

# Lourdes Hill College



## Sailing Club

26 November 2008

Mr Norman Fry  
Executive Officer  
Yachting Queensland  
578 Royal Parade  
MANLY QLD 4179

Dear Norman,

### **RE: Membership Proposal Fees for 2009/2010**

Unfortunately, as it is our Sailing Club Presentation afternoon/evening this coming Saturday, we are unable to attend this very important meeting. It is a big event for our club and so I cannot miss the event. So I am writing to you to register our views.

We do not support the propose fee structure going forward. There are a number of reasons for this and maybe we can also offer some advice.

The reasons for our opposition are:-

1. We are a self funded training facility for the Lourdes Hill College where we train approximately 45 young girls each year through the YQ programme. In order to cover the cost of our qualified coaches and the purchase and maintenance of boats, we charge the parents fees. If your fee structure is accepted and adopted, the additional YQ fee would add a further 50% to the cost of training each girl which ultimately the parents pay.
2. As we are not an elite sailing facility, we do not receive any financial support from either YQ or YA or indeed government departments to run our programme. As said above, we are fully self funded.
3. We pay YQ for the privilege of running the sailing training programme under the YQ programme and we pay YQ fees to register and train our coaches.
4. The club is run and managed by devoted parents whose girls participate in the programme. They volunteer a considerable amount of their time to

managing the programme, doing the administration, maintenance of the boats and equipment and transporting boats and girls to various outside sailing events. As the club survives only on this voluntary input, to turn around and charge these same parents a greatly increased YQ fee is well over the top.

5. We feel that as we are adding 45 girls to the sport of sailing each year through our own voluntary hard work, then we shouldn't have to further subsidise any programme that might be undertaken by YQ as this is of no benefit to our club.
6. We are not against the aspirations of YQ to promote advanced sailing skills in our sport, however, YQ have to recognise that sailors don't get to this level without the training and support that is provided by the clubs and their waning band of volunteers.

Therefore, following on from this, it seems to us that if we do not derive any benefit from YQ, then why should we ask the parents of our members pay more fees?

Personally, I am Professional Accountant and if YQ are in a position where they cannot run the business on the current fee revenue base, you either have to increase the revenue base or cut the expenditure base. No business survives by quadrupling their revenue base on their current market share. That is, you cannot ask your current customers to pay their current fee multiplied by at least 3 times and not expect to lose your customers. You either have to increase your customer base with a modest increase in fees, or you manage your expenditure constrained by the customer base you do have.

From my observations of the comments and from my own experience, all this fee proposal will do is dramatically reduce the membership level of YQ. So you are back to square one – that is, you run the risk that you will reduce your revenue base and be no better off.

There is no argument that the banding system has its limitations, and at the time that this fee structure was proposed, we were in opposition. However, against good advice from many member clubs, YQ went ahead with the banding system. Therefore we have little faith that the new proposal will work, particularly as YQ were very adamant that the banding system would work. We support the return to the capitation system where each club member pays a fee but we can only support a modest increase in fees from the previous fee prior to banding that is a modest increase to the \$21.50 per member fee that was the original system.

YQ need to look carefully at where their funding is spent. My opinion is that it should be spent at the club level if you want to increase the membership level. It is the work and promotion undertaken by sailing clubs that builds membership, not the amount of money spent on elite training. It is the grass roots participants in the sport that keep the sport going. So don't cut off your nose to spite your face.

And finally, to propose such a substantial increase in compulsory fees within a sporting community in the current economic climate is fraught with danger. Already

families participating in this sport are paying fees for sailing club membership, coaching and training and significant increase in the cost of purchasing and maintaining their boats, a substantial increase in YQ fees could be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

Yours sincerely,

**Derek Miles**  
**President**