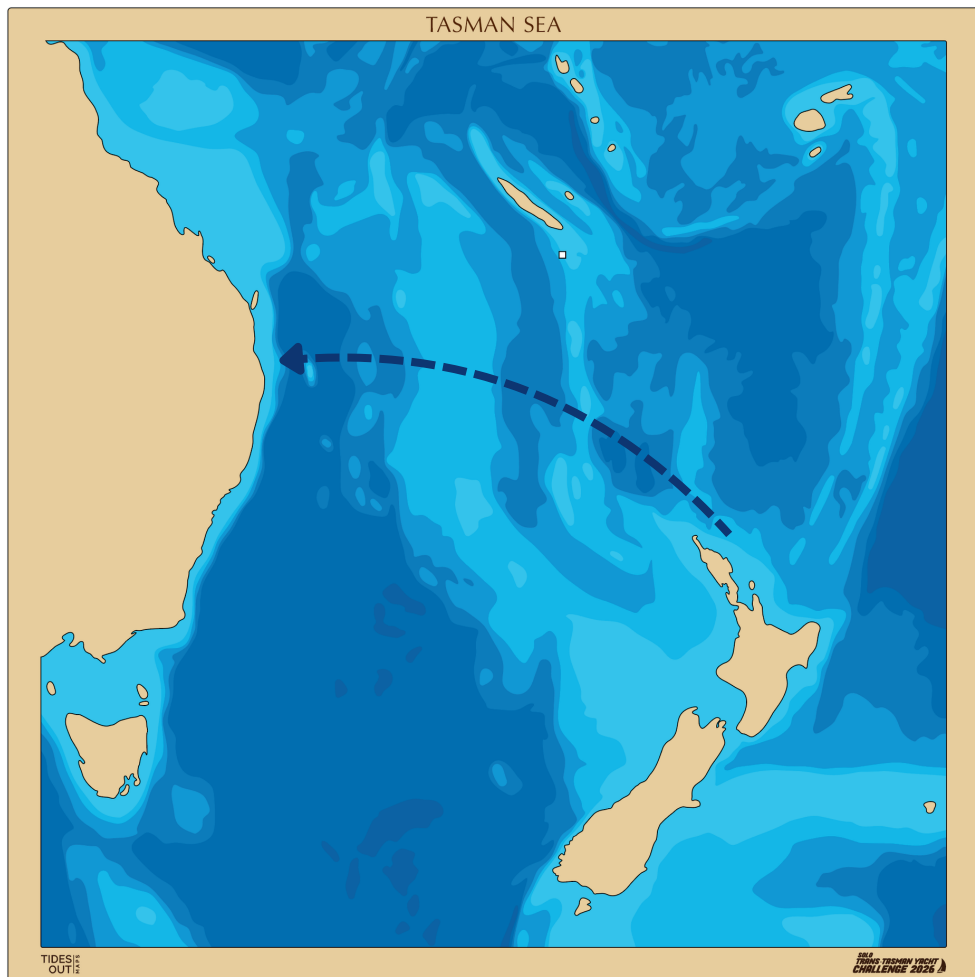


NEW ZEALAND



SOLO TRANS-TASMAN YACHT CHALLENGE 2026

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME



WWW.SOLO-TASMAN.CO.NZ

Welcome to Opua and the Opua Cruising Club for the 2026 Solo Trans-Tasman Yacht Challenge

Our club is immensely proud to host the start of this iconic race, a challenge that has become woven into the fabric of New Zealand offshore sailing history. For more than five decades, the Solo Trans-Tasman has represented courage, seamanship, resilience and adventure, attracting remarkable sailors willing to test themselves alone against the Tasman Sea.

On behalf of the Opua Cruising Club, we extend our sincere thanks to the race organisers, both past and present, whose passion and commitment have kept this extraordinary event alive through generations. We also acknowledge the many volunteers, families, friends and supporters behind the scenes. Solo sailors may cross the Tasman alone, but no competitor reaches the start line without a team of people supporting them every step of the way.

Most importantly, we congratulate the competitors. Your preparation, determination and willingness to take on this challenge embody the true spirit of offshore sailing. We wish every skipper a safe passage, fair winds and a successful crossing.

To everyone following the race, we encourage you to stay connected online and through social media as the fleet makes its way west across the Tasman.

Finally, we extend our gratitude to Southport Yacht Club for their ongoing support in welcoming the fleet to Australia and helping deliver another memorable edition of this legendary race.



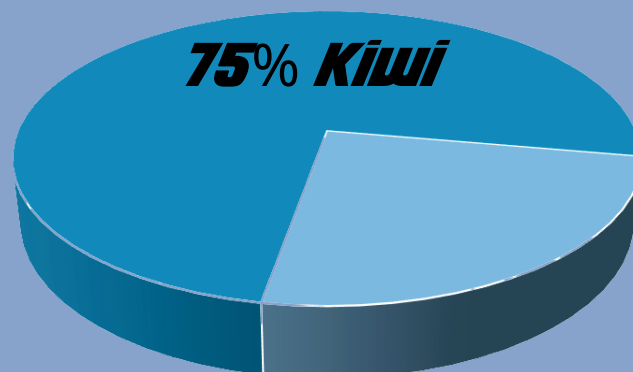
Meet the Skippers and their boats

Average skipper age - 62.25 years

Average LOA - 12.26 m

Five of the competitors have done this race at least once before.

Four Opuia Cruising Club members!



Will it be an Aussie or a Kiwi for line honors?



Ben Ball - Camellia

Representing SSANZ, Ben brings a deep personal connection and a lifetime of experience to his campaign.

“Camellia and I both turn 50 this year, so I wanted to do something epic to celebrate. The Solo Trans-Tasman has been on my radar since I was a teenager. I’m incredibly excited that this dream is finally becoming reality.”

- ◆ Boat: Camellia - #19
- ◆ Design: Cav 36
- ◆ LOA: 11.0m



Bill Kidman - Pretty Boy Floyd

Bill has been racing and cruising since childhood. With extensive offshore family cruising, plenty of coastal cruising and racing, and club racing in keelboats, multihulls, skiffs, and dinghies.

His mantra: “Do it today, because tomorrow doesn’t exist.”

- ◆ Boat: Pretty Boy Floyd - #5
- ◆ Design: Ross 12m
- ◆ LOA: 12.2m





Doug Esterman - Fair Seasons

After a lifetime on the water and more than 12,000 offshore miles, Doug is no stranger to the ocean, yet the Solo Trans-Tasman will be Doug's first solo offshore race.

For Doug, it's simple... "No solo offshore miles... so the journey begins."

- ◆ Boat: Fair Seasons - #1
- ◆ Design: Cavalier 39
- ◆ LOA: 11.9m



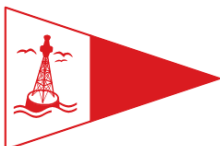
Tauranga Yacht & Powerboat Club

Geoff Thorn - Catnip

Geoff returns to the Solo Trans-Tasman with experience, determination, and a deep respect for the challenge..

"The Solo Trans-Tasman is the ultimate sailing challenge. The memory of that first race has never left me — it keeps calling me back."

- ◆ Boat: Catnip - #18
- ◆ Design: Beneteau First 45
- ◆ LOA: 14.0m



Lowry Bay Yacht Club



Glen Jeffrey - Wave

From coastal cruising as a kid in the Hauraki Gulf to multiple Tasman crossings and offshore campaigns, Glen brings serious experience to the 2026 fleet.

"If you have to ask why, you wouldn't understand the answer."

- ◆ Boat: Wave - #4
- ◆ Design: Grand Soleil 50
- ◆ LOA: 15.0m

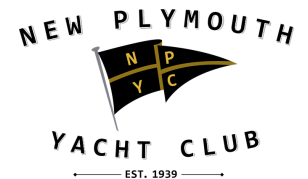




Graeme Francis - Robbery

Graeme returns to the Solo Trans-Tasman with over 19,000 offshore miles. This will be Graeme's third STT — finishing 6th in 2018 aboard Robbery, and 11th in 1986 aboard Redshift. With nearly four decades between campaigns, his commitment to the race speaks volumes.

- ◆ Boat: Robbery - #17
- ◆ Design: Wilson 36
- ◆ LOA: 10.97m



Guy Chester - Oceans Tribute

Bringing multihull speed to the fleet, Guy's Crowther trimaran will be one of the most exciting boats to watch.

His sailing experience over 50 years, includes over 120,000 nm; two circumnavigations, (One and a half solo).
 ..."my personal goal is to start, hang on and finish!"

- ◆ Boat: Oceans Tribute - #9
- ◆ Design: Crowther
- ◆ LOA: 13.85m



James Foster - Electron

Another multihull entry, James's Mumby 48 catamaran Electron brings serious pace to the crossing. James has over 20,000nm of short-handed sailing experience. For James, the challenge lies in harnessing performance while managing the demands of solo sailing.

- ◆ Boat: Electron - #11
- ◆ Design: Mumby 48
- ◆ LOA: 14.6m





Kevin Le Poidevin - Roaring Forty

Kevin brings an exceptional depth of solo and short-handed racing experience to the fleet. "The Solo Trans-Tasman is an iconic challenge — a true test of a sailor's skill, preparation, courage and determination. It pushes both boat and skipper to their absolute limits, mentally and physically."

- ◆ Boat: Roaring Forty - #14
- ◆ Design: Open 40
- ◆ LOA: 12.2m



Malcolm Dickson - Sarau

Malcolm returns to the Tasman for what will be his fourth Solo Trans-Tasman Yacht Challenge. He is the defending champion, having won the last race aboard Sarau, before that, he placed 2nd in 2018 also aboard Sarau. Sarau is the largest boat in the race

- ◆ Boat: Sarau - #7
- ◆ Design: Dickson 55
- ◆ LOA: 16.82m



Peter Bourke - Diablo

With the smallest boat in the fleet, Peter is no stranger to pushing both boat and self. In 2025, he completed a remarkable solo circumnavigation of New Zealand. "I've always had a fascination in single handed ocean sailing."

- ◆ Boat: Diablo - #10
- ◆ Design: S & S
- ◆ LOA: 8.7m



Sandspit Yacht Club





Peter Elkington - Pacman

With multiple Sydney to Hobart races completed, Peter brings a strong offshore pedigree to the fleet. With his proven Young 11, Peter combines performance with reliability—an ideal match for the Tasman crossing.

- ◆ Boat: Pacman - #6
- ◆ Design: Young 11
- ◆ LOA: 11.17m



Peter Nobbs - Smoko

Peter brings steady experience and a practical approach to offshore sailing. His experience includes being the first kiwi to complete a solo non-stop around New Zealand and a solo non-stop around the world. He's also completed a two-handed voyage Opuia to Seattle.

- ◆ Boat: Smoko - #8
- ◆ Design: B&G 36
- ◆ LOA: 11.0m



Richard Raea - Baker Street

Richard previously competed in the 2007 race aboard the 6.9m Nimbus II, Back then, Richard spent 13 days and 20 hours at sea—and he's quietly aiming to better that time in 2026. But for Richard, this race isn't about line honours. "Why the hurry?" he says.

- ◆ Boat: Baker Street - #16
- ◆ Design: Sweden 340
- ◆ LOA: 10.36m





Sharon Ferris- Choat - Vixen Racing

Double Olympian and veteran of the Volvo Ocean Race, Sharon has consistently pushed boundaries in high-performance sailing. She was also the first skipper to lead an all-female crew in the Extreme Sailing Series.

- ◆ Boat: Vixen Racing - #15
- ◆ Design: Class 40 (Verdier)
- ◆ LOA: 12.17m



Terry Dunn - Nautilass

Terry, current OCC Commodore, brings a lifetime of sailing experience to the start line. This race marks his first major solo offshore passage. And a late boat change brings Terry into the performance end of the fleet.

- ◆ Boat: Nautilass - #12
- ◆ Design: Beneteau First 36
- ◆ LOA: 11m



*Follow every mile: watch the solo
Trans-Tasman battle unfold.
Live satellite tracking. Every yacht.
Every decision. Mile by mile across
the Tasman.*



More Than a Race Across the Tasman

Since the first crossings in the 1970s, the race has built a reputation as one of the Southern Hemisphere's toughest tests of solo sailing.

The early years established its legendary status. In 1974, Annette Wilde became the first woman in the world to complete a single-handed offshore race aboard *Valya*. Four years later, Cyclone Hal devastated the 1978 fleet, with boats abandoned, dismasted and shipwrecked — yet the race endured.

The decades that followed produced fierce rivalries, remarkable innovation and record-breaking performances. Ian Johnson's stunning 1986 crossing set a race record that stood for 28 years. Tiny boats battled giant seas, owner-built yachts challenged professionally designed campaigns, and sailors from teenagers to septuagenarians lined up together to test themselves against the Tasman.

By 1998, GPS and modern self-steering systems were changing offshore racing, but the essential challenge remained unchanged: exhaustion, isolation, weather and decision-making alone at sea.

The 2023 edition proved the race's spirit is stronger than ever. Malcolm Dickson claimed line honours aboard *Sarau*, while Jim O'Keeffe returned to renew a rivalry that began back in 1978.

And now, with 2026 on the horizon, a new fleet is preparing to join that same lineage — to test themselves against the Tasman, write their own stories, and add another chapter to one of offshore sailing's most enduring challenges.

Pics top to bottom

- Marvin Glenn winner inaugural race in 1970 aboard *Rebel*.
- Jon Sayer winner 1982 aboard *Floating Footpath* toasting his win with Peter Mounsey.
- Ian Johnson, *Bullfrog Sunblock* winner 1986 in six days, eight hours.
- Andrew Fagan, *Swirly World* in 1994 at smallest boat ever at 5.49m. The winner that year was Jim Lowe aboard *Chinchilla*.
- *Krakatoa*, the first monohull in 2014. Line honours, and new race record went to Reini Gelder aboard *Shark Angels*.



Welcome To The Gold Coast

As the fleet makes landfall on Australia's spectacular Gold Coast, competitors can look forward to a warm Queensland welcome from the members of Southport Yacht Club, the local sailing community and race supporters alike.

After days alone at sea crossing the Tasman, Southport provides the perfect finishing destination — safe waterways, excellent marina facilities, outstanding hospitality and a vibrant boating culture. Since 1946, Southport Yacht Club has built a reputation as one of Australia's premier yacht clubs, renowned for offshore racing, sailing development and its welcoming atmosphere for visiting sailors.

Competitors arriving at the Club's award-winning marina can expect modern berthing facilities, marina security, laundry and shore amenities, fuel and servicing support, chandlery access, restaurants and bars, along with easy access to the Gold Coast's beaches, accommodation and transport links. The Club offers superb waterfront dining, relaxed social spaces and outstanding views across the Broadwater — the ideal setting for competitors, families and supporters to reconnect and celebrate the achievement of crossing one of the world's great ocean passages.

To every competitor in the 2026 Solo Trans-Tasman Yacht Challenge, we wish you a safe, steady and uneventful passage across the Tasman Sea. May the winds be fair, the seas manageable and your arrival at the Gold Coast both memorable and rewarding.

We look forward to welcoming you ashore at Southport Yacht Club.

southportyachtclub.com.au - 1 MacArthur Prade, Main Beach, Queensland 4216



Opua Cruising Club and the 2026 Solo Trans-Tasman Yacht Challenge competitors sincerely thank the following organisations for their support of this event.



NEW ZEALAND

Bay of Islands Marina

Port Opua  New Zealand



Riddlez



TIDES
OUT | MAPS



kordia



beaufort



Race Start

MIDDAY - 30 May

2026

The Organising Authority is Opuia Cruising Club (OCC), Baffin Street, Opuia, New Zealand (09)402 6924, management @opuacruisingclub.co.nz with co-operation of Southport Yacht Club (SYC), Queensland, Australia.

COURSE: From the start sail around North Cape and cross the Tasman Sea to the finish in Southport, Queensland, Australia. Approximately 1174nm.

START: The start line for all divisions is the transit line between an orange diamond marker above the window of the OCC starter box and a marker mounted on the top of the northern post pole of the club pontoon/dinghy dock. (Should conditions be such that the start cannot be held off Opuia Cruising Club then the alternative start area as per SI 8.3 will take effect.)

FINISH: The finish line is a virtual line shown on the Yellow Brick tracker off the seaward end of Sand Bypass Pumping Jetty and co-ordinates 27°56.315'S and 153°26.500'E.

TIME LIMIT: The Race Time Limit is 1700hr NZT on Friday 19th June 2026. Boats still racing after this time will be scored Did Not Finish (DNF) without a hearing.

race@transtasmanchallenge.org



WWW.SOLO-TASMAN.CO.NZ

