

Media Release: 2015 Darwin Dili Yacht Rally

8 July 2015

Fleet Sets Sail for Dili

A fleet of 7 yachts and over 60 crew will set sail for Dili, Timor-Leste, at 11.00am on Saturday 11 July in the 2015 Darwin Dili Yacht Rally. The Start Line is to the west of the Darwin Sailing Club, and the best vantage point for watching the Start is from East Point.

The event is organised from Timor-Leste through the Ministry of Tourism and a cross sector Committee. The Ministry of Tourism Timor-Leste has generously supported the Rally by offering prize money of USD15,000. The NT Government provides support for the Rally and the Cruising Yacht Association of the NT (CYANT) provides technical support and advice to the Committee through funding received from the NT Government. The last yacht over the line will also receive a generous prize money courtesy of major sponsor Too Wheels Adventures.

The 2015 event is the sixth Darwin Dili Yacht Rally of the modern era, having recommenced in 2010 after a 36 year hiatus following successful events in 1973 and 1974. In 2015, the 7 yachts are sailing in two divisions: Division I – Monohull Competitive Cruising and Division II – Monohull Cruising.

Division I is headed up by Geoff Hill's *Antipodes*, a 22 metre Smith Santa Cruz 72 with a crew of 20 on board which has come down from the Philippines for a number of events on the north Australian sailing circuit. If winds are good and conditions are favourable, *Antipodes* is favourite to overturn *Australian Maid's* Rally record of 52.12 hours set in 2013. Other local monohull yachts in Division I include Barrie Morgan's *Evolution NT*.

Division II comprises a diverse fleet of cruising yachts from Darwin, Adelaide and Launceston, ranging in size from 9 to 24 metres. Launceston-registered *Skye Melody*, owned by Graeme Hay, will be carrying over 120 boxes of donated medical and educational supplies to Dili for distribution to the Bairo Pite clinic in Dili.

This year's fleet also has the honour of having three Timorese participants, all aboard *Skye Melody*. Two members of the Darwin Timorese community, Mr Jose Luis Madeira Valadares and Mr Lourenco Manuel Da Silva are keen for the Rally to develop and extend ties between the two communities. As a sixteen year old living in Dili, Jose Valadares remembers the arrival of the first Darwin Dili Yacht Race in 1973, and is keen to experience it for himself. They are joined by Mr Miguel da Silva Araujo, a Timorese Sailor from Dili.

All participating vessels will be equipped with the Yellow Brick Tracking device, allowing friends, families and spectators to follow the Rally's progress online at <http://yb.tl/d2d2015> or on the Yellow Brick iPhone/iPad App (YB Races).

The 2015 Darwin Dili Yacht Rally will be started by Mr Joao Mendes Goncalves, Head of Mission and State Representative of the Office of Timor-Leste Prime Minister, Mr Jose Quintas, senior staff and special representative of the Timor-Leste Minister for Tourism, HE Francisco Kalbuadi Lay, and Mr Nathan Barrett MLA, representing the NT Chief Minister, Hon. Adam Giles. Representatives of the Ministry for Tourism will also be in attendance.

Media are welcome to cover the Rally and the Start. Media opportunities for coverage include:

- Aboard the official Start Boat, the *Spirit of Darwin*, which departs Cullen Bay Public Ferry Terminal at **09.45 am sharp on Saturday 11 July**
- Interviews with officials on the Start Boat
- Interviews with Rally participants, organisers and previous participants.

Media enquiries should be directed to Anne Kemp on 0412 180 330 or to mail@sailtimorleste.org Full details on the Rally and participants can also be obtained from www.sailtimorleste.org