

# THE UEC News



Annual General Meeting Wed 20 July 2016

Thank you 2015-2016 committee

President – Martin Smith  
Secretary – Steve Zoccoli  
Vice President – Geoff Geard  
Treasurer – Steve Day  
Membership – Mike Buchanan  
Dive Coordinator – Melanie Turner  
Boat Officer & SYC Liaison – Martin Smith  
Safety & Training – John De Boer  
Social – Liz Davey  
Environment – Sue Haste  
Fundraising – Liz Davey  
Communications – Chris Wilkinson



## Member subscriptions are due now

Member subscriptions are now due. Payments can be made by cheque payable to "Underwater Explorers Club of WA" and posted to the club at: PO Box 382, Melville WA 6956 or by EFT direct to the clubs bank account (preferred): BSB 066-136, Account no. 90-1972 \*please email [treasurer@uecwa.com.au](mailto:treasurer@uecwa.com.au) and advise that you have EFT paid and provide details (a screen shot of the payment is great).

Subscriptions for 2016/17 are:

UEC Ordinary member \$205

Family member \$340

Student/Junior/Social \$45

CIO Membership \$10

SYC membership is no longer required.

## UEC Membership Database

Have you moved house recently or updated your email address / mobile phone number? If so please let Mike know on [membership@uecwa.com.au](mailto:membership@uecwa.com.au) so we can ensure that the UEC membership database is up to date.

## Presidents Report

Hi All

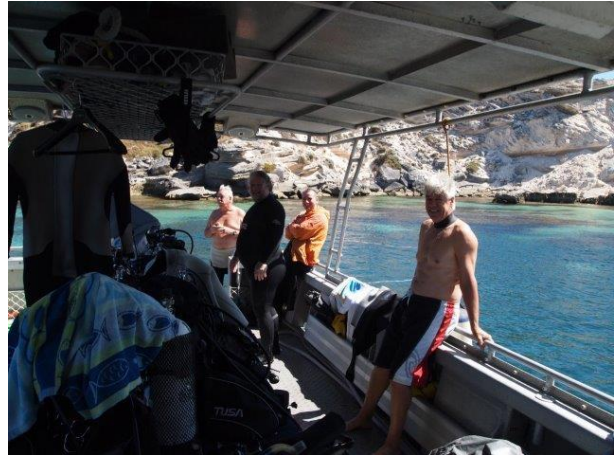
The past year has been a momentous year for the club. A year of great change and direction for the future. The format for the general meeting's has been enhanced by the use of PowerPoint presentations. My thanks to Mel Turner for helping me with this.

There was a little hick up with Cape Cruiser as she required an expensive overhaul of the motor but she now running beautifully.

Membership is well up thanks to lot's of well organised dive trip's.

As our name suggests we are still embracing exploring by welcoming the introduction of Tech diving, Thank's to Hugh Parker and his band of merry diver's.

The social side of the club has been very well attended thank's to the hard work of Liz Davey.



And of course the big change for the club was the move to Port Coogee. This new location give's the club faster access to diving around Garden Island and surrounding area. The facilities at Port Coogee are fantastic and moving in and out of the pen are easy due to the lack of water movement.

All in all it's been a great year for the club and I was glad to be part of it.

Thank's to all the committee, for without them none of this would have been possible.

I wish the new committee all the best for the year ahead.

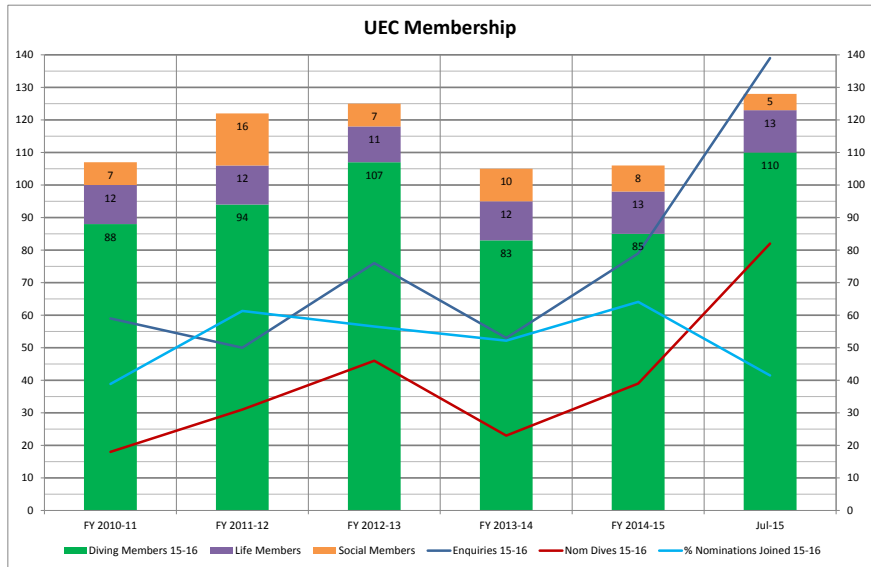
Martin Smith

President

## **Membership Report**

This year we really started to see the trend that started late last year show and membership numbers turn around after bottoming out the last couple of years. We had a huge increase in enquiries going from 54 to 79 to 139, a 157% increase over two years. This in turn led to an increase in nomination dives going from 23 to 39 to 82, a whopping 256% increase over two years, with 35 of these nominees joining the club. This large increase in new members and a smaller than usual loss of existing members translating into an overall increase in membership from 105 to 106 to 128, a 21% increase. The only trend that was down was the % of nomination divers going on to join the club, going from about 52% to 64% to 41%. It has been suggested that many of these nominations use the UEC as a cheap dive charter and that may well be true but at the end of the day they can only do it once (we do keep track of every nomination dive and check all bookings. They all pay for their nomination dive helping to fill the boat and if we want new members we need to accept there will always be some like this. I would also remind everyone that the best way to get a nomination diver to join the club is for everyone to make them feel welcome on the day and I think we do a pretty good job of that.

I think there are a number of drivers for the increase in interest and membership. The first was the level of interest we saw generated by the Dolphin Dive open day in October which was even better than the previous year. We will certainly be participating again this year and our discounted introductory offer was a factor in getting people to sign up. The second and probably much more significant reason

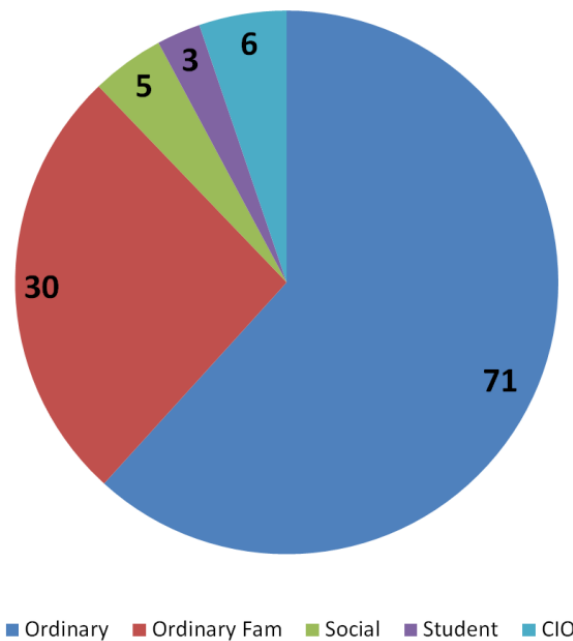


was the posting of the weekly club newsletter on all the local Facebook groups. We were already reaping the benefits from this towards the end of last year and this has just grown and grown. There can't be many divers in Perth now that haven't heard of the UEC. Finally new members tend to bring other new members to the club especially when our members, crew and dive coordinator all make them feel so welcome. New members also tend to be the more prolific divers with many of the regulars on the boat this year our newer members.

This year also saw the introduction (or should I say re-introduction) of the Country, Interstate and Overseas membership category.

This was designed specifically around giving ex UEC members who have moved away from Perth the opportunity to dive when back visiting and also to allow club members the opportunity to bring visiting friends and family on the boat. It has also enabled a few of our fellow divers from areas like Bunbury to come for a dive when visiting the big smoke.

I think our membership has now reached a level where we can seriously start implementing regular two dive trip weekends. We did a few of these this last year and almost filled the boat on both days. Of course running the boat both days puts a demand on the crew and we have been pretty proactive this year in initiating training (or re-training in some cases) of both Skippers (myself and John De Boer) as well as Dive Officers (Dave Carter, Hugh Parker, Anne McCarroll, Tom Bassett, David Geary, Steve Zoccoli & Bec Johnston).



I have now been on the committee for six years, two as Dive Coordinator, one as President and the last three years in the Membership role. I hope that the membership will support my nomination to continue in this role to further develop and build on the solid foundation of the last few years.

Mike Buchanan

## Treasurer's Report

This year was a very challenging one for the Club.

The engine & drive train repairs were responsible for a thousand percent increase in repair costs from the previous year. Fortunately cash reserves were available to meet these costs.

We are not out of the woods yet as the boat is using coolant which if further repair work is required may or may not be covered under warranty by the engine repairer, Westrac. This has now been fixed.



The move to pen Cape Cruiser at Coogee Marina after thirteen years at Swan Yacht Club was also momentous.

The loss for the year was \$56,891.32 which included \$14,188 in depreciation and \$75,094.91 in repair costs.

We finished the year with \$11,794.94 in our cheque account and \$23,759.93 on deposit with ING.

Some interesting financial comparisons from this year to the previous one are:

- Boat dive income up by 16% or \$2,290
- Membership fees up by 18% or \$1,919
- Nomination dive income up by 143% or \$3,225
- Ing Deposit account down by 64% or \$41,940

A big thanks to Clive Cass for again organizing the annual Rottnest dive week which netted the Club \$5,145.

I want to thank the Committee for an enjoyable year and have renominated to be your Treasurer for next year

Steve Day  
Treasurer July 7 2016



## Fundraising Report

Hello Everyone.

### Social and Fundraising report 2015-2016

Well this year I can include both Social and fundraising in my report, as I accepted the Social portfolio in August 2015, the dual role has kept me busy ever since, and guess what ... I love it!

What have we achieved this past year? Lots of things, so here goes...

This year's Social activities have included a visit to an exhibition and presentation by The Maritime Museum around Pearl divers and their poignant history.

The Amazing UEC Curry night, was generously hosted by Ilonka and Eddie. What a wonderful response we had that evening, and the food was totally **amazing**. So many fantastic cooks, in this club...I can feel the need to reschedule this one, especially during these chilly days and nights.. yum.

The Weather Gods and boat issues, did not bode well for the River Cruise nights planned aboard UE, and the Christmas BBQ meeting, however we managed alternatives (Thank you Martin and Jazz for your very short notice, hospitality). All nights were a great success, with oodles of fun and laughter.

I haven't forgotten Mussels on the Moorings, ( my personal favorite) and have it in mind for later in the year...

Who could forget the Sky Show Cruise, during which the boat broke down and we needed to be towed away from our priceless vantage point to Melville waters..... Never mind I have it from many who attended it was the best River Cruise they had in a long time. Nothing to do with the Moijtos...



The Orphans Christmas Day dive was well attended and enjoyed. Those attending agreed the change of location, from Robbs, to Ammo was a good idea... who need's a coronary on Christmas day?

The 2nd Hand Dive/ Camera gear day generated plenty of enthusiasm, several people leaving with a great bargain. If there is sufficient interest, we can hold a similar day again in 2017.

Which leads us nicely on to "Finding Dory". What an amazing response to that movie and meal night, with 21 members attending...all of us big kids at heart.. And so to Fundraising.

Well that's been busy too. This years Entertainment Book/App sales totaled 29, so a huge Thank you to all of those who bought...

I placed an order for club clothing and finally believe I am very close to nailing the Poncho purchase I have spoken of previously. I will bring the sample I have to the next meeting.

They are sooo cuddly... great for the surface interval during theses less than balmy double dive days.

The 'Lucky Number" raffle seems to continue to be popular with members, so I will keep that happening, until you guys tell me different.

Mel boosted book sales when she sold the three books trilogy, offered at a special rate by author Johan Boshoff, following his presentation at a club meeting. The books are great, a must have addition to my aquatic library. Thanks Mel.

Log Books, I still have a few UEC Log Books remaining... It is time to think about creating a new one, so watch out for the invite for participation in that one.

Those who attended the annual pilgrimage to Rotto would have received their UEC stubby holder as part of their holiday package. There's no need for you to miss out though, I have a small quantity I would like to sell, so if you would like one, contact me.. \$4.00 each.

That brings me to the most important Fundraiser held by UEC in many years.. "The Inaugural Sheep Poo Drive". Please support the club in this endeavor, we are attempting to bag and sell 1000, 70 litre bags of Sheep Poo for \$10.00 each. We are asking club members to commit to selling 10 bags each (family friends, neighbors...you know the ones) in an attempt to raise money to replace that which went towards the huge boat repair costs this year. Can you help? If not, how about making a donation in lieu of selling the bags, this option has been adopted by several club members already.

Planning fundraising and social events is great fun, but sometimes it's hard to find something new and exciting, so if you have any ideas of things we could "do" please let me know...

Finally, a heart felt thank you to you all, your support of this wonderful club is paramount in keeping us diving.....

Sincerely Liz.  
Liz Davey

Fundraising Officer

## **Secretary's Report**

Although to some extent I enjoyed my role as UEC Secretary, helping the Club and Committee, I will not be standing for the position next year.

I must admit this has also been a challenging role as I took over without any assistance so it took me some time to catch up to what the role required.

This year I have introduced a new Assets Register, however this is just in the beginning stages and



needs to be enhanced and I would like to see this system improved. I would also have liked to see A Role Position Policy introduced that describes the requirements of each committee position and its duties and responsibilities.

The General meeting format has been changed and the use of PowerPoints have taken over from minutes.

The face of modern society and good business practices, has changed very rapidly over the last few years, and, I believe that the club must move with these times if it is to survive and attract the younger generation. New technologies are out there including, Facebook, Twitter, Web Sites and Google, and the list goes on.....

Finally, It is time for the Constitution to be updated in line with the new Act that has been released, and also to reflect the changes in our club over the last few years.

I would like to thank you all for your support over the past year and look forward to being involved with the Club in the coming year.

Secretary

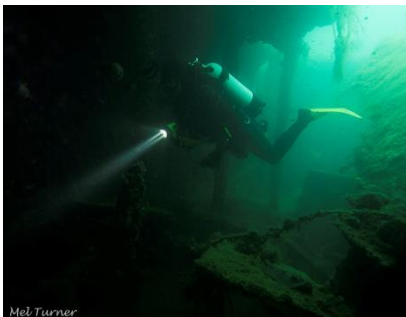
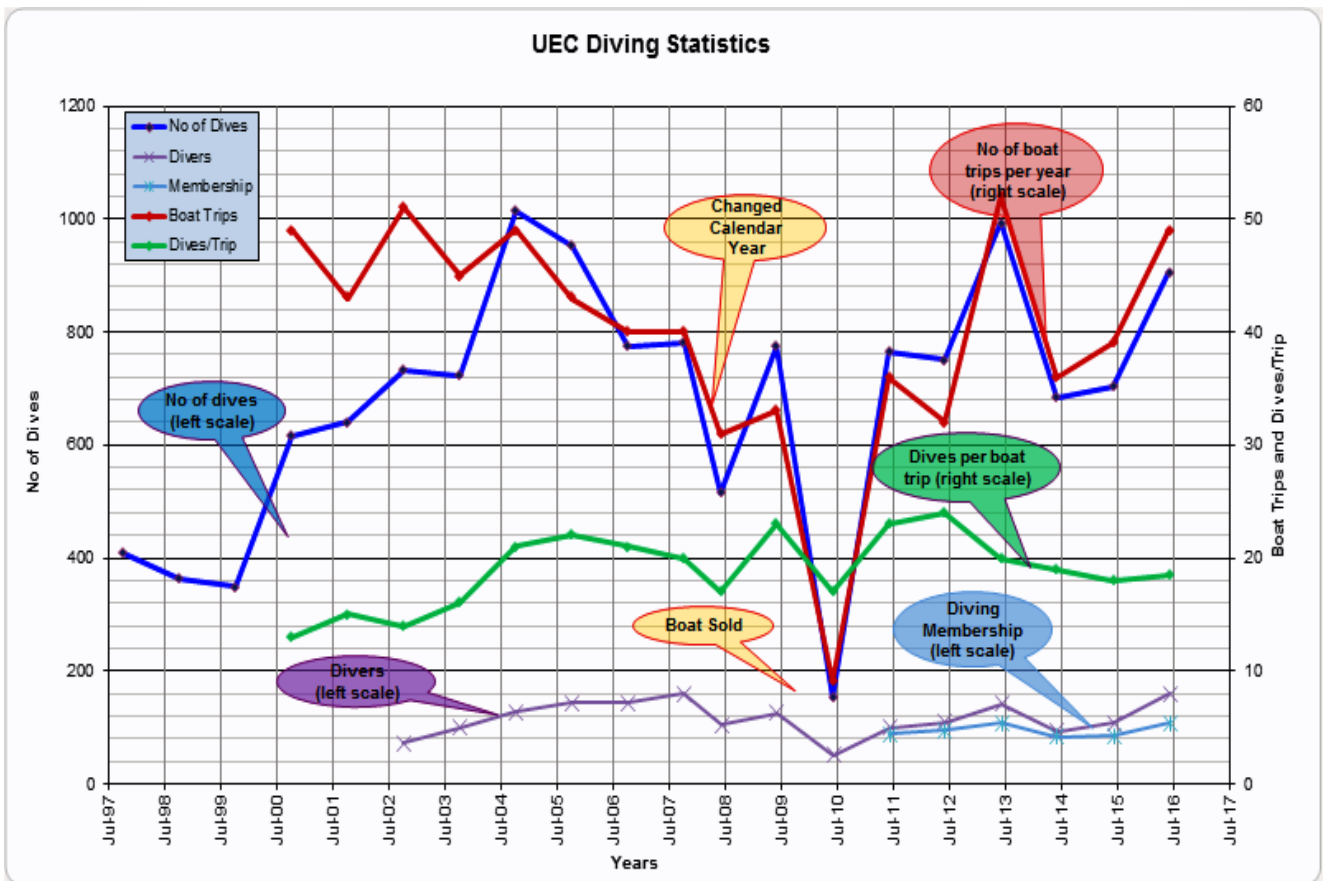
Steve Zoccoli

## **Dive Coordinator's Report**

This was my second year as the Dive Coordinator and I have to say – it was as much fun (if not more fun) than my first year on the job! With our Membership numbers increasing, as well as the introduction of the Tec Diving Chapter – we saw a whole new level of enthusiasm for diving with UEC this year... and it was so awesome to be a part of it!

Whilst the boat was out of action for a total of 15 weekends (due to a major overhaul of the motor), we still managed to break our records for both the number of divers and Diving Membership since we started recording these things (in 2009/10). We also had the highest number of boat trips and the highest number of dives since 2012/13... not a bad effort!





### Where did we go?

We visited a total of 40 different sites (some grouped into areas) over the course of the year. This included 2 new sites – one of which (Carpet Emporium) proved to be extremely popular, hence our diving it 3 times in the space of 3 months. Thank you to Malcolm Roberts for the tip-off here!

The Crystal Palace area was dived most often – in part due to sea/weather conditions, but also because it is a very popular reef system with our Members. Likewise – we hit Cray Canyon and Nurse’s Quarters with some regularity – again due to the popularity of these sites.



Dive Sites	No dives	Dive Sites	No dives
Crystal Palace Area	8	Brass Monkey	1
Cray Canyon	7	Carlisle Castle (Wreck)	1
Nurse's Quarters	6	Channel Marker Caves	1
Geordie Lump	5	Cray Market	1
Roe Reef (Arch Rock & Flat Cave)	5	D9 Barge (Wreck)	1
Stragglers (incl. Big Cave & Crazy Wobby)	5	Dave's Spot	1
Flat Top	4	Denton Holm (Wreck)	1
Roe Reef (Arch Rock & Flat Cave)	4	Elder Point	1
Kingston Spit (Shark Cave & Steve's spot)	4	North Mole - Gareenup (Wreck)	1
Carpet Emporium	3	Jumbo Cave	1
City of York (Wreck)	3	Kerry's Caverns	1
Point Clune Cave	3	Little Parakeet Bay	1
Hugel's Passage	3	Maree's Aquarium	1
Opera House	3	NW Rottnest – "Deep Dive 1"	1
Duck Rock	2	Parker Point Drop-off	1
Duffield Ridge	2	South Mole	1
Orizaba (Wreck)	2	South Passage	1
Swirl Reef	2	Stables	1
Anders Meander	1	Stragglers Dredge (Wreck)	1
Angela's Cave	1	Stragglers Ulydia (Wreck)	1

## Diver of the Year



Congratulations to Mike Buchanan on taking out the win for a second year in a row – with a massive total of 59 dives for the year. Mike passed Tracy Tebbutt's previously-held record of 54 dives in a year, and utterly blitzing the competition. This is even more impressive when you consider Mike is also a regular volunteer on the crew roster (as both a Skipper and Dive Officer). Good on you Mike! 😊

A special mention must go our second place winner – Geoff Geard... 49 dives in a year is an amazing total, and would have won him the title last year (last year Mike won with a total of 36 dives). Good on you Geoff – go for gold in 2016/17!

Other honourable mentions go to our new Members Bec Johnson (34 dives and 4<sup>th</sup> place!), Jarrad Baker (19 dives), Ciaran Kelly (16 dives), and Robert Garcia (10 dives) – good one Team!

## Diver of the Year -

Place	Name	Dives
1	Mike Buchanan	59
2	Geoff Geard	49
3	Mel Turner	43
4	Bec Johnson	34
5	Hugh Parker	28
6	Malcolm Roberts	25
7=	Steve Groen	23
7=	Clive Cass	23
9	Steve Zoccoli	22
10	Jarrad Baker	19
11	John de Boer	17
12=	Ciaran Kelly	16

Place	Name	Dives
12=	Liz Davey	16
14=	Anne McCarrol	15
14=	Mark Weber	15
16	Briony Robinson	13
17=	Pat Carter	11
17=	Dave Carter	11
19=	Bob Dobson	10
19=	Robert Garcia	10
19=	George Gandossini	10
19=	Chris McCoppin	10
19=	Zita Dobson	10
19=	Trevor Walker	10

## How much diving did we do?

A total of 159 Members had a total of 906 dives off Cape Cruiser this year, which is up from the previous 12 months (107 Members completed 703 dives last year). Of these, six of these trips were single dives (one being a Tec Dive), and one was a Triple (Wreck) Diving Day. Other than our night dive on the D9 (which formed as part of our Triple Diving Day) – not one of our Single Night Dive (Socials) went ahead this year, so we will reconsider how many of these to offer in the coming year.

In terms of non-diving days, Cape Cruiser underwent some major work this year and (as always) the weather sometimes conspires against our diving plans. Despite this, we still managed 49 different boat trips – our highest number of boat trips since the 2012/13 year (and second-highest on record). This figure was also up from the 39 boat trips we had last year.

Year	Boat Trips	No of Dives	Dives per Trip	Divers	Diving Membership
2009/10	9	153	17	51	
2010/11	36	764	23	99	88
2011/12	32	750	24	110	94
2012/13	52	993	20	142	107
2013/14	36	685	19	93	83
2014/15	39	703	18	107	85
2015/16	49	906	18	159	108



## What type of diving did we do?

2015/16 saw our inaugural “Tec Diving Days” and “Small Boats Days” take place, the start of “Monthly (Shore) Night Dives”, and the continuation of our Wreck Diving, Deep(er) Diving and Exploratory Diving Days....

### Tec Diving Days (Report by Hugh Parker – Tec Dive Coordinator)

Over the years I have undertaken various technical training courses, in an effort to further my own diving skills & knowledge. I have no particular ‘depth junky’ agenda for doing this, simply wanting to further explore the ocean & its inhabitants.

During my short time in Perth I became conscious of the limited opportunities available locally for divers to maintain their Technical Diving skills. Having dived with UEC for a couple of years I considered that the ideal answer was to convince UEC to go Tec diving.

After a club presentation, committee meetings, many (many!) emails, months of planning – taking into account safety considerations, dive protocols & some boat setup alterations, we saw the first Technical dive being conducted from Cape Cruiser in April 2016.



My wish for the Tec diving project is to provide an outlet for the existing WA technical diving community, plus give divers somewhere to dive after their initial foray into Technical diving training. As Technical diving is becoming more & more mainstream, the hope is to recruit more Members to UEC. The project would also provide existing UEC members increased value for their membership fees should they become interested in furthering their training.

Despite UEC having historically undertaken some ‘experimental’ (!) type diving many years ago, formal planned technical dives are very much a new venture for the Club. As such, the plan was to start with basic level Technical diving, such as the diving that would be undertaken by those trained to TDI’s Advanced Nitrox & Decompression Procedures level. This basic level is considered essential to allow both crew & divers to gradually build the skills & experience necessary to conduct Technical dives safely.



The dives being undertaken are all exploratory in nature at these early stages, being chosen off the available bathymetry data. Unfortunately, the weather Gods have not been kind to us over the Winter months. The Tec divers have been ‘treated’ to some interesting diving conditions, and have even managed to get up to 5m visibility in places!

With the increasing population of both Open Circuit & Closed Circuit Technical Divers, the hope for the Tec diving is to put the ‘Underwater Explorers’ back into UEC. In time, we hope to further map the diving sites around Rottnest and add to the club’s already extensive collection.



### Small Boats Day

We had our first “Small Boats Day” this year – with two Member-owned boats heading out on a blustery day, with the intention of completing a double-dive in Cockburn Sound. Unfortunately the weather didn’t allow us to complete the second, but we did manage a great single dive on the D9.

We plan to hold a couple more Small Boats Days in the coming year.

### Monthly (Shore) Night Dives



We decided to give monthly (shore) night dives a go this year and overall – I would call them a moderate success. During the winter months we went diving in the River, and over summer we dived various spots along the Perth (metro) coastline.

We plan to continue holding the monthly shore night dives over the coming year – with plenty of hot soup (after the dive) to go around!

### Wreck Diving Days (including a Triple Diving Day)

We had two Wreck Diving Days go ahead this year, with both being extremely popular. Most exciting was the fact that we nailed brilliant weather, and managed to visit the Orizaba on both days. Other wrecks we visited were the Ulydia, Carlisle Castle, and a spooky night dive on the D9.

We will definitely continue our Wreck Diving Days over the coming 12 months, and will also look to hold some more Triple Diving Days over Summer.

### Exploratory Diving Days

Given we are the Underwater Explorer’s Club of WA – it seems fitting we managed to schedule more exploratory diving this year.

Exploratory Diving days are a difficult to implement, in that no one wants to spend their day diving two disappointing dive sites – yet it is hard to make any guarantees when you’re diving the unknown. So to decrease the chances of disappointment, our exploratory dives generally utilised tip-offs from outside the Club’s knowledge base.



With that in mind, we held two Exploratory Diving days this year, which were a load of fun. We discovered 4 new sites over the two days,

which we named Cray Market, Steve’s Spot, Carpet Emporium and South Pass.



Carpet Emporium turned out to be a hugely popular site, and we have visited it another two times since discovering it in April.

### Deep(er) Diving Days

We had two Deep(er) Diving days go ahead this year. Our first saw us nail the Opera House, a site we had been gunning to find for a long time. We ended up diving this on a subsequent Deep(er) Diving Day – as well as Duffield Ridge.

Again, our Deep(er) Diving Days will continue it 2016/17.

### Carl the Cray Whisperer's Secret Spot Dives

By now most will know Carl – he is legendary at sniffing out and catching crayfish, and his days are always extremely popular.

Unfortunately the weather gods conspired against Carl and his Cray Days, with only three out of seven of the scheduled trips going ahead (such bad luck!) Consequently, he didn't quite break the record he set last year, when his trips saw punters catch the boat limit (24) of crays three trips in a row. But nevertheless – the trips that did go ahead still managed to yield more than enough crays to make keep our hunter-gatherers more than happy.



Thanks Carl! Here's to a record-breaking year ahead! ☺

### Our wonderful Crew

Without these fantastic people giving up their time, we wouldn't be able to go diving... you can't dive if there's no one to take out the boat! A big thank you! to our wonderful volunteers!

Congratulations to Mike Buchanan – who earned his Skipper “wings” this year.

It is exciting to see another Trainee Skipper, plus four Trainee DO's on board... the next 12 months should be an exciting year in terms of “Crew Development”

<b>Skipper</b>	<b>No of Trips</b>	<b>No of Dives</b>
Geoff Geard	9	166
Martin Smith	9.5	106.5
Steve Day	8	175
Chris Cunnold	7	121
Carl Anders	6	98
Rex Burke	6	129
Mike Buchanan	3.5	72.5
Wendy Hutchison	1	15
Dennis Stubberfield	1	23

<b>Dive Officer</b>	<b>No of Trips</b>	<b>No of Dives</b>
Mel Turner	14.5	244
Clive Cass	10	145
Mike Buchanan	7.5	153
Adrian Taylor	8	182
John de Boer	7	116
Wendy Hutchison	1	7
Martin Smith	1	17
Geoff Geard	1	16
Pat Swallow	1	26

You'll notice in these figures that some of our Skippers also gave their time to assist with DO Duties in the weeks we were short crew... a special thank you to these people (in particular – Wendy, Martin and Geoff).

Nearly finished ☺

I said it last year, and I'll say it again... it has been an absolute joy being a part of UEC this year. We really do belong to the best dive Club in the entire universe! I can't give enough thanks to the Committee and our Members for your support, guidance and encouragement again this year. I look forward to some awesome diving over the next 12 months with you all!

Mel Turner

## **Dive Travel**

### **Augusta – November 2015**

This was our third trip to Augusta, and again – we were blessed with fantastic weather and diving conditions.

(For some) the weekend started on Friday - with five of us arriving in Augusta by lunchtime, allowing us plenty of time for an afternoon shore dive.

After bit of a drive along the coast, we settled on Quarry Bay as our site of choice. It was a shallow but interesting site, with lots of fish and plant life. Four crays were brought up - two of these were keepers (hats off to Damian for catching his while free diving). Not bad for a site with a maximum depth of 3m!

On Saturday we headed around the Cape (back into the Indian Ocean) for a day of diving Cosy Corner. It was lovely conditions above the surface, however it was quite surgy under the surface, with the visibility reduced to around 5m.

We completed two lovely dives in the Cosy Corner bay, with a surface interval / lunch break around the corner at "Stinky Bay" (which seemed a strange name for such a pretty spot). Lunch consisted of freshly-caught crayfish, thanks to the proficient hunter-gatherers in our group.



On our trip back to Augusta we were treated to sightings of both numerous pods of dolphins, and a couple of humpback whales... magnificent!



Sunday's conditions were even better than those of the previous day, so we elected to dive the Southern Ocean. Our first dive was just off St Alouarn Island - holy moly, it was spectacular. We spent the dive exploring gullies and swim-throughs, all covered in swaying kelp.

The visibility was as far as the eye could see, the water a clear blue colour. Highlights of this dive were a monster blue grouper hiding under a ledge (which most of the group saw), big dhufish and lots of crayfish! Suffice to

say, we were all grinning ear-to-ear after that dive.



Our second dive was at a spot called "1,000 Pound Patch" - named after the 1,000 pounds of abalone that had been pulled out of the area over the years. The terrain was not as pretty at this site - but the abalone plentiful. Our two license holders (Geoff and Damian) bagged their limit of 5 green-lipped abalone each (which also gave us the boat limit of 10). The crays were a bit light-on at this spot, but there were plenty of rays and fish to entertain us. Again - the visibility was stunning.

Then as quickly as the weekend came, it was over - and time to start our travels back to Perth. A big thank you to Geoff G, Steve & Cathy, Mike, Liz, Anne, Adrian, Mark, Sue, Damian and George & Val for an awesome weekend of diving shenanigans.

## Bunbury / Busselton – January 2016

11 divers head to Bunbury early one Saturday morning to dive the Lena with Octopus Garden Dive Charters... owned and run by ex-Member (and good friend of UEC) - Kim Royce, who still proudly displays his UEC Training Documents and Logbook on the boat!

The Lena was a trawler caught fishing illegally for Patagonian Toothfish. It was chased down and eventually caught 2,200nm off the south-west coast of WA. Once caught it was sunk just 3nm off the Bunbury coast, and sits in a maximum of 18m of water - giving divers plenty of bottom time to explore all she has to offer.

After a quick 40min motor out to the site, we were greeted with beautiful conditions (barely any wind or swell), and some stunning visibility! We spent an hour exploring the bottom and surrounds of the wreck, slowly making our way up through each floor - until finally exiting the wreck through the top (the preferred hang-out spot for the Batfish and Baitfish).

Upon surfacing, the wind had picked up a little bit and so we made the decision to head to Leatherjacket Caves - only a short ride away. This spot was a little more stirred up than the Lena site, but still made for a lovely dive. Those who found the caves said they were stunning... for those who didn't, the highlight was definitely the biggest school of pomfrets and skippy (hanging out together) that we had ever seen!



It topped off a magnificent day of diving... you couldn't wipe the smiles off our faces!





After returning to the jetty and saying our goodbyes to Kim (with promises of a return trip in the near future), 10 of us headed down to our Busselton digs - the Pylon Inn. After washing our gear it was time to reminisce about our day over a few cold bevs and some take-away Thai food. As the night went on (and the drinks continued) - the stories and the laughs got bigger and better.

The next morning we arose to another wind-free, sun-filled morning... perfect for our jetty dive! The McCoppin's loaded some of our gear (tanks and

BCD's) in to their tinny, while the rest of us loaded up trolleys and proceeded to walk our way to the diving platform at the end of the jetty. Our efforts were rewarded with visibility as far as they eye could see, and so much fish life and colour, you didn't know where to put your eyes most of the time!

We had heard of some of the pylons being replaced in recent times (and they had been) - but it certainly didn't impact the quality of the dive. We saw so many different fish and critters: occies, dhufish, some stunning nudi's, schools of various fish, cuttlefish, stingrays (including a Fiddler Ray), Globefish... you name it, we probably saw it.

We dived for 90min and it wasn't nearly long enough... we could have spent hours down there... it is such a special place!!! But alas - none of us have grown gills (yet), and we had to return home at some point - so it was time to pack our gear back into the tinny and trolleys, and head back to shore.

A massive thank you to Chris, Wendy, Liz, Andrea & Dave (ACDC), the McCoppins (Chris & Ria), Malcolm, Anne and Kyra for a fantastic weekend... we'll be heading back down that way in October 2016, and again in early-2017.

### Abrolhos Island – May 2016 (Report by Tom Bassett)

May 18th: Wes Gray, Adrian Taylor, Jeff Weston and I drove to Geraldton to meet up with Luke (from Image Dive) plus 4 others – for four days diving off Luke's boat "Southern Image" out at the Houtman Abrolhos Islands.



We arrived in Geraldton around 4.00pm so had time to go to a Pub for a couple of beers, a meal before meeting the boat at around 8.00pm.

We left Geraldton 8.30ish and a mildly choppy ride out to the islands and picked up our overnight mooring around 12.30am.



Thursday and Friday we got in 3 dives each day in perfect conditions.

There were superb coral reefs and large coral "bombies" teeming mostly with fish life and some stunning coral. Some areas were a bit devoid of fish and the coral had been damaged however the diving was mostly superb. Unfortunately my pictures do not do it justice. A school of the biggest Dhufish I have ever seen.



We had a walk around one of the 120 odd islands that make up the group on Friday afternoon and interacted with some seals which were very inquisitive then Luke showed us a lake on the island where two large estuary cod reside.

As predicted late Friday night a storm rolled in. We were sheltered from the seas by the islands however the wind was blowing 40 knots gusting to 65 at times. It was a wild day but some divers got in two dives. I did one. Under the water it was calm, no swell, very peaceful, however after the second dive Luke said no more as the conditions on the surface were making it too difficult and dangerous to manage the boat and pick up divers.



We retreated back to the mooring and rode the storm out.

Sunday morning the storm had passed through although there was some patchy rain about. We were able to get two dives in on the Sunday before lunch then heading back to Geraldton.

Special thanks to Luke and Paul for keeping us well fed and safe, and also Wes for doing all the driving to and from Geraldton.

Tom Bassett