

SDFSFA Newsletter – June 2023

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SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA, Inc.

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SDFSFA Patron:
Dr. Richard Harris



SDFSFA Lifetime Membership Awards Night

Left to Right: Sara Leggatt, SDFSFA Membership officer; Con Penglis, Lifetime Member; Dr. Richard Harris, SDFSFA Patron

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SDFSA Lifetime Membership Awards Night, with Dr. Richard Harris

On the 19th of May, SDFSA recognised three long time members and champions of diving in South Australia at its Lifetime Membership Awards Night. The award recognises those individuals in our South Australian diving community who have contributed significantly to the work of the Federation, the sport of scuba diving and the enjoyment of our spectacular and unique marine and freshwater environments.

Tony Leggatt, SDFSA President, chaired the event. SDFSA's Patron, Dr. Harry delighted attendees with his own latest adventures into deep diving and other initiatives and then presented the awards. This year's recipients included those who helped to create the Federation, saved the old Rapid Bay jetty, worked to protect the Blue Groper in all Gulf waters, and influenced the creation of the Port Noarlunga Dive Trail.

Con Penglis

Con was a pioneer of scuba diver representation in South Australia and gave "birth" to the current day Scuba Divers Federation. In 1970 and '71, Con was very aware of the lack of scuba diver representation by both the Council of Underwater Activities of South Australia and its controlling body, the Australian Underwater Federation. With assistance from New South Wales scuba diver



colleagues, who were setting up their own association, Con and co-founders established the Scuba Divers Association of South Australia and became the inaugural president.

Among many achievements Con played a significant role in cave diving safety through the establishment of cave diver qualifications and the issuing of permits at Picanninie Ponds. And like many divers, he was also a conservationist, working towards the establishment of the first aquatic reserve in Australia at Port Noarlunga and the protection of blue groper in South Australian Waters.

Judy Hani



Judy is another inveterate South Australian diver who started out exploring the underwater world in places like Hawaii, Galapagos, Vanuatu, PNG and Micronesia.

After returning to Australia to live, Judy joined the SDFSA Committee. Scuba diving offered her a sport that she could feel passionate about, but it was more than that. It was the friendships and fellowship she shared among other divers and joining the SDFSA was a way to give back to the diving community.

Judy served for 20 years on the Committee, including a number of years as Vice-President. During that time, she represented the Federation at SA Trails, successfully encouraging them to include underwater trails as part of the SA Trails network. In particular,

Judy was instrumental in influencing SA Trails to create the Port Noarlunga Dive Trail, which every new diver experiences as part of their training. She was also the representative for the Hobart boat tours.

Christopher Deane

Christopher Deane started diving back in 1969 – his first dive being, of course, Port Noarlunga (but with a twin hose reg and zero visibility). Since that time diving has been an enormous part of his life, with all sorts of experiences under his belt. Chris, along with his wife Cathy, became serious advocates for diving in general. Chris was a long serving committee member of the Scuba Divers Federation of SA, worked in the Fisheries Dept as a technical diving officer, was a part owner of Divers International, PADI dive instructor from 1983 - 2006, foundation member of the Cave Divers Association of Australia, President of the Historical Diving Society Australia Pacific for the last 10 years, monthly contributor of Dive Log Australia for the last 30 years....and the list goes on.



Chris was a major player and instrumental in both the scuttling of the ex-HMAS Hobart and the design and build of the new Rapid Bay Jetty. He was unable to join us for the evening but we were happy to present his award earlier this year at Dive for Cancer.

The Giant Cuttlefish are back!

CuttleFest kicks off this weekend in Whyalla! Hundreds of thousands of Giant cuttlefish are now beginning to aggregate in the shallows off Point Lowly near Whyalla to breed and lay eggs.

As reported by the ABC and Experiencing Marine Sanctuaries, the annual migration is now protected by a permanent ban on fishing for Australian giant cuttlefish in the upper Spencer Gulf, above a line north of Arno Bay and Wallaroo. The Cuttlefish Coast Sanctuary Zone has also been added to the National Heritage List, joining other South Australian national heritage designated sites such as the Australian Fossil Mammal site at Naracoorte and the Adelaide Park Lands.

Desalination Plant update

And some additional good news that may offer additional protection to the Giant cuttlefish aggregation: Point Lowly is now off the agenda as a potential site for the Northern Water Supply desalination plant, and another site, Cape Hardy, has been proposed. The business case has now gone to Government for consideration. A summary of the report/public feedback is available here: <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/440524933/>.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

PICCANINNIE PONDS IS STILL CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE: Piccaninnie Ponds is/are closed to the public for water-based activities until further notice. It is best that you check the current situation before making any plans to visit the ponds.

FURTHER WORK ON THE PORT NOARLUNGA JETTY: The middle steps on the Port Noarlunga jetty are now closed for repairs. The Department of Infrastructure & Transport advises that the broken steps, ladder & platform on the middle steps have been taken away for repairs. The area is currently cordoned off and out of bounds. We will keep you updated via our SA Dive Sites Viz & Conditions Facebook page as more information becomes available.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ANNUAL ROCK LOBSTER SEASON CLOSURE: PIRSA advises that the South Australian annual Rock Lobster season closure in the Northern Zone began on 31st May (6pm). The closure ends at 12 noon on 1st November. You must not take Rock Lobster from the northern zone (west from longitude 139°0'4.80" to the Western Australian border) during this period. The Southern zone seasonal closure reopens on 1st October. The southern zone extends east from longitude 139°0'4.80" to the Victorian border.

SDFSA COMMITTEE BUSINESS: Upcoming AGM

The Annual General Meeting for the SDFSA will be held Wednesday 26th July, 7pm, Arab Steed upstairs meeting room. Calls for nominations for the 2023-24 Committee are now open and we encourage members to consider joining the governing Committee to help in our ongoing advocacy, communications and support for scuba and free diving in South Australia.

The next meeting of the Committee is Wednesday , 24 June, 7pm at the Arab Steed upstairs meeting room.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

- The winners of the 2023 SA Environment Awards, including James Smith, the winner of the Green Adelaide Pelzer Prize. Also to all those that received a commendation for the Pelzer Prize, including Catherine McMahon from the Estuary Care Foundation in SA. Catherine received a commendation for ECF's work in Climate Adaptation.
- Everyone who received a King's Birthday honour, including author Tim Winton (AO) and our own Rodney Fox. Rodney's AM award is for "significant services to Tourism and to Shark Biology".
- Our Patron, Dr Richard Harris on having his first children's book about Alfie the Brave dog short-listed for a Speech Pathology Australia's Book of the Year Award which recognises and celebrates Australia's best books for children's language and literacy development. The book is shortlisted for the 3-5 year old category.
- Freedivers Lauren Cameo and Fiona McQueen who found hundreds of tiny sea cucumbers called Rowedota shepherdii when they visited the Ardrossan jetty recently. This was reported at New Noodle Bar At Ardrossan. It was also followed up at <http://mlssa.org.au/2023/06/01/what-i-have-learned-about-the-seacucumber-rowedota-shepherdii/> . Further work regarding sea cucumbers can be found at

<http://mlssa.org.au/2023/05/31/sea-cucumbers-are-beneficial-to-the-marine-environment/> and <http://mlssa.org.au/2023/06/04/strange-sea-cucumber-discovery-at-port-lincoln-jetty/> . All recent articles can be found at <http://mlssa.org.au/2023/> .

- Dive Log Australasia magazine on reaching 400 issues with the June 2023 issue.
- The Cave Divers Association of Australia which will celebrate its 50th anniversary this coming November.

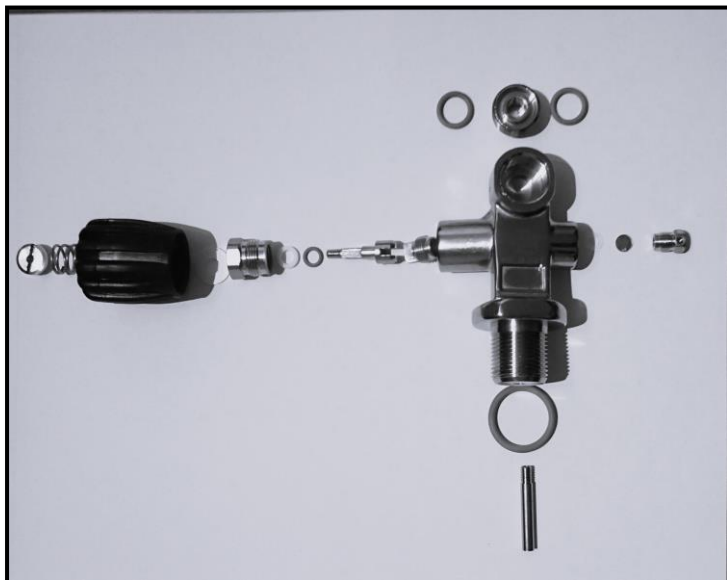
NEWS FROM MEMBERS

MARINE LIFE SOCIETY OF SA: The Marine Life Society of SA celebrates its 47th anniversary this month. The Society, in conjunction with the Fleurieu Marine Life group, recently published a seadragon brochure which can be found at <https://wp.me/P4BvtZ-1pM> . The Flinders Archaeology and History Society have formally voted to partner with both the South Australian Archaeology Society and MLSSA. Each group has agreed to support each other's society as much as we can. The FA&HS's Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/FlindersARCHSOC> . The Society has a management committee and a regular newsletter called "Dig It". The Society is visiting Port Adelaide on Wednesday 26/7, including the Port Adelaide Anchor Trail. Steve Reynolds will be guiding the Society on the anchor trail.

GEAR REPORT: The Scuba Cylinder Valve

By Alex Suslin

A DIN/K valve, the most commonly found unit topping modern cylinders, is about as basic as the tap in your home. Both are designed to regulate flow.



Unlike regulators & bcd, the cylinder valve does not require an annual service. A commonly accepted time frame is 5 years between servicing, though generally divers adopt the principle, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it".

The most common replacement item is the o-ring seal between the valve insert & first stage. Check it regularly for cracks & damage & replace before it starts to leak. The insert has another o-ring behind it, which will deteriorate over time, as do o-rings on the stem & between the valve & cylinder.

Air supply is shut off by the seat, which is durable & long lasting. Like with your tap, don't go using excessive force to turn off the air supply – this will cause unnecessary seat wear.

Burst discs too are rarely an issue, being designed to burst should a tank be filled well above capacity. They have not been known to fail under water. However, salt water does corrode & weaken the disc. This is overcome by filling the housing the disc sits in with silicon grease, once the disc is replaced. For obvious reasons, do not try this retrospectively, with air in the cylinder!

You'll know when your valve's due for a service. The handle will be harder to turn or a buddy will tell you they noticed an air leak. You can check for yourself, by immersing your cylinder, with regulator attached & air on, in a tub of water. A stream of bubbles indicates it's time for a valve service.

STEVE'S SCIENCE STORY for the month

By Steve Reynolds

NEW FINDINGS ON MACROALGAE

Scientists now say that researchers may previously have been misled about the health of coral reefs by macroalgae (seaweed). Researchers now say that macroalgae is possibly an inaccurate indicator of coral reef health. According to the web page found at https://www.deeperblue.com/seaweed-is-possibly-an-inaccurate-indicator-of-coral-reef-health/?mc_cid=829c3f6e25&mc_eid=d4cc43123c, "Researchers may have been misled about the health of coral reefs by seaweed." Scientists have been using macroalgae to gauge the health of coral reefs for years. Recent research by the University of British Columbia, however, has found that data derived from macroalgae "in the traditional way may be misleading and provide a false picture".

The researchers studied macroalgae from more than 1200 locations in the Indian and Pacific Oceans over the course of 16 years. They were shocked to find that this approach yielded inaccurate data. They found that it could actually "conceal signs of reef stress and problems in the reef systems". Several macroalgae species "can still thrive in water polluted by various contaminants like agricultural runoff, even though these pollutants, at the same time, devastate coral reef health.

The study's lead author, Dr. Sara Cannon, and a postdoctoral fellow at the UBC Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries, said that "it is vitally important that we derive high-quality data about the state of our reef ecosystems so we can better monitor them and crucially intervene if signs of damage are detected."

You can find the original study titled "Macroalgae exhibit diverse responses to human disturbances on coral reefs" at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gcb.16694>. According to the Abstract, "Scientists and managers rely on indicator taxa such as coral and macroalgal cover to evaluate the effects of human disturbance on coral reefs, often assuming a universally positive relationship between local human disturbance and macroalgae. Despite evidence that macroalgae respond to local stressors in diverse ways, there have been few efforts to evaluate relationships between specific macroalgae taxa and local human-driven disturbance. Using genus-level monitoring data from 1205 sites in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, we assess whether macroalgae percent cover correlates with local human disturbance while accounting for factors that could obscure or confound relationships. Assessing macroalgae at genus level revealed that no genera were positively correlated with all human disturbance metrics. Instead, we found relationships between the division or genera of algae and specific human disturbances that were not detectable when pooling taxa into a single functional category, which is common to many analyses. The convention to use percent cover of macroalgae as an indication of local human disturbance therefore likely obscures signatures of local anthropogenic threats to reefs. Our limited understanding of relationships between human disturbance, macroalgae

taxa, and their responses to human disturbances impedes the ability to diagnose and respond appropriately to these threats.”

FOR YOUR CALENDAR: FORTHCOMING EVENTS

South Australia

Until 25th June: The Winter Whale Fest is being held at Victor Harbor. It is a month-long festival of fun and thought provoking events, celebrating the annual migration of whales to the Fleurieu Peninsula. See <https://winterwhalefest.com.au/home> .

June/July/August: Cuttlefest, with many events organised by the City of Whyalla. Check out tours offered by Whyalla Diving Services throughout the season and Experiencing Marine Sanctuaries (23 June to 16 July).

30 June, 6:00-8:30 pm. Cuttlefest Science in the Pub. Rope a Football and Sporting Club, Whyalla. Book through EMS, at <https://emsau.rezdy.com/446847/cuttlefest-science-in-the-pub-whyalla-30th-june>.

Wednesday 26th July, 7pm, SDFSAGM. Venue: Arab Steed upstairs meeting room.

4-6 August: Science Alive! at the Adelaide Showgrounds

15 August, 6:00-8:30 pm. SA Marine Parks Science in the Pub. Brighton and Seacliff Yacht Club, 246 Esplanade. Book through EMS at <https://emsau.rezdy.com/567603/sa-marine-parks-science-in-the-pub-seacliff-beach-15th-august>.

7th and 8th of October: The Edithburgh Jetty’s 150th Anniversary will be celebrated. There will be multiple events, including a period costume ball at the Edithburgh Institute on the Saturday night, historic vehicles, presentations on the history of the Edithburgh jetty, a historical diving display and possibly demonstrations and much, much more.

Interstate/International

19th - 24th June: The World Freediving Championships are being held this June. The Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques (CMAS) Finswimming World Junior Championships are being held in Cairo, Egypt - <https://www.cmas.org/events/cmas-finswimming-world-junior-championship>.

25th - 26th June: The CMAS Finswimming World Masters Championship are being held in Cairo, Egypt - <https://www.cmas.org/events/cmas-finswimming-world-masters-championship>. Further events can be found at <https://www.cmas.org/events>.)

2nd to 7th July: The 57th Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) 2023 annual conference will be held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre. “This is a national marine science forum that will provide a space to exchange traditional knowledge and modern science. Together, this will provide a strong foundation for understanding marine ecosystems, and inform marine management decisions.

3rd to 6th August: The Sydney International Boat Show is being held at Darling Harbour. See <https://comms.sydneyboatshow.com.au/ch/62003/8h5w9/2217518/if0Ukw0XauTHaw7fJOyvtScd20frED6i2rkrzOm2-2.html> .

13th to 21st August: National Science Week – see www.scienceweek.net.au .

13-15th September: 2023 Joint Conference of the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology (AIMA) and the ICOMOS - International Committee on the Underwater Cultural Heritage (ICUCH). The Conference theme is 'Connected by Water' and will be held on in Canberra.

1 - 15th of October: This year's Nature Festival will be slightly longer, running during the full Spring school holidays.

7-13th November: National Recycling Week – www.recyclingweek.planetark.org .

18th – 25th November: Deep Week Taiwan is being held on Xiaoliuqiu Island, a small island paradise off the southwestern coast of Taiwan. The island is known for its clear water, amazing coral reefs. For all the details visit https://freedivingfamily.com/deep-week-taiwan?ss_source=sscampaigns&ss_campaign_id=643e354f6de4ca72918017aa&ss_email_id=643e5c6454dfcc67f77f586a&ss_campaign_name=New+Deep+Weeks+are+here%21&ss_campaign_sent_date=2023-04-18T09%3A01%3A39Z

ABOUT THE SDFSA...

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

JOIN US FOR FREE!

<https://sdfs.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 SDFSA!

You can also read about the Federation's work in monthly issues of DiveLog Australasia, Scubadiver ANZ and on our website at <https://sdfs.net>. Stay up to date with the latest news through our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/scubadivesa/>. And follow our FB group, SA Dive Sites Vlz and Conditions for current diving conditions shared by the group members.

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