



RNZYS commissions new Elliott 7m Fleet

After 10 years of hard use, the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron's fleet of 6m Elliott youth training yachts is about to be retired and replaced with new 7m yachts.

The new fleet of 10 yachts, also designed by Greg Elliott, will be built by Yachting Developments and the first six are expected to be in the water by next May. They are intended to deliver exciting, state-of-the-art yachts that will appeal to new generation sailors and stay current into the next decade. Meanwhile, the existing fleet has been sold, lock, stock and barrel to the CNC Yacht Club in Noumea.

After consulting closely with Guy Pilkington, the Squadron's Training and Development Manager, the Flag Officers and the Lion Foundation Youth Programme Committee on the design and technical

brief, Elliott was still finalizing aspects of the design as *Breeze* went to press.

"These new boats will be a development of the 6m design, but will take things to the next level," said Elliott. "They represent an extension for the Youth Training Programme. The new boats will not be radically different, but will have lots of subtle changes. They are more geared towards a real keelboat experience." The larger design means the boats will be crewed by four youth sailors, or three adult sailors. They are intended to be used in a wider application than only youth training.

"The design incorporates a prod and gennaker and will produce a high performance yacht. There is no point in doing a slow one," said Elliott with a laugh. "That does not mean it is going to be radical. It does not have a massive

sail area, but it is generous enough to be quick and exciting to keep the young guys interested. I have always believed that if you give them plonkers they will drift away from the sport which is not what we want."

This will be the third generation of Elliott yachts used by the Lion Foundation Youth Programme, starting with the **5.9** designs, moving up to the 6m and now the 7m. With the aim of tilting the Training Programme more towards a typical keelboat experience, the new yachts will have winches. "It is a change up from a boat where you can handle all the lines by hand. But these are calculated changes to extend the programme."

The yachts will feature in-board rudders, as opposed to transom-hung rudders, and will have carbon-fibre masts, spars and standing rigging.

The yachts will be berthed in the water with the keels fixed in their full-draft position. At the same time, there is provision for the keels to retract for transportation. This will mean that they can be loaded two-up on trailers and transported to regattas outside of Auckland, or on inland waterways. "The provides a great opportunity to extend the use of these boats," said Elliott.

"We have learned a great deal over the years and we are able to use that experience to apply progressive changes with each new design cycle. We have also been proactive in taking the design to the next level."

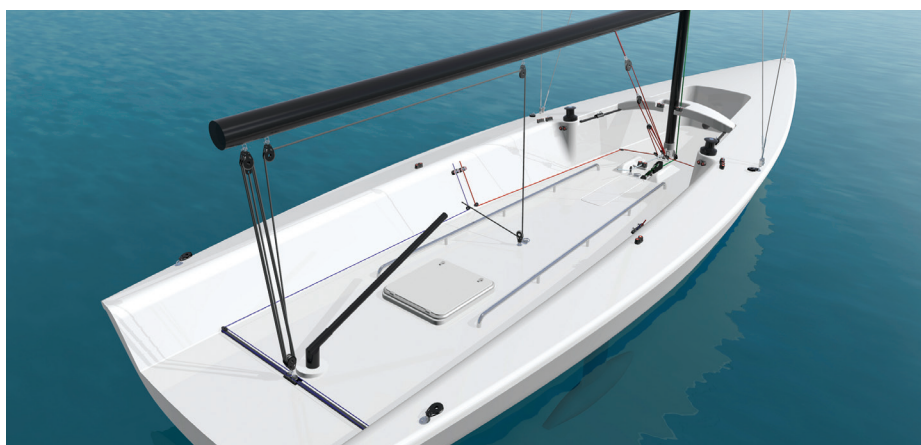
The administrative aspects of the project were entrusted to the Major Projects and Assets Committee under the chairmanship of Colin Carran. "We were given the task of putting together the fund-raising effort and we worked in conjunction with the Youth Training Committee, who were involved with the design and technical aspects," said Carran.

The major funding came from three sources: The Louis Vuitton Pacific Series, the Team New Zealand Trust and the Lion Foundation, which is the Youth Programme's major sponsor.

"We also had support from Doyle Sails, Harken and Southern Spars, all of whom put together very generous equipment packages," said Carran. "I am glad to say that the funding for this project is basically complete. There is a small shortfall, which will be initially met from general funds, but I am confident that this will be covered by additional sponsorship."

"As far as the existing boat sponsors are concerned, we are hopeful that they will renew their arrangements. The new boats will offer them new opportunities for exposure."

Carran said initial discussions were held with other designers, but it was felt the best



option was to continue the relationship with Elliott. "Greg Elliott has been great to work with. His previous boats have served their purpose extremely well. He knows and understands the aims and objectives of the Youth Programme very well and he has been a great supporter in the past."

While the new boats will be crewed by four when they are used in their youth training mode, there is no intention to enlarge the annual intake of students. Instead, eight boats will be used at a time, with two as spares.

The arrangement with the CNC Yacht Club provided a tidy solution for selling off the existing 6m fleet. "We had some enquiries from all over the world about buying 6m boats, especially as they have

become the Olympic class for women's match racing," said Carran. "People were interested in using them to train for the Olympics, but there would have been a lot of logistics in selling them off one by one to all parts of the world."

"The arrangement with CNC Yacht Club means they will take the entire fleet, including spare parts. They have agreed to wait until we take delivery of the first new boats, which means the transition from one fleet to the other will go as smoothly as possible."

"As part of that agreement, Guy Pilkington will go to Noumea and help them set up the 6m fleet and give them any assistance with their youth programme."

By Ivor Wilkins