## Rear Commodore Australia

The Australian Fireball fleet has remained steady since we last reported in Slovenia.  Numbers across the country remain the same with small fleets in Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales.  South Australia has seen a number of boats change hands with some new young sailors entering the fleet which is very encouraging and numbers around 20 boats.

The downturn of juniors coming up through the Australian fleets is a bit concerning as lower numbers in the junior classes will lead to lower numbers in senior classes in the future.  This is already having an effect on our three smaller fleets who all struggle to find crews and get juniors to buy boats.

Again Australia has provided a strong fleet for the Thailand worlds with 11 boats attending.  The numbers would have been higher again if we had gone to a new fresh venue - probably around 20 boats.

It still remains hard to encourage sailors to attend regattas in Europe as the cost to get there and lease a boat make it a bit prohibitive.  We do expect to have a strong turnout for the South African Worlds and aim to send a container.

Exciting news for the region is the increased Fireball talk in New Zealand, brought about by the return of Greg Bryom after a spell in Australia.  Greg has started a New Zealand Facebook group and is hunting down old sailors and boats across the country.  It would be great if we can come up with a way to support Greg and build a fleet in new Zealand - perhaps a future worlds is an option.

Ben Schulz