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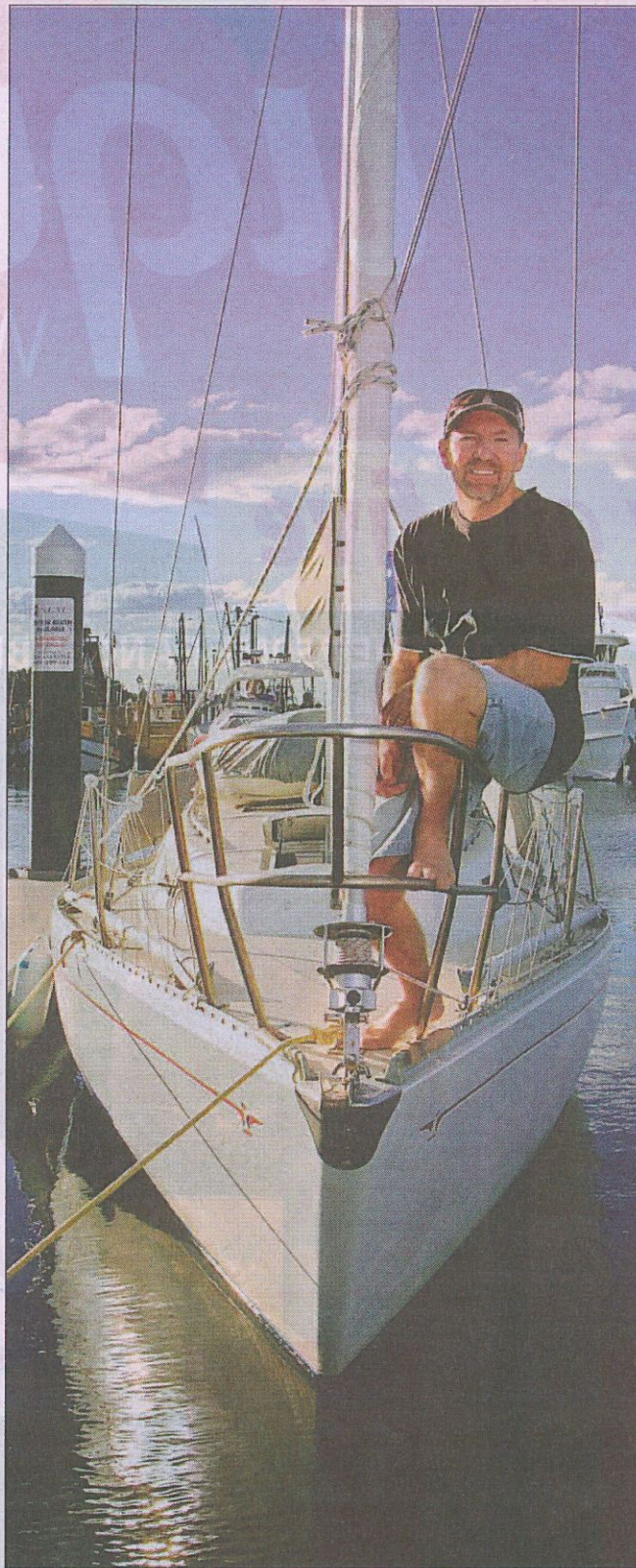
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VISITOR: Peter Carstens yesterday. — Picture by Dean Osland

Roundly happy to see the changes

By **MARTIN DINNEEN**

FOR visiting around-Australia yachtsman Peter Carstens, Newcastle Harbour is the perfect place to drop anchor and take stock for his next push to Brisbane.

Mr Carstens left Perth in September in his 30-foot yacht, Pioneer, and has made the journey in a series of monthly passages, flying home to work and spend time with family before setting sail again.

"It's one of those boxes in life I felt that I had to tick off," he said.

The Perth-based sailmaker said he sailed into Newcastle Harbour 30 years ago and remembered it as a drab, industrial port that offered little to the recreational yachtsman.

"Looking at it now, with the new facilities, it's a fantastic little harbour and the whole place has had such a facelift," he said.

Sailing in a smaller than usual vessel for this type of journey, Mr Carstens said there were advantages.

"It's not so much about the size but the structure of the boat and I knew she was a sea-worthy hull," he said.

Mr Carstens will set sail for Brisbane in two days before completing the final leg around the top end and then down the coast to home.