



Tuesday, January 20, 2009

Media Statement

Yachties race to remember algae season

This year marked the tenth anniversary of the Toxic Cup, a race held off Leighton Beach to commemorate the algal bloom which closed the Swan River to recreational events in 2000.

A record number of entrants got stuck into the action during the event last Saturday, with 48 boats from five yacht clubs vying for glory.

Swan River Trust deputy chair Dr Jane Chambers presented trophies to the Cup winners yesterday evening at East Fremantle Yacht Club, and congratulated all participants.

Divisional winners were:

Division 1 – Winward skippered by Steve Ward from Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club

Viking ½ ton – Mighty Blue skippered by Bryan Smith from South of Perth Yacht Club

Division 2 – Colusion skippered by Barry Arnold from South of Perth Yacht Club

Division 3 – L'Osprey skippered by Chris Oldham / Lee Bowers from Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club

East Fremantle Yacht Club general manager John Tissot said conditions on the day were excellent for racing on the ocean, providing just enough of a challenge for the crews.

“The race is always a lot of fun, with a competitive group of skippers and crews who are out to win,” Mr Tissot said.

“Coming from a river-based club, it’s a nice change racing on the ocean, and a commemoration of why we had to move the race there ten years ago.”

Dr Jane Chambers said the 2000 algal bloom meant all river-based yacht clubs and recreational river users could not use the river for 12 days, due to the toxic effects of the bloom.

“At the moment we’re seeing medium to high levels of algae at all monitoring sites in the Swan and Canning rivers. In the past, the season for algal blooms has been in late summer to early autumn when the days are long and hot and there is less wind,” Dr Chambers said.

“Still conditions can be bad for the rivers as well as sailors because they provide an excellent environment for algal growth. I encourage everyone to keep up to date with the Trust’s weekly algae activity report.

“The Trust is proud to support this event, and we congratulate the East Fremantle Yacht Club for keeping the issue of algal blooms present in the minds of people who enjoy and love the Swan Canning Riverpark.

“We must not be complacent about the health of the rivers – we are very lucky to be able to enjoy such wonderful rivers but they are under stress and everyone needs to do the right thing.”

Log on to www.riverguardians.com to find out how you can help keep our rivers healthy.

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