



Annual Newsletter

2017

2016/2017 Office Bearers

President and Membership Officer - Mike Buchanan

Vice President and Marina Liaison - Chris Cunbold

Treasurer - Steve Day

Secretary - Wendy Hutchison

Dive Coordinator - Mel Turner

Boat Officer - Mark Weber

Social and Fundraising Officer - Liz Davey

Communications Officer - Dylan Keys

Safety Officer - Rex Burke

Training Officer - Bec Johnson

Environment Officer - Jarrad Baker

Tec Diving Officer - Brian Skjerven

With thanks to Steve Zoccoli, Hugh Parker and James Jooste who also served in roles during the year. .



Presidents Report

The cooler weather marks the end of another club year and it's probably been one of our most successful in recent years. We hit a new six year membership high, narrowly surpassing last year with 129 members and we recorded a solid financial performance rebuilding our reserves after last years significant boat expenses.

The move to Coogee has generally been considered a success by the diving membership. However, the one area that most feel lacking is a social venue both after the dive and for the General Meeting. On the latter, thanks to Ciaran, we have just moved to the Esplanade Hotel which I think ticks the boxes for the General Meeting. A big thanks to Blair Wallace at the Esplanade Hotel for supporting the club with a fantastic venue and I would ask the club membership to show their support by using the facilities provided. We must also extend thanks to Murdoch University and Phil Good for giving us a home for the last few months since leaving the Swan Yacht Club, but I think all will agree that the social facilities the Esplanade offers in terms of food and drink, will definitely be a plus for our meetings.

On the subject of social events, Liz, our social coordinator continues to do an outstanding job organising events. The highlight of the year has to be the Xmas party, which thanks to Bec, was held at the Type One Telethon Centre. The venue was outstanding and the catering laid on by Liz and her band of helpers was outstanding.

For me the other social event highlight was the sheep poo drive. This idea was born from Mel's father, who used to organise similar events for his Fishing Club. While we didn't quite make the 1000 bag target, we came close and in the process raised almost \$7000 for the club. A big thanks to all those who attended and sweated beneath the sheds, particularly the second shed which was like digging an escape tunnel from the POW camp. An even bigger thanks to Mel and Liz who did all the organising for the trip, and to Wendy who did the delivery logistics. The next poo drive is only a few weeks away now and with the lessons learned from the previous promises to be even better.

The money raised from the drive was put towards the anchor modifications on the boat. This had been an area of concern ever since buying the boat given the need to manually tail the chain into the locker which was a hazardous operation. The design modification was done by UEC member, William Birdsall, a marine engineer at Austal ships, and the actual work was organised by Mark and Chris. Apart from a few minor issues with cracks in the hull due to the welding it has been a great success and has made the whole process of raising the anchor so much easier. While the boat was on the hard stand we also took the opportunity to get the boat and club name on the hull. Given our current pen at Coogee is right at the front it has been some great advertising for the club.

The two areas that have been a challenge this year have been Dive Officer numbers and Tec diving. The Tec diving was always going to be a challenge but I don't think any of us appreciated the full implications that to get the depth necessary for a Tec dive means you have to anchor in unsheltered waters. Added to this has been that the number of divers booking on has not been what we had hoped for. The program has currently under review to see what lessons can be learnt, particularly around boat operations in deep water and decide how best to proceed into the new club year.

On the Dive Officer numbers we hit a low of just three during the season. This has severely constrained our desire to move towards double dive weekends which in turn has forced us to limit membership growth. Thanks to some great work by our Training Officer, Bec, we have just fast tracked another five DOs. Along with this Bec has also managed to land a LotteryWest grant of \$6200 towards First Aid and other Marine Safety Training. Well done Bec and we will miss her support next year in the role of training.

Finally, the other highlight of the year was our annual trip to Rotto. Unfortunately this year the weather didn't play ball and we lost a number of days due to the high swell and wind. While the diving was somewhat limited, the social activities were not. Amongst the activities were an epic game of Scubopoly, some round Rotto cycling, a tied first place between the two UEC teams in the pub quiz and the usual club dinners.

While the year has had some challenges to deal with I think overall we have had a great management committee of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers and it is this, along with our fantastic crew, without whom no one would go diving, that leads to a very successful club.

Mike Buchanan, President



Treasurers Report

Thankfully, at the time of penning this, our year has been a smooth sailing one for the Club. Our reserves have been rebuilt and by the end of next year may well be back to the June 2015 levels.

Your Committee instigated significant fund and revenue raising during the year. The year kicked off with our inaugural sheep poo drive . Some 1,000 bags were sold which raised \$7,000. These funds covered most of the significant cost of Cape Cruiser's annual refit last September. Another Sheep Poo drive is scheduled for early August which hopefully will be just as big a success as the first one.

The year ended with Bec Johnson, our Training Officer, securing some \$6,200 of crew training funding from lotteries West. Bec also became a member of the exclusive solo Rottneest swim club this year which was a fantastic feat given the unfavourable tide that day. A big thanks to our other Rottneest Solo swimmer, Clive Cass, for again taking care of the annual Rottneest dive trip. Whilst this year's weather didn't cooperate Clive and Liz Davy's efforts again returned most welcome revenue.

We also welcomed the Affiliate membership of the Curtin University Dive Club during the year. Your Environmental Officer, Jarrad Baker, is also Curtin Dive Club's President. Their membership will no doubt see a further increase in dive income going forward.

I know the Committee have plans for further fund raising ideas next year so keep an eye on the weekly newsletters for announcements.

Another win this year was the recent good news from the City of Cockburn that our pens fees will be pegged at a 15m rate for the next two years. We began our occupancy in a 12m pen but this proved to be too small and as there were no spare 15m pens available we were forced to shift to our current 20m pen. We were expecting to pay the 20m pen rate next year but negotiations have resulted in the forecasted higher subscription increases being avoided.

Some interesting financial comparisons [May to May] were:

- Boat dive income up by 26% or \$3,641
- Membership fees up by 39% or \$4,778
- Inaugural Sheep poo drive returning \$6,947 to the club
- Nomination dive income down 35% or \$1,815
- Boat maintenance down by 81% or \$60,647
- Fuel costs up by 26% or \$1,800
- Ing Deposit account up by 112% or \$26,533

I want to thank your Committee for the energy they have brought to the Club this year. We now have a mix of old farts (me for one!) and generation Xers & Ys which in my opinion allowed our Club to prosper both financially and as a community this year.

I shall be renominating for your Club's Treasurer

Steve Day, Treasurer , June 16 2017



“Our reserves have been rebuilt and by the end of next year may well be back to the June 2015 levels”

Training

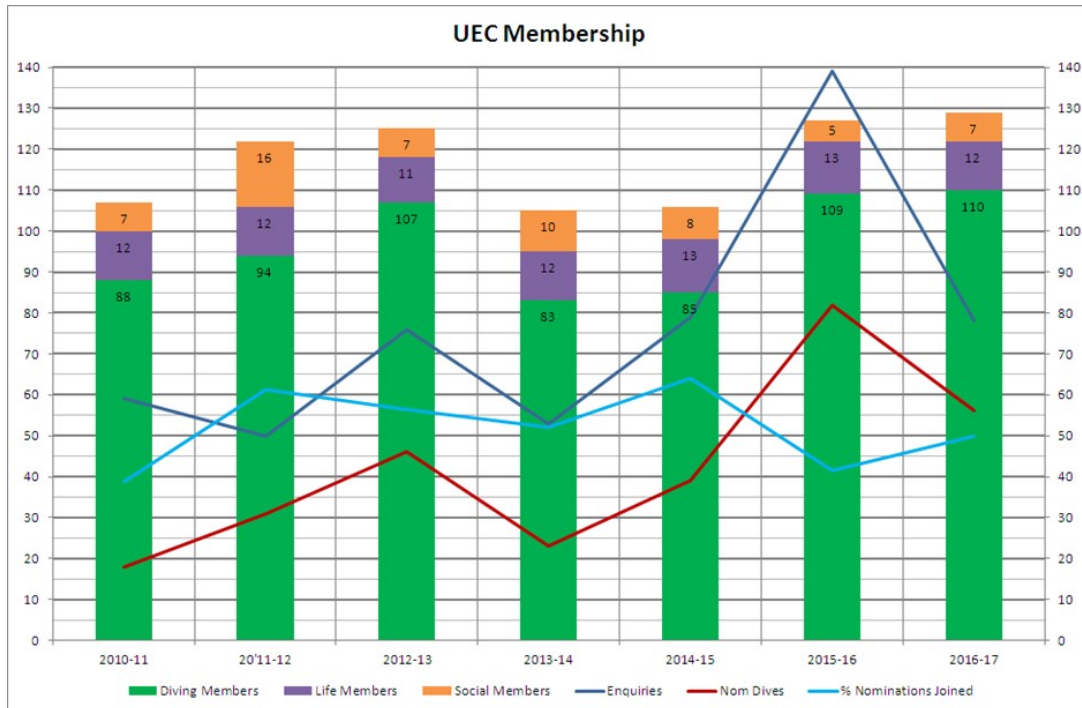
This year, Training saw some great developments. We held a well-supported Boat Training day to familiarise interested members and Trainee DOs with the boat, thanks to Chris Cunnold and Wendy Hutchison. Mike Buchanan, Mel Turner and Geoff Geard also held a Dive Officer Training Day which accelerated the five trainee Dive Officers towards DO status.

The Dive Officer Training Manual was streamlined and simplified, making it easier than ever for members to become Dive Officers. Finally, we received a significant grant from Lotterywest to ensure that all current crew, dive officers and trainees can access first aid and oxygen provider training, and two club members can undertake their Recreational Skippers Tickets. We thank Lotterywest for its generous support for UECWA, and look forward to enjoying a safe and skilled crew in the new financial year.

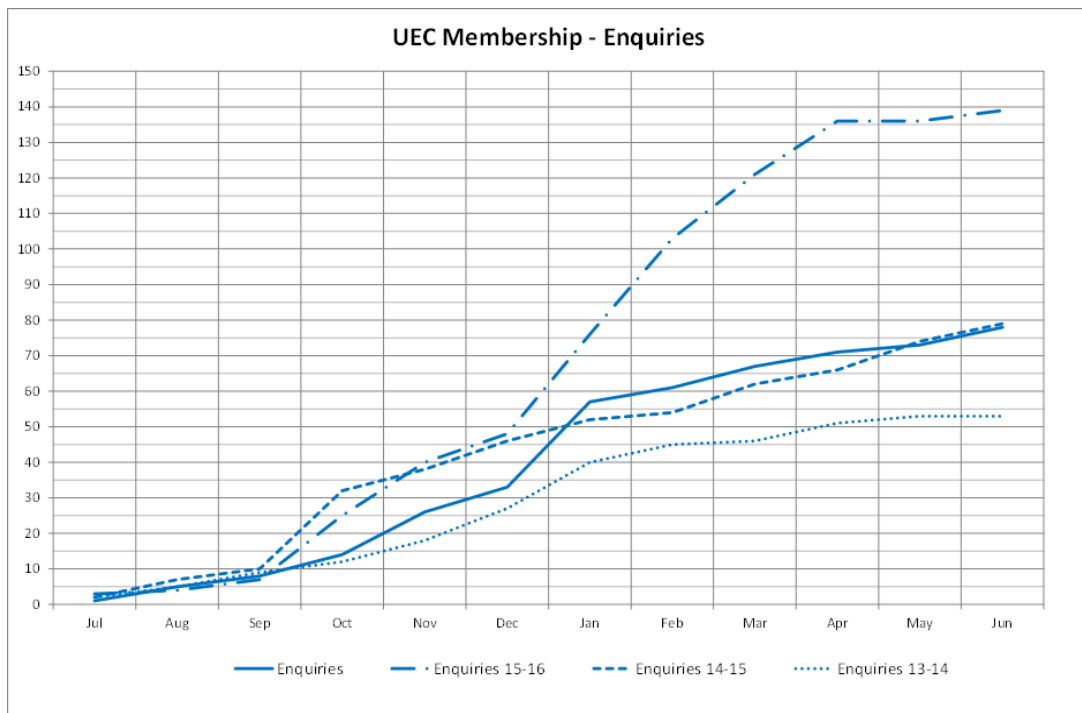
Bec Johnson

Membership report

This year we consolidated on last year's significant rise in membership narrowly topping last year's total of 127 with 129 members. This was our best result since my records begin in 2010.



Looking at the trends I think we would have ended the year with even more had we continued to plug the club on all the Facebook diving sites but I took the conscious decision to stop posting the news bulletin in about January as the boat was booking out fast. The graph below clearly shows the change from that month forward compared to the previous year.

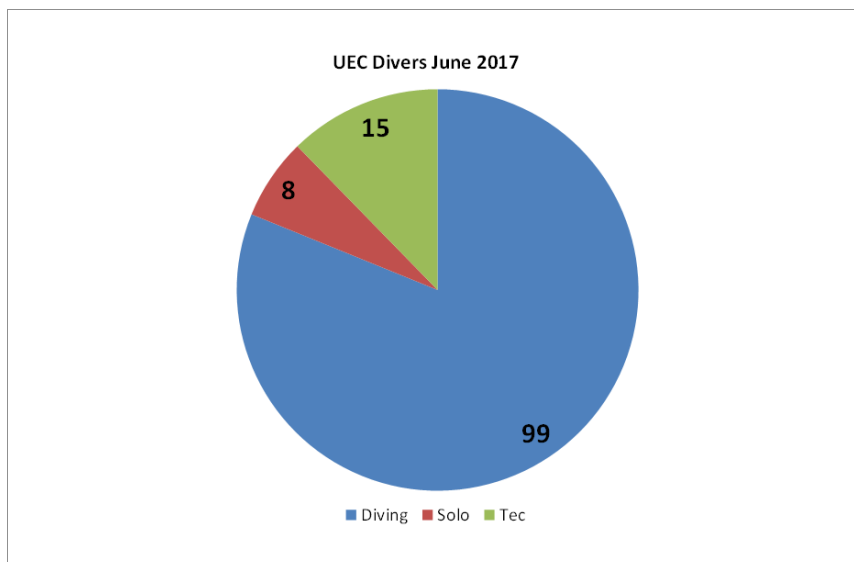
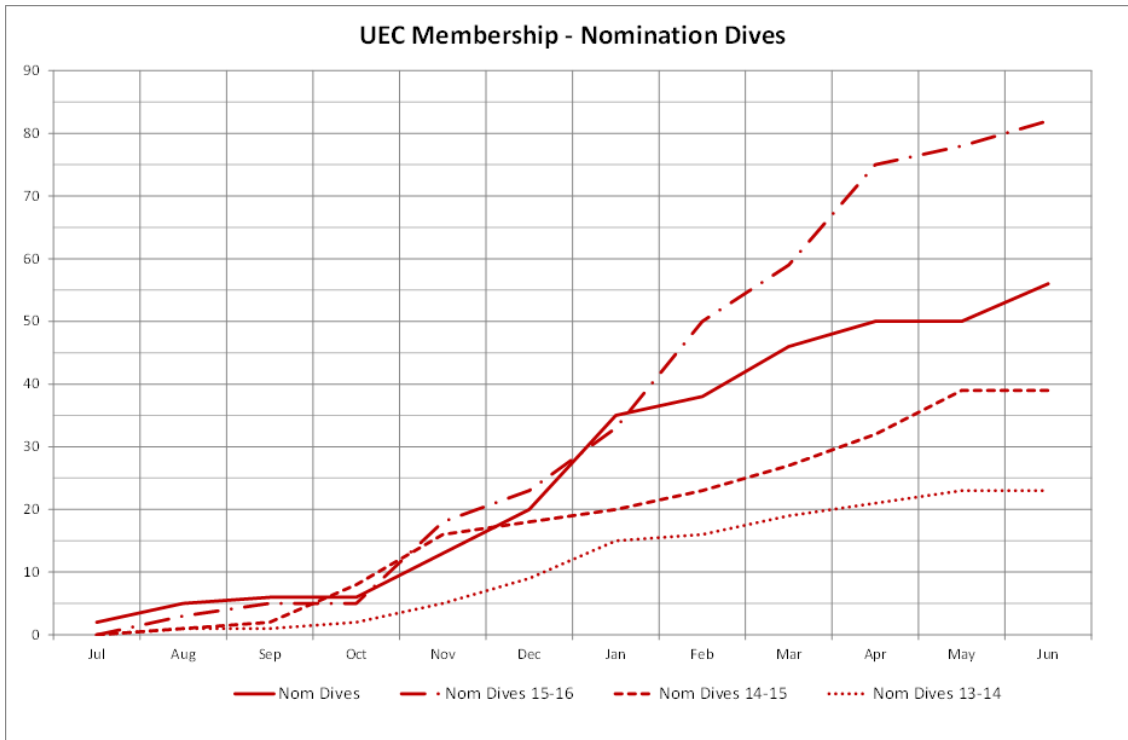


I think a membership base around the 130 mark is probably about right while the club is only able to run one dive weekends. With these numbers the boat is almost always booked out during the summer so to increase membership beyond this makes it hard for everyone to get a dive when they want. We had great intentions of going to double dive week-ends to ease the demand for places on the boat but we have been constrained by the lack of Dive Officers.

Membership report cont'

Enquiries lead to nomination dives which lead to new memberships and with the drop in enquiries from February onwards we saw a corresponding drop in nominations. Interestingly the ratio of enquiries to nominations to memberships runs very roughly at 4:2:1. In other words for every four enquiries we get two nomination dives and one membership.

This year also saw the steady growth of the Country, Interstate and Overseas membership category which now stands at 12, up from 6 last year. We also saw growth in the in number of Tec divers in the club to 15 with the introduction of the Tec Diving. Solo diving has also seen significant growth with a number of people completing their solo diving certification this year.



"I think a membership base around the 130 mark is probably about right while the club is only able to run one dive weekends "

I have now been on the committee for seven years, two as Dive Coordinator, two as President and the last four years in the Membership role. I intend to nominate for this role again to further develop and build on the solid foundation of the last few years.

Mike Buchanan

Boat Report

The Boat Sub-Committee, Dennis Stubberfield, Chris Cunnold, Geoff Geard and I have achieved a lot this year.

One of our greatest achievements was the complete modification of the anchor/chain locker and the installation of a new Bow Sprit. This involved moving the chain locker from the port side of the boat to a central position with a new Samson post installed. A great thanks must be given to former UEC Member William Birdsall for his help and guidance on this project.

At this time we also undertook repair work on the starboard-side fuel tank and installed reinforcing, so the fuel tank should see us out for the foreseeable future.

Additional fabrication work was undertaken to the boat to repair cracked webbing in the hull, making Cape Cruiser even stronger than she already was.

Other than the usual “wear and tear” (general maintenance) repairs that come with any boat, there were some other undertakings worthy of mention:

- Ropes spliced and perfected for the new pen
- Water tank repaired/sealed with new pipework
- (Starboard side) wheelhouse windscreen sealed
- GPS and Charts updated
- New ducky purchased
- Deck Wash Pump fixed and Deck Wash Hose reinstalled
- Fly bridge cushions upholstered
- New decals on the boat (Logo and “Cape Cruiser”)
- New Manson Anchor purchased (now spare on board)
- General Annual Maintenance (Oil, filter change, dry dock, antifoul and general clean)
- New 27 mhz Marine Radio installed
- Motor Valve clearances completed by Westrac
- Marlin Board mat replaced

Thanks must be given to the Boat Sub-Committee Members (Stubby, Chris and Geoff) for their help and guidance this year – I learnt a lot and really enjoyed the role. Thanks must also be extended to Rex and Wendy for their help – it is appreciated.

Mark Weber



Marina Liaison

After some initial settling in and getting into a pen which was large enough, the move to Coogee Marina has been accepted well by our Members and it is also working well for the club and Skippers.

As the City of Cockburn only took over management of the Marina around the same time we moved there they did have a few problems to deal with initially. There were a lot of security issues during the first 6 months of the year but significant investment in Patrols, CCTV and sensor lighting seems to have remedied this problem.

The Management at the Marina do appreciate us being there, they have commented that we add to the environment of community activity that they wish to promote and have been very helpful whenever we have had a problem with the pen, and especially with the negotiations of pen fees this year which resulted in a very good outcome for the club.



We will soon move to a 15 metre pen, the correct size for our boat, as part of the agreement we made when this year's pen fees were negotiated. The new pen will be on the C Jetty (south of our current position) and the pen will be a bit smaller for manoeuvring but still convenient.

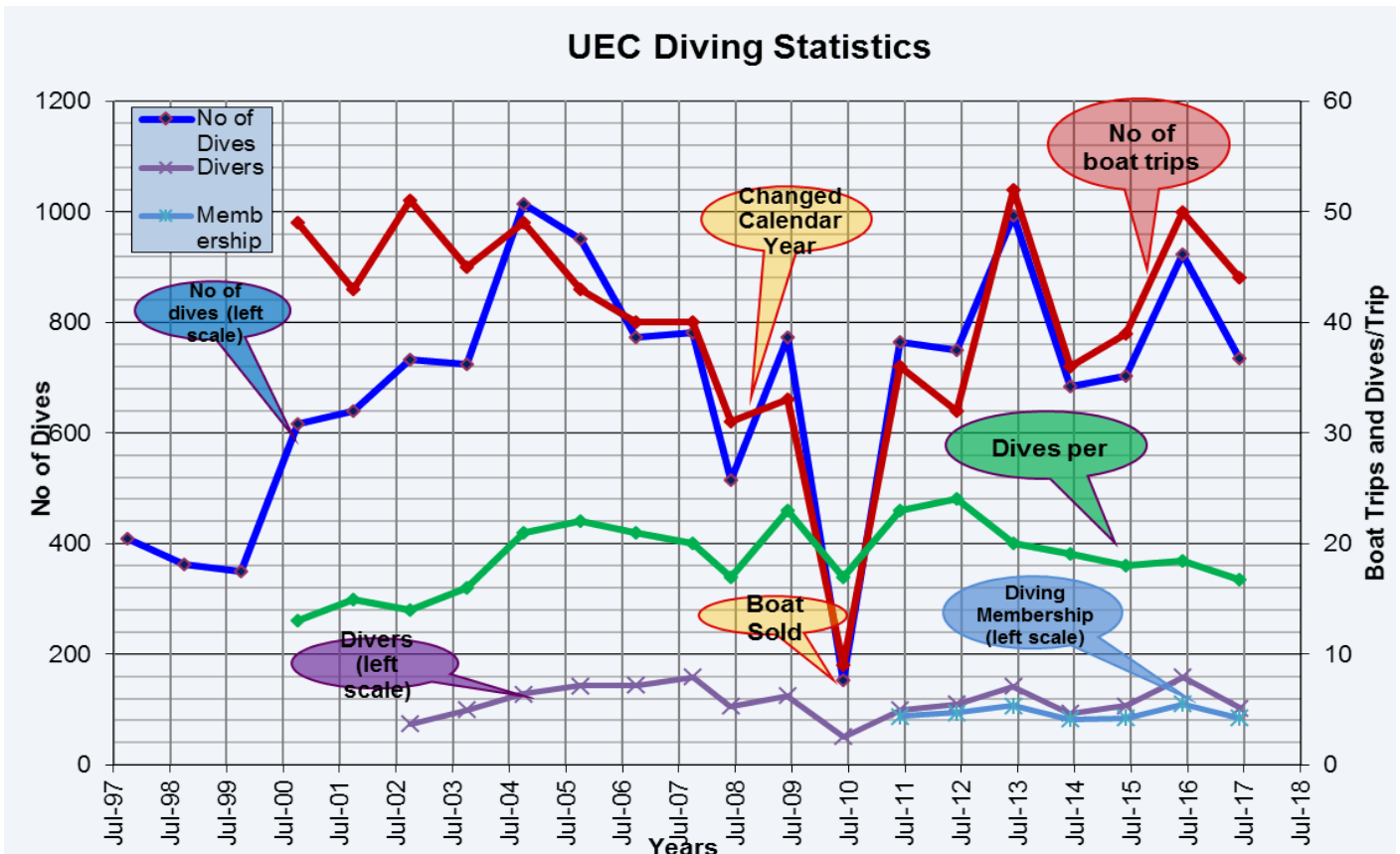
On the diving/social front, a few more Cafés are beginning to open in the area and rumour has it that Clancy's Fish Pub may have purchased the old Coogee Hotel across from Coogee Beach which would be nice for a drink after a dive in summer.

Chris Cunnold

Diving Report

While Mother Nature conspired against us, we still managed to make the most of what we were dealt, marking another great year for UECWA.

19 dive trips were cancelled due to the poor conditions... frustrating, but what can you do about the weather? While not a record-breaking year, we still managed some pretty impressive statistics...



Diving report cont' ...

Where did we go?

We visited 32 different sites (some grouped into areas) over the course of the year. This included a few new sites – Blue Groper Cave, Deep Northwest Rotto (for our Tec crew), Five Fathom Shark Cave and Geordie Bay Desperation.

The Roe Reef area (encompassing Arch Rock, Dave's Spot, RLS Marker & Elder Point) was dived most often – thanks solely to the conditions we saw. Crystal Palace and Stragglers also proved to offer some shelter and/or crayfish for many trips again this year.

Dive Sites	No dives	Dive Sites	No dives
Roe Reef Area	16	Parker Point Drop-off	1
Crystal Palace Area	5	Stragglers Dredge No 2	1
Stragglers Reef	5	Easter Lump Mary's Garden	1
Carpet Emporium	4	Geordie Lump	1
Angelas Cave	4	Stables	1
Opera House & "Not the Opera House)	4	Little Armstrong Bay	1
Hugel's Passage	3	Dark Cave	1
The Sepia	3	Anders Meanders	1
Point Clune	3	Martin's Arches	1
Deep Northwest Rottnest	3	Blue Groper Cave	1
Nurse's Quarters	2	Geordie Bay Desperation	1
Kerry's Caverns	2	Kingston Shark Cave	1
Flat Top	2	Cray Canyon	1
Swirl Reef	2	Kingston Spit	1
Five Fathom Shark Cave	1	14m Reef – T-Bone	1
Denton Holme/Macedon	1	Seaward Caves	1

How much diving did we do?

103 Members had a total of 735 dives off Cape Cruiser this year, slightly down from last year (159 Members completed 924 dives last year). 10 were single dives, and four were Tec Diving Days.

In terms of non-diving days – there were plenty, with the weather being the critical factor... we had a total of 19 days cancelled due to weather, 4 due to a lack of numbers, and only 3 due to boat maintenance.



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	50	924	18	159	108
2016/17	44	735	17	103	85

Diving report cont'...

Diver of the Year



Congratulations to Mike Buchanan on taking out the win for the third year in a row – with an impressive total of 49 dives for the year. Mike was aiming to break the record he set last year, but came up 10 dives short... still highly impressive given how many trips were cancelled due to weather.

A special mention must go our second place winner – Geoff Geard... each year Geoff sets out to knock Mike off the winner's podium, and each year he comes up just short. If there was a medal for effort Geoff, you would win it hands down!

Both Mike and Geoff regularly crew Cape Cruiser, making these diving numbers even more impressive.

Other honorable mentions go to (new Members) Lesley Joliffe and John Shrewsbury, and returning Member Gino Ferreri for making the leaders table.

Place	Name	Dives
1	Mike Buchanan	49
2	Geoff Geard	39
3	Mel Turner	25
4	Malcolm Roberts	23
=5	Hugh Parker	17
=5	James Jooste	17
=7	Briony Robinson	16
=7	Adrian Taylor	16
9	Bec Johnson	15
=10	Steve Zoccoli	14
=10	Ciaran Kelly	14
=10	Wendy Hutchison	14
13	Lesley Joliffe	13

Place	Name	Dives
=14	Steve Groen	12
=14	John Shrewsbury	12
16	Gino Ferreri	11
=17	Dylan Keys	10
=17	Duncan Fairbairn	10
=17	Liz Davey	10
=20	Sue Haste	9
=20	Steve Day	9
=20	Clive Cass	9
=20	Pete Northrop	9
=20	Tom Bassett	9
=20	Jarrad Baker	9
=20	Lee Attwood	9

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!

We were severely short on Dive Officers this year, and that saw each of our Skippers step up and take both Skipper and DO Duties on, when required...

Thank you Skippers – this was very much appreciated, as these trips would not have gone ahead without your help.

Congratulations to Dave Carter, Pete Northrop and Dylan Keys – who all earned their Dive Officer "wings" this year.

It's been exciting to see so much DO Training going ahead, and to see the new lot of DO's coming through... the next 12 months should be an exciting year in terms of Crew Development.

Nearly finished

Thanks (as always) to all of our wonderful Members for another great year with the best Dive Club on the entire planet! I look forward to blowing bubbles with you all in the next 12 months.



2017 Reef Life Survey - extract of RLS report by Rick Stuart-Smith and Paul Day

2017 Marked the 10th Anniversary of Reef Life Survey's monitoring of the Rottneest marine environment and the 7th year of support from the UEC. RLS are a UEC affiliated club and this annual event contributes toward UEC's community profile and environmental credentials especially with the RIA, and it is regular fundraiser for the club.

This year's big question from the Rottneest Island Authority was;

“are blue groper, dhufish and lobsters being protected within sanctuary zones?”

These were discussed with the Rottneest Island Authority the day before the monitoring weekend at Rottneest Island. The RIA were investigating indicators to track the health of the Rottneest reefs to contribute to the RIA Marine Conservation Action Planning and it was noted that the blue groper had become increasingly rare in Rottneest waters over the last decade, and dhufish and lobsters seemed to be protected well within sanctuary zones previously, but the dhufish had recently declined (while lobster numbers vary with state stocks and migrations). The RIA agreed that the RLS data is perfect for looking at trends in these locally important indicators, as well as in other more general indicators such as the Community Temperature Index and the biomass of large fish.

This discussion proved almost prophetic, with the surveys over the weekend finding lobsters abundant, more *dhufish* than ever in the last decade (at least 14 across four different sites), and four blue groper (one a very large male). There also seemed to be a return of some of the cooler-water species that had disappeared over the warmer years and less tropical vagrants in general. But there was a mix of signals in the fish fauna that suggested the story was not as simple as a return towards a 'pre-heatwave' fish community.



The findings included: Populations of some larger tropical species such as Black Rabbitfish (*Siganus fuscescens*), Scribbled Chisel-toothed Wrasse (*Anampses geographicus*) and Schlegels Parrotfish (*Scarus schlegeli*) appearing to be well-established and thriving, possible southern-most sightings of Blue Bastard (*Plectorhynchus caeruleonothus*), and coral trout (*Plectropomus leopardus*), both adults rather than fresh recruits, and an invertebrate ghost town. The team had to search very hard on the method 2 invertebrate search for relatively little reward this year. Relatively few invertebrates or cryptic fishes were recorded. A rare Red Seaperch was recorded (an RLS first), topping off what was an incredibly interesting and odd year of surveys.

The team of RLS divers comprised Michael Brooker, Paul Day, Jen Hoskin, Ben Jones, Don Love, Kevin Smith, Alicia Sutton and Rick Stuart-Smith, with a cameo from Tom Holmes (Department of Parks and Wildlife). Harry Watson and Rebecca Watson were also welcomed to RLS, nailing their training and providing welcome support to a growing and thriving WA RLS team. The overall vital statistics for the team: 12 divers in the water, 59 transects at 18 sites.

Substantial thanks go to the Rottneest Island Authority (Cass and Shane) for their continued support of the RLS monitoring at Rotto, Wendy Hutchison and Chris Cunnold and the Underwater Explorer's Club for the vessel (and expert and patient skippering), and Fraser Johnston (Crow's Nest Media) for joining the team and filming the activities.

2017 Social and Fundraising report

Is it really that time of the year again? Well I guess it is...

And again, incredibly, it's been another busy and productive one.

Want to see a snap shot of what you the club members have achieved and, how members have supported our club? read on!

Ongoing maintenance and behind the scenes tasks to keep our boat running smoothly, is both costly in terms of time and money. This is where Fundraising and volunteering becomes essential, to ensure members have an opportunity to regularly dive from the boat. Some of the activities our club has offered you this year, looks like this:

Afternoon/Evening visits to Maritime Museum for various exhibitions, e.g, Rough Medicine...depicting on board medical treatments passengers could have expected had they voyaged during 17 th 18 th Century. Followed by a pub meal.

Wine Tasting/ Ten Pin Bowling and the annual UEC amazing Curry night.

The sheep Poo drive. (which incidentally singularly raised more than any other UEC fundraiser).

The Christmas meeting and celebratory meal.

The sale of Entertainment Books/Apps, club Log Books and club apparel.

Sky show river cruise and BBQ

Lucky Number Raffles at the General Meetings .

And, last but not least the, Winter and Summer pilgrimages to our beautiful Rottneest Island. These trips, as well as creating a profit, cover the cost of our mooring and maintenance in Geordie Bay at Rottneest.

Collectively these events have earned a whopping \$10,000+, for the club coffers this year. No small feat, in fact a totally brilliant effort from those who, organized, volunteered or participated. Huge personal thanks from myself and the club members, followed by a loud and reverberating round of applause is long overdue for these amazing people.

Can we match that in this forthcoming year? Yes, I believe we can.... But it's all down to you...want to do "YOUR BIT", then consider coming to a GM and buying a raffle ticket, or buying an Entertainment book or App, or even coming along to one of the social events, the choice is yours...

Try volunteering on boat maintenance days, there are always plenty of jobs to go around, you would be made to feel welcome, you may learn something, and who knows you may even enjoy yourself.....even the dirtiest of jobs is always such good fun.

Finding new and exciting or interesting topics for social events is exhausting, so, if you have any ideas for activities, or would like to run one, let me know, I would seriously be both pleased and grateful.....similarly, if there is something you think we could offer the club, please let me know. I can guarantee my fullest support to bring the idea to fruition.

Hope your 2017/18, membership is fun and fulfilling.... see you on land or in the water.

Thanks

Liz socialbookings@uecwa.com.au

“Want to see a snap shot of what you the club members have achieved and, how members have supported our club? read on!



The Inaugural “Sheep Poo Do” (Fundraiser) - by Malcolm Roberts

Remember the old ‘Lamington Drive’ fundraisers? Only in Australia...

Well, we’ve put the FUN back into fundraising and we now have the UEC Sheep Poo Drive, also only in Australia. This was a first for our club and a great way to bring members together in the middle of what is for many members, the off-season for diving.

After an early start in Perth, the UEC Sheep Poo Gatherers met in the centre of York on Saturday morning. We then travelled in convoy to the farm with a shed in need of our attention. It turned out that the shearing shed in question hadn’t been done for 30 years, which explained the fossilised nature of the manure. It will be amazing for your garden, but took a bit of breaking up.

Once there Mel gave a quick briefing before we set to work digging, filling, tying and loading bag after bag after bag. Everyone had a job to do and it was a hive of activity around the shed as we worked in teams. The ‘digging’ component involved crawling under the low shed on your hands and knees and shovelling the manure into tubs that were then shuttled out to the waiting baggers. Once bagged, they were tied off with wire, before being taken to the waiting trailers, counting as we went.

It was hard work and the fact that no one smoked didn’t stop someone yelling ‘Smoko!’ and late morning we all stopped for tea, coffee and Ilonka’s delicious (and famous) brownies.

Later in the day as the resource at the first farm was exhausted we relocated to another farm and shearing shed and bagged until it got too dark to work.

As arranged, this farm had the shed that was to be our overnight stay and a couple of fire drums were lit as nibbly and drinks were enjoyed. Meanwhile Liz produced more food and we had a delicious BBQ dinner with extras, including desserts.

It was a cold clear night with a cosmos of stars overhead and the warmth of the fires, good people and conversations made for a social evening.

I don’t think it was too late when the last tired body collapsed into their camp bed and slept. Despite forecasts, we’d had a fine Saturday, but that all changed at 4am with heavy rain on the tin roofed shed. It came and went and we didn’t get up too early.

After bacon & egg rolls for breakfast we were ready to go again. Rain showers came and went, but it was always dry for those deep under the shed rolling in it. By lunchtime this shed too was depleted of the spice so we called it a day.

I’d like to acknowledge all those who helped over the weekend – both “shovellers” and “deliverers”... our Club is strong when we all work together.



Dive Travel - by Mel Turner

Bunbury Busselton – October 2016

This was the weekend of our annual Tangaroa Blue clean-up, however we didn't luck the best weather for this trip.

Saturday saw four of us head down, only to find a washing machine under Busselton Jetty. So we elected to postpone our Tangaroa Blue clean-up dive, and instead spent the day indulging at the Olive Oil and Chocolate factories, and a few sneaky wine tastings.



Sunday morning saw much better conditions for diving, so we jumped in - rubbish bags in tow – to start our clean.

We collected quite the pile of rubbish - comprising of old crab nets, loads of fishing line and tackle, glass bottles, plastic, a mobile phone and general junk... quite a collection. Once our Tangaroa Blue clean-up was done, we were off to dive the Lena with former Member and friend of UEC - Kim Royce (Octopus Garden Dive Charters)

It was early in the season to be diving the Lena and it was still a bit green and murky down there - but it was still a great dive. Of note was the large amount of fishing tackle and anchors caught up on the wreck - apparently a common find after the winter break.

A big thank you to the Carters (Dave and Andrea), Liz, Alan and Colin for another magnificent weekend in the south west.



Augusta – November 2015

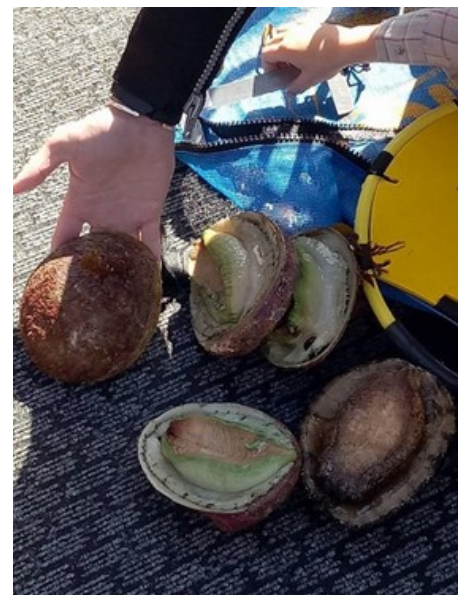
This was our fourth trip to Augusta, and again – we continued our winning streak with the weather and diving conditions...

A small group took the opportunity to grab a quick dive at Canal Rocks on the way down on Friday, continuing on their journey to Augusta after the dive and an all-important brewery stop on the way.

Saturday morning we were up, and we were cooking breakfast on the boat by 7am. After our bellies were full, we headed north to a new site for us – White Point.

While it was certainly a very pretty site with lots of rock formations and swim-throughs to explore, it was a very surgy dive in pretty average visibility (less than 5m). Interestingly, there wasn't a cray in site – most unusual for Augusta! So we decided to head back to one of our favourite areas in Augusta – the cluster of islands around St Alouarn Island. After checking out the local seal population sunning themselves on the rocks, we picked a spot between Seal Island and St Alouarn Island... what a difference! Although still a very surgy dive, the visibility was stunning (a good 15-20m), and there was loads of fish life and critters to see.

On this dive some monster crays were brought up, much to the delight of our hunter-gatherers. We then cooked "brunch" before our second dive nearby. This dive consisted of a great wall that started at about 5m depth and went down to 15m – truly spectacular. We spent a good hour exploring the nooks and crannies, and swimming through the cracks and crevices – finding lots of fish and critters to look at (and photograph).



Dive Travel cont'

A big thank you to our Augustarians (Geoff, Mike, Damian, Steve Z, Mark, James, Alan, Colin, Ross, Adrian and John) for another fabulous weekend of Southern Ocean diving!

Our final site for the day was "Thousand Pound Patch" – where Damian and James jumped in to grab some abalone. Less than 20min they were back with their bag (and the boat's) limit – comprising of (both) the massive green and brown-lipped abalone.

Next morning it was another early start. We made a beeline to the St Alouarn Island area again for our first dive of the day. This time we dived a different side of the islands, with mixed reports (those that stayed under the boat enjoyed the best diving – those of us who headed away, not



Bremer Bay – Easter 2017

The Easter long weekend saw a group of us head down to Bremer Bay, in a quest to find ourselves some dragons.

Friday saw us head out for a shore dive at Little Boat Harbour – the go-to spot for both Leafy and Weedy Sea Dragons. It was extremely surgy, but we still managed an enjoyable dive. Unfortunately – no dragons, but we were entertained by a number of critters, including a big Port Jackson shark that seemed to swim around greeting each and every one of us. That afternoon a small group headed out to Back Beach, to continue the hunt. They returned somewhat victorious– the Weedy's had been found...

That evening, while most of us kicked back with a beer or three, Brian and Michael headed back to Little Boat Harbour for a night dive. Their perseverance was rewarded – they returned with big grins and award-winning shots of our elusive Leafy friends.

Saturday saw 9 of us board a boat, and head around the coast to dive a spot called Black Point. Basically this dive followed a cliff face, and whilst it was very surgy, the diving was quite spectacular – with an interesting mix of hard corals, particularly plate coral and kelp. The vis was very reasonable at around 15m, but most importantly – everyone on board managed to spot a Leafy Sea Dragon, making for some very happy divers!

Whilst most of us headed out for wood-fired pizzas Saturday night, Jarrad and Michael sacrificed a warm meal for another night dive... Jarrad had missed the boat that day, and the Leafy Sea Dragons had alluded him until now. Their perseverance was rewarded with dragon sightings.

Sunday we awoke to rain, and it was a slower start for most – possibly due to the copious amounts of chocolate eggs most of us consumed for breakfast. Eventually we headed out for a dive – this time in Fisheries Bay. A highlight was bumping into the "Grandfather of MUD" (Phil) whilst kitting up, and he joined us for a pleasant dive around the rocks in the bay. No dragons spotted on this dive – but still loads of critters and fish life to enjoy.

Sunday afternoon we headed out in convoy to carve up the beaches 4WD style. What a hoot it was – with a few of us managing to get nicely bogged in the sand. Thankfully Jarrad and Mark had enough equipment on board to open their own 4WD store, so extracting the stuck cars was nothing more than a bundle of fun. Our final destination was a clearing in the dunes, where we cranked up a campfire and cooked up some snaggers, toast, pumpkin and potatoes for dinner... followed by an adventurous drive home in the dark – followed by a few more beers and a game of Trivial Pursuit. What a great weekend – a big thanks to those who came along!



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Boat

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Chieftain Esplanade, North Coogee, WA