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Fax to : Bureau of Meteorology, Tasmania and Antarctica Region  
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We met at the end of the Sydney Hobart race when you came aboard my yacht Aera to debrief us on the weather conditions that we had experienced during the race.

Since then I have read a number of articles in the Australian and International media suggesting that the weather forecasting for the race was not adequate and that this contributed to the tragedy. I therefore wish to put my own views on the record and would be grateful if you would be kind enough to pass this fax on to the appropriate person.

As an overseas competitor and a first time one at that, I feel that I am well placed to take an objective view of the weather forecasting since I came to the event with no preconceptions as to how such forecasts had been provided in the past.

I have been racing in offshore events for 25 years and have participated in a great number of races of 600 miles or more. These have included a number of Fastnet, Newport-Bermuda, China Sea, Middle Sea, and round Aegean races. Aera had a very experienced crew who, as well as having done a large number of the above events both with me and on other boats brought experience of the Whitbread, Round Ireland and Round Britain races as well as countless other races of less than 600 miles.

I attended the briefing at the CYCA on 24th. December at which a weather briefing was given. As a first time competitor I found the briefing interesting and informative. In the run up to the start of the race I also took advantage of the poll fax service and the internet website for weather and current information. I collected the weather bureau package at the CYCA

on the morning of the race, which I found to be excellent. I studied it and then returned to speak to the meteorologists who were happy to answer all of my questions. I must say that the quality of this material exceeded that which I have received in the past from commercial forecasters such as Bob Rice or Commanders weather and far exceeded the quality of that normally provided by the race organisers.

After the start of the race we heard a large number of regular storm warnings from coastal stations on VHF and SSB and had every opportunity to take a decision to retire long before the bad weather hit and long before we left the shelter of the east coast of Australia. We took a deliberate decision to continue, feeling confident of the experience of our crew and high level of preparedness and seaworthiness of our vessel. Throughout the race we received weather faxes which were clear and informative. We used these to decide in advance our strategy for when the strong wind hit and therefore were well prepared when the time came.

Your own visit to the boat in Hobart was the first time that any one of us has been debriefed by a weather forecasting service in the aftermath of a yacht race (please bear in mind that the crew included two persons who had participated in the 1979 Fastnet race). It was indicative of the professional approach of the Bureau.

With this fax I would like to express the sincere thanks of the crew of Aera.

With my best regards,



N. F. Lykiardopulo