

2028 Melbourne to Vanuatu Yacht Race

Preliminary Notice of Race



Amendments

Number	Condition Changed	Summary of Amendment

Key Information		
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About the Melbourne to Vanuatu Yacht Race

The ORCV ocean yacht race from **Melbourne to Port Vila, Vanuatu** is a 1,885nm Category 1 (plus extra requirements) race which starts off Portsea, Melbourne, Victoria, inside Port Phillip Bay, proceeds across Bass Strait and the Southern Pacific Ocean, around New Caledonia to the finish at Port Havannah Efate Island, Vanuatu.

The Vanuatu archipelago of 83 islands is a truly beautiful part of the world and after Past ORCV Commodore George Shaw visited on a cruise, the Melbourne to Vanuatu ocean race was proposed to introduce other sailors to this paradise on Earth. As a result the ORCV held the inaugural 2026 **Melbourne to Vanuatu Ocean Race** - and what a race it was! There are still people talking about it at now at various clubs.

The race was successfully run in 2006, 2010 and 2014, and now it is all happening again with the 2028 **Melbourne to Vanuatu Ocean Yacht Race**. This race presents some unique tactical and navigational challenges, including when to transit the South East Australian current, through the "Horse Latitudes" and into the South Easterly Trade Winds.

To help participants prepare themselves, the ORCV will conduct an extensive set of seminars covering all aspects of such long distance racing. Topics to be covered included Health, Provisioning, Repairs, Search and Rescue, Salvage and Customs and Quarantine.



The Race is organised and conducted by the Ocean Racing Club of Victoria inc (ORCV)

1. The Race

- 1.1. This is a 1885 nautical mile, Category 1 Race (plus the additional requirements listed in this Preliminary Notice of Race), starting in the vicinity of Portsea Pier in Victoria, Australia and finishing in Port Havannah, Vanuatu.
- 1.2. The Race will have a starting window commencing on Sunday 25 June 2028 with specific start and dates for that window to be determined.
- 1.3. The Race is a non-stop and unassisted event.
- 1.4. The details of the course including any marks will be in the Sailing Instructions for the Race.
- 1.5. In the event of extreme weather affecting the event the Race Committee may suspend racing to allow boats to seek shelter.

2. Rules and Regulations

- 2.1. The Race will be governed by the versions of the following rules, regulations and prescriptions current as of 1 June 2028, however using the dates in [] as guides:
 - The Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) of World Sailing (WS) [2025-2028],
 - The Prescriptions and Special Regulations of Australian Sailing (AS), Part 1 [2024 + amendments],
 - Where a boat is entered under AMS, the Rules and Regulations of the Australian Measurement System (AMS),
 - Where a boat is entered under ORCi, the Rules and Regulations of the Offshore Racing Congress (ORC),
 - The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (ColRegs), except as amended by the Notice of Race and the Sailing Instructions for the Race.
- 2.2. The ORCV reserves the right to amend this Preliminary Notice of Race.
- 2.3. The Sailing Instructions will be issued through the ORCV website (www.orcv.org.au).

3. Race Categories and Handicap Systems

3.1. The Race will be conducted with the following Race Categories and Handicap Systems:

Race Category	PHS	AMS	ORCi	OMR
Monohull including 4+autohelm	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Monohull Double Handed	Yes	No(refer 3.7)	Yes(refer 3.7)	No
Multihull Double Handed	Yes	No	No	No
Multihull including 4+autohelm	Yes	No	No	Yes

- 3.2. Boats in the Monohull and Multihull Categories may race fully crewed, “4+autohelm” or Double Handed.
- 3.3. Double Handed Category boats must have 2 crew. They are also automatically entered and scored in the Monohull Race Category in all eligible Handicap Systems.
- 3.4. The Multihull Category boats will be entered into the PHS and OMR Handicap systems if they meet the requirements of Appendix B: Boat Eligibility Requirements.
- 3.5. The Race Committee may split the Monohull/Multihull Categories into multiple divisions considering the number of entries and the performance characteristics of competitors.
- 3.6. Boats entering ORCi must hold a valid ORCi Rating Certificate based on data submitted to Yachting Australia by an accredited measurer. The ORCi All Purpose Handicap System will be used.
- 3.7. Non-Spinnaker and Two-Handed AMS rating certificates are not used for the Handicap Systems used for scoring. The ORCi two handed rating certificate will be used for the double handed race category using the ORCi handicap system.
- 3.8. Boats entered in the AMS and ORC Handicap systems of the Monohull Category must have a valid rating certificate which includes a spinnaker with a measured area of at least 130% of the area of the boat’s fore triangle where the fore triangle is defined as $0.5 \times FL \times J$ measured in accordance with the AMS rules.
- 3.9. The Race Committee reserves the right to cancel any Race Category or Division with fewer than 5 entries.

4. Eligibility

- 4.1. The Race is open to boats entered by a member of a yacht club recognised by a State or National Yachting Authority affiliated with WS.
- 4.2. All boats must be of a thoroughly seaworthy nature.
- 4.3. A monohull boat must have a Hull Length (LH) of not less than 9.0 metres; and a Loaded Waterline Length (LWL) as defined in the Australia Sailing Special Regulations not less than 7.3

metres. A multihull boat must have a minimum LWL as defined in the AS Special Regulations not less than 12.0 metres and must comply with the requirements of Condition 9.

- 4.4. Each boat must comply with the eligibility requirements listed in Appendix A: Stability Requirements.
- 4.5. Each boat must comply with the eligibility requirements as listed in Appendix B: Boat Eligibility Requirements.
- 4.6. The crew of each boat must meet the eligibility requirements listed in Appendix C: Crew Eligibility requirements.
- 4.7. A decision of the ORCV or the Race Committee as to any matter under this Condition 4, including as to whether a boat and its crew meet the eligibility criteria for entry in the Race, is final and binding and will not be grounds for a request for redress.
- 4.8. All safety equipment must be on board and available for inspection. On request by the Race Committee, boats must be made available for spot inspection to verify safety regulation compliance. Spot checks may be carried out prior to the warning signal or after a boat finishes.

5. Application for Entry

The entry application process will be detailed in the Notice of Race.

6. Fees

The following table provides an indication of fees that will be payable for registration.

Initial registration fee (AUD)	\$1,000	Payable on registration
Remainder of race entry fee (balance of full fee of \$1700/2000 member/non-member)	\$700 ORCV members \$1,000 non-members	By 25 January 2028
Late race entry fee	+\$500	After 25 January 2028
Crew fees	\$100 ORCV members \$150 ORCV non-members	At close of entry
Berthing fees in Melbourne and Vanuatu	To be determined	

7. Scoring

Details of the scoring system for all handicap systems will be detailed in the Notice of Race.

8. Trophies

The following perpetual trophies may be awarded, further details will be provided in the Notice of Race:

- Vanuatu Trophy – 1st place overall on ORCi

9. Changes to Rules and Australian Sailing Special Regulation Requirements

- 9.1. The following changes and clarifications to the Racing Rules of Sailing and Australian Sailing(AS) Special Regulations apply. This list is not exhaustive and will be revised in the Notice of Race. Additional requirements to the Special Regulations are detailed in Appendix B: Boat Eligibility Requirements.
- 9.1.1. **RRS 51:** A boat with movable ballast or variable ballast (within the meaning of those terms in the Special Regulations) may move that ballast for the purpose of changing trim or stability to the extent permitted by their stability rating.
- 9.1.2. **RRS 52:** The rule will be modified to allow self-steering equipment to be used by all boats and to allow the adjustment and operation of sails and adjustment of movable water ballast or canting keels on any boat by the use of stored power.
- 9.1.3. **AS Special Regulations 3.2** - All boats shall have either a watertight “crash” bulkhead within 15% of LOA from the bow and abaft the forward end of LWL or permanently installed closed-cell foam buoyancy effectively filling the forward 30% LOA of the hull. In addition, a bulkhead shall be provided at the stern, forward of the rudder post, with the top of the bulkhead a minimum 300 mm above the waterline.
- 9.1.4. **AS Special Regulations 3.18.4 Water Requirements** Emergency drinking water (in addition to that required to be carried at the start of the Race) shall be at least 2 Litres per crew member for non water maker boats or 12 Litres per crew member for boats with water makers. Emergency drinking water shall be carried in dedicated containers and labelled accordingly.
- 9.1.5. **AS Special Regulations 3.24.5 (d) – Fuel Requirements** - The minimum amount of engine fuel that shall be carried at the start of the Race shall be at least (Litres = LWL (metres)/0.080). Boats equipped with electric propulsion engines shall start the Race with sufficient power, by use of batteries and generating capacity, to proceed under motor for 54 hours at 6 knots.
- 9.1.6. **AS Special Regulations 3.25.1(a) – Communications** - The communications shall be via Starlink or an equivalent satellite system capable of high speed internet communications using WhatsApp. This Starlink or equivalent system shall be permanently powered from the house batteries. A back up Satellite phone system capable of being stored in waterproof container is also required in the event of the Starlink or equivalent system failure.
- 9.1.7. **AS Special Regulations 3.14.2 – Emergency Steering** – A dedicated emergency rudder capable of being installed off the transom in the event of loss of the main rudder shall be

carried on board. The emergency rudder shall be capable of being operated independently of the main rudder steering system.

10. Penalties

The International Jury will, at its discretion, apply penalties for a breach of a rule of the Sailing Instructions declared by an infringing competitor without hearing or after a hearing if a protest is contested.

11. Tracking Devices

A boat will be required to carry a tracking device supplied by the ORCV, or an alternative means to track the boat's position as specified by the ORCV.

12. Sustainability

The ORCV is dedicated to promoting and upholding the principles of environmental stewardship in ocean racing. The event will be conducted in accordance with the Clean Regattas framework established by Sailors for the Sea.

13. Seminars and Pre-Race Race Briefing

- 13.1. Seminars will be provided in the 12 months prior to the Race start and will be detailed in future communications to entrants.
- 13.2. One or more compulsory in-person pre-race briefing for entrants will be at a time and place to be announced.

14. Event Classification and Advertising

Advertising on a boat must comply with the requirements of WS Regulation 20 (WS Advertising Code) for Category C.

15. Trademarks and Copyright

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16. Sponsorship and Signage

A boat shall display any sponsor's materials provided by the OA, which may include boom decals, and backstay flags, in accordance with the Notice of Race and the Sailing Instructions (WS Regulation 20.2.3.1(b)).

17. Media Rights and Restrictions

It is a condition of entry that the owner of the boat and all crew members acknowledge that the ORCV owns all media rights to the Melbourne to Vanuatu Yacht Race and may exercise those rights as it sees fit.

18. Disclaimer

18.1. All those taking part in the Race do so at their own risk and responsibility. Crew acknowledge this and, by having their names entered on the crew list, release the ORCV and their respective officers, employees, volunteers and members, from all liability.

18.2. Specific attention is drawn to RRS Fundamental Rule 3, which states:

"The responsibility for a boat's decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone"

19. Mooring Arrangements

Mooring arrangements in Melbourne and Vanuatu will be detailed in the final Notice of Race.

Appendix A: Stability Requirements

The requirements specified in this Appendix apply to all boats intending to enter regardless of the Race Category in which they intend to enter.

A1 Proof of Stability

A boat must provide evidence as follows to demonstrate that it achieves:

- an ORCi Stability Index of 115 or greater for the configuration in which the boat proposes to race; or
- ISO 12217-2 Design Category A, except that the STIX number must be increased to a minimum of 35.0. The hydrostatics and stability demonstrating the boats compliance with ISO Category A shall be derived from measurement of the freeboards and righting moment of the actual boat by a qualified source.

A boat without a current valid ORCi certificate but with a previously valid within the last 5 years (but not current) certificate must supply its most recent previously valid (but not current) certificate with a Stability Index with a satisfactory margin to the minimum stability requirement for Race Category 1 events for the configuration in which the boat proposes to race, accompanied by a completed Stability Declaration supplied by the ORCV.

For a multihull boat stability requirement, compliance with ISO 12217-2:2015 sections 7.8 and 7.9 and 7.10 for Design Category A must be met. This compliance must be from a Naval architect signed letter stating compliance with these multihull stability requirements.

A2 Movable or Variable Ballast

A boat with movable or variable ballast must provide evidence that it achieves not less than a Knockdown Recovery Factor of 0.9 under International Standard ISO 12217-2, calculated in accordance with ISO 12217-2 paragraph 6.4.4 with the lesser of FKR_{90} and FKR_{-90} used. AS Special Regulations Appendix B 7.2.2 will apply.

A3 Documentation

Competitors found to be falsifying documentation, deliberately invalidating certificates or otherwise misleading the Race Committee regarding stability of their boat are subject to action under RRS 69.1.

If found guilty the penalty could include disqualification. The incident will also be reported to Australian Sailing.

A determination by the ORCV or the Race Committee as to the suitability of supplied documentation in demonstrating a boat's compliance with the stability requirements, as to whether there is a satisfactory margin as required by this Appendix or as to a boat's compliance with the stability requirements is final and binding.

Appendix B: Boat Eligibility Requirements

Boats must comply with the requirements of Paragraph 4 and/or as laid out in this Appendix to be considered eligible for entry to the Race. This list is not exhaustive and may be revised in the final Notice of Race.

Check ✓	Category	Requirement
	General – monohull/multihull boats	A monohull boat must be built in accordance with the Australian Sailing Special Regulations Part 1, Section 3.03 and Appendix C as applicable. The Safety Regulations are those of Australian Sailing Special Regulations, Part 1, Category 1. Yachts with full ISO 12215 compliance and holding a WS Structural Plan Review (this is consistent with the WS Off-Shore Regulations and also the AS Special Regulations) comply in all respects with regard to hull requirements. Older yachts that rely on the less demanding ABS or the EC Directive shall meet the additional bow and stern bulkhead requirements. If the yacht has a primary launch date prior to 1987, the hull and construction details shall be sent to the ORCV to confirm the yacht is seaworthy and suitable for a long duration offshore race. Where Australian standards for safety equipment are specified in the Special Regulations, equipment branded with a recognised equivalent international standard marking may be accepted.
	Structural Modifications & Inspection	All boats shall have either a watertight “crash” bulkhead within 15% of LOA from the bow and abaft the forward end of LWL or permanently installed closed-cell foam buoyancy effectively filling the forward 30% LOA of the hull. In addition, a bulkhead shall be provided at the stern, forward of the rudder post, with the top of the bulkhead a minimum 300 mm above the waterline. Boats shall provide evidence of a Structural Inspection in accordance with Special Regulations 3.02.4, 3.02.5 and 3.02.6.

Check ✓	Category	Requirement
	Fuel	The minimum amount of engine fuel that shall be carried at the start of the Race shall be at least (Litres = LWL (metres)/0.080). Boats equipped with electric propulsion engines shall start the Race with sufficient power, by use of batteries and generating capacity, to proceed under motor for 54 hours at 6 knots.
	Water	Emergency drinking water (in addition to that required to be carried at the start of the Race) shall be at least 2 Litres per crew member for non-water maker boats and 12 Litres per crew member for boats with water makers. Emergency drinking water shall be carried in dedicated containers and labelled accordingly.
	Communications	The communications shall be via using Starlink or equivalent capable of high speed internet communications using WhatsApp. This Starlink or equivalent system must be permanently powered from the house batteries. A back up Satellite phone system capable of being stored in water proof container is also required as a back up incase the Starlink or equivalent system fails. Note – HF radios are not required but are considered as a back up for communications for boats with a HF radio already.
	Emergency Steering	A dedicated emergency rudder shall be carried on board and be capable of being installed off the transom on loss of the main rudder. The emergency rudder shall be capable of being operated independent of the main rudder steering system.
	Medical Kit	The list of First Aid equipment required will include additional items and will be detailed in the Notice of Race.
	Insurance	The owner of a boat entered in the Race must hold a marine legal liability insurance policy with respect to the boat, current when racing, with a sum insured of not less than AUD10 million. The insurance policy must state that the boat is covered for the Race or that it is covered for yacht races of a length greater than the 1885nm.
	AMS	A boat may only be entered in AMS if the boat: — Has a current, valid AMS Certificate issued by YRSA Inc, — Satisfies, if any, the requirements of Condition 3,

Check ✓	Category	Requirement
		— Complies with all the current AMS Rules and Regulations, save to the extent they are specifically amended or excluded in this Notice of Race or the Sailing Instructions (refer RRS 78.1). — A signed off current AMS certificate is to be provided by the owner
	ORCi	A boat may only be entered in ORCi if the boat: — Has a current, valid endorsed ORCi Certificate, — Satisfies, if any, the requirements of Condition 3, — Complies with all the current ORC Rules and Regulations, save to the extent they are specifically amended or excluded in this Notice of Race or the Sailing Instructions (refer RRS 78.1). — A signed off ORCi and/or Two Handed ORCi certificate shall be provided
	OMR	A multihull yacht may only be entered in OMR if the boat: — Has a current, valid endorsed OMR Certificate, — Satisfies, if any, the requirements of Condition 3. — A signed off OMR certificate shall be provided by the owner
	Registration	Owners/charterers of boats are reminded of the requirement for registration as an Australian Ship (or the international equivalent) in accordance with Australian Maritime Safety Authority requirements.
	Equipment Audit	Each boat must have a signed Cat 1 Special Regulations Equipment Audit Form(including extra additional requirements) signed by accredited equipment auditor no more than 12 months before the Race start date by an AS Accredited National Equipment Auditor and by an ORCV assigned AS accredited equipment auditor at least 2 weeks before the Race start. Guidance and forms can be found at https://www.orcv.org.au/sailing/compdec
	Charts and Navigational Equipment	Charts conforming with the requirements of Australian Sailing Special Regulation 4.10 must be carried by competing boats. Use of ENC electronic charts is recommended. In addition the following paper charts shall be carried:-

Check ✓	Category	Requirement
		AUS 144 The Rip Where a boat relies upon paper charts to meet the requirements of Special Regulation 4.10, the charts shall cover the full length of the course from Port Phillip to Storm Bay at a scale of 1:300,000 or less. Currently available charts meeting this requirement are: AUS 487 Bass Strait Plus other charts to be advised in the final NOR. World hydrographic offices are discontinuing paper charts over time in favour of Electronic Nautical Charts (ENC's – S-57 & S-63) and then towards S-100. As such, some paper charts may no longer be available. Where paper charts are used they must be updated to the latest Notice to Mariners (NtM) within 1 month of the start of the Race. Relevant Publications including Sailing Directions and Lists of Lights shall be carried either as hard copy or alternative electronic resources, (for example as a soft copy on a computer) to ensure they can continue to navigate satisfactorily in the event of the failure of the yacht's electronic navigation equipment. If carried electronically, there shall be 2 independent electronic devices provided for storing these publications.
	Qualifying Race or Passage	A boat must complete, with the results shown online, a qualifying race of not less than 400 NM within 6 months of the start of the Race with 75% of the Race crew being the race crew for this Race. The boats must provide evidence of completing the qualifying race if requested. Qualifying races include the ORCV Melbourne to Hobart Yacht Race and the CYCA Rolex Sydney to Hobart Race. Approval of an alternate qualifying race shall be sought from the ORCV in writing. Otherwise, with the prior written approval of the ORCV, complete a nonstop 400 NM qualifying passage within 6 months of the start of the Race, with 75% of the Race crew being the race crew for this Race. A boat granted this dispensation must submit a detailed log of the passage with the pre-start documentation. For a boat carrying out a qualifying passage, further requirements(including the Cat 1 additional requirements) will be provided in the Final Notice of Race.

Appendix C: Crew Eligibility Requirements

Crew must comply with the requirements laid out in this Appendix to be considered eligible for entry to the Race. This list is not exhaustive and will be revised in the Notice of Race.

Check ✓	Category	Requirements
	Membership	All persons sailing on competing boats must be members of an Australian Sailing or World Sailing-affiliated club. AS/WS membership numbers must be included on the online TopYacht crew list.
	Age	The minimum age of all crew is 18. The Race Committee may grant a dispensation to this age limit if a competitor can show cause for such a request.
	Experience	In accordance with AS Special Regulation 2.04.
	Training	50% of the crew must have completed an Australian Sailing Safety and Sea Survival Course (SSSC qualified) or an ORCV approved equivalent within 5 years before the start of the Race. For international competitors this includes training prescribed by World Sailing Standard OSR 6.02. It is recommended that all crew have a recognised Australian Sailing certificate (or equivalent) of at least an Offshore Skipper certification.
	First Aid	Two crew must hold a current HLTAID011 Provide First Aid Certificate or equivalent qualification. For international competitors medical training prescribed by World Sailing Standard OSR 6.05 is also satisfactory.
	Radio	Two crew must hold a Short-Range Operator Certificate of Proficiency (SROCP).