

Australian Commodore's Report 2018

The Fireball fleet in Australia is in a growth stage with the 2022 world championships in Geelong providing an incentive to young sailors to enter the class.

The South Australian fleet has used association boats and association loans to help juniors enter the class.

In Victoria it has been more of a "reliving my youth" feel with a number of past fireball sailors being encouraged back into the class for another world championship.

New South Wales have a steady but aging fleet while Western Australia has failed to maintain the fleet post Mandurah worlds.

We are running out of boats to put sailors in which is a good reflection of the increased overall numbers on the water.

We have a number of sailors ordering new Winders this year and also a boat builder in Geelong looking to build himself a boat from the YMS mould.

Over the next few years we need to encourage our sailors to buy new boats so there will be second hand boats available for new sailors.

In New Zealand there are still rumblings from the old Fireball guard buy not a lot of action. There were a few posts on Facebook of old wooden Fireballs hitting the water over the last 12 months.

I am not sure how we can regenerate the NZ fleet without access to cheap ready to sail boats on their doorstep. All we can do is continue to encourage them.

Hiro has moved to Thailand and is occasionally visiting Royal Varuna YC. He says that there are still a few Fireballs tucked away in sheds but not hitting the water.

XSP still has a Fireball mould in Singapore and there are three glass boats there somewhere.

We have failed in our attempts to make contact with the boat owners in the past.

This perhaps should come back onto Fi's agenda. Perhaps we can look at the measurement certificates for the boats or contact XSP officially to see if they can help.

The Australians are very much against the twin pole system due to the cost and also a perceived lowering of the skill level required to be a crew. They have seen the Sayce Reece system in use on my boat but didn't like that either because you cannot take the end of the pole to the sheet through a gybe as easily.

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Ben Schulz