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Darwin Dili Yacht Rally set to restart after long break

Eight yachts will set sail in the Darwin Dili Yacht Rally tomorrow, following a route first taken in 1973 by competitors in the original Darwin Dili Race.

Chief Minister Paul Henderson said bringing back a sailing event from Darwin to Dili will further strengthen close ties with Timor-Leste.

The inaugural yacht race to Dili left Darwin in 1973 making it the first Australian yacht race to another country. Owing to its success, 24 yachts signed up to race the following year.

A sailing event between Darwin and Dili ran again in 2001 to coincide with Timor-Leste independence celebrations. This year’s event will be the fourth time sailors have followed the historic route.

“This yacht rally has a long history over three decades and I hope over the coming years it continues to grow,” Mr Henderson said.

“The Northern Territory Government is supporting the reestablishment of the event with a grant of $25,000.

“Events like the Darwin Dili Yacht Rally have the potential to become highlights in our local sporting calendar and also support tourism development and economic growth in Timor-Leste.

“I thank the Timor-Leste Government for hosting the Rally and for all their work in getting it back up and running this year.

“The Cruising Yacht Association of the Northern Territory has also played a vital role in providing technical support to re-establish the event and I also thank them for their work.
The Darwin Dili Yacht Rally will be started at 11am on Saturday by the Timor-Leste Minister for Tourism, Commerce and Industry Mr Gil Alves from onboard the “Spirit of Darwin”.

Competitors are expected to sail into Dili Harbour within 3 – 5 days, with formal celebrations scheduled for their arrival.

Member for Johnston, Dr Chris Burns, will be representing the Northern Territory Government in Dili next week.

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