

SCUBA Divers Federation of Victoria, Inc.

GPO Box 1705 Melbourne 3001

www.sdfv.org.au



Chair's Report: 2009-2010

This report refers to the operation of the SDFV for the period August 2009-August 2010. It has been prepared in consultation with the Vice President Communications and is tabled on behalf of the 2009-2010 Management Cell to satisfy the Annual Report as required by Clause 9.9 of the SDFV Rules of Incorporation.

The past year started as a good one for SDFV clubs and divers. First, we had remarkably good boating and diving conditions at Wilson Prom for the 2009 SDFV Cup weekend. This was closely followed the opening of the long-awaited ex-HMAS Canberra dive site. However, for a relatively brief period, SDFV members were then subject to an orchestrated campaign on a web-based public chat board claiming SDFV irrelevance and non-performance. In the scheme of things, the ill-informed criticism was petty and trivial, and it failed to recognise that the SDFV role is to represent SCUBA divers, not others, and SDFV members want it that way. But, in the midst of this distracting, and sometimes offensive noise, the SDFV continued to perform as a peak-body should, and represented the interests of recreational SCUBA divers to government and decision-makers. Key activities include:-

- Negotiated with Parks Victoria favourable access arrangements for dive clubs using the public mooring on the ex-HMAS Canberra.
- Submission to the Marine Act Review
- Attendance at the Outdoor Education Centre Peak-body Chair & CEO forum
- Attendance at the Boating industry forum for the Marine Safety Bill 2010
 - Secured a commitment from the Minister of Transport to provide extra 'diver-below' flag signage at boat ramps,
 - Submission and on-going dialogue with Marine Safety Victoria to assist with a community safety education program for the 'diver-below' flag.
- Representation as the VRFish nominee on the Abalone Fishery Management Plan Committee.
- Attended Victorian Government Marine Energy stakeholders workshop.

The increased demand on very limited SDFV resources continues. The 2009 SDFV Club Survey results identified the need to explore more effective ways to engage with both members and the wider diving communities. To this extent, new 'standard' reporting mechanisms are being tried and there is a deliberate wider inclusion of interested delegates in the routine of attending to SDFV business. An information pack about the SDFV role as a peak-body has been prepared with the view to enlighten a new generation of divers who may not be fully aware of the level of SDFV activity. The intention is to offer a presentation to both existing and potential member clubs, with the aim to grow membership and attract new volunteers into the ranks to ensure the longer-term future of the SDFV. No doubt there will those that will complain that these changes are not rapid or wide enough. But given the relentless demand on volunteer effort for 'normal' business, change comes as it can be implemented, and it is unreasonable to expect more from so few. Those who want more, or faster, outcomes should get on-board and help in a constructive and tangible way, as we move forward.

In summary, the SDFV is in good shape financially and as a recognised peak-body with relevant decision-making bodies. So as Chair, I thank member clubs and delegates, and members of the Management Cell for their time and input into the SDFV in the past year. The coming period of increased engagement looks to be exciting, and hopefully, rewarding.

John M. Hawkins

Chair,

SDFV, Inc. Aug 2010.