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## **Clean Sweep for NSW Marinas in National Awards**

**Empire Marina Bobbin Head has again been awarded the prestige title of Australian Marina of the Year in the category for marinas over 140 berths by the Marina Industries Association of Australia at the awards dinner in Melbourne overnight.**

Winners in other categories included Soldiers Point Marina in the under 140 berths category and the Royal Motor Yacht Club Broken Bay in the Clubs category. The Club Marine Australian Marina of the Year is the peak national award for marinas with a rigorous judging criteria including facilities and infrastructure, customer service and satisfaction, environmental practices, risk management, training and staff development, industry involvement and community contribution. A panel of eight independent judges from around the country assesses the awards.

This is the second consecutive win for Empire Marina's 200-berth marina at historic Bobbin Head in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park just 24 km from Sydney CBD and comes on the back of the company celebrating its fifth birthday at Bobbin Head. Since acquiring the facility from the Halvorsen family in 2006 Empire Marinas have completed a major upgrade and redevelopment of the facility, the majority of which was completed in 2008.

In accepting the award Director of Empire Marinas, Darren Vaux said, "It is such a great honour to be a part of an industry that strives for excellence in all aspects of its business. Winning this award for the second time affirms our vision to operate our marina and service facility to exceed our stakeholders' expectations and it motivates us to strive to achieve more and always be on the top of our game."

The Bobbin Head marina has a number of unique facilities that makes the marina inviting for its customers and the community. The marina boasts 200 berths, wide fairways and 10 swing moorings and has a large hardstand service facility that sets new benchmarks for environmental sensitivity. The public walkway along the waterfront includes a Discovery Trail that chronicles the history of the precinct including Aboriginal rock carvings that are visible in the marina's security car park. The licensed waterfront restaurant provides the perfect venue to relax and watch the world go by at this vibrant marina.

Stephen Smith, Operations Director at Empire Marinas, picked up a further honour at Marinas 2011 conference when he was confirmed as a Certified Marina Manager by the Global Marina Institute. This international qualification recognises the highest level of professionalism in the marina industry and Stephen is one of only 270 people in the world to be awarded this qualification. "Our mission is to constantly set new benchmarks for service and facilities in the marina industry' he said. "We are seeking to find new products and services to meet the needs of our customers."

A good example of this product diversification is the range of berthing options at Bobbin Head. Customers can secure berthing from one day to 25 years with the recent release of 2 year and 10 year berthing options proving very popular with customers seeking to secure their berthing future. There is limited availability for longer-term berths at the marina and a waiting list for larger vessels. This is not surprising with a report by NSW maritime published in 2010 predicting a dramatic shortfall in marina berths in Broken Bay over the next 15 years.

“We have just one 25 year berth lease remaining for sale and the ten and five year deals continue to be snapped up by buyers wanting to secure tenure at today’s rates” said Mr Smith, who described owning a berth in the national park as a ‘once in a lifetime opportunity’.

If winning Australian Marina of the Year twice in succession is any recommendation, the waiting list at Bobbin head can only be expected to grow.

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