Diving Policy

Aim

The aim of this policy is to communicate the requirements for diving with the club and club boats.

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1 Revision

This policy is to be maintained and reviewed by the AUSC Committee.

2 Application

This policy applies to all members who attend dive events.

3 Diving requirements

Members must hold at minimum an Open Water dive certification, or equivalent certification from an international standard 24801 training organisation to dive with AUSC.

AUSC membership may be terminated when a member falsifies certification credentials, cannot produce a dive certification that can be validated by the issuing training agency or assists in the falsification of the certification of anyone participating in a club sponsored dive.

DAN membership and dive insurance is highly recommended for all club members due to the significant costs an individual would incur if medical evacuation and treatment are required. Adequate dive insurance is required on all out-of-country club-sponsored dives.

AUSC is a drug free diving environment. Refer to the club's Illicit and Illegal Drug Policy for details.

The following safe diving advice should be read in conjunction with the clubs Code of Conduct:

- Divers should not surface alone and must not continue a dive without a buddy even if the diver's original buddy needs to surface due to low breathing gas or approaching NDL.
- Adherence to No Decompression Limits as calculated per dive tables/computers is mandatory for all dives not conducted in accordance with an approved deco dive plan.
- A dive below flag must be flown any time diving is being conducted from the club boat.
- Discuss and plan the dive with your buddy. Go over time, depth, route, hand signals, emergency procedures, etc. (do you feel comfortable diving with this person?)
- On any Club trip, a Committee Member, the scheduled boat operator or the Activity Leader can cancel the dive due to bad weather, etc.
- Decompression Diving or other Technical Diving requires the consent of the Activity leader
- A Committee Member may suspend a member's privilege to dive during a trip if that member violates these rules, the club's Diving Code of Conduct or otherwise demonstrates unsafe diving practices.
- Dives should be planned to commence against the current and return with it to the exit site. Keep in mind where you are in relation to the exit point.
- Penetrate a wreck only if you are certified and it is within your comfort level to do so, and your equipment is positioned so that it won't become snagged. Wreck or Cave Diver Certification is highly recommended and is mandatory for wreck penetration beyond visual range of an exit. A dive light and a dive knife are also recommended.
- Penetration cave diving (i.e. beyond the visible range of the cave exit) is not permitted on club dives unless the purpose of the trip is cave diving, and the divers are certified cave divers or are under instruction by a suitably qualified person.
- If surfacing away from the ascent/anchor line, deploy a surface marker buoy (SMB) to get the boat operator's attention.
- If surfacing away from the ascent/anchor line in an environment of a high level of boat traffic (as might occur at the Ex-HMAS Hobart) deploy an SMB from safety stop depth.

- Observe and obey all safe diving practices recommended by your dive agency for your certification level.

4 Away trips

AUSC organises several trips away from local metropolitan waters each year. Divers who attend these club trips must be a member of the AUSC to dive and must meet the requirements of the specific trip, including diving experience and training level.

5 Diving equipment

It is the responsibility of all divers to ensure they are appropriately equipped for all diving activities.

Divers are to ensure they have the minimum dive equipment described in Appendix C during all club dives and that they personally have verified proper functioning of that equipment.

It is recommended that divers bring the following on all club dives:

- Sufficient drinking water (depending on length of activity and weather)
- Sun protection – a hat with chin strap, sunscreen, long-sleeved shirt
- Snack (note that sugary food may be a good source of energy and useful for a cold or tired diver)

Refer to the club's Diving Code of Conduct for detail and other requirements.

6 Shark risk management

6.1 Shark Shield use

For all club boat dives, a Shark Shield should be hung beneath the boat at safety stop depth.

It is recommended that if one boat heads out, two Shark Shields should be taken. One Shark Shield should be hung at the surface, and the other at the safety stop mark. Alternatively, Shark Shields may be given and rotated between diver groups.

If more than one boat is taken out, each boat should attach a Shark Shield to offer protection at the safety stop.

In the situation where one boat is tethered to another, a Shark Shield should be hung below the anchored boat, or the one nearest the mooring buoy. Consideration should also be given to using a second Shark Shield at the second boat if they are not moored immediately adjacent to each other.

6.2 Shark sightings

According to the DTEI (2008, p.59), if a shark(s) is observed, the location, description, distance to shore and your contact details should be reported to:

- Fishwatch 1800 065 522 (all hours);
- SA Police 131 444;
- Local Council; and
- The local Surf Lifesaving Club.

Shark sightings should also be reported to the AUSC committee at the earliest opportunity.

7 Night dives

Diving at night is a unique diving experience that should only be attempted after a diver has sufficient comfort in daytime diving activities and has previously dived similar types of sites during daylight hours. It is important to note the reduction in visual diving cues and field of view at night can, for divers unaccustomed to night diving, increase the cognitive load to the detriment of safe diving practices. It is therefore recommended that divers hold a Night diving qualification (through SSI, or PADI, or equivalent agency) or complete an Advanced Open Water diving course before preforming night dives. At the very least, a diver's first night dive should be conducted at a relatively simple site and in the company of a diver experienced in night diving.

A torch (preferably with a backup torch) is required for all night dives. Consideration should be given for the length of dive being undertaken to ensure the torch can last the full duration of the dive plus a safety margin and is sufficiently bright for the dive being undertaken.

Locator lights, used to mark divers, are recommended in addition to dive torches. Locator lights can be chemical (liquid chemicals that, when mixed, produce a bright glow), or reusable flares (uses batteries instead of chemicals). It is recommended lights be reusable to reduce environmental impact. Divers should attach a locator light to their cylinder valves or regulator hoses.

8 Decompression illness

All dives should be conducted with a conservative plan and profile that takes into consideration risk factors that can increase the chances of decompression illness occurring. Additionally, strenuous activities and hot showers should be avoided after a dive to reduce the risk of decompression illness. For suspected decompression illness, the Activity Leader is to:

- Call DES 1800 088 200 and seek medical advice
- Commence or cause to be commenced First Aid at the earliest opportunity, including administration of oxygen.
- Abort the dive activity where this is necessary to expedite qualified medical treatment.
- Evacuate the casualty to an appropriate medical facility.
- Ensure, where practicable, that the casualty is accompanied by a club member, or other appropriate person to the medical facility.
- Secure (subject to the owner's consent) the dive computer and equipment relied upon by the casualty.
- Tag, secure and isolate club equipment used by the casualty.
- Ensure, where practicable, that the casualty's possessions are safeguarded.
- Subject to the casualty's consent (if this is possible) contact the casualty's Emergency Contact.
- Record the circumstances of the incident.
- Ask witnesses to prepare statements on the incident.
- Advise the club president or vice president as soon as possible, and
- Provide a record of the incident and available witness statements to the club committee.

9 Advanced Dive Sites

While the AUSC does not wish to exclude anyone, for the safety and enjoyment of all club members, some restrictions must be made for certain dive sites.

Divers shall dive within their training and experience as the club is not a training provider and none of its members can be assumed to take on roles such as instructor, divemaster, dive guide or first aider while on normal club dives.

An exception is for Training Dives, conducted under the supervision of a Qualified Instructor who is approved to conduct courses from the club boats in accordance with the AUSC Training and Development Policy.

9.1 Definition

The club defines an Advanced Dive Site as one offering challenges beyond the training and certification limits of a diver with just an entry-level certification such as PADI Open Water Diver. Criteria used to assess a site's suitability include depth, overhead environment, navigational complexity, site complexity, weather, and water conditions (and propensity to change quickly) and heritage status.

South Australian dive sites listed in Table 1 are deemed to be Advanced Dive Sites primarily due to depth requirements and complexity.

Note that even a shallow dive site can be difficult for beginner divers should there be challenging environment conditions, such as poor visibility, rain, swell/rough seas, etc. Ultimately a diver must only dive to their level of comfort and experience.

9.2 Advanced Dive Site diver requirements

The following requirements must be met for a diver to dive an Advanced Dive Site (as defined in Section 9.1, but may not be limited to those sites listed in Table 1):

- Divers must be qualified to Advanced Open Water (AOW) certification:
    - It is recommended that divers do not exceed their certification depth rating where possible – these are outlined at Appendix A.
    - For any dive site deeper than 30 m, additional dive certification is required, such as PADI/SSI Deep Diver specialty, in line with certification depth rating recommendations.
- A minimum of 20 logged dives, taking into account the dives already completed on OW and AOW courses;
- Have previously dived with the club on an active AUSC boat;
- Have previously dived in temperate waters; and
- Have successfully completed two club boat dives in the past six months.

Should an exception be required, then appropriate reasoning / rationale must be provided to both the AUSC President and AUSC Vice-President in writing. Approval must be obtained from both these individuals, as well as final endorsement by the Activity Leader / Boat Handler, who must also be comfortable with taking the individual.

9.3 Activity Leader / Boat Handler requirements

Additional Activity Leader / Boat Handler responsibilities for conducting dive trips to advanced dive sites include:

- Verification of diver qualifications / experience / comfort; and
- Consideration of placing a hang tank at an appropriate depth and position.

9.4 SA Dive Site Classifications

The dive sites listed in Table 1 are considered by AUSC to meet the Advanced Dive Site criteria.

Table 1 Advanced Dive Site List

Dive Site	Depth (m)	Comment / Rationale	Certification Required
AV *Ulonga* (wreck)	39	Depth	Deep Specialty
Claris (wreck)	23-25	Depth	Advanced Open Water
Ex-HMAS *Hobart* (wreck)	28-30	Depth and complex wreck	Advanced Open Water
Little Blue	41	Council by law	CDAA Deep Cavern
Leeton (wreck)	22	Depth	Advanced Open Water
Port Stanvac Barges (wreck)	28	Depth	Advanced Open Water
Port Stanvac Mooring Blocks	25	Depth	Advanced Open Water
Zanoni (wreck)	18	Permit required under heritage	Advanced Open Water
Ardrossan Barge (wreck)	20	Remote location and weather	Advanced Open Water
S.S. *Clan Ranald* (wreck)	20	Remote location and weather	Advanced Open Water
Haystack Island	20	Remote location and weather	Advanced Open Water
Althorpe Island	20+	Remote location and weather	Advanced Open Water

There are some dive sites that are deeper than the open water certification depth limit of 18m but may be dived by divers with that certification. For example, the Glenelg Dredge lies in 21m of water and contains an overhead environment, however most of the wreck lies above 18m, and open water divers can stay within their limits by keeping to the wreck's deck. Consequently, it is acceptable for these dive sites listed in Table 2 to be dived by non-experienced divers.

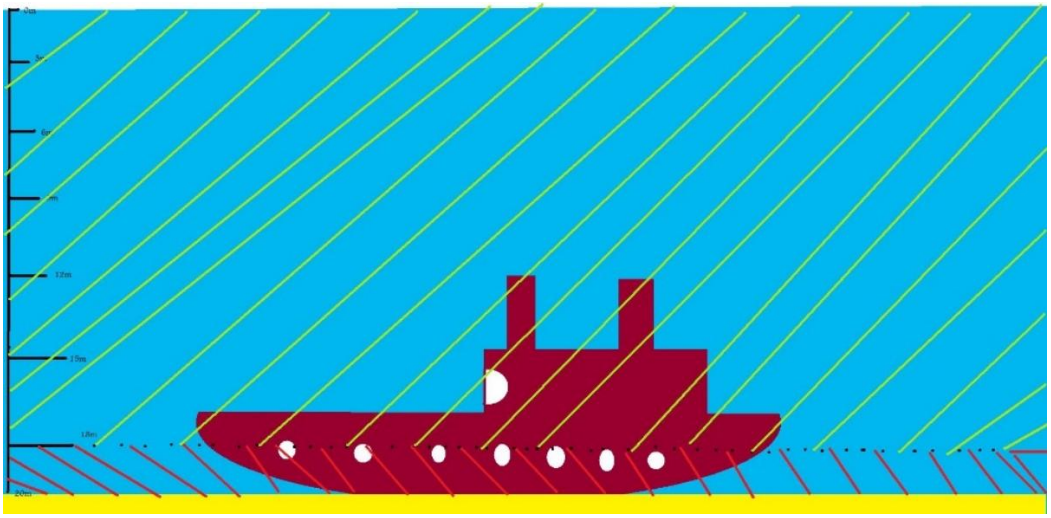

Figure 1 Glenelg Dredge depth schematic, outlining majority of the wreck shallower than open water diver limit of 18 m.

Table 2 Non-Experienced Dive Site List

Dive Site	**Depth** (m)
Aldinga Drop Off	5-21
Glenelg Barge (wreck)	20
Glenelg Dredge (wreck)	20
Glenelg Tyre Reef	18
Grange Tyre Reef	20
HA Lumb (wreck)	20
John Robb (wreck)	18
MV Seawolf (wreck)	22
Point Lowly Tyre Reef	20
West Island, Victor Harbor	20-22

Appendix A: Diver certifications

Divers should not exceed their depth certification, as per Table 3.

It is noted that there are many Adelaide metropolitan dive sites only slightly deeper than the Open Water recommended depth rating of 18 m, consequently for those non-experienced dive sites deeper than 18 m, the diver should exercise judgement and stay within their comfort of their limits.

Table 3 Certification Depth Rating

Certification	Depth Rating (m)	Comment
Scuba Diver (SSI)	12	Same as open water, while under supervision of a certified professional
Scuba Diver (PADI)	18	Same as open water, while under supervision of a certified professional
Open Water	18	
Advanced Open Water	30	
Deep Specialty	40	

Junior certifications exist, but they tend to be depth limited versions of their adult counterparts and vary depending on age.

Ex-HMAS Hobart dives

It is recommended dives to the Ex-HMAS Hobart occur on a dodge tide. If weather conditions are suitable dives may also be planned to coincide with a low tide. A dive to the Ex-HMAS Hobart should only be undertaken if the conditions look appropriate and are considered safe for the skill level of all divers on board.

It is mandatory that a diver holds at least an advanced open water certification, with a minimum of 20 logged dives, to dive on the Ex-HMAS Hobart.

It is not considered safe practice to dive from your buddy's computer, if you do not have your own computer. You can hire club regulators which come with an inbuilt computer. If undertaking a double dive, the deepest dive should be your first dive.

If inexperienced divers want to attend a dive trip to the Ex-HMAS Hobart it is the Activity Leader's and boat handler's responsibility to ensure before leaving the clubrooms there are sufficient experienced divers on board to buddy up with inexperienced but suitably qualified divers.

AV Ulonga

Due to its depth the non-decompression time is very limited.

It is required that a diver hold at minimum an Advanced Open Water and deep certification or equivalent training, to dive on the AV Ulonga.

Appendix B: Boat diver responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every diver participating in a club boat dive activity to:

- Pre-dive, satisfy himself or herself that the proposed dive activity is within the reasonable limits of their equipment, skills, and experience.
- Ensure they are properly equipped for boat and dive activities (refer policies).
- Conduct herself or himself in accordance with safe diving practice (refer Diving Code of Conduct).
- Assist the boat operator or Activity Leader when requested to do so or as the need arises.
- Assist other divers when requested to do so or when the need arises.
- Participate, where practicable, in the post-dive clean-up of the boat and equipment.
- Pay for the hire of club equipment and dive fees prior to commencing the activity unless the Activity Leader approves payment immediately upon conclusion of the activity.
- Secure their equipment on the boat.
- Post-activity, remove all hired and personal gear (including rubbish) from the boat.
- Act in an environmentally friendly manner, including appropriate storage and disposal of waste (including cylinder valve tape).

Appendix C: Diver Equipment List

Mandatory:	
Mask	With prescription lenses if required
Fins	
Exposure suit	Suitable for the conditions
BCD	
Weight System	Quick Release
Weights	
1st Stage Reg, 2 x 2nd stage Regs, SPG	
Cylinder	
Dive Computer, or dive tables and a dive timer	
Depth Monitoring Device	E.g. Dive computer.
Whistle	Or comparable sound-making device
Recommended:	
SMB	Mandatory for boat dives
Booties	
Snorkel	Mounted on left side.
Dive Knife or Cutting Tool	In case of entanglement. Fishing line, for example.
Compass	Especially for tyre reefs and multi-part dive sites.
Torch, primary	To see colour underwater. Mandatory for night dive.
Torch, secondary	Night dives
Spool	To enable deployment of SMB from depth
Optional:	
Undervest	
Gloves	
Hood	
Socks (diving or non-diving type)	Inside dive boots
Dive slate and pencil	

Document control

Revision (Date)	Person	Comments
0 (15/11/2009)	**Author:** David Warren, Treasurer **Reviewed:** Emily Moskwa, Secretary **Approved:** Mostyn Walker, President	Document released to club membership.
1 (15/12/2012)	**Approved:** Sam Owen	
2 (15/03/2013)	**Author:** Mike Swinbourne, President **Reviewed:** Committee **Approved:** Mike Swinbourne, President	Changed following comment "Collecting of fish for aquaria is permitted if it is within the legal fishing limits or you have a license, but spear fishing is not allowed on SCUBA" to make clear spearfishing is not allowed on club boats. Added diving alone discouraged comment.
3 (13/10/2015)	**Author:** David Warren **Reviewed:** Committee (via Meeting 13/10/2015) **Approved:** David Warren	Updated to new format. Added Shark Shield reference. Also amalgamated SOP 16 *Diver Equipment* (developed by Tim Brown) within this policy. Added SOP 12 *Boat Diver Responsibilities* (developed by Tim Brown) to appendix.
4 (10/03/2021)	**Author:** Anita Futterer **Reviewed:** Jade Bruggeling **Approved:** Jack Morelli	Remove Shark Shield reference. Amalgamated Experienced Dive Site Policy (developed by David Warren / Daniel Kinasz) within this policy. Adequate dive insurance not exclusively DAN insurance is mandatory for overseas trips. Safety stops are encouraged and are not mandatory.
5 19/08/2022	**Author:** Tim Brown **Reviewed:** **Approved:**	4. Tips for safe diving include use of SMB. 6. SMB to be carried by all divers on club boat(s).
6 15 July 2023	**Author:** Jade Bruggeling & Tim Brown **Reviewed:** Committee (via Meeting Date) **Approved:** Committee (via Meeting date)	Deleted requirements duplicated in the new Diving Code of Conduct. Added training and dive skill considerations for night dives. Added recommendations around avoiding decompression illness. Added clarification away trips can have unique trip requirements. Adjusted language in shark shields to be inclusive of private boats. Updated experience site requirements to reflect previous club boat dives are needed and not just previous club dives. Updated experienced site list to include Marion Bay sites, Clan Ranald, Zanoni, and Ardrossan barge as per current club practises. Adjusted language that Ex-HMAS Hobart dives require a minimum of 20 previous dives, AOW, marine parks permit, and is over 18 only due to permit requirements and not specific club policy. Consolidate most dive gear requirements from main body into Appendix C.
7 9 October 2023	**Author:** Jade Bruggeling **Reviewed:** Committee via FB chat group **Approved:** Committee (06/11/2023)	Removed permit requirements for the that Ex-HMAS Hobart site. Adjusted Ex-HMAS Hobart site dive computer requirements
8 19 May 2026	**Author:** Matt West **Reviewed:** Committee (via Meeting 21/05/2026) **Approved:** Committee (via Meeting 21/05/2026)	Updated requirement from "Have previously dived with the club;" to "Have previously dived with the club on an active AUSC boat;" updated wording from via email to in writing in regards to exceptions.