

PORT HACKING OPEN SAILING CLUB INC.

Pioneers of Sailing in the Sutherland Shire since 1945



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SAILING CLUB OBJECTS TO OUTRAGEOUS NSW CROWN LANDS FEE

Attn: Sutherland Shire Leader

14th February 2026

Dear Editor,

Port Hacking Open Sailing Club is under threat of closure due to massively increased fees from NSW Crown Lands Department. PHOSC is a community-based volunteer club with the club's primary income being the annual fees paid by club members.

Port Hacking Open Sailing Club (PHOSC) was formed in 1945, and has occupied a waterfront site in Yowie Bay Port Hacking since 1957. The club sails every weekend and its main focus has always been to introduce people to the great sport of sailing via the clubs "Learn to Sail" classes that are held annually. The sailing club is run by a group of enthusiastic volunteers with a love for sailing and sharing their passion with the community. PHOSC was formed in 1945 in an effort to help rebuild the St George and Sutherland Shire community after the depravations of WW2, the club is now celebrating its 80th year of operating for the benefit of the community.

The majority of the sailing club is positioned on Council owned land; however, a small part of the sailing clubs' facility sits over the water and the club requires a permissive occupancy licence controlled by the NSW Crown Lands Department. This has been an ongoing arrangement for decades (since 1957) with last year's annual fee being \$664 PA, however the sailing clubs' latest invoice from NSW Crown Lands was a **1,400%** increase on last year's fee, bringing it to a whopping **\$9,908 PA!**

This is without justification or due diligence as to how that increase would affect a small volunteer run sports club and the local community it serves. PHOSC is a completely volunteer run club without restaurants, poker machines or liquor licence, the club relies on annual financial subscriptions from members for its income. This fee increase will place the volunteer club in an untenable financial position which will force the club to close its doors after operating successfully for the benefit of the St George and Sutherland Shire and other communities for the past 80 years.

The Crown Lands Department has also disregarded the fact that PHOSC does not have exclusive use of the PO area in question. In fact, of the 377m2 of land covered by the Crown Lands Permissive Occupancy, only 20% of the area is utilised by the club to store sailing dinghies, whilst the other 80% of the waterfront area is open to the public seven days a week, year-round with access controlled by Sutherland Shire Council.

Unless the status quo is restored by NSW Crown Lands Revenue Department to around \$664 annual PO fee, (which is inline with most sailing clubs around Sydney Harbour), PHOSC will not be a financially viable sports club and will cease to operate. The loss of PHOSC will impact the many community groups that utilise the clubs' facilities, such as Scouts Australia, Christian Youth camps (Youthworks – Royal National Park), PCYC, local community swimming groups, local school mothers' groups and Marine Rescue Solander.

NSW Crown Lands Department unyielding revenue demands upon a small volunteer run community club is an unprecedented money grab, with total disregard for the people they serve and is extremely out of touch with community expectations. The sailing club has approached our local politician The Hon. Mr Mark Speakman MP, Sutherland Shire Council and Australian Sailing Organisation for assistance to resolve this issue for the benefit of the community.

Regards,

Scott Roberts

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