

SDFSFA Bulletin July 2007

This bulletin is provided as a service to members of the
SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA

Working to develop the sport of Scuba diving in SA
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We are publishing this electronic bulletin as a separate publication to our normal monthly SDF News Sheet. Future issues of this "SDFSFA Bulletin" will include lengthy articles about matters of interest to recreational divers. We welcome contributions from our readers.

If you don't have the time to read through everything in this bulletin, take advantage of the following table of contents. Click on any item of interest to proceed straight to that section.

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INDEPENDENT REPORT ON DESAL PLANT TALK TO MLSSA

"DESAL - A FISHY BUSINESS FOR MARINE LIFE

With desalination plants the hot topic of the moment, Bill Nicholas went to find out how such a plant in SA would impact on the environment.

Desalination plants have been making the news with this week's announcement of a big new one at Kurnell in Sydney, at a cost of \$1.8 billion, and another is to be built in Melbourne for \$3.1 billion.

It's no news that South Australia has one on the drawing board - BHP Billiton is planning one for Lowly Point just north of Whyalla - to supply Roxby Downs. It was interesting to get an invitation from the Marine Life Society of SA to hear details about the new plant and how it's going to sit alongside the biggest cuttlefish breeding ground along our coastline.

A freezing Adelaide winter's night and a steady drizzle makes getting a park in the car park opposite the big Wakefield Street fire station pretty difficult as it's nearly full of beat up station wagons and campers with roof racks and heavy duty off road tyres.

I make my way next door to the Conservation Council headquarters. This is the headquarters and drop-in centre for about 60 greenie organisations devoted to the conservation and preservation of the environment - they're non-government but get a few small grants.

Inside there are about 30 people, about 29 of them male. Turns out they're all scuba divers. Most of them are wearing hand-knitted heavy-duty woollen jumpers that could withstand a windy night in the sand hills of Eyre Peninsula -where they all spend a lot of time after their diving adventures. They spend all of their leisure time up and down Spencer Gulf, chasing fishy wildlife and then yarning on about it over campfires half the night.

They know and love the Gulf. They scuba dive from tiny tinnies way offshore - but never in groups, "for insurance reasons"- and most of them could probably name half a dozen cuttlefish species, all of the gulf scale fish and every kind of shark known to man.

BHP Billiton had an unfortunate experience in environmental management at the Ok Tedi copper mine high up in the mountains in Papua New Guinea. According to Bob Burton, a reporter with Asia Times, "In 1999, BHP reported that the Ok Tedi Mine was the cause of "major environmental damage".

"The mine simply can't continue to operate as it is," the Port Moresby-based manager of Ok Tedi Mining, Vincent Bull, told the media.

BHP released reports showing damage from mine waste that for well over a decade had flowed down the Ok Tedi river, destroying food gardens, fishing grounds and villages. Four years after it ran an advertising campaign proclaiming that the 90 million tons of mine waste it dumped each year into the Ok Tedi river were "virtually identical" to natural sediment, BHP admitted its error.

"With the benefit of these reports and 20/20 hindsight, the mine is not compatible with our environmental values and the company should never have become involved," said BHP managing director and chief executive officer Paul Anderson.

BHP Billiton's 2002 annual report contained a single sentence about Ok Tedi from then chief executive, Brian Gilbertson: "During the year we finalised our responsible exit from the Ok Tedi copper mine in Papua New Guinea, transferring our equity in the mine to an independent company established to support the future social and economic development of the people of New Guinea."

The scuba diving audience knows all this so they're wary about the BHPB spin-meister who's drawn the short straw to address them tonight.

Anita Podda, a former Advertiser journalist and now on the staff of BHPB, and her scientific sidekick Darren, who was never formally introduced, take the floor.

We hear a very credible account of where the Roxby expansion program is at - halfway through the pre-feasibility study alongside of which is running the Environmental Impact Statement preparation by a team of 200 scientists. Consultant for the desalination planning is Brisbane-based WBM.

Podda tells us that BHP Billiton is the most efficient recycler of water in the country. The BHPB board rejected the option of taking water from the Murray to pipe to Roxby, their feeling that such a use was inappropriate. Great Artesian Basin water was too hot/salty/remote/fragile and a radical plan to pipe water recovered from Adelaide's rainfall run-off was rejected as too uncertain / over-polluted / expensive. The obvious answer was a desal plant. BHPB already operates a desal plant for its Escondida copper mine in Chile and it works just fine.

Essentially a desal plant takes in seawater and pumps it at a high pressure through a process of "reverse osmosis" - which apparently consists of polymers within plastic pipes. If you take 10 litres of seawater for desalination you get four litres of fresh water

and six litres of very salty water. The tricky bit is getting the very salty water back into the seawater without upsetting the delicate balance of nature.

The original plan from BHPB was to build the desal plant at Port Augusta. But being at the very tip of the Gulf, the marine environment is a bit sluggish and there's not enough regular movement in the water to take care of the elevated salt content of the result of the desal process.

A concentrated brine solution, like that emerging from a desal plant, is heavier than normal seawater and the danger is that it can form a brine salt slug that sits on the bottom and kills the oxygen supply resulting in bad news for any sea creatures or plants caught up in it.

To avoid this possibility, BHPB decided to look at Lowly Point, a deep water port just north of Whyalla from where Santos ships its hydrocarbon exports, for the site of its desal plant.

The most important thing is that there is sufficient water movement to absorb the very salty water emanating from the desal plant. BHPB reckons if the water is discharged a couple of kilometres off Point Lowly, it can be absorbed into the seawater safely.

To study the issue it has digitised the bathymetric model of the entire gulf. Bathymetrics is the measurement of the depth of bodies of water - usually by sonar - and they come up with great videos of underwater scenes.

Podda showed the modelling of how the water moved within the gulf over a 24-hour period. This reputedly showed there was more than enough water movement off Point Lowly to absorb all of the salty water discharge with no worries.

The detail which I find is a real barrier to understanding this crucial belief step, are the facts about volumes of water. Sure, Podda gave us the exact amount of water that would be discharged daily and annually- some billions of gigitalitres or megalitres or something- but it's impossible to visualise.

Podda said the discharge would be at the rate of three cubic metres a second. This compared with the natural movement at the theoretical outlet point of some 2000 cubic metres a second. It all made sense when she said that was like a half a teaspoon compared with a 44-gallon drum. So if that figure stacks up scientifically, it looks pretty safe to me. And all of the scuba divers - bar one - pretty much agreed.

The cost of constructing a brine discharge pipe was \$10 million per kilometre and the research is currently looking at where the outlet will be sited. A spot some three or four kilometres towards the middle, in the deepest and fastest-moving currents seems to be in favour - but testing continues.

The reverse osmosis filters have to be cleaned often and the chlorine solvents used for that would not be going into the sea. Some anti-sealant liquid waste would also be recovered and disposed of a land.

The first question, more of a speech, was from a former SARDI scientist who, armed with a fistful of scientific studies that were done when Dow Chemicals was working on a petrochemical plant for the same site some 20 years ago, suggested there was tons of research data that BHPB could access. He handed over some useful references.

There were a couple of questions about how the Lowly Point cuttlefish colony would handle the influx of salty water. The BHPB scientist, Darren, explained how the company had initiated and developed a special test for cuttle-fish. Testing of other fish species was proceeding.

One very disgruntled observer wanted to know why the project had failed to win favour with the academics at Flinders University, one who was apparently of the opinion that the desal plant would lead to Spencer Gulf becoming another Dead Sea, Anita Podda jumped all over that one saying the Flinders team had been offered a personal briefing but had declined the offer. How could they offer useful criticism when they wouldn't even hear the story?"

Source: The Independent Weekly | June 30 – July6, 2007

Environment and Heritage, Coast and Marine Conservation Branch on (61 8) 8124 4900.

CUTTLEFISH AT RISK FROM DESALINATION PLANT

We understand that BHP Billiton have been testing what effect the proposed desalination plant at Port Bonython may have on cuttlefish in the area. The details below were some early comments made about the possible threat of the plant on the cuttlefish: -

“A marine biologist says BHP Billiton's proposed desalination plant in Upper Spencer Gulf could wipe out the cuttlefish population off Whyalla. The sea around Whyalla is the world's largest cuttlefish breeding zone. Adelaide University Associate Professor Bronwyn Gillanders says cuttlefish only breed once in their lifetime. She says if increased salt levels caused by the proposed plant negatively affect the cuttlefish reproductive process, the entire population could be devastated. "I'm particularly concerned about them at that Point Lowly, Port Bonython area because that's where they aggregate," she said. "We do know that they breed in other places but nowhere near the hundreds and thousands that they do at Point Lowly." BHP says its research shows that increased salt levels caused by the plant will not affect local sealife. Ms Gillanders says unlike fish, increased salt levels may be disastrous for cuttlefish. "Squids and cuttlefish are generally short-lived," she said. "They live a year. They breed only once. So if you damage the eggs or affect their reproductive ability then potentially that will have devastating consequences for the population." The South Australian Government has given BHP Billiton permission to build a pilot plant to see if the proposal will work.”

Source: <http://www.letsconnect.com.au/cuttlefish-at-risk-from-desalination-plant-r444.htm> .

NUDIBRANCH DISCOVERY

Steve Leske, the Reef Watch Project Officer, recently found (and photographed) an unusual green sea slug whilst diving on the Yorke Peninsula. It can be viewed in the Reef Watch Newsletter Issue 10.2, June 2007 or at

http://www.reefwatch.asn.au/PDF/Issue_10_2.pdf . Steve described the slug as looking like ‘origami’, with paper flat ‘wings’. The slug had some tiny, iridescent blue spots dotted around its body. It seems that the slug may well be the nudibranch *Crosslandia viridis*. (Colour & shape are not good indicators.) The Sea Slug Forum at

<http://www.seaslugforum.net/showall.cfm?base=crosviri> classifies *Crosslandia viridis* as follows: - Order: Nudibranchia, Suborder: Dendronotina, Family: Scyllaeidae. It gives the distribution of the species as “Tropical Indo-West Pacific”. There are several photos of specimens which all look quite different to each other. The forum’s Bill Rudman describes *Crosslandia viridis* as follows: -

“This strangely shaped dendronotoidean nudibranch looks very like a species of the sacoglossan genus *Elysia*. The rhinophores are hidden in small pockets at the tip of the

tenacle-like extensions to the front edge of the mantle. *Crosslandia* is closely related to *Notobryon* and *Scyllaea*, the latter adapted for life on floating pieces of brown algae. All members of the family feed on hydroids living on algae. Only one species (of *Crosslandia*) is recognised from the Indo-West Pacific and it ranges from bright green to dull brown, apparently matching the algae or seagrass it is living on.” It has already been recorded at Point Turton, Yorke Peninsula by Stuart Hutchison & Ron Greer in 1998. So much for a distribution of ‘Tropical Indo-West Pacific’! Visit <http://www.seaslugforum.net/display.cfm?id=2876> for details re the Point Turton sighting.

DRAFT ADELAIDE DOLPHIN SANCTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The draft Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Management Plan was released for public comment on 29th June 2007. Submissions towards the draft Plan close on Friday 7th September 2007. A submission form is available at: - http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/coasts/ads/pdfs/ads_submission_form.pdf . Copies of the draft Plan may be downloaded at: - http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/coasts/ads/pdfs/ads_draft_mplan.pdf .

Copies are also available for inspection at: -

The Department for Environment and Heritage, 1 Richmond Road, Keswick, ground floor reception and Chesser House, 91-97 Grenfell St, Level 9
and

The Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre, 66 Commercial Road, Port Adelaide.
Otherwise, you may contact the Department for Environment and Heritage on 8124 4900 to have a copy posted to you. Submissions may address any aspect of management planning for the Sanctuary. Topics you may want to consider include: -

The issues identified to achieve each objective - Should issues be amended, added or removed?

The actions identified to address each issue - Should actions be amended, added or removed?

Do you have any suggestions about the structure of the draft Plan? Can you find information easily and understand explanatory information?

Are there any other aspects of management of the Sanctuary on which you would like to comment?

Post written submissions in a standard size envelope to: - Department for Environment and Heritage, Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Draft Management Plan, Reply Paid 1047, Adelaide SA 5001 or fax to: (61 8) 8124 4920, Attn: Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary. Send electronic submissions to: adelaidedolphinsanctuary@saugov.sa.gov.au. Please note that the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Act requires that all submissions must be available for public inspection, unless the submission is specifically made in confidence. These submissions will be available on request at the Department for Environment and Heritage, 1 Richmond Road, Keswick. Any questions? Please contact the Department for

WRECK OF THE “PILAR”

The Spanish Manila galleon *Nuestra Senora del Pilar (de Saragoza* y Santiago)* sank in deep water in the Central Pacific on 2nd June 1690.

* (Or Zaragoza or Zaragoza.)

It was during the return leg of her maiden voyage from Acapulco, Mexico to Manila in the Philippines. She was running parallel to the Cocos Islands off the southern tip of Guam, heading for the protected waters of Umatec Bay. She was attempting to clear a reef with the aid of a strong wind which suddenly died. The ship was caught in strong currents around the reef. She fractured her hull and sank in ~80m after she had smashed into the reef. Her crew consisted of some 200 and there were also some Franciscan monks on board. There was said to be >47 tonnes of treasure on board the wreck, some of which has since been recovered. Adelaide divers John Bent and Paul Lunn were involved in the initial search for the treasure in the 1980s.

The “*Pilar*” is ‘related’ to similar named ships such as the *Nuestra Senora del Atocha*, *Nuestra Senora del Rosario y San Francisco Xavier*, *Nuestra Senora del Guadalupe* and *Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion*.

Now for a Spanish language lesson – ‘Nuestra’ means ‘Our’, ‘Senora’ means ‘Lady’, ‘del’ and ‘de’ mean ‘of’, ‘y’ means ‘and’. So *Nuestra Senora del Pilar de Saragoza y Santiago* means (something like) ‘Our Lady of Pilar of Saragoza and Santiago’. Further than that, these names generally seem to have a religious theme. For example, *Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion* means ‘Our Lady of the Conception’. *Nuestra Senora del Guadalupe* means ‘Our Lady of (the Virgin Mary of?) Guadalupe’. Guadalupe, the Guadalupe Mountains and the Guadalupe Islands are all located (in order) in Mexico, New Mexico and the Leeward Islands. *Nuestra Senora del Atocha* refers to the “Virgin of a famous Madrid shrine”. *Nuestra Senora del Rosario y San Francisco Xavier* means ‘Our Lady of the Rosary and St Francis Xavier’.

Visit <http://www.wordreference.com/es/en/translation.asp?spen=nuestra&dict=esen> to find out more about Spanish words.

MORE ON THE *ATOCHA*, *SANTA MARGARITA* & *NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL ROSARIO*

2007 is the 385th anniversary of the sinking of the Spanish galleons *Santa Margarita*, *Nuestra Señora de Atocha* and *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*. They were three of the ships in the Spanish 1622 treasure fleet, sunk off the Florida Keys in 1622. The *Nuestra Señora de Atocha* was a 20-gun guard ship. In 1969, Mel Fisher started searching for the *Atocha*. The *Santa Margarita* was found first, in 1980, and the scattered remains of the *Atocha* were found in 1985. Here are some details taken from

<http://www.newworldtreasures.com/atochastory.htm> about these ships:- Two heavily armed galleons guarded each fleet for protection against pirates. The lead guard ship was known as the capitana, whilst the rear one was called the amaranth. The *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, was designated the amaranth of the Tierra Firme Fleet. The decision was made to set sail for Spain in near perfect conditions on Sunday 4th September 1622. The 28 ships of the combined fleet set a course due north towards the Florida Keys and the strong Gulf Stream current. The wind started to pick up out of the northeast by evening, growing stronger through the night. The seas were mountainous at daybreak. Throughout the next day, the wind shifted to the south, driving most of the fleet past the Dry Tortugas and into the relatively safe waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Five vessels at the tail end of the fleet, including the *Atocha*, *Santa Margarita* and *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, received the full impact of the storm and were not so fortunate. Their sails and rigging were reduced to shreds and their masts and tillers were either battered or broken. The five

ships drifted helplessly toward reefs and were all lost. The *Atocha* was lifted high on a wave and smashed violently on a coral reef. She sank instantly and was pulled to the bottom by her heavy cargo of treasure and cannon. In 1970, Mel Fisher formed a company called Treasure Salvors and began searching for the *Atocha*. His efforts from 1970 to 1986 lead to the discovery of the *Santa Margarita* in 1980 and the *Atocha* on 20th July 1985. Her hull was found lying in 55' of water, exactly as recorded by the first salvagers in 1622.

According to "The Trouble With Treasure" by Eugene Lyon, "National Geographic", Vol.149, No.6, June 1976, (as mentioned above) the *Nuestra Senora de Atocha* was a 600-ton galleon named for the Virgin of a famous Madrid shrine. She was built at Havana for King Philip IV, King of Spain in 1622

For more details about the history of the shipwreck *Nuestra Senora de Atocha* (The Atocha Story) visit <http://www.newworldtreasures.com/atochastory.htm> or read the article "The Trouble With Treasure" by Eugene Lyon, "National Geographic", Vol.149, No.6, June 1976. For more details about the *Santa Margarita* (and the *Atocha*), read the article "Treasure From the Ghost Galleon" also by Eugene Lyon, "National Geographic", Vol.161, No.2, February 1982. (For more details about the *Nuestra Senora del Guadalupe* read the article "Graveyard of the Quicksilver Galleons" by Mendel Peterson, "National Geographic", Vol.156, No.6, December 1979.)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY

AIMA/NAS Part 1 is a non-diving course which provides a general introduction to maritime archaeology and focuses on aspects such as:

- * Archaeological principles
- * Archaeological sciences
- * materials conservation
- * ship construction
- * surveying
- * search techniques
- * shipwreck position fixing
- * remote sensing
- * State and Commonwealth legislation
- * Non-intrusive surveys of shipwreck sites

Venue: Flinders University, Humanities Building, Room 112. Dates & Times: August 11-12, 2007 (Sat. & Sun.) 9.00am - 5.00pm. Cost: \$160.00

Registration Deadline: August 1, 2007 (Seats limited to 20, so register now!)

General enquiries and registration contact: Jason Raupp, AIMA/NAS State Tutor (South Australia), 8201 5533, jason.raupp@flinders.edu.au

** Each participant receives an annual membership in the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology (<http://aima.iinet.net.au/>) **

GREY NURSE SHARK NUMBERS

Further to last month's report, SCAN's John Olsen says that he went to a presentation by NSW's Fisheries / DPI on 12/6/07 for an update on Grey Nurse Shark numbers in NSW. John tells us that folks making the claims in the article titled "Dispute over 'endangered' shark" by Samantha Williams (published in the "Daily Telegraph" on 25th May) have

difficulty with the scientific statistical modelling which Fisheries have used. This has been used in the terrestrial sphere for many years so it is not new or cutting edge. These people find it hard to accept that level of aggregation at a single site. All studies have consistently stated that there are only a few aggregation sites in NSW which have high concentration and that the GNS move from one site to another. This does not sit well with the folks behind the article. What is actually interesting is that this specific aggregation counters the argument that there are “other sites” out there which scientists do not know about. The sampling techniques do not support this at all, but which others are consistently trying to argue against. DPI / Fisheries put on this road show to counter the vexatious stuff in the article. You must remember that the recreational / fishing gear sales lobby is very well funded. They see GNS protection via sanctuary zones as a threat to their commercial viability. If recreational fishing is limited, there will be less sales. Make no mistake, money is the nub of their argument. John suggested that Megan Kessler, Fisheries and Marine Network Adopt a Shark Coordinator at the Nature Conservation Council of NSW would be a good contact. Her address is Level 2, 301 Kent St, Sydney NSW 2000. Her numbers are: - Ph: 02 9279 2466, Fax: 02 9279 2499. According to <http://www.marine.org.au/newsletterjune07.htm> , “As part of the NPA~Marine's Let Lucy Live campaign, supporters gathered together in mid-June to learn about the Department of Primary Industry's Grey Nurse Shark research. Presented by DPI project officers, topics discussed included the population estimates, key threats, levels of current protection and future research. DPI spoke about less than 500 sharks remaining along the east Australian coast, the high rates of hooking of these sharks, the low reproductive rate of the sharks and the fact that current levels of protection are not preventing deaths.”

FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS AQUATIC PROGRAMS

Jane Lomax-Smith, the Minister for Education, made the following announcement on 29th June 2007: -

“MORE SCHOOL CHILDREN TO GAIN AQUATICS AND MUSIC SKILLS

New measures to enable thousands more South Australian school children to access improved music and **aquatics** programs will be introduced over the next five years and within the existing annual funding of \$10.7 million.

The measures, which broaden access by school students to both programs, will be implemented in partnership with key education interest groups and local school communities.

The Education Department initiatives to improve the programs for students across South Australia follow wide-ranging community reviews of the State's aquatics and instrumental music programs.

South Australia's Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith said today: “I have ruled out any reduction in total education dollars currently directed to both the SA school instrumental music program and Australia's only government-funded school aquatics program.”

“The department will now harness existing education dollars to deliver more effective aquatics and music programs to benefit more children.

“The reviews were designed to create better opportunities for children and ensure these long-standing programs are effective, fair and are efficiently delivered.

“Our intention is to work with schools, teachers and instructors to enable many thousands more young people to develop their creativity, skills and abilities by learning aquatics, water safety skills and music.’

“The Rann Government is investing more into education, and we will continue to examine all of our education programs with a view to making sure we gain the best educational value for taxpayers’ dollars.

“Where programs have been in place for decades they need, from time to time, to go under the spotlight to ensure they still benefit children educationally and make the best use of available funds.

“Following these departmental reviews, I have requested that the department work with schools and interest groups to reshape aquatics and music within their existing funding, so we deliver better opportunities for more children.” the Minister said.

The Education Department will work in collaboration with aquatics and music education interest groups to gradually introduce the measures over five years.”

An overview of key Education Department measures for **aquatics** (only) follows: -

“For the aquatics program, which involves 42,000 children across 480 government and non-government schools, key measures proposed include:

- Continued investment of the current \$3.2 million to deliver water skills activities, including canoeing, snorkelling, sailing and surfing to students
- Adding year 10 to the Years 11 and 12 SACE program with its provision for 12 to 18 hours per subject, by reshaping the years 6 to 9 general program from 7.5 to 6.0 hours. This will enable overall greater access to the total program
- The Education Department discussing with instructors a range of proposals to improve workforce job security
- A single booking and management system for all schools to reduce red tape and ensure broader use by schools and students on an equitable basis
- Parents and students continuing to contribute toward the cost of aquatics school camps in line with existing practice”

John and Mike at the Port Noarlunga Aquatics Centre say that this is very significant, particularly in centralising the way schools book and also in improving instructors’ job security.

This topic was reported in The Advertiser on 30th June, under the heading “Increase in music, aquatics lessons”. It was also posted to the AdelaideNow website, under the heading “Music, aquatic lessons rise” at

<http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,21992964-2682,00.html> .

According to both of these sources (Advertiser & AdelaideNow), “Opposition education spokesman Iain Evans questioned how the services would be provided. "I'm suspicious (of) how the minister thinks she's going to increase the number of students using the service of aquatics, but maintain the budget at the current level," he said. He said the system might start to become more user-pays, either through increased school fees or direct payment for programs. Australian Education Union president Andrew Gohl said: "This change would see far greater access . . . 19,000 more students across the state will access instrumental music programs, and that has got to be a good thing." Education Department chief executive Chris Robinson dismissed the user-pays claim. More children would be taught instrumental music by having "whole of class" lessons in Year 5, he

said.” Source: <http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,21992964-2682,00.html> .

According to the article “Sharks put bite on swim program” on page 30 of “The Advertiser” of 29th June, “Shark sightings are being blamed for a fall in the number of children enrolled in swimming classes . . . Enrolments . . . in VACSWIM . . . have fallen over the past 4 years. Sport & Recreation Minister, Michael Wright . . . attributed the decline to “negative publicity” about shark sightings over the past 3 years.” Well that wouldn’t help, but “He did not explain how that could have influenced attitudes about swimming lessons in pools. Mr Wright also said poor weather conditions, pool closures and entry prices at public pools were contributing factors*. However, Mr Wright said the numbers (for 2007?) had increased by more than 100 when compared to last year (2006?).”

* It seems that there needs to be some lobbying against public pool closures and also against rising entry prices at public swimming pools.

GERMAN TOURIST DIES AFTER DIVING IN WHITSUNDAYS

Here is a headline from the AdelaideNow website which didn’t make the pages of The Advertiser this month: - “German tourist dies after diving in Whitsundays - Man suffered from gas bubbles call (sic) air embolus - Diving industry forced to defend safety record”. Here are the details: -

“MAN DIES AFTER 'TEXTBOOK DIVE'

by Robyn Ironside (3/7/07)

The diving industry was yesterday again forced to defend its safety record following the death of a tourist in the Whitsundays on Sunday. The German man, 28, was the fourth foreign visitor to die in a diving incident in two years. A certified diver, he surfaced from a "textbook dive" at Bait Reef off Hayman Island before collapsing as he climbed back on board the charter boat *Gladiator*. He was pulled aboard and crew members tried for nearly two hours to resuscitate him, as they waited for the CQ-Rescue helicopter to arrive from Mackay. "It appeared to be a classic progression of an air embolus," intensive care paramedic Trevor Clark said. "You're OK when you're horizontal, but as soon as you're vertical the gas bubble rises, causing shortness of breath, or even sudden death." Mr Clark said it was a tragic end to what had been a "glorious day" for the tourist. "They saw whales and sting-rays. It really was perfect," he said. Water police were yesterday awaiting results of an autopsy to confirm the cause of death, which was not considered suspicious. Dive Queensland spokesman Margie McKenzie said the local diving industry was very safe, with more than a million dives undertaken each year. "The Barrier Reef is one of the safest places in the world, not only because of Workplace Health and Safety regulations, but because it's well protected, has limited currents and good visibility," she said. Four foreigners have died in diving-related incidents in north Queensland in the past two years. Three men from Britain, the US and Japan have died in snorkelling or scuba-related incidents since November 2005. But Mrs McKenzie said any "overrepresentation" of international tourists in diving and snorkelling deaths was probably because they made up 90 per cent of the divers. In comparison, four international tourists drowned on Queensland beaches in the 12 months to June 30. A spokeswoman for Surf Life Saving Queensland said eight people had drowned at beaches in that period.”

Source: http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,22008807-911,00.html?from=public_rss

The Scuba Divers Federation of SA is a member of the following: -

Rapid Bay Jetty Design Group

SARFAC (SA Recreational Fishing Advisory Council)

Fleurieu Reef Management Committee (Ex-HMAS *Hobart*)

TRAIL COMMITTEES - SA Trails Coordinating Committee (Office of Recreation & Sport) and Port Noarlunga Reef Underwater Trail South Australian Trails

Contact the Federation's Secretary on sdfsa@adam.com.au to be included on the mailing list for this electronic bulletin.

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