



# ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

## 2019-2020

### The year of COVID 19



2019/20 Office Bearers	
President	Mike Buchanan
Vice President	Chris Cunbold/Tom Bassett
Treasurer	Steve Day
Secretary	Wendy Hutchison
Membership Officer	Mike Buchanan
Dive Coordinator	Donna Gratton
Boat Officer	Chris Cunbold/Johnathan Anderson
Safety Officer	Pete Northrop
Marine Liaison	Chris Cunbold/Johnathan Anderson
Social and Fundraising Officer	Liz Davey
Training Officer	Vacant
Communications Officer	Steve Zocolli
Environment Officer	Jasmine Lyons

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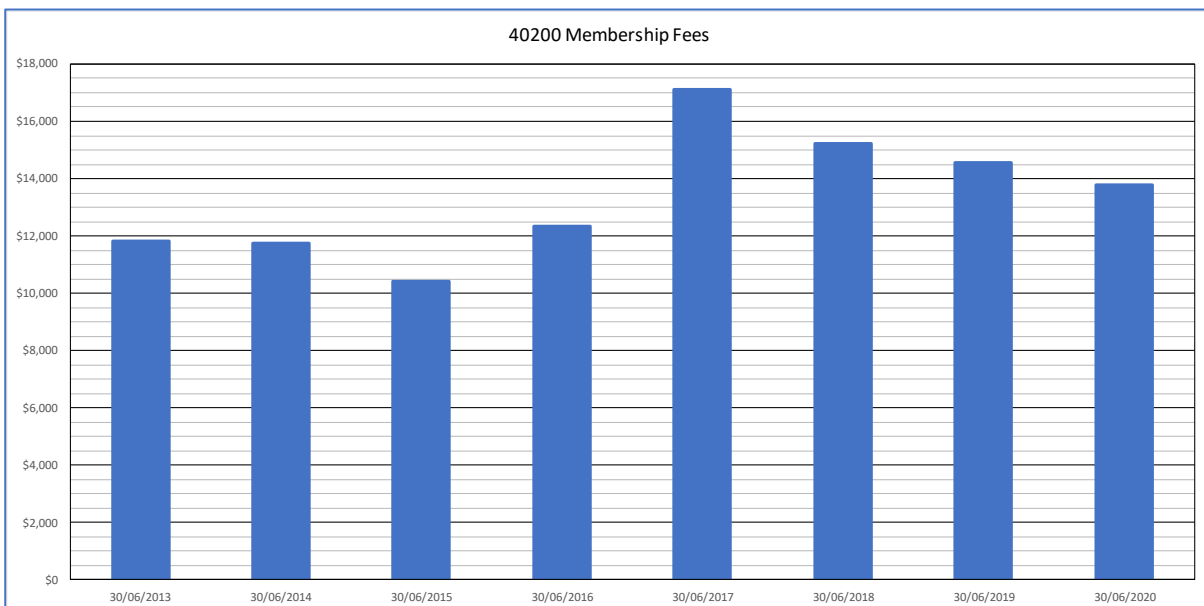
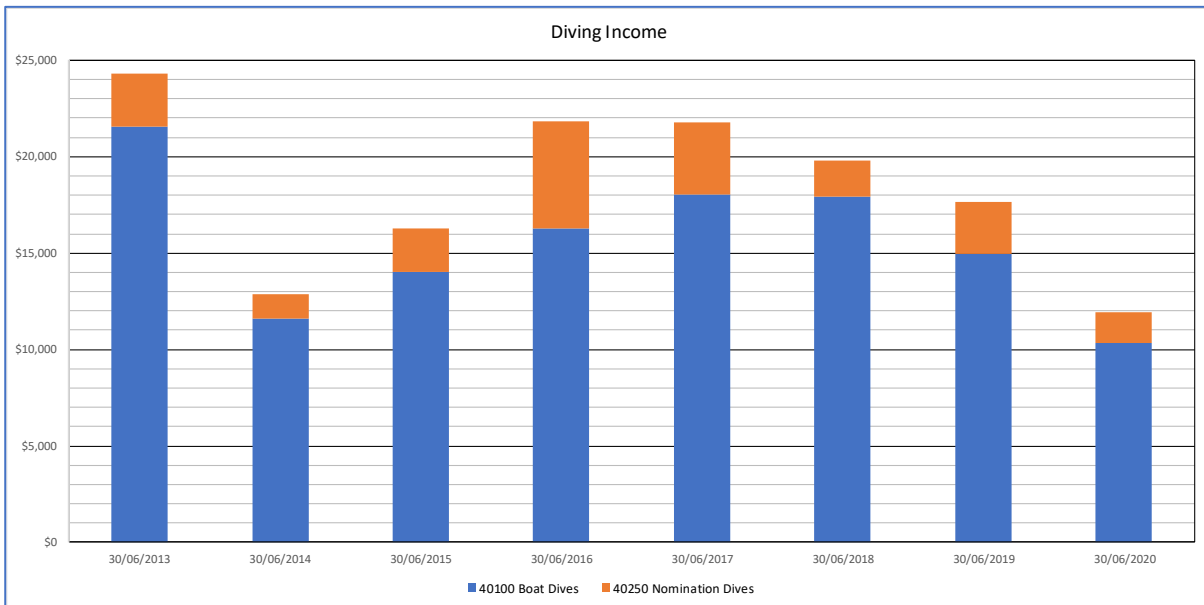
## PRESIDENT'S REPORT JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

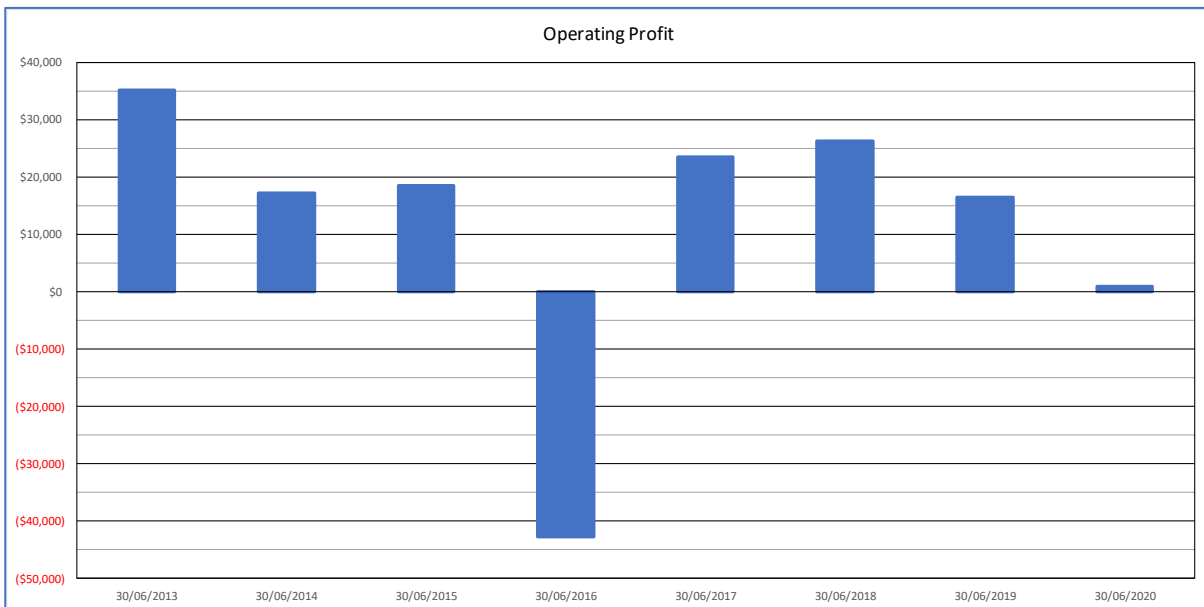
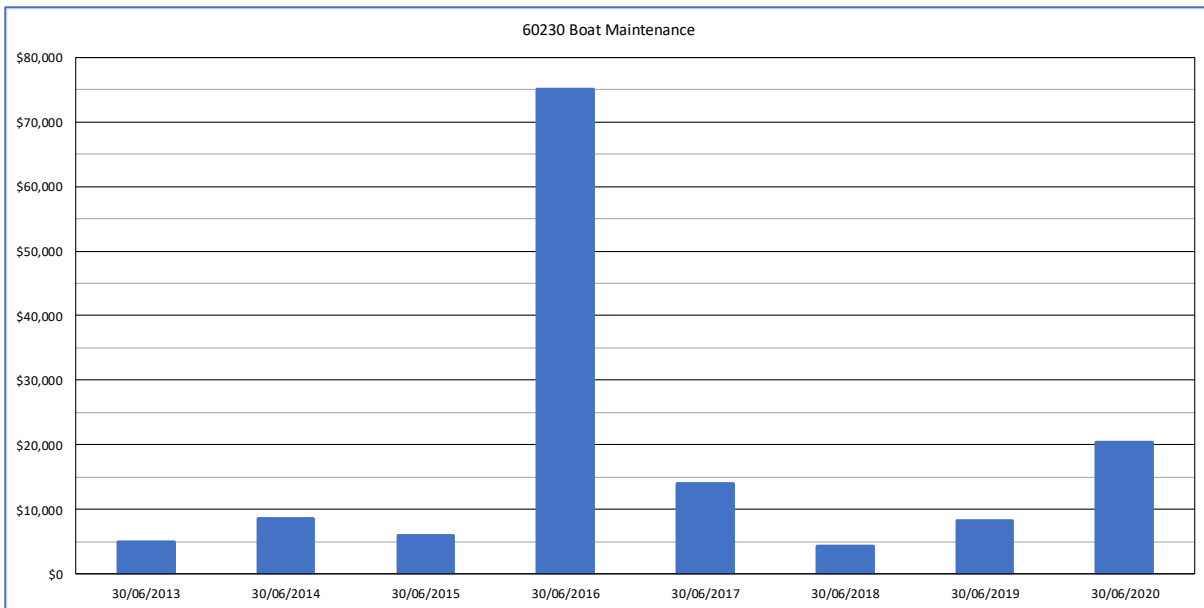
### MIKE BUCHANAN



The end of an unusual club year. Covid has taken its toll on all of us, some in more ways than others. For the club it curtailed our season very early with no diving and new memberships from late March until June. The Rottneest week fortunately completed just days before restrictions came into place, culminating in the closure of the island and surrounding waters.

Despite the Covid set back in revenue from membership and dive bookings (down \$6k), and an expensive year for boat maintenance (up \$12k), we had a very small operating surplus. With depreciation on the boat added in we made a deficit for the year of almost \$8k. Despite this, the club remains in a healthy financial position, and given these difficult economic times, the committee decided on no increase in membership and diving fees.





Thanks again to Steve Day, who works tirelessly in the background keeping the books up to date. It's no mean feat keeping on top of everything and he has now been doing the role since 2012.

Thanks also to Wendy Hutchison for her hard work in managing the day to day correspondence, meeting agendas and minutes and general club business. Her attention to detail and the high standard to which she does everything makes all our jobs so much easier. She will be standing down from the committee this year and will be missed by all.

On the social side Liz Davey organised another great Xmas party back at the Type One Telethon Centre (thanks yet again to Bec for helping on this). We decided to move the Australia Day firework boat trip back to the city as Rockingham can be a bit exposed to the elements. I think everyone who went on it would say it was an outstanding success and thanks again to Liz for organising and Chris and Wendy for crewing.

On the topics of social get togethers, we gave up with the bimonthly club meetings as again we had a very poor attendance. We will continue to hold a quarterly get together for the AGM (August), a social, probably on the boat in October, the Xmas party and another social in March. I'm sure there

will be other events such as the Australia Day boat trip and the Christmas Orphans dive. Of course, members are more than welcome to organise any social events outside of these four meetings and if you would like to organise something please get in touch with Liz, our social coordinator.



The boat thankfully has been running well with only a couple of technical issues with the engine control system and of course a fairly significant repair to fix a leaking fuel tank. Again, a big thanks to Chris Cunnold who put in so much time to keep it ship shape and running smoothly. Chris handed the reigns over to committee newbie Jonathan Anderson in May after almost two years in the job. In between Steve D stepped into the breach to organise the boat lifting, fuel tank repair and anti-fouling to which we had an outstanding response in offers to help, including a good few newer faces.

Donna Gratton took over the reigns as dive coordinator from Mel Turner (always going to be a hard act to follow) and has done a fantastic job both in the regular weekly arrangements but in also arranging a good few specials, including a Rotto weekend, a Mindarie weekend and an Abrolhos trip. All proved extremely popular showing a good demand for dive trips outside the regular weekends.



On safety Pete Northrop has maintaining our vigilance in safety and this year I think has seen the fewest incidents that I can recall. Steve Zoccoli did a great job updating our website with a fresh and contemporary look and introduced the new booking system including an option to pay by credit card. Meanwhile Jazz tried hard to get some club enthusiasm for the environment but struggled with the ongoing issue of member apathy with poor attendance at a number of events.

We welcomed two new committee members during this year, Tom Bassett taking over as Vice President and Jonathan Anderson taking over as Boat Officer from Chris who covered both roles. Tom is a long serving club member and has held the position of Vice President in the past. Its great to see him back and always great to see a new face on the committee in Jonathan, our Boat Officer.



The club is also now welcoming free divers on board following discussions between the committee and Helen Alison, culminating in a boat trial at Nurses Quarters in January with Helen and Tania Douthwaite. Like our Scuba divers, this of course subject to the free divers holding the appropriate qualifications and always buddy diving.

Finally, a huge thanks to the crew, the Dive Officers and Skippers that make the club work. Without them the boat would sit in the pen going nowhere.

It is a continual battle to maintain numbers, particularly of Dive Officers and we have seen a high turnover these last few years. Many of our divers seem to forget that the crew are all volunteers and we always welcome a helping hand, particularly at the end of a long day when the boat is put to bed. If any club member would like to train up as a Dive Officer then please let me know. It only takes a commitment of about once every six weeks and does come with the benefit of free diving as long as you are on the roster.

Here's to a better 2020-21 club year and may we all remain healthy and lockdown free.

## TREASURER'S REPORT JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

STEVE DAY



Phew! who will ever forget 2020, the year the Covid-19 pandemic struck our world. One minute we are all going about our busy lives the next those lives were turned on their heads. All I can say is thank goodness for the new social media applications which has allowed work from home and contact with loved ones where the physical was not permitted.

I am grateful our State Government locked down our borders to allow us to enjoy the relative freedom, at the time of writing tis, we currently enjoy.

I can report that our Club's deficit for 19/20 was \$7,845. This included a non-cash depreciation charge of \$8,829.

Unsurprisingly Covid19 impacted the Club's 2020 results in that diving income for the March-June quarter fell some 62%. Nomination dive income fell 76% for the same period.

We can be grateful that the annual Rottnest trip scraped in before the Covid lockdown. Not so lucky was the May annual Reef Life Survey trip which did not proceed.

A major contribution to our deficit was boat costs which increased 149% this year. We had some troublesome engine niggles which thanks to Chris Cunnold were finally diagnosed and fixed.

Despite the increase in costs and decrease in income we managed to grow the Ing's cash deposit fund by 1% and pleasingly membership income fell by just 5% for the year.

A big thanks this year for the efforts of Donna Gratton who admirably filled the shoes of Mel Turner as our Dive Coordinator. Her hard work was recognised and rewarded at our Christmas function by being presented with the Club Person Trophy.

Liz Davey pulled through again this year by running a very successful annual Rottnest trip so well-done Liz.

Apart from those mentioned above I would also like to record my appreciation to the other Committee persons, namely, Mike, Wendy, Peter, Steve Z and Jazz.

Also, a big thanks to Paul Burns and Gurmit Singh for again auditing the club's books.

Given the lockdowns in place plus the international travel bans I can see this year will be a bumper dive year for our club.

I intend to renominate as your Treasurer.

## BOAT OFFICER AND MARINA LIAISON REPORT JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

### JOHNATHON ANDERSON



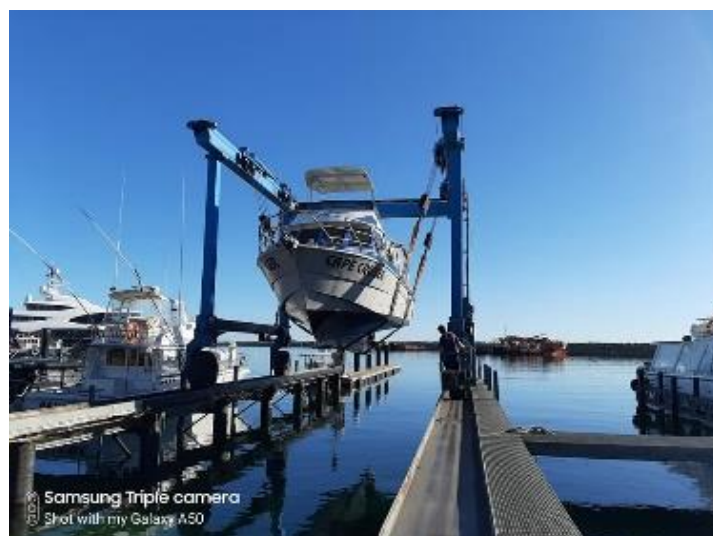
Chris resigned from the position at the end of April and Steve Day took over care holder of the position for the month of May. I took over during June and I am still trying to find my feet. I am very grateful to Steve and Chris for taking care of the vessel refit in May as there was a substantial amount of work complete during the dry dock. I also want to say thanks to Mike and all other members who were involved in the work during that time.

#### Activities during the refit in May:

- Hull cleaned and 2 coats of antifouling paint applied (12 L of paint)
- Keel anodes replaced
- Propeller shaft anode replaced
- Propeller cleaned and shined
- Rudder shaft and tiller arm greased
- 2 x primary and 1 secondary fuel filters replaced
- Water inlet grill cleaned
- Fuel tank leak repaired
- Reversed anchor chain
- New anchor swivel
- New blue paint on transom.

#### Activities which require my attention:

1. Steve currently has spare parts for the vessel stored at his place. Need a place to store these parts
2. Get quotes and get ladder repaired
3. Determine the remaining life in the battery banks and prepare cost estimate
4. Put together a maintenance spreadsheet (of sorts)
5. Need to find possible stand in (subcommittee) for times when I am out of town.



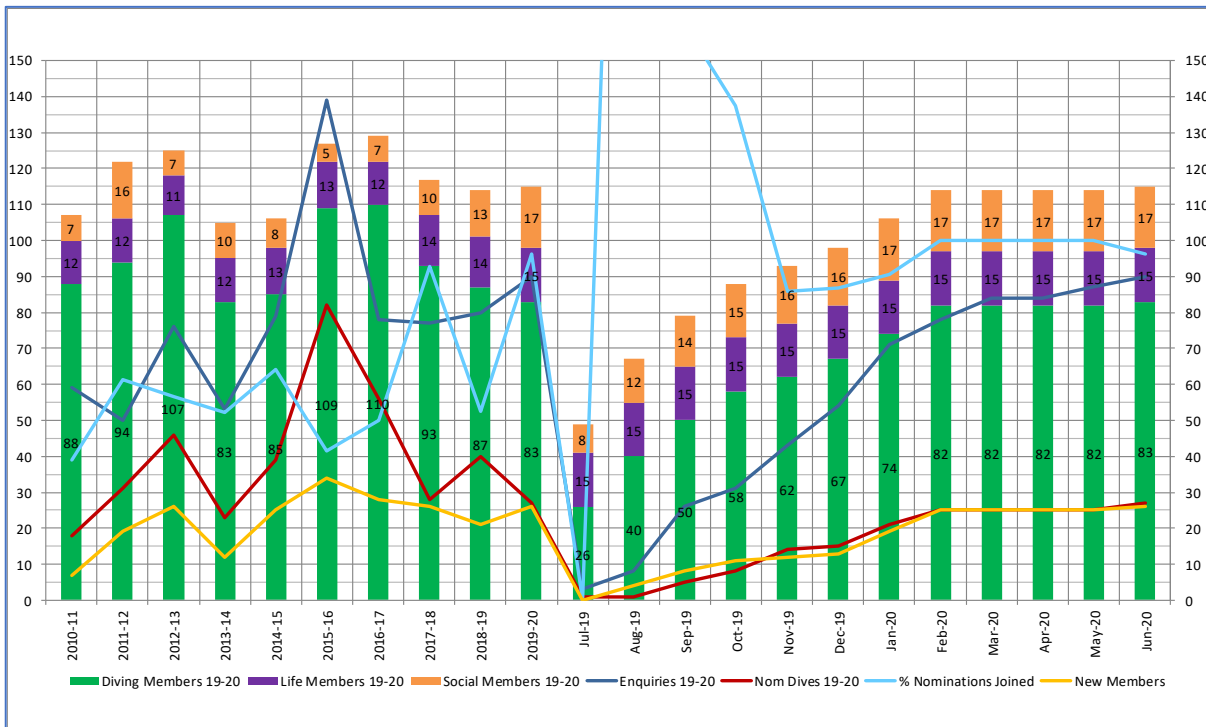
## MEMBERSHIP REPORT JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

**MIKE BUCHANAN**



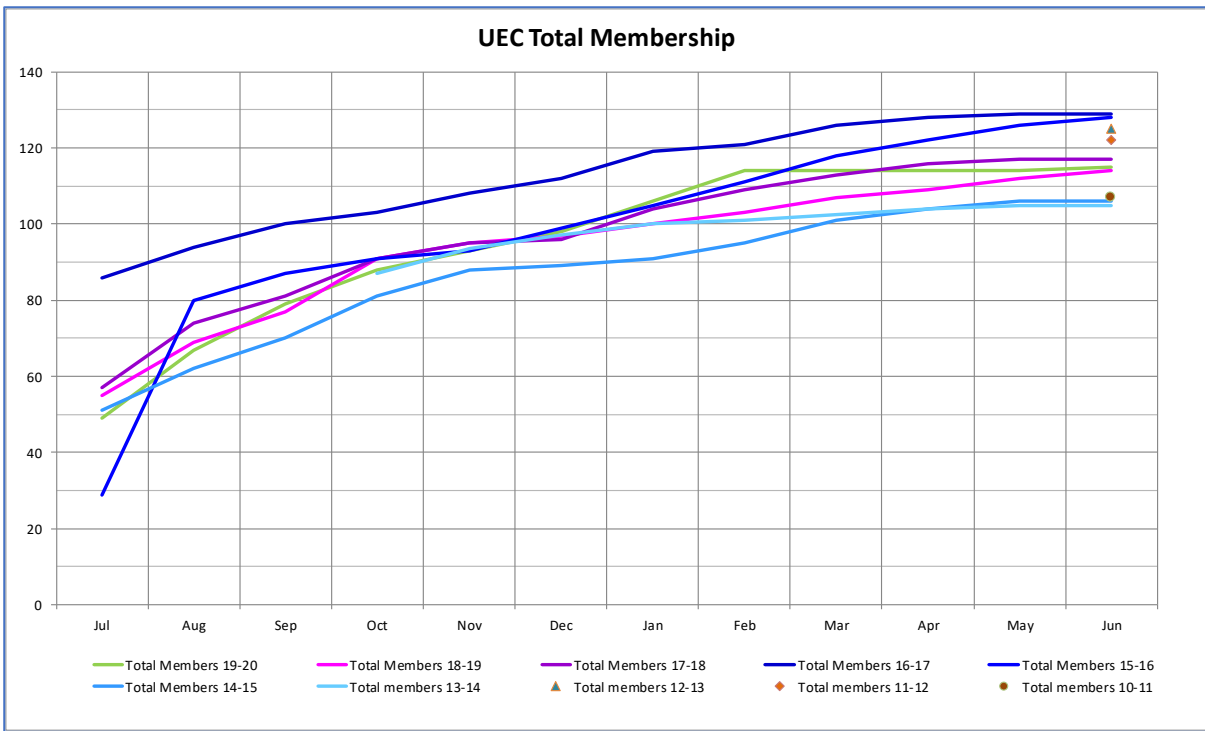
Membership numbers for 2019-20 club year were pretty much the same at 115 as the previous year, which given the fact that Covid effectively halted new memberships from March until the end of the club year, was a better than expected outcome. Diving members (i.e. members who dive as opposed to social members) continued the downward trend seen over the last few years but I suspect if not for Covid we would have reversed that trend this year. Oh well.... here's to next year. May it be less traumatic than this one.

A continuing interesting trend on the chart below is the % of nomination divers joining the club. For the last two years we have had close to 100% join. Why? Well as before, I think because nomination divers are AOW they are more experienced and dedicated and therefore more go onto to join the club. Fewer 'fly by nighters' if you like.

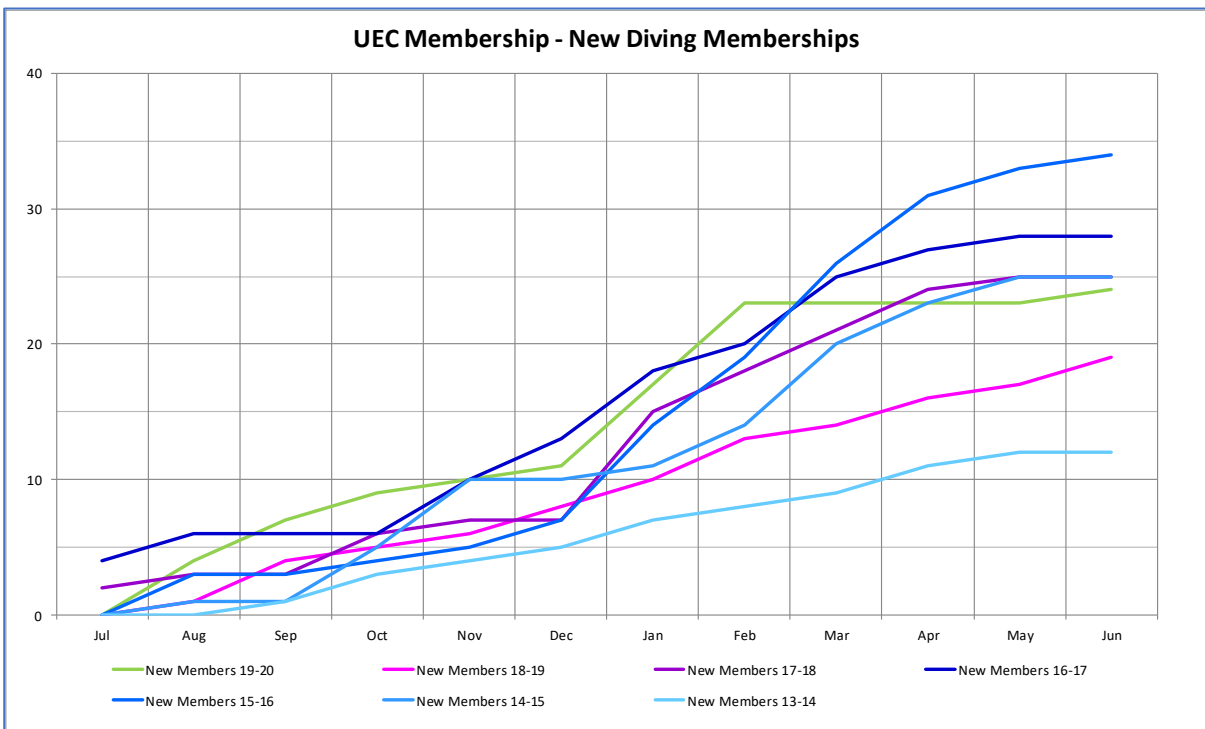


Total membership was pretty much in line with the two previous years despite the Covid set back, finishing at 115 members. However we did see a small drop in the number of diving members to 83, which in turn usually means a drop in diving revenue.



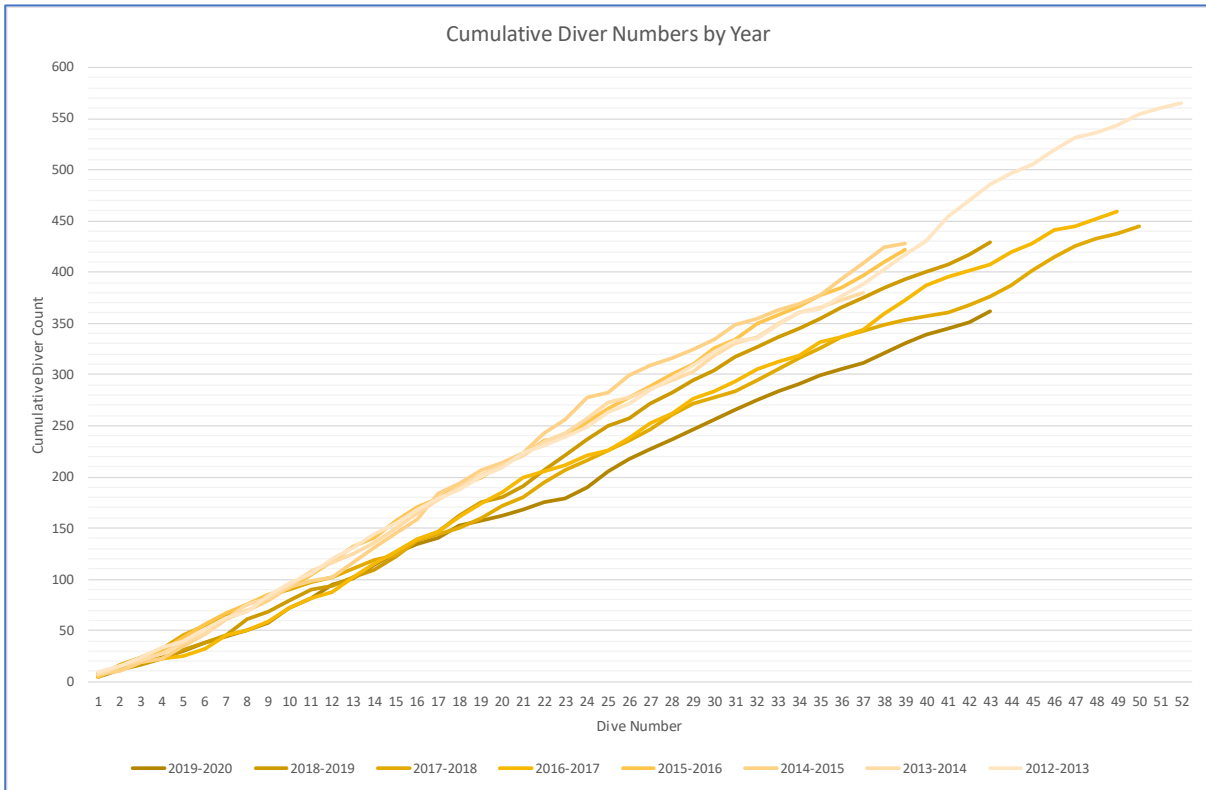


Every year we turn over between 20 and 30 members and this past year was broadly in line with previous years with 24 new members joining. New members are a critical component for the club as not only do they bring in membership fees, but they generally make up the majority of the divers on the boat and thus are critical in keeping boat dive numbers up. As the majority of club income comes from membership fees and diving revenue, its critical that both these are maintained for a healthy club. We can all play a part in that process by publicizing the club and inviting along diving friends and family.



Finally the chart below I think shows a concerning trend. The lines represent the cumulative diver count as we go through each years boat dives. The darker the line the more recent the data with

the bottom most line the result for 2019-20. Even without Covid you can see we were trending well below the previous years in terms of number of divers on the boat. As this directly equates to revenue to the club it is a downward trend we cannot sustain for too long. The fewer divers on the boat the more we will need to increase dive fees to pay the running costs which in turn leads to fewer divers. A dangerous spiral to get into.



To this end we all must play our part if we want the UEC to last another 60 years

## DIVE CO-ORDINATORS REPORT JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

DONNA GRATTON



There really is not a huge amount to report this year in terms of regular dives due to Covid19. As you all know we were put on hold from March until recently. I also have no doubt that Mike (statistician extraordinaire) will have offered the dive stats. My report is more a personal one, reflecting and looking forward rather than looking at statistics.

My deepest thanks to Wendy and Chris, along with everyone who has supported me in organising the dives this year. I hope we can keep working together to offer special opportunities for diving beyond our usual territory. Please know how much I appreciate all the support I get organising the diving at Rotto and surrounds on a weekly basis as well, everyone jumps in to help if I am unavailable, it's great to be a part of such a supportive community. The skippers, the DOs and everyone, have helped me experience a wonderful opportunity to grow and feel confident as our club Dive Coordinator. THANKS EVERYONE xx I'm looking forward to 2021.

I am very excited to have initiated connections with Tania Douthwaite and Helen Alison looking to explore including Free Divers into the club an onboard. We had an exhibition dive with them both which went well and while Covid stopped this we are seeking further liaisons with this group of people. It would be wonderful to expand our connections to divers beyond SCUBA. This is a relationship in development.

### DIVING TRIPS OFFERED IN 2019-2020

**Rotto Week 2019** The talk of the club, and just getting in before Covid 19 arrived. Thanks to Liz Davey for organising this huge trip and making sure everyone is well fed and has a great time. This trip is our Gold Badge and always enjoyed by everyone who attends. Thanks for everyone's support, but a huge thanks to Liz Davey who manages this trip and has done so for MANY years.



**Augusta Nov 2019** was booked out in November 2019 very quickly and by all accounts was a massive success. Thanks for organising Geoff Geard and Mike Buchanan.

### **Abrolhos 2019 5<sup>th</sup> Sept – 8<sup>th</sup> Sept**

We headed off with 10 divers onboard. Being our first club trip there in many years it was a great success. Conditions were perfect, the Vis was at least 20 metres for most of our diving and water temperatures were around 22 degrees.



## **Abrolhos 2020 29<sup>th</sup> May – 1<sup>st</sup> June**

This trip happened even though it went down to the last minute, the intrastate borders opened on the Thursday that we needed to cross them. It was a contingent of 8 divers and while Dave McShane of Abrolhos Island Charters usually takes a minimum of 10 divers, he honoured the trip with 8. We were really blessed to have this experience and it was without doubt a great success, getting our boat limit of crays on one single dive, and experiencing great conditions and water temperatures around 20 degrees (a tad cooler than Sept).



**Rotto Weekender 2019 (The Dark Side of Roe Reef)** The weekend of October the 25<sup>th</sup> was a huge success, fully booked and great weather. Thanks to Wendy and Chris for their tireless efforts to help me organise this trip. Accommodation was all Wendy's doing and the trip would likely not have happened without her support with this. It helped enormously having her with 'boots on the ground' at RIA. Thanks to Chris for skippering for the whole weekend.

**Mindarie Trip 2019 (Beyond The Wall)** The weekend of the 16th November was another success, fully booked on both days and great diving reported by all. We dived the Gemini Wreck and some great sites shared with us from Dave Freemantle. Eight of us went up and stayed overnight on Saturday in a shared Air BNB which worked really well for the 'Southerners' who see a trip to Mindarie as "going beyond the wall".

## **FUTURE PLANNED TRIPS INTO 2020 AND 2021**

The **Rowley Shoals (OCT 2020)** trip is being managed by Mel Turner and things are looking good for this trip. We had interstate visitor's interest, however Covid 19 destroyed us being able to include Victorians. Maybe next time our Vic friends can join us? Thanks to Mel Turner for managing this. We are now full.

**Mindarie Trip (OCT/NOV 2020)** we are looking at options over two weekends and possible fishing during the week. We will keep you updated on this. Thanks to Steve Day.

**Augusta (NOV 2020)** trip is booked and filled. Thanks once again to Geoff Geard.

**The Rotto Week (MAR 2021)** will be going ahead in March 2021 (if Covid 19 restrictions keep as good as they are). Thanks to Liz Davey.

**Abrolhos Trip (MAY 2021)** has been booked for May 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks again to such an amazing team, and particularly to Wendy and Chris who have guided me and supported me in organising all the dive trips beyond the regular (as well as the regular). I have learnt a great deal from you both.

## **Cocos Islands (2021)**

I'm currently looking at a dive trip to the Cocos Islands in 2021, stay tuned for this one.



## SOCIAL CO-ORDINATOR REPORT JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

LIZ DAVEY



Already? Well that went fast, 2020, and it has certainly been different thanks to Covid 19, but, it has not all been negative, so let us look at the positives and embrace a new year of diving and associated activities.

UEC apparel, along with the usual Hoodies, Beanie's , Polo shirts ,Hats, Caps and fleece, UEC proudly introduce a Hooded Shell jacket .Thanks to Jeff Weston who modelled one during the Rotto 10 day holiday in March, these jackets have proved to be a huge success . Most of us bought a size bigger than needed to accommodate wearing over a wettie during the surface

interval. Wind and water proof, with a comfy hood, and a number of secret dry pockets, they are quite the thing for those double dive days.....I am currently compiling a clothing order so if there's something you would like please don't hesitate to let me know.

The Christmas Gathering held at the Type 1 Diabetes Family Centre was another roaring success with around 30 club members enjoying a very quick meeting, followed by a great feast. It is at this meeting that Club Member of the Year, and Boat Person of the year, club awards, are presented. Club Dive Co-ordinator, Donna Gratton took out Club member of the year and Boat person of the Year award, went to Boat Officer, Chris Cunnold. Well done Guys, don't forget to congratulate them both next time you catch them on the boat.

The Christmas Day Orphans and some dive, happened again from The Ammo Jetty at Woodman's Point. This free event is open to anyone and is rounded off by a shared morning tea after the dive, just to get you ready for the remainder of your Christmas Day activities.

Thanks to Skipper and Crew, Chris Cunnold and Wendy Hutchison, the Australia Day, Sky Show river cruise and dinner, was successfully run once again from an amazing Perth Waters view point. Seats for this event are limited to 20 plus crew and sell out super quick. This year was no exception. Fortunately, the weather was balmy, food and drinks plentiful and delicious, and the fire works superb. Pick up points both South and North of the river was much appreciated by those attending.

Entertainment Books /App. Well from here on in, the "Entertainment", as it is now called is available in App form only. That is not the only change, the App now runs from the date of purchase, also available, for an additional small sum are offers in other major Australian cities, and Bali. This (once borders re open) will provide access to some amazing offers for many things, food, drinks, travel, accommodation Australia wide. Apps are easy to download and cost \$70.00. \$14.00 from each sale comes back to UEC WA, which we use exclusively for boat maintenance and repair, it's a win, win for us all.



And finally, the jewel in the UEC crown, of course, is the "Annual Rotto Pilgrimage", held across 9 days in March each year. We book (thanks to Bob and Zita Dobson who assist with this process) 2

chalets in Geordie Bay, giving us 14 beds. Costs vary dependant upon if you are a diver or non-diver or if you choose to stay 3 days. 6 days, or all 9 days. **Dates for 2021 are 6 th – 15 th March.**

2020's trip was brilliant, the weather Gods smiled on us each day, the Crays queued up to be caught, and everyone had the best time. We were additionally, lucky in as much as we had only just returned to Perth when the WA Government requisitioned the Island as a Covid 19, quarantine Station for those returning to Perth from overseas. We were so lucky, timing is everything, they say, in this case they were spot on.

I will begin advertising 2021 Rotto Pilgrimage Bookings, bookings shortly so keep an eye on the weekly Newsletter.

Like all things UEC, Social and Fundraising event information is always advertised in the Weekly Newsletter, to keep in the loop please read it.

If you have any ideas for Social or Fundraising activities please let me know, we are always willing to try new things...

Thanks for reading this report and thanks for supporting your club throughout 2019- 2020.

See you in the water soon.



## SAFETY OFFICER REPORT JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

PETE NORTHROP



The 2019-20 dive season was a very disrupted season with the Covid 19 pandemic closing our diving down activities for a considerable period. The diving activities that did occur were carried out in a safe manner, with no safety incidents being recorded.

It is encumbered on all UECWA members and UECWA guests taking part in UECWA activities to comply with UECWA rules and procedures. These rules and procedures have been developed over a number of years to ensure all participants not only enjoy their UECWA activities but do it in a safe manner.

Members should also be aware that should they see any unsafe actions or activities occurring during UECWA activities, they have a responsibility to bring these matters to the attention to the boat or dive personnel at the time.

With winter with us, a number of you will reduce your dive frequency, if not stop diving altogether. This is the time to have your dive gear checked and serviced to ensure a safe and enjoyable start to your diving when the weather improves. You don't want to miss out on dives next season, due to faulty gear on the day.

## ENVIRONMENT OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

JASMINE LYONS

2019 / 2020 Have been very interesting and challenging years for the underwater environment with some very sad and alarming reports on an increase in plastic pollution but also many positive reports of water quality improvement due to lockdowns such as the Venice canals.

A UN report from May 2020 says, "The study suggests that the temporary shutdown of activities due to the crisis, as well as reduced traffic on the seas and demand for marine resources, could give oceans the "much-needed breathing space" to recover from pollution, overfishing and the impacts of climate change." I wonder if the dolphins and whales and



other sea life are breathing a sigh of relief with the reduction of ocean traffic and all the noise associated with it.

Before we were asked to socially distance the UEC had put its hand up to help out with several clean-up activities to help our little corner of the world but unfortunately the events were not well supported. I hope the next year will see us back to our normal outstanding numbers of volunteers for these community events.

**The summary of 2019 / 2020 events are as follows:**

19/10/19 Mandurah Dawesville Cut clean-up

20/10/20 Port Coogee Marina clean-up

23/02/20 River Guardians, Clean-up Australia Day

(I apologise if I have missed any events that were organised or attended by UEC members.)

Unfortunately, some other scheduled events were cancelled this year due to Covid-19. Hopefully they will be back on the calendar in the near future.

I am now standing down as the Environment Officer and would like to thank everyone who assisted me during the past year and wish the new Environment Officer every success in 2020/2021.

