

SDFSFA Newsletter – APRIL 2020

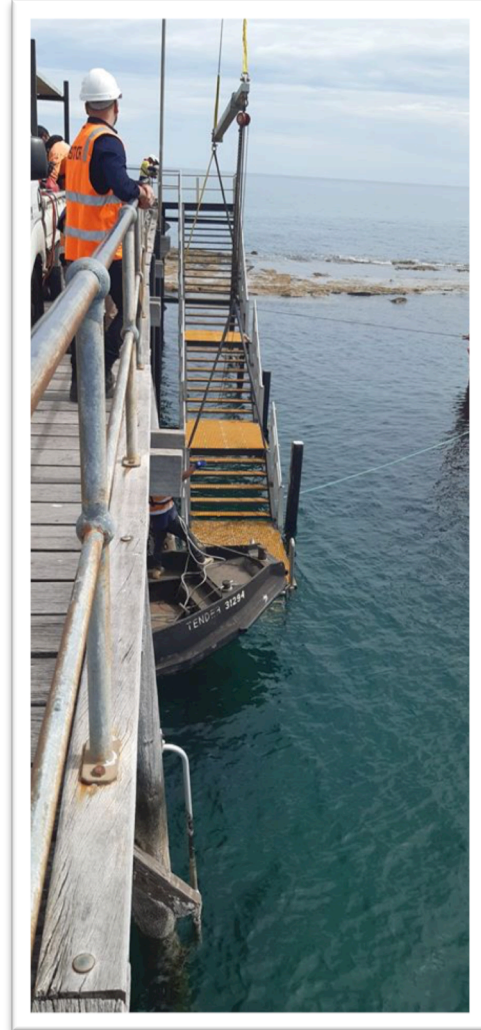
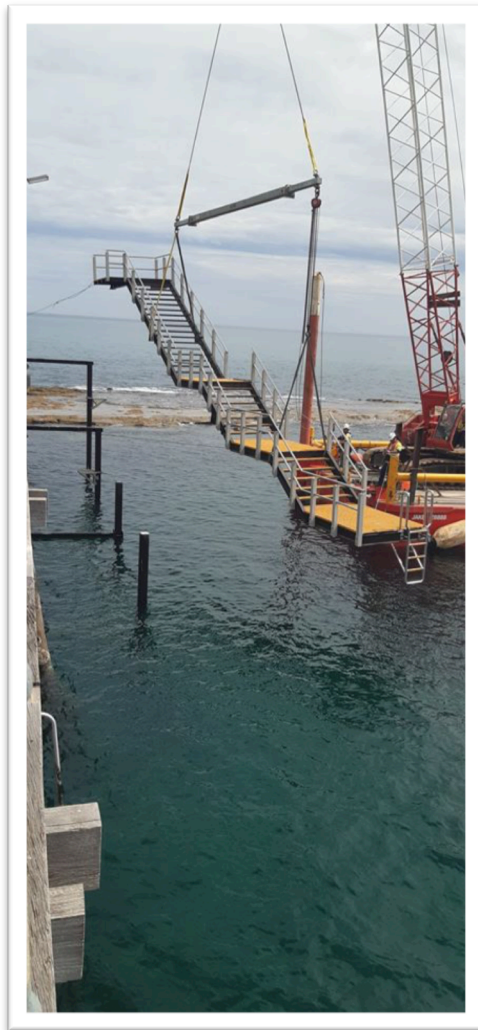
SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA, Inc.

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Photos courtesy of Onkaparinga Council

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AN IMPORTANT NOTICE TO SA DIVERS

Light at the end of the tunnel (or air at the end of the snorkel??)

In the coming months, SDFSFA will be working for and with the SA diving community, with all the video conferencing and email tools available to us. Your committee is using this time to plan for the future: We want to ensure that, when divers can get back into the water with their clubs and shops, we will be ready with great events, expanded engagement with divers across the State, and sustained advocacy with Councils and the State on the issues that the Federation is passionate about: great dive sites, good diving practice, marine conservation, and more. We will be consulting with all of you on a three to five year strategic plan to advance the Federation as the peak body for divers, freedivers and snorkellers across the State.

In the meantime, people are wondering whether they can or should continue to dive.

Exercise is important for good health – this is recognised by all levels of government during the pandemic. Except for those in isolation for health reasons or returning from international or interstate travel, people are allowed to go outside for walks, bike rides and other forms of exercise. The federal government has now advised that people are to go out only in groups of 2 (with the exceptions of families). For the latest information on the State of SA's guidelines, go to: <https://www.sa.gov.au/covid-19>.

For divers, this suggests that going for a dive with your buddy falls within the guidelines. But remember that all divers need to keep to the 1.5 metre distance rules. Each diver must therefore be able to get into and out of their gear, and into and out of the water, without assistance from their buddy.

SDFSFA recommends that before continuing to dive, especially if you plan to borrow, loan or rent gear, you read the guidelines on diving and COVID-19 put forth by DAN-Europe: <https://www.daneurope.org/>. In particular, think about disinfecting your 2nd stages in the unlikely event that you may have to share your air during a dive.

Many of you will choose to continue diving within the guidelines for social distancing. We do ask that you consider diving closer to home for the time being: you may inadvertently transmit the COVID-19 virus from one region to another, and communities in Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas in particular have limited health facilities to deal with an outbreak. We also draw your attention to the additional strain on emergency services should a dive accident occur: we ask those who are continuing to dive to be exceptionally cautious and diligent in your diving practices.

PORT NOARLUNGA JETTY STAIRS

Divers across the greater Adelaide region are celebrating the installation of new stairs at the end of the Port Noarlunga jetty. Sixteen months ago (69 weeks or 484 days, but who's counting?) a particularly vicious winter storm tore the stairs off the jetty at one of the most popular dive sites in South Australia. Since that day, divers have had either to climb down the narrow metal stairs and ladder half way along the jetty (not accessible at low tide) or swim 300 metres out to the reef and back. Getting a new set of stairs at Port Noarlunga took considerable time and was not without its challenges: the jetty had to be assessed for its own structural integrity, the Council had to budget for the unexpected and significant costs, and access to a barge and crane large enough to do the installation had to be arranged from halfway across the State. The Scuba Divers Federation of South

Australia (SDFSFA) worked with Onkaparinga Council on the new design while keeping the diving community aware of progress. And the outcome is simply magnificent: a gold standard in non-slip stairs that provide ample room for snorkelers and divers to enter and exit (even with the current COVID-19 personal spacing guidelines), and platforms that work at different tide levels, accessible to deal with any emergencies that might arise at any time. The SDFSFA commends Onkaparinga Council for their investment of time and funds to make Port Noarlunga, once again, a premier dive site for the State.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- Andrew Viduka on having been elected as a new Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (The Society of Antiquaries of London Royal Charter, 1751). The mission of the society is "The encouragement, advancement and furtherance of the study and knowledge of the antiquities and history of this and other countries."
- The divers who rescued a turtle drowning off the WA coast recently. See Perth news about the turtle rescue at <https://10play.com.au/news/perth/divers-rescue-turtle-drowning-off-wa-coast/tpv200308phzgb>.
- The team from Dive Log Australasia. The monthly magazine published its final issue online this month after some 32 years of keeping the dive community informed and engaged in our sport. It will be missed!

2020 EVENTS

We note the uncertainty of whether upcoming events will be postponed or cancelled. Keep checking on the following events by visiting the relevant websites:

- MIDE 2020 - Malaysia International Dive Expo - 12-14th June - www.mide.com.my.
- 6th International Eco Summit Conference - Gold Coast, Queensland - 21st-25th June.
- Australian Marine Sciences Association/New Zealand Marine Sciences Society 2020 Conference - Sydney - 5-9th July – <https://amsa2020.amsa.asn.au/>.
- AIDE 2020 - Australia International Dive Expo - 30th July to 3rd August - www.australiadiveexpo.com.
- World Fisheries Congress 2020 - Adelaide - 11-15th October – <https://wfc2020.com.au/>.

SCIENCE ALIVE! & NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK, ADELAIDE SHOWGROUNDS

SDFSFA will participate in this year's Science Alive! to be held from Friday 7th August to Sunday 9th August. There will be a Marine Science section this year, and the SDFSFA will have a booth next to Experiencing Marine Sanctuaries. National Science Week 2020 will run from 15th–23rd August. The school theme for this year is "Deep Blue: innovation for the future of our oceans".

National Science Week is an annual festival of science that usually takes place in August each year. This celebration aims to raise the profile and increase the public understanding and public appreciation of science, innovation, engineering and technology, and their role in maintaining and improving our society, economy and environment.

OZTEK CONFERENCE & OZDIVE EXPO 21

Next year's OZTek, the Advanced Diving Conference & Exhibition, will be combined with OZDive Expo, Melbourne Conference & Exhibition Centre 11-12th September 2021. It will cover every aspect of exploration, diving, dive training, underwater photography and dive travel. OZTek talks will concentrate on everything technically advanced, whilst the OZDive Expo will inspire divers with dive travel, photography, new training and equipment as well as recreational and conservation-based talks. Visit <https://OZTek.com.au> and <https://OZDive.net.au> for more details.

SCIENCE STORY: DEEP-SEA CORAL GARDENS DISCOVERED

Deep-Sea Coral Gardens have been discovered off South-Western Australia by using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) called "SuBastian". The ROV belongs to the Schmidt Ocean Institute's (SOI). Scientists, including researchers from the University of Western Australia (UWA), discovered the corals in the Bremer Canyon Marine Park off southwestern Australia during an oceanographic expedition.

The Bremer Canyon faces the Southern Ocean and it is said to provide important information on the recent and past histories of climate change and ocean conditions in this region, as well as global scale events.

SuBastian is capable of sampling depths down to 4500m. With the ROV's help, the research team collected coral, fauna, seawater, and geological samples from depths of between 200 and (almost) 4000 metres. (200m is the depth of the continental shelf, whilst 4000m is referred to as the 'abyssal depths'.)

Julie Trotter, the Chief Scientist from UWA, led the oceanographic expedition. "We have already made a number of remarkable discoveries from the Bremer Canyon," she said. "The vertical cliffs and ridges support a stunning array of deep-sea corals that often host a range of organisms and form numerous mini-ecosystems."

The new discoveries are "being integrated into a comprehensive package of biological, geological, and bathymetric data". The Schmidt Ocean Institute said, "Such rare records of these deep-sea habitats are a new and very important contribution to the Marine Parks, which will help managers as well as the broader community to better understand and protect these previously unknown ecosystems."

The deep waters that surround Australia are largely unexplored. The Bremer, Leeuwin, and Perth canyons were all explored by the expedition. They all have extensive fossil coral deposits. The Leeuwin Canyon is especially notable for a massive pedestal-like coral graveyard. Professor Malcolm McCulloch from UWA said, "This has global implications given these waters originate from around Antarctica, which feed all of the major oceans and regulate our climate system."

(Source: <https://weather.com/en-IN/india/science/news/2020-03-02-deep-sea-coral-gardens-discovered-mysterious-canyons?fbclid=IwAR1ia657-hAIAIay-SLLZvIcZO5urcW0Rx4aEY2oFQohpPjtwblz3oQ3pM> and <https://10play.com.au/news/perth/scientists-to-explore-depths-of-was-coral-coast/tpv200307ksxrm>.)

ABOUT THE SDFSFA...

SDFSFA is a non-profit, incorporated membership association dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of our unique underwater world.

JOIN US FOR FREE:

<https://sdfsfa.net/membership-categories/>

The more members we have, the stronger our influence. We serve as a peak body representing the interests of South Australian recreational scuba divers and the related sports of freediving and snorkelling, including the provision of information to government and the general public.

Together we can have real impact on the issues affecting the South Australian diving community.

If you wish to be added to the mailing list for this Newsletter, join the SDFSFA!

You can also read about the Federation's work in monthly issues of DiveLog Australasia, Scubadiver ANZ and on our website at <https://sdfsfa.net>. Stay up to date with the latest news through our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/scubadivesa/>.

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