



AUSTRALIAN UNDERWATER FEDERATION- SPEARFISHING

1. Message from the National Chair

The AUF has developed a strong working relationship with state chairs and peak recreational fishing bodies and sees great value in working together in the future. It has also been a challenging year with change and political decisions that impact our sport, and important issues requiring extensive consultation.

The key items of interest are discussed below:

2. Membership and benefits

One of the main questions I get from people is what does the AUF National body do for me. Each AUF member pays \$10 towards the national body (except Juniors who are free).

1. About 10 volunteer hours week for 52 weeks year (520 hours) of my time working on spearfishing issues and co-ordination. I also pay my own phone calls and most postage. I do charge for some travel and expenses for AGMs. In this time I work primarily with state chairs, members, industry, government, stakeholders and the community to represent your interests on spearfishing to ensure that you have access for the future.
2. Financial - Legendary Skindiving Equipment- *10% discount for members for 2007-8*
3. Financial – *50% discount on Fantastic Fish Calendar*
4. Representation- AUF National spearfishing commission pays our associate membership fee for Recfish Australia (\$550 pa) and I also am on the Board. This group represents all recreational fishers and has full time staff and has contacts with the Federal Minister.
5. Planning- National Strategic Planning template (which I have encouraged states to also use)
6. Planning- Review and update of Competition rules (which I have encouraged states to consider when reviewing their rules)
7. Planning- Bylaws (how we run the National Commission)
8. Communication- MPA Conference (6 AUF members attended and I presented- talk which is on AUF website)
9. Communication- I send several hundred emails and letters and also write regular articles for ISFN and Spearfishing Downunder magazine. Also other important events such as radio and TV appearances and media releases and articles (such as Obitury for Wally Gibbins).

10. People Development - Next Generation of Leaders (first course in Darwin this month with NSW and Vic AUF attendees)
11. Legal - AAT court case on GNS (and also \$2000 towards costs)
12. Competitions- List of all competitions so as to reduce overlaps. Seed money of \$2000 to help clubs run national competitions (generally returned but loss in SA)
13. International Competitions - Money to support international and world teams
14. Best Practise- Tournament accreditation (I facilitated the Blue Water Classic as the worlds first spearfishing tournament with ****- and Cloughy Challenge in Qld is looking at it now)
15. Sponsors - I have worked with my contacts and Sue to get spearfishing industry to sponsor the back of the AUF cards (Edge in 2005, Adrenalin in 2006, Picasso in 2007). Also I work with other sponsors for national titles or other teams (eg Paspaley).
16. Professional presentation- business cards and t-shirts organised for state executive.

3. Strategic Planning

The National AUF Strategic Plan was updated (below) and several new initiatives were completed or are close to completion.

These include:

- National Competition Rules completed

- Tournament Accreditation of Blue Water Classic (**** 4 stars)

- This is a world first for a spearfishing tournament and also the first competition in a MPA and also included media release by *Recfish Australia*

The AUF national body drafted a policy on Marine Protected Areas. The draft policy was presented to the National Seminar on MPA's (copy of powerpoint presentation on AUF website). This policy contained percentages for sanctuaries and was controversial and there were some concerns from some AUF members. The AUF draft policy was not progressed but efforts were redirected into a Recfish Australia policy on MPA's.

The National Spearfishing Commission has worked closely with the AUF and President Graham Henderson on two key issues which we hope will be finalised in 2008- national insurance, on-line membership.

4. People

The people who contribute are what makes the AUF the organisation it is today. A huge thank you to all the volunteers of national, state and club positions. I know it is hard to give up your precious time but if we don't do it that our future is bleak.

The AUF Chair, Dr Adam Smith was accepted to the Recfish Board for 1 year and has taken an active role. In particular Adam has led items on policy, leadership, strategic planning and vision, national fish names, communication and contributed on issues such as grey nurse sharks and marine protected areas.

Several AUF committee members – Adam Smith and David Welch, were finalists in the inaugural Recfish Awards.

Several AUF members were selected to participate in the next generation of leaders program- Dr Matt Koopman (Vic), Craig Shepherd (NSW) and Chad Lunlow (Qld).

5. Communication

The communication between spearfishers has been greater than ever before. The AUF has several websites, specialist publications (*International Freediving and Spearfishing News* and *Spearfishing Downunder*), DVD and video and trade displays and I believe that this has led to a significant increase in knowledge transfer and our membership in the past year.

The AUF spearfishing website -<http://www.auf-spearfishing.com.au> is fantastic (thanks very much to John Featherstone) and contains campaigns, media, contacts, competitions, records and much, much more.

In 2006/7, AUF committee members wrote hundreds of letters and emails and made and received hundreds of telephone calls with the state Chairs, Federal Fisheries Minister, State Fisheries Ministers, fishing and conservation groups and AUF members.

Highlights of particular importance:

- Presentation on spearfishing to Recfish Australia seminar on Marine Protected Areas- November 2007
- TV program on Grey Nurse Sharks
- *Fantastic Fish Calendar (2007)* included AUF logo
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6. Competitions

The Australian Championships were held in November 2007 in Townsville, Queensland waters with 52 competitors. The event was focussed on spearfishing but also held film fishing and fin swimming events. AUF organisers held a Qld DPI permit to fillet fish at sea and also donated fish frames for key species to scientists and some fillets to local charities. The next national championships are in southern NSW in January 2008.

A full list of Australian Championship winners over the past 50 years has been updated and is on the website. Several trophies have been repaired and recovered.

The Blue Water Classic (Woolgoolga, NSW) is a pelagic species only competition and was accredited as four stars in March 2007 under the NEATFish program developed by Recfish Australia. The next tournament to apply for accreditation is the Cloughy Challenge held offshore from Mackay in September.

An Australian team attended the Interpacific Competition in NZ in March. Thank you to Gunther Pfrengle and David Welch for managing the team. The boys had a great time, caught some quality fish and made great friends. We were 3rd on the first day and 1st on the 2nd day. Congratulations to NZ who won the event. Next years competition will be in Hawaii and Japan will be invited to attend for the first time. Also the World Championships will be in September/October 2008 in Venesuala and the Australian team will be managed by Tony Heugh

7. Politics and management of fisheries

Spearfishers continue to be under pressures for changes to our activity from Federal and State government and the conservation groups, and there has been major issues associated with marine protected areas, protected species and fisheries management. We need to be more proactive with meetings with politicians, mail outs, media releases

Highlights of particular importance to the AUF

- AAT hearing on Grey Nurse Sharks which has cost the AUF approximately \$12,200 (\$2200 from national body and \$10,000 from NSW Freediving and Spearfishing Commission)

8. Finance and support

AUF is associate member of Recfish (\$550) and also contributed to AAT (\$2200 from national body and \$10,000 from NSW Freedivers). A significant amount of in-kind support such as expertise, contacts, letters and time was also provided

9. The future

I have also worked on a grant proposal for funding a part time EO, DVD, roadshow, monitoring and rewards (wetsuits and some fuel money) for 2007/8. This proposal was largely focussed on shark monitoring so we can have some facts and be seen to be involved in care and stewardship of the marine environment.

10. Finances

Finances are largely generated from membership (\$10 from adults, juniors free), 50% profit from two competitions (Australian titles, BWC), sponsorship (Paspaley).

Expenses include international competitions, Grey Nurse Shark legal costs and travel for AUF meetings. Copies of financial statements available for viewing at meeting.

Current account has \$8,422.38



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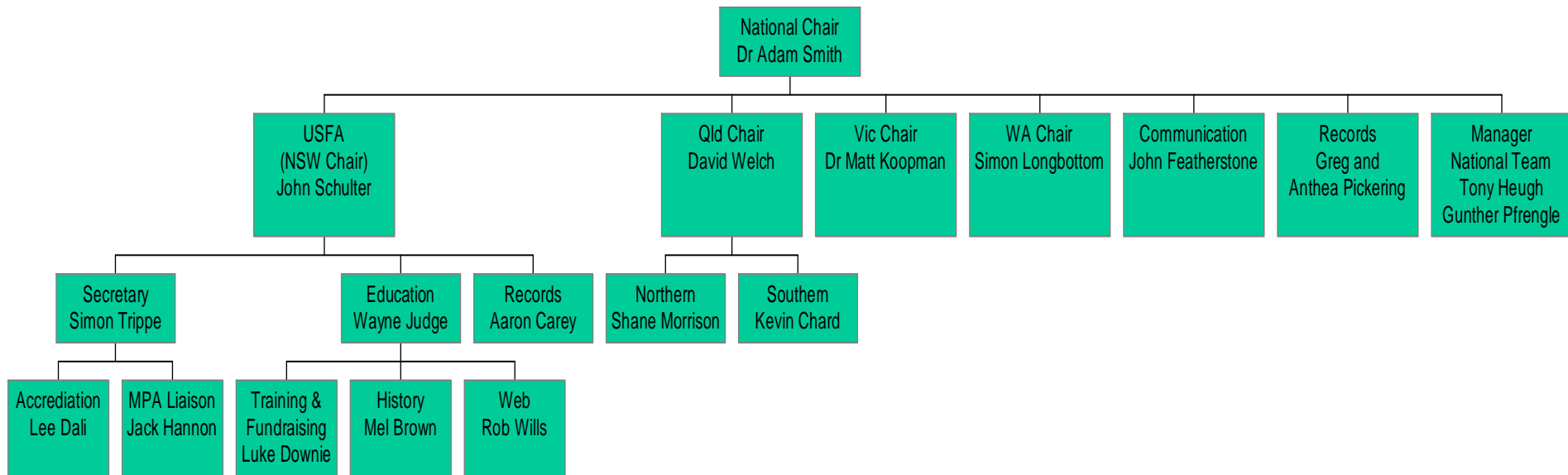
3 October 2007

1. Draft strategic plan for spearfishing in Australia. 2005- 2007

AIM	HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
To increase membership of the AUF by 10% pa.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All AUF members compulsory join national commission Incentives and rewards 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> National Chairman State Commissioners Club Presidents Dive Shops Website 	500 members by May 2006 550 members by May 2007	Letters to all existing and non-current members (twice a year – May and August) One simple membership form Electronic form on www
To improve communication about freediving and spearfishing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8 articles per year in IFSN and Spearfishing Downunder 2 articles per year in newspapers website conference or talks poster Training video 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> National Chairman State Commissioners, Club Presidents National Chairman Australian team Greg Smith, Mark Priest and Rob Torelli 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> & 2. Associated with new information website updated every 3 months 4. 1000 Safe, sustainable spearfishing posters by Dec 05 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership with dive shop 5. One to each member and all dive shops, councils and surf clubs (\$3000) 6. 500 copies for sale at \$25 each and profit to AUF for training
To raise the profile of the support by involvement in community activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Donate fish to charity Clean-up Australia Day Initiate or assist scientific research (eg annual fish count, records on database) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> State commissioners State commissioners Chairman 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> National and state championships and nominated charities All divers at local boat ramp or dive spot one day each year 	
To raise awareness of safety and improve training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> AUF members must pass test (licence?) 5 training courses held Pairs competitions rather than individual 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> NSW State Commissioner to commence trial All state commissioners Chairman 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> By May 04 1 course in each state by December 03 1 Day at national titles 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Questionnaire and booklet Partnerships with key dive shops. New rules trialled and new trophy at national titles
Participate in major competitions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> International competitions Australian Championships State Championships Club events 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Team to attend world and Interpacific comps Rotate between NSW, Qld, WA, ?Vic 	2003 WA 2004 Vic 2005 SA 2006 Qld 2007 NSW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of profit from national titles and blue water classic goes to Australian team and 50% by host club(s) 3\4. Profit retained by state and clubs
Develop partnerships with	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Discount equipment for 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sudefrog, ? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Feb 03 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsed dive shops to

industry and peak groups	<p>AUF members</p> <p>2. Prizes or money for AUF activities</p> <p>3. Annual meetings with major decisions makers (politicians, fisheries departments, council)</p> <p>4. New line of Australian underwater fish clothes, shorts, hats</p>	<p>2. Picasso, Paspaley Pearls, Adrenalin Dive, Extreme Spearfishing, Abalone Divers Cooperatives, Westpac</p> <p>3. Each state commissioner to meet with fisheries minister once a year</p>	<p>2. Aug 03</p> <p>3. when possible</p> <p>4. April 04</p>	<p>offer 10% to AUF members.</p> <p>2. Put out a tender, advertise and write to peak groups in April each year seeking annual contributions</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4. Seek EOIs for design and hold discussions with clothing manufacturer (eg Burning Spears, Hot tuna, Mambo)</p>
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Draft structure- for discussion-
National and State Spearfishing Commissions - October 2007



Dear Adam,

Enclosed is my annual report for A.U.F. Records Officer 2007

31 record applications were received in the past 12 months and subsequently accepted as A.U.F. National Spearfishing Records.

One application was re classified to another species which subsequently broke the existing record for a Blotched Unicorn.

Listed Below are all the new records for which Certificates have been given.

Coronation Trout	Andrew Sprenger	7.450kg
Northern Threadfin	Barry Paxman	2.700kg
Star Eyed Parrotfish	Andrew Sprenger	1.110kg
Black Surgeon Fish	Adam Smith	1.800kg
Hairtail	Craig Whalley	2.558kg
Small Mouth Nannygai	Andrew Sprenger	6.450kg
Golden Trevally	Andrew Sprenger	18.140kg
Long Tailed Tuna	Andrew Sprenger	17.000kg
Long Tailed Tuna	Tony Heugh	21.760kg
Blotched Unicorn	Greg Pickering	5.800kg reidentified
Western Humpnosed Unicorn	Greg Pickering	3.600kg
Long Snout Boarfish	Simon Trippe	4.575kg
Black-spot Goatfish	Davin Smith	2.075kg
Black and Gold Sea Perch	Simon Trippe	4.000kg
Blackfin Barracuda	Tim Neilsen	29.200kg
Long-spot Coral Trout	Craig Whalley	8.600kg
Shark Mackerel	Tim McDonald	12.240kg
Black-saddled Wrasse	Geoff Pesut	1.200kg
Wahoo	Ashley Boler	50.000kg
Scarlet Sea Perch	Tony Humphreys	11.500kg
Queenfish	Zachary Marusic	13.100kg
Blue and Gold Barracuda	Adam Smith	1.000kg
Rough Leatherjacket	Jack Hannan	1.130kg
Buffalo Emperor	Scot Evans	8.800kg
Black Spot Tuskfish	Craig Whalley	16.600kg
Wire-Netting Parrot	Mike Greinke	4.500kg
Blue Marlin	Brett Vercoe	78.000kg
Surf Parrotfish	Andrew Lucas	2.000kg
Pearl Perch	James Sakker	4.735kg
Black Spot Tuskfish	Pam Prescott	14.100kg
Boarfish	Lee Paxman	5.250kg

MARLIN TROPHY NOMINATIONS

Since no formal nominations have been received the winner was chosen from submitted record applications as was the case last year.

In choosing the winner this year I find myself in a rather difficult position. On sheer weight the Blue Marlin of 78kgs taken by Brett Vercoe is a clear winner. Despite numerous requests over many months I still do not have any information as to how the fish was caught. I presume that the fish was taken by trolling a lure behind a moving vessel but I'm not sure about this because no one will confirm or deny it. Even so I can find nothing in the rules prohibiting this type of capture but the question needs to be raised as to whether this form of fishing is acceptable for a nomination for a meritorious award such as the Marlin Trophy. I'm not saying either way what should happen just that a formal discussion at an A.U.F. meeting should take place regarding this issue. It's probably too late for this year so Brett's fish would be awarded the Marlin Trophy but I feel that the 50kg Wahoo taken by Ashely Boler could have won the trophy.

Species Identifications.

Applications for a national record will always proceed more quickly if the species has been formally identified by a museum or recognized fish expert. I would like to thank Mick McDade of the Queensland branch for his invaluable assistance during the year.

On an interesting note an Australian Record Black Spot Tusk fish taken in September 1966 by Robert Stehbins was finally surpassed by Craig Whalley in November 2006 after standing for more than 40 years!

Also a Marlin Trophy nomination by Pam Prescott in 1978 for a Black Spot Tuskfish of 14.100kg has now been recognized as a National Ladies Record.

Greg Pickering
AUF Federal Records Officer

Spearfishing Commission, Queensland - Annual report 2006-07

The AUFQ Spearfishing Commission has two assistant commissioners due to the vast area of coastline and very different issues. Kevin Chard is the assistant in the south and Shane Morrison is the one for the north. Activities in each year are guided by a strategic plan that is updated annually in consultation with all clubs.

Liaison and promotion

Management

Kevin Chard continues to represent the AUFQ and spearfishers on the GBRMPA Fisheries Resource Advisory Committee (FRAC). Not only does this position provide an opportunity for the AUF to have input directly when issues impacting on spearfishers occur, but it also demonstrates an acknowledgement of our activity in Australia's largest Marine Park. It has also provided an effective means of educating managers and other stakeholders represented on the committee about spearfishing and how we operate. Further acknowledgement has been the EPA seeking a spearfishing representative on the stakeholder advisory committee for the development of the Moreton Bay Marine Park currently in progress. Kevin is also sitting on this committee. We have and will have further input into the current Inshore fisheries management plan being developed in Queensland by QDPI&F.

Through our national affiliation with Recfish we also had representatives from Queensland at the National Workshop on marine parks and recreational fishing in November 2006. Given our minority status as a stakeholder group in Queensland this involvement affirms our recognition as an important and legitimate user group and can only help in having our activity recognised in future management.

Research

Once again we have continued to be involved in assisting research in Queensland:

- Providing fish frames for the QDPI&F long-term monitoring program on regular occasions along the full length of the coast, particularly from the National Titles held in Townsville.
- Fish frames have also been provided to James Cook University for student classes and research programs.
- Continued reporting of reef condition to GBRMPA as part of their Bleach Watch program.

Communication and Education

I have tried to focus some of my attention to ensuring communication to AUF members in Queensland and nationally is improved by providing updates for the AUF section in the spearfishing magazines '*International Freediving and Spearfishing News*' (IFSN) and '*Spearfishing Downunder*' (SD). I have also tried to ensure information of relevance to the AUF and spearfishing is forwarded to all state members via club representatives using a regular email service.

During 2006-07 I have appeared several times on the 4K1G radio show called 'The Fishing Show' to discuss spearfishing issues and educate listeners. The program is live on Saturday mornings and can be heard throughout Qld. I also gave a presentation on spearfishing at the Townsville Fishing & Outdoor Expo in June 2007. I have also written several articles and letters to IFSN, SD, and the AUF website. As part of the National Spearfishing Titles held in Townsville in November 2006 a media campaign gave us very positive exposure to the general public through:

- ABC Radio North Queensland interview (Adam Smith & Dave Welch)
- Townsville Bulletin (Dave Welch, Kell Kielly, Naomi Spicer, Gunther Pfrengle)
- Fish donations to local charities (eg. Meals on Wheels)

Administration

A large part of the past 12 months has been taken up by involvement in a major review of the national spearfishing by-laws which have thankfully been resolved. More recently further involvement has taken place in the review of the national 'A Section' rules of competition spearfishing. These processes are lengthy and time-consuming but necessary due to rules becoming very outdated. The same could be said for the Queensland state versions of these rules and a review of these is desirable in the next 12 months. There has recently also been a review of the AUFQ constitution which, although is still incomplete, is very close to being finished.

Also in the past 12 months has been a lot of time developing a risk management framework for all AUF sports in Queensland. This has included two weekends in Brisbane attending training courses, and many hours wading through documents and developing risk assessment material for spearfishing. This process will help at many levels including:

- Cheaper insurance cover
- Better documentation of procedural requirements (legal and otherwise) at state and club level
- Safer practices for our sport
- Better insurance cover for all members

Adam Smith and John Picard have devoted their time in assisting me with the risk management process which once completed may provide templates for use by other states..

Competitions

Cairns Underwater Association (CUA) again hosted the Far North Queensland Titles (won by Kevin Ranger) and Nemrod round in November 2006 and was won by CUA. The Townsville Skindiving Club (TSC) hosted a successful 55th National Spearfishing Titles in November/December. This was a huge effort and preparations took most of the year. I would like to thank the efforts of the TSC and its' members. Queenslanders did very well taking out the national Open Champion (Adam Smith) and national Junior Champion (Scott Evans), as well as numerous other awards (see www.auf-spearfishing.com.au). As a result of selection trials four TSC members gained selection in the Australian team for the Inter-Pacific Championships held in New Zealand in March. I also attended as the assistant team manager. In May 2007 the MDUC hosted a Nemrod round won by TSC; in July TSC hosted the North Queensland Titles won by Adam Smith, and Nemrod round won by TSC. The Queensland State Titles and Nemrod final will be held in late October in Cairns. One task I intend to complete in conjunction with the national chair is a competition guidelines document for future national competition organisation.

Membership

The 2006-07 Queensland Spearfishing Commission membership was approximately 193 which was once again a significant improvement on the previous year. Memberships so far in 2007-08 have been slow and maintaining membership continues to be a critical issue for the future.

Strategic Plan and Future issues

This year has achieved many of the targets set in the Strategic Plan. However, time committed to several task in particular (nationals organisation, risk management, national rules reviews) meant several of the identified tasks were not achieved (eg. competition policy development). These can roll in to the Strategic Plan for 2007-08 and followed by the next State Chairperson. The highest priority items are a review of the Qld competition (A Section) rules and by-laws to iron out inconsistencies and lack of clarity in our current rules. The completion of the review of these rules at national level will help provide some guidance in this regard. Another high priority is the development of administrative guidelines for the Commission. Some progress has been made towards this and the development of a risk management framework will greatly

assist the completion of this task. Other priorities for the future include the development of policy documents with respect to running events such as the state titles, improving the education of our sport to other user-groups, improve our own code of practice, and to maintain and increase our membership through better communication and benefits.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank Kevin Chard for his role as Qld sub-commissioner (South) this past year and to Shane Morrison as the Qld sub-commissioner (North). Any voluntary position is challenging in many respects but I am grateful for the assistance throughout the year from a variety of other people: Adam Smith, Marc Richards, John Picard, Judy Breeze, Bob Eves, Tony Heugh, and John Featherstone.

Dave Welch
Queensland Chair
AUFQ Spearfishing Commission
0414 897 490

2. Strategic Plan for Spearfishing in Queensland 2006 - 2007

Objective	Strategies	Who	When	Resources
I. To increase membership of the Spearfishing Commission by 10% pa.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write to all past and present members 2. Ensure continuation of member incentives such as magazine subscriptions by encouraging members to use them 3. Advertise the AUF, benefits and club contacts in dive shops and the web 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State Commissioner 2. State Commissioners, Club Presidents 3. State Commissioners, Clubs 	155 members by May 2007	Letters to all ex non-current members (June each year) Electronic state membership form
II. To improve communication among all spearfishers (AUF members and non-members)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a policy for communications between the executive, clubs and general members 2. 4 articles per year in IFSN and Spearfishing Downunder 3. Website 4. Advertise in dive shops 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State Commissioners, Clubs 2. State Commissioner 3. State Commissioners 4. State Commissioners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. August 15, 2006 2. Every 3-6 months 3. Updated every 3 months 4. July each year 	4. Partnerships shops
III. To improve the community communication and education of spearfishing and freediving	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 articles per year in general fishing/leisure magazines 2. Public presentations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State Commissioners 2. State Commissioners, Clubs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As per deadlines 2. Opportunistically 	2. PowerPoint presentation
IV. To raise the profile of the sport by involvement in community activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Donate fish to charity (e.g. Meals on Wheels) 2. Encourage participation in Clean-up Australia Day 3. Initiate or assist scientific research (e.g. annual fish count, donate fish samples) 4. Public presentations 	1. – 4. State commissioners, Clubs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National and state championships 2. March each year 3. All year, major competitions 4. Fishing & Outdoor Expo's 	
V. To raise awareness of safety and improve training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete risk management training 2. Develop risk management policy for spearfishing in Qld 3. Educate members of risk management policy 4. Promote the AUF 'Code of Practice' to all spearfishers 5. Support member training where possible (e.g. Snorkel coach, 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. – 3. State Commissioner, Adam Smith, John Picard 4. State Commissioners, Club presidents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By June 30, 2006 2. By February 28, 2007 3. By December 31, 2007 4. July each year 5. As requested 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend Brisbane courses 3. Attend all club meetings 4. Member letters

	first aid)	5. State Commissioner		shops, web 5. AUFO funds
VI. Organise and participate in major competitions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Australian Championships 2. Schedule State Championships 2007 (venue, club) 3. Schedule Nemrod inter-club competition 4. Promote a mix of club competition and social diving 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State Commissioner, Townsville club 2. – 4. State Commissioner 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. December, 2006 2. March, 2007 3. June 30, 2006 	
VII. Develop partnerships with industry and peak groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Letter to relevant management agencies, ministers and dive shops of the AUFO and it's role and contacts 2. Annual meetings with major decisions makers (politicians, fisheries departments, council) 3. Continued membership on GBRMPA FRAC 4. Develop annual strategy for FRAC issues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State Commissioner 2. State Commissioners 3. State Commissioners 4. State Commissioners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. July each year 4. August 31, 2006 	
VIII. Improve administration of the AUFO Spearfishing Commission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop strategic plan for spearfishing in Qld 2. Document roles and responsibilities of the State Commissioner 3. Develop policy documents for organising AUFO competitions 4. Conduct a review of the Qld spearfishing by-laws 5. Review the spearfishing 'A Section' competition rules 6. Ensure policy documents are accessible to members 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State Commissioners, Clubs 2. State Commissioner 3. – 5. State Commissioners, Clubs 6. State Commissioner 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. June 30, 2006 2. August 31, 2006 3. February, 2007 4. June 30, 2007 5. June 30, 2007 6. Ongoing 	6. Website

A.U.F. NATIONAL SPEARFISHING A.G.M.
U.S.F.A. CHAIRMANS REPORT - John Schulter
Saturday 8th October 2007

Accomplishments and involvements listed in point form as follows:

- Instigation of an opinion poll to gauge NSW opinions on three important issues to do with non domiciled competitors winning trophies in either National or State competitions and representative divers/management losing out in their own local competitions.
- Input into “A” Section rules with the inclusion of a boat safety section.
- Letter to all clubs outlining the dangers in boat starts at competitions resulting in the Southern Zone using new starting procedures in competitions. This will hopefully flow on to all Zones and be featured in USFA rules when re written.
- Meeting with John Diplock with discussion on may issues.
- Letter to Ian Macdonald regarding the delays in appointing reps on ACoRF, LOBMAC and ABMAC: no response.
- Letter to John Diplock seeking fisheries opinion and legalities on using sea urchins as berley: response received.
- Submissions and letters of response to the PSMP (response received from Max Haste) and BMP (no response from Geoff Kelly).
- Letter to Eric Abetz supporting the grant application from AUF National Spearfishing: no response.
- Letter of concern regarding intention to close Bondi Bay to spearfishing.
- Presentation by Lee Dalli to NSW Maritime regarding diver’s flag.
- USFA Constitution document nearing completion.
- Attended Revesby Club meeting dealing with many National, State and Zone issues.
- Attended DPI GNS Presentation.

Objectives for this year:

- Get the USFA office in order by completing the Constitution, then the Rules and Regulations, Rules of Spearfishing, Code of Conduct, etc.
- Focusing on Safety
- Fill remaining positions on the USFA committee.
- Improve the content of the website.
- Improve membership: over 300 members at present.
- Improve new membership and renewal procedures.
- Publish a USFA magazine.
- Complete the Handbook to Accreditation.
- Commence enquiries into the feasibility of running a spearfishing expo.
- Reintroduce some of the discontinued inter zone competitions.
- Complete a budget forecast for accounting purposes.
- Begin data collection and analysis from competitions by the newly created position of Data and Research Officer.

- Keep up to date with all endangered species information, studies, outcomes etc, via the newly created position of Endangered Species Officer.
- Keep up to date with MPAs via Marine Parks Liaison Officers: North (vacant), Central (vacant), and South (position filled).
- Improve Fair Trading documentation and liaison by the newly created position of Public Officer.
- Improve communication to all members via newly created Members Liaison Officer, who will follow up (by phone contact) all important email communications and make sure they are relayed.
- Work with AUF National Spearfishing and all other States, Recfish, RFA, etc. to tackle any current or future issues.
- Run the National Titles efficiently, and at a profit.

Report to the AUF National AGM 6 October 2007

The Guide to Spear Fishing (NSW Edition) and Diver Accreditation Scheme

Office bearer responsible – Darren Higgins

1. Guide to Spearfishing in New South Wales

Why the Guide to Spearfishing (NSW Edition) is being Produced

- The Guide to Spearfishing (NSW Edition) eventuated from a need to educate the spearfishing community at large on responsible, ethical and sustainable spearfishing practices. It will serve as the primary reference for all skindivers and underwater fishermen.
- The guide is the baseline solution within a number of other key initiatives being developed by the USFA to transform the sport. There are a number of key audiences intended.
 - a. Firstly participants of the sport will be targeted to yield a greater knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities,
 - b. Secondly the public will be addressed to improve knowledge and perception. This includes anglers as an associate aquatic users group.
 - c. Thirdly Government Representatives will learn of the professionalism of the sport's participants and the public's acceptance that the sport remains congruent with the objectives of marine conservation.
 - d. Similarly environmental activists may be persuaded to understand the benefits of recreational underwater fishing in context to other, more pressing, global issues.

Where we are at

- A national government grant was established to mutually fund the NSW Guide to Spearfishing to the total of \$18,500.
- 90% of the grant has been awarded and has been disbursed to a dedicated bank account of the USFA where funds will be appropriately drawn to pay for development costs.
- The remaining 10% of the grant will be paid upon successful completion of the project (or otherwise put, when the contract held between the USFA and the Australian Government is deemed to be fulfilled it will be endorsed and the remaining funds will be released to the USFA and the risk of forfeiting the 90% already paid will be mitigated).
- The project is contracted to finish 21 December 2007. An extension of 6 months is currently being sought owing to the considerable work yet to complete. If all project elements go to plan, it is likely only half the extension will be required, however the buffer will be necessary to mitigate the risk of not finishing on time and consequently losing the funds.

A working document has been constructed that comprises the original draft, proposed content and gap analysis which highlight the necessary alterations and actions.

In the past 11 months the project has gained considerable momentum and a 46 page draft now exists based on the contributions of various people who were deemed appropriate to write each of the sections that they did.

What the Next Steps are

1. Obtain official extension
2. Meet with creative director to work up the design, images and illustrations.
3. Work with desktop publisher to get the raw document into a professional layout.
4. Circulate draft to steering committee for feedback.
5. Meet with Fisheries to do the same.
6. Consolidate feedback: alterations, deletions, additions, other recommendations.
7. Finalise layout and artwork.
8. Proofread and send to Fisheries for official endorsement as per contract.
9. Proceed to print. (5,000)

10. (Concurrently) map out distribution plan, work on launch plans, PR opportunities etc. [this is a project within the project]

NOTE: *This is not an exhaustive report, there is considerably more detail, in particular the future plans and activities that are intended to leverage off this project.*

2. Accreditation

- Accreditation is a vision. It is the vital step in the grand plan to a controlled approach to *self regulation*.
- Public perception is the key to the future. Divers ideally must be entry level accredited, however the option to progress further and achieve higher levels of accreditation are planned. In this way competent, frequent divers will become role models and ambassadors for the sport.
- Note – the Guide to Spear Fishing in NSW – MUST FIRST BE DELIVERED. The two projects are not mutually exclusive. To sit the test for Accreditation, you need to have first read and understood the guide.
- Strategically, it is envisaged that in the future all existing members and new members will need to be Accredited divers. This fortifies the quality of our membership and if accreditation were to become legislation, part of the drive would be to link compulsory membership, thus increasing numbers and our ability to be persuasive.
- To summarise, in the short-term we must focus on the guide after which the Accreditation scheme will be a priority.
- Resources permitting, the plan will be to:
 1. Establish a federal grant
 2. Leverage off the guide
 3. Create a new framework for Accreditation
 4. Have this endorsed by relevant authorities
 5. Deliver the program to market
 6. Compel all divers in the State to partake
 7. Initiate a central register.
 8. Communicate milestones to relevant authorities.
 9. Communicate elsewhere (PR, newsletter, web, member comms etc.)

WA State Chair Report for the AUF National Spearfishing Commission

October 2007

Chairperson: Simon Longbottom

Introduction

The year of 2006/07 has seen somewhat of a revival of the WA Spearfishing branch of the Australian Underwater Federation (AUF).

This has come about with the recognition that the state body needs to do more than just overseeing competitions. More specifically there is a need to; educate the public as to the real facts of freedive spearfishing, make sure information about marine park and fisheries management proposals is passed on to divers (and responded to), and provide a high profile contact point for new divers.

Membership status

Spearfishing AUF membership within WA is at a 10 year high with approximately 75 financial members. This is likely to increase during the financial year with the formation, or revival, of clubs in Albany, Geraldton and Dunsborough. This massive increase from the previous year (3 WA Spearfishing AUF members!) is mainly due to both the West Australian Undersea Club (WAUC) and Bluewater Freedivers of Western Australia (BFWA) making AUF membership a compulsory part of club membership.

Committee status

There have been a number of changes within the committee of the WA AUF Spearfishing division for 2007.

Simon Longbottom has taken over the role of Chair from the long serving Joe Petrovich, who has agreed to stay on as the WA AUF spearfishing representative on the Recfishwest board. This position was previously held by Paul Mckeown who has resigned for personal reasons.

Peter Barbara will stay on as treasurer and Jodi Ingram has take on the role of secretary.

Alistair McNeill has taken over as competition organiser. Alistair is a previous Chair of the commission and has a great deal of experience in this area. He has some great ideas such as digital “photograph and release” type competitions aimed at increasing the skill of the freediver while removing the capture of less desirable species.

Lee Paxman will continue to take charge of state records. Lee has done a great job in keeping on top of this. Records are accessible via BFWA’s website www.bluewaterfreediversofwa.com

Arnold Picolli and Barry Paxman, while not holding official positions on the committee, will be providing their experience in regards to large competition organising.

The committee (and invited guests) currently meets every 3 months (Nov, Feb, May, Aug).

AUF events

Western Australia is not “big” on Spearfishing competitions and has not run any AUF Spearfishing competitions in the last 3 years, however with the revival of the committee it is envisioned that a state pairs competition and hopefully a state singles competition will be run prior to the scheduled nationals of 2008/09.

Major issues facing WA divers

Equal access compared to other recreational fishers

Several new restrictive zones came into force at Rottnest this year and once again we were confronted with unequal access compared to line fishing. The biggest loss has been demersal fish protection zone at West End. Here linefishers still troll for pelagics however spearfishers may not drift for the same fish.

Recfishwest and Fisheries WA backed us in efforts to keep access to this area however the Rottnest Island Authority saw fit to disregard all scientific advice and use spearfishers as the “sacrificial lamb”.

Equal access will be an on going issue with the Shoalwater and Cape-to-Cape marine park final rulings yet to be made public. The one “ray of hope” is that in his media release on metro fish stocks Fisheries minister John Ford stated that by-catch mortality from rec. linefishing was proving to be a bigger issue than once thought. This provides us with the opportunity to push the “selective and zero by catch” slogan for the next round of rec. fishing restrictions.

Tightening of bag limits and restriction of fishing areas

While the entire east coast seems to be facing marine park zoning issues, WA has recently been confronted with unprecedented fisheries management intervention.

Fisheries minister John Ford has stated that at minimum the overall level of catch for the key demersal species in the West Coast Bioregion needs to be reduced by at least 50 per cent as soon as possible. To put this in perspective cutting rec. bag limits in half will reduce overall catch by 4%!

Interim measures include:

- Ceasing professional fishing for demersal scalefish between Lancelin and Cape Bouvard south of Mandurah. The 200km zone will come into effect in December 2007 and should reduce overall catch by 25 to 30%.
- The closure to fishing for pink snapper in Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds will be extended by two months from 1 October to 31 January.
- Extend the existing 20kg finfish possession limit to also apply to the place of residence (previously applied outside places of residence).
- Totally protect baldchin groper within the Abrolhos Islands.
- Create a possession limit of 4 'Category 1' fish per person on aquatic charter vessels.

Fisheries release a paper for public discussion and further restrictions that will be introduced next July will include:

- A registration of anglers who fish for key demersal species.
- Explicitly managing the catch by issuing 'possession' tags (one per fish with a maximum number per angler per year).
- Restricting fishing activity by closed seasons.
- Restricting fishing activity by closed areas.
- Establishment of 'no take away' wilderness fishing areas eg Abrolhos islands

So it is without doubt that the next 12 months will see restrictions we can hardly fathom however the WA AUF will be working to ensure Spearfishers are given equal access and that new management approaches are based on real science that will benefit us in the long term.

Dive flag

Under current legislation diving in WA is defined as breathing underwater on compressed air (ie. SCUBA or surface supply compressor). Therefore Freedivers are not protected by the current laws or afforded the rights set out in the legislation (technically boats do not have to keep 50m clear of Freedivers).

This situation was highlighted when Will Intveld has his leg nearly severed by a boat 25km west of Rottnest early this year. Will's boat had a regulation size flag that was visible from 360 degrees and he was within 20m of his boat. The water was calm and there was no other boats in the area. The offending driver has eventually given a small fine for "contravening Navigable Waters Regulation 14A - No person shall navigate a vessel in such a manner as to - (a) endanger the safety of that or any other vessel or any person;"

The state commission, through Joe Petrovich, along with Recfishwest are investigating how the legislation can be changed to offer some protection to Freedivers. Currently there is some opposition from government and divers.

Currently Freedivers do not have to tow a float/flag and as many divers use reels in WA and dive in low boat traffic areas they do not want the perceived extra hassle of a float. DPI is concerned that including snorkelling/freediving in the legislation will block off boat access to many popular bays at Rottnest as the 50m “keep clear zone” around snorkellers could potentially cover a whole bay. There is also the issue of children snorkelling off a beach having to tow a float/flag.

The commission has suggested “slowest possible speed to maintain steerage within 50m of a dive flag” rather than total exclusion. Debate on this issue will be ongoing but hopefully we will have a positive outcome before the nationals.

Goals of the WA Spearfishing commission for 2007/08

Create a strategic plan for WA to cover the next 3 years

Starting at the November meeting the commission will produce a strategic plan of Spearfishing within WA to cover the next 3 years. We will use the national model to ensure consistency within the AUF.

Create a scoresheet appropriate of a national competition

This is not going to be easy given the restrictions we face this November/July and the unknown changes set to come in July 2008. It is highly likely that our prize species, that usually separate the top divers, will be subject to a tag lottery system and large areas such as the Abrolhos will be “no take home zones”. Whatever happens the current scoresheet will need revamping with the intention of making it as least complicated as possible while complying with new fisheries regulations.

Run a state championship using the above scoresheet

Obviously it is vital the above scoresheet be tested before the nationals. If a state championship can not be achieved then this scoresheet should at least be tested at a club level to see what “spread” of scores are achieved and what other problems arise.

Increase membership and create new clubs

As noted previous the massive increase in membership this year is due to WA’s only active clubs, BFWA and WAUC, making AUF membership compulsory. Both these clubs are based in the northern suburbs of Perth. To further increase AUF membership regional clubs will need to be encouraged.

There are loose associations in Albany, Dunsborough and Exmouth (BFWA has a chapter in Geraldton). The commission will work towards giving these groups a reason for joining the AUF. Current ideas include a state newsletter, “diver

directory” (for when we travel around this huge state) and discounts at local dive shops (no good using a Perth shop that is 6 hrs or more drive away!).

Justifying as to why joining the AUF will benefit a dozen guys in an isolated town will be a major task and the WA Commission will be seeking help from other state bodies.

The WA AUF and Recfishwest

The WA AUF sees its relationship with Recfishwest as a vital part of ensuring our pastime has a future and is encouraging its members to join Recfishwest as individuals rather than by AUF proxy.

Conclusion

In summary 2006/07 has been a major rebuilding year for the WA AUF, however, we are confident that a well balanced organisation has emerged. One that is focused on ensuring that freedive spearfishing stays recognised as a legitimate form of recreational fish (and is afforded the same rights as recreational line fishing) while educating divers as to their environmental responsibilities in this delicate resource sharing age.

Sincerely

Simon Longbottom
Chair
West Australian Spearfishing Commission
Australian Underwater Federation

3.

4. **REPORT FROM THE VICTORIAN CHAIR**

5.

6. **Membership**

Southern Freedivers memberships increased from 31 in 2005-06 to 39 in 2006-07.

7. **Committee Structure**

President: Ilias Louie Papadopoulos replaced former President Paul Dorfstatter during 2006-07

Social Secretary: Rob Miler

Treasurer: Russell Bennet

Dive Convenor: Drew Fenney replaced former Dive Convenor Brett Illingworth during 2006-07

Records Officer: Greg Ruby

Newsletter Editor: Chris Monaghan

8. **Competitions**

- A full season of competitions was held during 2006-07. Eight club competitions were held with the club champion being Drew Fenney. The state titles were held at Indented Heads and Pyramid Rock. Aaron Crocombe won, while Rob Torelli and Chris Monaghan came second and third respectively. The Victorian Spearfishing Challenge was won by Brett Illingworth.
- A photography competition was initiated by Jack Monkiewicz to increase freediving and hunting skills, and to offer participation in competitions with a no-take option. Interest in this comp has been increasing and some great photos were entered in the first year. Jack won the inaugural competition.

9. **Achievements**

- Drew Fenney and Aaron Crocombe (as National Pairs Champions) were selected to represent Australia at the Interpacific Championships in New Zealand.

- I was consulted by VRFish on a number of issues including decontamination SOP for the abalone virus. I attended a meeting with VRFish, Fisheries Victoria and Primary Industries Research Victoria to discuss options for estimating recreational rock lobster catch. To follow on from that meeting I conducted a survey to gauge potential for voluntary participation in a phone survey to estimate recreational rock lobster catch.
- I participated in Recfish Australia's seminar on Marine Protected Areas- November 2006.
- The Southern Freedivers website has been maintained and regularly updated.
- In co-operation with a local angling club, I successfully applied for funding to install two FADS of the Victorian coast. This has come at a great time, with excellent catches of southern blue fin tuna and dolphin fish off Portland in recent years.

10. Communication

- Communication with the greater spearfishing community of Victoria has been facilitated through the Southern Freedivers website (www.southernfreedivers.org.au). The website contains information on club events, records, competition results, fish species and a forum. The website receives a large number of hits from 'unique' users each month (from within Australian and around the world). We have a new website administrator, club member Kurt.
- I had one article published in 'International Freediving and Spearfishing News' and have submitted another article to Spearfishing Downunder.

11. Proposed work program and commitments for 07/08

- Following on from the 4 star Tournament Accreditation of the Blue Water Classic, I will work with Adam Smith to assess the Victorian Spearfishing Challenge for NEATFish accreditation.
- The greatest safety concern we face as divers is being hit by boats and jetskies. We are working on a program that aims not only in increase awareness of rules regarding operating vessels around dive flags, but also to educate boat users of the practices of divers displaying the flags. For the initial stage of this program we have submitted an application for funding from Marine Safety Victoria to enhance signage at major boat ramps. Future work will involve communication with the

boating industry though the media. I hope to collaborate on this project with other states.

- Fish size and bag limits are up for review by Fisheries Victoria, with the public consultation process beginning soon. I will be encouraging as many people as possible to have their say.
- Following on from the RECFISH Next Generation of Leaders workshop I will maintain and hopefully expand the network of contacts within the recreational fishing community. Case studies have been set for this group to report on a case study regarding issues associated with the introduction of National Recreational Fishing Licence.
- I will build, install and monitor two FADS off the Victorian coast. These FADS will be of the same construction as the NSW FADS. One will be placed about 15km off Portland, the other about 10km off Barwon Heads. FADS will be for use by all recreational fishers. Thanks to Heath Folpp from NSW Fisheries for assistance in getting this up and running.

Matt Koopman
Victorian Chair
AUF
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