

Australian Melges 24 Class Report 2019.

The Melges 24 Australian fleet had a bit of a flat season in 2018/19. There wasn't quite as much regatta activity as in previous seasons. A few boats have changed hands hopefully bringing new blood to the class.

While many boat owners did do some sport boat and handicap racing, we did have 3 Melges 24 regattas. The first was the South Australian Championships on February 19 at the Cruising Yacht Club of South Australia. A very small fleet, but two great days of racing.

In March 2019 we held a two day NSW Championships followed by the Australian Champs over four days at Lake Macquarie, about 2 hours north of Sydney. This venue is the home to some of Australia's greatest sailors (including many of the Olympic sailing team, Sail GP & America's Cup crews) and one of the most underrated race tracks for sailing in the world. The fleet of 10 boats enjoyed wind strengths of 5 to 25 knots throughout the week.

Although these participant numbers are ok for us, we are facing a few challenges.

- 1) About 25 percent of our owners want to One Design / Regatta race and the balance are happy to do a bit of beer can racing at their local club and are not interested in travelling. This frustrates the regatta racers who eventually move on.
- 2) The boats are very spread out across the country with only one or two at each club except Adelaide, which has about seven boats.
- 3) There are very few one design regattas that we can link into. To run a Melges 24 only event costs around \$1200+per day. The question is always, who is going to guarantee the \$2400 for a two day regatta and run the risk that only a couple of boats will turn up.
- 4) Communication is the biggest problem for organisers - delayed replies to emails and owners not committing to regattas until the last minute.

In light of all this, it always seems to work out and our National Champs are a great event that everyone that competes enjoys.

The 2020 Australian Champs will be in Adelaide in March. The Adelaide sailors are always welcoming and run a fun event. We are expecting 10 to 15 boats.