

SCUBA Divers Federation of Victoria, Inc.

GPO Box 1705 Melbourne 3001

www.sdfv.org.au



Chair's Report: 2008-2009

This report is a summary of the key activities of the SDFV for the period August 2008-August 2009. It has been prepared in consultation with the Vice President Communications and is tabled on behalf of the 20080-2009 Management Cell to satisfy the Annual Report as required by Clause 9.9 of the SDFV Rules of Incorporation.

In a sustained environment of increased demand on very limited resources, SDFV peak-body representation and activities in this Reporting Period have included:-

- Regular (approximately quarterly) meeting with Port of Melbourne as a member of the Dive Industry Liaison Group (DILG) in relation to the Channel Deepening Project
- Dialogue with Parks Victoria in relation to the booking system for SDFV clubs for the annual Cup Day Weekend.
- Meeting with Parks Victoria in relation to management arrangements for the ex-HMAS Canberra dive site
- Monthly attendance at the Maritime Heritage Advisory Committee (which replaced the statutory Historic Shipwrecks Advisory Committee in Dec 2008).
- Written submission to the commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) in relation to the review of the Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976.
- Representation on the Abalone Fishery Management Plan Committee and negotiating a commitment for an increase in the number of access days to the recreational abalone fishery in Central Victoria Waters.
- Written submission to Fisheries Victoria in relation to the Draft Rock Lobster Management Plan (2009).
- The SDFV Survey/Questionnaire process
- Preparation of a SDFV Code of Practice for recreational diving on shipwrecks and artificial reefs and a related Code of Practice for diving on the ex-HMAS Canberra.

Risks and issues

The above list is not exhaustive; it is to convey that the SDFV is active and productive in promoting and protecting the interests of the recreational diver. The list should be viewed in the light of persistent, undermining claims by some individuals that the SDFV is non-performing and thus irrelevant. This year, claims of general dissatisfaction with the SDFV performance was put to the test in a Survey canvassed across current and past members. Wide-scale dissatisfaction was not reported – indeed, the majority of members appreciated the scope of activities of the SDFV role as a peak body. This is not to say, however, that improvement steps were not identified – in particular, the need to work smarter, given limited resources, and the need to expand our membership base so as widened our spheres of influence. On this point, the Management Cell has been actively pursuing past or lapsed members back into the fold, and at the time of writing, I am happy to report new financial members compared to the same period last year. But more needs to be done and I encourage all members themselves to be more active ambassadors championing the value of the SDFV.

The SDFV is a quiet achiever and has worked hard over more than 40 years to gain a respected voice. It has no history of grandstanding. The SDFV is time- poor and people-resource poor.

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The last thing we can afford at this time is low membership. Those who put their hand-up do SDFV business are a godsend, and they will get my vote and respect every-time.

So in summary, the current times are not all that different from recent years. The SDFV is active, financial, and clearly a recognised peak body in the community. I extend my thanks on behalf of the entire membership, to all those who put-in, and my personal gratitude in particular to the current Management Cell. The SDFV is in good shape. To build on this, is, as always, up to the fraternity.

John M. Hawkins, *PhD*,

Chair,
SDFV, *Inc.*

Aug 2009.