

# Waves 'n' caves

www.wavesncaves.com

#9 SPRING/SUMMER 2008



## In this edition:

- Past Events
- Upcoming Events
- More information on Ewens Ponds closure.
- Diving with Sharks.
- Airliners and luggage secrets.
- Update on the HMAS Canberra
- and more...

Congratulations to the latest people to enter the world of diving—5 Open Water students from Horsham completing their course. (Article inside).



## What's been happening?

*Welcome to this edition of the Waves n Caves newsletter.*

As usual, much has been happening. Cray season is back and divers are out their looking in nooks and crannies. Dive boats are going out more frequently and the weather is warming up.

Another open water course has been completed by Horsham divers. So far this year, we've had 13 new divers from Horsham get their Open Water certificate..

The HMAS Canberra is coming along nicely, and many are looking forward to having a world class quality dive wreck just out of the heads of Port Phillip Bay.

The buoyweather account is back online and members now have access to 7 day forecasts.

There is also concerning news as to the quality of water and environment at Ewens ponds with current new government proposals looking at prohibiting future diving in the Ponds. (More in this newsletter).

And dolphins visited some divers a few weeks ago whilst diving wrecks on the south coast. One of our lovely instructors—too keen to get in with the dolphins forgot to do up her drysuit zip first. (Well, truth be told she was told to get in the water quickly, which didn't help, but let's not let the truth stand in the way of a good story) ✍



## **Diving with the sharks** **By 'Roughwater'**

Oh no—it's the 'S' word. One of the most controversial issues related to the sport of diving, and no—I'm not talking about Sandy jocks!

They're mean. Their nasty and they have a large mouth. Yes—you guessed it. I'm talking about all those people who tell you you're an idiot coz you want to dive with sharks! 😏

Truth be told though—if it wasn't for the way Sharks have been perceived in movies and the media—we probably wouldn't be as interested as diving with them as we are.

Many of us have gone diving with sharks. We've seen the odd Wobbegong, or said G'day to the Port Jackson here and there—but my dive sharing water with Grey Nurse sharks was something different.

It was a beautiful day, and the end of a big week diving at Batemans bay. Truth be told we were quite tired, and could have given diving a 'miss'. After tossing the idea around we decided to go, as we had an opportunity to share the costs with a local diver (and his boat) which was much cheaper than a charter.

So, Kasey, Brylee and myself made the effort, and forced our aching bodies out for 1 more dive (as we were quite tired after a week of constant diving prior) to go and see the sharks. We weren't to be disappointed!

The warm air rushed past us as we headed out to the Tollgate islands at Batemans bay for our first open water dive with Grey Nurses. The swell was light, and conditions were magnificent compared to what we're used to down south!

The Tollgates are home to around 14 Grey Nurse sharks

who live just off the island in a gutter approximately 15m deep.

We anchored in a calm cove, and went over the side of the boat—one by one. It was a bit daunting at first to realise I was floating in water with these sharks below us, but once the others were in the water I figured my odds of surviving had increased somewhat! Soon we were making our descent into the gutters.

It's said that you don't see sharks come—they just 'appear' from no where. Well—that's just the experience we had. We were diving around, minding our own business, wondering where the sharks were, and then—there was one, and another one. They seemed to appear close to use from out of no where.

Cautiously protecting a nearby rock from the rear (as the rock environmentalists we are), we watched these creatures swim up and down the gutters—their eyes fixated on us. I was wanting to take photo's, but the blasted camera casing had fogged up, and I was going to have to wait 10 minutes for the silicon to do it's job!

After a short while we got a

'feeling' for these creatures and started to relax and venture away from the rocks and towards one of the sharks.

They moved gracefully and slowly. They didn't seem too fussed by us, just happy to swim around doing their 'thing'.

Diving with these creatures was something else. Something surreal. They are the largest fish that I have dived with, and the way they're happy to swim towards you and almost pose for the camera as it seems is incredible—if only it wasn't fogged up!

Grey nurse sharks are placid creatures, and are quite fascinating. They can turn about in their own length and are quite manoeuvrable.

We stayed down there for some time, but found that one by one the sharks either got bored of us, or changed their minds and decided they just didn't like us in their space, so they moved off. **Then** the camera case decided to unfog itself. Isn't it always the way!

So—not to be outdone it was time to go looking for them. We found a couple just around the



corner making their way back towards us—I guess to see if we had gone yet.

I wasn't going to miss any more opportunities so the photo's started off. Time to take some photo's! We followed them back to "the gutters" taking some shots where they soon left again. I gave the camera to my wife and decided to do some looking in nooks and cranny's.

During this time, I was unaware of the return of one of the grey nurse sharks as I was concentrating on some small fish near a rock as it sneaked up behind me to get a better view.

I turned around just as she was but a few feet away from me. I was startled—not expecting a shark to be there, let alone that close—with all her teeth showing in full view.

Thankfully she decided to turn away before bumping into me, but was startled when *her* 'escape route' was blocked by my wife, filming the whole thing with the camera!

A quick crack of the tale, and she changed directions and glided away at a fair speed – albeit quite effortlessly.

Thankfully my wife had the whole lot on video tape. Looking



**Kasey and Brylee brave the shark infested water**

back on the video I don't know who was more startled, the shark or myself, but it wasn't the shark leaving a trail of brown substance in it's wake!

It made for an impressive video . Me, an unsuspecting diver with my back turned, and a shark 'sneaking up' behind for 'the kill', just to have it's plan thwarted at the last moment by me turning around ready for the defence. Hey—never let the truth stand in the way of a good story, ey!

Nurse's are used in many marine aquariums as attractions, probably because they look the part—always swimming with their mouths slightly opened showing all their sharp teeth, but yet are

very safe to dive with for the curators and window cleaners :-)

They swim with their mouths open to allow the water to flow through and out of their gills. The fact that their teeth are showing is just a 'bonus' for us onlookers (and photographers).

And that's part of what makes them so good to dive with. They look the part, but are quite docile! Great photo opportunities abound. I'm sure hoping to go back there sometime soon—it was a fantastic experience!

If you ever get the chance to dive with these sharks in the wild—take it. You won't be disappointed.✍️

## Looking for Accommodation?

Whether you're chasing it for a night, a weekend or a week, this spacious 3 bedroom house with good size living areas and fully furnished, located in Wimmera Street Mt Gambier may be what you're looking for.

It includes an outdoor entertainment area at the back with facilities for diving gear to be hung up on. Perfect for scuba divers visiting the Mt Gambier region, whether to dive in caves or the nearby sea.

It also makes an excellent place to stay while doing your CDAA course! Prices start at \$20 / head / night.

For bookings, contact Kelvin or Paula Ball

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## Airlines and Dive gear

With the constant rising costs in fuel, Airline industries have been forced to find more ways of covering their costs.

Airlines have various schemes, so it can be confusing to compare one against the other.

As divers we normally have more gear to carry than the average traveller, so what does this all mean for us?

Living down South, it's most probable that we're going to have to have a connecting flight if flying internationally, or at least one of our legs will be a domestic flight to get to our diving destinations (whether they be Queensland, Fiji, Vanuatu, PNG, etc).

This being the case, we've decided to take a look at our domestic airlines first to see what they have to offer.

Virgin Blue have adopted a new scheme where they charge \$8 for checked in luggage. This allows for 23kgs to be checked in, but for sporting goods, they allow an additional 5kg on top, which gives you a total of 28kgs checked in luggage .

On top of this, you are also permitted 7kgs for carry on—a total of 35kgs per passenger.

Exceeding this limit will cost you \$8 per kilogram which can get very pricy very quickly.

I called Jetstar to find out the equivalent details, and here's what they had to say.

Jetstar currently do not charge for checked in luggage at all, however



they only allow 20kgs (not 23kgs) of luggage. Excess weight is charged at \$10 per kilo.

They do not have any exemptions or allowances for sporting goods, thus the following table shows a comparison:

Weight	Virgin	Jetstar
20kgs	\$8.00	\$0.00
21kgs	\$8.00	\$10.00
22kgs	\$8.00	\$20.00
23kgs	\$8.00	\$30.00
24kgs*	\$8.00	\$40.00
25kgs*	\$8.00	\$50.00
26kgs*	\$8.00	\$60.00
27kgs*	\$8.00	\$70.00
28kgs*	\$8.00	\$80.00
29kgs*	\$16.00	\$90.00
30kgs*	\$24.00	\$100.00
31kgs*	\$32.00	\$110.00
32kgs*	\$40.00	\$120.00

\* - including 5kg sporting goods allowance

From this table, we can see you're \$8 ahead with Jetstar up to 20kgs, but then you become much better off with Virgin exponentially as your weight increases.



Unless you're going to have less than 20kgs checked in luggage, and are really worried about a once off fee of \$8.00, it would appear as though Virgin is by far the best and safest option when it comes to weight and luggage.

In addition to this, Virgin allow 8kg of carryon, compared to Jetstar's 5kgs—giving you yet an additional 3kgs (or \$30 worth when comparing to Jetstar) not included in the table shown left.

If you're going to be carrying extra weight—it seems to be a no brainer as to which one to go for.



Here are some other tips you can look at when travelling next:

**If possible, book your tickets as a connecting service.** This saves you having to check out your luggage, and check it back in again for the next flight—adding to the risk of being charged again—and if you are charged, you'll only be charged the once.

**Don't just compare ticket prices**—make sure you take into account hidden charges. These can include airport or fuel levies / taxes / etc. But, most importantly compare luggage conditions, inclusions and excess prices. As already shown luggage can be a real trap!

**Try and split the weight evenly** when travelling with other people. It may be that one traveller is below their allowance, and you can save money by having them carry some of your gear.

**Be polite and courteous.** The staff are only doing their job, and probably have to deal with disgruntled travellers all the time. Showing a smile costs nothing, and can quite often allow excess amounts to be 'overlooked' when checking in. (We've seen this on a number of occasions now).

**Consider Buying an extra seat.** OK—this one sounds far fetched, but if you have lots of luggage, and there are flight specials on—do your calculations! There are times that it may be cheaper to pay for 2 seats, and use the 2x28kg limits for each seat (Totalling 56kgs plus 2 lots of carry-on) than to pay excess baggage allowances. You may also find it cheaper to buy one extra seat amongst 2 or 3 people as a group.

## In Brief—Past Events

### August 23-24th —Mt Gambier Caves

A number of caves were dived and enjoyed in Mt Gambier this weekend including Pines, Iddlebidy, Nettlebed and Englebrechts.

### October 18th—Paint Balling

A number toured over from Horsham to Mt Gambier's Skirmish Down Under to inflict bruises upon fellow friends. A few stayed behind and enjoyed a night dive at Ewens ponds, followed by a tour of Englebrechts caves the following morning.

### October 18th—CDAA AGM

The CDAA held it's AGM. Prior to there were various workshop demonstrations which have received great feedback from those who attended.

### October 25th—Wreck Weekend

4 shipwrecks were dived this weekend including the Labella, the Loch Ard, the Schomberg and the Emily. Conditions were perfect with the Northerly. Hopefully we'll see a few more weekends like this before the summer's out.

### November 27th-29th—South Coast

This weekend we had people diving all over. Sites included Middle Island at Warrnambool, where the sea turned 1/2 way through the dive. Tank cave and Little blue were also enjoyed.

### December 6th & 7th

Open water Scuba course was held at Horsham. (Theory and confined water environment training).

### December 13th & 14th

Open water Scuba course was finished along South coast in harsh conditions. (See article in this edition for more information).

## Upcoming Events

### Jan 10th-11th —The Shaft

The shaft will be open, and guided by Freddy this weekend. Those interested should book on the CDAA webpage to avoid disappointment.

Due to harvest and the silly season, no one's organized any long term events yet, but there are plans for drift dives in Port Phillip Bay, a week in Jervis Bay, Wreck dives, Kilsby's and more in the works. (Watch the mailing list for dive notifications, or check out the calendar) and please post an email to the mailing list if you have a dive planned that others might be interested in.

### Short-notice Events

Unplanned diving events happen almost on a fortnightly basis, with trips all over the coast and inland at caves! (Even overseas trips are sometimes arranged at very short notice!) These trips, normally decided within a week or two of the dive are communicated between divers on the waves n caves mailing list.

If you are not on the mailing list, then you are most likely not in the know of the majority of the dives that take place!

If you would like to be on the mailing list, send an email to [help@wavesncaves.com](mailto:help@wavesncaves.com) requesting to be added. The mailing list allows all involved to be able to send emails to the list members about any intended dives. ✍

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## **New Divers** **Horsham's recent Open Water Course**

The latest Horsham Open Water Course has now been finished. The first weekend went without a hitch— 6 new divers entering the water (2 who had never even snorkelled before).

As usual, Linda attempted to instruct the students on the finer art of diving whilst Gary distracted them, and was more focused on training them for underwater egg and spoon races.

All the students had studied prior which made the lectures go smooth and well. The water at the pool was fresh, and even the wetsuits couldn't hold the heat in for the whole 5hrs in the end. The warm showers afterwards brought much satisfaction.

Unfortunately during the week one of our students was to be delayed from finishing the course due to catching the flu, and will be completing it early in the new year.

It wasn't long until the 2nd weekend was upon us. The south coast had turned nasty. A low pressure region had come that brought very wintry weather. The rain thrown violently through the air by a hefty icy southerly stung as it hit our faces. This brought about much winging, complaining and protesting.



However, the students were keen as custard. No words of moaning came from their lips (even though they didn't even have drysuits!), and they wouldn't back down, so the whining bunch had to shut up, get in their drysuits and teach their students.



The first two dives for the weekend were conducted at Pea Soup in Port Fairy. This offered up a great experience for the students, including introductions to the meanings of the phrases 'strong current', and 'poor visibility'. However - not only did they accomplish their tasks, they did it with much competence.

In addition to their normal tasks, the croc hunter would have been pleased with the willingness of the students to risk all (or maybe a puncture from a hook), to help a poor helpless fish who had succumbed to a hook with the line tangled up in rock.

He could only swim in circles, and had almost lost his will for living until his "MacGyver" (our one and only Dean Anderson)

came and gave him his freedom.

The generosity to the wildlife would not stop there, with another student being willing to regurgitate his food whilst diving for the benefit of the local marine life and their hungry stomachs!

They were to be greeted by another latecomer from Horsham, who already had completed his open water only 8 months previous. No murmuring was found in his lips either about the weather (the instructors could learn from these students ). 🙄

He wasn't to be deterred from diving, although he was later on deterred from re-entering his car when his plan to safely stow his keys away in his car boot revealed a slight drawback!

The afternoon was mostly spent in relaxation back at the Port Fairy house in front of a fire, where the ladies of the group playing melodies on their guitars creating a peaceful atmosphere whilst the rain fell outside.



The following day required the final two dives. All the hard work was behind our students - they pretty much just needed 2x20min dives left and they would be certified. After yesterday's effort this would be an easy task. The decision was made to go to Portland and dive off the ol' trusty lee breakwater.

The wise words "You can get usually get in here—even in bad weather" from our beloved instructors were still fresh in the ears of our students as they left Portland, heading across the South Australia border - the term 'usually' obviously meaning 'not today', and the lee breakwater not being as trusty as one would have hoped. (Although the local surfies took up the opportunity to surf the rare breakers coming right in along side the lee breakwater that day).

It was to be an interesting day - with even Ewens Ponds having less visibility than normal, especially the 2nd pond which had the worst vis' we've seen in there - right through the whole pond. I guess the 3 inches of rain the previous day must have washed a large amount of sediment into the ponds.

Nevertheless, the dives were enjoyed by all, and



after the previous day, it was nice for the students to be able to enjoy visibility that allowed them to see their own buddies. No fish needed rescuing or feeding this day and even the instructors seemed to be less grumpy than normal.

Congratulations go out to our 5 new Open Water Students, Carrie, Cindy, Andrew, Dean and Lachlan. You put up with the scariest of weather, and even the more scary instructors - everyone doing an exceptional job! The diving conditions can only improve from here so you have plenty to look forward to! ✍️



## Ewens Ponds—To be closed?

We mentioned briefly in our last newsletter some information about the possible closure of Ewens Ponds just as the newsletter was released, and now have more information available.

Firstly, Ewens Ponds is a fantastic dive site in Mt Gambier. It is full of life including a variety of fish, eels and plant life.

It consists of 3 separate sinkholes connected by a creek that eventually flows out through to the sea. It is currently the only sinkhole site in Mt Gambier that can be dived by Scuba divers who are not active members of the CDAA.

Easy access, crystal clear water, fish life and colourful plants make this a popular site for snorkelers and divers alike.

Unfortunately over the years the site has deteriorated. Those who have visited it over the past few years on a semi-regular basis will have noticed the fading of colors with the plant life near the edge of the ponds and in the channel.

At this stage there are a number of theories on why the ponds may be deteriorating, including local chemicals used by farmers and scuba divers stirring up silt, or damaging the environment.

The current proposal by the Department for Environment and Heritage, SA would indicate that they plan to **close the park for divers completely**, and allow access for snorkelers only by permit.

Piccaninnie Ponds is already managed under a permit system, with a cost of \$8 per snorkeler, or \$25 per diver (with Annual fee's also available).

At present, Ewens is free to dive and snorkel, and no bookings, reservations or liability forms need to be signed to enjoy the park, once can just rock up and enjoy the site.



Most who visit the site would agree that something needs to be done to stop the deteriorating of the site. The site has been closed before to allow re-growth, and was reopened with some minor restrictions (such as maximum number of divers/snorkelers in any one pond) but nothing major.

These new proposals are different, and include statements such as:

***“Ewens Ponds will be available for snorkeling only.”***

and

***“A permit system will be introduced to better manage snorkeling and will include the limitation of the number of snorkelers allowed in the ponds at any one time.”***

This time the future for access to this site is unknown, but it looks probable that Ewens will no longer be available on a casual basis to freely rock up and use, that **scuba diving will no longer be permitted**. Those wishing to snorkel will require paperwork to be filled / signed and possible payments for permits - if the current amendments go ahead without changes.

Those interested in placing a submission for the future of the site are encouraged to do so. Information for providing submissions can be found at [http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/pdfs/ewens\\_ponds\\_cp\\_amend\\_draft.pdf](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/pdfs/ewens_ponds_cp_amend_draft.pdf)

**Those who have never experienced diving Ewens ponds before, or would like to revisit it again should consider taking the current opportunity to do this before Christmas as this might be the last chance you have left to dive this magnificent site!**



## DRYSUITS

### *So - You Want to Dive without getting wet?*

So, you've been diving for a bit, and you've seen a few people getting around in these drysuits. Unlike you, they're able to step straight out of them, put on some shoes, and go straight out for a meal—not having to worry about getting a towel, drying off and putting some dry clothes on. Plus—they have added warmth, and now you've decided it's time to invest in a drysuit huh?

Sounds like a good idea, but is there more to drysuits than just putting one on and going diving? We thought that we'd take a look at the different types, and how they operate.

Firstly, a drysuit traps a layer of air between your body and the suit. Because air is better at insulating than water, a drysuit will usually keep you warmer than a wetsuit. However, in order to do this, you need waterproof seals at the openings (wrists, neck and zip).

Then, there are different types of drysuits. The two main kinds available are Neoprene (similar to wetsuits), and membrane (which come in a variety of different types).

Neoprene suits are, as mentioned similar to a wetsuit. These are bulkier than most membranes, and are more positive buoyancy than a membrane, meaning you will require additional weight to offset the buoyancy.

As these also have added insulation (the neoprene) these offer better insulation than a membrane, and thus are slightly warmer. Thermal garments may also be able to be worn underneath to give added insulation.

Neoprene suits are naturally warmer, and not as much thermal gear is needed. They can come in different thicknesses and offer more of a variety of choice. Not as much adjustment is needed as they provide little squeeze.

However, neoprene's are bulkier, heavier, and are less manoeuvrable.



Membrane suits on the other hand are much thinner in comparison. They use a layer of waterproof material, and normally have some sort of shell for protection over the waterproof area. Trilaminate drysuits are a common type of membrane suit.

This in itself virtually has no insulation, so added thermal undergarments (or your clothes) are usually required to give the extra warmth.

Which suit for you comes down to personal choice, however there are some pro's and cons for both:

These however can give the body a bit more of a pinch or squeeze. If you've been used to diving in wetsuits, you may find it slightly easier to adapt to a neoprene suit rather than a membrane.

Both suits do their jobs quite well, and in the end it comes down to personal choice. Each suit virtually operates the same way. You have an inflator hose attached to your suit's chest valve which provides additional air as you descend to equalise the suit from the outside pressure forced against it. This also can add a layer of air to keep you warm, or increase your buoyancy.

Air can also be dumped via a separate valve. Depending on your suit type, the valve will normally be located near your shoulder along the arm, or at your wrist. To dump air, you can press the valve, or alternatively if fitted with an automatic dump (on most models these days), you just need to raise your hand or elbow so the air rises to that part of the suit, and then is released.

Some suits also come with valves in the shoes, which is a design to stop one from being stuck upside down. However this is a bandaid solution for those with poor drysuit skills, rather than a requirement. These are normally taped up by tech and cave divers as they vent air when it's not wanted due to the heads down attitude required for this kind of diving.

Your drysuit should be rinsed thoroughly with fresh water after use. It's also important to pay attention



to the drysuit zip. This zip is probably the most expensive part of the drysuit to repair!

Regular waxing of the drysuit zip should be done to increase its life span, and storage of the drysuit should be done without bending or putting pressure on the zip.

Drysuits are not cheap, but if you spending a lot of time under the water, they are a great investment to add to your scuba equipment. It doesn't hurt to try out a few suits before making your purchase to decide what is best for you and your hard earned cash.

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### The Under Water Channel (*Online TV*)

There is an online website called 'The under water channel', which hosts a variety of online TV programs.

You will be asked to download a file sharing software 'Babelgum' which allows you to view the programmes ... but it is worth while doing so. A good broadband connection is obviously necessary.

Many of the programmes run for approx 40 minutes and content appears to be excellent.

The Channel is free to watch (except for the downloads depending on the plan you have with your ISP) and designed to appeal to a global audience of divers and 'armchair' divers - those who have yet to take the plunge!

The channel including stories of interest relating to free diving, wreck diving, cave diving, snorkelling, dolphin watching – and even nudibranch spotting!

Also, available are stories on Whales, Dolphins, Great White Sharks, Manta Rays, Wrecks and other dive destinations stories are also available..

For those who are interested, the site can be found at <http://www.theunderwaterchannel.tv/>

### HMAS Canberra

Well, we're keeping track of the goings on with the HMAS Canberra. The good news is that it's still moving forward, and we're likely to be able to dive on it the first half of next year!

Additional good news is the proposed site for the sinking of the Canberra. If all goes to plan the bridge should be accessible at 18m, with the sea bed and deeper parts of the ship lying to depths up to 35m.

With this range of depth, the dive site should accommodate for various rated divers beginning with the Open Water certification.

The ex HMAS Canberra arrived off Port Phillip Heads at around 10pm on the Monday, 9th June 2008 and entered bay at noon on Tuesday.

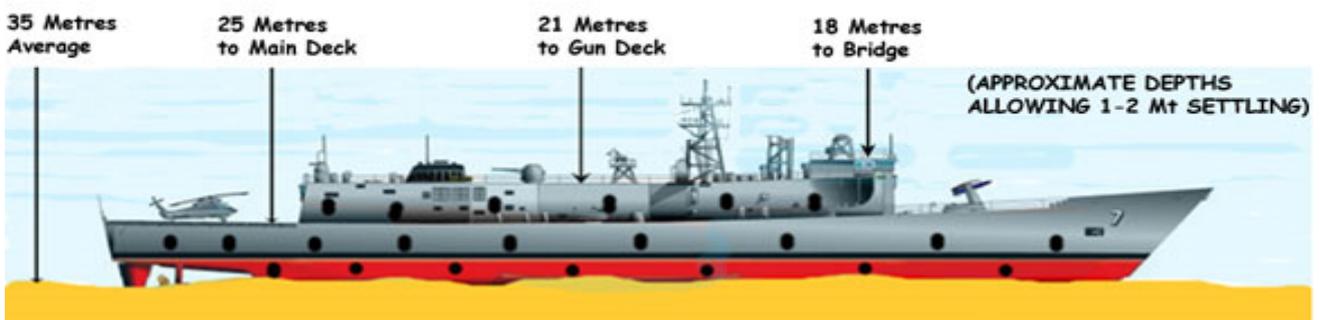
It made it's way up the South Channel and arrived in Geelong on Wednesday.

The Canberra is now currently undergoing cleaning and preparation. Once this is done, and the red table is completed the vessel will be towed back out of the heads and sunk.

At this stage, VARS are indicating a proposed sinking for the first quarter of next year, but with a few hurdles left with permits and some bureaucracy remaining it may take a little while longer.

We will keep you posted to the events on the website as well as other newsletters as we have more information. A notice once the ship is divable will also be released on the mailing list

### CONCEPTUAL DRAWING AND PROPOSED SITE DEPTHS FOR THE EX HMAS CANBERRA



## Deadly Creatures

### The cone shellfish

There are over 80 species of cone shellfish (*Conus geographus*) in Australian waters, most of them in the tropical waters. Some feed on worms, some on molluscs (including other cone shells) and some on fish. It is the last two types which are most dangerous to humans. To stop a fish in its tracks a snail needs a formidably fast-acting venom.

It is believed that the conefish detects its prey by detecting chemicals in the water drawn through its siphon, although some visual sense may also be involved.

The conefish will extend its proboscis, (which is a hollow feeding tube), on the end of which is a hollow, barbed tooth.

This tooth is attached to a poison sack, and the tooth is driven like a harpoon into the hapless victim, the poison being injected through the tooth.

The force of the harpoon is formidable and has been known to penetrate a periwinkle shell.

Each tooth can only be used once, but a supply of is kept in an internal tooth sack and moved into position as required.

Held by the barbed tooth, the victim is quickly immobilised by the poison and then drawn into the expanded proboscis to be digested.

A mollusc victim may be sucked



from its shell as certain toxins may loosen its attachment to the shell, making this easier.

The bright colours and patterns of cone snails are attractive to the eye, and therefore people sometimes pick up the live animals and hold them in their hand for a while. This can be a deadly mistake. About 30 human deaths have been recorded from cone snail envenomation.

One species, (the Geography cone, *Conus geographus*), is also known colloquially as the "cigarette snail," in the belief that the victim will have only enough time to smoke a cigarette before perishing. (unless first aid is dealt with promptly, as discussed a little further on). Especially in the case of these larger species of cone snail, the harpoon can penetrate gloves and even wet-suits.

The best way to avoid being stung is not to touch live cone shells. The extendable harpoon-wielding proboscis is capable of reaching most parts of the shell so it is not safe to grip anywhere on the shell, including the wide end! Cones should never be put in pockets or sleeves.

The venom used in conefish contains Tetrodotoxin (TTX), (or TTX like substance) which is found in a number of marine life.

TTX works by blocking nerve impulses to voluntary muscles so causing a "dose-dependent flaccid paralysis". This basically means that the victim remains awake but is paralysed and so unable to breathe or move!

Rescuers handling a victim of a cone shellfish should keep in mind that a victim can remain awake during the rescue and thus should not make audible predictions of poor outcome, as the victim will be able to hear all that is said while they remain conscious (even if they appear



dead!)

First aid in a TTX envenomation/poisoning can be life saving! Expired air resuscitation (EAR) will support the victim's breathing until an advanced life support can be instituted with airway protection and mechanical ventilation (such as an iron lung).

This external support for breathing will be required for 4 to 8 hours until the toxin wears off. At this point in time there is no antidote.

The good news however is that the venom of some conefish has potential medical promise, for providing a non-addictive pain reliever 1000 times as powerful as, and possibly a replacement for, morphine.

Many peptides produced by the cone snails show prospects for being potent pharmaceuticals, such as AVC1, isolated from the Australian species, the Queen Victoria cone, *Conus victoriae*.

This has proved very effective in treating post-surgical and neuropathic pain, even accelerating recovery from nerve injury. The first painkiller Ziconotide derived from cone snail toxins was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in December 2004 under the name "Prialt".

Other drugs are in clinical and preclinical trials, such as compounds of the toxin that may be used in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and epilepsy. 

## Handy Hints

**Turn that flash off!** Unless you have proper mounted flash(es) on arms, or you're in extremely clear water—the internal flash on your camera will mostly light up every particle between you and your intended shot. Every particle reflects part of the flash straight back at the source (in this case, the camera) —causing the particles in the water to become quite bright, making it look very grainy.

Where possible, it is best to leave the flash off for clearer pictures unless you have flashes mounted on arms, which allow the light to travel on a different angle—with particles reflecting back to the flash, and not the camera.

If you need an external light source, and you don't have fancy arms and strobes on your camera—try asking another diver to light up the subject with their torch. (HID's work well for this!) from an angle.

Here is an example of the same scene taken with the internal flash turned on (first) and turned off (second).

**Learn good buoyancy and trim.** Having the right amount of weight, and being trimmed right can make the difference between an easy enjoyable



dive, and a dive that feels awkward, uncomfortable, and harder work.

In addition to this, it also improves your ability to take those great photographs!

**Zoom Out.** When making video recordings, it is best to have the camera zoomed out as far as possible, and physically move in closer to the subject, rather than using zoom.

By zooming in—everything becomes larger—including your shakes and movements. By keeping the camera zoomed out, and physically moving closer to your subject—you get the same shot without amplifying the shakes and jerks.

Zooming out and getting closer to a subject for still shots can also be better than zooming in with still photography, especially in surgy or rougher conditions, as it reduces the amount of image movement when the photo is taken, giving a sharper and clearer image.

**Dehydration.** Don't forget to take a bottle of water with you for when you get out of the water after a dive to keep well hydrated. One dehydrates much faster breathing on scuba because unlike normal air—there is no moisture (0% humidity) in the scuba air, and thus our body dehydrates much faster—even in cold and wet weather.

**Spare O-Rings.** Try keeping some spare O rings on a zip tie then keep it Tied to your tank neck or on your first Stage. these will save the dive for you at the dive site. Also check all your fin straps and mask straps for the start of the dive season so you do not miss a dive. (This idea stolen unremorsefully from the Warrnambool Sub Aqua Club newsletter): 

### Warrnambool Sub Aqua Club

*The Warrnambool sub aqua club plan dives for almost every weekend, which range widely in the skill levels involved, so there's something for everyone!*

*The Warrnambool sub aqua newsletters are on our website, (as well as a new webpage for them) and dates are listed on our main page, as well as our calendar.*

*They're a bunch of friendly divers, and more than happy for you to join them for a dive.. Why not take them up on the offer!*

*However, if you are going, make sure you let the mailing list know your plans, as there may be other interested people who would come with you.* 

## Piccininni Ponds—Mapped

Recent deep underwater exploration of Piccininni Ponds in Mt Gambier has revealed a much larger cave than first thought.

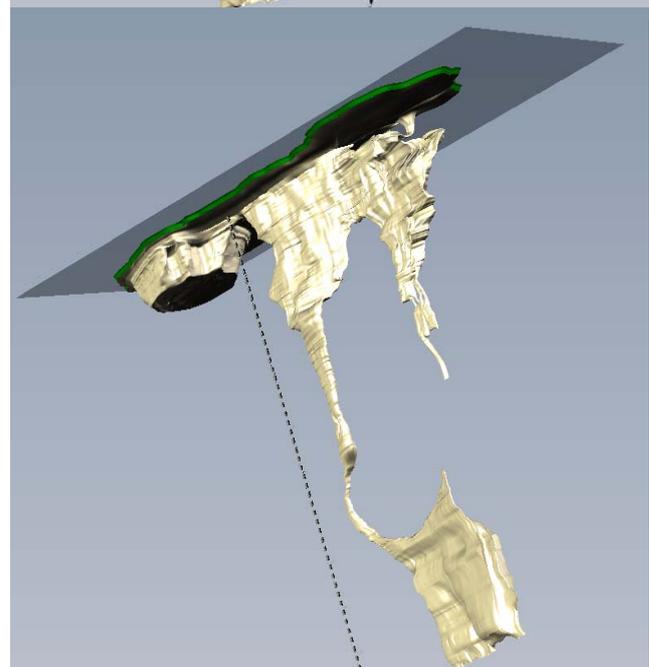
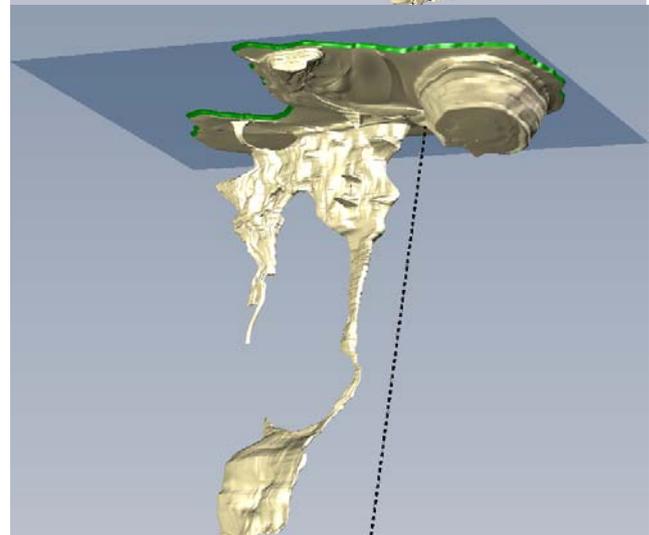
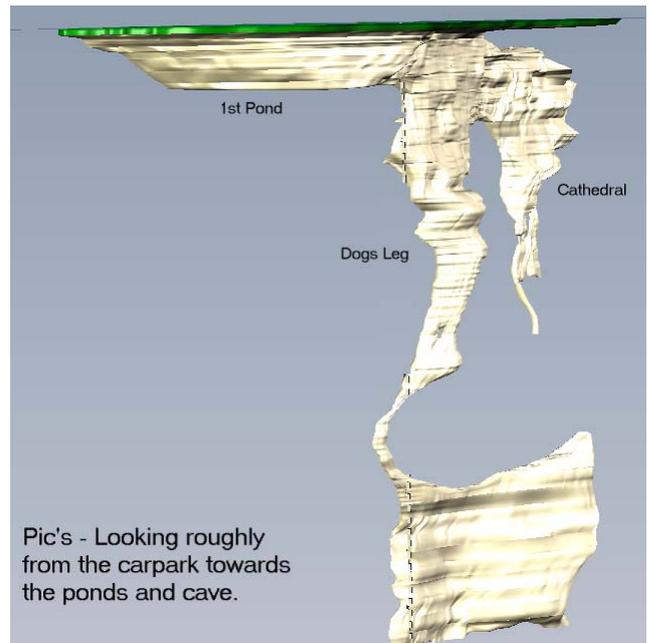
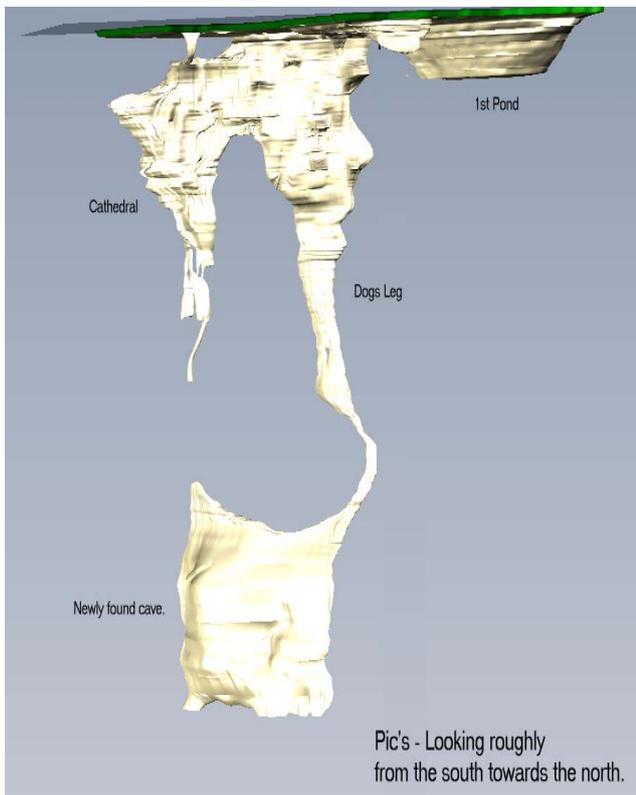
A number of divers with special permission given for the exercise by the Department for Environment and Heritage descended to around 110m, exploring and mapping out the latest find.

Members of the CDAA can download a 3D application and freely rotate, zoom and view the cave map for themselves.

JDZ (John Dalla-Zuanna) has kindly given permission for these still shots images from the application to be used in this newsletter.

One can see with these images the 1st pond, along with the cathedral and well known Dogs leg. Underneath the cathedral (and at significant depth) is a larger cave.

The exploration included the taking of water samples. We hope to be able to report more information about the exploration in a future edition of our newsletter.✍



## Jokes submitted by our readers

### Warning signs that you're addicted to diving:

When you worry about how quickly you ascending when you're ride up in an elevator.

When you never admit to your spouse exactly how much you have spent on my gear.

When you consider a women's/mans sac rate as an important factor in deciding whether or not to date him.

When you find the scent of neoprene intoxicating .... and over-dosing on it (like walking into a fully loaded dive shop) which makes you lose control of your wallet.

When you have a picture of YOURSELF diving on your desk at work

When you have cake to celebrate your 250th dive - but not your birthday.

When you record the dive profile for the little diver in your aquarium and get him his own dive log

When you try and convince your Doctor to give u a sick note for having Nitrogen Deficiency so you can take the day of work and go for a dive

## Top 10 Ways to Lose an Annoying Buddy FAST

- 10) Give your buddy "I'll follow you" signal and then go in the opposite direction.
- 9) Send him back to our boat for more air.
- 8) Tell him to meet you on the "anchor line" on a drift dive.
- 7) Two words--camouflage wetsuit.
- 6) Tell him you spent a lot of money for this dive and you want to get the maximum bottom time possible. So the plan is for one person to breathe all his air then share air with his buddy, then do an emergency ascent from 45 meters.
- 5) Let him enter the shipwreck first, then close and lock the door.
- 4) While gearing up, tell him not to pay attention to the large pus filled sores on and in your mouth. If he needs air, you'll be there.
- 3) Blow up heaps of party balloons on the boat using his regulator.
- 2) Paint "FULL" needles on his gauges and remove the real ones.
- 1) Confess you never really got certified, you're just using a Qualified Diver card you found while walking on a beach.

## Website New Features & Facelift.

Our latest additions to our website includes a new webcam webpage. (Thanks to Doug for the idea and information!) This webpage currently hosts 3 webcam's, with the Warrnambool and Portland cameras being user controllable—allowing you to view and zoom in on various sites, such as the breakwater to see surf / sea conditions.

Also included are updates to the dive sites pages which includes new information on sites (such as Portland), and new video's such as the Goat Track in Tank cave, and Englebrechts East.

One of the more popular parts of our website is the photo's section that is constantly been updated by various members. If you have some yourself—please add them there. (if needed, email help@wavesncaves.com for the password)

Current and past editions of our newsletters can also be found and downloaded on our website, along with the latest information on upcoming dives, including the interactive dive calendar.

If you've got an idea or suggestion for the website, (or newsletters), would like to submit a newsletter article, or would like to advertise on our website, please let us know. We're always looking for good stories, photos and articles!





# The Year of 2008

