International Sail Training and Tall Ships Conference 2018

As a youth representative for The Lady Nelson & Young Endeavour, I was honoured to be chosen this year to attend the international Sail Training and Tall Ships conference in Seville, Spain. We were lucky to have a large number of representatives from Australia this year, with a large portion from Tasmania, reflecting the states growing and ongoing commitment to sail training and tall ship management. I thoroughly enjoyed sharing ideas with my fellow Australians and crew from neighbouring ships in Tasmania, as it felt like a little slice of home on the other side of the world.

During the first day of the conference I attended the following sessions: “Incident Analysis – Identifying the root causes and lessons learnt”, “Square-Rigged Master-class”, “Your Youth Council” and “Military Tall Ship Programmes and On-board Training”. I found the Incident Analysis session particularly valuable as several real-life scenarios were presented by The United States Coastguard and Holland ships to facilitate our learning. This session also provided me with some fresh ideas relating to common safety and incident reporting processes currently used within Australia, and areas in which these could be improved.

I also enjoyed the Youth Council session, as it provided me with the opportunity to network within a community of young passionate sailors and sail trainers from across the globe. During this workshop we shared ideas on the image of the Youth Council as well as hearing about some current projects and ideas for future events. I was surprised and excited by the number of women representatives within the Youth Council, and would consider this a good representation of young women’s ever growing engagement within the sail-training world.
In the afternoon I attended Stephen Moss’s session presenting the Young Endeavours youth sailing program and other ships military tall ship programs. It was interesting to hear that only one other country seemed to have a similar program, making the Young Endeavour unique in its efforts to provide youth development within a military environment.

There were a number of opportunities to network also during the conference, and I feel I benefitted from this time to make friendships and connections within the Youth Council as well as with crews from across Europe.

During the second day of the conference I enjoyed “Cyber Security Awareness On-board”, “Youth Council Open Forum” and “Funding Trainees – Three Different Approaches”. Cyber security is not an issue I had ever considered for sailing and this session was somewhat scary with examples of students hacking into navigational devices and the dangers of storing large amounts of personal content for crew members. This session was a timely reminder that in this social media and technology focused age, that we all need to remain vigilant for our cyber safety at shore as well as at sea.
To celebrate the end of an excellent event, the conference gala dinner was held at the stunning Casino De La Exposicion, Seville, providing one final opportunity to mingle and network. Having made friendships across the Youth Council as well as with my fellow Aussies, the Gala dinner was one of many highlights of the conference, as we all enjoyed ‘frocking up’ and socialising at the end of a busy conference.

Key Learning/Outcomes

• The importance of practicing ‘worst case’ scenarios (MOB at night & rigging falls) regularly to limit the risk for all crew and passengers
• Medical safety considerations at sea: what resources are really important for longer ocean crossings, need for well trained crew members and medications carried on-board
• Cyber security as an important consideration for all ships - particularly as the modern age of sailing relies heavily on electronic navigational equipment as well as the safe storage of crew and passengers personal information
• Networking within the International Youth Council, meeting the current Australian Youth Council Representative and sharing ideas relating to improving youth recruitment and retention in the sailing community
• A better overall appreciation for the wider global sailing community and some of the fabulous events held annually across Europe and the world to celebrate this dynamic and ever growing community

I would sincerely like to thank Tall Ships Australia and New Zealand for the opportunity to attend the conference, it has been an invaluable experience and I look forward to sharing my new learning more within the Australian sailing community in the future.