

Windsurfer Class Association of Australia – 1977-2027

Discussion Paper - Beyond 50 Years - Building a Resilient Class for the Next Generation

A Vision for the Next 50 Years

In 2027, the Australian Windsurfer Class celebrates its 50th anniversary.

It is an opportunity to recognise the people, achievements and culture that have shaped the class over five decades.

Just as importantly, it is an opportunity to look forward.

Windsurfer has remained relevant for fifty years because it has continually adapted while staying true to its core principles of simplicity, affordability, accessibility and great racing.

This longevity is built on by the off-water camaraderie, friendships and community that unpin the class ethos – **50% Racing / 50% Fun**

As we celebrate our history, we should also ask an important question:

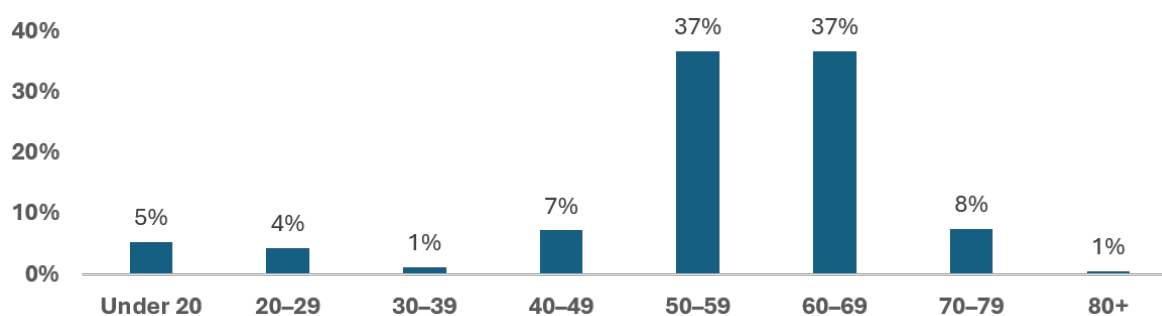
What do we need to do today to ensure the class is still thriving fifty years from now?

Our fleet size remains healthy and in fact is one of the few growth stories in the Australian sailing community.

But like many long-established classes we face predictable challenges.

Our sailors are getting older, participation patterns change through different stages of life, and attracting new participants has become increasingly competitive.

The 2025/26 membership figures tell the tale – over 80% of our base is aged over 50 and over 45% is older than 60.



The objective is not simply to grow the fleet, but to retain sailors for longer, broaden the ways people can enjoy their Windsurfers, and create welcoming pathways for those joining the sport.

The 50th Anniversary provides the ideal opportunity to trial new ideas, celebrate our history and invest in the future.

A Class for Every Stage of Life

Rather than focusing on a single solution, the class should consider a suite of initiatives that support sailors throughout their Windsurfer journey.

Youth, Family and Club Development

Develop practical tools and support for clubs wishing to establish or grow Windsurfer fleets through subsidised starter programs, coaching resources, promotional material, mentoring and the sharing of successful initiatives.

Introducing young sailors from Tackers, Optimist and other junior classes to windsurfing broadens their sailing skills and creates a potential pathway into lifelong participation.

One of the unique strengths of the Windsurfer Class is that it is a true lifetime class.

It is not uncommon to see children racing alongside their parents, and even multiple generations of the same family competing together. Few sailing classes can offer this unique combination of youth development, family participation and lifelong competition.

Growing strong local fleets remains the foundation of a healthy national class.

Women on Windsurfers

Facilitate momentum in female participation through dedicated coaching, mentoring, social sailing opportunities and women's racing initiatives.

The objective is to create an environment where more women discover the enjoyment of Windsurfer sailing, remain engaged for longer and become future leaders within the class.

Green Fleet

Providing a fun, supportive introduction for young rookies with an emphasis on learning, confidence and enjoyment before competition.

Cruiser Division

A welcoming pathway for newcomers, returning sailors and recreational participants who want to enjoy organised events without the pressure of championship racing.

Flexible Sail Choice

Allow sailors to change freely between the existing 5.7 race sail and the 5.0 sail at any stage of an event.

This recognises that wind strength, physical capability and endurance vary between sailors and throughout a regatta. Providing greater flexibility encourages sailors to remain on the water rather than sitting races out.

New Initiative

Revised Age Divisions

Age categories should continue to evolve alongside the fleet.

Revised age brackets better recognise the growing number of older competitors and provide meaningful competition throughout every stage of a sailor's competitive life.

Division	Eligibility	Previous
Junior	Under 15 years on the first racing day of the event	Same
Youth	15 years or older and under 19 years	Same
Core	19 years to under 50 years	19-39
Master	50 years to 57 years	40-49
Grand Master	58 years to 63 years	50-59
Legend	64 years to 69 years	60-69
Super Legend	70 years to 75 years	70+
Icon	76 years and over	N/A

New Initiative

Tempo Division

A new racing division using traditional Rule 42 (thereby limiting downwind pumping) that rewards tactical racing, board handling and consistency and reduces the emphasis on physical stamina for sustained pumping.

Tempo is not intended to replace Open racing.

It simply provides an alternative style of competition that may better suit many sailors while extending competitive participation for years beyond what might otherwise be possible.

See Appendix A for more information.

Beyond Racing

Not every Windsurfer sailor measures success by championship results.

The class should actively promote and celebrate the many ways people enjoy their Windsurfers, including:

- Adventure sailing
- Long-distance cruising
- GPS speed sailing
- "Wally's in Space" wave challenges
- Exploration events
- Destination sailing weekends
- Social sailing

By recognising these activities alongside racing, the class can engage a much broader community while reinforcing that owning a Windsurfer is about lifestyle and enjoyment as much as competition.

A Year of Celebration – Memories to last a Lifetime

The 50th Anniversary will be celebrated throughout 2027 with a series of activities that recognise every aspect of the class.

The anniversary is also an opportunity to properly recognise the people who have built the class.

Australian Windsurfer Hall of Fame

Establish a Hall of Fame recognising outstanding champions, innovators, volunteers and long-term contributors whose impact extends beyond existing Life Membership criteria.

This creates a permanent record of those who have shaped the class over fifty years.

The Australian Windsurfer Digital Archive

Launch a national crowd-sourced digital archive inviting every current and former Windsurfer sailor, friend and volunteer to contribute photographs, videos, race results, newsletters, memorabilia and personal stories.

Many of the class's most important moments exist only in personal collections.

Capturing these memories now will preserve an irreplaceable part of Australian sailing history before it is lost.

The archive will continue to grow long after the anniversary year, becoming the permanent home of the Australian Windsurfer story.

“Doing it Standing Up – 50 Years of Fun”

Use the anniversary as a rallying point to capture and communicate the joy the Class has provided – from the pioneers to the next generation.

Doco

Develop a professionally produced short form documentary capturing the story of Windsurfer in Australia through the voices of the people who lived it.

This will feature a combination of archival footage, interviews and story telling through the decades. Music and movement to celebrate the big FIVE O.

Coffee Table Book

Combined with the commemorative book, *Doing it Standing Up – 50 Years of Windsurfer Class in Australia*, the documentary will preserve stories that might otherwise be lost forever.

50th Anniversary Australian Championships

The Australian Championships at Parkdale Yacht Club will become the kick-off of the anniversary year, bringing together current champions, former sailors, families and generations of Windsurfer sailors for a truly historic regatta.

50th Anniversary Merchandise

Develop a limited range of premium anniversary merchandise celebrating fifty years of Australian Windsurfer sailing. These items become both commemorative keepsakes and a source of fundraising for anniversary initiatives.

Limited Edition 50th Anniversary Boards

Work with Aroona to explore the production of a numbered limited edition run of 50th Anniversary boards. These collector's editions would celebrate the milestone while creating a lasting legacy for the anniversary.

50th Birthday Bash

Host a national celebration weekend in New South Wales during early November 2027, bringing together the entire Windsurfer community.

The (long) weekend would include:

- Fun racing and on-water activities. Freestyle Jam // Tag Team Racing // Giant slalom // Adventure sail to....
- Reunion sailing for past champions and former competitors.
- The official launch of the **Australian Windsurfer Hall of Fame**.
- The premiere screening of the **Doing it Standing Up** documentary.
- **A gala anniversary dinner and celebration.**
- Live entertainment featuring **Rob Cudmore and his band**.
- Recognition of volunteers, life members, national champions and the many people who have built the class over fifty years.

The objective is to create a celebration worthy of the occasion while reconnecting generations of Windsurfer sailors.

Looking Forward

The success of the 50th Anniversary should not be measured solely by the celebration itself.

If these initiatives encourage sailors to remain active for longer, provide clearer entry pathways for newcomers, better recognise those who have contributed to the class, preserve our remarkable history and strengthen the bonds within our community, then the 50th Anniversary will become much more than a celebration of the past.

Four Pillars for the Future

Retain existing sailors through initiatives such as Tempo Division, flexible sail choice and revised age divisions.

Recruit the next generation through Green Fleet, Cruiser Division, welcoming families and extra participation options (not just racing).

Recognise the people who have built the class through the Hall of Fame, anniversary celebrations and contributing to the capture of the class memories.

Remember our history through the commemorative book, documentary, digital archive and preservation of our shared stories.

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Appendix A

Tempo Division Rules - Draft

Rule T1 – Interpretation of Rule 42

The Tempo Division shall be raced under the **World Sailing Racing Rules of Sailing – Appendix A**, including **Rule 42 – Propulsion**.

The purpose of the Tempo Division is to preserve the tactical and technical aspects of Windsurfer racing while reducing the influence of sustained pumping as a means of propulsion.

This document provides guidance on how Rule 42 will be interpreted during Tempo Division racing.

In Simple Terms

The Tempo Division changes the way the current Windsurfer Class interpretation of Rule 42 is applied in two key respects:

1. **There is no 30-second pumping period after the starting signal.**

Rule 42 applies from the start of the race.

2. **There is no unlimited continuous pumping downwind.**

Competitors may not use repeated rhythmic pumping to generate or maintain additional propulsion.

All other aspects of the Racing Rules of Sailing, including the normal interpretation of Rule 42 relating to sail trim, steering, manoeuvres, balance, gust response and rapid trimming (pumping) to initiate planning or surfing waves or swells, remain unchanged.

The Tempo Division is intended to complement, not replace, Open Division racing.

Sailors who prefer unrestricted pumping as part of their racing style, or who simply prefer the existing format, can continue to compete in the Open Division under the current Windsurfer Class rules.

Tempo provides an additional racing option, allowing competitors to choose the format that best suits their sailing style and aspirations.

Rule T2 – Principle

A board shall compete using only the wind and water to increase, maintain or decrease its speed.

Competitors may trim the sail, steer the board and move their bodies as required for normal sailing.

They shall not repeatedly use sail or body movement to generate propulsion independent of the natural effects of wind or waves, except to initiate planning or surfing downwind.

Rule T3 – Permitted Actions

The following actions are considered consistent with the intent of Rule 42 and are permitted when sailing downwind:

- Normal sail trimming in response to changes in wind strength or direction.
- Movements necessary to maintain control in gusts or rough water.
- Steering the board and adjusting body position to maintain balance and control.
- Tacking, gybing and other normal manoeuvres.
- Rapid trimming of the sail (pumping) to initiate planning and/or surfing down the face of a wave or swell.
- Body movement that initiates surfing or catches a wave or swell, where the subsequent acceleration is provided by the wave or swell.

Rule T4 – Prohibited Actions

The following actions are not permitted:

- Repeated rhythmic pumping of the sail to increase or maintain speed.
- Continuous sheeting in and out to generate propulsion.
- Repeated body movements intended primarily to propel the board.
- Sustained pumping after acceleration from a gust or wave has ceased.

Rule T5 – Interpretation

The guiding question for competitors and race officials is:

Is the board being propelled by the wind or wave, or by repeated actions of the sailor?

If the primary source of propulsion is the wind or the energy of a wave or swell, the action is considered consistent with the intent of Rule 42.

If the primary source of propulsion is repeated sail or body movement by the competitor, the action is considered pumping and is not permitted.

Rule T6 – Penalties

Tempo Division races shall be conducted using **Appendix P – Special Procedures for Rule 42** of the Racing Rules of Sailing, unless otherwise stated in the Notice of Race or Sailing Instructions.

Competitors who consistently prefer unrestricted pumping as part of their racing style are encouraged to compete in the Open Division, where the existing Windsurfer Class interpretation of Rule 42 continues to apply.

The following penalties shall apply for breaches of Rule 42:

First Penalty

- The competitor shall complete a **Two-Turns Penalty** in accordance with Rule 44.2.
- Failure to take the penalty shall result in **Disqualification (DSQ)** without a hearing.

Second Penalty (during the same event)

- The competitor shall promptly retire from the race.
- Failure to retire shall result in **Disqualification (DSQ)** without a hearing, with the score counting and not eligible to be discarded.

Third and Subsequent Penalties (during the same event)

- The competitor shall promptly retire from the race.
- Failure to retire shall result in **Disqualification from all remaining races in the event**, with no score excluded, and the Protest Committee may consider further action under Rule 69.

Where on-water judges are not appointed, alleged breaches of Rule 42 may be protested and determined by the Protest Committee in accordance with the Racing Rules of Sailing.

The Tempo Division has simple principles:

The same board.

The same sail.

The same course.

The same Racing Rules.

One different interpretation of Rule 42 to encourage tactical racing over sustained pumping.

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