

Wildlife Coast Cruises offering the best seat in the house

SAILING

Cowes Yacht Club and the team from Wildlife Coast Cruises have joined forces to offer the best seats in the house for the start of the Australian Air Safaris Around French Island National Catamaran Challenge.

The fleet takes to the water on Saturday March 23, and a special Wildlife Coast Cruise has been organised so members of the public can get a waterfront view of all the action.

Spots on the cruise are very limited, with only 50 people able to take advantage of this fantastic offer.

Boarding will start at the Cowes Pier at 11.30am and with tickets only \$5 per person, they are sure to be snapped up quickly.

Race fans are advised to get in early and book their seat at the Wildlife Coast Cruises website.

Some of the best sailors from around the country are venturing to Phillip Island for the 28th running of the race to try and win the overall Isle of Wight Trophy and the \$11,000 in prize money that goes with it.

"Our customers always love watching the sailors in action so it's going to be great to be right there and give everyone the best seat in the house this year," said Wildlife Coast Cruises Captain, John Dickie.

"Sometimes it feels like we are navigating through the Sydney to Hobart fleet of yachts when we are heading off to Seal Rocks on a tour and Cowes Yacht Club is run-



A special Wildlife Coast Cruise has been organised so members of the public can get a waterfront view of all the action start of the Australian Air Safaris Around French Island National Catamaran Challenge on March 23.

ning a race with 30 or so boats." Cowes Yacht Club Commodore Tim Modra is super excited about the ferry offering for spectators.

"We will have up to 15 different types of Catamarans competing in the race, some of these have great wildlife names such as Wildcats, Tigers, Taipans and Mosquitos so it feels at home to have the Wildlife Coast Cruises ferry with us which is more commonly looking at seals, dolphins and humpback whales."

Four time Cowes Yacht Club Champion Rod Saw will be aiming to claim his first Isle of Wight Trophy win this year and loves the idea of family, friends and spectators having the opportunity for a close up view of the race.

"Having the spectators on the ferry and right amongst the action will be amazing.

"My wife and kids put their hands up to get a spot on the ferry as they normally watch me from the beach."

The race committee is very excited to advise that the State

Member for Bass Jordan Crugnale MP will also be on board to start the race.

This is just one of many things Cowes Yacht Club and their partners are offering for the community to get involved this year.

Cowes Yacht Club want you to mark March 23 in your calendar. If you can't make the ferry or miss a spot, make sure you head down to the club for the race start, with market stalls, food and coffee trucks, two-for-one coffees and a free sausage sizzle.

"This is all being provided thanks to the Isle Of Wight Hotel," a club spokesperson said.

"There are also lots of giveaways for spectators with things like event merchandise and rounds of golf at the Red Rocks Golf Course."

Spots on the Wildlife Coast Cruises Ferry are limited to 50 people. Bookings are open now: www.wildlifecoastcruises.com.au/catamaran-challenge

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SHORT STACK

A QUICK ROUNDUP OF NEWS, VIEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Junior Landcare grants

The latest round of Woolworths Junior Landcare Grants is now open for applications. The grants (up to \$1000) support projects with a focus on sustainable food production, improving waste management, or enhancing native habitats. The Woolworths Junior Landcare Grants program is all about supporting fun and engaging learning experiences that can help younger generations connect with natural environments. Applications close on March 19. Details www.juniorlandcare.org.au.

Victorian Learn Local awards

Nominations are open for the 2024 Victorian Learn Local Awards. Victorians are encouraged to nominate individuals and organisations that showcase innovation and the transformative role of Learn Locals, delivering vital foundation and workplace skills. Winners in the organisations categories will win \$10,000 while individual winners take home \$5000 and finalists win \$1000. Applications close May 31. Details: vic.gov.au/learn-local-awards.

Delivering better libraries

Applications are open for the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program to improve libraries across Victoria. Grants between \$10,000 and \$200,000 are available in this

Living Libraries Infrastructure Program funding round. Applications close March 28. Details localgovernment.vic.gov.au/grants.

Aboriginal Infrastructure Funding

Applications are open for the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program. The grants support Aboriginal organisations to build new functional and accessible infrastructure, or to repair, renovate or expand existing infrastructure - ensuring they can continue to deliver the services their communities need. Applications are open until 2pm, Monday April 2. Details: firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-community-infrastructure-program.

Dyson Community Grants

The latest round of the Dysons Community Grants opens on March 1. This program, now in its fourth year, provides grants to support sporting, educational, welfare and community groups around Victoria. Eligible organisations include pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, sporting clubs, not-for-profit groups, charities, welfare agencies, local societies and volunteer emergency services. Applications close March 31. Details: dysongroup.com.au/about-community-grants

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