

Sailability Shorncliffe Legends Ted Balneaves

Ted joined Sailability Shorncliffe after seeing an article in the Bay Star newspaper. He brought with him a lifetime interest in community activities that connected him to his boyhood experiences. His dad drove buses for the Brisbane City Council; the council and the drivers would take children with disabilities on picnics, fairs or other activities. Young Ted would come along, helping children on and off the bus and whatever needed to be done – a similar role to Sailability.

Ted brought a lot of life skills to Sailability. He started his career with a steel merchant working his way upward. Later he worked in sales management; he was manager of Herbert Smalls Camera Store as well as many other roles. He bought a camera as a young man and developed a passion for photography that to this day is a keen interest. Many photographs featured on our Facebook and our brochures are Ted's work.

He was always involved in supporting community activities including school P & C, Rural Fire Brigade, Guides. Ted was a key driver in building a Kindergarten.

Ted and wife Margaret were no strangers to adversity. In 2011 flood destroyed their home possessions at Graceville. There was little insurance payout. His employer also did not recover from the impact of this flood. Margaret was diagnosed in 2006 with level 4 aggressive lung cancer and emphysema.

When Ted joined Sailability Shorncliffe Ron Walker was President. Ted not being a sailor allowed him to concentrate on many non-sailing matters. Working with Ron Walker (who also had a terminal cancer), he became vice president. Ron and Margaret both spent time at the Holy Spirit oncology ward at the same time. A strong bond was created between Ron, Ted and Margaret.

Ron and Ted were a great team with Ron being the sailing aficionado and Ted more involved with non-sailing matters. Ron died in May 2015; Rob Adamson became acting President. Ted was elected President at the 2015 AGM. This was a testament of the man, taking on this role while his wife was so unwell and needing so much care. He committed fully to both roles.

His time as president was eventful as Sailability Shorncliffe was developing. The team with Ted in charge submitted grants and were successful with many projects. These include designing, then opening the Ron Walker shed and fitting it out in 2016 and acquisition of the Golf Buggy to tow the dinghies from the shed. The trailer for bringing all the requirements from the shed to the slip was built at this time by Alan & Phillipa Bolt.

2018 was a very productive time for Sailability Shorncliffe with the acquisition of the Grumpy Walker pontoon boat. This generous donation came about from Ron Walker's involvement with the Freemasons. The SS team worked out our requirements with discussions with the supplier and created this wonderful asset, bringing enjoyment to our clients.

Also, this year Safety 1 support rib boat (later named the Mike Rickens Rib) was sourced from a grant and required the team to work out Sailability requirements. The two power boats created need for more space than the shed provided. Once again, the team, with supplier input worked out the requirements, submitted another grant application and fortunately was successful again. All these improvements required negotiation with Queensland Cruising Yacht Club, Queensland

Dept of Transport and Brisbane City Council. Ted and the team applied themselves with enthusiasm to these tasks.

These endeavors had set up Sailability for future operations where Sailability Shorncliffe was able to take clients in wheel-chairs on the Grumpy Walker pontoon boat as well as giving clients the sailing experience in the Access 303 dinghies.

The next challenge Ted and the club faced was the covid pandemic. The lockdowns prevented Sailability servicing our clients and carers, so Ted set up training and maintenance days to keep the core of the club together. This ensured our skills did not drop and our equipment stayed in tip top shape. To keep the volunteers enthused and committed, social days were combined with the training and maintenance. During these times Ted's health had some ups and downs with many visits to doctors, specialists and hospital. His positivity never failed.

To keep the finances on track while we could not operate due to covid regulations, Ted approached Bunnings to participate with their sausage sizzle fund raisers. This prevented our funds draining away when we had no income from our clients. Sailability Shorncliffe emerged from the pandemic in good shape financially with morale of the volunteers high.

During Ted's time as president, he spent time getting to know the clients, their organisations, the carers and volunteers personally. A friendly chat created bonds of friendship and good working relationships with all. He also spent time ensuring our relationship with our host QCYC was healthy with easy two-way communications.

Ted enthusiastically supported some promotional activities like the "Juiced TV" visit and creating a video with the children of the Brisbane Children's Hospital. The kids were a hoot interviewing Ted. It was fun day where the children enjoyed all the Sailability activities.

Ted should be proud of his achievements as a member and president of Sailability Shorncliffe. He faced many challenges, was a steady hand and lead the club to a very strong position. Sailability Shorncliffe is most grateful for his leadership and contribution, making the organisation well respected in the community

He is greeted with warmth and enthusiasm on his visits from the Northern Territory to the club.

Thank You Ted!

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