



## Vice Presidents Report 2020-2021

*Jade Bruggeling*

As Vice President of the club, it has been my role to oversee the safety of the club, maintain knowledge on rapidly changing legalisation of COVID-19, coordinate grants, and to assist the president with the running of the club when needed.

### COVID-19

COVID-19 continued to be an area of dynamic government policy which required us to closely monitor our operations for compliance. Diving outside of South Australia has not been a viable option for most members with rapid state boarder changes occurring throughout the year. With these limitations, the club focused on providing local diving and offering some unique trip opportunities to areas of South Australia that were infrequently dived. This has been extremely successful in maintaining membership engagement and providing some recreational relief from the multitude of stressors COVID-19 produced.

At present, we are operating in line with the South Australian COVID Directives which are reflected in our COVID Mitigation Policy as well as our Mandated COVID Safe Plan. This currently sees us largely operating at full capacity with some limitations, however this is subject to change.

### Club Safety

There was a significant loss of capital with the partial sinking of our dive vessel Stargazer. More information on the breakdown of this will be available in the boating officers report. Despite this significant loss the year overall is absent of any major safety incidents and no formal breaches have been recorded. There were however some near misses, two key incidences which could have led to adverse outcomes without intervention from experienced club divers and committee members are highlighted below.

One near miss was on a Ex HMAS Hobart dive where a diver attempted to dive without a dive computer and instead wanted to rely on a buddy's computer. This scenario presents multiple issues including but not limited to separation of buddy pair, differing depth profiles sending the deeper diver over their No Decompression Limit (NDL), and a single point of failure in the buddy pair. All members must be diving with a dive computer of their own and be familiar in its operations.

A second near miss was on the Clan Ranald where an unexpected change of conditions led to an aborted dive where the divers ascended on a DSMB instead of the anchor line. While the decision to ascend on a DSMB was valid there is a risk of underwater current pushing one away from the boat, sometimes a significant distance, especially if conducting safety stops or decompression stops. Separation from the dive boat occurred in this instance and issues compounded on top of each other with cognitive load of managing the DSMB, attempting to clip on dive gear to their BCD, all while there were adverse surface conditions. Issues were further compounded by one of the buddy pair being a new side mount diver in equipment that was unfamiliar to the diver. When choosing an ascent method in an aborted dive consideration should be made as to the potential for drift and extended pickup time from the boat if the boat needs to break anchor to collect divers. Drift on a DSMB can be managed to a degree by finning into the silt flowing in the water column or visually tracking a distinct feature on the bottom of the seafloor.

Screening of divers to ensure they dive within their comfort, training and AUSC Policies remains a priority and it is important that inexperienced divers and divers experimenting with unfamiliar equipment do not dive on sites that they are not sufficiently qualified or experienced to safely dive. We continue to remind our boat handlers that they have the authority and support of the club to not allow a member to dive if they are not confident in their skills or ability to do so safely.

Out of the water it continues to be important to replace aging club equipment when needed and it is important that AUSC members that hire gear advise the committee of any gear malfunctions and said gear is kept well away from serviceable gear in the club room facilities.

Overall, we are catching near misses before they become potential incidents and the informal screening of divers to ensure comfort and safety is continuing to be a key method of keeping diving operations running in a cheerful and safe manner.

### Development Grants

In 2020 AU Sport awarded the Club a grant for the clubs' safety related training for members. This ended up funding 4 Rescue Diver Courses while a further 4 Seamanship courses and 1 radio course were ultimately funded by AUSC due to difficulties with the grant cycle and booking delays with COVID-19. There are still a few courses outstanding and they are being handled between the members and their selected training organisation. Thanks to this grant round we are in the final stages of onboarding a new boat operator who is keen to explore the many dive sites of South Australia.

### Active Club Program

The active club program is run by the South Australian Government of Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing. It is a program that provides grants ranging from \$1500 to \$3000. AUSC was awarded a grant just shy of \$1,800. We are putting this grant money towards such items as inflatable life jackets and new boating electronics.

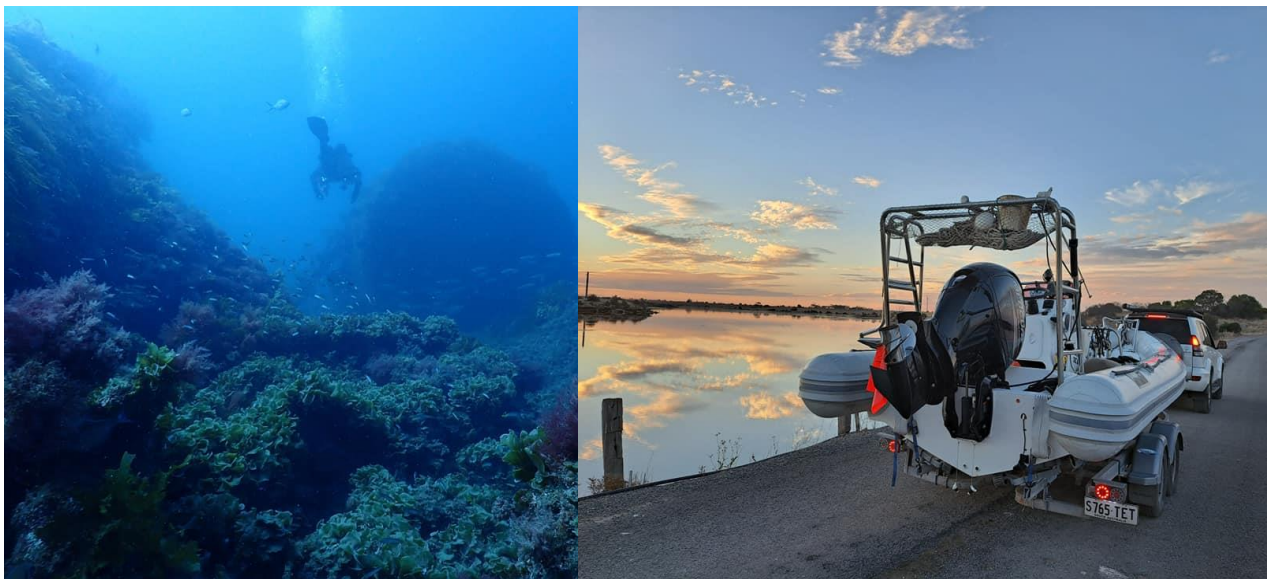
### Dive Trips

In 2020/2021 the club has run several trips down to Coobowie which continues to be a great base for exploring the underwater wonders at Edithburgh. A very special Coobowie trip allowed the diving on the Clan Ranald! Further to this we managed to do a day trip to double dive the Ex-HMAS Hobart and the AV Ulonga with visibility so perfect one could see the wreck from a depth of 10 metres.

At the end of 2020 we also ran a weeklong trip to the Eyre Peninsula basing ourselves 50km north of Elliston on a farm stay. With Vitamin Sea, Stargazer, 3 portable compressors, and a multitude of divers, we explored some exotic and rarely dived sites around the area. While there were some adverse wind conditions it was a truly spectacular trip that kept on producing postcard perfect pictures.



*AV Ulonga and EXHAMS double dive trip*



*Australia Day Long Weekend Coobowie*