

BRUDG

# DOWN UNDER With The Black Rock Underwater Dive Group



Sept-Oct 2014



## BRUDG DIVE CALENDER

Divers should contact the dive captain on Thursday if they are interested in going diving on the weekend.

- ALWAYS TAKE A COMPASS BEARING THAT NAVIGATES YOU FRONTWARDS OF THE BOAT.
- MINIMUM JESUS LINE LENGTH 150 M WHEN DIVING IN CURRENT PRONE AREAS

### Dive Calendar

4 October Alan Balmer bay - drift dive  
11 October Grant Callow. Heads - Lonsdale beaches  
18 October Hillary Ingram. Bay drift dive - scallops  
25 October Allan Conley. Sorrento back beaches  
31 October. Alan Balmer. Prom weekend

**Notes: 1.** The gazetted dives are subject to change at short notice as winds, swell and tides on the day will either allow or disallow the dive.

**2.** The boat skipper is responsible for safety of the vessel and the crew so its his / her judgement that will determine the day's activities including dive cancellation.

**3.** With ocean diving, the swell has a huge impact on safety and dive quality. Ocean swell is pushed by gale force winds many thousand of kilometres to the south west in a region stretching from the Indian Ocean to Great Southern Ocean near Antarctica. We can have

## 2014-2015 Committee

Our Committee Members:

President: Hillary Ingram  
Vice Presedent: Greg Sauter  
Secretary: Ton Van Den Blink  
Social Secretary: Gary Payhoff  
Treasurer: Joe Arlove  
Public Officer: Joe Arlove  
Safety Officer: Jen Ch'ng  
Editor: Dan Wahrenberger  
Property Officer: Alen Conley  
Dive Coordinator: Alan Baulmer  
SDFV Representative: John Griffiths  
& Steve Snow

### Life Members:

John Davis  
Ron Dunlop  
Max Graham  
Bob Hurst  
Lionel Martin  
Dave Perry  
Bill Silvester  
Mike McCrae  
Trevor Heath

### Mailing List Adresses:

Committee Members  
committee@brudg.org.au  
Club Members:  
members@brudg.org.au  
Interested Persons:  
interested@brudg.org.au





perfectly good weather conditions in Melbourne but a massive swell. For ocean diving, swell height will determine the most comfortable and safe depth. Guidelines are given below:

**> 2 m** ..... Forget it! - Stay in the Bay – Rip drop-off will be OK but swells can break near Queenscliff so be careful! Expect dirty water on the flood tide. Ebb tide could be better prospect on days of heavy swell?

**1½ m** ..... Minimum recommended dive depth is 15 – 20 m (expect visibility of around 5 - 6 m at 15 m and may be 8 - 10 m visibility at depths greater than 20 meters)

**1m** ..... Minimum recommended dive depth is 8 – 10 m (visibility should be around 10 m)

**½ m** ..... Dive anywhere – expect perfect conditions except after rainy period that can make the water dirty due to run off from the cliffs.

## Editorial

Welcome to the September-October edition of Down Under with BRUDG. Again this month I've had a great response to my requests for submissions. Particularly from the usual suspects on Breaker who've been quite prolific over the last month or so. Also Steve Snow has come up with a great article on abalone diving in North California which whilst lengthy is well worth taking the time to read.

I've had several dive reports and seen that there is some great diving going on over these cooler months. Though you'll need to wait for the next edition for the full trip report from the North Solitary Islands road trip crew.

It has been very encouraging to see the efforts of the committee over the last couple of months. Being on the committee mailing list you really start to appreciate how much they do for the club behind the scenes. The new team have stepped up and there is a lot of work going on to take the club forward over the next year. Greg with his efforts on bringing the constitution into line with the

Current Victorian Consumer Laws, Jen in researching, purchasing and assembling new emergency oxygen sets and Ton's efforts with the new liability waivers all leap to mind. The other committee members are working hard also and I'm sure the club will benefit from all their hard work for a long time to come.

I'm sure you'll all appreciate the massive amount of hard work that has been put into the club compressor trailer over the last month. A huge shout out to Grant, Rainer and Mike for restoring the trailer to something the club can be proud of.

Well, enjoy this edition and if there is something you'd like to see in the next edition of Down Under - tell me about it. Better yet, write about it and I'll see you get your say.

Dive Safe  
Dan Wahrenberger  
Editor



## Presidents Report

Dear Brudgers,

We are in our flattest period of diving that we have throughout the year, our normally frenetic diving activity has now contracted to a trickle, with only the hardy or the dry suit divers continuing to dive. A recent change to this pattern, which I hope may become a regular cooler period feature was the small contingent of Brudg divers, Ton, Gary P, Stephen and Dan who drove or flew North to the highly regarded North Solitary Islands to dive with Grey Nurse Sharks, Painted Crays, Yellow Tail Kingfish, monster Wobbegongs and a myriad of both tropical and temperate water sea creatures. I hope we are fortunate enough to hear firsthand at the coming meeting of their trip to warmer water in this secluded NSW dive location. I also understand that members Jon and Saskia are shortly to travel to Niue, no doubt Saskia ably assisted by Jon will produce another spectacular summary of their trip, which shall can provide valuable firsthand information for both our interest and to assist members if they planned to have dive in this location themselves in the future.

Whilst diving is comparatively slow, it is the perfect time for the committee to continue to progress a few necessary administration duties, first off, I confirm the clubs "Diving Recommendations for Members and Guests" have been reviewed, condensed and agreed by the committee, please take time to review on the clubs site. The new updated waiver has been sent out to all members, can we all please make sure we have read, digested, executed and returned to the committee.

The committee has been refreshed with a number of new members volunteering either to the committee or to a new role in the committee. Ton has been outstanding in the role of Secretary (which he volunteered for simply to serve the club as the position remain unfilled), Jen has thrown all energies to the clubs safety officer role and drives the much need upgrading/ replacing of the oxy-viva kits which has now been completed, Greg has continued in maintaining and upgrading our website and has expended considerable time and energy rationally exploring the Constitution review driven by changing government legislation. Alan C has completed a full safety review of the compressors with Peter Cronin to once again ensure everything is fully and safely operational for the coming season. Joe and Gary continue as always being sound contributors in their roles even though they are often out of Victoria working. Alan B has thrown considerable enthusiasm to the Dive Captain role giving clarity and visibility to diving opportunities to members and prospective members. John G and Stephen contributed valuable feedback from the last SDFV meeting to ensure the club does not simply look at issues from an insular perspective.

An issue that the committee has uncovered by prudent enquiry is the changed legislation that governs all Non Profit Organisations, many members are aware that many sporting clubs have updated their Constitution in the last 12 months. The catalyst for this change is the 2012 legislation which provides uniformity to non-profit entities such as our club, our understanding is that effectively the new guidelines are already in place for all clubs. So change is already upon us, please be assured the Committee has not strayed into this issue looking to make unnecessary changes, we are simply addressing the legislative change that has already occurred and that we are now aware of. Our intention is to put our existing Constitution and proposed Constitution up on



the Club website for members to view and compare so that we can rationally digest and then progress, it appears the changes are already in place and we should thoughtfully review. I understand this may be a sensitive issue, but ask we that simply progress in a logical and informed fashion.

A healthy development for the club is the successful rebuilding of the clubs compressor trailer, it has been a sound workhorse for the club for many decades, but was sadly in need of some restoration, I understand Alan C and Graeme R started the review process. Alan called for a volunteer ideally someone with a few skills in metalwork and aligned trades. Grant Callow ably supported by his reliable crew Mike Mossveld, Rainer Freitag and Dave Stowe completed an extensive upgrade, replace, repaint virtual rebuild. I know they sacrificed many weekends (some of which were good diving weekends, Heaven forbid) completing the rebuild and as the photos attest the result is better than new. Many thanks to everyone involved for the upgrade of one of the club's crucial assets.

I completed a survey of member's age and period with club which proved to be an interesting example of how poor our memories have become, as many members who joined together had significantly different perceptions of when they joined the club. Our average age was 53 and average period of club membership was 15 years. Our years are properly understated a fraction with a few younger members favourably distorting the average age, however I was taken back on how capable, active some of our older members were still diving regularly and capably with no sign of retirement in sight. Regardless of our age, we should all be

accountable to ourselves to ensure we fit and healthy for the coming years diving. I work in an office, so endeavour to maintain fitness with commuting cycling and tennis. I encourage all members to ensure they have a sound platform to maintain their health, fitness and energy levels for their planned diving activities.

The clubs annual pilgrimage to Wilson's Prom is now only four weeks away, I note the strong club attendance even though the fee structure has dramatically increased. Hopefully the weather will be kind to us and we will once again enjoy superb Spring weather and hopefully perfect diving conditions. The club will be hosting the SDFV barbecue this year, so all help will be gladly appreciated from those members who can bring barbecues and assist on the day. We will enjoy the clubs rebuilt compressor trailer, which has a fresh copy of our compressor procedures, please ensure you are fully conversant with the operating procedures of the compressors and I suggest newer members buddy up with experienced hands to strengthen their skills in need.

Looking forward, there is much interest in a number of possible diving trips the club is considering, Tasmania has sparked much discussion and I have envied the smiles of members as they shared stories of the clubs past trips to Tasmania and reminisces. There is also great interest in a possible trip to the Solomon's Island with Graeme Rees hand picking locations from his past experience diving in that location (I'm always a sucker when they mention possible hammerhead sightings). The difficulty will be spreading trips so we can maximise attendance for as many members as possible. When weather permits there is also the chance of trips for the lucky few to the Hogan's Island Group or even a jaunt over to the fabled Deal Island, that we



have seen such stunning pictures of from Graeme Rees past sailing/diving trip.

In closing, I would like to personally thank the club for their concern, best wishes and

generous bouquet of flowers that was much appreciated for my wife Corrie who is being treated for a medical condition. Your thoughts, flowers and phone calls of concern were much appreciated many thanks from us both. All the best in safe and enjoyable diving,

Hilary Ingram  
BRUDG President

## Treasurers Report

Hello all,

Below is a list of members who owe money to the club for membership and a couple who owe for deposit at Apollo Bay next Australia day weekend.

If you could all pay up promptly as the club has had some major expenses and the bank balance is running low.

Last month I reported that we had \$5096 in the working account and \$8057 in the maxi account giving us a total of \$13,153, since then we have spent \$4499.20 for Prom bookings (pre-paid by members attending) plus \$3884.80 for 5 x compressor maintenance, leaving us a balance of \$4769.

Since the we have had some money come in and giving us a balance of \$3576.78 in the working account and \$2096.82 in the maxi account, total \$5673.60

Out of tis balance the club owes approximately \$1400 for trailer repairs and up to \$4000 for Oxy Viva upgrades, so as you can see we need your money if you owe the club !!!

First	Surname	Owing	Comments
Peter	Altis	\$100.00	subs
Daryl	Avery	\$100.00	subs
Peter	Cronin	\$100.00	subs
Nick	Ente	\$100.00	subs
Rainer	Freitag	\$100.00	subs
Jim	Henderson	\$100.00	subs
Hilary	Ingram	\$100.00	subs
Len	Joyce	\$100.00	subs
James	Mc Farland	\$100.00	subs
Andrew	Monger	\$100.00	subs
Frank	Reynen	\$100.00	subs
Wayne	Salisbury	\$100.00	subs
David	Simpson	\$100.00	subs
David	Stow	\$100.00	subs
Andrew	Watkins	\$100.00	subs
Eileen	Wilson	\$20.00	Social subs
Bill	Sandford	\$20.00	Social subs
Ian	Coward	\$100.00	subs
Ross	Joy	\$20.00	Social subs
Keith	Grainger	\$20.00	Social subs
Total		\$1,680.00	

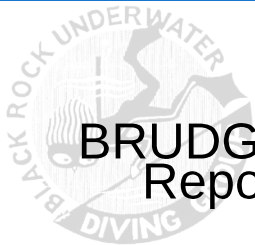
Plus:

Wayne Salisbury and Greg Saunter \$120 ea for Apollo Bay deposit.

Thanks,  
Joe Arlove

Editors Note: I am reliably informed that at least several of these members have since paid.





## BRUDG Safety Officer Report: October

This period of relative 'inactivity' has been a busy one in that we now have the new oxygen kits ready for use (and hopefully not!). These kits are designed to be easily and immediately used;

Open the case

Place mask on the calm 'patient'

Turn on the valve on the cylinder

Oxygen flow should be maintained and set at 6lt

Watch and monitor 'patient'

Call '000' or emergency services and report circumstances

New sealed hard case



Sock and a small case



Demand valves to be gradually funded and added to kits.

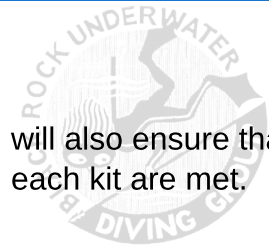


It is very important to have a calm patient because the hyperventilating patient will not actually inhale the oxygen, such rapid breathing will in fact increase carbon monoxide levels and could possibly see decompression illness worsen. In the case of using a demand valve the patient may indeed deplete their oxygen supply within minutes not giving enough time for treatment.

We will have a mix of kits as we try to move to demand valves that will extend the life of an oxygen bottle should it be needed to be used. There are adapters that are either used for constant flow versus a higher pressure attachment for a demand valve hose. We will gradually upgrade each kit to demand valves as we can source the valves and required attachments.

It is also important to treat these kits as a pressure cylinder. It is therefore recommended that when removing the regulator from the oxygen bottle for any reason that pressure is relieved prior to removal and that the oxygen flow dial is set on '0' when reattaching and checking pressures and tank volume.

Tanks and cases are all numbered and so the kits should not be mixed for any reason. This



will also ensure that servicing requirements for each kit are met.

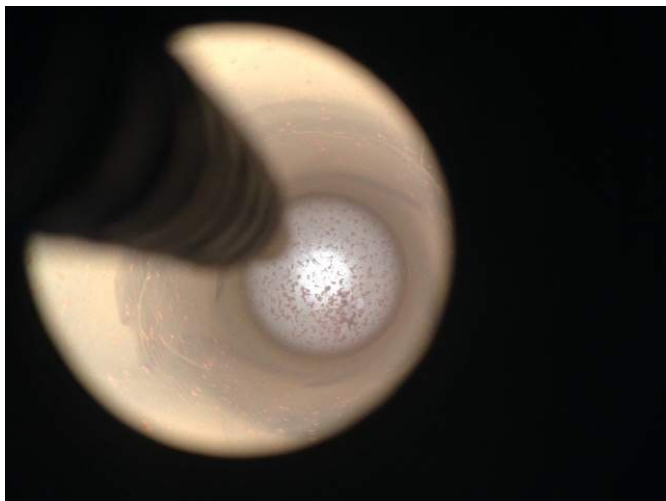
Budget summary – Budget Provisions for Oxygen kits - \$4,000.

Budget Expenditure so far - \$3,000 (8 kits and 3 demand valves)

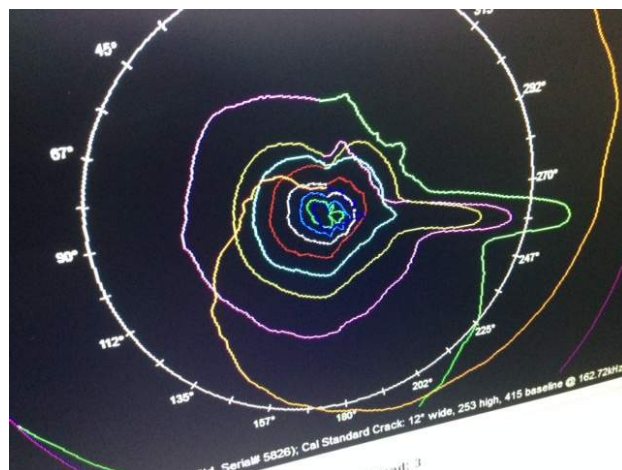
## Tank Testing;

It is once again the season for tank testing and we have been getting through the club tanks with Robin WOODS. In having some long discussions with him he has found the number of tanks in general needing to be rumbled has dropped. He commented that there are a few club members that he has not seen their tanks as of 24th September. Please consider your tank test as I have taken some photos of what goes on inside a tank...

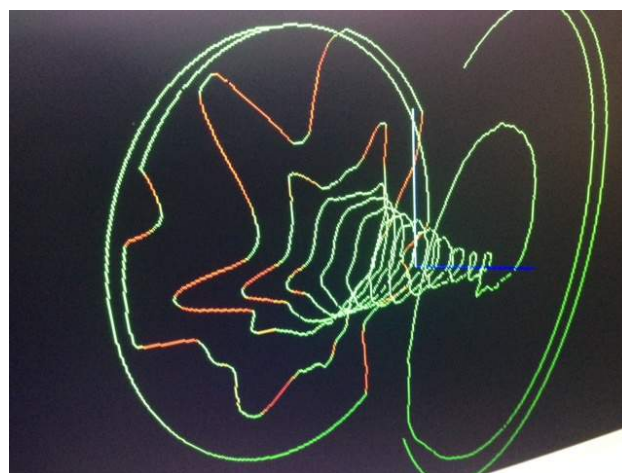
Rust in a steeli.....



Thread crack formation in an Ali....



Catastrophic breakdown/cracking of an old Ali tank....one of mine a few years back!



We have reports this year that we have had occurrences of spot rust (yours truly in a 2 year old steel tank) through to water pooling in the tank. This would be a great mouthful should one be upside down 'exploring' terrain copping a gulp of water and oxide dust.

Although the numbers of 'rumblings' has reduced Robin mentioned the names, Payoff, Bell, Snow, Conley (X1) and Ch'ng (X1). What we need to do is look in to the filling habits and ensure that we can prevent these moisture events. We need to track compressors that are filling 'moist' air. There was a report of a compressor with wet filters. Maintenance of valves during filling of tanks is essential. The oil





and water valves need to be regularly drained approximately every 15 minutes during filling and also prior to filling the first bottle. Hot and humid environments also require more attention to detail. This is a subject that will affect all members in the costs of maintaining and servicing our tanks.

Maybe an agenda item should be using club funds to have auto-drain valves placed on all compressors eliminating the need to do this during fills.

## Dive Report September 14th 2015 (LAST DAY OF THE LOBSTER SEASON!):

**Boat** – SS Ch'ng(1st club Queenscliffe launch)

**Crew** – Jen C(wetsuit), Greg S(wetsuit), Alan B(dry suit) and Gary P(dry suit).

**Launch** – Queenscliffe. \$10 ramp fee with wash facilities and warm showers after.

**Conditions** – 1m swell, 10Kt NNE winds, water temp 13 degrees.

We launched at a very reasonable 9.30 am due to slack water in the heads being around noon. We proceeded out through the heads and found water and structure out in front of Lonsdale ocean beach. Looking for reef and structure at around 14m we found terrain and ledges that looked appropriate.

We dived in pairs, wetsuit divers followed by drysuits the again after that. We did a couple of dives each and landed 3 male crays, I also shot 3 Magpie Morwong of which my kids

wanted more than the crayfish.

Overall a lovely day on the water with all motors, radios and electronics working with out fault. Things we learnt, watch out for the shallow water around the docks and remember your weight belts...

I will be keenly looking forward to doing a 1st beach launch prior to the Prom weekend.



## Wilson Prom and Arch Rock – August 2014

By Saskia Loer Hansen

**Base camp:** Cabin no. 40 at Walkerville North

**Arrival:** Friday night 16 August

**Boat:** Breaker (beach launch from the nearby beach)

**Divers:** Grant, Mike, Jon and Saskia

### Day 1: Wilson Prom

The only takers for the fabulous opportunity to dive Wilson Prom in the middle of August were the four of us. A shame for the others who couldn't make it as the weather conditions were great and promising for good diving out at Wilson Prom.



Diving the Glennies

We launched the boat just after 8.30 on Saturday morning and set course for the Glennies. The water was almost flat calm and there was very little wind. Just the right day to be out on the water.

While the water conditions as such were perfect for diving, visibility was not as great as one could have hoped for. In particular during

the first part of the dive, there were lots of algae or whatever it was in the water, and at times the visibility probably wasn't much more than 5-6 meters. There was lots of fish life though, and it was nice to just potter around in such calm and relaxed conditions.

After our morning dive and time to just enjoy the islands and the view in across Wilson Prom, we sailed up to Waterfall Bay to enjoy lunch in the sun. The Bay didn't look quite right when we first neared it so we thought we'd gone to the wrong place, but on the second attempt, it was clear that there were waterfalls well hidden and high up on the rocky hills. It was just gorgeous enjoying a cup of hot tea and lunch, while enjoying the warm winter sunshine and the sounds from the waterfalls.

After lunch, we headed out to Skull Rock and took a little while to just look at the island.



Mike and Grant in the water (flat calm)

We then circled the island just next to it. There were loads of seals on the cliffs and rocks, and we were joking that it would be an interesting place to dive. Not least after a

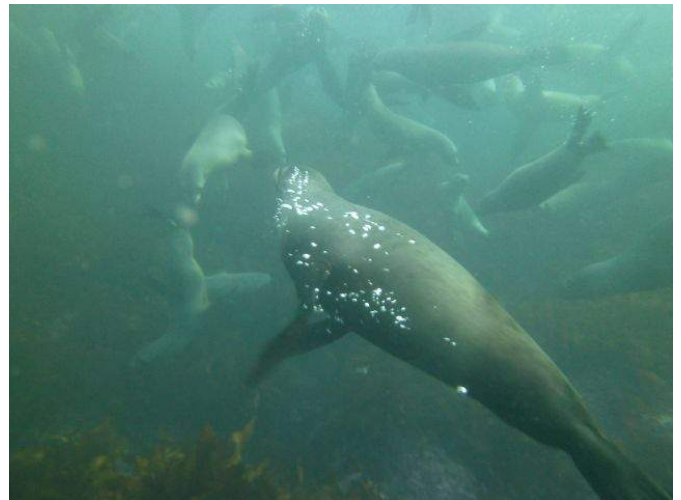


Skull rock (from Grant's phone)

whole horde of the seals jumped in the water to follow the boat and then literally stuck their heads out of the water again and again, to look at the four of us in the boat. There might have been a bit of confusion though as Mike did a pretty good imitation of the seals' squealing, so they might have been intrigued by the two-legged seal on the boat.

As it was so exciting to see so many seals in

the water, and as we wondered what it would be like to dive with so many seals, Jon made the decision that we should give it a go and simply do the second dive here with the seals. There were so many seals about and it was well after the seal pulp season that chances were there wouldn't be lots of sharks in the water (or at least we made the assessment that it was likely to be no greater risk than otherwise, to jump in the water at this





particular dive site). Very gentleman-like, both Grant and Mike did the shark sign just as we had jumped in the water (and after a quick check to ensure that this indeed was a joke, Saskia dutifully responded with a universal one finger sign before descending into the seal frenzy). Thankfully no shark was to be seen and while of course one can never be sure, we felt we had made the right assessment about getting in the water.

It was an exhilarating and exciting dive and we probably had a least 100 seals around us during the dive. One could feel the motion in the water as seals flew past and twirled around right in front of us to have a second look at these odd creatures in the water. The noise from the seals was pretty phenomenal and there was just life everywhere. If there were many seals in front of us, there was a least two or three times as many just behind us. We all felt a bit of tugging on the fins as the seals came close enough to touch us, but otherwise the main sensation really was the feeling of the water moving around us as seals just flew past in all directions.

After 30 minutes of close seal encounters, Saskia had had enough though, not least after two big seals got quite close and took a good bite at each other (and revealed some mighty big teeth in the attempt). So, we did a quick exit with plenty of seal company right until the point we got back up on the boat.

While not keen to go diving with seals in the first instance, the two Aussie divers in the company had had 30 minutes to get the courage to follow the crazy Danes, so Mike and Grant went in for a dive with the seals as well. And they had a great dive – and from the surface, we could follow the divers in the water as the seals clustered around the area where the divers were. Grant and Mike took the time to sit still on the sandy bottom towards the end of the dive and just followed the silhouettes of all of the seals who were playing around above them. A great

experience for all of us (at least once we were out of the water, safe and well).

And from this dive, it was back to Walkerville for air fills and dinner around the fire outside the Cabin (after some hard work to get the boat out of the water – a reminder that beach launching isn't easy).

## Day 2: Arch Rock

The next morning the wind had picked up a bit and the waves were a bit higher. After

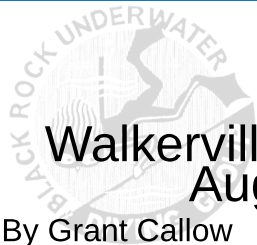


Jon, Grant and Mike after the dive

launching the boat, we headed down to Arch Rock where we found a good dive site. Saskia stayed on the boat while Grant, Mike and Jon went in the water.

The wind picked up further while the divers were in the water and as the dive had been mediocre with some swells and currents, we decided to head back up to Walkerville to retrieve the boat before the waves got any higher than what they were at this point. And in terms of boat retrievals, there were a few lessons to be learned on this trip as well (see separate input from Grant).

It was still a beautiful day to be out on the water, but nothing as perfect as the day before at Wilson Prom which just about represented the best possible dive conditions one can hope for in terms of diving this part of the world. What a fabulous way to spend one's weekend.



## Walkerville beach launch, August 2014

By Grant Callow

We arrived at Walkerville around 4pm on a high tide and all looked well. The caravan park owner asked where we would be launching and we replied "the usual spot". Little did we know heavy seas had stripped the beach of sand. We head off in the morning for a 7:30 launch on a low tide and were a bit surprised to see the beach gone, just rock. At the far end there was a small sandy area a bit like Flinders.



Sunday retrieval was with a half meter swell, went relatively smooth only because of the hands on approach of the crew. Relatively smooth meant a retrieval with no winch because the handle broke off.

We also broke off the jockey wheel handle on a rock, bent the 5th wheel bracket and one of the skids was snapped when the boat came down on the trailer in the swell. The joys of a beach launch.



With a 4 person beach launch on Breaker there was no room for error. As the tide was so low, but with no swell or waves at all I decided on a rearward entry so the boat could be pushed off into deeper water. Mike scouted an area free of rocks and in we went and off she came no drama.

We arrived back on a king tide and had 20 feet of beach, the trailer had to be reversed down the ramp, this retrieval was a challenge. With the walkerville spectators arriving it was our reputation at stake. (we did not want to be the afternoon entertainment) Fortunately my crew have done a few beach launches and we retrieved with no incident, even receiving praise from a local boatie.



## Prized but Perilous Catch In Hunt for Red Abalone, Divers Face Risks and Poachers Face the Law

By JOHN BRANCH, JULY 25, 2014  
New York Times



Chris Enjalran surfacing with a red abalone, an edible mollusk found off the Northern California coast. Credit The New York Times

FORT BRAGG, Calif. — Every year, as steady as the tides, lifeless bodies are pulled from the cold, restless water along the rugged coastline north of San Francisco.

Most of the victims are middle-aged men. They wear black wet suits, usually hooded. They are often found in small coves framed by crescents of jagged rocks. An abandoned float tube sometimes bobs about nearby. Almost without exception, the victims are found wearing weighted belts that help them sink.

Sometimes the bodies are discovered by friends nearby. If the fog is not too thick, the victims might be spotted from the towering bluffs above, where lifeguards patrol dozens of miles of desolate coast and armed game wardens spy for poachers. Many of the bodies are plucked from the swells by a search-and-rescue helicopter crew accustomed to making daring rope rescues and recoveries several times a year.

The bodies are those of abalone divers.

“There’s a lot of death in abalone diving,” Nate Buck, a longtime Sonoma County lifeguard, said as he steered a pickup truck south along Highway 1, the Pacific Ocean churning below the cliffs to the right. In 14 years, he has lost count of how many bodies he has helped retrieve. “Lifeguards know that. Drive around here, and every one of these coves is another reminder.”



Abalone is an edible mollusk, a snail-like, single-shell gastropod found in coastal waters around much of the globe. But the red abalone is the biggest and the most prized, found only on the west coast of North America. In California, with a litany of restrictions to protect its fragile population, the hunt for wild red abalone is permitted only north of San Francisco, and only for sport.

Part of the enduring allure is how easy it is to take part. No experience and little equipment are necessary. Air tanks are illegal. Abalone divers simply slip into the murky water and hold their breath, in search of a hidden prize.

The red abalone’s thick, domed single shell grows to more than 12 inches in diameter. Brick red on the outside and pearly silver on the inside, they are trophies, framed for the wall, mounted above a mantel or set along walkways as yard decorations. The meat inside, sometimes several pounds’ worth, is a delicacy, with a taste and texture not unlike calamari.



"It really is an iconic species for California," said Laura Rogers-Bennett of the University of California at Davis Bodega Marine Laboratory and a senior biologist for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. "It is a species that is part of our fishing heritage. And because of the size of red abalone, the biggest in the world, it's not unlike the redwood or the sequoia."

During the seven-month diving season — April through November, with a hiatus in July — thousands arrive each weekend to the wild edges of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties, mostly, in serpentine parades from the south and the east. Divers are rooted in tradition and thrive on camaraderie, like those who hunt deer or pheasant elsewhere. They pour from cars and trucks and vans, dress themselves in rubber suits, burden themselves with as much equipment as they can carry and trudge down treacherous rocks to the ocean's edge.

Continue reading the main story  
Those brave enough to dive deep below the water's surface for abalone or pick through the shoreline rocks during low tides may take no more than three in a day and 18 for the year. Each abalone has to be at least seven inches in diameter, meaning it is probably at least 10 years old. Each shell must be tagged and recorded immediately. It cannot be resold.

But temptations are real, and the black market for poached red abalone is active, because a full-size one can fetch \$100 or more.

With roughly 250,000 red abalone legally captured for sport in California annually, and estimates that at least as many are taken illegally each year, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, including its undercover Special Operations Unit, spends as much time and resources protecting abalone as any other creature in California.

Abalone, in other words, is a big deal in Northern California.

"It's like the last warrior-hunter thing to do," said Sydney Smith-Tallman, whose family owns a dive shop in Fort Bragg that caters mostly to abalone hunters. "There's danger, thrill, beauty."

And, though no one tracks the numbers specifically, up to a dozen people die doing it every year.

## 'The Dream of a Diver'

The holy grail for divers is an abalone with a 10-inch shell. No one has caught more than Dwayne Dinucci, a retired high school technical arts teacher who lives on a cul-de-sac in Union City, Calif., near Oakland. The license plate of his truck reads, "POP NAB" — pop an ab, the widely used expression for plucking abalone, or abs, from their suctioned underwater homes on the rocks.

"Ten inches is a landmark, the dream of a diver," he said. "To this day, 45 years later, when I find a 10-inch abalone, I am thrilled."

Dinucci had captured 343 abalone before the start of this season, including 20 that were more than 11 inches. The biggest he has caught is 11 29/32 inches, just shy of the world record of 12 5/16 inches, set in 1993 by John Pepper, a former student of Dinucci's.

Dinucci has four of the top 10 largest abalone caught on record in California, according to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"The lure is finding the world's largest abalone," Dinucci said. "And on my gravestone it'll say, 'Never found it, but sure as hell tried.' "

The walls and rafters of his two-car garage are covered in hundreds of abalone shells,

like hubcaps. They are perfectly aligned on hooks and labeled: size, date, time, location. The locations are intentionally vague, because a good abalone diver does not reveal such secrets.

Dinucci, with a rim of gray hair and a salt-and-pepper mustache, usually dives with a group of like-minded, trophy-hunting friends. While some coves can be jammed with dozens of divers and pickers, Dinucci and his crew look for open water, about 12 feet deep, disguising rocky shoals. From an inflatable boat, they drop into the water, one held breath at a time.

Dinucci has a customized boogie board — most use a float tube, which Dinucci finds too cumbersome — fitted with straps so he can hike up and down cliffs with it on his back. The board has hooks to connect to his necessary tools, such as fins, goggles, a waterproof flashlight and an abalone iron, like a small crowbar, used to pry abalone from rocks. Divers are required to carry gauges that measure seven inches, the legal size, but Dinucci's is 10, because he wants nothing smaller than that.

Continue reading the main storyContinue reading the main story

He has no special ability for holding his breath — a minute at best — but has patience to dive and resurface dozens of times in pursuit of a single abalone. With tight limits on the catch, Dinucci does not want to pluck one that he will regret if he happens upon something larger.

The water, besides being cold and rough, can be as murky as soup. Dinucci prowls the underwater rock formations, feeling with his hands, shining a light into dark holes. Some of his best catches have required him to squirm through narrow passageways. Others have necessitated great patience and reach, inserting the bar into a nook and under the abalone, hoping the slow-moving animal will slide and attach itself firmly enough to let

Dinucci carry it to the surface like a Popsicle.

"I've gone into holes and all of a sudden a swell will come over and suck you into the hole, even farther than you wanted to come in," he said. "I wouldn't say I've come close to losing my life. But I've had some scares. Which is good."

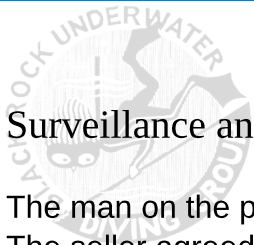
Dinucci said he had been thrown into rocks by sudden swells and so-called sneaker waves, known to pull unsuspecting beachgoers off the shore. In many places, the shoreline can be inaccessible because of cliffs.

"Why do a lot of these people die?" he asked. "Mostly inexperience. We get a lot of Southern California divers, but the North Coast is different. It's rough. And it can get rough" — Dinucci snapped his fingers — "like that. The key is to know where you're coming out. Getting in is easy. Coming out is the hard part."



Photo

Carlton Cathey bobbed in the water of Russian Gulch between dives for abalone. Air tanks are illegal. Abalone divers simply slip into the water and hold their breath. Credit Jim Wilson/The New York Times



## Surveillance and Raids

The man on the phone wanted 45 abalone. The seller agreed to deliver them to him in San Francisco for \$2,500, a reasonable black-market bulk price.

A few days later, a car approached an auto repair shop on the west side of San Francisco, far from the tourist sites. It was met by an employee in coveralls and ushered into a service bay. Three coolers were removed and placed into the back of a Toyota Prius. Cash changed hands.

"Our guy's leaving," a voice on a walkie-talkie radio said. Unbeknown to the buyer, the seller worked for the Special Operations Unit of the state Fish and Wildlife Department. The shop was surrounded by agents in eight cars, parked on surrounding streets, connected by radios and cellphones.

The 10-member unit is a type of SWAT team, charged with protecting California's wildlife resources from poachers and the black market. Among its chief concerns are sturgeon eggs, part of the high-dollar caviar market, and black bears, prized for body parts such as paws and gall bladders.

Abalone, though, is the top priority. It was first harvested with regularity in California by Chinese immigrants in the mid-1800s, who mostly dried and exported it. The Japanese created many of the state's hundreds of commercial operations in the early 20th century. With the advent of scuba, divers could eventually collect 2,000 or more abalone a day.

Concern grew as the red abalone population plummeted through the 1970s and 1980s. California took serious action in the 1990s, banning all commercial operations and declaring that sport diving (unassisted by air

tanks, with no reselling allowed) could take place only north of the Golden Gate Bridge. (There remains a legal, niche business for small, farm-raised abalone steaks, sold to restaurants and consumers for roughly \$125 per pound.)

Continue reading the main story

These days, about 98 percent of the legal abalone diving in California occurs off the remote coasts of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. Even so, if biologists' estimates are correct, at least a quarter-million abalone are illegally poached each year off the coast of California, and the street value could be \$25 million.

"It's not endangered, but it's scarce," said Capt. Robert Farrell, head of the special operations unit. "But with lots of money from the black market, it could be endangered quickly."

Last August, using armed wardens from across the state, Farrell's team led simultaneous early-morning raids on 14 homes in Sacramento, Oakland and several Bay Area suburbs. It was dubbed "Operation Oakland Abalone Syndicate." Thirteen men, most of them Vietnamese, were charged with illegal possession of abalone, believed to be part of a black-market network.

"We've seen him to date take 57 abalone," Lt. Patrick Foy said outside one Oakland house, noting that the annual limit in 2013 was 24. (It was reduced to 18 in 2014.) "We believe it's for commercial sale."

Abalone remains a delicacy in many Asian cultures, treasured not only for taste, but also for medicinal qualities, including as an aphrodisiac. In drugstores in San Francisco's Chinatown, in glass apothecary jars kept on high shelves behind the counter, dried abalone can sell for \$2,000 or more per pound. Frozen abalone, too, is commonly found in Asian restaurants and seafood



markets, but often out of its original packaging and without proper paperwork. One Chinatown market recently offered it for \$55 per pound in plain bags.

Not all abalone is illegal — there are dozens of varieties, and many can be imported from other countries. For investigators, though, paperwork trails get lost in translation, and promising leads disappear in mistaken identities. Leads have led to massage parlors, nail salons and other businesses viewed skeptically as fronts for seafood poaching, among other illicit activities.

The belief is that California abalone not only finances criminal activity, but makes its way across the ocean. In other countries, such as Australia and South Africa (where, this month, investigators found 36,340 abalone hidden inside a house), the authorities have connected abalone poaching directly to drug and arms cartels.

California officials have been unable to draw as many straight lines. But they have made a string of large-scale abalone busts over the past two decades. In 2004, Warden Dennis McKiver boarded a commercial sea urchin boat in Mendocino County and found it jammed with 458 abalone — a load, presumably not the first, probably worth \$40,000 on the black market.

The two men aboard were arrested, barred from fishing for life, fined a combined \$60,000 and sent to jail for two years. They remain oft-cited examples of the type of temptations facing divers of all kinds.

“Sea urchins are nickels,” McKiver said. “But next to those nickels are \$100 gold pieces. And it’s very tempting for those guys to grab a couple. And then it grows from there.”

Continue reading the main story

Along the coast, wardens sometimes dress in camouflage and hide on bluffs and in trees, spying on abalone divers through binoculars,

recording what they see and citing offenders as they return to their cars.

On a couple of busy weekends each season, they erect abalone checkpoints along the meandering two-lane highways leading to and from the coast. Hundreds of cars returning inland from abalone diving are diverted, their drivers and passengers politely questioned by uniformed wardens.

Often, as cars approach the backup, abalone can be seen getting flung out windows in desperate attempts to avoid detection. Confiscated abalone is donated to area fundraisers and local soup kitchens. Wardens mostly find improperly completed log sheets and an extra abalone or two. Even those can be costly violations.

At the Mendocino County Courthouse in Fort Bragg, about a four-hour drive north of San Francisco, the docket is filled with abalone cases. A majority involve Asian defendants from the Bay Area, often requiring Vietnamese, Mandarin or Cantonese interpreters.

Most want to avoid the headache of repeated trips to the courthouse and are circumspect about their chances of winning a trial. They accept a plea bargain, usually losing their fishing license for a year and paying more than \$1,000 in fines and fees.

Investigators, of course, want meaningful arrests. After unsuspectingly buying the 45 abalone from an informant in May, the suspect at the auto repair shop in San Francisco continued his shift, unaware that he was surrounded by a constellation of law enforcement agents. They had their dealer. They wanted to see what he intended to do with his stash.

Two older men arrived in a pickup truck and went inside.

"Product 1 out of the box, into white plastic bags," an agent reported through the radio. "Product 2 out of the box, into a plastic bag."



Photo

Nate Buck, a lifeguard, and Ben Vanden Heuvel, a park ranger, climbed an embankment along the Sonoma County coast near Jenner, Calif. They observed skid marks from a vehicle that led over the edge. The marks turned out to be from a previous wreck. Credit Jim Wilson/The New York Times

It appeared that four or five abalone changed hands. The men left. Agents had already run checks on their car, and had at least one name and address. They would find the men later. They stayed with the abalone.

A couple of hours and many legitimate car repair customers later, another man left with four or five abalone. A woman accompanying him carried one in a bag. They left, also unfollowed.

At closing time, the suspect left and unwittingly led a parade of cars, mostly S.U.V.s, through the streets of San Francisco. He pulled into an auto body shop in Daly City. Agents parked nearby and watched. An hour later, the suspect left in his car and drove to a home in South San

Francisco. A woman came out. The man carried two of three coolers into the garage and closed it. She got in the car and they left. Several agents followed. Others stayed within sight of the house. And, taking turns, they staked it out, unnoticed, for four more days as the supply of abalone in the coolers dwindled.

The man, a first-time offender, had no single buyer, just a lot of small ones. Some paid about \$100 per abalone, investigators said, and others may have been given the abalone as a gift or a returned favor. The man was charged with unlawful purchase and sale of sport-caught fish/abalone. His web of connections was noted.

Continue reading the main story

"It's a hard community for us to infiltrate," Lt. Adrian Foss, who led the sting operation, said during the stakeout. "But as they become more desperate for product, they have to reach beyond their own circle in search of it."

It is just another kind of risk taken in the search for abalone.

## Danger In and Out of the Water

Not all abalone-related deaths are by drowning. In June, a 55-year-old man fell to his death immediately after diving while climbing a 100-foot cliff near Mendocino.

Most out-of-water victims, however, are struck by heart attacks. They may drive hours to get to the coast and are eager to return with abalone, a quiet desperation that causes them to overlook ominous clues that the surf, tides and weather conditions silently provide to experienced divers. Water temperatures usually range from 47 to 56 degrees. An ability to see the rubber fins dangling from your toes counts as clarity.

Divers wear constricting wet suits and weight belts, up to 30 pounds, designed to help offset their buoyancy. They sometimes panic when swept into riptides or swamped by

sudden swells. Other dangers lurk in the depths, ranging from tangled forests of kelp to great white sharks.

"All these things are layers upon layers of stress," said Buck, the Sonoma County lifeguard. "And all that, unfortunately, is too much for people sometimes."

Twelve years ago, when Buck was 21, he was diving off the rocks of Salt Point State Park with a 52-year-old uncle, an experienced diver from Southern California and an "ocean mentor" to Buck. The man climbed out of the water and had a heart attack on the rocks. Help, as it is along this part of the coast, where traffic is light and cellphone reception is spotty, was slow to come.

"The hardest part was calling my mother and telling her that her brother died," Buck said. "Hearing her anguish on the other end of the line is a sound I'll never forget."

Like Buck, most lifeguards in Sonoma County gained experience much farther south, where beaches are sandy and dotted with "Baywatch"-style lifeguard stations. In Sonoma County, lifeguards work out of pickup trucks. They go where instinct, experience and unfamiliar parked cars tell them to look. The air temperature can be cold (often in the 50s in the summer) and so foggy that the high-pitched wail of young harbor seals is sometimes confused with that of a person in distress.

"I was a lifeguard in Southern California," said Tim Murphy, one of two uniformed state park peace officers who double as lifeguards on the Sonoma County coast. "I never had a rescue where I worried about getting the person back to shore, nevertheless myself. Up here, it really is a mixed bag. You're in the water sometimes thinking, 'I hope my backup is here soon, because I'm not sure I can pull this off myself.' "

Lifeguards learn to scan a cove of bobbing divers and instantly detect discomfort or inexperience by the way they hold their heads above the water or cling to their float tubes. They urge some out of the water with polite coaxing. If there are no imminent signs of trouble, they hike on to the next cove, or drive farther up the highway.

Continue reading the main storyContinue reading the main story

"You are not expected to have drownings in Southern California," Buck said as he stood on rocks near where another lifeguard nearly lost his life a few years ago in an ill-considered, unsuccessful rescue attempt in churning water. "Here, it's sort of the norm."

Abalone season opens each year on April 1. By early May last year, four men had died while searching for abalone — three of them on the same weekend, the other a week later.

On the last weekend of last season, during still weather in late November, a 67-year-old man from San Francisco was found in the same cove where Buck's uncle had died more than a decade before. A day later, divers noticed an unattended float a few miles south, near Fort Ross State Park. Buck rushed to the scene, where he found a 57-year-old man from Oakland at the floor of the ocean with his weight belt on. He was the seventh and final casualty of the season.

"It's not a matter of if some will die," Murphy said in late May this year. "But when."

Within two weeks, two abalone divers were dead near Mendocino. And on June 29, a 44-year-old man became the season's third victim. He was sucked into an underwater cave. It took two days to recover the body because of high tides and strong swells.



Most abalone divers, of course, do not see their hobby as a risk, but a reward — a chance for companionship, to enjoy the ocean and, if all goes well, capture an abalone that others envy. Abalone diving in Northern California is celebrated, not feared.

The World Championship Abalone Cook-Off began at a dive shop in the late 1980s, but it now finds a home each fall at Noyo Harbor in Fort Bragg. On a sunbaked day last October, there were 20 booths, offering abalone wontons, abalone salsa, abalone ceviche (two kinds), abalone sausage, even abalone wrapped with dates, goat cheese and bacon, all of it deep fried.

It is the pursuit of abalone, more than anything, that fills the campgrounds, motor lodges and bed-and-breakfasts up and down the coast in both directions. Fort Bragg used to have thriving lumber mills and commercial fishing operations. They have dried up.

“What we depend on now is tourism,” said Charlie Lorenz, the self-proclaimed Abalone Hunter, who interviewed people at the cook-off for MendocinoTV.com. “And what brings people here? Abalone.”

The festive air belied an undercurrent of concern about the state of abalone diving. The total legal catch in Northern California has dropped more than half in the past 25 years, and restrictions tightened further in 2014. Longtime abalone divers worry about the trend and see a day when diving is banned completely. Some say it would be catastrophic to the area’s economy and culture, and suggest it might make abalone more susceptible to poaching, not less, as if it were an illegal drug.

The only certainty is that the coves that scallop the coastline would be emptier. And the lifeguards who patrol the bluffs and rough waters would have it easier, if they had a job at all.

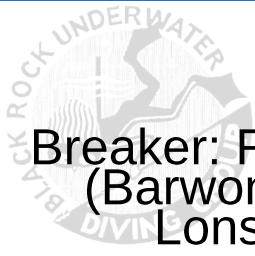
“Abalone divers make up the bulk of our rescues,” Buck said. “They’re the reason we’re here.”

## Diver Handheld VHF DSC transceivers (AKA Nautilus Lifeline Radios)

Effective as from November 2013, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) does not mandate a marine radio operator certificate prior to the issuing of an MMSI for personally attached diver VHF radios, that offer a digital selective calling transmit capability, and limited voice communications. This presumes that the radio operator in the diving boat (mother vessel) is qualified. In the case of lone divers not operating from boats, the requirement for a marine radio operator certificate remains.

## Equipment Service course.

- John McCormack will run an equipment service course at his work shop in Moorabbin.
- \$350.00 each for minimum of 6 people . 2X 4 hour sessions on a Saturday or a Sunday . You will obviously not come out a qualified service rep, but your gear will all be serviced under supervision during the course.
- Stephen Snow will coordinate, if you are interested.



## Breaker: Reef explorations (Barwon Head and off Lonsdale Point)

By Saskia Loer Hansen

**Saturday 17 August**

**Grant (skipper, not diving)**

**Mike, Alan B, Jon, Saskia**

**Barwon Heads – bommie**

**Lonsdale - reef**

**Saturday 31 August**

**Grant (skipper)**

**Mike, Alan B, Hilary, Jon, Saskia**

**Off Lonsdale Point, past Marine Park**

**Two dives**

As the weather conditions were perfect two weeks running, a small group of us had the chance to do some reef explorations near the Heads past Lonsdale Point. More often than not, Breaker heads up to the back beaches of Sorrento, so given the fantastic weather conditions these last weeks, Grant was keen to make use of the opportunity to dive some of the more exposed sites close to Lonsdale Point.

### Barwon Heads

The very first dive however was a bit further afield. Alan had dived the Barwon Heads area and persuaded all of us to go looking for this particular site. As it wasn't easy to know where to start, Alan phoned up



the organiser of his previous Barwon Heads dive from Breaker get the coordinates for the exact dive spot. Even with the coordinates, it took a little while of intense sonar based searching before we found the site. In we went with Grant being the non-diving skipper of the day. We found the reef sitting on a weedy sandy bottom at 14-16 metres. The reef was really beautiful though relatively contained in size, so we managed to circle it a few times. There were lots of sponges and anemones and in particular the yellow and orange colours stood out. It was a nice and really



Sponges and anemones on the reef, just off Barwon Heads

relaxed dive, and just great to see some good country side like this. The visibility wasn't fantastic as the water was pretty packed of green growths and closer to the surface, we had to navigate getting past a fairly thick soup of golden stringed jelly fish.

But a very nice new dive site for Breaker and a place we'll hopefully come back to.

### Off Lonsdale Point

The second dive on 17 August and both dives on 30 August were around the area past Lonsdale Point and past the marine park. We simply followed the sonar reading and got in the water at a few sites where it looked like there would be interesting reefs and bommies.



Swim throughs, cray hunting, surfacing and enjoying the catch

There was fantastic fish life and on all dives, someone sighted draughtboard sharks and rays. Importantly, for the cray hunters amongst us, this was good crayfish hunting

ground. Jon caught the first (and according to Jon, the biggest) cray of the day - and Saskia & Jon had to come to the surface with the catch as Jon didn't bring a catch bag (we just weren't prepared for the opportunity that a



Sun hitting the reef at



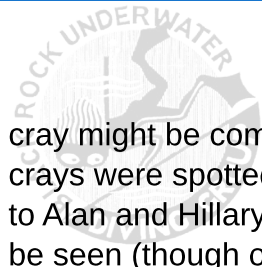
10 metres; fish life; and moving kelp



(with a wee bit of current)

Barwon Heads – bommie





cray might be coming our way). A few other crays were spotted and caught, and according to Alan and Hillary, many female crays were to be seen (though obviously not touched). Given how full of eggs some of them were it bodes well for a good cray population in the future.

Everyone had a great dive out on the water and it was fabulous exploring some new country.

For their second dive, Grant and Mike landed on what looked like just regular sandy bottom, but at closer inspection, they were in front of a 4 metre drop off. They spent most of the dive simply following the ledges that formed part of the drop off.

This spot was marked down for future dives – and if Mike and Grant's excitement on surfacing is anything to go by, this is truly a dive site that is worth exploring in more detail.

Another great couple of days of diving on Breaker (and fantastic to have a couple of weeks where the weather has behaved and enabled some fantastic dives).

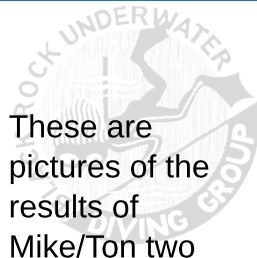


Jaco and his wife were at home watching TV.

Jaco had the remote and was switching back and forth between the fishing channel and the porn channel.

Jaco's lovely wife, Toots became more and more annoyed and finally said:

"For god's sake! Leave it on the porn channel  
You already know how to fish!"



These are pictures of the results of Mike/Ton two bottle drifts this winter.

Because of the lousy weather we have had this winter, we often could not dive at all or go to the back beaches and we dived the

## Ton's Bottles



To our surprise there are still some bottles to be found, mainly black beer bottles but also some more interesting ones such as the Webb's torpedo from 1840-1850, the Rowland's marble bottle and the Beacon Trading Geelong Imperial Quart (what would that have been used for??).



bay.

After many years of mostly not doing these drifts, thinking most of it had been cleaned out, we did some around well known spots from the past such as "Torpedo Alley" near Queenscliff.



We also found a Port Phillip pilots cup.

All in all something a bit different from our usual diving.

Ton





## Giant whale sharks butchered for Asian fish fin market

by: By TREVOR PADDENBURG in Hong Kong

From: The Sunday Times

June 05, 2010 7:00PM

(NOTE: This is an older article, but still I think relevant..Ed)

**SCANDALOUS:** WA whale shark expert Brad Norman holds a dried shark fin in a Hong Kong market. Picture: Trevor Paddenburg Source: PerthNow

Whale sharks slaughtered for fins

Hong Kong denies whale shark trade

Giant fins found in backstreet markets

WHALE sharks - one of WA's most iconic creatures - are being slaughtered and sold in a backstreet Hong Kong shark-fin market.

The fins of the gentle giants, the same species that delights snorkellers off Ningaloo Reef



every autumn, are sold for just \$300 each and used as window displays in shark-fin shops in Hong Kong's Sheung Wan market district.

The Sunday Times this week joined an investigation inside the Chinese territory to expose the trade in the world's biggest fish, which is in decline and listed as vulnerable to extinction by the World Conservation

**TARGET:** Whalesharks are being killed for their fins. Picture: Kurt Amsler Source:

Union.

Hong Kong's Sharkfin and Marine Products Association secretary, Charlie Lim, interviewed



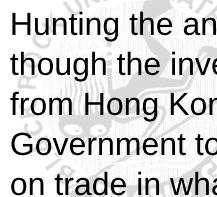
PerthNow

briefly by The Sunday Times in Sheung Wan before this reporter was thrown out of his office, claimed no whale-shark fins were for sale, despite evidence on the streets. And Mr Lim provocatively hit back at Australians who would like an international ban.

"Australia sent Aboriginal people's heads to museums," he said, and therefore the Chinese

should be allowed to have whale-shark fins on display in shops.





Hunting the animals is legal in much of Asia, though the investigators will use the evidence from Hong Kong to pressure the Federal Government to lobby for an international ban on trade in whale-shark meat and fins.

WA whale-shark expert Brad Norman, who swam with the majestic creatures as part of his research less than 24 hours before flying into Hong Kong, led the investigation team and said he was "shocked" by the number of fins on display.

The founder of non-profit marine foundation Ecocean said his inquiries had also revealed that up to 1000 whale sharks were killed each year in China.

The revelations of whale-shark slaughter come ahead of World Ocean Day on Monday.

Perth-based UN endangered species officer Aleisha Caruso, who also joined the Hong Kong mission, said: "To think these gentle beings are mutilated and left in agony to drown in their own blood, just to end up in a window display in Hong Kong, tears out my heart."

On Hong Kong Island's Des Voeux Rd - known to locals as "dried seafood street" - Mr Norman and Ms Caruso found tens of thousands of dried shark fins, used in shark-fin soup and sold for up to \$40 a bowl.

Dozens of giant whale-shark fins, some more than 1m and distinguishable by their telltale pattern of dots, were also mounted in windows or packaged for sale.

Mr Norman, who has studied Ningaloo's whale sharks for 16 years, said the fins were most likely harvested in waters off Taiwan, China, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. It was unlikely they were the same sharks that visit Ningaloo, he said.

The Sunday Times was ordered out of several stores after taking photos of the gruesome shark-fin haul, which the International Humane Society says is run by Chinese triad gangs.

"Ninety per cent of the countries whale sharks visit still permit the slaughter and efforts will continue to push for their protection," Mr Norman, a Murdoch University researcher, said. "I knew we had a problem on our hands, but not on such a shocking scale."

WWF-Hong Kong shark officer Silvy Pun said "tonnes and tonnes" of shark fin landed on the docks every month in Hong Kong - the world's shark-fin capital. It handled up to 80 per cent of the global trade.

Ms Caruso said destroying a whale shark for its fins was "senseless slaughter".

"Panic-stricken, helpless and terrified, they thrash around without fins until they become exhausted and die a slow and painful death," she said.

A spokesman for the Hong Kong Government's Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department said the sale of whale-shark fins was not illegal and fin shops were doing nothing wrong.

"(A) considerable amount of whale-shark fins have been imported legally to Hong Kong and are available in the local market," the spokesman said.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

\* Ecocean is the WA-based non-profit group dedicated to research, education and conservation of whale sharks. Support its Finish Finning campaign and donate at [www.whaleshark.org](http://www.whaleshark.org).

\* Swim with a whale shark at Ningaloo and consider adopting one at [www.whaleshark.org/adoptashark.jsp](http://www.whaleshark.org/adoptashark.jsp).

## Dive Report 23/08/13

By Alan Balmer

**Boat: SS Breaker**

**Crew: Madam Hansen, Captain Callow, Messrs Mosseveld, Halland and Balmer**

Heading back to along the coast for lunch and our second dive, Captain Callow spotted a dive charter and said "they will be on a nice spot, lets mark it on the GPS and dive it after lunch"



We were forecast a sunny day, and at 830 at Queenscliff, it was looking great, so SS Breaker departed with Madam Hansen, Captain Callow, Messrs Mosseveld, Halland and Balmer. Captain Callow navigated us out the heads to go exploring down the Lonsdale coast. A generous skipper from another club gave us the coordinates for Chimney Rock, just off Barwon Heads. The Lat Long wasn't quite right, and as can be seen on the photo of the GPS, it took a bit of searching to get the right spot.



It was worth it. 24 to 14 metres full of overhangs and swim throughs. Visibilty was average but overall a good dive.

After a pleasant lunch in the sun, we proceeded to said marked point, which was no where near where the charter had been diving, so after some discussion about how



to use a GPS, Captain Callow found another nice bit of reef about 12m deep. Mike spotted a weedy sea dragon, which seem to be uncommon in the sheltered waters. The variable currents around Lonsdale were in play, resulting in the 2 pairs of divers ending up about 300m apart. Diver marker buoys and a vigilant skipper quickly scooped us up. The only crays found were pretty girls, so Breaker came home empty, and unusual state of affairs. Captain Callow did suggest that if HE had been diving, the outcome would have been different! Back at the ramp at 3.30 and a good day was had by all.





## Compressor Trailer

By Grant Callow

### Stage 1, Father's day Brudg trailer refurbishment.

Well I put the call out to Mike, Grant B and

base to start the rework patching and reassembly. Vicki stopped the crew for a bbq lunch (and a bit of quiet), that was only short lived and we were soon back in to it.

The trailer was built in 1991 and is in sound condition for its age.

A good way to spend father's day, although the neighbours may not agree with that.



Rainer for some assistance on the refurbishment of the club trailer and true to form they were there on time with their angle grinders in hand.

The aim was to remove the draw bar and grind off any loose paint and rust. After many hours of grinding and cutting we got to a good





## Stage 2- weekend 2

I carried on during the week and cut out the bad rust spots and welded in some plates. Saturday was spent fabricating and installing a

new drawbar. Sunday I towed it to a mates place who has 17 acres and he kindly allowed me to set it up there for painting. It received a solid coat of etch primer and is currently awaiting top coat.







All painted, wired ready for the Prom.



## President hangs his head in shame

**Dive site-** Point Lonsdale 28/8/2014

**On board-** Grant C, Mike, Saskia, Jon, Hilary and Alan B.

Well we searched some ground and dropped in 4 divers leaving Mike and I to man the boat. About 15 minutes into the dive a safety sausage appears and Jon and Saskia surface. I said to Mike I must have dropped them on some bad ground but as they got closer I saw an orange glow under Jon and he had returned because he had pulled a nice cray and doesn't carry a catch bag. He dropped off his catch and head back down to carry on with the dive. I looked at this cray

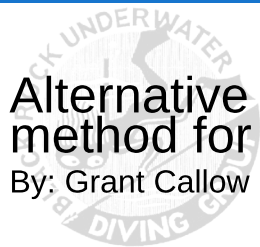


and suggested to Mike we tell our President when he boards that we lifted a pot. Soon Hilary boarded the boat and eventually noticed the cray in the box, straight away he said "where did that come from" and Mike I spun him a story, even suggesting he let the pots soak a bit before checking them again.

When Alan boarded he noticed the cray and asked the same question. The president explained how it was allegedly caught and expressed his disappointment. Alan not so quick to accept this giving Mike and I a glimmer of credibility.

When Saskia and Jon boarded Jon asked Hilary if he had seen his cray, a sense of relief came over Hilary. If I had to categorise Hilary into a fish species it would be a 'Flat head' because he took the bait, hook, line and sinker in a blink. (an awesome day of diving as well!!)





## Alternative beach retrieval method for rough conditions.

By: Grant Callow

Last meeting we briefly discussed alternative retrieval methods for rougher conditions. The purpose of this article is just to show another option that we have found works well for us in rough conditions, your retrieval method is up to you.

We installed a snap shackle on the safety chain that lives there all the time. This enables us to clip the boat to the trailer fast, no mucking around with shackles and pins. This reduces the risk of a hand crush injury, simple and inexpensive.



Our preference is a rearward retrieval in rough conditions. The boat is 22 ft, 2.5 tons with 6 packs of dive gear, has an 8 foot beam and needs a minimum of 600mm water depth to launch or retrieve. We have found with 4 divers we can retrieve safely in rough conditions using this method.

We have 2 bow ropes so we can keep the nose into the swell and we guide the boat over the trailer with these ropes. We have the third person clips on the safety chain and the 4th holds the rear of the boat in position. The bow rope holders stay and the third person comes to the back. I have made up some stainless ratchet tie downs that are put on prior to retrieving. The mating strap is a

permanent fixture on the trailer. We thread the strap through, wait for a drop in between waves and then together ratchet it down to the trailer. Now the boat and trailer are one, pressure is off.



I have a 'y' strap which I connect to both sides of the back of the trailer on the tow lugs so it can be pulled out in any direction.



The best thing about this method is that the next wave pops your trailer out of the sand as it is on the boat so a straight pull out is no drama, less stress on the car and trailer. The other advantage not having to pull out on an angle means the 5th wheel doesn't get bent and less beach space is needed.

My crew's safety is first but I also hate to be the afternoon entertainment for the beach goers.

# MINUTES OF THE BLACK ROCK UNDERWATER DIVING GROUP GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE CELTIC CLUB ON TUESDAY 12 August 2014

## Meeting Opened

7.45 pm

## Apologies

Darren Bell, Gary Pahoff, Steve snow , Luke Conley, Craig starritt, Saskia Hansen, John Halland, Graeme Iye

## Attendees:

Hilary Ingram, Graeme Rees, Joe Jakubczyk, Ton van den Blink, Jen Ch'ng, Ron Dunlop, John Griffiths, Wayne Salisbury, Tom Dreyer, Greg Sauter, Allan Conley, Michael Sesin, Peter Vermey, Michael Mosseveld, Rainer Freitag, Grant Callow, Alan Balmer, Wayne Salisbury, Joe Arlove, Dan Wahrenberger, Iain Coward.

## Welcome

### PRESIDENT

President welcomed everyone. He mentioned the need to have a concise and effective meeting.

The Committee has met recently and discussed the following:

1 – A new waiver to be distributed to all to sign. A record of the signed waivers will be kept by the Secretary on the members list, this list will be made available to boat captains in November so they will be aware who has signed.

2- Iain Coward has returned from UK permanently.

3-The diving guidelines were reviewed by Ton, Hilary, Stephen S and Allan C and approved by the committee to be put on the web as a download-**Action Greg Sauter**

4- Greg Sauter setting up a matrix of what club provides for different levels of membership in draft.

5-Constitution review needs a lot of work, new model rules added for incorporation. **Action Committee to review and assess.**

### EDITOR

The new mag. went out Sunday night. The Editor wants to know who prints it and who views it on screen only. Discussion around where the club logo should be.-**Action Dan Wahrenberger**

### DIVE COORDINATOR

---Alan Balmer discussed



The Wilsons prom bookings to be organised . Lynn Conley does the booking on 1/9 at 9 am. , the 16 sites need to be payed to BRUDG before 16/8/14. Cost \$236.80.

Someone needs to tow the compressor trailer.

Robe and Warnambool at Xmas are booked.

Tasmania at Easter, Helen Salisbury is organising this trip.

Suggestion for Australia day, so we can prebook.

Weekends away diving at short notice, who is interested.

Graeme and Jen accepted actions

### **PROPERTY OFFICER**

--The club trailer needs work , new drawbar and side panels

New hinges to be refitted for doors.

It also needs to be rewired. **Action Graeme Rees.**

Drawbar was temporary fixed last year

Tank tests robin wood, wants to know what is happening. Need to put in soon

Drop off tanks at Graeme Rees, Alan's factory or Robin Wood. Due end of august.

We need to make a list of what is in the club clothes bag. **Action Alan Conley**

Robe is booked for 10 sites, need volunteer to tow compressor.(s) t Robe.

Compressors need to go to Allan Conley's factory for new filters etc.

### **TREASURER**

Invoices will be send to all for subs\$100.

Accounts \$2300 and maxi acc. \$5000

Accepted Graeme R and Peter Vermey

### **Correspondence**

#### **Membership**

---Ross and Annette Joy are now social members

---Philip de Bono experienced diver due to family commitment will for the time being be social member

### **Safety**

#### **Safety officer report Jen Ch'ng**

a- SPUMS mag. Has articles re. health issues, hard copies available tonight.

b-Oxy viva kits could be being upgraded in pelican type cases. John Mac Cormack is assessing them , can send pictures of kit, not all have to be brought in, quotes to come.

Issues with the current kits are the boxes are different, some parts can not be serviced due to age. Bottles are out of test.

Joe and Dan nominated and accepted the action.

**Action Jen**





## General business

Graeme Rees, proposed next year trip to Solomon islands details to be in next mag. with details. Drop offs deep water, based at a resort at Uppi  
Away for 2 weeks. Approx. \$3500 june/july

Hilary Ingram re. servicing regulator training this is **not** something club organises it is an individual responsibility, but members can organise amongst themselves..

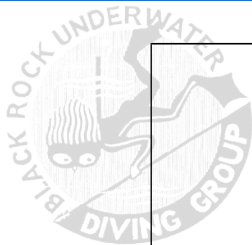
Presentations at meetings, Ton on Philippines next meeting.

Meeting closed 9 pm.



**MINUTES OF THE BLACK ROCK UNDERWATER DIVING GROUP GENERAL MEETING  
HELD AT THE CELTIC CLUB ON TUESDAY 9 September 2014**

<b>Meeting opened</b>	8 pm
<b>Apologies</b>	Mike Sestin, Neil mc Kenzie, Joe Arlove
<b>Attendees:</b>	Hilary Ingram, Graeme Rees, Joe Jakubczyk, Ton van den Blink, Jen Ch'ng, Ron Dunlop, John Griffiths, Wayne Salisbury, Greg Sauter, Allan Conley, Michael Mosseveld, Rainer Freitag, Grant Callow, Alan Balmer, Dan Wahrenberger, Gary Pahoff, Bill Ferguson, Grant Brittain, Stephen Snow, John Griffiths.
<b>Welcome President</b>	<p><b>Discussion on issues arising from previous minutes</b></p> <p><b>New waivers to be signed.</b> <b>Send list of outstanding waivers action –ton</b></p> <p><b>Volunteer to tow compressor to prom. Action—Gary Pahoff will tow compressor trailer.</b></p> <p><b>BRUDG is organising The BBQ this year. We need to take box trailer with bbq food, BBQ's etc. Action-Hilary will take trailer.</b></p> <p><b>Tank tests, coming back from Robin Wood soon. Action- Allan Conley</b></p> <p><b>Clothes/gear bag with old BRUDG gear, Stubby holders and bum bags for raffle prom. Gary P to do a stock take and send out email.</b></p> <p><b>Oxyviva –Jen Ch'ng—\$1500 for new bottles and \$2000 for new regs firming up budget for it. And sort out final costs. Action Jen Gh'ng</b></p> <p><b>Graeme Rees potential trip to Soloman islands in June next year. Needs more details.</b></p> <p><b>Stephen snow re. Equipment servicing course \$200--250 each, min of 6 people, 4 hours sat. and sund. am. Publish details in mag. Action Stephen Snow.</b></p> <p><b>Membership enquiries followed up by John Griffiths. 2 Prospective memebers have asked to be included for a further 6 months as they will dive as it gets warmer.</b></p> <p><b>Age of membership discussed, 32% of membership over 60, 25% over 50. Therefore 57 over 50. Divers we know are potential new members, members are encouraged to introduce mentor and support friends who may be suitable new members.</b></p> <p><b>North solitary islands trip discussed there is still room to come along.</b></p> <p><b>Australia day weekend 5 sites booked.</b></p>



Tasmania trip, very costly, \$1400 for car and boat to take over-- at Easter, needs more thought. Maybe we should go another time ie. in winter.

Treasure Report: Hilary Ingram on behalf of Joe  
Deposit bearing interest \$8057.

Westpac business maxi-i-direct \$5096.79

Some membership fees still need to be paid.

Safety officer report: Jen Ch'ng

Oxy viva's mainly, to be purchased looking at costs.

Incident, beach launch at Walkerville, beach can vary a lot , small swell at times. With swell keep hands clear of winch etc. boat can weigh 1.5 to 2.5 tons

Social report: Gary Pahoff

Trouble organising outing.

Brudg doing bbq at prom this year.

Xmas party at Graeme Rees Saturday, 6/12

SDFV report: John Griffiths

Dive Vic given up Canberra moorings , only 2 moorings left.

Pest collection Wilsons prom cancelled.

Gary Spencer organising dive museum at old Portsea Quarantine Station buildings, meeting Monday 29/9 at Mordialloc.

In SA 2 university clubs were checked, accused of running a commercial operation, complaint from dive shop, not proven. Report on marine park, they are to be kept as is.

Abs no change to days and limits etc. to be put in legislation therefore hard to change in future.

Discussion about crayfish and quotas. There are not enough recreational divers to have much influence on decision making process like recreational fishermen.

Dive Coordinator: Alan Balmer

Dive calendar some still diving in winter maybe start in October.

Alan B. dive captain prom.

Magazine Editor: Dan Wahrenber

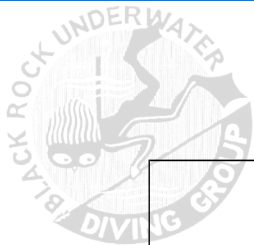
New mag. out end of October please submit articles.

General business:

Greg Sauter is reviewing constitution to comply with new Consumer laws he is in the process of completing an update, not much can be brought across from old constitution which is out of date.

Visag 60th function ,Graeme Rees won first price.





	Raffle won by Gary Payoff.



**BLACK ROCK UNDER WATER DIVING GROUP INCORPORATED**  
C/O **CELTIC CLUB**  
**320 QUEENS STREET**  
**MELBOURNE, 3000**

For use with Membership Application or Request to Dive

**WARNING UNDER THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUMER LAW AND FAIR TRADING ACT 2012**

Under the Australian Consumer Law (Victoria), several statutory guarantees apply to the supply of certain goods and services. These guarantees mean that the supplier named on this form is required to ensure that the recreational services it supplies to you-

- are rendered with due care and skill; and
- are reasonably fit for any purpose which you, either expressly or by implication, make known to the supplier; and
- might reasonably be expected to achieve any result you have made known to the supplier.

Under section 22 of the **Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012**, the supplier is entitled to ask you to agree that these statutory guarantees do not apply to you. If you sign this form, you will be agreeing that your rights to sue the supplier under the **Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012** if you are killed or injured because the services provided were not in accordance with these guarantees, are excluded, restricted or modified in the way set out in this form.

**NOTE:** The change to your rights, as set out in this form, does not apply if your death or injury is due to gross negligence on the supplier's part. **Gross negligence**, in relation to an act or omission, means doing the act or omitting to do an act with reckless disregard, with or without consciousness, for the consequences of the act or omission. See regulation 5 of the **Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Regulations 2012** and section 22(3)(b) of the **Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012**.

Supplier in this document means the Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. ("DIVE CLUB"), ARBN A0012546F and its directors, officers, members, employees, agents, boat owners and boat operators.

I, ....., hereby apply to become a member of Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. I acknowledge and agree as follows:

1. I acknowledge that participation in Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. activities is entirely voluntary. The term Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. activities" means any activity organised or conducted by Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. or for which Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. is otherwise responsible, including any transportation for which the Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. or any Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. director, official, member, employee, agent, private boat owner or private boat operator is responsible.



# BLACK ROCK UNDER WATER DIVING GROUP INCORPORATED

C/O CELTIC CLUB

320 QUEENS STREET

MELBOURNE, 3000

For use with Membership Application or Request to Dive

2. I further warrant to Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. that I, or the minor who I am signing this Agreement on behalf of, do not have any physical or medical disability or condition which would render it unsafe or inadvisable to engage in sport diving and I undertake to inform Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. in writing immediately upon becoming aware of such disability or condition.
3. I am aware that sport diving is a hazardous sport and that Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. activities involve risks and dangers, including the risk of serious injury or death. I certify that I am aware of and accept full responsibility for all of the risks involved in Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. activities, including but not limited to the risks inherent in sport diving and in the sport diving environment, and the actions or negligence of Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. members or participants, or any other persons, or accidents or illness even in remote areas without medical facilities.
4. I accept my responsibility, and the responsibility of any minor for whom I am signing this Agreement, to act safely at all times, to faithfully observe and be bound by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. and by all of the by-laws, policies, rules and instructions of Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. which may from time to time be in force.
5. I acknowledge that I am responsible for any equipment that I, or any minor I am signing this Agreement for, provide or use, regardless of where it was obtained from, while sport diving and accept full responsibility for the safe condition of such equipment and any risks or dangers caused by such equipment.
6. In consideration of Blackrock Underwater Diving Group 's acceptance of the foregoing application for membership, I hereby agree to release, indemnify, hold harmless and defend Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. and its directors, officers, members, employees, agents, boat owners and boat operators(hereinafter the "said persons") against any loss, damage or expense arising from any claim, suit, demand, prosecution or cause of action (hereinafter referred to as "claims") arising out of or in connected in anyway with participation in any of Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. activities by myself or any minor for whom I am signing this agreement.
7. If I am signing on behalf of a minor, I acknowledge that I am agreeing to release, indemnify, hold harmless and defend the said persons against any and all claims that I may have as the minor's parent or legal guardian, whether or not the release of the minor's own claims is found to be enforceable under the applicable law. In the event that the release of the minor's own claims is held not to be enforceable, I agree to accept full responsibility for any such claim of the minor and to hold harmless, indemnify and defend Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. and its directors, officers, members, employees, agents, boat owners and boat operators, from any and all claims by or on behalf of the minor arising out of or connected in any way with participation in any of the Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. activities by myself, or any minor for whom I am signing this Agreement, as well as any costs or expenses, including reasonable attorneys fees, incurred in connection with such claims.





# BLACK ROCK UNDER WATER DIVING GROUP INCORPORATED

C/O CELTIC CLUB

320 QUEENS STREET

MELBOURNE, 3000

For use with Membership Application or Request to Dive

8. I acknowledge that the release and indemnity provisions in paragraphs 6 and 7 apply to all claims for injury or damage resulting from any cause, including the negligence of any party released herein. I further acknowledge that this Agreement shall be binding on all family members, including minors, guardians, heirs and any executor or personal representative.
9. I agree that this Agreement should be enforced to the full extent permitted by law. If any section or part of this Agreement is held not to be enforceable under the applicable law, the remainder of the Agreement shall be enforced.
10. If I am signing this Agreement as an adult participant, I state that I am 18 years of age or older and legally competent to sign this Agreement. I affirm that I am a certified diver and I warrant to Blackrock Underwater Diving Group that the information provided on my Application for Membership and Certified Diver Details forms is true and correct in every particular.
11. If I am signing this Agreement for a minor participant, I state that I am the parent or legal guardian of the minor participant signing this Agreement and that I am legally competent to sign this Agreement on behalf of the minor. I affirm that the minor is a certified diver and I warrant to Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. that the information provided on the Application for Membership and the minor's Certified Diver Details forms is true and correct in every particular. I have discussed with the minor the risks and responsibilities of participating in Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. activities and represent that the minor is sufficiently mature to understand the responsibility to act safely and to abide by all of the Blackrock Underwater Diving Group Inc. rules referred to in paragraph 4.
12. I understand that these terms are contractual and not a mere recital. I have signed this Agreement of my own free act. I have fully informed myself of the contents of this Agreement by reading it before I signed it.

**Applicant's Signature:**..... Date (d/m/y):...../...../.....

*If applicant is under 18 year old,*

**1<sup>st</sup> Parent/Guardian Signature:**..... Date (d/m/y):...../...../.....

**2<sup>nd</sup> Parent/Guardian Signature:**..... Date (d/m/y):...../...../.....



Application for Membership  
BLACK ROCK UNDERWATER DIVING GROUP  
'Victoria's Oldest Diving Club'

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Partner (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers,  
Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_  
(Do not provide a number you do not wish used)

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ (Applicant's must be 18 years old to join.)

Diving Certification:

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(At least one basic qualification is needed for full membership.)

There is a 3-month probationary period and applicants must fulfil at least one dive with the Safety Officer or his nominee not exceeding 20 meters to demonstrate competency. All applicants must have as a minimum Open Water certification and be medically fit to dive.

Social (non diving) members do not require certification. All applicants must complete a separate waiver of liability which will be provided by a committee member. The joining fee for full members is \$75 plus an additional annual fee of \$100. (Total initial cost \$175 for the first year.). A quarterly prorated annual fee will be assessed if the applicant joins late in the year. Diving members and guests contribute to the boat running costs (based on current fuel prices) and are not included in annual fees.

The information you provide will be added to the membership list, which is available to all members. Membership information is for club use only and applicants agree not to provide it to non-members or to use it for any purpose other than club business.

The information provided by me is true and correct and I agree with the conditions above.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Address All Correspondence:

BRUDG/Black Rock Underwater Dive Group

C/O Celtic Club

320 Queens Street

Melbourne, 3000