

## Port Stephens Update:

On the last weekend in February I had the privilege of travelling to Port Stephens with Dick McCulloch to sort out some of the organising for the National Championships.

The weekend was a huge success and with things falling into place nicely I can happily say that we have found a venue that should be even better than last year in Queensland.

Port Stephens is surrounded by national parks with small towns appearing along its shorelines. Jump on the internet and have a look at some photos and a map. All I can say is WOW!!! The area is very picturesque and there are stacks of things to do.

We will be sailing at the Port Stephens Sailing and Aquatic Club which looks east out over Salamander Bay and onwards towards the heads of Port Stephens.

The club is small but nice. There is a newly carpeted function room upstairs with a kitchen and a view to die for. Downstairs – well it's a sailing club – change rooms and boat shed.

From the photos you will see that the tide comes right up so the boats will be stored in a couple of small clearings in between the trees and up along the access way.

We will be using the club as a base for the sailing including serving of lunches.

All social stuff including the after sailing drinks will be conducted in the beer garden and function rooms of the resort directly behind the club called the Salamander Shores. Paul O'Rourke, the owner of the resort is a yachty and is the chairman of the Sail Port Stephens Committee. As such he is keen to have us there and is on our wave length. Post sailing drinks will take place in the beer garden – see photos – unless the weather isn't friendly, in which case they will give us our own function room and bar. Welcome night and presentation night will be held in one of the function rooms. The resort is also looking to put on a New Years Eve show that would be open to the public if enough of us would be interested in attending.

Following on from the success of last year's New Years Day trip, it has been suggested that we again head off on a bit of an adventure. Paul O'Rourke has offered to have us at his other resort – the Grand Mercury in the Hunter Valley. The day would go something along the lines of a 10am pickup from Salamander Shores, a one hour coach ride to the Hunter Valley where we would have use of all the resort facilities including pool and day spa, lunch in the highly rated steak house, wine tasting at 5 wineries within easy walking distance and access to the shops along the main strip for those that need the shopping fix. Stay tuned for more information.

For something a bit different, we have arranged a "Barefoot Bowls" evening at the Soldiers Point Bowls Club – across the road from Salamander Shores. This

will include a BBQ tea plus the opportunity to try your hands at lawn bowls. They tell me the trick is not to spill your beer as you bowl the ball. The bowling club is well set out and absolutely huge. It seats well over 600 people and the meals are sensational – I highly recommend the chicken schnitzel surf and turf – covered in fresh prawns.

On the sailing front this regatta will be run a bit different to those in the past. The club is very small and wasn't prepared to run the nationals themselves so we have come to an agreement where we are able to use all their facilities as long as we run things ourselves. What this means is we are looking for volunteers to help on the rescue boats, man the radio in the club and monitor the kitchen. If you or someone you know can help for the week or even for a day please contact a member of the NSW committee or IFAA. Mike Rogers has volunteered his services as PRO which we really appreciate and we have had an offer from one of the locals to supply a boat and his services, now we just need a few more to make sure the event runs smoothly.

Dick and I had a great weekend checking out all the things to do. Unfortunately I have already found there are more things on my list than there are days. Jump on the internet and do a search to check it all out. Below are some of the things that stood out for me.

The waterways and scenery around Port Stephens are some of the most beautiful in the world and the bay is full of sea life. There are many companies that offer trips out on the bay dolphin watching and exploring the bay.

A visit to each of the towns around the local area is a must. Driving east along the bay we find Corlette is the next area on from Salamander bay (3km from club) and is home to Peppers Anchorage. A walk around the marina and a coffee in the cafe provide for stunning views of the bay and back over the race area. Nelson is next (6km from club) and is the largest town in the area. There is a restaurant and cafe precinct on the edge of the marina and plenty of shops, cafes and pubs up through the town. Moving on we visited Shoal Bay, (9km from club) looking out the bay through the head, and has a great beach, and a number of pubs, restaurants and cafes with alfresco dining looking out over the bay. Finally we head across the point to Fingal Bay (14km from club), with a long white beach which gets surf at one end and is perfectly still at the other. In the other direction from the club we headed to Anna Bay (10km from club) where there is access to Stockton Beach, famous for the massive sand dunes and beach that seems to go for ever. Try your fancy at a sand dune safari or a quad bike adventure.

Amongst the numerous other things to do there is kayaking, jet boat rides, horse riding, surfing, fishing, diving, shark and ray feeding for the kids, camel rides, wine tasting, kids farms and amusement parks, go karting, an adventure park which includes a toboggan that all the adults raved about, golf courses, day spas, shopping plus heaps and heaps of restaurants. Something for all really.

For more information you can look on the following web sites:

Tourist Information: [www.portstephens.org.au](http://www.portstephens.org.au)

Port Stephens Sailing and Aquatic Club: [www.pssac.com](http://www.pssac.com)

Salamander Shores: [www.salamandershores.com.au](http://www.salamandershores.com.au)

Grand Mercury Hunter Valley Gardens: [www.gmhvg.com.au](http://www.gmhvg.com.au)

#### Accommodation Options:

Port Stephens is a major holiday location for those living on the east coast. Accommodation books out very early so to make sure you get something close to the club I advise that you book early. Some places including the Big 4 are nearly booked out now so be quick or you will miss out!

#### Salamander Shores – All Seasons Motel

This is the sponsor of the event and will be where all social functions including after sailing drinks will be conducted.

The motel sits directly behind the sailing club – approx 100m walk and looks out over the bay where we will be sailing.

The rooms are 3 star motel type, some with sea view and some with garden view. They are clean and functional. They do not have cooking facilities – being a motel room – but the hotel is putting together a package for Fireball Sailors that will include the buffet breakfast.

Accommodation prices range from \$135.00 per night for a garden view room through to \$165.00 per night for a sea view room with spa, based on two people not including breakfast.

There are also limited family rooms available.

Please note that minimum stay is 3 nights over Christmas – New Years

I will update the prices to include breakfast once the details come through.

More information can be found at: [www.salamandershores.com.au](http://www.salamandershores.com.au)

#### Big 4 Holiday Park Soldiers Point

The park is located across the road from the All Seasons, approximately 250m from the sailing club.

There are a very limited number of units, bungalows and cabins available – no van or tent sites. The park is extremely popular so if you want to stay there book now!

Park facilities are great with plenty for kids to do including a kids games room, play area, pool and tennis courts.

The accommodation is pricy for what you get as it is in high demand.

Minimum stay here is 7 days but not locked in to weekly bookings.

The prices are as follows:

Units: \$1,330.00 per week – very small and tucked in back corner of park but clean, sleep 4

Bungalows \$1,645.00 per week – a bit bigger and closer to facilities – quite new, sleep 4

Cabins \$1,820.00 per week – bigger again but still not huge, quite new and close to facilities, sleep 4

More information can be found at: [www.big4soldierspoint.com.au](http://www.big4soldierspoint.com.au)

### Colonial Ridge Resort

The resort is located half way between the club and the shops in the main street – some 500 m from the club.

It contains 42 cottages, each with two bedrooms, lounge, kitchen and bathroom. The cottages are older than the Big 4 cabins and Bungalows but are well maintained, and more than double the size.

The pool is the highlight of the resort with views out over the bay. There are also tennis courts available.

The resort doesn't have all the fancy play stuff for kids but in my mind was better value for money.

Minimum stay is 3 nights over Christmas – New Years.

The weekly price is \$1,450.00

More information can be found at: [www.colonialridge.com.au](http://www.colonialridge.com.au)

### Soldiers Point Caravan Park

Located right at the end of Soldiers Point, the park is 1.5km from the club. There a may be a few cabins available on asking.

This park is more likely to be able to accommodate those looking to camp.

More information can be found at: [www.beachsideholidays.com.au](http://www.beachsideholidays.com.au)

### Holiday Houses

There are numerous well priced holiday units and houses close to the club.

Ideally you would be looking for a place on Soldiers Point Road located between number 50 and 220. Note that the club is at 139.

The only issue with the holiday homes is that they must be booked in weekly blocks.

The best variety can be found through Cheryl Newton First National, located at Salamander Bay. Their rentals run from Saturday to Saturday.

Their web site is: [www.holidaysnelsonbay.com.au](http://www.holidaysnelsonbay.com.au)

More properties can be found on the PRD Nationwide site. Their properties run from Sunday to Sunday

Their web site is: [www.holidaysportstephens.com.au](http://www.holidaysportstephens.com.au)

Further Afield – (more than 2 km)

#### Resorts

Mantra Aqua Resort Apartments	02 4916 4777
Nelson Bay Breeze Resort	1800 113 200
Oaks Pacific Blue Resort	1800 884 071
Peppers Anchorage	02 4984 2555

#### Holiday Parks

Burubi Beach Holiday Park – Anna Bay	1800 827 300
Fingal Bay Holiday Park	1800 600 203
Shoal Bay Holiday Park	1800 600 200
The Retreat Port Stephens – Anna Bay	02 4982 1244

#### Hotels - Motels

Admiral Nelson Motor Inn – Nelsons Bay	02 4984 9902
Corlette Palms Motor Inn	02 4981 1833
Nelson Lodge Motel – Nelson Bay	02 4916 4600
Peninsula Nelson Bay	02 4981 3666

#### Backpackers

Samurai Beach Bungalows – Anna Bay

02 4982 1921

More accommodation is also available by surfing the net and by calling the Port Stephens information Centre.