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First Peoples crew up for world's toughest ocean race

The first ever Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crew is preparing to enter the world's toughest ocean race and inspire a new generation of Australian sailors.

The crew of professional and community sailors, including members of Tribal Warrior Aboriginal Corporation, will sail in the 2019 Sydney to Hobart yacht race on the Marguerite, a Beneteau 477.

The City of Sydney has been a longstanding supporter of the corporation and will provide \$25,000 for safety and sea survival training, and essential wet weather apparel and equipment, to help the team prepare.

At least 70 per cent of the crew will be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. The crew will represent seven Aboriginal communities – Redfern, La Perouse, Malabar, Springwood, Chifley, Moree and Coonabarabran.

Lord Mayor Clover Moore said the City's support for the crew is part of its ongoing commitment to providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and building respect for Indigenous culture in the wider community.

"As they prepare for this huge endurance event, this year's Beneteau 477 crew are already inspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the nation," the Lord Mayor said.

"It will be a momentous occasion when the crew set sail and an opportunity for all Australians to recognise the maritime history and strength of First Nation Peoples."

The crew's voyage out of Sydney Heads, over the Tasman Sea and across the Bass Strait will coincide with the 75th anniversary of the world famous yacht race.

The City's support of the initiative will contribute to the capacity of the Tribal Warrior Aboriginal Corporation to mentor, train and employ Indigenous people and promote opportunities for cultural tourism.

Tribal Warrior CEO, Shane Phillips, said the City's support would help enhance and develop valuable skills in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sailors.

"Participating in this world-renowned race opens up a wealth of opportunities for our sailors," Mr Phillips said.

"It gives us a platform to showcase our culture to Australia and the rest of the world, and helps us send a message that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been sailing up and down the coast for thousands of years.

"Our crew will return from the race and will be able to share their personal triumph in their communities."

The yacht will be skippered by Wayne Jones, an expert in open races and water rescue, with over 40 years' experience as a sailor.

Tribal Warrior has partnered with motor cruise and racing yacht company EastSail to provide one of their best yachts for the crew.

24-hour City of Sydney Media Team contact details

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The City has an ongoing relationship with the Tribal Warrior Aboriginal Corporation – a not-for-profit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation based in Redfern.

The organisation is the only Indigenous maritime training company. It also provides cultural activities, mentoring programs and cultural harbour tours. Each year it presents the official smoking ceremony from their boat, Mari Nawi, as part of the Sydney New Year's Eve celebrations.

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