



# Sydney Flying Squadron



# The Case for Amalgamation

October 2024

For the Membership of the Sydney Flying Squadron

On behalf of the Sydney Flying Squadron Board



# Sydney Flying Squadron

## The Case for Amalgamation

### Background - The SFS Board's View

It has been many months since the first meetings regarding the matter of amalgamation between the Sydney Flying Squadron (SFS) and the Australian 18 Footers League (A18s). The SFS Board has not shifted ground on its support for this to proceed.

An arm's length and therefore independent review and assessment of the business case for the amalgamation is appended hereto for your perusal and understanding. It contains an executive summary as well as the detailed forecasting and projections. Please spend some time with this, as it is as important as the overarching objectives of the amalgamation itself, which is the sustainability of the 18-footer class in both modern and historic forms and the modern '12 foot skiff'.

As far as the SFS board is aware, there are no legal impediments to the concept moving ahead to a GM (General Meeting) where you, the members, vote for or against.

To reiterate, the SFS Board's vote to proceed remains carried, 5 to 1. It was 6 to 1 when the original decision was taken prior to John Winning's resignation as President of the Club. John remains a pro-amalgamation member of both clubs. As nearly all of you will know, the current board held off replacing the President's role until the 2024 AGM. It currently comprises six (6) members.

### The Future of Sailing



The future of sailing generally is regarded as being "under pressure" as a competitive sport for many reasons, as much to do with societal and economic change as any single driving force. Most involved in the sport recognise this is almost certainly the case, in Australia, the North American and European markets. Those that read international newsletters in the recent past on this subject will have sensed that trend.

Events such as the America's Cup and the Sail G.P. International series are one-off events and while they attract attention from the sailing communities, the non-sailing audiences are generally left with the impression that sailing has become an ultra-high technology sport for the rich and often famous. Exciting, interesting but "not for me".







The need for significant corporate size and economic horsepower, particularly in the skiff classes, and specifically the ‘18 footers’, is the key to long-term survival at both ends of the 18 footer spectrum i.e. modern and historic. There are not many off-the-beach classes left that have a regular current racing fleet comprising skiffs spanning a period of 130 years of their history and development. That is marketing gold.

## Facilities

Both clubs are supported by bar, cafe and restaurant facilities for both sailing and social memberships. They are significant community assets in their own right separately, let alone operating with two venues for members, two racing fleets as a single corporate entity, preserving the familiar club names and importantly the resources to promote and build their commercial and economic future and importance in the sailing communities and at the same time, continuing to maintain and renewing their racing fleets as the pinnacle of the skiff classes in Australia and beyond, in the case of the modern ‘18 footers’ with their annual European Championship.



Sydney Flying Squadron - current bar



Australian 18 Footers League - current bar

## Pattons Slipway



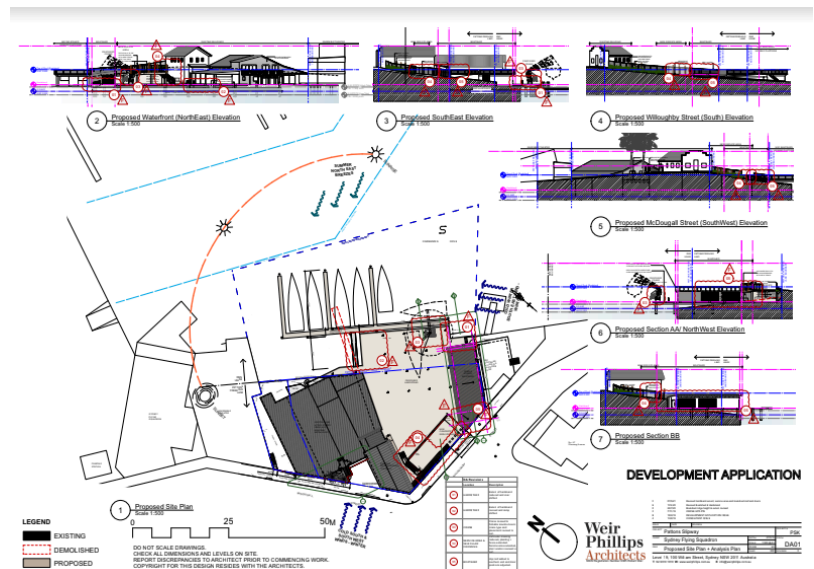
Aside from the commercial operations of the Clubs the SFS has the benefit of the asset that Pattons Slipways provides.

Pattons is a wholly owned subsidiary of the SFS and a Development Application is currently being assessed for the redevelopment of the site that will ensure its operations into the future.

The proposed redevelopment includes for an environmentally compliant hardstand deck along with expansion of the current workshop facilities.

It is envisaged that part of the redeveloped facility will be allocated to the maintenance and restoration of the SFS historical skiff fleet, the SFS '12-footer' fleet and the modern '18's' fleet as well as a base for servicing start and rescue vessels.

Having this facility will provide for the sustainability of the existing fleets and give opportunity for research and development of future advancements in skiff sailing. Administration of the facility by the amalgamated entity will ensure the continuation of our skiff fleets sailing on Sydney Harbour.





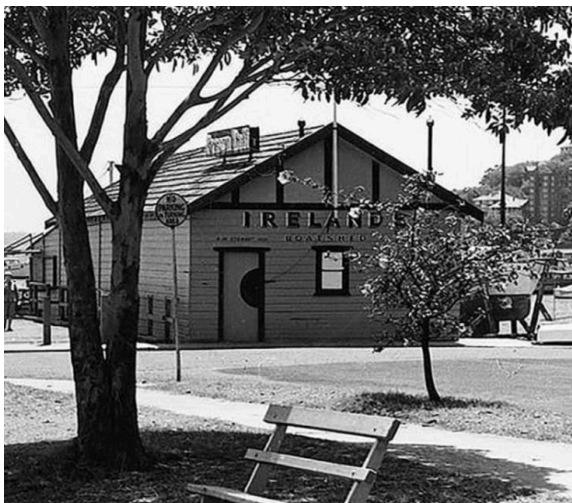


## The Whole is Greater than the Sum of the Parts



It is worth spending an hour, even more, visiting and having a beer and something to eat over at the Australian 18 Footers League, harbour end of Bay Street, Double Bay. Here, you will get a feeling of the similarities and differences of the two organisations. The modernity and the ‘go-ahead’ attitude and ambiance of the League clubhouse is refreshing and palpable. Combine this with the history and brilliant historic look and feel of the Flying Squadron at 76 McDougall St., Kirribilli, and it gives a sense of what the future could look like for the sailors and members, with the two clubs coming together with a single-minded objective of driving the health of the 18-footer class and the commercial success of the one corporate entity, operating from their respective current

venues but perfectly aligned in its operational, tactical and strategic objectives to achieve success amongst all skiff classes.



It goes without saying that nothing happens commercially unless the partners in any new enterprise are enthusiastic, committed long-term and professional in their approach to the achievement and realisation of the aims and objectives of the enterprise. There is no place for petty politics, nit-picking or negative sentiments. They are poisonous to corporate success.

We’re on the cusp of 2025, one quarter of the way to a new millennium. The eighteen footers of both stripes want to remain part of the sailing landscape by the turn of this century. There’s doubt both or even one will see this event without using all the opportunity and resources available to both if the two

are brought together. This is October 2024, not 1935.

All the SFS Board asks is that you open your mind to the bigger picture of ‘18 footer’ sustainability as a class and a club, more able to offer a wider range of sailing opportunities for sailors to a broader demographic, and an improved scope of club member benefits through greater commercial success aided by significant operational efficiencies. As an aside, the Manly Sixteen Footers have seen this and acted accordingly, with some significant and obvious success, also worth a look. Member benefits that should be realised have been suppressed by the continuation of the two clubs operating separately. In the final analysis, we all sail ‘18 footers’.

One club, two great waterfront venues, three skiff options and endless fun and enjoyment for sailors and social members alike.



## **Appendix 1: Original Memorandum of Understanding - Signed 19 October 2023**

<https://tinyurl.com/3spkxsuj>

## **Appendix 2 The Business Case**

<https://tinyurl.com/27jxsvcx>

## **Appendix 3 The Independent Review of the Business Case**

<https://tinyurl.com/bdhtv22h>