

A white sailboat is shown from a side-on perspective, sailing on a deep blue sea. The sky is a mix of light blue and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The boat's mast and rigging are visible on the right side. The water has a textured, wavy appearance. The overall mood is serene and adventurous.

DARE TO DREAM

BY IAN THOMSON

DARE TO DREAM

An account of Ian Thomson's life where he dares to dream and he chases those dreams. He now holds a world record for the fastest solo circumnavigation of Australia and has plans to chase more records in coming years. He is also passionate about the marine environment and works hard to protect it.

I ask you one favour. This eBook is about raising funds for Ocean Crusaders. Please do not pass it on to friends. Please purchase a new copy for each friend or get them to purchase it. We need funds to keep our campaign going. It is cheap to allow this to happen.

Ian Thomson

Founder: Ocean Crusaders (Formerly Save Our Seas Australia Pty Ltd)

Funds from the sale of this book go directly to Ocean Crusaders to continue their campaign to raise awareness of the damage plastic bags and plastics do to the environment

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DARE TO DREAM

This book is dedicated to my mother
Pauline Salter and my pop Sam Salter

Without their support
I would not be where I am today

Introduction

When Ian Thomson set himself the goal of becoming the fastest person to sail solo non-stop around Australia he decided to make a statement about a serious problem he had encountered in the world's oceans.

Ian started his love affair with the sea on a windsurfer as a teenager at Balnarring in Victoria. Over the next 20 years he worked his way up in the windsurfing world and moved on to ocean yacht racing.

He became a qualified commercial yacht skipper after sailing in Hawaii, Fiji and Australia and now takes the helm of some of the country's fastest maxi yachts and large cruising catamarans in Queensland's magnificent Whitsundays.

He is a sought after helmsman on racing yachts and has competed in most of Australia's major ocean races. He has a divisional win in the tough Sydney to Hobart race to his credit.

During the course of his sailing and his work Ian became aware of the shocking and unnecessary damage the 'convenient' plastic shopping bag is causing the ocean environment and its wildlife. He is particularly disturbed by the death of turtles courtesy of discarded plastic bags.

In June 2010 Ian sailed his 12 metre yacht Save Our Seas Ocean Racing back into Airlie Beach after a testing 6536 nautical mile voyage around Australia that took 42 days, 5 hours, 31 minutes, 55 seconds beating the previous record by 26 days. He had achieved his dream of becoming the fastest solo circumnavigator of Australia.

Ian used the voyage to launch his campaign to reduce the use of plastic bags. On his return he established Ocean Crusaders and set himself other goals in his pursuit of a world free of plastic bags. He has three aims in his campaign: to raise awareness, promote alternatives and to take action to achieve this dream.

Ian Thomson's journey from a broken home to world record holder is inspirational and motivating and his story of chasing dreams and sailing the oceans is guaranteed to inspire and motivate others to chase and achieve their own dreams.

-- Julian Burgess, Editor, September 2010

New World Record for Fastest Solo Circumnavigation of Australia

42 Days : 5 Hours : 31 Minutes : 55 Seconds

This book was written to inspire people to create dreams and to chase them. I encourage you to take your time reading this book. I don't envisage you'll read it cover to cover in one go but maybe use it to draw inspiration for your dreams.

The chapters are short and after each chapter there is a poem or verse about dreams or not giving up. If you read a chapter before you go to bed and then the verse after it you'll go to sleep with the thought of chasing your dreams.

I hope you will find the book inspirational and I hope you can chase your dreams, after all a world without dreams is a world without life.

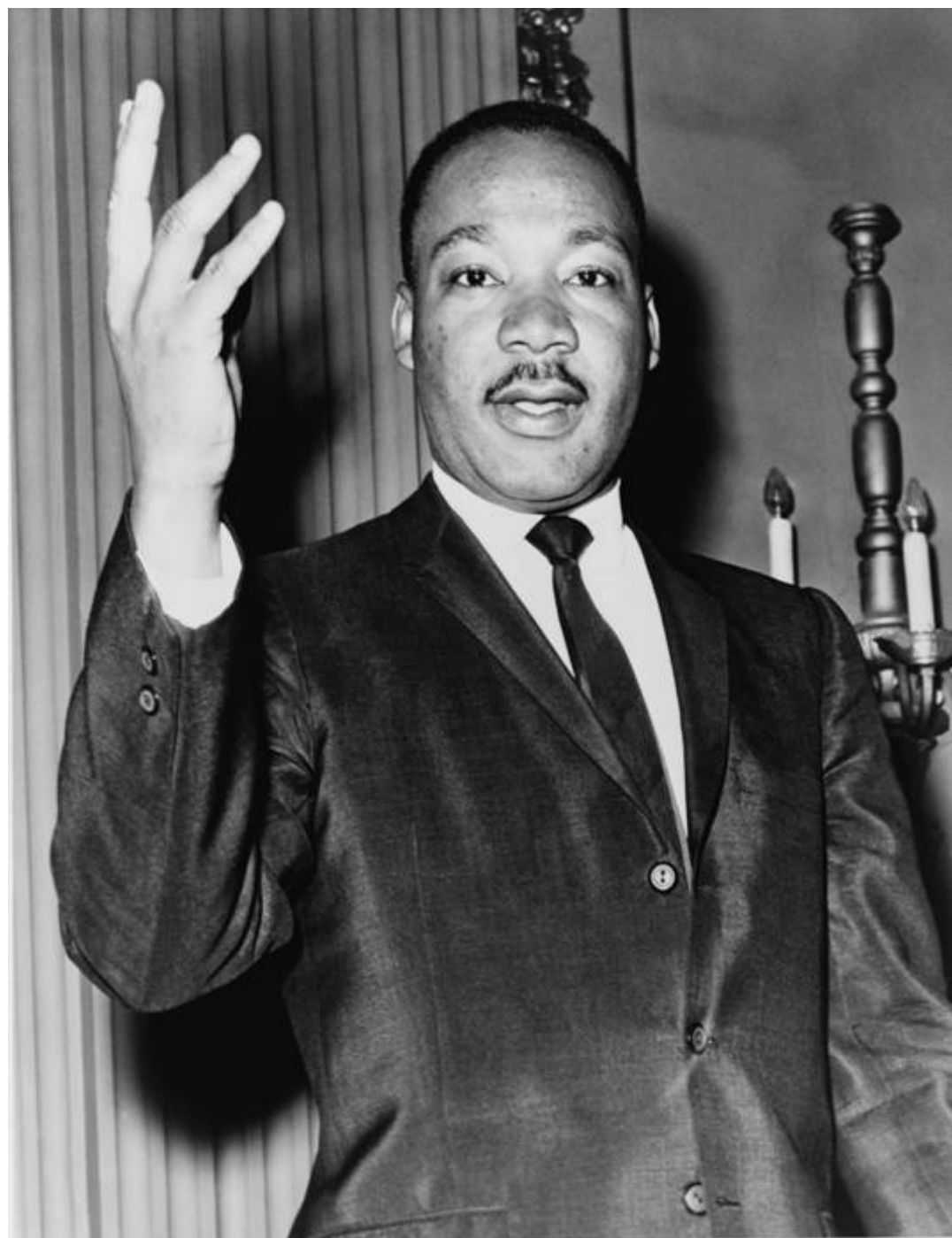
Ian Thomson,
Airlie Beach
September, 2010

Dare to Dream

The dictionary says a dare is a risky challenge that one person suggests to another to try to get them to prove their courage. It can also mean to confront bravely. A dream or goal is a projected state of affairs that a person or a system plans or intends to achieve – a personal or organizational desired end-point in some sort of assumed development.

The title of this book *Dare to Dream* came to me on the first day of my single-handed sailing voyage around Australia in May 2010. Breaking the record for this journey had become my dream and 42 days later I was able to claim the record.

Had I not dared to dream, I would not have done what I did and this book would not exist.



A Famous Speech

When I think of famous motivational speeches there is one that stands out for me. It was made well before my time but the words still ring loud for me. It was 28 August 1963 and the speech was made at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC. Of course it was the famous speech made by Martin Luther King Jr entitled “I have a dream”.

He had a dream and he fought hard for his dream. He had struggles all the way through and he knew there were people who were so threatened by his dream that they were prepared to kill him yet he pushed hard and fought through the barriers.

He made a massive difference to the lives of African Americans and I believe started the breakdown in racial vilification. He had the courage to stand tall. More than 40 years after he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, his dream continues to provide inspiration to people all over the world.

He had a dream.

Do you have a dream?

The following stories are of people who have lived their dreams. Being a sailor, I have focused on some other sailors, however it begins with someone we all know about, Abraham Lincoln.

The Abraham Lincoln dream was to become President of the United States of America. Most people know the Abraham Lincoln story. Who can forget learning about him at school. While we all know he reached his goal of becoming President not everyone knows the road he undertook to achieve his dream.

In 1816 his family was forced out of their home after a dispute over the ownership of their farm and Abraham went out to work to help support them. He was seven years old at the time. In 1818 his mother died. He was only nine years old.

He tried to set up his own business when he was 22 years old but this failed. The following year he stood for election to the Illinois General Assembly and was defeated. He lost his job and was unable to get into law school.



In 1833 he was declared bankrupt. He spent the next 17 years of his life paying back the money he had borrowed from friends to start his business. But he was elected to the Illinois legislature in 1834, taught himself law and by 1837 had been admitted to the US bar.

He became engaged to his sweetheart Anne Rutledge in 1835 but she died suddenly of typhoid and his heart was broken. The following year he had a nervous breakdown and spent six months in bed.

In 1838 he was unsuccessful in his attempt to become the Speaker of the state legislature but each time he was defeated he would step forward even though the setbacks kept

coming. He made unsuccessful bids for a seat in the US Congress but did serve for two years from 1847.

He refused to give up and continued his interest in politics making an unsuccessful bid for the Republican vice-presidential nomination. Such defeats can beat lesser men and women but Abraham Lincoln continued to stride forward. In 1858 he was once again defeated for the Senate.

But in 1860, at the age of 51, the man who had overcome all these struggles was elected as the 16th President of the United States of America. It took Abraham Lincoln, one of the world's greatest men, some 30 years to achieve his dream. Yes it was a big dream but he took it step by step. Although he faced countless obstacles, he never gave up and he never quit.

Great quotations from Abraham Lincoln.

*The sense of obligation to continue
is present in all of us. A duty to strive
is the duty of us all. I felt a call to that duty.*

*The path was worn and slippery.
My foot slipped from under me,
knocking the other out of the way,
but I recovered and said to myself,
it's a slip and not a fall.*

Believe In Your Dream

Do you sometimes find it hard to believe that you can really make your dreams a reality? If so, consider this. We live in a world of dreams.

Every man-made item around you at this very moment began as a thought, an idea or a dream in the mind of an individual. The computer on your desk, your mobile phone, your car and countless other items that you use each day are all the result of someone's 'dream come true'.

What this means is that throughout history, hundreds and thousands and millions of people have had an idea, worked hard, overcome problems and ultimately transformed their dream into reality.

And if hundreds and thousands and millions of people have been able to do this in the past, then it stands to reason that you can do it too. Often we make the mistake of thinking that dreams only come true for a small number of talented individuals who have skills or abilities that we don't possess. But this is simply not true.

The fact that millions of people have brought their dreams to fruition in the past demonstrates that the ability to set and achieve goals is something that is available to each and every one of us. Right now, millions of people around the world are taking the steps necessary to achieve the goals that are important to them. Some are studying, some are building businesses, and some are writing books. What do you want to achieve?

In order to achieve your goals in life, the only things you really need are:

A crystal clear picture of what you want and an unshakeable determination to do whatever it takes to make your dream a reality.

As soon as you take these two steps anything becomes possible. If you need a new skill – you learn it. If you come up against an obstacle – you find a way around it. If you experience failure – you learn from your mistakes and adopt a different approach.

And gradually, step-by-step, you can bring your dream into reality to join the dreams of the countless other individuals who have gone before you. So today I'd like to encourage you to take a look at the evidence around you and appreciate that you live in a world where 'dreams do come true'.

Understanding that millions of people have made their dream become a reality in the past means that millions more will make their dream a reality in the future. And you CAN be one of them.



Break down your mountain one rock at a time

Often we have major dreams and we look at them and think 'I'll never be able to achieve that.' That is because too often we look at the big picture. Each dream needs to be broken down into steps.

Let's consider a mountain. This mountain is in our way and we need to remove it to continue on our journey. If you look at the mountain in its entirety there is no way you think you have the strength to move it. Even with 100 people, you simply could not lift it and move it out of the way.

The best way to look at any major obstacle is to look at it in steps. Firstly grab a shovel and a wheelbarrow. Shovel a load of dirt into your wheelbarrow and move it. You find you can



do this easily so you continue with this method. Bit by bit the mountain slowly disappears until it is gone and your path is clear. You can continue your journey towards your dream.

Consider the story of the ant and the lion. A dead lion can be consumed by ants. The ant is so small and the lion so big yet bit by bit ants will consume the lion until it is just a pile of bones. And I recall that a Shih Tzu puppy can kill a Great Dane, well the joke says that the Great Dane will choke on the Shih Tzu!

It can sometimes take a lot of hard work to achieve your goals. Too often we quit because we look at the big picture and think it is impossible. By breaking it down we learn that we can achieve our goals, it just takes more work than we probably thought.

I found in my solo circumnavigation of Australia that when I looked at the finish line it seemed to be so far away. I broke it down into legs and set about reaching each location by a certain time. By doing this I had estimated time of arrivals that were only a few hours or days away, rather than over a month.

I knew I could sail for a couple of days because I had done this before. So each time I set a new destination it was within goals I knew I could achieve. I then set another goal and kept going. Before I knew it, home was my next goal and I had finished. Dream accomplished.

So having big dreams is not a problem. Trying to get there directly with no effort is impossible. You have to break it down and work as hard as you can to get there. You will have many trials and tribulations along the way but keep moving forward. If you get knocked down, get up again and continue. It is those who stop and get defeated who go nowhere. It is those who get up and move forward who succeed.

Nick Moloney

My role model



Everyone in life needs a role model and mine came in an unlikely form. When I first met Nick Moloney he was buying windsurfing equipment from me while I was working at a shop in Melbourne. To me he was just another windsurfer.

I found out he crewed on large racing yachts and eventually learned he was a highly respected sailor and raced a lot on the Mornington-based yacht Wild Thing which was arguably Victoria's most famous ocean racer. He sailed with a guy who occasionally worked at the windsurfing shop called Andrew 'Hendo' Henderson.

The two of them would disappear at Christmas time for some race they called the Sydney to Hobart. I didn't know much about yachting at that stage but later in life this yacht race would become a dream of mine.

Nick would buy wave gear as he loved to go wave sailing down at 13th Beach or Point Danger near Torquay in Victoria. Then all of a sudden he started buying Mistral One Design equipment from us.

This was an Olympic windsurfing class at the time and I assumed he was thinking of training and trying out for the Olympics. At the shop he was a mate so he got gear at cost plus 10 per cent as a sort of sponsorship.

One morning in 1998 I was driving to work and heard on the radio that a windsurfer had just sailed across Bass Strait. They said it was Nick Moloney. I couldn't believe it. When I got to

work I made a heap of calls and sure enough, Nick had crossed from Victoria, near Flinders, to Stanley, in Tasmania, taking a total of 21 hours 11 minutes.

When he reached the other side he had no skin left on his feet thanks to the rubbing from his foot straps. His side was totally bruised due to the harness and in the last few hours he fell off countless times as fatigue set in.



Nick about to set off on his Bass Strait crossing.

Next I saw all these photos in newspapers of him holding his gear and right across the top of the sail was our shop logo. When I next spoke to Nick I mentioned that if he had told us about his expedition I would have given him the gear.

His response was simple. He wanted to plan and do the trip without people knowing. The reason for this was he needed to prove to his international sponsors that he could plan and

execute something major. He was effectively using this world record as a stepping stone to make a breakthrough to solo sailing in Europe.

His plan worked and he received sponsorship to buy his first Mini Transat yacht. These are tiny 6.5 metre ocean-going monohulls (single hulled sailing boats). Their sail area is excessive and they are a bit crazy to be honest. There is a major race every year called the Mini Transat and they race across the Atlantic Ocean, from France to Brazil in these souped up machines.

The race regularly gets in excess of 250 entries but only 80 boats are accepted to start so you have to qualify. Nick did all the qualifying events and made the final 80 for the 1999 race. Come start time he was among the favourites. A start line collision meant he had to return to shore for some minor repairs before returning to the race course.

Slowly but surely he ran down the field and was heading to the front of the fleet when a big storm hit. His boat was rolled and he went overboard. He was tethered on with a safety harness but as the boat righted itself he was caught around the keel.

I am not sure what goes through someone's mind at a time like this. You are drowning and if you release your harness you are going to watch your boat sail away from you and probably drown. Nick told me that he was just about to release his harness and pray that some other competitor would sail past when his boat got knocked down again.

As he was released from the keel he broke his arm but was back on the surface and able to drag himself back onboard and call for help. He had to withdraw from the race due to his injuries. A lesser man would have given up sailing after a near death experience like that. Nick was different, maybe some would say he was stubborn.

His racing resume is outstanding. It includes two America's Cup campaigns including being the crew member responsible for going up the mast to engage the halyard lock on the mainsail of One Australia just before she famously split in two and sank. This happened during the challenger series in San Diego in 1995. Nick says he is still haunted by the sight of the top of the mast sticking out of the water before One Australia went to the bottom.

Nick had set himself three major sailing goals some years ago. They were to race around the globe fully crewed stopping off at the world's best sailing locations in a Whitbread Race (now the Volvo Ocean Race), to race around the world non-stop and fully crewed in a giant multi-hull and finally, to lap the globe non-stop and single handed in the Vendee Globe race.

The first part of the goal was achieved when he joined Toshiba in the 1997/98 Whitbread Around the World Race. I recall seeing footage that he took onboard and it was wild stuff. Then in 2002 he was onboard Bruno Peyron's maxi catamaran Orange when it broke the Jules Verne record for the fastest circumnavigation of the world by more than seven days.



Nick onboard Toshiba in 1997/1998 Whitbread around the world race.

Next was the Vendee Globe, the toughest of his three goals. He was, and still is, the only Australian to compete in this epic race. Using British solo sailor Ellen MacArthur's former yacht Kingfisher (called Skandia for Nick's campaign) he was among the favourites for the 2004/2005 race even though it was his first attempt.

For those who don't know, Ellen MacArthur finished second on Kingfisher in the 2000 race and once held the world record for the fastest solo circumnavigation of the world on her maxi trimaran B&Q / Castorama. She is, in my opinion, the world's greatest female sailor and among the best there is in any form of sailing. I'd be very happy to be half as good as her, and I'm twice her size!



01_0541D-©ThMartinez - St Malo (FRA) 3rd July 2001.
EDS Atlantic Challenge. "KINGFISHER", Ellen MacArthur (UK) skipper &
Nick Moloney (AUS) co-skipper.

Nick and Ellen have had a business relationship in the UK since 2001 when he was first employed as her coach. After her Vendee Globe rise to fame they decided to form Offshore Challenges Sailing Team and continue their sailing careers under the same umbrella of sponsors.

This period proved to be one of the most successful in the international sailing sports business to date and they managed around £50 million of sponsorship funds and won six prestigious Hollis Awards for best use of sports sponsorship.

The Vendee Globe is the Mount Everest of sailing. It is actually harder than climbing Mount Everest. In fact more people have been put into space than have circumnavigated the globe single-handed. Over 1500 people have climbed Mount Everest but less than one tenth of that have circumnavigated the globe solo.

Circumnavigating the world is extraordinary but doing it single-handed is something else. The fastest solo circumnavigation of the world on a monohull is 84 days so it is a long time at sea, twice as long as my venture. Most people in the Vendee take over 100 days. Nick aimed for 95 days.

If Nick completed the Vendee he would become the first person to circumnavigate in the three different disciplines. Crewed with stops (Whitbread Ocean Race 1997/98), crewed with no stops (Orange 2002) and finally solo non-stop (Skandia 2004).



Nick onboard Bruno Pyron's successful Jules Verne Trophy winner Orange

Nick is not known that well in Australia. In fact he remarks that he is just one of the boys here but overseas he is a very high profile sportsman. In France he is recognised as a famous sailor and he used to get teddy bears and flowers left on his car every time he parked it in main streets. He learnt it was one of the hazards of having his website address on his car.

The Vendee Globe is a challenging race and the Southern Ocean is the hardest part of it. It is commonly said that below 40 degrees there is no law and below 50 degrees there is no God. Yet these sailors take their cutting edge sailing machines into the high 50 degree latitudes where icebergs are a real danger and where help is a long way away.

In previous years sailors had died in the Southern Ocean and many more had been rescued, some within hours of death. So when Nick passed Cape Horn and headed up the South American coast towards the finish line in fifth place and a chance of still getting on the podium he would have been in high spirits.



However disaster was not far away. Sailing just south of Rio de Janeiro he lost his keel and his boat became dangerously unstable. Nick was gutted to have come so far and then fallen short. But that is the way things happen in life. Nick didn't give up, he had a new keel fitted and sailed that boat to the finish line. He wasn't an official finisher but he finished his challenge.

Just like my trip, Nick's goal was non-stop and unassisted but he had to stop and get assistance. He was still the first person to sail around the world in three disciplines even though his solo attempt had stops and assistance, just like my circumnavigation of Australia.

This is what Nick told the online sailing website Sailing Anarchy: "I am happy, I have had a great life and I just want to sit back for a moment and say ... hey, these three goals have been massive, lots of hard work. The road has been long and has had its difficulties but I think I am the luckiest person alive."

I spoke with Nick while I was sailing up the East Coast of Australia. We were talking about the solitude and I remember his words vividly. "Life is too short to spend copious amounts of time by yourself". It was exactly what I was feeling at the time and why I have given up on a solo sailing career for now. I learnt that your friends and your family are so important and you need to spend more time with them because life is too short. And life is too short not to go after your dreams.

Nick is now sailing in the Extreme 40 sailing series. They race on powerful 40ft (12.2 metre) catamarans and the best sailors in the world compete in this series. In the first two years Nick has placed third, only beaten by America's Cup teams. When not competing in that series he is sailing super yachts and maxi yachts in regattas around the world.

He gets to spend most nights with his wife and child which is what he wanted so badly even before doing the Vendee. His dreams through life have changed however he has always had one. He is now living the dream. His next dream is to compete in the Olympics. He admits he doesn't have the skill for dinghy sailing but I am sure he will succeed. Until he achieves his goal, Nick's determination and ability will not allow him to give up.



Nick's true love is his family. Wife Flavie and daughter Eva.

I will always admire Nick for his work with youth and the disabled. Again in the interview with Sailing Anarchy: "I am a very proud patron for the sail4cancer charity. I am also in pretty close contact with disabled sailing. These gigs humble me; they make me really appreciate how easy my life is. I get stressed because I put a lot of pressure on myself but contact with these guys is my pressure release ... I have heaps of sailing friends that think they are pretty hard core but we are soft compared to those fighting disease and disability. When I am wet and cold I always think ... 'grunt up, you had the choice to come out here or to stay at home'. I guess because these people have not chosen to have sickness or restrictions on their body functions makes me appreciate that I have a choice as to how I want to live. Their courage and strength is absolutely inspiring."

Nick says on his website "why be good at everything, when you could be the best at something!" For more information on Nick Moloney and his career or to purchase his book "Chasing the Dawn" or his DVD "Sea of Dreams" visit www.nickmoloney.com. I know he will inspire you, just as he has inspired me.

Don't Give Up!

Your Dreams May Be Closer Than You Think!

There may be times when you feel as if you have taken a million steps towards your dreams, and acted on your plans, only to find yourself in the same place that you began from.

At times like this, you must not give up.

You must continue on. Though you may feel lost, bewildered, and alone, continue to believe in yourself. Do not allow discouragement and doubt to blur your vision and wash away your dreams. Visualize your way beyond the detours, standstills, and obstacles.

You will realize your dreams. You have worked hard and taken so many productive steps in a positive direction that you are bound to succeed. Whatever the hurt of the moment may be, it will pass. Tomorrow is always a new dawn. Today, you must pause, rest, catch your breath, and then look ahead. Each step will bring you closer to your dreams. The rainbows and the love that you deserve are in sight. Happiness is just around the next turn.

~ Vicki Silvers ~

(From Alissa Wood's Vicki Silver crime mysteries)

Jamie Dunross

www.solo1.com.au

The next inspirational story I have will blow your mind. I discovered Jamie Dunross when I was researching solo circumnavigations of Australia. In my circumnavigation there were times when I just didn't have the energy or ability to do the things I wanted to and this left me frustrated and wondering how I was going to continue.

My circumnavigation was the toughest thing I have ever had to deal with. So what would you say if I said that Jamie was doing it as a C5 quadriplegic. Jamie has severely restricted movement in his arms and hands and no movement in his legs.

Nick Moloney had to withdraw from his Mini Transat race after breaking an arm and while it is a different kettle of fish to compare a race to Jamie's journey, the difficulty of sailing alone with any form of handicap is so much harder.



Spirit of Rockingham – S&S 34 custom built for Jamie.

Jamie's story is best told in his own words:

"I was born on 28 August 1965 the eldest of three children. The interest in sailing came at a reasonably early age with the opportunity to play with a surfcat from when I was about ten. I then progressed onto sailboards at the age of 17. Those experiences set the course for my competitive sailing.

Even as a ten-year-old I enjoyed the whole sensation of being out on the water, and my naturally competitive nature would turn most sailboard rides into a race.

At the age of 18 I was offered a spot to crew for a friend at my local yacht club. I continued to sail until about the age of 22, when I decide to move my young family to remote Meekatharra to further my career in the gold mining industry. The next six months was spent working as a gold room operator.

It was on 24 August 1988 that my life as I knew it would change and nothing would ever be the same again. I was at the end of my shift cleaning a vessel with water connected to a pipe under pressure and pumping water into a tank when the pipe from the tank came off due to a faulty valve.

The water, escaping under enormous pressure, hit me in the chest, lifting me off my feet and throwing me across the yard, through a chain guard around the hydrochloric acid fibreglass tank, splitting that and then hitting the ground.

This was the start of a new life thrust upon me. Here we go. After being transferred to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in Perth, my doctors told me it was quite possible that I would be a quadriplegic. A 'halo' traction apparatus was fitted. I have to say it was just one of the scariest and worst sensations that I have experienced in my life.

It was six weeks before I had any positive indication that things might improve with the sensation and movement starting to return in my index finger of my right hand. I left Ward 11 after four months of rehab. It was a record for a C 5-6 quadriplegic. The date was 24 December, I was determined to get home and bring my family back together.

The reality was, going home to a life with so many uncertainties. Not being able to do much for myself, being reliant on family for all my needs I didn't know if I would survive this journey. Unfortunately my relationship didn't.

Depression set in and I entered into a new phase of the journey. I didn't know if I would or wanted to survive. This could be likened to a journey in space or maybe out of space describes it better. A journey that would last five years.

A good mate Ted Fuller had been encouraging me for years to come back and sail, but I just couldn't stand the thought of spoiling the memories that I had of my sailing days being an active crew member. Ted didn't give up, he just got more inventive as to ways he could dangle the carrot that would eventually change my mind to return to sailing.

And he found the key that would unlock a new door in this journey. I had never skippered or steered the boat before. It really appealed to me and would maybe get Ted off my back. Also I would dream at night that I could still walk and when I woke up in the morning the nightmare would start again.

I sailed in the TCYC 1992 Easter Regatta (in Perth, WA) as skipper on Ted's yacht Magician. And we won. For the first time in five years I had a sense of self worth and belonging. Remarkably my dreams began mirroring reality and were of achieving things from my wheelchair.



That was the start of me sailing back into life again. It was like turning back the clock to being a clumsy teenager, meeting people, communicating, socialising, getting my disabled drivers licence and even dating again.”

Life goes on. It's what you make of it that counts. Jamie not only moved on in life, he set new goals, new dreams and at the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney he won the Sonar class Gold Medal.

Jamie then decided to push his limits further, much, much further! Sailors at times push themselves to the edge of their comfort zone but rarely do they leave the outer limits of that zone. Jamie decided he wanted to be the first quadriplegic to circumnavigate the globe, solo and unassisted. First he would sail solo around Australia to gain coverage and hopefully sponsors.

In October 2007 Jamie broke the existing world record for a quadriplegic for sailing alone and unassisted when he sailed 129 nautical miles out to sea beyond Garden Island. This was a practice run for his circumnavigation.

Originally intending to depart Perth, Western Australia, in early January 2008 Jamie found that window of opportunity closed fast which meant delaying his departure to the next window in September 2008.



Of course there are people who, in light of his disability, said he couldn't do it. To them he said: "I'm not a goose and I won't hasten, I'll do it sensibly, I'll do it carefully and I'll do it to prove to those who believe in me that you can do anything you set your mind to."

Never doubting himself and solidly supported by his parents Rod and Rosemary, his partner Joanna and children Lynley, Jack and Isabella, Jamie was overwhelmed by the random

offers of help often from the most surprising quarters – contact from strangers, some of them on the other side of the globe.

Customising the boat required time and effort and his boat took a long time to build. When I spoke with Jamie he told me that his disability meant it would take him 40 minutes to get to the bow of his boat and back.

Other modifications are best explained by Jamie:

“Firstly I have had a Harken electric winch modified so I can operate it with a waterproof wireless control which will pull me up the mast via the spinnaker halyard. I have had some fear that if I use an electric winch to get up and down the mast and I got to the top I would be in serious trouble if I pressed the button to go down and nothing happened, so to get around that I am going to use the most reliable thing that I know which is gravity to get back down.

Once I get to the top of the mast I will rappel back down using mountain climbing equipment with an extended length of halyard that will go back to the deck. I also have a chair lift set up to get up and down the companionway”

Personally, I feared going up my mast by myself and was very fortunate not to have had to do it. That was with four limbs that work perfectly. I feared being bashed around as the boat rocked in the ocean swells. Jamie’s courage is incredible.

In the Olympics disabilities are graded 7 (least) to 1 (highest level). Jamie is graded Level 1 and he has the highest level of grit, determination, enthusiasm and spirit to boot.

To read more on Jamie’s story visit his website at www.solo1.com.au

Jamie has proved that it doesn’t matter who you are, if you have the drive to succeed, you can overcome almost anything. He has become one of my heroes. He is a deadset legend.

Courage

I remember a question on the exam paper the year I finished high school. We had to write what “courage” meant to us. A few months later a story emerged of one particular student who apparently wrote a massive essay on what he believed courage meant. Towards the end of the time period for the exam he stopped, thought for a bit, stood up with his paper and walked up to the teacher’s desk.

He proceeded to rip up the paper in front of the teacher and throw it in the bin. He then went back to his desk. He pulled out a fresh piece of paper and wrote down his name and student number. Then he wrote the words “This is Courage.”

He packed up his belongings, walked up to the teacher and handed the paper in and walked out. These are the kind of risks you must take to achieve your dreams. He got 100 per cent for his assignment.

Some people argued this was not right but they are the ones who don’t have that kind of courage and are not achieving their goals. I imagine that student will forever be successful simply because they know how to take a risk to achieve their goals.

Jamie Dunross and Nick Moloney know what courage is. It is the determination to take that next step. And when everything goes wrong to get back on the horse. You may never want to sail the world like these two, and I assure you that Jamie will succeed in sailing the world, however every dream is achievable if you go after it.

You must have courage to take the setbacks in your stride and no matter how hard it seems you must move forward. You may have to start again, you may have to alter your goals for a different set of circumstances but if you keep your eye on the end goal, you will score that goal.

Nick survived a near drowning experience and now lives what many sailors would regard as the perfect life. He is 'living the dream' as we say. At the time of writing, Jamie had just completed his circumnavigation of Australia and the sailing world is better for it. More outstanding is that the sailing time of his passage was just 57 days.

If you discount the stationary days in his trip he has sailed around Australia in the second fastest time ever, only behind my own record. Disabled and able-bodied people around the world will be inspired.

His record will not go into the World Sailing Speed Record Council books but this is one of the greatest achievements in sailing. It is comparable to Ellen Macarthur's solo world record circumnavigation and the French hydrofoil yacht L'Hydroptere breaking through 50 knots to claim the sailing speed record.

But neither of these heroes faced the same difficulties that Jamie had to face and his story will make your setbacks seem tiny. Use Jamie as an inspiration when you face a challenge. You can plough through and come out the other side. It may take time, you may need some friends to help but you can do it.



Reaching Your Dream Takes Courage

Courage is admitting that you're afraid and facing that fear directly. It's being strong enough to ask for help and humble enough to accept it.

Courage is standing up for what you believe in without worrying about the opinions of others. It's following your own heart, living your own life and settling for nothing less than the best for yourself.

Courage is daring to take a first step, a big leap, or a different path. It's attempting to do something that no one has done before and all others thought impossible.

Courage is keeping heart in the face of disappointment and looking at defeat not as an end but as a new beginning. It is believing that things will ultimately get better even as they get worse.

Courage is being responsible for your own actions and admitting your own mistakes without blaming others. It's relying not on others for your success but on your own skills and efforts.

Courage is refusing to quit even when you're intimidated by impossibility. It's choosing a goal, sticking with it, and finding solutions to the problems.

Courage is thinking big, aiming high, and shooting far. It's taking a dream and doing anything, risking everything, and stopping at nothing to make it a reality.

~ Caroline Kent ~

(American writer and poet)

Brotherly Competitiveness

Many times I have been called a dreamer. My brother says I am the one who takes all the risks. He told me that he once spoke with the children at his church about me. He said he talked about his brother who always set new targets in his life and then went out and got them.

But life is never plain sailing. There are many storms that you need to get through to experience the great days we love so much. The days where dolphins swim on the bow, whales breach in front of you and the sunsets are magical. They don't come every day. If they did life would be boring and they wouldn't be magical anymore.

I've been competitive from childhood. I have been very competitive. I attribute this to my brother. He is two and half years older than me. I also have a sister who is four years older. So I was the youngest in the family. From an early age, I don't recall when, I wanted to be better than my brother at everything. We would compete in everything.



My sister Jenny and brother Peter with me on left.

We slept in the same room and had racing car bedspreads and we would sit on them and race each other. He would win more than me because he was older. Looking back, I'm not sure how that worked because the beds never moved! The imagination of children!

We played cricket in the hallway, golf in the back yard and football in the street. But my fondest memories are playing cricket in the street with our best friends Brad and Glenn Akers. Brad was Peter's age and Glenn was my age. We were so fanatical about cricket that we even drew lines on the road in paint to mark out our pitch.

We would play every afternoon after school and every weekend. In winter we played football. As we grew older, my brother and I got more serious about cricket. We were both the best players in our team but we played in different age groups. Every Saturday morning we would go off and play our separate games and then come home and brag about who had done what. We would record our averages in books to keep an overall record.

It was through my brother that I became so ferociously competitive. I wanted to be better than him more than anyone else. He drove me hard as he too was very good. Had it not been for him, I am sure I would not be who I am today.

I played representative cricket through my youth and achieved all sorts of records, winning countless trophies. However the strongest memory I have of my cricketing days is one particular match when I was batting with my brother.

It was the last game of the regular season and we had to win outright to get into the finals. We had successfully bowled the other side out in the first and second innings and only had to score around 80 runs in our second innings to claim outright points and a ticket to the finals.

Peter, being the better batsman, was elevated up the order to score quickly. He was doing well and eventually I went in to bat with him. We were playing on Bayswater High School's cricket ground which is very big. I was at the bowlers' end and I recall Peter hit a ball that just missed me and the umpire.

It went past at head height and it did not go much higher. It carried the boundary and smashed into the school building some 20 metres past the boundary. It hit so hard a concrete tile disintegrated on impact. It was the best six I have ever seen. We went on to win with my brother hitting the winning runs.

To this day I will claim to be the better bowler however he will always claim the better batting status because he has scored a century which I never did.

But it is through this competitiveness that I set my goals higher than I would normally have done. If I hadn't had to compete, I would probably have set lower goals. But my brother would set a goal and I would have to trump it. This went on for years.

My brother is now happily married. He has two really great boys who will probably end up competing the same way we did. Already Ryan, the youngest, is apparently keen to compete with his older brother Josh. It mimics Peter and my journey. I think my brother at times has resented me because I have gone on to achieve so much but if you look at his life you can see that he too is a high achiever.

He won many first class sheet metal awards through his course at TAFE and is simply the best sheet metal worker in Victoria. He is now working in a very successful company and has recently renovated his house. He also claims a victory over me at golf!

On his wedding day we played a round with the other groomsmen. I had never played golf before and was trying to use my cricket skills to get around the course. My sister Jenny rang half way through the round and spoke with Peter and then with me. She told me Peter was a little annoyed I was level with him after nine holes!

It was his wedding day so perhaps I should have rolled over and let him beat me. Not me, I battled with him to the end. He beat me by four shots.

So without challengers to your dreams, you set your dreams lower than you should. While you don't have to "keep up with the Joneses", healthy competition is good for you. It stretches your horizons and takes you further than you thought you could go.

Too many people set their goals too short. While they may achieve them, they never fully reach their potential. I will never discourage anyone from setting any goal, however I do encourage people to reach for their full potential.

If your goal is a family holiday on your boat why not make that dream a family holiday to the Whitsunday Islands and charter a luxury charter boat and cruise the magical islands. If your dream is to be the best in your company, why not make it the best in your company and make your company the best. Stretch yourself a little and you will grow with it.

Staying within your comfort zone will not make you everything you can be. You need to step out of it occasionally and try something you didn't think was possible. It may be jumping out of a plane, bungee jumping or even conquering a fear of heights. Step by step your challenges get bigger and bigger but you grow with this and your dreams need to grow too.

QUOTES from the book, DREAM IT DO IT:

“Despite what we’ve been taught, we don’t have to be rich, famous or distinguished to make our dreams come true.

If you have ever felt such tremendous enthusiasm and desire for something that you would gladly spend all your waking hours working on it, that you would happily do without pay, then you have found your passion.

Following our dreams almost always requires us to take chances. There is no guarantee that we will succeed in our venture. But if we don’t try, we will never know how far we can go.

Most people who are recognized for their remarkable accomplishments started out stumbling and struggling just like anyone else.

When our dreams are born of purpose, we can soar above the limitations to accomplish the seemingly impossible.

If nobody was willing to try something new, nothing would ever be invented. A single action can completely alter your future, for better or worse.”

Life can knock us down flat. It’s our measure of resilience that determines whether or not we keep dreaming and reaching for our dreams.

My Motivation

This part of my story is a little hard to talk about. For many years I have been driven by one little sentence. It is not a positive sentence by any stretch of the imagination. In fact it was when someone told me that I couldn't be something that gave me the motivation to prove them wrong.

I was born on 31 October 1973 and grew up in a typical family -- mum, dad and the three kids. I was the youngest. Dad was a teacher and mum made the family her work. She was a home mum and was always there for us. While growing up we went to church every Sunday. My brother and I hated Sunday school.

We used to fake sickness to avoid it. If we did go we would mess around at the back of Sunday school and end up having to sing songs by ourselves. We were mischief. I think I was about 15 when my family decided they wanted to move churches because the minister had changed and they didn't like the new one.

Being rebellious I decided I wanted to stay. Rather than faking sickness I would walk to church, a 40 minute walk. I ended up getting rides with the ladies from the retirement village across the road. I would get to church somehow or another. I was told I couldn't do it so I wanted to prove them wrong. I started to lead the youth and became a key member in teaching young people.

When I was 18 my parents separated. My father had been found to have had six affairs in the 25 years of marriage to my mother. I couldn't believe it. I hated my father and confronted him in our shed. His words still ring in my ears: "You are nothing and you never will be anything, you are just a little know-it-all."

I don't know if it's the right thing to take inspiration from negative words but these words have driven me to accomplish much. I don't speak with my father anymore. I believe he is a negative influence who I just don't need around me. His words however live with me.

Every time failure comes to the forefront I tell myself those words and I strive to succeed. I am a person who never gives up. It allows me to be a better competitor and people often wonder why I am so stubborn. Well, now you know.

If you give up you will never reach your potential. Sometimes the road can seem so rocky you may think there is no hope but you just need to take the next step. You may be so close to success, you just never know.

Don't die wondering. Give it another go. You may be knocked back time and time again but the next time might just be the time you succeed. You have to try again. There is always hope. Being told you can't do something is a great motivator. Prove them wrong, it makes for a very satisfying experience.

The Nature of Character

Sometimes we can help others reach for their dreams. Here is a story of an English teacher called James Glover who changed the life of more than one person. He glanced at the students as they filed into class – worn out sneakers, shirts untucked and slumped shoulders.

What could his English class give these kids that would help them with the problems they faced in the real world? He had tried reaching out to them and knew he'd failed but today he was going to try a different approach.

OK everyone, grab a seat and listen up!

Today we're going to talk about the nature of character. So ... Damon, what does character mean to you?

The heavysset boy in the second row shifted in his seat uncomfortably before replying, "Umm, character is it the people in a story?"

You're right Damon, characters are the people in a story, but the nature of character goes much deeper than that. Let me show you something.

James lifted two plastic trays up on to his desk so that everyone in the class could see them. In each tray sat a large sponge. He then produced two glass jugs. The first contained clear water and the second contained dark brown drain water. The young teacher poured the clear water into the first tray and the brown water into the second tray.

OK, who can tell me what's happening here?

"The sponges are soaking up the water?" replied the usually quiet Sharon. That's right Sharon, the sponges are soaking up the water that surrounds them.

And that's exactly how we develop our sense of character. We absorb the ideas of the people around us just like these sponges soak up the water.

If we surround ourselves with supportive, optimistic people we gradually develop a positive character, said the young teacher, indicating the tray containing the clean water.

He then motioned towards the second tray.

On the other hand, if we continually associate with pessimistic and cynical people, we gradually develop a negative character.

James paused and noticed that the background chatter that usually filled the class was absent.

Now what happens when I take the sponges out of the water? he asked as he lifted up the sponges, one in each hand.

The class looked puzzled.

How do they look? prompted James.

“They look the same to me” said Damon and the class responded with a ripple of laughter.

You’re right Damon, they do look the same on the outside, but there’s one important difference.

Watch what happens when I squeeze the sponges. James squeezed the first sponge and clear water flowed back into the tray. He then squeezed the second sponge and released a steady stream of dark liquid.

You see, even when I remove the sponges from their trays, they still carry their water with them. It’s only when I squeeze the sponges that we can really see what’s inside them.

The same thing happens with us, continued James, When we leave our familiar environment, we still carry our character inside us and when life puts us under pressure, our true character emerges from within.

The class was quiet as they reflected on the story.

For Damon Washington, this was a timely message. Since moving schools he’d been spending time with a group of neighbourhood kids who had a very negative view of the world.

In a moment of insight that belied his years, Damon realized that his new 'friends' were a lot like the dark brown water in Mr Glover's second tray. Perhaps his mum was right after all – perhaps he did need to find some new friends...

At the end of the period, as the students filed out of the classroom, James Glover received the most rewarding compliment of his teaching career when Damon paused at the door and said, "That thing with the sponges was pretty cool Mr G."

~ Anthony Fernando ~

(Australian educational software designer)

We all need to take Mr Glover's lesson on board. We must make the decision to spend time with motivated, optimistic people. By doing this we will gradually soak up the thoughts and ideas necessary to develop a positive character.

And when the time comes and life puts you under pressure you'll be able to draw on this reservoir and your true character will emerge from within. In life I chose not to hang around my father because he was a negative influence. I chose my mother. She was the strong one who would give me the character I wanted.

Don't Quit!

*When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low, and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.
Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow,
You may succeed with another blow.
Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things seem worse, that...
You Must Not Quit.*

~ C. W. Longenecker ~
(Motivational poet)



Never, Never, Never give up

My Hero

My mum is the greatest champion I know. Okay, I might be biased but my mum is my hero. My brother gave me competitiveness but my mum inspires me.

Mum's history is fairly unusual. She was adopted out as a child with her sister. She lived in a boarding school for many years until her new parents rescued her and her sister. After growing up and getting married and having three children she wanted to find her maternal mother and father. Her adopted parents disowned her because of this. Her husband cheated on her yet she continued to be strong and raise three children.

She eventually found her maternal parents but her mother had died due to medical issues many years before. Her father was living in Colac in country Victoria. Not long after their reunion he too died so she never really got to know him. But Mum would battle on. After the separation from my father life was difficult for mum. She didn't have much money and had a mortgage to pay. She battled on and decided to live life. She set off in a 4WD campervan and trailer with a friend and spent nine months prospecting for gold in Western Australia.

It was her hobby and she loved it. She is a true adventurous spirit and I have inherited that. She was eventually reunited with her adopted parents although her mother did not embrace the reunion. But her father did and wanted contact. A few years later her adopted mother died leaving her adopted father alone.

Mum took over as his carer and today is still looking after him. She has a dream to go travelling in a camper again and will when she gets the chance. Until then her role is to look after her father and catch up on lost time. She has four grandsons who she adores and spoils rotten. And then she has this son who is always going off and doing something crazy. But she supports everything I do and to have this support is priceless.



My proud mum, seeing me home in Airlie Beach.

In my circumnavigation of Australia she was my rock. She was always there to call on. I would yell at her at times and then apologise the next day but she would always say that she didn't take it to heart, that she just felt for me. On the final day of the trip I was running a bit early. I had planned to arrive in the afternoon around 4 pm. This was simply because I was waiting for mum.

She was flying up from Melbourne and I wanted her there to see me finish. I couldn't think of finishing without her. After I finished mum was the first person on the boat. She is my hero and I had made her proud. That is all a son can ask for, to see his mother happy. And I had made her happy.

Mum's road was very rocky and there have been times that life has challenged her yet she charges on towards her next goal. She will never be rich, she will never travel the world and stay in five star hotels but she is living life. She taught her children that life needs to be lived and that when times get tough better days are not far away.

So many times she could have given up but she strode forward, step by step, knocking back the hurdles to become who she is today, the mother of a world-record holder.

There's A New Day Coming!

*When the Sun announces the dawning day
just flex your muscles and start on your way.*

*Go over, or under, around, or through
any obstacles or hurdles that challenge you.*

There's a new day coming.

Cast aside the failures of yesterday.

Forget the peaks and valleys that have paved your way.

Wipe the sweat from your brow and the dust from your shoe.

Take a breath and relax so that you may begin anew.

There's a new day coming.

Forget the burdens and obstacles that have held you back.

Focus on your dreams and prepare a plan of attack.

There are battles awaiting to challenge your success.

Daring you to stand tall and to give it your best.

There's a new day coming.

*No matter how great the journey or how heavy the load,
how steep the mountain, or how rough the road.*

*When your arms grow weary and legs give way,
stop and rest for a moment, it will be okay.*

There's a new day coming.

As shadows spring forth from the setting Sun.

Take a moment and savour the battles you've won.

Sleep peacefully tonight and enjoy your rest.

Awaken tomorrow and continue your quest.

There's always, a new day coming.

~ Mychal Wynn ~

(American inspirational poet)

Helping others to live their dreams

After attending the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and studying for an associate diploma of architectural technology I got a job working with homeless youth at Harrison Community Services in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne where I was the recreational officer and maintenance manager. I was 19 and my role was to fix the houses the youth lived in. These were troubled youth and in drunken or drug fuelled rages they would punch holes in the walls or break windows etc. I would go and fix them. I used the company truck to pick up furniture and take it to opportunity shops run by Harrison. I would also take their rubbish to the tip. My other role was to take the young people on a recreational activity once a week. This could be tobogganing, windsurfing, a visit to the beach, tenpin bowling or even an organised camp.

After I started taking the same young people on recreational trips they learnt to respect me and the damage they were causing slowed a little. Then I decided that if they broke anything they could help fix it and I would get them involved. The damage stopped and we were able to start making improvements. Again they participated in fixing their accommodation.

One particular young lad, Cameron, who was 14 at the time loved to work with me. He often rang management seeking to work with me and he gradually became my full-time apprentice. He had alcohol and drug problems and was living away from home. He felt his family did not respect him.

One day I had too much on so I left him to paint the interior of a unit. I wasn't meant to leave him on his own but I trusted him. I came back later the same day to find him sitting on the porch having a cigarette. As I walked up he had a big smile on his face. I went inside to find that he had finished painting the interior and it was excellent work.

I rang my boss and she came down and praised our work. I had to tell her it wasn't me but that Cameron had done it all without me being around. She gave him extra money for his day's work. Cameron then asked me if we could show his parents. I gladly went and got them and brought them back to have a look.

Showing them what their son had achieved seemed to break down a barrier and not long after that he moved back home with them. He ended up with a full-time job and at 16 he was a shift manager at a service station. He bought his first car before he could even drive.

He had a dream too, you see. It was just that no one gave him a chance to shine, no one gave him respect. It was not a major thing for me to do, in fact it was easy, because he did some of my work for me. But his dreams are now not just to survive each day. His dreams are soaring. I know he will be successful as long as people continue believing in him.

So many times we are too scared to go after our dreams because we are afraid others won't support us. It is far too common today to have people 'talk it up' and not deliver. But we must be confident in ourselves. It is a lot easier to live our dreams and go after them if we have support but we must also be confident to chase them even if we don't have support. You've just got to trust yourself.

Your Dimension Of Greatness

*No one can know the potential,
of a life that is committed to win;
With courage - the challenge it faces,
to achieve great success in the end!
So, explore the Dimension of Greatness,
And believe that the world CAN be won;
By a mind that is fully committed,
KNOWING the task can be done!*

*Your world has no room for the sceptic,
No room for the DOUBTER to stand;
To weaken your firm resolution
that you CAN EXCEL in this land!
We must have VISION TO SEE our potential,
And FAITH TO BELIEVE that we can;
Then COURAGE TO ACT with conviction,
to become what GOD MEANT us to be!
So, possess the strength and the courage,
to conquer WHATEVER you choose;
It's the person WHO NEVER GETS STARTED,
that is destined FOREVER to lose!*

~ Unknown Author ~

Windsurfing will not take you anywhere

I took up windsurfing in my Christmas holidays at Balnarring Beach on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria. My family went there every year and stayed in our caravan as did several other friends and their families. My uncle bought a windsurfer and I had a go. I loved it and I got hooked.

Windsurfing became my passion after I recovered from knee injuries and asthma problems that prevented me from fulfilling my dreams in cricket. The fresh air and water was great for my asthma and the gentle up and down movement of the board over the water was great for my knees. However my competitive side moved in and within six months I was racing in the Victorian Slalom Windsurfing Championships.

I heard through the grapevine that my father had said that windsurfing wouldn't take me anywhere. I had given up my job at Harrison Community Services when the windsurfing shop that had sponsored me to race offered me the manager's role. Even my girlfriend at the time hated it. In fact we broke up over it. I told her I had been offered the position and her words were simply 'you didn't take it did you?' Of course I had. I wanted to work in a role that was my passion.

I was 20 when I started working as manager of Sailboard Headquarters (SHQ) in Melbourne. Leaving Harrison was hard, not because of the job but because I was leaving the youth. But I stayed in touch with them. When I went to SHQ I got my windsurfing instructors certificates and went all the way to the top.

I became a Master Windsurfing Instructor, one of only five in the country at the time. This meant I could instruct people to become instructors. I even became president of Windsurfing Victoria during my time at SHQ. Once I settled into the role the work hours went up and up. In the winters we started running tours to Maui, Hawaii and Plantation Island in Fiji. I lead every tour, spending my winters away from Melbourne.

On one particular tour to Fiji a good friend, Brendan Boxall, was the other instructor travelling with me and I took a photo of him windsurfing towards me with a yacht sailing in the background. This photo formed my next dream. I wanted to run windsurfing tours in Fiji off a yacht. This photo lived beside my computer at work for many years as an inspiration to keep working hard towards this goal.

To achieve this goal there were several key components I needed. I had to get a commercial licence to drive boats and then I needed the money. So I resigned from SHQ and moved to the Whitsundays. It helped that my best friend Anthony Bradbury had just moved there with the police force. I got a job at Brampton Island in the water sports department and got my coxswains licence.

Having achieved this part of the goal I then decided to move to the home of windsurfing, Maui, Hawaii. I went with very little in my pocket but I had a plan. My plan was to link up with a top windsurfer and create a vacation rental business where people could fly in and we would have everything for them in one spot.

I met Josh Stone who was the current world freestyle windsurfing champion and he had the property so we set about adding the other items. This included buying vans and cars for the guests to use and building what was known as the 'Toybox'.

The Toybox contained windsurfing kits, surfboards, body boards and mountain bikes. Using Josh's status around the world we created a very successful business having an occupancy level of 65 per cent in the first year which was extraordinary. And this was bed nights not room nights. If we calculated it on rooms it was more like 85 per cent occupancy.



Windsurfing my favourite break in Hawaii – Ho'okipa Beach Park

After the success of the business it was time to get the boat. I purchased a Beneteau 51 from the Moorings yacht charter company. Although I bought it from the United States the boat was at Hamilton Island in the Whitsunday Islands. I packed up everything I had including all the windsurfing kit for the boat tours and off I went to Hamilton Island to get my new boat.

On arrival I found that the final payment for the boat had not arrived. I was allowed to move onto the boat but couldn't take it anywhere. It was a frustrating 10 days stuck on 'Hammo'. Many would say that being stuck on Hamilton Island was a good thing but when you have a boat that you should own and want to go sailing, well it just gets frustrating. Eventually the funds came through and the boat was mine.

I had a few friends join me and we delivered the boat to Fiji via New Caledonia and started our tours. We would surf in the morning at Wilkes or Namotu Lefts then we would sail off to find some wind and party at resorts in the evening. I was joined by my other best friend Mark Lannoy and he and I were living the dream. Perfect wave breaks, good friends and great times.

This created an issue after a while. For the first time in my life I had no further dreams. I was living my dream and had not created any more. It was everything I had dreamt of. The dream came to an end because I was lonely and looking to get more out of life. Mark felt the same way. It was time in our lives to settle down a little. Without another dream, without another goal, I was lost. I sold the boat and headed to Brisbane not knowing where my life was leading.

This was a hard time in my life. I didn't know how to live without dreams and I didn't want to just make something up. Dreams need to be what you really want out of life. It is not worth striving for something just so you have a dream because you won't chase it. Your heart simply won't be in it. I had to come up with a dream, and quickly, or my life would spiral out of control. It had started. I was drinking a fair bit, going out every weekend trying to find that life partner but getting drunk instead.

Windsurfing had taken me all the way to an amazing place but I found it was not the perfect dream. There was still something missing and this is something that can happen. It doesn't stop you chasing your dreams as you don't know till you get there what it will be like. It is a risk you take. When Mark and I talk about our time in Fiji we recall it as the best time of our lives. We don't regret it one bit. It's just we needed to move on.

Mark is now married to the lovely Jennifer and their wedding was amazing to be involved in. They have a wonderful little fella called Charlie and they are very happy with life in Melbourne. So windsurfing took me all over the place and was a very successful part of my life. It was now time to grow up and take on new challenges, but what would they be?



Off the lip at Ho'okipa Beach Park, Maui Hawaii 2002

Within You Is The Strength



*To Meet Life's Challenges!
You are stronger than you think,
remember to stand tall.*

*Every challenge in your life
helps you to grow.*

*Every problem you encounter
strengthens your mind and your soul.*

*Every trouble you overcome
increases your understanding of life.*

*When all your troubles weigh
heavily on your shoulders,
remember that beneath the burden
you can stand tall,
because you are never given
more than you can handle ...
and you are stronger than you think.*

*~ Lisa Wroble ~
(American children's author)*

New dreams - more hurdles

Not one to stand still I started to think of other dreams. I decided to buy a boat in the Caribbean and sail it home, sell it and hopefully make a bit of money while covering the cost of the trip. I bought a Beneteau S38.5 from Canouan Island in the Grenadines, West Indies. On arrival a couple of friends and I sailed the boat down to Grenada to fit it out for the voyage home. We sailed past Tobago Keys which is a magnificent spot for yachting.

On arrival in Grenada we went shopping for provisions. I found it funny that over the speakers in the grocery store there was a live broadcast of a game of cricket instead of music. It was a game between the West Indies and Australia. Brian Lara, the home hero, was going ballistic and every boundary, be it a four or a six, was cheered by people in the shop.

As the game was close to the end people gathered around the speakers. It was amazing. This country is cricket mad and beating the Australians was a major thing for them. Countless times cheers went up and I couldn't help but smile. My team was getting beaten but you had to smile. How simple can the joys of life be. The West Indies won and that night it was party time throughout the town. Luckily for me there was another game in Grenada a couple of days later.

Being cricket mad I walked to the stadium with the crowds. I was by myself as the other members of my crew were American and Israeli and didn't understand cricket. I sat in the upper seats and watched as enormous speakers blaring music played and the crowds sang and danced, tooting horns and anything else musical they could find. It was the atmosphere you dream of when you think of a game of cricket in the West Indies.

As the day went on the game was not so good for the Australian team which was tired. They had already won the series and just didn't seem interested. However I was befriended by the people around me. None of them were Australian. I sat next to an English guy on his

honeymoon. His wife was at the spa back at the resort. Nice work mate, going to the cricket on your honeymoon without your wife!

At the innings break I thought I would buy some lunch. Well I wasn't allowed to. The people sitting around us basically shoved plates of food in front of us. I recall having three giant sized plates on my lap at one stage. I had no idea what it was and didn't want to offend them by not trying everything. Some was good, some not so good but the whole concept was great.

These people had embraced us and accepted us into their culture. It was a great feeling. At the end of the game we all went off to the yacht club for some drinks and continued partying. The West Indies had beaten us but it didn't matter. You couldn't be upset in this place because everyone was so happy.

Sometimes in life you need to remember the simple things in life can be the best. We take for granted so many things. I still do this today. However I am reminded every time I go to these places just how simple life can be. These people dream of a happy day every day and they usually live it. It is not by owning expensive cars or fancy holidays, it is simply living a good life with your family and friends.

Your dreams don't need to be elaborate, they just need to be what you want in life.

The boat I had purchased was called Southern Accent. It had a new engine and there were a few electrical problems. Sailing to Aruba Island in the Lesser Antilles I experienced one of the highs of my sailing career. There are no photos and no video footage of this moment. It's all in my mind.

We were sailing through the night under a full moon. I was the only one on deck, the other two were sound asleep. The boat was on auto-pilot and we were cruising downwind at about 6 or 7 knots. It was very comfortable. Suddenly a splash beside the boat caught my attention, then another and another. Before I knew it there were hundreds of dolphins playing around the boat.



They would walk on their tails and jump over the bow. It was spectacular. I am very laid back and don't get excited by much however this was something that made me feel like an excited child once again. For about 40 minutes they jumped and played and I just sat watching in awe. I would run up the front of the boat and sit and watch, then cruise to the back to watch from the cockpit.

Then a light came on downstairs and they disappeared. This was a show for me and me alone. What an amazing memory. It will always be in my memory and today it still rates as one of the most amazing things I have seen.

Southern Accent started to develop more problems. Approaching Aruba Island we had no power at all. I recall sailing up the coast looking for the entrance to an inlet that had the main marina in it. Against the back drop of lights I just couldn't see it. Our navigation lights were only faint by this time because we were running very low on power and we couldn't start the engine.

Then I heard the sound of outboard engines nearby but couldn't see a boat. Then all of a sudden we were flooded with light as a black boat with people in black uniforms just 50m from us turned on a massive flood light. It was quite scary at first because we thought we were being boarded by pirates but it was the coastal patrol.

They thought we had drugs on board as we were sailing with no lights. I explained the situation but they searched the boat anyway and eventually they gave us the okay. I asked them to tow us in to harbour but they simply went on their way.

Eventually we found our way into port and over the coming days repaired the boat. I had a marine electrician complete the work and then we set off to Panama. This was always going to be an interesting journey. The first few days were going to be windy however the last 200 to 300 nautical miles would be light. This is due to the inter-convergence zone of the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea. In this area there is rarely any wind. So I knew we had a long period of motoring ahead of us.

On one particular day at 6 am the wind had died away and it was time to start motoring. As the day wore on the wind got lighter and lighter. At 6 pm with 130 nautical miles to go to Panama I smelt smoke. At first I thought the crew was burning dinner until one of them came up and said the engine was on fire.

I immediately shut down the motor and bolted downstairs grabbing the fire extinguisher on the way. It wasn't the engine that was on fire, the smoke was coming from under the bed in the aft cabin where the batteries were located. I lifted the bedding up and put out the fire but my batteries were ruined and we were very lucky not to have lost the boat.

The problem was caused by the electrician in Aruba who had changed a few things around. He put the positive battery lead over the negative terminal right at the back of the battery box, almost out of sight. After 12 hours of motoring it had burnt through the protective coating and was shorting out eventually creating enough heat to start a fire.

The result was a boat with no battery power at all, no motor, no lights and no navigation systems. We were dead in the water with no wind and the situation was pretty grim. And we

were sitting in one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. About 13,000 ships use the Panama Canal every year and we were right in their path with no navigation lights.

I used my satellite phone to call the United States Coast Guard but they told us that we were in Columbian waters and they couldn't help. Even after a bit of negotiation they were not allowed to come and get us. It would be up to the Columbians to get us. So we tracked them down. The American on board spoke very little Spanish but it was better than my entire Spanish vocabulary of 'Ola'.

She tried to negotiate to get us rescued but they said they would only come and get the crew and not the boat. I wasn't going to leave the boat so I wasn't happy with that. They got a quote for a commercial vessel to tow us in to port but it was US\$26,000 which I wasn't willing to pay. The boat was not in danger, it had sails and it would be just a matter of time before I got to port.

Towards midnight I made a decision to evacuate the other crew. I would stay with the boat and sail it the 85 nautical miles to Cartagena in Columbia when the wind returned. All I needed was a bit of wind. So one final call was made to the Columbian Coast Guard. They responded saying they were already on their way. We asked if they were getting the boat as well as the crew and they said they were. We had no idea why they had changed their minds.

That night I sat up as the sails slatted from one side of the boat to the other. I had the tender in the water ready to tow the boat out of the way should a ship appear. I had torches and if I saw a ship I was going to shine it on the sails. It was a long night. In the morning a dark figure appeared on the horizon and slowly grew bigger. It had been 12 hours since the fire when a large frigate pulled up alongside.

All credit to the skipper as he touched us very gently. Next thing a net was deployed down the side and my two crew took the invitation and were gone. That left me on the boat by myself. They were going to tow me the 85nm back to Cartagena and they handed me a

rope that was about three inches thick. On a 39ft boat there is nothing to attach this size of rope to so I wrapped it around the anchor winch and then tied it to the mast.

Slowly they pulled away with the tow line unwinding off its spool. After a while I saw a big commotion on the back of the frigate and people were diving for the rope. They had forgotten to tie it on at their end! When the spool unwound it simply went straight over the back of the boat and into the water.

It was then my job to haul it onboard my boat and wait for them to come and get it. After an eternity of heavy lifting I had it all onboard and they came back and got it. This time they tied it on and I fed it out from my boat. We were away.

I was the only one on board and the weather was pretty much a flat calm. It was hot and I was wearing just my board shorts, a hat and sunglasses. As the boat continued to pick up speed I could only guess how fast we were going and I hadn't done the calculation of how long it was going to take to get to Cartagena. Then the yacht started slewing off to the side so I had to stay on the helm to keep the boat right behind the frigate.



Under tow behind a 300ft Frigate

The frigate kept accelerating. Faster and faster and the keel of my boat was humming. This was much faster than my boat's theoretical hull speed of just over seven knots. We were flying and the spray was peeling up from the bow and what little wind that was around threw the spray back in my face and into the cockpit. At one stage the cockpit was full of water because the drain plugs couldn't keep up.

I stood up to wave and get the attention of the people on the frigate. For a long time I was waving frantically but was not willing to let go of the helm. Every time I did the boat would veer off suddenly and there was the risk of rolling over. Eventually they slowed down but only to check their tow line!

I quickly got my wet weather gear on and got set again. For the next six hours we flew along at 15 knots. Not recommended I can tell you that. Finally Cartagena came into sight and the frigate slowed. I was very tired by this stage but the safety of the boat was paramount and adrenalin had kept me going.

A smaller gunboat had come out to take the tow for the last part of the trip. My crew were handed back to me and the gunboat took the tow line. This was obviously a boat used to chase drug runners. It had three massive props under the water and I hoped they wouldn't go too fast.

The port of Cartagena is up an inlet and I had done my research on the marinas. The first one was owned by an Australian and the second was a better marina but locally owned. I had my crew try to explain that I wanted to go to the Australian owned marina. As we approached they went straight past and I assumed we were going to the locally owned marina. At that stage I just wanted to clean up, have a shower and sleep. We went past the second marina.

I didn't know about any other marinas. They turned towards another set of docks. I worked out it was the coast guard docks. As we pulled up I saw a crowd of people waiting with cameras and microphones and there were people in uniforms and I had no idea why. As we tied up a guy handed me three t-shirts saying Coast Guard Cartagena. They were all

It's funny how life can take major twists and turns. I sold the boat in Columbia rather than bring it back across the Pacific. I just didn't trust it anymore. My dream to sail across the Pacific had been shattered. However I had made the money I planned to make and life carried on.

Once again my dream had been altered but you have to go with these changes. I couldn't chase that dream anymore. It was just too dangerous for myself and my crew and I didn't trust the boat. One day I will do it but on a bigger and better boat. The lesson I learnt out of this is that sometimes you have to change your dreams end result. I don't believe I was meant to sail across the Pacific on that boat. I sold it and made the money I wanted so I couldn't complain but it left me once again without a dream.



My crew and I posing for photos

Words To Live By

*It's not how much you accomplish in life
that really counts,
but how much you give to others.
It's not how high you build your dreams
that makes a difference,
but how high your faith can climb.
It's not how many goals you reach,
but how many lives you touch.
It's not who you know that matters,
but who you are inside.
Believe in the impossible,
hold tight to the incredible,
and live each day to its fullest potential.
You can make a difference
in your world.*

~ Rebecca Barlow Jordan ~
(Best-selling inspirational author)

Where now?

I arrived back in Sydney to meet up with my girlfriend who I had only just got together with before leaving for the US. I had no dreams and no idea what I would do next. I hated Sydney but she had a new job. I was once again lost and searching for a new dream.

The next couple of years would see me go around in circles, not really going anywhere. I moved to Adelaide with my partner and renovated her mum's house and then a house she owned with her sister. Then I moved up to Queensland.

While in Brisbane I dreamt of establishing a successful business and set about selling yachts. I built a business only to have it taken away from me in a period of betrayal and heartbreak. Not only did I lose my business, I also lost my fiancée. I was once again a lost soul with no dreams or goals.

While I was living in Brisbane I was in the yachting scene and it was here I really got into racing yachts. My neighbour Rudy Weber owned Too Impetuous, an old Admirals Cup boat, and I raced with him in local races and eventually in a Brisbane to Gladstone race. We won the veterans division in that race.

After a brief stint in the Whitsundays I found myself back in Brisbane living at my best friend Anthony Bradbury's house in Alexandra Hills and helping him renovate his house while I finished my commercial skipper's license (Master V). I then spent some time skippering the ferries out of Redland Bay. I probably ran into a guy called David Beard who resided on Russell Island. I never met him but I am sure I crossed his path. Later on it would be his world record that I chased.

A Creed To Live By

Don't undermine your worth by comparing yourself with others.

It is because we are different that each of us is special.

Don't set your goals by what other people deem important.

Only you know what is best for you.

Don't take for granted the things closest to your heart.

Cling to them as you would your life, for without them life is meaningless.

Don't let your life slip through your fingers by living in the past or for the future. By living your life one day at a time, you live all the days of your life.

Don't give up when you still have something to give.

Nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying.

Don't be afraid to admit that you are less than perfect.

It is this fragile thread that binds us to each other.

Don't be afraid to encounter risks.

It is by taking chances that we learn how to be brave.

Don't shut love out of your life by saying it's impossible to find. The quickest way to receive love is to give love.

The fastest way to lose love is to hold it too tightly; and the best way to keep love is to give it wings.

Don't dismiss your dreams.

To be without dreams is to be without hope;

to be without hope is to be without purpose.

Don't run through life so fast that you forget not only where you've been, but also where you're going.

Life is not a race, but a journey to be savoured each step of the way.

~ Nancye Sims ~

(American inspirational poet)

The Big Dream in the making

One evening while I was home alone I had decided to drown my sorrows at a local bar when I turned the television on. The movie Waterworld was on. I found myself watching this movie with interest. Seeing Kevin Costner on the rail of his monstrous trimaran cruising at speed, solo in the middle of the ocean brought back memories of my times at sea. I said to myself 'I can do that'.



I am not sure exactly what it was that set me on the course of finding out if anyone had ever sailed around Australia solo but I spent the night researching on the internet. I found the record was held by David Beard who had set a time of 68 days 8 hours and 30 minutes in 1990 in his Adams 35 yacht Skaffie II. He was something of a sailing legend with two world circumnavigations to his credit.

David Beard had sailed out to Australia from England when he was young and had worked as a professional mariner most of his life. He was 58 when he did his solo circumnavigation of Australia and was living at Morningside in Queensland. As mentioned he was now living on Russell Island off Redland Bay

I didn't go out that night. I was forming my new dream, a dream of great enterprise and enormous challenge. I also wanted something I could start and finish. I have, in my mind, created a reputation of starting so many things and not finishing them off. This however was something I set my heart and soul on starting and finishing. It was winter 2008.

In October that year I moved back to the Whitsundays to skipper maxi yachts, something I thought would be the ideal preparation for my dream. I started working with a company called Ozsail and was thrown onboard a former racing yacht called Freight Train, a 60ft aluminium hulled pocket maxi. I ran charters for backpackers showing them the glorious Whitsunday Islands.

At Christmas another dream came true when Rudy Weber invited me to join his crew onboard his yacht Lloyd's Business Brokers Too Impetuous for the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. It is every offshore sailor's dream to complete a Hobart and I was no exception. Due to my work on maxi yachts in the Whitsundays I was the 'rock star' skipper.



The crew of Too Impetuous (Left to Right) David Cutcliffe, Roger Patterson, me, David Stenhouse, Bruce Green, Owner Rudy Weber, Vicki Patterson, Linsay Patterson, Phil Lamplough & Steven Lock

I flew into Sydney on Christmas Eve and stayed on the boat with Rudy. The preparations for the race were already completed and in the morning we set out to achieve a dream, not just for me but for the entire crew. It was a remarkable race and I still say I never saw the cliffs

of Sydney Heads I was so focussed on getting the boat out of the harbour and keeping out of the spectator fleet wash.

The crew were a great bunch and everyone worked well together. During the first night a yacht called Georgia sank making the upcoming Bass Strait even more of a challenge for those of us who had never ventured across it. What a reputation this place has. In previous years people had died in Bass Strait as waves as high as 20m had smashed into the race fleet. I used to watch the race on TV intently when my friends were competing in it.

In 1998 the Sydney to Hobart claimed the lives of six sailors in a tragic race that changed offshore racing forever. New safety regulations had come into place but every year it seemed Mother Nature could still unleash her fury on the fleet at some stage. In 1998 boats were dismantled, retirements came in the dozens and boats even sank. A boat I had once raced on for a day at a big regatta out of Hamilton Island had gone down when large waves had cracked the timber frames.



Too Impetuous under spinnaker just after exiting the heads

I was ready for the Bass Strait challenge and my experience as a heavy weather helmsmen meant I would be called upon to steer in the toughest conditions. I saw it as a challenge, not as a danger. I trusted my ability to get the boat through in any conditions and I knew the boat was strong.

Our crossing of Bass Strait however was in shorts, shirts and sunscreen. Not what we had expected or envisioned. It was not until we reached the coast of Tasmania that we got a bit of weather with up to 35 knots of wind on the nose. I drove the boat hard that night. At one stage I spent four hours on the helm and only handed it over when I was exhausted.

With one helmsmen feeling sick and one with a bad back we decided to pull the headsail down and sail under just the mainsail for a little while. I went to the bow and remember sitting in front of the forestay (the wire that holds the sail at the front of the boat) waiting for the halyard to be released so the sail could come down.

It was an amazing moment. Yes, I was physically fatigued to the point that when the sail was released I struggled to pull it to the deck. But the water was alive with phosphorescence. This is a bright, blue coloured light in the water caused by the disturbance of plankton by the movement of the boat. The plankton sparkles for a short time and as the bow was pounding through the waves it was flying everywhere. It splashed up on the sail and onto me and the whole boat seemed to be sitting on a cloud.

Once the sail was down I simply collapsed in the companionway, half under the hatch and half in the cockpit and I could not be budged. On our arrival into Hobart on the morning of the 30 December 2008 we crossed the line to the applause of hundreds of spectators. We had won our division. The smile on Rudy's face was priceless.

He had sailed a Sydney to Hobart race before but had never done it on his own boat let alone win a division. The celebrations were memorable with the traditional drink at the Court House Bar. I was on a high and my plan to sail around Australia was only more heightened by this achievement. I hadn't told anyone about my dream at this stage. That was something that would come up later.



A victorious crew in Hobart after winning PHS Division 2.



Leaving Pittwater on e11even.

I flew back to Sydney on New Years' Day to join David Elliott's e11even, a Farr 40, for the Pittwater to Coffs Harbour race. This was my first real chance on a high performance yacht in an offshore race. Rudy's yacht was high performance but older and slower. A Farr 40 is a state-of-the-art one design yacht with a planing hull and hence a lot quicker. I was full of excitement having come off the highs of the Sydney to Hobart victory. I set very high standards for myself in sailing and have created a reputation of being the one to take the helm in heavy weather.

This Pittwater to Coffs race was sailed in a constant strong wind. David was helming as was John Warlow, a respected helmsman. I was third helm. The start was interesting for me as I had no usual pre-race nerves and felt a bit too relaxed about it all. At my first turn on the helm I couldn't get the feel of the boat at all. I was not hitting the speeds the others were getting and was a little bit all over the place.

Back on the rail I was berating myself but reminded myself it was only the first real run on the helm and the next session would be better. But it wasn't. In fact I believe my second stint was worse than the first one. I was not letting myself feel the boat. After another hour I was sitting on the rail beating myself up again and wondering what was going on.

I had never had this problem before. I was the 'you beaut' helmsmen and I prided myself on that but I couldn't get the hang of this boat. I believe it was only my demands on myself that caused this feeling as no one was making any comments and after dark David willingly handed the helm over.

Well, what a difference. I couldn't see the waves, I had to feel them. I couldn't see the sails or the wind, I had to feel them and everything came together. I became one with the boat and from that moment on everything was much better. We finished fourth overall and third in division, so not a bad silly season's efforts between this and the Sydney to Hobart victory.

Helming a boat well is just like life. Sometimes you don't get into the swing of things and times are rough but when everything clicks the road is so much smoother. It doesn't mean it is all smooth going. I had plenty of round ups where I lost control of the boat in the heavy

winds. But I got the boat back on track and the next minute had it surfing along at high speeds once again.

I could have given up and David could have given up on me but persistence pays. You keep going till you get it right. Just like life!



I Will Persist Until I Succeed!

I will persist until I succeed.

In the Orient young bulls are tested for the fight arena in a certain manner. Each is bought to the ring and allowed to attack a picador who pricks them with a lance. The bravery of each bull is then rated with care according to the number of times he demonstrates his willingness to charge in spite of the sting of the blade. Henceforth will I recognize that each day I am tested by life in like manner. If I persist, if I continue to charge forward, I will succeed.

I will persist until I succeed.

I was not delivered unto this world in defeat, nor does failure course in my veins. I am not a sheep waiting to be prodded by my shepherd. I am a lion and I refuse to talk, to walk, to sleep with the sheep. I will hear not those who weep and complain, for their disease is contagious. Let them join the sheep. The slaughterhouse of failure is not my destiny.

I will persist until I succeed.

The prizes of life are at the end of each journey, not near the beginning; and it is not given to me to know how many steps are necessary in order to reach my goal. Failure I may still encounter at the thousandth step, yet success hides behind the next bend in the road. Never will I know how close it lies unless I turn the corner.

Always will I take another step. If that is of no avail I will take another, and yet another. In truth one step at a time is not too difficult.

I will persist until I succeed.

Henceforth, I will consider each day's effort as but one blow of my blade against a mighty oak. The first blow may cause not a tremor in the wood, nor the second, nor the third. Each blow, of itself, may be trifling, and seem of no consequence. Yet from childish swipes the oak will eventually tumble. So it will be with my efforts of today.

I will be likened to the rain drop which washes away the mountain; the ant who devours a tiger; the star which brightens the earth; the slave who builds a pyramid. I will build my castle one brick at a time for I know that small attempts, repeated, will complete any undertaking.

I will persist until I succeed.

I will never consider defeat and I will remove from my vocabulary such words and phrases as quit, cannot, unable, impossible, out of the question, improbable, failure, unworkable, hopeless, and retreat; for they are the words of fools. I will avoid despair but if this disease of the mind should infect me then I will work on in despair. I will toil and I will endure. I will ignore the obstacles at my feet and keep my eyes on the goals above my head, for I know that where dry desert ends, green grass grows.

I will persist until I succeed.

I will remember the ancient law of averages and I will bend it to my good. I will persist with knowledge that each failure to sell will increase my chance of success at the next attempt. Each nay I hear will bring me closer to the sound of yes. Each frown I meet only prepares me for the smile to come. Each misfortune I encounter will carry in it the seed of tomorrow's good luck. I must have the night to appreciate the day. I must fail often to succeed only once.

I will persist until I succeed.

I will try, and try, and try again. Each obstacle I will consider as a mere detour to my goal and a challenge to my profession. I will persist and develop my skills as the mariner develops his, by learning to ride out the wrath of each storm.

I will persist until I succeed.

Henceforth, I will learn and apply another secret of those who excel in my work. When each day is ended, not regarding whether it has been a success or failure, I will attempt to achieve one more sale. When my thoughts beckon my tired body homeward I will resist the temptation to depart. I will try again. I will make one more attempt to close with victory, and if that fails I will make another. Never will I allow any day to end with a failure. Thus will I plant the seed of tomorrow's success and gain an insurmountable advantage over those who cease their labour at a prescribed time. When others cease their struggle, then mine will begin, and my harvest will be full.

I will persist until I succeed.

Nor will I allow yesterday's success to lull me into today's complacency, for this is the great foundation of failure. I will forget the happenings of the day that is gone, whether they were good or bad, and greet the new sun with confidence that this will be the best day of my life.

So long as there is breath in me, that long will I persist. For now I know one of the greatest principles of success; if I persist long enough I will win.

I Will Persist. I Will Win.

The Planning

I returned to the Whitsundays and went to work on Mandrake, a 55ft ex-racing yacht, running similar trips to Freight Train. It wasn't until the wet season fully hit that the problems of the maxi yachts became apparent to me. Inside they were stuffy and you couldn't sleep. Outside it was too wet and windy.

This is okay when you are racing for a short stint but with 15 to 18 backpackers on board, plus crew, it was all too much week in week out. I resigned and went to work on Hayman Island driving their transfer boats. It was not really my kind of work as I am a sailor but it was good to get time on bigger boats and the crew were always fun to work with.

In June 2009 I finally decided to move to a company called Islandive. They run large sailing catamarans that are air-conditioned and the trips focus on diving trips to the Great Barrier Reef. I had to advance my diving certificates so on my trial trip on Wings III I had one of the dive instructors, Evya Gilo, run me through my advanced diver's course.

I will never forget the final dive of my course. I swam past two turtles without identifying them on a dive known as fish identification. To this day Evya reminds me of it and has great pleasure in telling the story. My response is that a turtle is not a fish!

After two weeks I had a month's break which had been planned before I started the job. I raced in the Brisbane to Keppel Yacht Race aboard e11even and then delivered it with some friends to Airlie Beach where I took part in the Meridien Marinas Airlie Beach Race Week.



e11even at Airlie Beach Race Week 2009

Dave Elliott had given me permission to race the boat without him onboard which I will always be grateful for. I raced with locals and a few other friends and had a great week. This was followed by Hamilton Island Race Week with the regular crew. Neither of the events went well results wise but were a lot of fun.

Then it was back to work with Islandive. One of the things I enjoy about Islandive is the regular diving to see the reef and wildlife. We see a lot of wildlife swimming in the oceans. I have swum with turtles quite a lot and I wear a turtle medallion around my neck which is a Fijian symbol for long life. Turtles can live for up to 200 years.

I've seen whales breaching in front of me and surface less than five metres from the boat. I've seen dolphins swimming on the bow of the boat. One night I watched dolphins chasing squid in the light of our torches and one surfaced right below my feet and sprayed me with a spume of water. Our oceans are a wonderful place and are so fascinating. They are always changing. They are full of amazing creatures and it is a privilege to swim amongst them and call it work.



Humpback Whale Calf breaching at Hamilton Island Race Week 2005

What disturbs me though is how easily we humans neglect our oceans. I see this first hand in my job. It is common to see people just tossing rubbish into the ocean and we see all sorts of garbage washed up on the beaches. I have had the sad experience of pulling several turtles out of the water, dead from different causes.

A couple of turtles had been hit by boats and this is probably the least disturbing of all. A lot of the time a boat will not see the turtle as it pops up under their bow. However two different types of turtle deaths I've seen can be stopped. The first is the turtle that drowns in a crab pot. These pots are used by commercial and recreational fishermen who put in bait so the crabs climb in and due to the design, they can't get out.

There are some types of crab pots on the market where the opening is big enough for a turtle to swim in to feed on the bait. They get stuck in them and drown. There is an easy fix to this by simply changing the regulations for crab pots. This is something I hope I can push throughout Australia.

More disturbing to me are the turtles where the cause of death is not known. One particular turtle I picked up and delivered to Marine Parks several years ago was dissected to find it had swallowed a plastic bag. The bag had formed perfectly in its stomach so that everything it ate stayed inside the bag. It died of starvation. What was more disturbing was that there were 12 cigarette butts, a bottle top and half a coke can in the bag.

This rubbish had been thrown off boats and wound up in the sea grass that turtles live on and they eat the foreign matter when feeding on the grass. In 2009 I heard other stories of turtles dying from plastic bags and started to hate the common plastic shopping bag with a passion. A turtle is a graceful creature and if you get a chance to swim with one it will be an experience you never forget.

I started to think of how I could get the message out and decided to use my sail around Australia to raise awareness. I called my campaign Save Our Seas Ocean Racing. I also started to talk about the problem with the guests on the Islandive boats. My crew probably thought I was a little crazy, until we found a dead turtle.

The night before it had been raining heavily and a lot of rubbish had washed into the sea. We turned up at one of my most favourite dive spots to find rubbish floating everywhere. The most disturbing thing was the tiny pieces of plastic floating in among the other debris. You couldn't collect it as the pieces were too small.

My good friend Onno Compeer, a Dutch instructor who spends his life teaching people to dive, spent the whole of breakfast out in the dinghy collecting rubbish. I continued collecting rubbish while the dive groups were below the surface. I even collected a large blue plastic barrel off the rocks.

The passengers couldn't understand it but it is simple. Rubbish comes from humans and ends up in our oceans because of our laziness and carelessness. I had a German hostie (Sophie Gossman) and she hated it too. My other dive instructor was Australian (Courtney Osborne) and we all talked about it with the passengers.



The rubbish and the turtle I found. I wasn't happy about it

The message got across. That afternoon we headed to Whitehaven Beach. We parked in Tongue Bay as this is the entrance to the Hill Inlet lookout walk. It is also renowned for the turtles feeding on sea grass so you see them surfacing all day.

On a lucky day you may even see a Dugong, the 'sea cow' of the ocean. As Onno was dropping the passengers off on the beach in our tender I saw a large floating object. I pointed it out to Onno and on his way back he found it was a dead turtle. We went back and picked it up because I knew Marine Parks would want it for research.

Unfortunately it was a little old and the smell was terrible. However I managed to take photos of the rubbish and the turtle and now I use them in presentations to show people what we are doing. While this particular turtle looked like it had been killed by a boat strike its death had affected the crew. And the guests, too felt sad about it.

Seeing a dead turtle, or any sea creature, is an awful thing. We all love seeing them whether we sail, snorkel or dive and in the Whitsundays turtles are the number one thing people want to see on our trips.

My passion for the ocean had been reignited and I needed to do something about it. It has become a dream of mine to clean up our oceans, rid the world of plastic bags and reduce the pieces of plastic that clog our oceans. It is estimated there are 46,000 pieces of rubbish in every square mile of ocean.



Always Have A Dream In Your Heart

Follow your heart, never surrender your dreams.

Constantly work towards your goals.

Believe in yourself, and always be truthful.

Take time to enjoy life's pleasures.

Keep your mind open to new experiences.

Think before acting, but don't

forget the joys of spontaneity.

Make your own decisions.

Look out for yourself, but remember

that you share this universe with others.

Look for the good in others,

everybody has their own song to sing.

Live each moment to the fullest,

for a moment too soon becomes a memory.

Look for opportunities, not guarantees.

Hope for the best.

Give people a chance to love you,

for that is how you learn to love.

Live your life for yourself,

but always be considerate of others.

Believe in tomorrow, for it holds the key

to your dreams.

~ Melissa Ososki ~

(Inspirational poet)

The Campaign Begins

It wasn't until January 2010 that I was in a position to launch my campaign to sail solo unassisted around Australia. It was always going to be a short preparation time but I had done the research and all I had to do was find a boat, fit it out and go sailing. I built the website and started to campaign for sponsors. Every day I had off work I would send out proposals and the search for a boat was on.

It was hard work and at times it seemed like I was getting nowhere. My biggest issue was finance. I was not flush with funds and I was about to take four months off work which would hurt.

Eventually I found the perfect boat. It was in Brisbane which was ideal because that is where I wanted to start the sailing part of the campaign. The boat was a Hugh Welbourn designed 12m sloop custom built by Halifax in Brisbane for the 2007 two-handed Melbourne to Osaka race. This boat is very light at 4.7 tonnes and very sparse down below with 900 litres of water ballast to make it more stable in heavy winds. It has a carbon fibre mast and boom and is a true racing boat. In the end it didn't compete in the Melbourne to Osaka race.

The former owner is one of my sponsors, Carlos Steenland, from Build for Cost. Carlos had campaigned the boat in the Brisbane to Gladstone race in 2007, 2008 and 2009 in the Performance Handicap System division with the best finish being fourth in 2009. I wanted to sail in the Brisbane to Gladstone as a warm up. I drove to Brisbane and spent two weeks working on the boat. It wasn't enough time. I found myself stressing as the time ran out.

The result was that I wasn't really prepared for the Brisbane to Gladstone race. Some would say I shouldn't have gone to the start line as the boat wasn't ready. But I'm too stubborn for that. I had organised to do the race and had publicised it so I was committed. On the



morning of the race, Good Friday, I had a friend Lisa Bolger come to the start with me. I had organised for her to be picked up by another friend Dean Thornton just before the start.

On the way to the start line I was still commissioning the auto-pilot but there were problems. It was not working properly. I was using several different brand name components in the system and I later found out the wiring was around the wrong way.

As time was ticking away I decided I should start first and deal with it later even if it meant stopping in at Mooloolaba to fix it. I couldn't race solo without the auto-pilot, that just wouldn't work. Then I tried pulling the mainsail up and it was extremely tight. The halyard had slipped off the pulley at the top of the mast and fallen into a gap causing a lot of friction. I ground it up but it was taking forever. Eventually Dean threw a couple of his mates onto the boat to help and I got the sail up.

We got to the start line three minutes before the main race was to start even though I was meant to start 15 minutes before them. As I was sailing solo my promise to race management was that I would stay clear of the fleet because I wasn't an official entrant. I had only the mainsail up and sailed below the fleet, catching my breath and getting into the groove of sailing.



Lisa and I set off on our Brisbane to Gladstone

Lisa had stayed on board and as we sailed out of the bay we made a decision that rather than worry about fixing the auto-pilot Lisa would stay with me all the way to Gladstone and act as my auto-pilot. Every time I wanted to use the auto-pilot, Lisa would take the helm. Considering Lisa had come out for a day sail and didn't have a change of clothes it was an awesome thing she did. I had enough safety gear for her so that wasn't an issue.

Lisa enjoyed her race immensely. She told me that two years ago she had done the race as a crew member, last year she was the mainsheet hand and this year she was helming a boat. What a fantastic rise!

We were slow out of the bay, mainly due to the headsail which didn't fit properly. I was waiting for a new sail for my solo attempt and it had been delayed. It was just a cruising dacron headsail and the luff was too long for the new furler track, but it worked okay. I knew it only had to get me out of the bay and then it would be all spinnakers home and I had plenty of them.

I had arranged with Julie Geldard, from VidPic Productions, who were taking photos of the fleet from a helicopter, to have some pictures taken of my boat. But things didn't go according to plan. As she approached we were on port tack so the logos were on the wrong side of the sail. Not a major issue, just not as good as I had hoped.

Then as the helicopter got close the spinnaker collapsed and as they flew around the boat I couldn't get it to refill. Julie believes it was their fault for flying too close but I am pretty sure it was pilot error and not the helicopter pilot either.

Out of the bay and we were in the back third of the fleet. Rounding the fairway marker off Caloundra allowed me to launch the A3 spinnaker and open the boat up. Immediately we started gaining ground on the boats around us and catching those in front of us.

On the horizon I could see the fleet of Farr 40s. I had a bet with several of them that if I beat them they would donate \$500 to my campaign, if I finished within one hour they would donate \$200. Any further back than that and I owed them a jug of rum at Gladstone!

Slowly but surely we started to close in on them. The boat was flying. Being lighter and with a flat bottom she planed very quickly. The smiles on our faces would have told the story.

However I am not a gladiator and knew I couldn't keep the pace up all night. The idea of the auto-pilot, which was now Lisa, was that when I needed her to take over I would reduce sail to make it more comfortable.

I decided to do this just after dark. I knew the Farr 40s would run away from me but this trial was about finding the weak points in the boat, and me. All night we ran with the mainsail and headsail and a few boats got past but our speed was still good.

In the morning I relaunched the A3 spinnaker and away we went again closing in on the three boats in front and leaving those that had caught up to us in our wake. By Lady Elliott Island I was with Arcadia, Corum and Dream and with the top half of the fleet. The wind was gusting to 27 knots and the boat was surfing at speeds of up to 19.1 knots. I was buzzing but I decided that I'd proved everything I needed to with the boat and we took it easy in the last part of the race to make sure I didn't break anything.

The Brisbane to Gladstone race that year was the best ocean race I had ever done. The boat had performed so well and I finished at 2030 on the Saturday night, much to the surprise of many people who had thought I would finish on Sunday morning. I did however only have 20 minutes sleep and just missed out on my bet with the Farr 40s but it was a great hit out.

I had also learnt one particular weakness in myself and that was my hands. I was not used to a tiller and the day after the race both of my hands were severely swollen.

I fixed the auto-pilot in Gladstone and the next trial was the leg further north to Airlie Beach. It was a glorious sail and it was at this time I knew that I was going to enjoy this challenge. Arriving in Airlie Beach, Meridien Marinas at Abel Point Marina had offered me free berthing until I departed some three weeks later.



Sailing from Gladstone to Airlie Beach

I continued to work on the boat to get everything ready. The set departure date was approaching and I was on schedule. Then the problems with my satellite tracker started. The tracker, which has a standard antenna on the back of the boat and a unit enclosed in a box attached to the rail, was an integral part of the world record attempt. It meant my record could be ratified by the World Sailing Speed Record Council. I had turned it off when I went for a twilight sail and for some reason when I went to start it again it just wouldn't work.

I had another unit freighted up at the last minute. It was to come by express air freight but when I went to the airport to collect it the night before my departure it wasn't there. I was going to be delayed.

The parcel was found to be in Darwin. It seems that Toll Air Express don't have such a great system for tracking packages and it had been put in a container with freight going to Darwin. It had not been manifested onboard and instead someone had called Brisbane from Sydney

to tell them to take it out of the container. This didn't happen and the package wound up in Darwin.

Two days later I got the part but it wouldn't work either so I had to get a whole new tracker, aerial and all, sent up. Thankfully it arrived the night before my next departure date and it worked.



My tracking unit mounted to the stern of the boat as we race along at high speed

The night before my voyage started was amazing. I went to the Whitsunday Sailing Club for dinner with mum and my best friend Anthony. There were a lot of people at the club wishing me well. I was feeling really good about everything. As expected, I didn't sleep well that night. I was about to start out on my biggest dream to date. It was to be an amazing challenge but I was ready and the boat was ready, well as much as I could afford anyway.

I have to admit that I never really worried about this voyage. In fact I thought it would just be a month and a bit of sailing. I never contemplated massive storms or major problems. Maybe I just shut this all out and focussed on the task of sailing. I knew I could sail and I knew the boat was fast. I never contemplated failure. In fact I have never withdrawn from an ocean race so I had planned to finish this and failure was not an option.

My boss, who also loves sailing, said that if I had to stop and try again I could but this wasn't my mindset. I only had success in my head and to fail was just not being considered. I didn't know how to fail and I went into the sail with a very positive attitude. It was just a matter of how much time I would take off the record.

My life has taken me many places and it is my 'can do' attitude that allows me to do this. I strongly believe that if you can take this kind of attitude into every dream you will achieve what you want. It is really just a matter of how to do it and how long it may take.

Too many people never get out of the starting blocks. John Brooks, the Australian representative from the World Sailing Speed Record Council, told me that most of the people who notify him of a world record attempt never get it off the ground.

For me, it was a big dream and many times I thought it would not happen. When you send out so many sponsorship proposals and nothing comes back, whether you get rejected or they simply can't help, you feel so down. The media wasn't picking up the story as I had anticipated so it was going to be hard work. But I didn't let this stop me. I kept crawling forward, bit by bit, and finally I was ready to go. I knew once I had left that the hardest part was done. In fact it would take longer to prepare than to actually complete the journey.

Be True to Your Heart

And Your Dreams Will Come True
Stay true to all your beliefs and goals.
Stand tall.

Through all life's setbacks and disappointments,
your dreams will come true.

When no one else is with you,
and no one seems to care,

just whisper to yourself,

"I am the controller of my destiny.
It's up to me what comes to pass,

and if I keep my thoughts positive and strong,
my dreams will come true."

When what seem to be impossible obstacles
stand in your way, just think of all the times
you got through yesterday.

There is a place for you in this world.

Stay on your chosen path.

All the power is within you;

be true to what is in your heart.

Be honest within yourself;

if you are, then you cannot fail.

Your dreams will come true.

~ Debra Ruegg-Jenkins ~

(Motivational writer)

Airlie to Darwin

The big difference between a world record attempt and a normal yacht race is you get to decide when you start. Choosing the right weather window meant studying the weather charts and patterns all the way around Australia and I found May to have the most favourable weather systems. To put it simply, if a high pressure system comes in over Australia you can sail around it.

The World Sailing Speed Record Council (WSSRC) gives you a 30-day window to depart however I decreased the size of my window to nine days for the sake of my mum. She couldn't afford to spend too much time away from my pop who she cares for. So I had a window of 1 May to 9 May. Originally I had planned to leave on 2 May but the satellite tracker problems meant that the start was delayed to Wednesday 5 May.

One of my sponsors is navigation software company MaxSea and they provided me a copy of the latest version 'Time Zero'. This is an incredible program. Not only does it give you a 16-day weather forecast, as you scroll around the charts it is like flying a plane with no redraw time. The 'routing' module allows you to put in the boat's polars and it tells you where to sail to make the fastest passage time over a 16 day period.

Polars are the data for speed of your boat in a certain wind at a certain angle. It gives you all the data and you upload it into a simple Excel spreadsheet. The program then uses this data to predict the best route.

For weeks leading up to the start I used this program to find the best departure date and the best days to leave came up as between 2 May to 6 May. I left on 5 May. The winds would be strong and behind me for the first week and a bit and this would see me get all the way over to Western Australian waters before any real change in conditions.

On my day of departure I woke up very early and couldn't get back to sleep which is not unusual for such a challenging day. I packed my bags, had one final hot shower and ate

breakfast. Mum and I made up a heap of salad rolls which would form the basis of my early meals. After the fresh stuff ran out I would be eating dehydrated food.

I got to the boat about 0800 hours. The plan was to have my mum, best mates Mark and Anthony, Cassie Roberts (My shore manager) and one of my work colleagues, Tim Wuth come out with me to put the mainsail up. They would stay with me till just before the start. Tim has always joked about being my son when we work together. He was 21 at the time meaning just a 15 year age gap but we could always get the tourists to believe the story.

I have always tried to be a mentor for him so he will chase his dreams so him calling me dad all the time was fine by me. He even called my mum Gran and she loved it.

Steve Watson from the Whitsunday Sailing Club was to set the start line and came around in Rescue 1 to tow me out to Pioneer Bay. My gearbox was isolated with a seal so we could ratify the record and say I never used the gearbox at any stage for propulsion. He was joined by the WSSRC Commissioner of Record, George Canfield.



Preparing to leave the dock

As we left the dock it was rather surreal. I wouldn't be touching land for a long time, longer than ever before. The staff of Meridien Marinas Abel Point, another of my sponsors, all came out on the balcony and waved me off as I went past.

Once out on the bay we set about getting the mainsail up. It took a while as we set up all the reefing lines. Then I was set free from my tow. It would be all wind power from then until I got back.

I had planned a 1000 hours departure but was running a little late. Just after that time I offloaded my helpers to the club boat Rescue 1 and they went over to the cruise catamaran Whitsunday Adventurer which had come out to see me off. This is one of the boats from work. Also there to see me off was Terry Archer's yacht Questionable Logic. He's a good mate and a major local competitor of SOS Ocean Racing.



As Tim disembarked I reminded him that 'if he could dream it, he could do it'. Then the rest followed him off after many hugs. There were no tears, everyone was just excited for me. I knew this was where the worrying started for mum. She was so strong though and wished me good luck and said she hoped the winds would be behind me all the way.

I was all alone. It was pretty strange when all of a sudden I felt relaxed rather than stressed. I knew I had done all the hard work in getting the boat ready. I knew I could sail and now that I was just minutes away from departing a wave of relief spread through me.

I tacked back and forth for a short time and then went past the boats giving them one last farewell. Then I headed to the start line. I only had my mainsail up as I crossed the line and

headed onto my course. I put my auto-pilot on and set my headsail. I was off. The official start time was 10:30:20.

After less than a minute I went down to get my A3 spinnaker. As I came up Josh on Questionable Logic yelled out 'now we're talking'. It was time to get serious about speed. It was only blowing 10 to 15 knots and I knew it would pick up in the afternoon. I really wanted to get to the reef before dark so I could get through it into the open ocean.



Leaving Airlie, in picture are Safety 1 & Questionable logic

The gap in the reef is wide enough but passing through it during the day would be best. I set the spinnaker and off I went. The boat was up to seven knots and after half an hour both of the spectator boats had left me. As Airlie Beach faded into the distance it was time to do what I do best, go sailing. My dream was now a reality. I was sailing solo around Australia.

The wind built throughout the day and at 1330 I pulled the spinnaker down and sailed under mainsail only. I had a plan in my mind to sail at a rough average of 200 nautical miles a day. I didn't need to push past this and stress the boat out too much, especially in the early days.

After all, the record I was chasing was an average of just 96 nautical miles a day. Getting eight knots out of the boat was easy when we were going downwind and the auto-pilot coped easily.

As the day drew on I had to throw in a couple of gybes to get downwind to the opening in the reef at Tiger and Kangaroo Reefs. Monohull yachts do not like going directly downwind so you have to sail at a bit of an angle, particularly when under auto-pilot.

An auto-pilot reacts to changes in course, it will not predict changes like a human can. So there is a chance of it doing what we call a Chinese gybe or crash gybe. This is when the mainsail swaps sides without you planning and if it is uncontrolled on a boat with this much power, it can easily break something.



The gybes meant my plan of getting through the reef before dark was not going to happen. I was on final approach to the reef when I experienced the first magical sunset of the voyage. Sunset is my favourite time on a boat. The lighting is awesome at this time and it seems that everything is always perfect at sunset. I was at peace with the world, the boat was cruising nicely and the miles were ticking away. I was living the dream!

My first waypoint was at the entrance to the reef. My waypoints were a way of breaking the voyage up into smaller sections. Looking at the entire 6536 nautical miles of the course was daunting so I had little targets. For instance, I wanted to be through the reef by dark, then I wanted to be around Cape York within five days and across to the west within 10 days. Setting smaller goals made the overall task seem less daunting.

I was through the reef by 1900, the wind was a consistent 17 to 22 knots and the boat was flying. I was racing along at speeds up to 18 knots as I surfed down each wave. I still had only the mainsail up and I was now heading just west of north.

By morning the wind was blowing 20 to 25 knots. This was exactly what I had hoped for, a perfect breeze for the boat and coming from the south east it meant it was all downwind. Again it was a little too downwind so I knew there would be a bit of gybing to be done.

At 1030 I worked out the distance made good on the route which was something I would do every day. I am a numbers person and working out the distance to go and distance covered daily was always a fun task. It would also fill in part of the day and I would spend hours at my computer working on weather routing to find the fastest possible passage.

Day one and I had covered 197 nautical miles. Considering my slow start I was really happy with this. Already I was a day ahead of record pace however it was a long way to go. I needed to focus on each small task but it was hard not to work out the estimated time of arrival back in Airlie Beach based on this pace, even at such an early stage.

With no land in sight I felt I was in no-man's land. I love being alone sailing on the open ocean. It is something you can't describe to people. You are such a small particle in the

world and Mother Nature has you in her hands and can deal out whatever she likes. You are at her mercy.

The highlight of day two came just after sunset. I had a couple of sea birds trying to land on the boat and finally one landed on the railing forward of the mast and a second one landed on the stern railing. I needed to gybe so I set everything up and the bird on the stern rail was still sitting there, fighting to keep its balance.

As I gybed the bird decided that rather than fly away he would head straight into the cabin. My computer was still on so there was a bit of light and he flew straight in. I could hear all this fluttering around but I had to sort out the sails before dealing with it.

As I walked down the companionway the smell of fish hit me. The bird had thrown up its day's catch and there were fish all around the cabin and it stank. The bird was sprawled out near my stove so I grabbed him and with no fight, threw him into the cockpit. He just sat in the cockpit looking at me as though I was disturbing him. I then set about cleaning up the mess.

Now I know we get the nickname of 'grotty yachty' a lot and I expected to smell a bit after five or six weeks on a boat but day two and the cabin was reeking of fish. That wasn't fair. No matter how much I cleaned up it still stunk.

When I'd given up on the task I went on deck and threw the culprit off the boat. I must admit that I am glad the story entertained everyone who was following me on the internet. When I got back it was the most talked about story I wrote.

Day three and at 1030 I had covered another 210 nautical miles. I had broken through the 200 nautical mile barrier and was stoked. As the wind had filled in even more I had put in my first reef into the mainsail. This makes the sail a little smaller and gave a bit more control to the auto-pilot.

I was pretty much over bread rolls by this time but knew I had to eat them before they went off. Also my 12 volt fridge was not cooling very quickly so I made a decision that as

the only thing needing to be cooled was milk I would just go without refrigeration. I hated running the engine to charge the batteries and the fridge drained them much quicker so not running the fridge meant less engine time.

Day four and my timing was perfect. I got to Raine Island at 0530. This was to be the biggest day in the north. I had to enter the reef and wind my way through all the atolls and reefs and then past Cape York Peninsula before rounding Wednesday Island and finally out into the Arafura Sea where I could relax again.



As the sun came up I was passing into the reef. I had to trust the navigation gear in the early hours until the sun got high enough to see the reefs. The Furuno chart plotter was doing an awesome job and in 3D mode it showed me the depths of where I could sail and the passages. It is like flying along looking through the water. You can see all the contours.

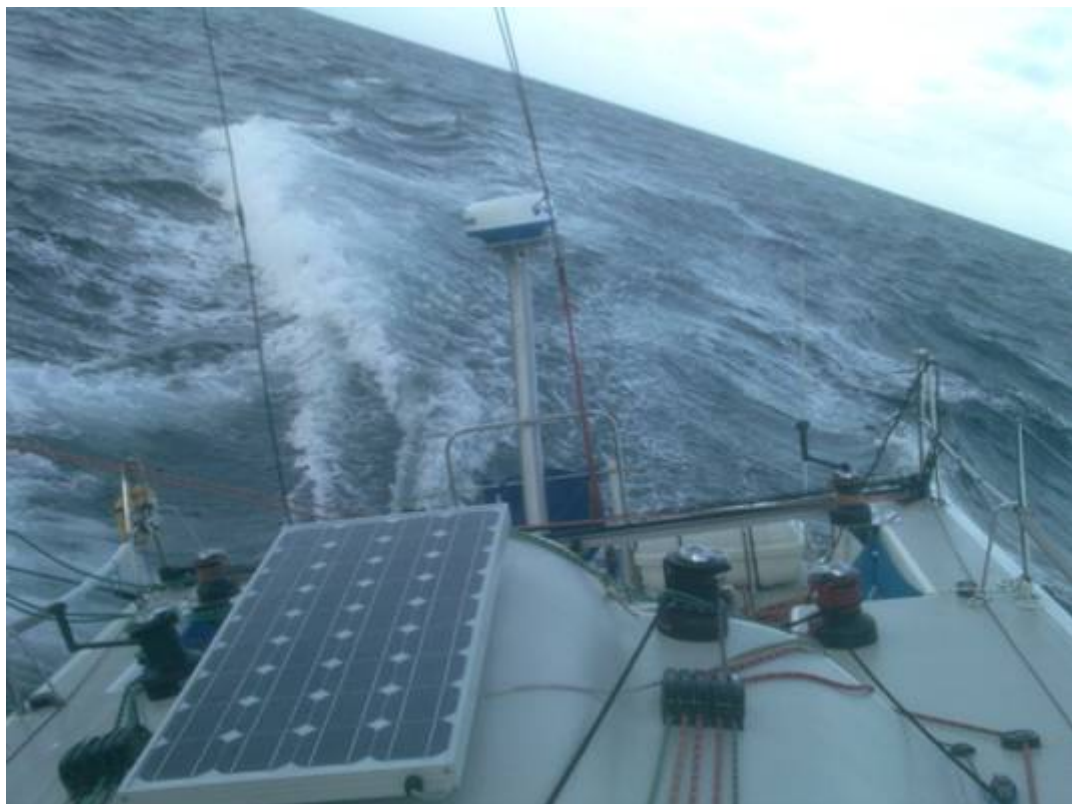
The day would involve countless gybes as I wound through each reef trying to keep the speed up. The water was flatter which was nice after the four to five metre waves offshore. I saw the first boats of my trip at Monsoon Reef. A couple of trawlers were parked there for the day, resting before their nightly work.

The biggest concern here, other than the reefs, was floating debris. I am not talking about rubbish either, I am talking about floating trees, not sticks or logs but entire trees. I even saw the root of a Pandanus tree floating by. I was so glad it was daylight because hitting one of these at the speeds I was doing could do major damage.

By late afternoon I was in the Cape York Peninsula region and into the main shipping channel. This created another challenge as giant super tankers cruised past.

You might recall that at the start of the Brisbane to Gladstone race I had help putting my mainsail up by two guys. Well one of them is an avid kayaker Anthony Malloch who runs a website called airmongrel.com and he kayaks all around the country.

His latest expedition had him kayaking from Cairns to Papua New Guinea. I had read on his website that he was in the Peninsula region. I wasn't going to be able to catch up with him because at this time I was flying. The wind was still in the 20 to 25 knot region and I was making eight to 10 knots consistently. However I was hoping to at least sight him as I flew past and get a photo of him and visa versa. I found out later he had lost his prescription sunglasses and had turned back as he couldn't see the islands in front of him.



Surfing along on approach to Wednesday Island

As I sailed from the peninsula to Wednesday Island I had a storm front chasing me. The wind was gusting up to 28 knots and I was blasting along. The sun set just as I started to round Wednesday Island and with the current ripping across the top of the island in my favour I flew past. I could see lights on the island and it looked so magical in the evening light. This is a place I need to come back and visit.

At 2130 I passed through the final reef and into the Arafura Sea. It was now time to head west and with the open ocean in front and no reefs to dodge it was time to rest after a full day of steering.

People always ask me how I managed to sleep during the voyage. I find sleeping on a boat really easy if I trust the boat. I found the best method was to decrease the power of the boat by reducing sail so the auto-pilot could cope and make sure I had a good angle to the breeze so it wouldn't crash gybe.



I could then sleep for anywhere between 20 and 60 minutes. It was 20 minutes for most of the time until I was in the Southern Ocean where there was no traffic and no land to worry about.

While I was sleeping I always set alarms. This included an alarm to wake me up! But I had an alarm on my radar to warn me if anything came within a range of two to five nautical miles and a course alarm to warn me if I was approaching navigational dangers or the boat was off course. The depth sounder had an alarm to warn me if I was approaching shallow water and there was a power alarm to notify me if the batteries were getting low.

My bean bag bed

I would sleep for whatever period, get up and check everything and then go back to sleep. I found that sleeping at night time was best and I found myself sleeping anything between four and eight hours a day.

I had my first shower on day five and did some housekeeping. The fish smell had faded and the smell of me was gone so it was good. The wind had lightened a little so I removed the reefs from the mainsail. I was heading slightly north of my course as I knew the wind was due to swing in behind me again over the coming days.

By mid morning my speeds were down to eight knots. I set the A3 spinnaker in the early afternoon and held it for the rest of the day. There was a bit of cloud around and under the clouds you would get a five to 10 degree shift in the wind which meant a change of course with the spinnaker up.

I tried to get some sleep in the early evening and at 2230 my radar alarm went off. I found that there was rain on the horizon so I quickly pulled the spinnaker down. Rain usually means a wind squall and I didn't want to get caught with a spinnaker up.

I set the headsail for the first time in ages and then went back to sleep. I was going a bit slower but it was safer. It was to be a very frustrating night. The wind kept shifting and the headsail would flap around so I'd have to get up and trim it.

I was tired in the morning due to lack of sleep and then I got a message that my satellite tracker power was out so I went to find out what was wrong. The power wires had already corroded and disconnected so I sealed them up inside the tracker box. I had used all the right materials when connecting them but salt water and the first week of high winds had obviously taken their toll.

The other issue I had early on was water coming in through the deck around the mast. When we had tuned the rig we must have broken the seal between the mast and the deck and it was leaking pretty badly. I tried to use the Sikaflex sealant I had onboard to seal it up. Later on I would find that I failed dismally.



Charging along under spinnaker

I ran the A3 spinnaker all day. This would become my favourite sail. It worked perfectly with the boat and was easy to handle. In the evening I had eight 30 minute sleeps and felt comfortable enough to leave the spinnaker up. Waking up from the last one I felt that the boat was going very slowly. I went out to find my spinnaker wrapped very tightly around the forestay.

The last time I had a spinnaker wrap was in the Sydney to Southport Yacht Race in 2007. With a crew of six we couldn't get it out and pulled into Newcastle and anchored to untangle it. We totally destroyed the spinnaker getting it off. For over an hour I tried everything to get this spinnaker off the forestay. I was yelling at it, cursing my luck and wishing I had not run it at night.

Before I left I had planned to use the spinnaker as much as possible but I knew my biggest problem out there would be pushing too hard. Running spinnakers at night while I was sleeping was a gamble. This night it did not pay.

Eventually I managed to get it off the forestay and reset it. I was in the cockpit dancing for joy when the boat went into a massive round-up. When the spinnaker becomes overpowered, the boat simply rounds up to spill the wind. I reset the course and attached the auto-pilot. Then there was another round up. I decided it was time to pull the spinnaker down.

I set the headsail and the next thing you know the boat does a complete 360 degree turn with full sail up. I found that the tiller extension had come out of its cradle and jammed on the floor which meant the auto-pilot couldn't turn the helm. The auto-pilot was beeping madly saying it had a drive failure. I reset everything and shortly after the boat went through another 360 turn and the auto-pilot again beeped its warning of a drive failure.

I had to go and hand steer while I checked out the ram that drives the tiller. My auto-pilot was made up of several different brand name components. The brain was Furuno, the compass was Maretron and the rudder feedback was TMQ which had to be waterproof because it was on deck. The ram was a brand I will not name. As I checked it I found the internal ram had just pulled out of its casing.

My immediate thought was that my trip was over. I hadn't been able to afford a second ram as my budget was far too tight. Without an auto-pilot I just couldn't continue. I can't tell you how I felt. This was my big dream, failure was not an option yet there I sat, 175 nautical miles short of Darwin, and it all seemed to be over. I was gutted. I sat motionless for quite some time.

Then the urge to not give up hit me like a wave. I am not sure where it came from, maybe it was those famous words from my dad that I will never be anything, but I decided it was not over, I would fix it.

I pulled the headsail in and locked the rudder to steer straight. I set about my task of rebuilding the ram. After 20 minutes I had it back together, if only on a short-term basis. I would have to wait for light winds to fix it properly. It worked and I was ecstatic but I wasn't sure I could trust it. I knew I wouldn't be able to sleep as well.

In my head I was telling myself that it was time to take it easy on the auto-pilot. It was so important to my campaign and any mile the auto-pilot covered was a bonus. I tried to get some sleep but my head was just waiting for the boat to round up again and for the auto-pilot to break. Through sheer tiredness I eventually fell asleep.

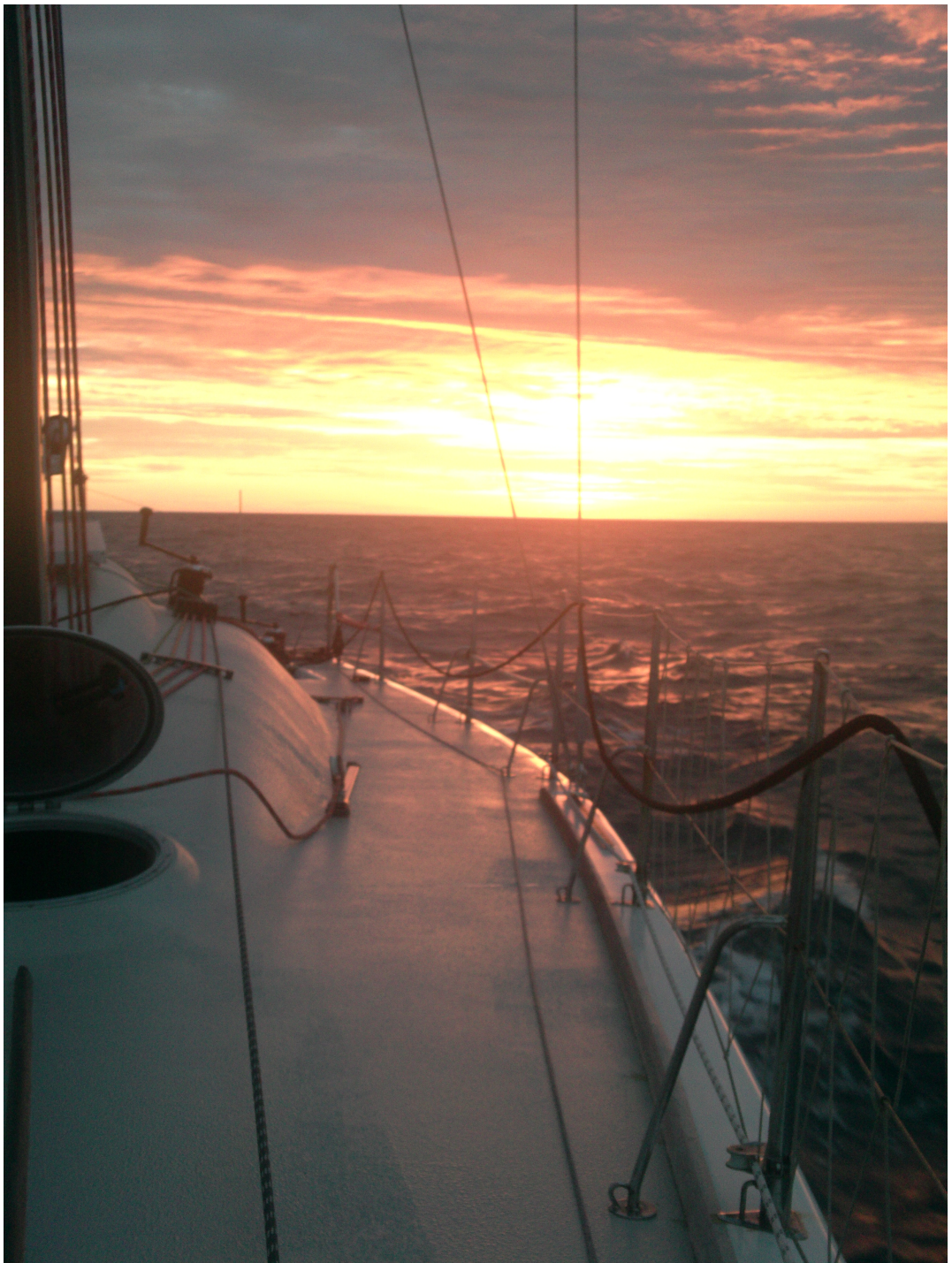
The next day was plain sailing and I was taking it easy and sneaking the odd sleep in the cockpit on my bean bag. The next evening and the wind was really lightening off but I was sleeping okay again.

At 0300 I was woken by the sound of the auto-pilot beeping. The ram had pulled apart again. The wind was really light, down below five knots so I hove-to. This is where you turn the boat into the wind and it just sits and drifts. I spent the next 30 minutes working on the ram. I pulled it apart completely. I put Loctite on everything that was coming apart and I even fixed the crossbar between my two tillers that was also coming apart.

After I had put everything back together the ram sounded really bad. It sounded like something was grinding. I checked everything and it all seemed fine so I decided to run with it.

At 0640 local time I got a call from Alan Steer from ABC Radio Darwin. He wanted to know about the sunrise from where I was, which was off the coast of Melville Island. It was a magical sunrise and I explained it to them and spoke of my plastic bag campaign.

The first part of my journey was complete, I had made it to Darwin and the next step was to head south west and down the west coast of Australia. I had reached the most northern point of my course.



Sunrise off Darwin just before speaking to ABC Darwin

You Can Be Whatever You Want To Be!

*There is inside you all of the potential
to be whatever you want to be,
all of the energy to do whatever you want to do.
Imagine yourself as you would like to be,
doing what you want to do,
and each day, take one step
towards your dream.*

*And though at times it may seem too
difficult to continue,
hold on to your dream.*

*One morning you will awake to find
that you are the person you dreamed of,
doing what you wanted to do,
simply because you had the courage
to believe in your potential
and to hold on to your dream.*

*~ Donna Levine ~
(Songwriter and poet)*

Darwin to Bunbury

Having left the Darwin region, the rest of the day was perfect sailing and the auto-pilot, even though it sounded really bad, was working fine. Around midday the wind had come around a little to the south to give me the perfect angle for sailing. At 1330 I launched the A3 spinnaker and I was off, heading towards the West Australian border.

The fresh rolls were all gone by this time so it was into the next stage of food which was the pre-packaged meals. I had frankfurts for lunch and enjoyed them so much I had them for dinner too. Once opened I had to finish anything that would go off quickly so this became a routine, eating one food until it was used up.

My milk situation was the biggest problem. As soon as I opened the long life milk, due to the hot temperatures of the tropics, I had to finish it off within five hours and then throw any leftover out. So I would eat breakfast twice in this period and that was it for that milk container. I only had 12, two litre bottles so I didn't do this every day. I thought that if I waited the colder temperatures of the south would help extend the useable life of the milk.

I stayed under mainsail all night and that 24 hours I covered 192 nautical miles. Not bad for 'cruise' mode. I had now got into a pattern of sailing under mainsail only when on auto-pilot and launched the headsail when I was steering. I would steer for three or four hours at a time and then rest. The middle of the day was ludicrously hot so I would steer when the sun was more in the west and behind the mainsail.

The winds were back to 20 to 25 knots and I was flying along. Coast Watch had been following me since the Arafura Sea and they even commented on the distance covered that day. In fact they had been worried when they hadn't spotted me earlier.

My next waypoint was off Broome. I had planned to stay out fairly wide even though I would be out of wireless internet range. I couldn't afford a satellite internet connection so I was relying on the mobile phone network which was a bit sparse here.

Already I was finding that when I was in internet range I was happier as I could talk with the real world. As soon as I was out of internet range I felt more alone. When I didn't have the internet I would use my satellite phone to call my shore manager Cassie Roberts. I would call at 9 am every day and relay a story for the media and my website.

A couple of days I missed her and left messages on the answering machine. It was easier to get the message off the answering machine anyway as she could replay it as often as she liked. However when I hadn't spoken to anyone for three days I felt a bit strange. I asked her to answer the phone the following day so I could speak to someone, hear someone's voice. The solitude was starting to get to me.



As I was approaching Broome the wind lightened off a little and allowed me to launch the A3 spinnaker once again. This seemed to be the only spinnaker I would use as I trusted it. It was also such a good spinnaker.

The guys at Doyle Sails had made a piece of magic. It was one of those spinnakers that set perfectly, no creases or wrinkles and being nylon was super strong. Just before dark the wind had picked up to 20 knots so I dropped the spinnaker. I sailed all night under mainsail and headsail.

The west coast was always going to be a problem when it came to weather. This is where I expected to have to sail into the wind. It was the only region I expected to do this in the entire voyage. My boat was selected because it was quick downwind and hence any upwind work needed to be minimal. It would not enjoy it and neither would I. If that meant sailing out into the Indian Ocean to get around the weather fronts then so be it.

My weather routing software would give me the best course to take. I hadn't had the internet since Darwin so my forecast was several days old and hence I had no way of knowing the forecast, apart from radio updates. I missed several of these accidentally by enjoying the sailing too much and this would come back to haunt me.

In the middle of the night the wind died, then came back and then shifted to the south east. All night the wind kept shifting and I had to keep altering course. It meant a very sleepless night. By morning the wind had been blowing from so many different directions that the sea state was horrific. The boat was bouncing all over the place and my speeds were down as a result.

At one stage a wind change caused a crash gybe. During this the preventer, a rope attached to the side of the boat to stop the boom going through a crash gybe, totally destroyed the block it was attached to. A pulley in my boom vang was also shattered.

It is incredible the loads that these components are under at times. The breaking loads are in the tonnes and when you use spectra lines that have huge breaking loads the block becomes the weakest part.

To make things worse it started pouring with rain. I went to get the broken block off the rail and as I went to slide it off the track the boat rolled and I lost my balance. My instant reaction was to stop myself falling off the boat and I put my hand down, right on top of the shattered block. I ended up with a 20 mm slice in my hand and disturbingly I could see the inside of my hand.

It didn't bleed immediately however I knew this was going to cause me major issues. Being on my right hand meant I had lost most of the use of my predominant hand for steering,

The wind continued to rise and eventually I was on port tack with two reefs in the mainsail and was flying along. The sea state had become even worse and these were some of the worst conditions I had ever sailed in.

Big waves in one direction are nowhere near as bad as waves coming from three or four directions and all colliding. The wind was now blowing 25 to 30 knots on the beam and the boat was flying but it was really uncomfortable. To add to the drama of the day my satellite tracker failed again, this time it had water in the aerial connection meaning it wasn't sending out messages.



I was sleeping on a piece of foam next to the engine all night and I found it was wet. Water had been leaking from the impeller casing on the engine without my knowledge and when the boat heeled over it poured out onto the floor. My bean bag, foam mattress and pillow were all wet. I slept the rest of the night on the starboard bunk on my doona. Despite all the water in the boat it was still too hot to sleep under any covers.

With 400 nautical miles to go to Exmouth I was starting to get excited at the prospect that a good friend who was working on the dive

boats there was going to come out and see me. It would be good to see a friend. The loneliness was really starting to get to me and with no internet reception and satellite phone bills being really expensive I had no contact with the real world. I found I was not enjoying the solitude. I thought I could handle it but I was not coping well at all.

During the day I passed an island that seemed to pop up out of nowhere. The charts said I could sail close to the west side of it however as I approached I saw it was very shallow. I had to bear away and go around it. I was glad to see land but relieved I hadn't come across it at night as I would have probably run aground thinking it was deep enough.

My GPS was struggling on this day as was my satellite tracker. All my aerials were pointing out to the west due to the heel on the boat and all of the satellites were in the east. It was disconcerting to see that this could happen and this is why all sailors should keep a log and plot their position on paper charts. You never know when you could lose reception or the Americans might turn the GPS satellites off.

The wind had started to die a little so I launched half of my headsail. Being on a furler means you can reef it almost infinitely. This kept the speed up and I decided it was time to clean up a bit. After cleaning the cabin I cut my nails, had a shave and had a shower. I even used some of my drinking water for my shower as I had plenty left. I topped up my diesel tanks out of the jerry cans and started to read my book. I wanted to keep the cut on my hand dry so I didn't steer all day.

So what does one read when sailing out in the ocean? Well I was reading David Lundy's *Godforsaken Sea*. It is a story of the 1996 Vendee Globe, the solo round-the-world race that goes through the Southern Ocean, the ocean that within a week I would be sailing in. Reading about boats capsizing, losing masts and one guy dying was probably not the best thing for someone about to sail into these waters but I continued. The Southern Ocean was what I was looking forward to the most on this journey.

My mental state was not good on this day, so much so that I rang my mum. It was good to talk to her and express my feelings. She just listened and reassured me I was doing well. It

made me feel so much better. I hadn't even thought about it but I was nearly two weeks in front of the record already.

The wind the next day was up to 35 knots and under two reefs in the mainsail the boat was flying again. I covered 212 nautical miles in the preceding 24 hours and Exmouth was fast approaching. Off the coast of Dampier I started to see the big oil rigs. At night they look like high rise buildings in a major city and are lit up like Christmas trees.

I had an opportunity to talk with one of the tugs that service the rigs, the Mermaid Achiever, and they mentioned that they had had a conversation about plastic bags in the galley just before my call. It was good to finally talk to someone and it made me feel so much better.

There was a bit of rain around and the wind was still blowing on the morning that I was approaching Exmouth. I was running very early and when I rang my Dutch friend Onno he tried to organise to come out and meet me but his skipper said I would be past before they could get out and the weather was too rough anyway.



Sailing past Exmouth with 2nd reef in

While it was a disappointment I could understand and it was just great to talk with him. I was back in internet range and it was also good to catch up on the current news stories. What was more important I was getting new weather information and was able to plot my course down the west coast.

It showed a bad patch of weather ahead where I would have to sail upwind. Off the coast of Perth a huge low pressure system was coming and I needed to get in front of it to get favourable weather. I needed to push hard to get south as soon as possible.

Frustratingly that afternoon the wind lightened off and went south meaning I had to sail into the wind for the first time in the trip. The forecasts from the Bureau of Meteorology, my MaxSea software and several other sources all predicted a south westerly wind in the afternoon on the coast so I headed inshore.



It never arrived and I had sacrificed half a day heading there. This would prove critical. That day I covered the shortest distance to date on the trip, 149 nautical miles. Still this was way faster than record pace. The next day was worse still, just 98 nautical miles, as I tried to work my way back out from the coastline.

Before I left people asked me what I thought would be the worst part of the trip. They all expected it would be the Southern Ocean however I always said it would be the west coast. I hate no wind. It makes you feel like you are going nowhere and having become used to

covering 200 nautical miles plus a day, an average of only four knots felt like I was standing still.

Frustrated to no end I was yelling obscenities into space. There was no one to hear them and I am not sure why I did it but I kept doing it. Maybe it was a release for me but I was getting angry at the wind gods. How dare they take my wind and where was my south westerly.

In the back of my mind I knew my window to get through in front of the big low pressure system was closing. If I didn't get through in time I would be hammered. I was sailing straight into the swell and as mentioned earlier, the boat hated it and so did I. It was then that I started wondering why I was doing this.

To make things even more frustrating I went to call Cassie and my Iridium Satellite phone was not connecting. It kept saying that I had dialled the wrong number. I had no contact with the outside world. Of course I had my HF radio but I wasn't using that. I felt alone, frustrated and my state of mind was slipping.

On the night of 20 May the wind died away to five knots and shifted and I knew I was about to get the effects of the low pressure system. Without an internet connection I was once again hoping the forecast I had was still accurate. Slowly the wind came in and I was able to point straight at Cape Leeuwin, my next rounding point and the entrance to the Southern Ocean.

By this stage I had finished Godforsaken Sea and was reading the Bancroft Strategy by Robert Ludlum. An awesome book and I couldn't put it down. I finished it and this meant I had only one book left but the Southern Ocean was coming and I wouldn't need books as I would be busy sailing the boat and the east coast would be the run home, hence I would just sail and there would be no time for reading.

My pace for the trip was excellent and I had an ETA of finishing within 35 days. This would not only be the fastest solo circumnavigation of Australia but also the fastest monohull circumnavigation. Keeping this in mind kept me pushing on. After the light winds of the morning and relaxing on the bean bag in the cockpit waiting for the wind it finally started building.

I launched the A3 spinnaker at 1530 when the wind came in behind me and the boat was back up to speed. The sunset was awesome and after dark the wind kicked back in and I pulled the spinnaker down. All night the wind kept building however it was the fact it was coming around on my beam that disturbed me most. I didn't want to sail into this storm, I wanted to sail in front of it.

The wind was now gusting between 40 and 45 knots from behind. I was steering by hand with the second reef in the mainsail and the boat was alive. This is what I love and I was grinning from ear to ear as the spray from the bow was swept back and into my face. I had

to stop smiling as I was swallowing salt water. I hit a top speed of 23.4 knots (approximately 40kmh). I was having a blast but it was getting cold.

I went and got my thermals on and came back to the helm. In the night it was hard to see the waves so I had to feel them. Had it not been for the huge array of instruments that Furuno had provided me it would have been impossible to steer and go as fast as I was.

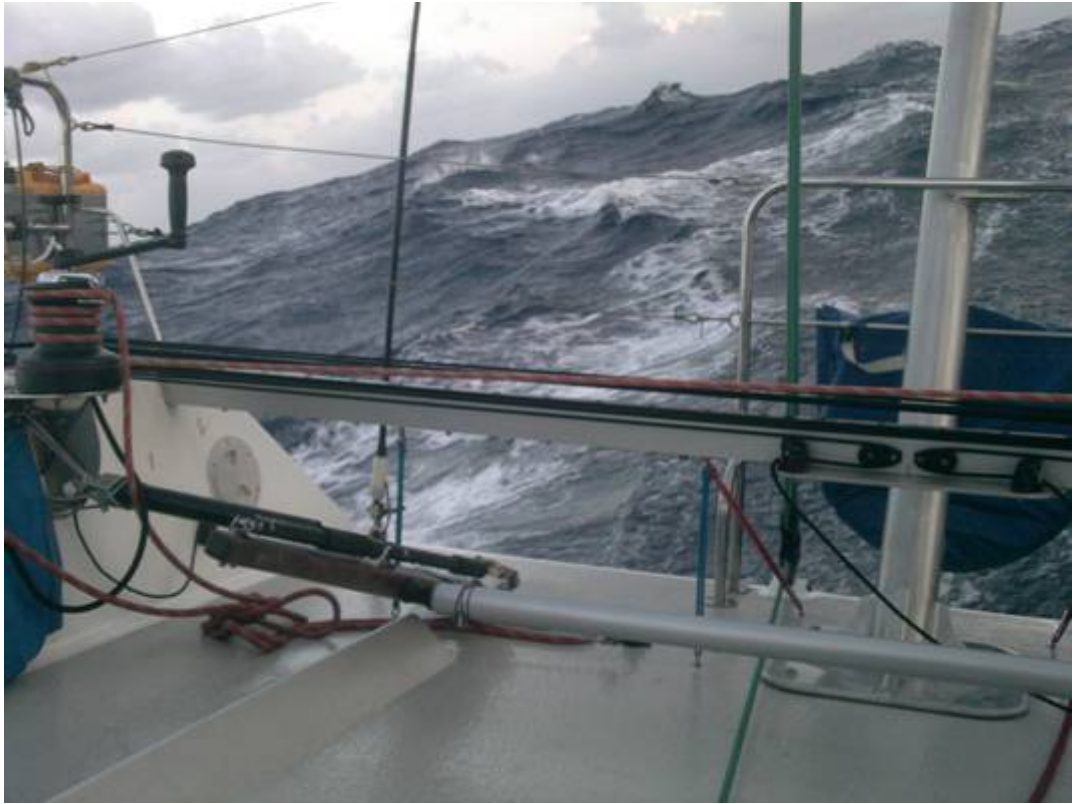
Everything downstairs was wet and as the wind died away I tried to bail the water out of the hull that had come in through the cracked mast seal. The only dry part of the boat was my bed which I looked after as much as I could. I was only 184 nautical miles from Cape Leeuwin and the entrance to the Southern Ocean.

I was excited to be approaching what I saw as my biggest challenge. I was also going to pass the half way mark on my circumnavigation. What I didn't realise was that the biggest challenge would be just getting into the Southern Ocean. By lunchtime the next day the wind was back up to 35 knots and coming on my beam. By evening it was gusting to 45 knots and was forward of the beam.

I was sailing upwind. Initially this was fine until the wind came right around and I was pointing at 50 degrees into the wind. I had to put a third reef in the mainsail which was extremely hard work. Reefing it was okay but lashing the sail to the boom was the hard part with the boat bucking around all over the place.

The boat was heeling severely even with the ballast tanks full and when I was running the motor to charge the batteries I lost all the coolant. With the extreme winds my mainsail started to delaminate in the leach (back edge of the sail) at the top. The waves were up to five or six metres and really steep. The boat was getting pounded. It would launch off the top of a wave and land in the trough with an almighty thud. It wasn't fun anymore.

In the Sydney to Hobart in 2008, for the entire 4 hours in heavy weather it was hard work on the helm but the crew sat up on the rail with me. They said nothing. They sat their braving the wet and cold and this was a great support to me. On this occasion I was alone.



Heeling over in the big winds

In fact after a couple of hours I was tired, cold and I was starting to worry about the boat. In fact I was in a bad way. Before I left I had redone my sea safety course courtesy of the Whitsunday Sailing Club. You learn all about life rafts. I was told you never step down into a liferaft, you always step up into a liferaft.

Rudy Weber, owner of Too Impetuous, once asked me where you would draw a line on a yacht that when the water reached it you would jump into a liferaft. I said the top of the mast but he disagreed and used his finger to draw a line around his neck!



Training in safety at the Whitsunday Sailing Club – this is a 6 man raft

On this evening I was in such a bad mental state and the boat was getting pounded that much that I was just waiting for the boat to fall apart. I can't describe in words what I was feeling. Logic wasn't working any more. I was freezing even though I had locked myself in the cabin to try and warm up. I was sitting there and I started thinking of how to deploy the liferaft.

I had borrowed a raft from Terry Archer who owned Questionable Logic. It was a 10 man raft so I had worked out in my mind that without 10 people it would probably roll over in the waves. I decided that if I needed to I would use my jerry cans of diesel to weigh down the raft. I worked out what I would take and the order I would get it all together.

Then I hit the lowest point in my life. I started to plan the whole thing to get into the raft. I didn't want to be in the boat in this place anymore, I wanted out. I had hit the edge and my next move was to launch the liferaft. I had convinced myself that the liferaft was a better place.

I was heading towards land and had everything planned in my head. When I hit the 100 metre depth line, that was when I would do it and I would abandon ship. While I was waiting I fell asleep.



I've never felt so low in my life.

When I woke I was in a totally different frame of mind. I couldn't believe that I was even thinking about abandoning the yacht. I went outside and helmed for a bit but decided making it to Cape Leeuwin was hopeless. I headed to Busselton but couldn't make that and ended up heading to Bunbury.

I thought that I could sail into there, rest up, fix my mainsail and engine and keep going. I knew that under WSSRC regulations I could sail in and anchor as long as I didn't use my engine. I could stop as long as I didn't seek outside assistance or go ashore and my time for a non-stop record would still stand. I had plenty of time so I worked on this idea.

I sailed into Bunbury at 1100 hours the next day and dropped anchor. I found my mobile phone in a pool of water and it was ruined so I used the internet to tell everyone where I was and what I was doing. The water was flat, it was dry on deck and the sun was even out. It was still windy so I secured the sail to the boom and started to empty the water out of the boat. I set everything out to dry and fell asleep.

I woke after midday and set about my tasks. First was the engine to charge my batteries that were really low. Then I cleaned up everything and spent a heap of time on the internet. I had a plan to stay for 48 hours, until the weather changed for the better. I also found out that the weather front had accelerated so I was never meant to get across in front of it. Perth had been hammered that night too with gale force winds.

My thoughts were tending towards the finish and how long I could afford to stay in Bunbury. I deliberately didn't tell any locals I was around and didn't speak with people who went past in their boats.

Being so close to land the cravings for hot fish and chips and a cold beer were creeping in. That night I watched the MotoGP race on my computer. I needed a bit of reality. Of course being Australian I follow Casey Stoner. He was on pole and was leading on the first lap but then crashed out. It summed up my day.

It was one of the hardest times of my life. I had been lower than I had ever been before. To consider jumping off a perfectly good boat into a liferaft is ludicrous but that was where I

was at. I feel stupid to admit it now.

However from every bad time in your life you grow and being able to make the decision to carry on, even at this low point, is what chasing dreams is about. Every time you go to a low point or face an obstacle you have to overcome it.

I started dreaming of the finish and the celebrations. I also used my friends, who were leaving messages for me on how well I had been doing, as inspiration. I didn't want to let them down. Out of despair I created new life, a new vigour to get this dream done and dusted. My friends may not have been on the rail, however their support through the internet was giving me courage to continue on.

All I needed to do was take a step forward and a sleep had helped me do that. It refocussed me. Had I not fallen asleep on that night in the storm I am not sure what would have happened. My mind needed a rest and it took one. Thank God it did.

Dare To Dream

Dare to Dream

Let nothing hold you back from exploring your wildest fantasies, wishes, and aspirations.

Don't be afraid to dream big and to follow your dreams wherever they may lead you.

Open your eyes to their beauty; open your mind to their magic; open your heart to their possibilities.

Dare to dream.

Whether they are in color or in black and white, whether they are big or small, easily attainable or almost impossible, look to your dreams, and make them become reality.

Wishes and hopes are nothing until you take the first step towards making them something!

Dare to dream,

Because only by dreaming, will you ever discover who you are, what you want, and what you can do.

Don't be afraid to take risks, to become involved, to make commitment.

Do whatever it takes to make your dreams come true.

Always believe in miracles, and always believe in you!

~ Julie Anne Ford ~

(Motivational poet)



Bunbury to Tasmania (The Southern Ocean)

The Southern Ocean, the greatest challenge to sailors.

*Below 40 degrees there is no law.
Below 50 degrees there is no God.*

This quote is commonly used by round-the-world sailors to describe the Southern Ocean. The degrees are the latitude. While in Bunbury I learnt that Jessica Watson (youngest person to solo circumnavigate the world) had been hammered countless times in the Southern Ocean just before I arrived in Bunbury. Jamie Dunross too had been hammered with hail storms as he crossed the Southern Ocean.

Before I left on my trip everyone talked about the Southern Ocean as being the hardest part. To me it was the challenge I looked forward to the most. My boat was a big surf board and I have a reputation of loving high winds. I was keen to have a storm hit me in the Southern Ocean. I knew it would be hard but I wanted to find the top speed of the boat and experience the full brunt of the Southern Ocean. I simply wanted to 'survive' the true Southern Ocean not just sail across it.

It is like the Sydney to Hobart race, you want to 'survive' Bass Strait. In my Hobart race we had cruised across and it is not the same as having survived the full brunt of a storm. This was my time and after the rest in Bunbury I was ready. Bring it on.

I actually left Bunbury the very next day, not waiting the extra 24 hours I had planned. I knew it would be light getting across to Cape Leeuwin but that was fine. I had repaired the top of the mainsail with all the sticky back sailcloth I had. When I went to put the sail up I noticed that between the second and third reef the sail had totally delaminated.

I was left with a mainsail that I had reefed down to the third reef for the rest of the trip home. This reduced its size to about 40% of its original size. I wasn't too concerned as it was the Southern Ocean after all. It was going to be windy and even with this amount of sail I would still get plenty of speed and I still had my spinnakers and headsails. By this time I had decided that I would settle for the fastest solo circumnavigation of Australia and not chase the monohull record. The fastest monohull record attempt would have wait for another time.

When I left I expected light wind but what I didn't expect was a glass out as I left the rock wall of Bunbury. I was stuck sailing and drifting in circles for 90 minutes. I was frustrated but I couldn't even sail back into the harbour. Finally the wind came in and I was sailing again towards Cape Leeuwin. It was frustrating at times when the wind died but I had in my mind that every mile I travelled today was a mile I didn't have to cover tomorrow.



I reached a point just north of Cape Leeuwin at sunset only to slow even more. Between 2230 and 0500 I travelled a lousy seven nautical miles. Then at 0500 the wind filled in and I was past Margaret River and off to Cape Leeuwin. In the 24 hours since I'd left Bunbury I had only travelled 81 nautical miles, the slowest day on the water to date.

I rounded Cape Leeuwin and the wind filled in at 18 to 20 knots. I was finally in the Southern Ocean. Just after dark the pin on the tiller where I attached my auto-pilot broke the weld. I

had already planned for this situation in my mind and set about replacing it with a drill bit. To this day that drill bit is still being used.

My next target was Maatsuyker Island. This island is off the south west corner of Tasmania and is notorious for its rough weather. It was 1500 nautical miles away. In my head I had this down as a six or seven day sail, hopefully less, and the weather forecast had good wind for me to play in.

The first few days were rather cruisy. I had my A5 spinnaker out at one stage as the wind lightened off but it was flapping about as there was too little wind. I knew the wind was coming so it was a game of patience, a game I am not good at. Once again I found myself yelling and screaming profanities because I was so frustrated.

I was in the Southern Ocean, the windiest and roughest place in the world, I had passed one of the stormy capes and here I was in a glass out sitting in the cockpit on my bean bag putting sunscreen on. Many people would dream of this weather down here but not me, no I wanted to be challenged.

Just after dark on 27 May I had my first Southern Ocean storm. There was lightning to the south which was disconcerting due to having a carbon mast and being the only conductor out here. I was a sitting target but the storm passed to the south. My heart was thumping as the wind picked up to 20 knots. Here it was, the true Southern Ocean.



I sat and tried to capture the moment on video and I recall saying 'wow' about three million times. I had read about this place and this was my big challenge. I went and steered and the boat was surfing along nicely at 15 to 18 knots. The feelings inside me didn't allow me to

sleep much that night, I was too excited. I spent plenty of time steering and waiting for the wind to build as it was forecast.

It never happened. It stayed at 20 to 30 knots all day and the seas only got to five to six metres and then it started dying off. If I sound disappointed it's because I was. I really wanted a challenge in the Southern Ocean and here I was cruising in perfect weather. People think I am insane and say I was really lucky, but not me.

I wanted the big challenge. It took me 11 days to get to Maatsuyker Island. I had frequent glass outs and became so frustrated with life. I couldn't believe my bad luck, luck others called good luck. I am sure mum was happy but I was frustrated.

On approaching Tasmania things got worse. The wind was so light and I was so frustrated that I started to run my spinnakers at night again. I had my A3 spinnaker up and it had run perfectly all day. I had finished another book, the last one I had on board, so now all I could do was sail the boat.



On approach to Tasmania – a storm brewing

On the last night before I saw Tasmania my spinnaker started to play up so I decided to pull it down. The sock that collapses the spinnaker to make it easy to control single-handed would only come half way down the sail. This meant my kite was flapping around all over the place. As I tried to drop it and keep it on the boat it started to drag in the water. Next thing it was trawling under my boat and had pulled out of the sock entirely. I winched it back up the mast but it had become caught around my propeller.

This was my favourite kite caught under the boat with no way to release it. I tried to back the boat up by turning into the wind but it would not release. Eventually I made the hard decision to cut it free. This was the first time I had ever had to take a knife to a sail and it was not a good feeling. But I still had plenty of other spinnakers and headsails to use and I only had the east coast of Australia to go. I'd get through.

I cut the corner off the sail and pulled the rest on board. I was not sure if the sail was still caught around the prop or whether it had come free. In the morning I would find a streamer of sail cloth hanging out under the boat. It would eventually disappear two days later.

The next morning I launched my A5 spinnaker. It was on a furler so it rolled up. I had to gybe so I rolled it up and went through the manoeuvre. As I gybed it unrolled at the top and started flogging in the wind and tore for about three metres. With no sticky back left to fix it, this meant it was all over for this kite too. Two spinnakers in 12 hours, what next?

Eventually I sailed around Maatsuyker Island. It was night and I had 12 to 15 knots of wind from the north west. It was so flat I sailed within one mile of the island even in the dark something you wouldn't dream of doing in rough weather. My Southern Ocean crossing was complete when I drifted past South East Cape at the bottom of Tasmania in another glass out.

How frustrating my progress had been in what I had envisaged was going to be the fastest part of the journey. Sometimes your expectations can be totally wrong. This was certainly the case here. I could not believe my luck. I believe it was bad luck, others believe it was good luck, however at the end of the day I guess I did survive the Southern Ocean, but not the real Southern Ocean, far from it.

I know I will have to go back someday. Why? I can't answer that, it is a lure I cannot get rid of, just like a big Bass Strait crossing in the Sydney to Hobart. I just have to experience and survive it. I'll probably hate it but I need to do it or my life won't feel complete.



Never Let Go Of Hope

*One day you will see that it all has finally come together.
What you have always wished for has finally come to be.
You will look back and laugh at what has passed and you will ask yourself,*

“How did I get through all of that?”

Just never let go of hope.

Just never quit dreaming.

And never let love depart from your life.

*~ Jancarl Campi ~
(American poet)*

Tassie to Sydney

Heading past Hobart the change I had been waiting for kicked in. It was miserable weather with rain pelting down and the wind was extremely cold. This part of the journey for me was really exciting. I had sailed in a Sydney to Hobart and so I set myself up for a reverse version of this race. My next target was Sydney. It would include the notorious Bass Strait however this time I would be sailing downwind across it.

With the predicted winds it would be a quick journey, even with my triple reefed mainsail and no spinnakers. In fact the more wind the easier it would be. If I could sail under just the mainsail and I was getting 20 or 30 knots of breeze the boat speeds would still be in the eight to ten knot range.

Passing Tasman Island is one of those magic moments in ocean sailing. We have all seen the pictures of the famous racing yachts with Cathedral Rock in the background. In the Sydney to Hobart in 2008 we passed it a night and I didn't get to see it. On this day the rain and overcast conditions meant it wasn't that spectacular but you could only still sit in awe of how beautiful this part of the world is. As I sailed past in the late morning I was trying to take good photos in between the rain squalls.



As the day wore on I was flying up the coast. At the rate I was sailing it would be three days to Sydney. I rested up a little as I knew Bass Strait was coming and wanted to be fresh. With the auto-pilot still having issues when the seas were big or the wind was up I knew it was going to be a long hard slog across Bass Strait.



That night was freezing. Launceston had an overnight low of zero degrees. Out on the water it was less, I'm sure of it. I locked myself in my cabin and I was still cold even with my thermals on, tracksuit pants, a t-shirt, my fleecy vest, fleecy jumper and my full ocean wet weather gear. I jumped in my sleeping bag with my doona over the top and tried to keep warm.

I'm not a fan of the cold. I moved to Queensland to get away from the chilly winters in Melbourne and this was a great incentive to get north quickly. It was blowing between 20 and 30 knots from the south when I hit Bass Strait. I only had my tiny main up and the boat was surfing nicely. The seas however had picked up and the auto-pilot was frequently failing to cope. It took me approximately 20 hours to cross the Strait and of those I reckon I steered for 16 hours.

When I saw the coastline of mainland Australia I was really relieved. On the same morning the alternator belt broke and I had to replace it with my spare. The auto-pilot kept failing while I was replacing the belt. It was not a good morning and the fact I was tired didn't help.

For some reason the spare alternator belt wasn't the same size and I had to space out the pulleys using tape so the belt was tight enough. The belt had come with the boat and I hadn't checked it before I left other than note that I had a spare belt. I obviously didn't do a good enough job of getting it tight because that night after only two hours of charging it too broke leaving me with no alternator.

Without an alternator I couldn't charge my batteries and on modern-day yachts like mine you have so many electronics to run on the boat and this is particularly important while you are trying to get some sleep. So the first thing I did was turn off my computer as the inverter was the biggest power drain on the boat.

I set about making a new belt out of rope. For five hours I tried different ropes. I would stitch or tie them together, anything I could think of. Each time I made a belt I would try it out and it would only last for a couple of minutes before breaking.

I finally tried a small size spectra rope and it was strong enough to hold. I turned the engine on and it was working but there was no charge coming out of the alternator. I tried all sorts of things and eventually decided to change to my spare alternator. After I had finished this I put the belt on and got the same result. It was very frustrating.

Here I was approximately 1000 nautical miles away from home and I was having a major issue. My biggest problem was night time. When I wanted to sleep I needed my electronics with the alarms, the auto-pilot and navigation lights. Without them it would be dangerous as the fishing fleets and commercial shipping traffic can be quite a danger up the entire Australian east coast.

I was aware that Jessica Watson had run into a ship when she hadn't turned on her electronics at night and it was disconcerting to think about sailing on without them working. I feared that if I did the same as Jessica I would lose my commercial skipper's licence. As the power level dropped I decided it was time to turn off all electronics except those vital to drive the boat such as the auto-pilot and the wind and speed instruments.

I had in my mind that I would sail up the coast Captain Cook style. I had my charts out and was now using them instead of my electronic versions. I tried to stay up as long as possible but I just needed some sleep. I set the alarm for 20 minutes. When it went off I went to check everything out and was shocked to see a super tanker passing about 150 metres to the west of me.

This totally freaked me out. I was now a danger not only to myself but also to other ocean users. I started to think about the alternatives and quite simply I couldn't come up with anything other than to stop. After all, as a commercial skipper I would probably go to jail if I was found to be negligent in the case of an accident that possibly killed someone.

I am a professional seaman, that's my job. Even causing a collision would mean losing my career. I have total respect for what Jessica Watson did in sailing around the world but when she ran into a tanker and was dismantled off Moreton Bay near Brisbane on her first night out on a sea trial to Sydney she was lucky she didn't lose her boat and maybe her life.

I considered dropping the sails at night and drifting with the wind and seas but this was still dangerous because big ships take so long to make a course change. With my battery power fading I was also losing power to my navigation lights. I hoped the next day my solar panel would provide enough power to get through another night.

During the day I sailed with no instruments at all. I had all the electronics off so the solar panel could top up the batteries. Of course it was an overcast day and the power top-up was minimal. By night time, when I needed my power again the battery levels were only 11.1 volts, way below the minimum for a 12 volt system. I had to make a decision.

I called a good friend in Sydney, James Young, and spoke to him about the problem and we came up with a couple of options. I could sail into Sydney Harbour and get a couple of new belts handed to me or I could simply stop in Sydney. Both of these options meant that the non-stop unassisted record would not be available to me but I really had no option.

I had to be responsible and I was not going to risk my career for a couple of words on a certificate. I knew I could still claim the fastest solo circumnavigation of Australia so everything was not lost.

I decided that the best option was to pull into Sydney and get everything sorted out. I wasn't entirely sure it was just a belt, it could have been my alternators or something else in the system. The next day I was really tired when I sailed past Botany Bay. I saw a super tanker

that looked like it was anchored but as I got closer it moved and I had to bear away to go around it.



As I did this I ran over a floating buoy and picked it up on my keel. I dragged it for probably 200 metres before it came free. It was just my luck. As I sailed towards Sydney Heads the wind started coming from in front of me so I was sailing upwind. Then the breeze started to die.

Being tired this only made my frustrations grow. I was really angry by this stage and just wanted to jump onto the dock and have a cold beer and get away from the boat. I really felt like I had had the worst luck in the world. As I approached Bondi Beach a 25 knot westerly came in, right on the nose. I couldn't believe it, what was next? I was sailing hard into the wind, which my boat hates. It seemed like I just wasn't meant to get to land.

I finally sailed into Sydney Harbour and soon after James arrived with Matthew Short from Andrew Short Marine in their rigid inflatable so they could tow me to Ferguson's marina where I would get the work done. I had to be towed as my gearbox was still sealed and I did not want to break it until I got back to Airlie Beach.

As I sailed in they came alongside. It was great to see a mate however he was really hesitant about jumping onboard. I later found out that he knew that as soon as he stepped onboard my record was over. But it had to be done. I reached out and grabbed his hand to get him onboard. That was it, my non-stop unassisted record was gone.

When I set out on this journey I really wanted this record. It was my true goal. It was not to be but I didn't feel all that bad about it. I had been through so much on this voyage and I knew I would finish it off. Of course I couldn't achieve my big goal however I would finish my dream of sailing around Australia and I would still be the fastest solo sailor ever to do it.

What was more interesting is that since being back I have been applauded for making the decision I did. With the recent dramas of Abby Sunderland, the 16-year-old American girl who had to be rescued in the Southern Ocean after being dismasted, my decision for the safety of me, my boat and other water users was seen as a breath of fresh air. I had not failed, I simply had altered my dream. I lost the words 'non-stop' and 'unassisted' from a certificate. So what!

Anything Is Possible

*Believe in Yourself,
and Remember that
Anything Is Possible*

Believe in what makes you feel good.

Believe in what makes you happy.

*Believe in the dreams you've always wanted to come true,
and give them every chance to.*

*Life holds no promises
as to what will come your way.*

*You must search for your own ideals
and work towards reaching them.*

Life makes no guarantees as to what you'll have.

*It just gives you time to make choices
and to take chances*

and to discover whatever secrets might come your way.

*If you are willing to take the opportunities you are given
and utilize the abilities you have,*

you will constantly fill your life

with special moments and unforgettable times.

*No one knows the mysteries of life or its ultimate meaning,
but for those who are willing*

to believe in their dreams and in themselves,

life is a precious gift in which anything is possible.

*~ Dena Dilaconi ~
(Motivational poet)*

Sydney to Home

After been towed into Ferguson's marina I stepped off the boat for the first time in 35 days. I finally had a chance to stretch my legs and go for a walk. James had organised a few beers and they went down really well. As it was late afternoon I packed up the boat and then we headed off to James's apartment.

Getting in a car was quite funny and driving at 60 kmh was really daunting. Soon after arriving at the apartment I decided I needed a shower. I didn't tell anyone that I hadn't showered since Western Australia but I am sure they could tell. I had washed myself down with wipes just prior to my Sydney arrival to try and help a little.

Taking off my clothes and seeing my body in a mirror for the first time in ages I realised just how much weight I had lost. I was so skinny, skinnier than I had been in a very long time. I stand 193 cm (6ft 4in) and I usually weigh in at around 95 to 100 kg. When I left I was on 96 kg. That day I was just 82 kilos. I had lost 14 kg in five weeks. I thought I had eaten quite well but obviously I needed more.

After a shower we went out for a steak dinner. I had left my wallet back at Airlie Beach because I thought I wouldn't need it being as my next stop after Airlie was meant to be Airlie. So James paid for everything and I am in his debt for his efforts and kindness. Dinner went down very nicely ... fresh food and cold beer. So well did it go down that I was wanting more but decided that was asking too much of James.

I slept so well that night. I thought I would have troubles but there were no issues at all, I just slept right through. In the morning I did a bit of work on my computer before heading back to the boat. I had organised a guy to fix the power supply, the local Furuno guy to come down to re-program my chart plotter with the latest software (this was available the

day before I left and they hadn't had a chance to install it so I took this opportunity to get it done) and then set about cleaning up the boat.

The alternator problem was found to simply be a belt issue which was fixed and I could have left that afternoon but decided another night was worth it to allow my batteries to charge right up on shore power and to rest up. I still had plenty of time to complete my circumnavigation in record time so it was best to be fresh. We even joked about me taking a holiday in Fiji and then finishing it off. That night James's partner Sarah Calman cooked a chilli con carne and I went to bed fairly early. I would leave the next day.

We went down to the marina for a big breakfast and straight after that I set off. I sailed off the marina and bid farewell to James. He had been so awesome for me, that's what good mates are about. I had already set my mainsail on the marina so I pulled the headsail out and slowly cruised out of Middle Harbour.

On exiting the Heads I saw a whale watching boat and realised they had whales next to them. I am not sure how they managed to do it but they had a video crew onboard filming for the nightly news. Their images made me seem like I was on top of the whales and the nightly news had a guy being interviewed saying that private vessels are the biggest worry in getting too close to whales. There I was as the private boat.



I can assure you I was 100 metres from the whales. Being in the marine industry I know the rules. In the Whitsundays it is actually 300 metres as it is a breeding and calving ground for the humpback whale.

I headed north and the wind was meant to be 15 to 20 and building. It was really light and I was ghosting along at under

three knots for the entire afternoon. Finally just after nightfall the wind came back and I was off. As I flew up the coast I had dolphins playing on the bow for a lot of the time and I saw plenty of whales. It was great to finally see so much wildlife. It was like they had abandoned me for the journey until now.



The trip up the coast was fairly uneventful but it was fast. I had consistent wind of over 20 knots and the boat was surfing along nicely. Passing Cape Byron it was raining however I was really excited as this was the next turning point towards home. I had rounded the most eastern point of Australia and could turn more towards Airlie Beach. The next step was crossing into Queensland, my home state.

I was really happy to finally be back in Queensland, not just because it was my home state but I knew it would be warmer. The nights were getting warmer and the layers of clothing were coming off. That's why I love Queensland.

Off the Gold Coast I had my mate Dean Thornton, who had been at the start of the Brisbane to Gladstone race with his mates to help me put the mainsail up, come out to see me in his boat. I had spoken to him earlier in the day and ordered a pizza and hamburger to be brought out. I had lost the unassisted record so getting this was not an issue, in



fact it was a bonus.

The weather was horrible yet he came out and after several attempts I was able to get the pizza, hamburger and the newspaper from him. The food went down great even though it was cold. It didn't matter, it was better than the food I had on board.

I flew past Moreton Island and then Noosa. I was now in familiar territory having sailed these waters so many times in races and delivery trips. By this stage I had a fairly accurate estimated time of arrival. Mum organised her flight up on the Wednesday to arrive at 1330. I would arrive that afternoon or Thursday morning.

After passing Fraser Island I could finally head straight to Airlie. It was not long now, less than two days to go and I would finish my dream. With one day to go I was sailing past Yeppoon and the weather was terrible. It was pouring with rain and the wind was up and down all the time. Visibility went down to 100 metres at one point. I locked myself in the cabin and played on the internet to kill time. When the rain cleared I would go and helm or sit outside and just watch the world go by.

I sailed past Mackay in the early hours of Wednesday morning and I was starting to try and slow the boat down. Even though I was under just my triple reefed main I was flying along and averaging nine knots. I didn't want to arrive before mum got there so I had organised to arrive at 1600 hours. This way the twilight race fleet out of my home club, the Whitsunday Sailing Club, would also be out to see me come in.

Jessica Watson sailed for three days off the coast near Sydney waiting for the weekend so her arrival would be on a Saturday when more people could see her arrive. I was just waiting for my mum. She had been a tower of strength throughout and I wanted her to be there.

Even when my local newspaper the Whitsunday Times rang and said that if I arrived after 1400 they wouldn't be able to put me on the front page I didn't relent. This was about my mum.

I sailed past Lindeman Island and into the Whitsundays at 0900. I was home and into my own backyard as I like to call it. I had plenty of time to kill so I cruised past Pentecost Island and then up Dent Passage. I was hoping to see some of the ferries I used to work on as I passed Hamilton Island but there were none around.

I then sailed up and around Henning Island and into Cid Harbour. I played around in Cid for about an hour before heading off to meet another of my mates, Big Kev, off the top of North Molle. I knew he would be sailing out in one of the maxi yachts that I used to sail. Crossing the Whitsunday Passage as I had done so many times before was awesome. I was only hours away from finishing off this dream.

I played around off the top of North Molle for about an hour before Big Kev came into sight. I sailed across to him and tacked to sail with him back towards the islands. As I pulled up alongside his passengers and crew all applauded. He had obviously told them what I was about to achieve. He even had his hostie flash her breasts. He later told me that he had told her that I hadn't seen a real woman in six weeks so he wanted to show me one. You've got to love your mates.

Finally it was time to sail into Pioneer Bay and into Airlie Beach. As I crossed the Molle passage I got the phone call that mum was on a boat. She would be there. It was time to finish. I sailed past Pioneer rocks and into the wind shadow of the mountains. Then across



Funnel Bay where Whitsunday Blue (a boat from work) pulled up alongside me with all my friends and my mum onboard. They were all cheering and congratulating me. It was quite an emotional time yet I held back the tears. I wasn't done yet.

Into Pioneer Bay and I saw my finish line. Steve Watson was on board Manly Too ready to take my time. I had my full headsail out and as I sailed across the line I breathed a huge sigh of relief. After 42 days, 5 hours, 31 minutes and 55 seconds of solo sailing I was done. Mission accomplished.

One thing I had always wanted to do was set off a set of flares to celebrate my achievement. I dragged out a couple of flares and set them off. I know this is highly illegal however this was my celebration. I now have a great photo of that time taken by my mum. I will look at this photo for the rest of my life and remember the moment I conquered my dream to sail solo around Australia.



Time to celebrate

I pulled the mainsail down and just let it fall on the deck. And then I just drifted around for the next hour. Every boat from the Whitsunday Sailing Club fleet came past and congratulated me, some giving me three cheers others just cheering and clapping. I recall saying on many occasions that I was just happy to be back among friends.

Before I knew it, mum was stepping on board and I gave her a huge hug. Then my friends from Whitsunday Blue all came over. From being alone on my boat for so long I now had people everywhere. Cassie handed my phone back and it was ringing off the hook. One call was my sister and she was in tears. She was so proud of her little brother.

I sat and reflected while talking with my friends about the highlights and the low lights.

I have to say that it was a weird feeling. I wasn't overjoyed, I was simply relieved that it was over. I think most of my relief was that I didn't have to worry about making it anymore, I was there. I didn't have to get the boat home, I was there. I was home.

Meridien Marinas Abel Point Marina had offered me free berthing for a week so we moved the boat into the marina. As soon as we landed everyone took off saying they would meet me at the yacht club. Mum and her friend went straight to the club and I was with my mate Scott Clarke who lives with me.

I took a few moments just to sit and look at the boat in the sunset. I even took a few photos of the boat. She had done well, she had made it in record time. Her sails were shot but they could be replaced and there were other things that I needed to do but when you think that she did more than the length of 10 Sydney to Hobart races, she did so well.

I packed up a few things and then shut the boat and headed home. I had a quick shower



as I wanted to get to the club. I could have longer showers later. As I arrived at the club there was a huge round of applause led by Terry Archer and then it was time to 'talk story' as a friend once put it.

They have a huge buffet roast on Wednesday nights at the Whitsunday Sailing Club and I ate so much it was crazy. I just didn't seem to be able to fill myself up. It was good to have fresh food again and talking with my friends about my journey was great.

After the twilight racing presentation they awarded me a rum bucket for my efforts and I had a chance to talk to everyone. Usually the club is quite rowdy through the presentation but when I grabbed the microphone there wasn't a sound to be heard. This was my greatest reward of the whole trip. People genuinely wanted to know what I would have to say after such an achievement.

I used my time to say how good it was to be home at the Whitsunday Sailing Club, the greatest sailing club I know. I told them that I would be furthering my campaign to rid Australia of plastic bags by forming Save Our Seas Australia and then finally that I wanted to go around again the following year, this time with a full crew to break the world record for the fastest monohull, a record I missed due to my problems with sails and equipment.

I had to be sensible with my drinking that night. I knew it would affect me badly having not had much alcohol in the preceding weeks. My boat was a dry boat but I had a few drinks in Sydney when I stopped there. I didn't drink the rum bucket. I put it in with the twilight racing rum bucket. I just tried to pace myself. I did a great job as I didn't feel drunk all night.

A few of us left the club late and went down to the Phoenix Bar in town. There was only about 30 or 40 people there and I felt okay with this. I caught up with another mate Phil who just kept joking about a world record holder being in the house. Later we went to my favourite bar in town, Paddy Shenanigans. It is an Irish bar and has live music every night. It was packed. Within 20 minutes I was just so overwhelmed with people I had to leave. I went home. I was freaked out by being around so many people.

I slept well that night and the next day I had what I call my typical downer. Every time I go racing or sailing, the day after is not a good day. It is a day where I just can't be motivated to do anything. Sailing is a better place for me. I didn't even go to the boat. I used the day to spend time with my mum, relax and even watched a movie. We watched Avatar. What can I say, having not watched TV or a movie for so long, to watch what I regard as the most unbelievable movie ever made was surreal.

The following week I had very little energy and motivation. The trip had tired me physically and mentally. I needed time to recover. Instead I went back to work, my funds were beyond low and I had bills to pay so I had no choice. It was good to get back out into the Whitsundays. My life had changed though and I didn't enjoy the company of the backpackers onboard. I wanted something more mature and since then I have been driving Whitsunday Blue which is just four couples. It works really well for me.

I learnt a lot on the circumnavigation and making the most of every day is the key. I have created more dreams the Ocean Crusaders company is now formed to continue my work of raising awareness of the damage plastic bags do. My dream had come true. It was the hardest thing I had ever done but it was incredibly rewarding and it has set up the next chapter in my life. New dreams to chase, new friends to be made. Life is a wonderful thing.



Today's Dreams Are Tomorrow's Successes

*Don't be afraid of high hopes
or plans that seem to be out of reach.*

*Life is meant to be experienced,
and every situation allows for
learning and growth.*

*Motivation is a positive starting point,
and action places you on a forward path.*

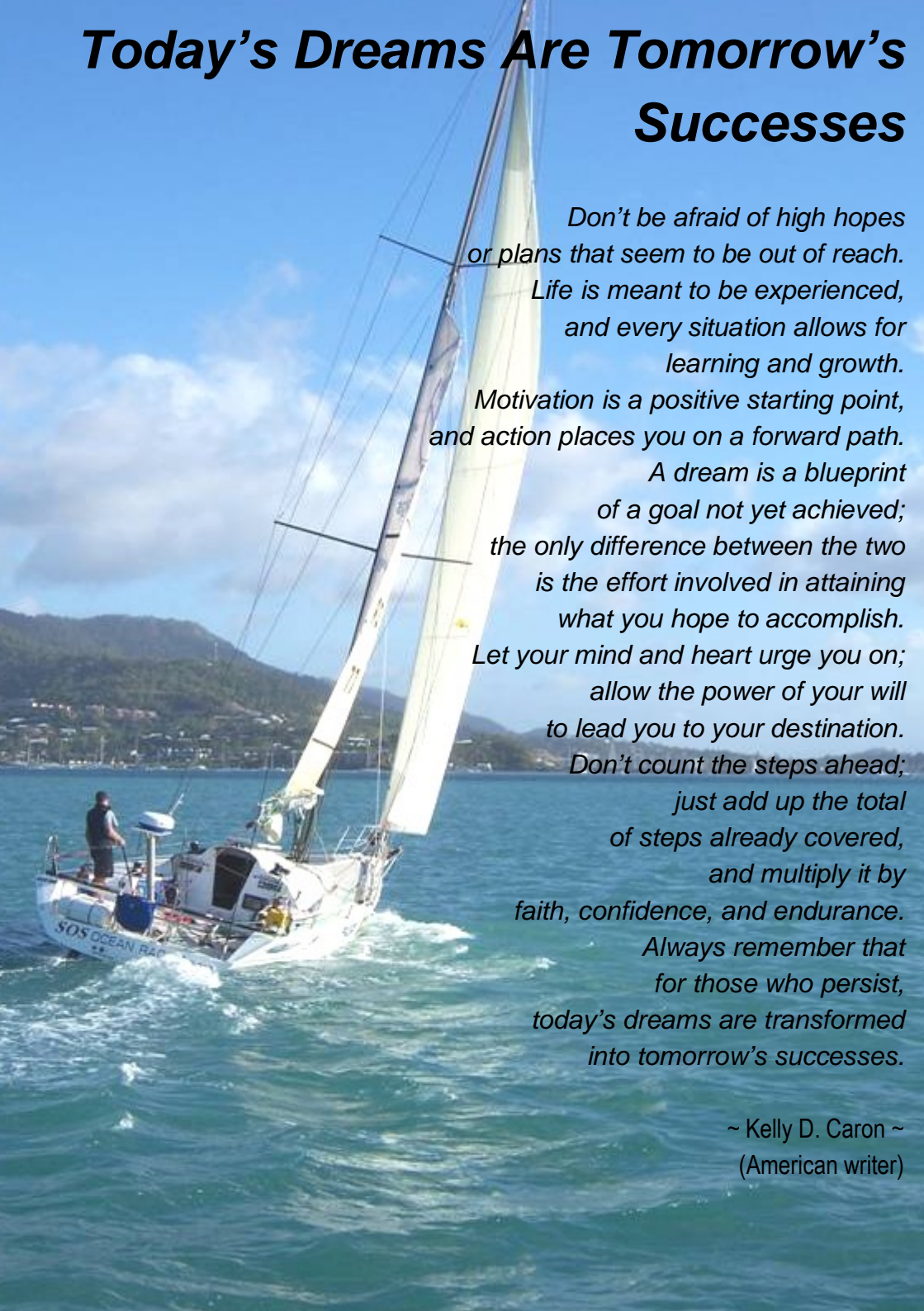
*A dream is a blueprint
of a goal not yet achieved;
the only difference between the two
is the effort involved in attaining
what you hope to accomplish.*

*Let your mind and heart urge you on;
allow the power of your will
to lead you to your destination.*

*Don't count the steps ahead;
just add up the total
of steps already covered,
and multiply it by
faith, confidence, and endurance.*

*Always remember that
for those who persist,
today's dreams are transformed
into tomorrow's successes.*

*~ Kelly D. Caron ~
(American writer)*



Sailing as equals

One of the big things I learnt on my voyage was that it doesn't matter who you are you don't have the right to treat other people like idiots. Admittedly I had done this in the past myself. I think everyone has. Nick Moloney is very well known in the international sailing world but to me he is just an ordinary bloke.

Here is what he said in an interview with Sailing Anarchy:

“SA: Who are the best sailors that you've competed against/with, and why?

NM: The best sailors ... hmmm ... I guess there have been heaps of them. I respect anyone that I have learned from but for me, to be a good sailor you must firstly be a good person! You can have all the skills in the world but if you are an arrogant kook, then to me you are a dork, even if you win the event. Life is a pretty important thing to me ... live by the rules, be kind, honest and all the rest, but mostly never think you are above someone else on a personality front ...win the race but be cool in the beer tent ... be friendly, life's too short.”

This is a common thing around yacht clubs in Australia. The thing I love about the Whitsunday Sailing Club is that it doesn't matter what kind of boat you have, whether it is a big go-fast boat or a trailer sailer, everyone is treated equally.

In some of the other clubs I have been involved in and at the end of some major events I have felt that the boat I had, or I had raced on, was not worthy of the big boys. And it is a weird feeling. It is not what sailing is about. If you walk down to your local marina you will find people waving hello or helping with mooring lines for other boats. There is always a story to be told.

Elitism is such a dorky thing. I don't care who you are in the world, if you are arrogant and people can't come up and say g'day to you then you are an arrogant so and so. In my windsurfing days I met two people at the opposite end of the scale. There was Bjorn

Dunkerbeck, ten times world champion and known as The Terminator. And then there was Robbie Naish, the God of windsurfing.

I was running a tour with guests to Maui in Hawaii and one day down at the 'beginner – intermediate' beach called Kanaha Beach Park I saw Robbie Naish packing up his gear. I was sponsored by Mistral Australia and he was an international rider for them. I wandered over and introduced myself and mentioned I had a group with me. He invited me to bring them over. He spent the next 30 minutes talking to them, signing autographs and posing for photos.

I found out later that he was actually running late for a plane. He missed his plane. But it proved that this guy was just an ordinary down-to-earth person who was just very good at what he did. He had grown up windsurfing and to get more windsurfing in he used to volunteer to bring boards back up the beach for beginners who always ended up downwind.

In total contrast there was 'The Terminator' Bjorn Dunkerbeck. When I first met him I said hello and he basically ignored me. It wasn't until I met him at the World Windsurfing Presentation Awards that he actually spoke to me. He was drunk at the time. If you ask me who is the better windsurfer I will tell you that Robbie Naish is the best windsurfer the world has ever seen. I won't mention Bjorn.

In life, it doesn't matter what you are trying to achieve but if your dreams involve standing on people to get to the top then your dreams will be crushed. You must build your foundation of stone so it never shifts. A foundation built on sand may seem strong at first but a storm will come and take it away from you and your dreams will be crushed..

For some reason I saw this a long time ago and it has stuck in my head. It is certainly an image to live by.



This famous Leunig cartoon tells the story of digging your own hole and putting someone else on a pedestal. Every time you dig deeper they go higher. My advice is never use and abuse people, it will come back to haunt you. You must control your destiny.

Believe In Yourself And Your Dreams Will Come True

Know what you can and want to do in life.

Set goals for yourself and work hard to achieve them.

Strive to have fun every day.

Use your creativity as a means of expressing your feelings.

Be sensitive in viewing the world.

Develop a sense of confidence.

Be honest with yourself and with others.

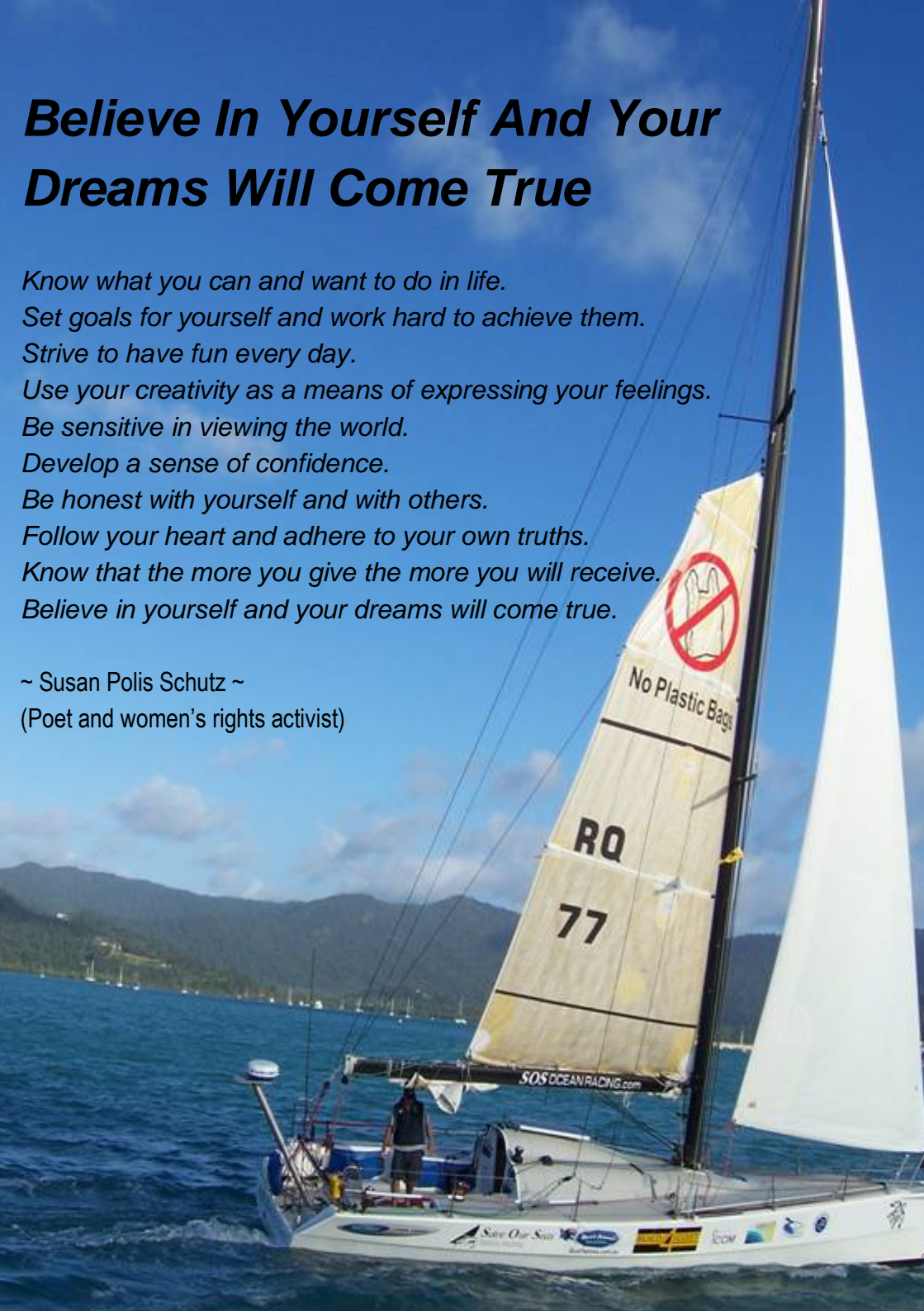
Follow your heart and adhere to your own truths.

Know that the more you give the more you will receive.

Believe in yourself and your dreams will come true.

~ Susan Polis Schutz ~

(Poet and women's rights activist)



Warning - Sailing is an addiction

When I got back from my trip I said I would never sail solo around Australia again. A month later and my thoughts were to consider it. I'm not sure if I will or not, we will see where life takes me but I am considering it. You see sailing is addictive, well it is for me. After most ocean races when I am tired and grumpy I often wonder why I keep doing it. Sometimes it is even during a race and I swear I will not do it again.

Then you get into the bars and it is time to 'talk story' and you talk of the hard bits, the broken spinnakers, the top speeds, the wipe outs, the battles and everyone is having a great time. It is the camaraderie that makes those nights so great. By the morning you are thinking, that wasn't so bad, it was tough but a good sail. A couple of days later you are itching to go again.

After my solo venture it took exactly four weeks for me to go back out on my boat. It sat out on a mooring and I watched it from my bedroom window. Don't get me wrong, I was sailing because the boats I work on are sailing catamarans but it wasn't the same.

I had six days off and it included a Wednesday afternoon and hence a chance to join the twilight race out of the Whitsunday Sailing Club. I patched up my mainsail as best I could. I didn't have a budget to replace it but I needed to go sailing. I invited my friends of whom very few knew how to sail.

On a day with a breeze of six knots maximum I had 12 people on board, a far cry from the solo effort a month earlier. We had a shocking start, a pathetic first leg and it didn't get any better. But you know what, who cares. We were out having a sail. I had some people from Estonia, England and Germany on board as well as a few Aussies. And the beer was flowing, people were smiling and the sunset was glorious.

Better still, when we got back to the club, while I copped a fair bit of flack as expected, I realised that at the end of the day getting out there is much better than staying at home and watching. And there were plenty of comments about my crew. Apparently I have a reputation of loading my boat with good looking ladies. My theory is if you can't get a pro crew, make sure you look good. My passengers were distracting the other crews!

It was all in the name of fun and that is what Wednesday afternoon sailing is about. For several of my crew it was their first yacht race so giving people that experience is something we should all try to do. You never know what you will help achieve for someone. One of my crew just may see sailing as a future or they may have conquered a fear. You just never know unless you get out and have a go.

The following Wednesday was even funnier. I took out an all female crew, but one. Only three of us knew how to sail and the other two were very new to it so we were never going to be competitive. That day we won the SML award at the Whitsunday Sailing Club -- Stone Motherless Last. But we had so much fun it didn't matter. I am not the one who cries when I lose. If I'm not having fun there is more reason to cry.

In life you have to enjoy each and every day. If you are not enjoying racing, go cruising with your friends and family for a week, enjoy your yacht. If your job is not making you happy, move on. Life is too short to just put up with things. Dreams are out there waiting to come true, make a change and go for them or you will regret it later in life.

A red sailboat is shown from a low angle, sailing on a blue body of water under a clear blue sky. The sail is a vibrant red, and the boat's hull is white. The background is a soft-focus view of the sea and sky.

Take These Thoughts With You On Your Journey To Your Dreams

Don't ever forget that you are unique. Be your best self and not an imitation of someone else.

Find your strengths and use them in a positive way. Don't listen to those who ridicule the choices you make.

Travel the road that you have chosen and don't look back with regret. You have to take chances to make your dreams happen.

Remember that there is plenty of time to travel another road - and still another - in your journey through life.

Take the time to find the route that is right for you. You will learn something valuable from every trip you take, so don't be afraid to make mistakes.

Tell yourself that you're okay just the way you are. Make friends who respect your true self.

Take the time to be alone, too, so you can know just how terrific your own company can be.

Remember that being alone doesn't always mean being lonely; it can be a beautiful experience of finding your creativity, your heartfelt feelings, and the calm and quiet peace deep inside you.

Don't ever forget that you are special and you have within you the ability to make your dreams come true.

***~ Jacqueline Schiff ~
(Hiker and writer)***

Go After Your Dream

You're good, but you're going to be great.

You're the best, but you're going to get better.

Sometimes the paths we take are long and hard, but remember: those are always the ones that lead to the most beautiful views.

Challenges come along inevitably: how you respond to them determines who you are - deep down inside - and everything you're going to be.

Increase the chances of reaching your goals by working at them gradually.

The very best you can do is all that is asked of you.

Realize that you are capable of working miracles of your own making.

Remember that opportunities have a reason for knocking on your door, and the right ones are there for the taking.

You don't always have to win, but you do need to know what it takes to be a winner.

It's up to you to find the key that unlocks the door to a more fulfilling life.

Understand that increased difficulty brings you nearer to the truth of how to survive it - and get beyond it.

Cross your bridges.

Meet your challenges.

Reach out for your dreams, and bring them closer and closer to your heart.

Get rid of the "if onlys" and get on with whatever you need to do to get things right.

Go after what you want in life, with all the blessings of all the people who care about you. And find out what making your wishes come true really feels like.

~ Collin McCarty ~

(American author)

An ocean free of plastic bags



Save Our Seas
AUSTRALIA



I dream of an ocean free of plastic bags and continuing my campaign against plastic bags was one of the things I just had to do when I got back. I have since Ocean Crusaders. It will focus on three A's -- Awareness, Alternatives and Action.

Awareness – I will continue to create awareness, particularly in the marine industry through my sailing campaigns, through advertising and articles.

Alternatives – To promote alternatives is a big thing for me. They are out there, we just need to promote them.

Action – Taking action to stop the problem is the key. I will teach the next generation through talks at primary schools, I will teach the current generation at promotional talks and I will educate through articles when I get the chance. I will also support companies that clean up and will campaign for Plastic Bag Free Days. I will also campaign local, state and federal governments to change legislation. We are so far behind the rest of the world here in Australia. It is time to change.

I have a chance to do something and if it helps one turtle or one whale then I will consider it has been successful. However my dream is for a world free of plastic bags, where turtles can swim without risk of suffocating on these crazy creations.

Why am I on this mission?

The 'convenient' plastic bag is killing our world.



In my life on the water I have been disturbed by the number of turtles and wildlife I have found dead. I have now found seven dead turtles in total. One of these turtles was found and the cause of death is unknown, two died because they had been hit by boats, two were found in crab pots and two were found to have died from plastic bag suffocation.

While I love turtles, I can understand that occasionally boats are going to run into them. I recall a race last year in Meridien Marinas Airlie Beach Race Week where I believe we hit a turtle. I can't be sure because we never saw it on the surface but the solid sound on the keel and the sudden stop of the boat meant it was something solid and I can only imagine it being the shell of a turtle.

I pray that he survived the bump and the solid sound gives me the idea we hit his shell and not his limbs. A large power boat can easily hit a turtle or any creature. Today's luxury cruisers are flying along at speeds in excess of 20 knots and seeing a turtle at this speed can be extremely hard and avoiding it if you do see it is near on impossible.

I used to work at the Bay Island Transit System out of Redland Bay in the Brisbane Bay Islands system. The government wanted to introduce a six knot speed limit among the islands due to the number of dugongs, turtles and dolphins in the area.

The ferries cruise at 20 to 25 knots ensuring passengers get to their destination quickly and efficiently so putting this speed limit in place was going to impact on a lot of people's lives by increasing run times by about 20 minutes.

Leaving the situation the way it was, was not an option either as I had heard stories of the ferries hitting dugongs in particular, a creature that is very rare to see. So the company commissioned an entire new fleet of jet powered vessels. Without propellers sticking down into the water the risk of deadly strikes would be minimised greatly.

I have always called power boats 'stink boats' due to the excessive fuel they burn compared to us yachties who use the wind to power us along. I know they hit our marine life and cause deaths but I think the greater concern is the diesel these boats burn. Some of today's private luxury cruisers use in excess of a 1000 litres of diesel every hour. Surely this is a crime against the environment.



Anyway, back to the turtles. Two of the dead turtles I found were in crab pots. Fisherman use wire net cages that have bait hanging in the middle to lure the crabs in through openings around the sides. Once inside the crab falls to the bottom of the pot and can't get out.

The problem is that some of these nets have holes large enough for a turtle to get in and eat the bait too. And then they get stuck and can't find a way out. They eventually drown and as their bodies bloat they float to the surface with the net.

A waste of life

I recall the first one I brought back in. I was running my partner's mum back to the mainland to catch a plane. I saw something floating in the water so went to investigate. I thought it was a large palm frond however on approach realised it was a turtle in a crab pot.

I contacted Marine Parks and they asked me to bring it in so they could dissect it. Having that turtle on board the boat was quite disturbing. It had only recently died judging by the lack of marine growth and his eyes were open staring into space.

It is a simple thing to make sure crab pots don't have big holes in them. You can simply tie an extra piece of string across the hole to close it up. Of course you want big crabs but you don't want to be responsible for killing a turtle. You can actually get big fines if your trap is found with a turtle in it, just like you can be fined for hitting a turtle with your boat.

Two turtle deaths particularly disturbed me. Not because the turtles were killed but the way in which they died. It was our 'convenient' plastic bag. Turtle throats have spines in them that point backwards. This means they cannot regurgitate anything. So anything they eat has to be digested.

A turtle, like many other marine animals, can mistake plastic bags for jelly fish. This is their favourite source of food, just like us and chocolate cake I imagine. They eat jelly fish that can harm humans. Their digestive system neutralises the poison which can put a person in hospital.



I have seen them munching on a jelly fish and you can see the delight on their faces. But once they have digested a plastic bag there is no way of getting rid of it. If they are

unfortunate enough to swallow a plastic bag it clogs their system and eventually they die. Or they starve like the turtle with the plastic bag in its stomach.

That turtle was eating sea grass and that's where a lot of rubbish winds up. Too many yachties and boaties around Australia, and the world for that matter, use the sea as a garbage dump. Flicking your cigarette butt into the ocean, or even out of the car where it ends up in drains leading to the oceans, is a real worry. They eventually get among the sea grass where turtles, dugongs and other marine creatures eat them without knowing. It's the same with bottles and cans. You might think cans rust away but if a turtle eats it in the early days the damage is done.

I recently found a can on Whitehaven Beach, arguably the world's best beach. It had obviously been there for a long time. It was a can of Castlemaine XXXX and I had never seen a can like it. It was years old. So they don't rust away like you would think.

Quite simply we need to stop using our oceans as a dumping ground. While a lot of the rubbish comes from storm drains, yachties and boaties contribute their fair share as well. It is illegal to litter in Australia yet I have seen it so many times. The cigarette butt tossed out of a car window or thrown overboard. If we stuck a cigarette butt in your meal at a restaurant you'd definitely complain. So why are we doing this to our marine life.

Another issue I have is with those people who hang plastic bags on their boats to keep birds off. Plastic bags do not keep birds off your boat. Hanging plastic bags from your rails or shrouds only creates a whole heap of noise. The birds then go and sit on the top of the mast or your forestay or worse still they just fly past and let go all over your pride and joy.

What's worse is eventually the bags flutter themselves to the point they let go and end up in the water. Surely it is time that marinas around the world banned plastic bags from being used as bird deterrents. Use bunting if you really think it works. It is cheap, easier to hang up and doesn't make the noise of plastic bags which annoys your neighbours when they come down for a drink on their boat at sunset.

Our oceans are in trouble. It is estimated that there are 46,000 pieces of plastic in every square mile of ocean. This is our play ground. You pick up rubbish in your kids' playground so they don't have to deal with it so why do we rubbish our oceans.

We need to protect our oceans. Our lives depend upon the seas. It is a source of so many things and if the waters keep rising, as everyone predicts, they will get bigger. One day we may be living on the oceans just like Kevin Costner in Waterworld. It would be horrible if there were no fish or wildlife left because we killed them all with our rubbish.



Rubbish washed up on a beach

The Serenity Prayer

*God grant me the Serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And Wisdom to know the difference.*



What can I do to help?

I am not asking you to stand in front of a bulldozer to save a forest or put your boat in between whaling ships and whales and risk being killed. The most simple thing you can do is something you can do every time you go shopping.

Australians currently use 6.9 billion plastic bags every year. If each and every family used one less plastic bag a week that would be a decrease of 253 million bags a year. If everybody bought 'green' reusable carry bags then we could eliminate the need for plastic bags.

The trick to this however is to remember to put your 'green' carry bags back in the car after you put your groceries away. You need to have them every time you go shopping. Don't put them in the bottom drawer of your kitchen cupboards. You'll probably only remember about them as you walk into the shop.



Then you either have to buy another green bag, go home and get one or as most people would do just accept a plastic bag. After all they are so 'convenient'.

I have had correspondence with the Australian Government on the matter of changing the legislation on plastic bags. Their response was that it is too expensive to consider and instead are spending \$300,000 on investigations into bio-degradable bags. The problem is a lot of bio-degradable bags just disintegrate into millions of

pieces and don't break down all that quickly. It would be far better just to ban them all together.

If it is too expensive to ban plastic bags how did South Australia change their laws to ban non-reusable shopping bags. South Australia is one of our smallest states yet they lead the way in container and plastic recycling and plastic bag legislation.

Countries around the world are banning plastic bags or introducing fees for their purchase. In Ireland they introduced a 15 cent plastic bag tax. In the first year it reduced plastic bag consumption by 90 per cent. The tax is now 22 cents.

In Bangladesh they had major floods in 1988 and 1998 and it was found that vital drains for the release of flood waters were clogged by garbage and in particular plastic bags. They banned plastic bags all together.

San Francisco and Ohio are leading the way in the United States by banning plastic bags. Legislation has just been passed to ban plastic bags in the entire state of California. Throughout Europe they are either banned or have a tax on them.

Australia has one of the seven natural wonders of the world in the Great Barrier Reef yet we cannot protect our own animals by simply banning these killer plastic bags. Apparently this is a cost thing. The alternatives are out there, however other countries have found that as soon as a ban is in place people learn to deal with the change very quickly.

So what can you do? Next time you go shopping, say no to plastic bags and tell your friends they are killing our turtles. I've been known to call them turtle killers rather than plastic bags on many occasions. If you picked up a dead turtle you would know the feeling I had. To find out it had died because of a plastic bag ... you make the decision.

Visit the Ocean Crusaders website and run through out education program with your children.

Visit the company website at www.oceancrusaders.org

Dreams do come true

While writing this book I flicked on the TV and was watching the Nascar Nationwide Series. This is American car racing and the nationwide series is the second tier competition. They were racing in Daytona in the biggest event of the year, the July 4 Independence Day weekend meeting.

The name Dale Earnhardt is huge in Nascar. He won so many races and is a legend of the sport. He died at Daytona on this same weekend in his racing prime in 2001. However his son Dale Earnhardt Jnr is now racing in Nascar and in this race he and his team raced under his dad's former race colours with his dad's race number. This was to be the last race that Jnr would use this number and paint scheme.

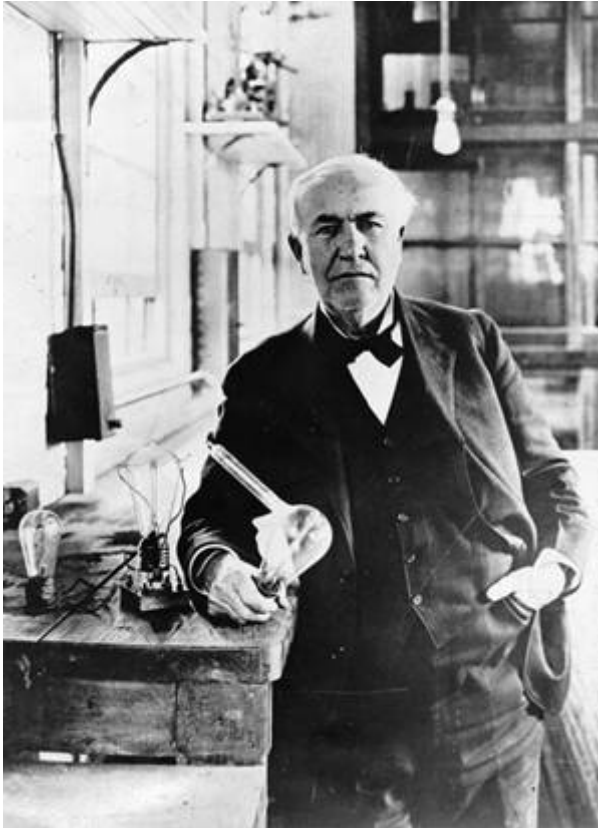
Dreams do come true ... He won.



Reach Beyond your limits

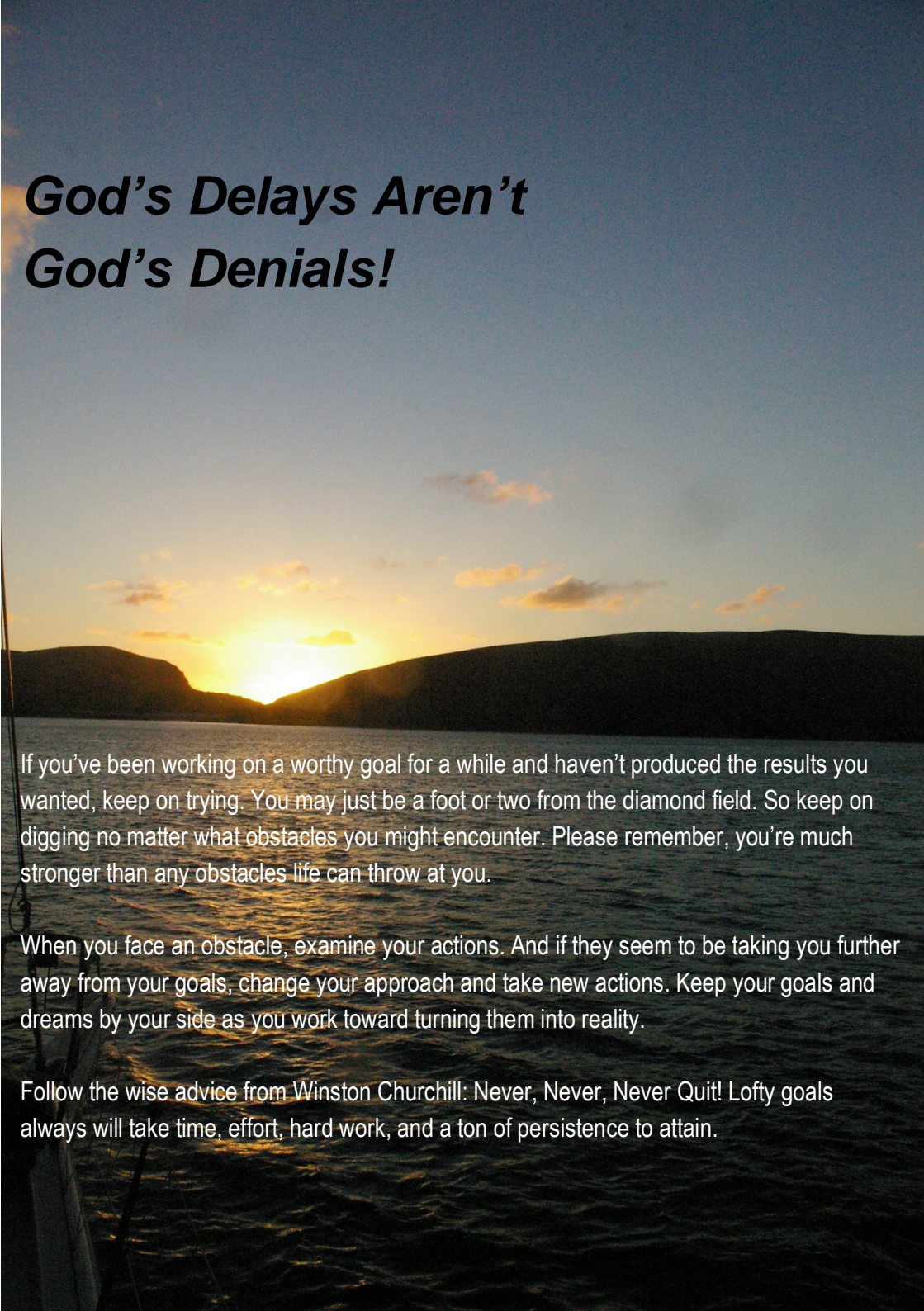
You truly have the potential to achieve your dreams. I know sometimes it's hard to believe you actually can realise your aspirations when you may have tried for many years and nothing has worked out for you. Let me ask you the question 'Have you ever wondered why most people don't achieve their goals?'

I believe the reason is they give up too soon. Most people quit after they've struck out or got knocked down a few times. They simply don't have the persistence to hang on when the going gets tough. So they incorrectly think that if they can't achieve their goals after several attempts they're a failure and never will be able to attain them for the rest of their lives.



The truth is, if they just hold on to their dreams and persist a little bit longer when the situation gets tough, then they'll reach their dreams sooner or later. Sometimes it is good to be stubborn.

In the history of humankind, the man or woman who has accomplished anything worthwhile has had to try many times before achieving their dreams. For example, it took Thomas Edison more than 10,000 tries before he succeeded in inventing the light bulb.

A sunset over a body of water with hills in the background. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and water. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with some clouds. The water is dark with some ripples. The hills are silhouetted against the sunset.

God's Delays Aren't God's Denials!

If you've been working on a worthy goal for a while and haven't produced the results you wanted, keep on trying. You may just be a foot or two from the diamond field. So keep on digging no matter what obstacles you might encounter. Please remember, you're much stronger than any obstacles life can throw at you.

When you face an obstacle, examine your actions. And if they seem to be taking you further away from your goals, change your approach and take new actions. Keep your goals and dreams by your side as you work toward turning them into reality.

Follow the wise advice from Winston Churchill: Never, Never, Never Quit! Lofty goals always will take time, effort, hard work, and a ton of persistence to attain.

The problem

Plastic bags are:

- Made from petroleum, a nonrenewable resource.
- A serious litter problem since they are lightweight and hard to contain (blow around).
- Non-biodegradable, breaking into smaller particles BUT never fully disappearing.
- Mistaken for food by marine animals (particularly sea turtles).
- One of the most numerous items of litter along with cigarette butts and Styrofoam.
- A major part of waste in our landfills.

“I’m the problem, I’m the solution”



IT'S A GLOBAL THING!!!

Other countries are ahead of the Australia in finding ways to reduce the impact of plastic bags on the environment!

Bangladesh :

Polythene plastic bags have been banned completely - the government is promoting bags made of jute, a natural fiber.

Ireland :

Individual consumers are required to pay a 15c tax per plastic bag - this has resulted in an estimated 90% reduction in plastic bag use in the first year.

The European Union:

Member countries require manufacturers/producers of plastic bags and other plastic waste to take them back and recycle them.

Taiwan and South Africa :

Both countries prohibit the thinner plastic bags - this encourages people to bring their own bags since retailers can't afford to provide the more expensive, thicker plastic bags for free.

The leatherback turtle can keep itself warm in cold water, dive over 1000 meters below sea level, travel thousands of miles and gulp down a Portuguese man-of-war but is threatened by the inert plastic shopping bag”
- Mrosovsky, N. 1987.

Plastics, like diamonds, are forever!

Clean Oceans make us all winners!

All people must be responsible and held

accountable for their actions!

PLASTIC AIN'T SO FANTASTIC

- Australia uses 6.9 billion plastic bags a year of which 3.6 billion are plastic shopping bags.
- If you tied 6.9 billion plastic bags together end on end they would travel around the world 42.5 times.
- Australians dump 36,700 tonnes of plastic bags into our landfill every year. That equates to 4,000 bags a minute or 230,000 per hour
- Only 10% of Australians take their plastic bags for recycling
- 100,000 marine creatures a year die from plastic entanglement and these are the ones found.
- Approximately 1 million sea birds also die from plastic.
- A plastic bag can kill numerous animals because they take so long to disintegrate. An animal that dies from the bag will decompose and the bag will be released, another animal could harmlessly fall victim and once again eat the same bag.
- It costs the Australian government in excess of \$4 million to clean up plastic bag litter each year.
- The floods in Bangladesh in 1988 & 1998 were made more severe because plastic bags clogged drains. The government has now banned plastic bags.
- If each Australian family used 1 less plastic bag each week that would be 253 million bags less a year.
- The #1 man made thing that sailors see in our ocean are plastic bags.
- There are believed to be 46,000 pieces of plastic in every square mile of ocean.
- There are 5 ocean gyres in the world where plastic gathers due to current circulation. These gyres contain millions of pieces of plastic and our wildlife feed in these grounds.

- It can take anything between 20-1000 years for a plastic bag to break up. I mean break up as they break up into smaller pieces. They don't break down and those that do, break down into polymers and toxic chemicals.
- It costs \$4,000 to recycle 1 tonne of plastic bags and you get a product that can be sold on the commodities market for \$32. We must stop them because recycling is not viable.
- Less than 1% of plastic bags in Australia are reused.
- It takes just 4 family shopping trips to accumulate 60 shopping bags.
- If you imagine a piece of plastic 1m wide. As a conservative guestimate, a length of this plastic 40km long is produced each day and this is for one brand of toilet paper packaging. For bread you can triple the length (120km long)
- World wide, 13-15,000 pieces of plastic are dumped into the ocean every day.
- Every year, 6.4 million tonnes are dumped into the ocean. This is the same as 3,200 kilometres of trucks each loaded with garbage.
- At least two thirds of the world's fish stocks are suffering from plastic ingestion.
- Ocean acidification is a growing problem
- Scientists have identified 200 areas declared as 'dead zones' where no life organisms can now grow.

The Cure to the problem is prevention!

The solution

- Bring your own cloth bag.
- Ask for paper bag (holds 5 to 6 times more than a plastic bag).
- Ask your merchant to promote cloth bags (charge for plastic or provide incentives for cloth).
- Encourage development of bags made from natural products such as cornstarch and soy.
- Write your elected officials regarding the hazards of plastic bags.
- Participate in a community/beach cleanup.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

- Buy your drinks in glass or aluminum containers
(75% of aluminum cans are recycled only 36% of plastic bottles)
- Bring your own mug or cup
- Reuse plastic utensils and containers
- Make plastic bags into jump ropes, rugs, and hats

GLOSSARY

Abeam	At right angles to the boat's centreline.
Auto-pilot	Electronic self steering system.
Batten	Fibreglass strip across a sail used to assist the sail to hold the correct shape, usually stitched or tied in place.
Beat	To sail upwind or as close into or towards the wind as the set of the sails can achieve.
Bilge	The lowest point inside the boat.
Boom	Horizontal spar along the bottom of the mainsail.
Bow	The front end of the boat.
Chinese Gybe	Unplanned change of direction due to the wind switching from one side of the mainsail to the other when the wind is from behind the boat. Also crash gybe.
Clew	The lower, aft end of each sail.
Cockpit	The main steering and sail control place on deck.
Companionway	The main stairway from the cockpit down into the cabin.
Deck	The main working surface outside around the cabin.
Delaminate	When the layers of sail cloth in a sail separate and weaken the sail.
EPIRB	Electronic Position Indicating Radio Beacon. When turned on it transmits its position via satellites back to the rescue centre.
Foredeck	The deck area towards the front of the boat.
Forestay	The wire between the front of the boat and the top of the mast that stops of the mast from falling backwards.
Furler	A headsail roll-up system to reduce the amount of sail area exposed.
Furled	The state of the headsail when rolled up.
Genoa	The largest headsail at the front of the boat.

Glass out	Total calm at sea.
GPS	Global Positioning System. Gives the boat's position and speed from a calculation obtained from satellites.
Gunwale	The side of the boat where the deck meets the hull.
Gybe	To change the wind from one side of the mainsail to the other when the wind is from behind the boat.
HF Radio	High Frequency radio transmitter/receiver.
Halyard	The rope used to raise and lower a sail.
Headsail	Smaller sail at the front of the yacht. Also jib.
Hove to	Positioning the boat to lie across the wind and waves sometimes with a small sail usually sheeted to windward.
Keel	The weighted fin under a yacht, usually lead or steel designed to prevent capsizing.
Knockdown	A term used when a yacht is rolled over by a wave or wind till her mast and sails are horizontal and in the water.
Knot	A measure of speed for boats. One knot is the speed a boat would be doing if it covered one nautical mile in one hour.
Leech	The rear edge of a sail.
Lifelines	The fence around the sides of the yacht.
Log	An instrument that measures boat speed through the water.
Log book	A record of activity and happenings on the boat.
Luff	The front edge of a sail.
Luffing up	To steer the boat up towards where the wind is coming from.
Mainsail	The sail on the rear or aft edge of the mast.
Mainsheet	The rope used to control the mainsail.
Mast	The vertical spar holding all the sails up.

Nautical mile	One nautical mile is 1.852 kilometres.
Outhaul	A rope used to stretch the bottom edge of the mainsail out along the boom.
Rhumb line	A direct line or course drawn between two points to be travelled on a chart.
Port	The left side of the boat when looking forward from the back of the boat.
Pulpit	The hand rail at the front of the boat.
Pushpit	The hand rail at the back end of the boat.
Reach	To sail a boat across the flow of the wind.
Reef	To reduce the amount of sail to slow the boat down because of excess wind.
Rig	A broad term to describe the mast and stays holding it all up.
Sheets	Ropes used to control the position of the sails.
Shrouds	The wires from the mast to the side of the boat to hold up the mast.
Spinnaker	A lightweight sail used to increase the speed of the boat when sailing downwind.
Spreader	A horizontal bar on the each side of the mast that the stays run through to brace the mast.
Starboard	The right hand side of the boat when looking forward from the back of the boat.
Stanchion	The small post supporting the wires in the life lines around the boat.
Stern	The back end of the boat.
Tiller	Short pole attached to the rudder to steer the boat.
Transom	The back of a boat, usually the actual panel at the rear end.
Windward	The direction from which the wind is blowing.

Acknowledgments

Writing this story could not be possible without many people. First of all I would like to thank those who have made me look like a professional writer. Julian Burgess was my editor. He has made this piece of writing so much better and I thank him for his professional attitude and for doing the editing in very quick time. His advice has also helped me form the book into something that is much more professional. I would also like to thank Robert Matthews for his spelling corrections and for his reviews. I met Rob through my Brindabella campaign as he has applied to join us on the record attempt. And also I would like to thank my friend Fleur Stone who was the first person to read my work and correct a lot of grammatical errors.

Of course I have to thank those most dear to me. My rock has been my mother. Without her I would be a raving lunatic by now. My brother and sister for supporting my campaign and for helping me grow up when I was a kid. My two best friends, Anthony Bradbury and Mark Lannoy. I have known Anthony longer than any other friend and after 20 years we have still never had a fight and we have seen each other through so many hard times and celebrated so many good times. Just as this was going to print I had the honour of becoming his son Josh's God Father. And to Mark, whom I spent the glory years in Fiji. We were always on the same wavelength. If I needed something done, Mark would already be doing it. Two of the greatest mates a man could ask for.

I also need to thank those who have helped my sailing career over the years. Rudy Weber (Too Impetuous) and Dave Elliott (e11even) gave me the opportunity to race on their boats and I learnt my trade on these boats in particular.

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My campaign would not have reached the audience it did without my media supporters.



Rob Kothe from Sail-world.com offered so much support and advice and ran interviews with me on several occasions and articles daily. His website ensured my message and campaign got to the sailing community around the world.



The entire team at the Whitsunday Times has been ultra supportive to the point where we now joke that the paper should be renamed the Thommo Times. They have run articles most weeks and continue to support my campaign.



Scott & Teegs from ZincFM in Mackay & Whitsundays ran regular interviews throughout my journey to update locals of my progress. We now have a great working relationship and they continue to support my campaign.

The last thank you goes to our creator. The world is an amazing place and the oceans are my playground. Our creator is a genius.

Ian Thomson

Airlie Beach

September 2010

Below are my sponsors, without them I would not have got to the start line.



Furuno Electronics – Ben Mudd – www.furuno.com.au



Bulid 4 Cost – Carlos Steenland – www.build4cost.com



MaxSea International – www.maxsea.com



Ocean Tracker – Roy Barkas – www.oceantracker.net



Streaming Video Systems – Mark Christiansen & Tom Swanton
www.streamingvideosystems.com



Boat Names Australia – Chris Lloyd-Parker – www.boatnames.com.au



Icom Australia – www.icom.net.au



Aluminium Boats – Stuart Pascoe – www.allyboats.com.au



Paradise Bay – Peter Spann – www.paradisebay.com.au



Hayman Island – www.hayman.com.au



My last thank you goes to everyone who works and sails at the greatest sailing club in the world. The Whitsunday Sailing Club. This club helped me raise much needed funds for my campaign. They hosted an auction night for me which raised almost \$7,000. In addition, for several weeks leading up to my departure, the funds raised by the meat tray raffles on a Wednesday night went to my campaign.

As a tribute to their support, if you now visit the Whitsunday Sailing Club, you will find my official World Sailing Speed Record Council Performance Certificate hanging on the wall.



Thank you one and all.

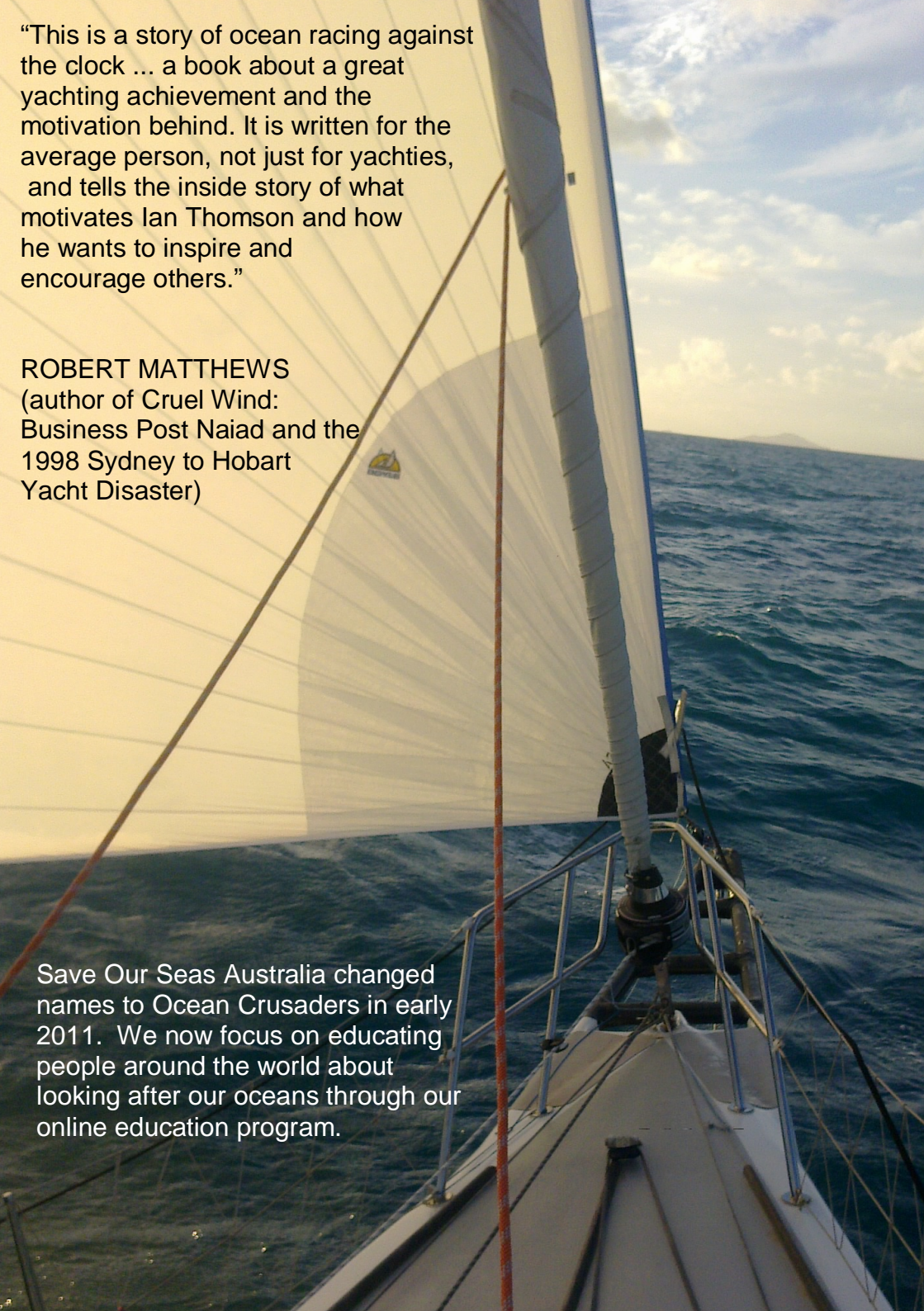
My final words are simple

ONWARDS

&

Upwards



A photograph of a sailboat on the ocean. The sail is white and has a small logo on it. The rigging is blue. The ocean is blue and the sky is blue with some clouds. The sun is low in the sky, creating a warm glow.

“This is a story of ocean racing against the clock ... a book about a great yachting achievement and the motivation behind. It is written for the average person, not just for yachties, and tells the inside story of what motivates Ian Thomson and how he wants to inspire and encourage others.”

ROBERT MATTHEWS
(author of Cruel Wind:
Business Post Naiad and the
1998 Sydney to Hobart
Yacht Disaster)

Save Our Seas Australia changed names to Ocean Crusaders in early 2011. We now focus on educating people around the world about looking after our oceans through our online education program.