

# FATHOMS

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# VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

**AUG-SEP 98**

# FATHOMS

Official journal of the *Victorian Sub - Aqua Group*

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### Next General Meetings:

Bells Hotel  
157 Moray Street (cnr. Coventry Street)  
South Melbourne - 8pm sharp!  
Thursday 17th September 1998  
Thursday 15th October 1998

### Next Committee Meetings:

Tuesday 25th August - Gerry Devries' home  
Tuesday 22nd September - Andy Mastrowicz's home

### Editorial submissions to:

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### S.D.F. DELEGATES:

Andy Mastrowicz, Des Williams & John Lawler

## EDITORIAL



Whilst we have had mild, windless weather for the past 10 days or so, there has only been one scheduled club dive recently. No doubt Neville Viapree will compile a report on this but it will have to wait until the next issue. Because this has been the only dive, this issue of FATHOMS is very small when compared to the usual. It is therefore timely to remind members that they can submit articles of general interest, not necessarily dive reports. This month we welcome new members John Peach, Josie Mare and Phil Dunn. Their profiles can be found in this issue. Welcome folks, we all hope to see you at club dives, monthly meetings and other club functions for years to come.

In this issue you will find a committee nomination form. At the September general meeting, four committee members must stand down in terms of the club constitution, and Gerry Devries must also stand down as he was seconded to the committee during the year to fill a vacancy. Des Williams and Bob Scott will not be re-nominating for their own reasons so there will be at least two vacancies for aspiring members to fill. On behalf of all members and indeed their fellow committee members, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Des and Bob for their tireless work and valuable time afforded the club over many years. Well done guys, you will be hard to replace.

Those wishing to nominate for a committee position should do so now by completing the form and having it signed by two financial members of the club, returning same to the club Secretary by 3 September, 1998. If you are nominating, be prepared to rotate into any job to share the workload evenly amongst your colleagues.

Thankyou Robert and Darren for submitting articles for this issue, it would have been a relatively poor read without your contributions. Let's hope for an improvement next issue.

*Mick Jeacle - Editor*



## NEW VSAG MEMBER PROFILE

**John Peach** AGE: 47

Occupation: Plumber

Family: I am married to Robyn and have three grown up children - Adam (22), Emily (20) and Bradley (17).

### **HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DIVING?**

I became interested in diving through many conversations with Pat Reynolds, and I found that I was asking a lot of questions and eventually wanted to find out the answers myself. I was encouraged to take up diving after attending your introduction day at the Nunawading pool. I have been diving for 13 months and have enjoyed every minute of it.

### **DETAILS OF EMPLOYMENT:**

I am a self-employed plumber and work for a mechanical contracting company in Braeside called Trident Mechanical Services Pty. Ltd.

### **DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER SPORTING INTERESTS/HOBBIES?**

My other interests are playing billiards, camping, fishing and motor bike riding. My son Bradley is interested in snorkelling and eventually wants to take up diving.

### **DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE DIVE SITE?**

I feel that I have not been diving long enough to have a favourite dive site or any proposals for dive sites, but I would like to mention that I have enjoyed the dives that I have been on to date and the company of VSAG members.



## NEW VSAG MEMBER PROFILE

**Josie Mare AGE: 42**

**Occupation: Graphic Designer &  
Desk Top Publishing**

### **HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DIVING?**

Having watched many dive classes enter the murky depths beneath Portsea Pier as I casually lounged around the pub, I often thought about learning to scuba dive - one day. That day arrived when I was on a working holiday in Cairns. If ever there was a right time to learn to dive, it would have to be in the tropics. So, in November 1992, I took the plunge.

On the trip back to Sydney, being a veteran of 11 dives, I journeyed out to the wreck of the Yongala (off Townsville) for two spectacular dives that almost rival the Coolidge. The trip out was long; really long and I was in trouble even before the crew gave everyone Kwell and carrot cake for morning tea. However, it was worth the effort. Quite spectacular diving. My only regret was that I wasn't a more experienced diver and willing and able to dive deeper than the 35 metres I did. Next time.....!

### **AGE:**

42 - 14th April for anyone who would like to take me out for dinner next year (or any time between now and then.)

### **MARITAL STATUS:**

Available - which at my age, indicates what a dragon I am.

### **CHILDREN:**

No thanks.

**OTHER SPORTING INTERESTS:**

Anything expensive	Snow skiing
4 wheel driving	Camping ()
Writing stories	Arty, farty stuff
Dancing (rock and roll, street latin, belly dancing)	

**DETAILS OF EMPLOYMENT:**

Scat Cat Design and DTP

Graphic Design and Desk Top Publishing for anyone who pays me. So if you, or anyone you know, need new business cards, letterheads, advertising material, brochures, fliers, reports etc., give me a call.

**WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE DIVE SITES?**

I once thought the best place on earth to dive was the Great Barrier Reef until I went to the Coral Sea. If I had to choose a favourite Aussie dive destination, the Coral Sea would have to be it.

If we're talking about OS dive sites, I would be hard pressed to choose between Uepi in the Solomons and the Coolidge in Vanuatu. I really love wreck diving so the Bonegi wrecks at Honiara would also be in the running. Shore dives to 40+ metres - my type of diving.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY PROPOSALS FOR NEW DIVE SITES YOU COULD SUGGEST TO V SAG?**

I should be so bold!!!!

Yeah - maybe I should. Nelsons Bay in NSW. It was my favourite "local" dive site when I lived in Simony. And yes - a four-five hour drive is "local".

**HOW DID YOU COME TO JOIN V SAG?**

When I returned to Melbourne in December last year, I popped into any dive shop I walked past to check out their dive clubs. Surprisingly poor efforts some of these shops put into their clubs. I drove past Johns Dive Shop in St Kilda several times and eventually phoned him to have a chat. He gave me John Lawler's phone number and the snowball was set in motion.

**WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A DIVE CLUB?**

New friends and a new dive buddy.

I used to dive quite regularly with a friend in Sydney who eventually moved to

Brisbane (bastard). He was a great dive buddy for the following reasons:-

- \* He dived more often than my partner.
- \* He did weight lifting so when my wetsuit shrunk, he could grab hold of the damn thing and literally shake me into it.
- \* He could get me out of same very tight wetsuit.
- \* He would help carry my gear when the going got tough.
- \* He would help carry me when the going got tougher.
- \* If I was freezing cold after a dive - he would start his car and put the heater on full to warm me quickly.
- \* He would wrap me in a towel and dry my feet for me.
- \* He would help me into the water before anyone else so that I wouldn't get too sick.
- \* He would look after me when I did get sick.
- \* He would gather all the gear I tossed around the boat when I was too sick to care what happened to it.
- \* He was my own personal divemaster (silly bugger)
- \* He had a really keen eye and always spotted the things most people missed - great for Simony Harbour dives where you're lucky if you see anything
- \* Etc.
- \* Etc.
- \* Etc.

On a more serious note, I enjoy my diving much more when I'm relaxed and comfortable. This wouldn't happen if I didn't feel my dive partners were trustworthy and responsible. Since my first "official" dive with SAG, I have been impressed with the level of experience, expertise and reliability to be found amongst it's members. You really are - just what I'm looking for in a dive club.



# NEW VSAG MEMBER PROFILE

**Phil Dunn AGE: 49**

Occupation: Self-employed Automotive  
Engineer and consultant.

Family: Separated, but under the thumb again.  
Father of fabulous kids (1 boy, 5 girls ranging  
in age from 13 to 25.

## **EMPLOYMENT:**

Dunno Automotive Services Pty.Ltd. I recently sold my repair workshop along with house and other goodies. I have decided to become a full-time consultant and my practice is developing well.

## **HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DIVING?**

Performed my first open water dive on 17/5/97 with A.B. Ocean Divers.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE DIVE SITES?**

Drift dives along the Bay and anything I haven't done yet.

## **HOW DID YOU COME TO JOIN VSAG?**

A good friend, Jim Greenwood was kind enough to invite me to a meeting, the rest is history.

## **DO YOU HAVE ANY PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE DIVE SITES?**

Still in awe of your organisation as yet. Give me a few months longer and I'm bound to find something!

## **DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER SPORTING INTERESTS/HOBBIES?**

Car racing, photography, rock climbing, abseiling, thespian, cycling and bushwalking.

## **WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A DIVE CLUB?**

- \* An opportunity to dive regularly.
- \* Comradeship.
- \* Dive buddies.
- \* Opportunities to learn more.

# ELECTION OF DIRECTORS 1997/1998

The V.S.A.G. Committee now needs your help. From the September meeting of the Committee, there will be vacancies and your chance to contribute to this great Club. This is your chance to do something as a Director of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group. If you would like to be involved, please fill out a nomination form and have two members counter sign. This form **MUST** be returned to the Secretary personally or by mail to "The Secretary", VSAG, P.O. BOX 2526W, G.P.O. Melbourne, 3001, **NO LATER THAN 3rd SEPTEMBER 1998.**

Committee members whose term expires at the September meeting are:  
John Lawler, Andy Mastrowicz, Bob Scott, Des Williams and Gerry Devries..

## NOMINATION FORM

We, the undersigned, being full members of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group hereby nominate:

.....  
for the position of Director of the Group.

Signed ..... Date: .....

Signed ..... Date: .....

I, ..... hereby accept the above nomination for  
Director of the Group.

.....

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I, ..... hereby accept the above nomination for  
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.....

**REMEMBER: OUR SECRETARY MUST HAVE THIS COMPLETED NOMINATION FORM NO LATER THAN THURSDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 1998.**



## ***THE PHILIPPINES***

BY DARREN PEARCE

Two years ago I would never have imagined I would be going to the Philippines. Tuesday evening 28th April here I am having a panic attack trying to do last minute packing. Finally everything was in order. By this time I was running forty five minutes late and my mum was having a neryv turn; I had to give her Valium to calm her down.

I arrived at the airport in one piece with Pat Reynolds who was out tour leader, also with Neville and Dave. Shortly afterwards we met up with Peter Vleugel accompanied by his wife and the rest of the group including some with partners. Altogether there were eighteen, fourteen were divers.

No sooner had we checked through customs than we were on our way. The flight was uneventful and felt like it was going to go on forever. Eight hours later we got our first glimpse of the Philippines. Shortly after we landed in Manila, we made our way over to the domestic plane flights. Then we left for Palawan in a six seater.

After arriving at Palawan we then transferred to Kokonuss resort where we would be staying for the first ten days. By this time I was hot, tired and looking forward to lying on the beach sipping cocktails, but woe to me it was not to be. All I could see was a dusty yard with two huge German Shepherd dogs, roosters and hens and a water fountain in the middle. My glamorous hotel was a small hut and the air conditioner only worked when it was windy. Forget the prawns and the cocktails, my first meal was a hotdog and coke.

Before taking a huge bite I checked my roll to see if there was only a hot dog in it, because there were lots of lizards running around the kitchen floor. But my main reason was diving and I was sure the diving would make up for this, and that I could rough it out for ten days if need be.

After lunch, we all took off down to the dive shop and organised a boat ride where we could have a swim/snorkel and cool off. This turned out to be a quite enjoyable and relaxing activity for me on the first day.

Once we had arrived back, some of us checked the scene in town and then had dinner at the resort. The meal was okay, so long as you like fish. Then the power went off - I thought it was great. It brought out a bit of excitement into the group and talks on the good diving that we were going to be having.

On the second morning I awoke at 6am and it felt like 32c. We had some breaky and took off down to the dive shop where we got introduced to the owner Gunter, and our dive decky Chris. These two people were good operators.

The boat ride took one hour and twenty minutes to get to the wreck sites. The first dive we did was on the Kogyo Maru which was a Japanese freighter 160m in length and resting on its Port side. In one of the cargo holds I found blocks of cement and various other construction material. Penetration was fairly easy in certain places. On the outside I noticed a variety of reef fish. I was disappointed at the vis. Which was poor at around eight metres.

My second dive was on the Olympia Maru - again the vis. Was about the same as the first dive. Some various coral was growing on the port side with some angel fish living around them. We also had easy access to the engine room because it had a huge cut on the port side where the engine was removed. The cargo holds were fairly empty. Over the ten days the main wrecks we dived were the Akitsu-hima, Irako Maru, Kyokuzan Maru, Kogyo Maru and Taiei Maru. My two favourites were the Irako Maru and Akitsu-hima.

The Irako Maru was a refrigeration ship, displacement 9570 tons, resting upright in 44m of water. I had four dives on it and only covered a small area. Inside the bow section, I came across a Japanese pushbike. Unbelievable. When I was on the outside I saw some schools of trevally and barracuda.

The Akitsu-hima was the only warship we dived on lying on her starboard side. Her total length, 200m along the outside. I came across an anti-aircraft gun along the bridge of the ship. Inside I came across a radio frame. I also saw a small school of barracuda on the outside.

One of the hottest dives I had was in a volcanic lake called Barracuda Lake, where the water temperature starts at 28c on the surface. With the water being brackish at the thirty metre mark you get into the next thermocline which would be about 42c. The water was salty at this depth and below 30m, the vis. would drop down to about zero. I could not get over how much the water temp. and vis. would change at various depths and how uncomfortably hot I got. At the bottom I saw that it was very silty with no growth or life.

All in all, over the ten days I spent at Coron Palawan I had good dives with good company and I got to know the group well and also meet different people from other countries who were also diving.

On arriving at Cebu City from Manila we were being transported via bus ferry to Bohol. All of a sudden I thought all my birthdays had come at once when I saw armed security guards out the front of various banks with pump action shot guns. I thought this was only on TV. One and a half hours later we arrived at Bohol. The Bohol beach club resort felt like luxury compared to Kokonuss. My room was looking out over the water. The meals were basic but okay and you had a choice of buffet or a la carte.

The dives we did at Bohol were mainly wall dives. Most of the dives I did not see many large fish - mainly small reef fish but on the other hand I came across some large colourful sea fans. There was one other time I was diving I found all these dead fish lying scattered. This was due to local fishermen dynamiting parts of the reef. I was appalled and disgusted at the destruction they caused just to catch some small lousy fish.

One of the main reasons we came to Bohol was to swim with the hammerhead sharks. We even got up at 5.30am to get out to a particular dive site. By 7am we were in the water. The vis. Was over thirty metres, but I did not spot one hammerhead, nor did anyone else for that matter, apart from Curly who said he saw one down the bottom of the wall at seventy metres - but I suppose being at that depth you might see a lot of other things as well.

My highlights of the dive at Bohol were when Peter and I came across a sea snake asleep on the bottom. Pete picked it up by the tail which I thought was

pretty brave. The days I spent in Bohol I was disappointed I did not see a hammerhead, but I was lucky to have the opportunity to experience diving at Bohol.

Finally my dive trip was coming to an end. We spent the last two days at Tambula and did two dives but they were pretty ordinary. Overall this dive trip taught me a lot about life and how hard life would be for some of the Filipinos, and when I returned home it made me appreciate my own country and what I've got. I would like to thank Pat Reynolds for organising the trip and the rest of the group for putting up with me. My mum also had a wonderful holiday as well at home.



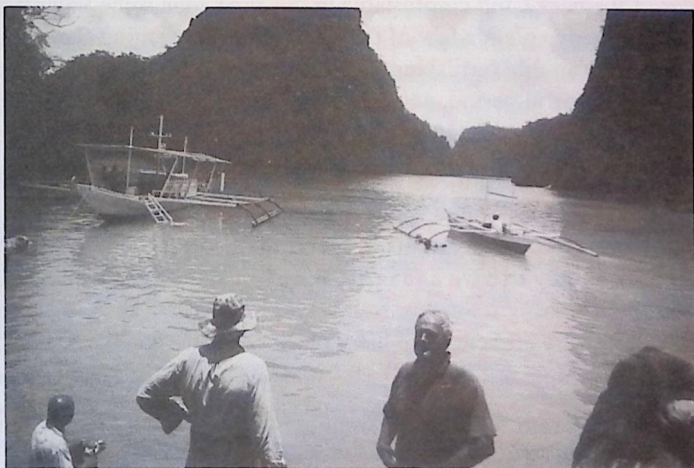
*Here we are enjoying ourselves at the bar. We're all drunk on coke!*



*This is my sweetheart. I'm saving madly to bring her over here to be close to me.*



*Barracuda Lake. The hottest dive I have ever done - 40°C plus in some parts.*



*Tour leader Pat Reynolds. Did OK for an old bloke.*





## *DIVE TRIP* *EAGLEHAWK/TASMANIA*

BY ROBERT BIRTLES

Late afternoon of the 5th June, an unofficial VSAG meeting was convened in the Tullamarine Mantas Club. Those in attendance were Des Williams, Praia Cardinaletti, John Mills, David (Grumpy) White, Gerry De Vries and Robert Birtles.

Initially the mood was subdued, obviously those in attendance were still carrying baggage from their current week's work. However, and after ample sampling's of goodies on offer (no booze as the bar didn't open until 3pm), all boarded their flight to Hobart for a long weekend of clear & cold water diving. On arrival we were met by the Eaglehawk Dive Centre then transported to the Lufra Country Hotel, Eaglehawk Neck.

Built in 1837, the hotel's character has since changed to the 60's Art Deco era. Des (leader of the pack), felt comfortable in this time zone so he volunteered to take Priya aside and explain a few of the finer points concerning flared trousers, wide ties and comfortable furnishings. Priya was obviously having trouble in relating to this colourful period, not to mention life without her diary, internet, email, or any other computer toy to play with.

Next morning (around 7.30am) we were picked up by the charter operators. Then we proceeded to the Dive Centre for assimilation and briefings, including first name introductions to the local mutts. It seems that most local divers have dogs, which are eager as they to have a fun day. Who would dare eat their salad roll or candy bar without sharing it three or four ways? The writer (keen to get first pick) was immediately attracted to a hairy black & white mop but to this day is not sure of it's sex. Note to Editor - Go for it Mick. Don't disappoint me.

Gerry (who the dogs rejected) headed straight for the souvenir counter, thus the beginning of many more to come.

It was obvious on the day that poor weather would severely restrict our dive plans, however our hosts Gary Myers and Mick Baron were determined to get us in the water (without dogs) and went to great lengths to ensure we did just that. Our vessels were first class. A 20 foot Shark Cat as well as an ex cop boat (built in diesel power) ensured our dives, which otherwise would have been cancelled.

### Day 1.

Two boats proceeded to the Wall and Kelp Forest at Glen Bay. Seas were rolling but settled once we reached our semi protected destination. The dive, though not spectacular, was rewarding enough given that we nearly didn't dive at all. Our average depth was 75 feet with a sea temperature of 9c. Those who hit the Wall had fun with the white water and swells, the rest of us enjoyed tickling decapods. Completing the dive we returned to the centre for lunch (shared with you know who) then re-gearred for a second run. Some wimps bombed out much to their disappointment. The second run was back to the same location, but more within the kelp beds.

From the bottom face up was like lying in a pine forest. Very spectacular, however the tranquility was broken when Des (who was on his back at the time - 70ft under) experienced an attack from what we now know was the feared Tasmanian Rooting Shark. This black and horrible figure from Launceston (Owen Cameron) spotted Des and proceeded to mount him, knowing his body suit offered that much needed protection. Of course, the attraction was Desmond's bilious yellow dry suit which, after much discussion, all agreed the incident could have been avoided if Des had stuck a feather duster up his arse and whistled canary. It's well known that Tassie Rooting Sharks fear canaries particularly those on their backs dreaming about historic wrecks but being wrecked themselves. This Wasn't to be the only incident concerning Des, as will be explained later.

Apart from the spectacular scenery, numerous decapods were seen and one had tremendous fun just fondling them. Catch and release was practised and I can assure you Praia was proud of us all. I doubt this would have been the case if she had seen everything. You can't be everywhere at once Praia!!!

After returning and thawing out, we headed for the hotel then down to the "Officers Mess" (restaurant) where Gerry bought his second round of souvenirs. After witnessing his obsession, we proceeded to stuff ourselves. Like the meals were gigantic, and John, who not only ate his way through a three man steak (person steal for the correct types), Gerry's as well, not to mention his oysters and garlic bread.

### **Day 2.**

The weather had deteriorated to a point that further diving was unlikely, however we grouped at the centre for a verdict. Initially thumbs were down which suited the mutts as they could now consume our lunches earlier rather than later. However the decision was changed after we managed to get eight divers willing to have a go. Without hesitation we boarded the cop boat and again headed for the kelp beds. This being the only possible dive site. The trip out was not good, and getting worse. On arrival the skipper tried to position the boat for anchorage, but to do so was suicidal, not only for the boat but for divers unable to swim back to the boat. It wasn't put to the test as all agreed the dive was off and the best option was to go and feed the dogs.

Not to be outdone the skipper moved further up the coast to North Waterfall Bay, where to our disappointment conditions were almost calm. Reluctantly we went in, down to about 60ft., cold but bearable and surprisingly, all had a great dive. We had kelp beds, crays, sea dragons, leopard sharks and strange, rare fish types. After the dive, our return trip was quite rough, even the writer was on the verge of throwing, but this didn't suit his image thus, had to suffer in silence. In fact, another five minutes and the silence would have been broken - stuff the image.

Back at the centre, we cleaned and packed our gear as diving was over due to the obvious. After pleasantries, we decided to visit Port Arthur, but how to get there was our next challenge. Consistent with the Dive Centre's hospitality, they lent us a vehicle which I'm sure, if they were aware of our backgrounds, wouldn't have been so generous. However they were, and it was much appreciated.

Without a doubt, Port Arthur is one of the most spectacular and moving historical sights in Australia. Due to time limitations, we couldn't view everything but

enough to comprehend the extreme conditions early convicts endured. The recent tragedy is sufficiently recognised, but not obvious to the point that it takes from the historical message.

### Day 3.

After Port Arthur we returned to the hotel for sustenance and verbal bullshit. Next morning we were again lent a vehicle so we could return to Hobart prior to catching our flight home. This wasn't to plan as the dive centre intended being our chauffeur. Unfortunately, one of their children had a horse riding accident thus needed hospitalisation. We think everything is OK and certainly hope so.

Once in Hobart we did the tourist thing, being led by Gerry straight into the souvenir shops, where he proceeded to (for the 3rd time) severely reduce stock inventories. Like they see him coming. He couldn't carry it all. This man needs counselling.

At this point, and with the sun breaking through, we noticed what seemed like a rope mark around Des' neck. It was obvious to the point of embarrassment for the poor chap. After interrogation it seemed that, and after the Tasmanian Rooting Shark sniffed him out, a Yellow Fin Neck Sucker took hold and finished the job. What one really thinks happened was a severe rash caused by his dry suit. Maybe I'm wrong.

Then coffee on the sidewalk and a leisurely stroll around the wharf where we checked out an ice breaker that Praia was interested in. She was fascinated by the anchor wells, and we had her convinced that's where the crew positioned flame throwers to soften the ice. Believe me, she was sucked in. John had to do the explanations. We just moved on.

One of our party who hasn't so far come under scrutiny is David (Grumpy) White. David (not a member as yet) could well be a role model for the Scotts Guards. He certainly is an experienced diver and wasn't one of those who wimped out on the rough day - like Gerry. His passion seems to be heavy snoring after a good bottle of Red. Sounds familiar.

Finally we transferred to the Airport, boarded our flight, where to our total shock and horror discovered John Mills reads "Womans Day" and Des Williams reads "Who." They specifically requested these magazines from the flight attendant. Like it wasn't as if these were the last magazines available, but they actually asked for them by name. Naturally, they came under heavy attack but both defended their choice - maybe a little too vigorously.

Well that's about it. As you can see, there's considerable padding in this report due to limited diving caused by poor weather conditions, Regardless, the dive centre worked hard for us resulting in only one cancelled dive (two for Gerry). Tasmanian coastal regions are certainly worth more visits, particularly for those with limited time. Thanks for doing all the hack work Des.

*Ed Note! Great article, thanks Robert. It seems you have never heard of the saying "Sticks out like doggies!" However, if they have been cropped, you can still tell if there is a bit hanging down or attached to the abdomen. If you're still not sure, consult our resident Vet., Jim Greenwood, I'm sure he'll help.*

## **REMEMBER!**

**V.S.A.G GENERAL MEETINGS**

are on the

**THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH!**

**AT BELLS HOTEL**

**CNR. MORAY & COVENTRY STREETS, SOUTH MELBOURNE**

*Make a note of these dates in your diary or calendar now.*

Thursday 17 September (A.G.M)

Thursday 15 October

Come and enjoy a delicious meal before the meeting  
which commences at 8pm.

## *SPECIAL NOTICE*

### ***READ THIS! READ THIS! READ THIS! READ THIS!***

Now that I've got your attention, please take careful notice of the following, as it is innovative and a great idea that will benefit all keen VSAG divers.

How many times have you noted that the Saturday before a scheduled Sunday fortnightly dive is ideal for diving? Glassy seas, sunny conditions, no wind, clear water etc. etc. What about the fact that two, three, maybe four fortnightly dive days have been cancelled due to inclement weather?

Quite often the next Sunday proves to be ideal, but the next scheduled dive is still a further week away.

In the past, some keen members have been known to ring certain boat owners to enquire as to whether a dive may be scheduled on these ideal non dive weekends. However, this is not the ideal as everybody does not benefit from the situation. Good news! A plan has emerged.

Neville Viapree has agreed to become the "Duty Officer". What this means is that when ideal weather conditions present on non scheduled weekends, members can ring Neville to ascertain whether there may be a chance to dive. Neville will then take control of the situation, co-ordinating other boat owners and divers (who ring in) to take advantage of the conditions.

I think this is a marvellous idea and one which is sure to prove a boon, particularly in the summer months. So, everybody please make a mental note. Nev's your man on weekends where a scheduled dive has not been planned. Dives on these weekends will NOT be official VSAG dives. Hence, arrangements between boat owners and members will need to be agreed upon.

Neville can be contacted on 9551 1547 (H).

# V.S.A.G.

## 1998 CHRISTMAS DIVING TRIP

### OCEAN LAKE CARAVAN PARK WALLAGA LAKE BERMAGUI

Yes, the annual VSAG Christmas trip is on again and we return to the coast of N.S.W. at Bermagui, just an easy and enjoyable day journey from Melbourne.

The area offers exciting diving, great fishing and plenty of safe beaches for the families to enjoy a day out.

V.S.A.G. has booked 15 powered sites at the Ocean Lakes Caravan Park right on the shores of Wallaga Lake. Non powered sites are also available.

More information can be obtained from Gerry DeVries on 9725 2381.

**A deposit of \$50 will be required by the  
AUGUST GENERAL MEETING to secure your booking.**

**SEE YOU AT BERMAGUI  
CHRISTMAS 1998!**

**VICTORIAN SUB  
AQUA GROUP.  
FATHER'S DAY LUNCH.  
6.9.98**

V.S.A.G WISHES TO INVITE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS  
TO A YUM CHA LUNCH TO CELEBRATE FATHER'S  
DAY. YOU ARE WELCOME.

IMPERIAL KINGDOM CHINESE RESTAURANT  
546-554 WAVERLEY ROAD  
MOUNT WAVERLEY

1.15PM

B.Y.O BEER AND WINE.

R.S.V.P TO: GERRY DEVRIES BY 20TH AUGUST.

**Home: 9725 2381  
Mobile: 0417 324608**



## MEDIA WATCH



**Wilsons Promontory:** how will history judge us?

### Prom swapped for profit

**O**NE hundred years ago and against all odds, a small number of men and women won national park status for Wilsons Promontory.

In 1996 several thousand people stood on Norman Bay in the now historic "hands off" protest. More than 3000 submissions were presented to the Victorian Government rejecting the privatisation of the Prom.

As I write, a walking track is being cut through wilderness between a new commercial development at the Lighthouse and Waterloo Bay. Hectares of pristine bush will be removed over the next two months, but this is a Sunday picnic when compared with what is to come.

The government is in the process of removing rangers and works staff from Tidal

River and one can only wonder who will take their place.

One also wonders who will use proposed car-free camp sites, at least two backpacker lodges, a new lodge behind Oberon Bay and other massive developments at Tidal River, if not commercial operators.

Sealers, Derby, the North East, and other out stations will see the same fate.

In future, do not plan to pack the car and head off for a weekend's camping at the Prom unless you've purchased a package from big business.

It comes as a great surprise to me that Victorians are willing to hand over the Prom to money and profit so readily.

One wonders how history will judge us for surrendering what generations of Victorians fought so hard to protect.

*Neil Taylor,  
Woolamai*

# Don't blame Narooma bar

NAROOMA's boating fraternity is angry.

While extending sympathy for the families of those who died on Saturday, they are angry that anyone should have even considered going out to sea on Saturday.

They are angry because the lives of Narooma rescue volunteers were endangered and the Narooma bar has inevitably received bad press.

Those concerns about the bar were confirmed by newspaper reports on Monday.

"Saturday's accident had nothing to do with the bar," Narooma charter boat operator Bert Elswyk said. "No one in their right mind would have gone to sea on Saturday.

"Charter boats along the coast have been fully booked for the holiday weekend but cancelled on Saturday and stayed tied up along with the fishing fleet because of the big seas.

"That was the position in Narooma, Bermagui and all along the coast.

"We are not tied up for nothing. Why don't people take note?"

"When a person sees the fleet tied up, that should warn them," another charter boat operator, Darryl Stuart said.

"The whole eastern seaboard copped it."

He said Sunday's swamping of a boat crossing the bar was different.

"A lot of boats went out on Sunday morning," Mr Stuart said.

"Conditions were better on Sunday with waves of one to one-and-a-half metres in sets, interspersed with huge long lulls.

"I understand that it was the first time that driver had crossed the Narooma bar and he went out on the northern instead of the southern side which is the preferred route."

## MEDIA WATCH

# If only ...

**AFTER Saturday's tragedy in big seas off Narooma, it is easy to say, "if only..."**

**If only they hadn't gone ...**

**If only they had heeded advice ...**

**If only they had been wearing life-jackets crossing the bar, it could have been a whole different scenario and the families would not be suffering as they are now.**

**Many people are saying life-jackets should be made compulsory when crossing bars, just like they are for charter boat clients.**

**Many fishermen and boaties will tell you they hinder your movement too much, or they are difficult to swim in.**

**There'll give you heaps of reasons why they don't wear them.**

**The truth is that until either you make it macho to wear life-jackets or invalidate insurance if you don't, the situation is unlikely to change.**

**Saturday's tragedy has also put the spotlight on Narooma, even internationally, but for all the wrong reasons.**

**City-based media reports on Sunday and Monday talked of the "notorious Narooma bar", forgetting for the moment that boats all along the coast were tied up on Saturday because of the big seas.**

**Many in the town have gone into overdrive emphasising that the Narooma bar was not to blame and putting the whole incident in proper context.**

**Most feel that someone, whether it be police, coastal patrol or the Waterways Authority, should have the power to close the bar through legislation that would apply in any port where and when it was necessary.**

**The problem as the law makers see it is that if an incident such as this happens and the bar wasn't closed, the authority responsible for implementing the closure would be wide open for legal action.**

**Regardless of all these things, the onus does come down to the individual to assess the risks and make the right decision.**

**A few fish at Montague Island were just not worth it.**

## MEDIA WATCH

# Diners shell out for sick seafood

By SARAH DENT,  
environment reporter

FISH and shellfish are being served to diners still flapping, cut in half before they are killed, and stored in overcrowded and polluted tanks in Melbourne restaurants.

RSPCA inspectors have found dead fish and lobsters in tanks, crabs hanging outside shops in the sun all day, live crustaceans being dropped into boiling water and crayfish tied around the legs and nippers for days.

They believe diners could become ill after selecting and eating seafood from tanks filled with faeces and filthy water.

RSPCA president Dr Hugh Wirth urged restaurant customers to protest against the way fish were being treated by not eating seafood from tanks.

He said despite extensive education since the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act was amended last year to include fish and crustaceans, some restaurant owners were still mistreating tank



**Cruel sea:** the RSPCA found ill treatment of restaurant seafood.

specimens. Dr Wirth said offenders could be fined up to \$6000 and/or jailed for six months for mistreating fish and crustacea.

"We have diners still calling us to say they selected a crayfish from a tank and within 10 minutes it had been cooked and put in front of them.

"The animals are supposed to be put in an ice (bath) for 20 minutes which makes them

unconscious before they are killed, cooked and served.

"People are also saying tanks are absolutely filthy and they have no oxygen in the water so they become overloaded with fish excretion. It is a major misunderstanding that fish and crustaceans don't feel pain."

RSPCA inspectors said most complaints were about Asian restaurants in Victoria St in

Richmond, but there were also reports of Japanese restaurants filleting live fish.

Animal Liberation group spokeswoman Rheya Linden said recent investigations had uncovered a coastal restaurant placing live crayfish on a table for diners to "dig into with knives and forks".

She said mud crabs were left in polystyrene boxes without water and a protest had been staged last year in a Melbourne restaurant after crustaceans had been removed from tanks and placed on ice "to amuse diners".

"We believe live fish and crustaceans shouldn't be allowed in restaurants.

"They should be killed humanely and transported fresh to restaurants so the abattoir can be regulated and inspected.

"We need an inspector at the elbow of every chef and there aren't enough about."

Marine and Coastal Community Network spokesman Tim Allen said fish were still regarded as food or sport, instead of animals.

Restaurants contacted by the *Herald Sun* refused to comment.

## Fishing industry facing threat: report

By **BRIAN REID**

Half a century of excessive fishing across the globe is depleting oceans and threatening survival of the fishing industry, according to a report by the Worldwatch Institute.

Poor management of oceans has diminished global fish stocks and fishermen now expend more effort hauling in smaller, lower quality catches, said the study. "Our capacity to fish far exceeds the value of the resource," said the study's author, Ms Anne Platt

McGinn, a research associate at Worldwatch. "We're overinvested to the point where fishers can't let up."

If fisheries were managed better, she said, the industry could see revenue climb \$US25 billion (\$A40.8 billion) to \$US30 billion above the \$US80 billion the industry generates annually.

But industry officials have branded the report as alarmist.

Mr David Nitchman, the spokesman for the National Fisheries Institute, dismissed

Ms McGinn's report as "hype, hype, hype and more hype".

"There is no need to panic," said Mr Nitchman, whose group serves the seafood industry. "The trend is toward more management, not less."

Although some fisheries were poorly managed, those cases should not be cause for global alarm, he said.

Ms McGinn is calling for a 50 per cent cut in fishing fleets and more international efforts to reduce overfishing.

**BLOOMBERG**

***DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR***

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT/LOCATION</b>	<b>DIVE CAPTAIN MEET AT</b>	
20 Aug	General Meeting Bell's Hotel Cnr. Moray & Coventry Streets, Sth. Melbourne		8.00 pm
23 Aug	Sea Life Centre, The Nobbies Phillip Island	John Lawler 9589 4020	The Nobbies 10.30am
30 Aug	Nepean wall	Gerry DeVries 9725 2381	Sorrento 10.30am
6 Sep	Fathers' Day Yum Cha Imperial Kingdom Restaurant	Gerry DeVries 9725 2381	Glen Waverley 11am
11-13 Sep	Snow Trip Mt Hotham	Leo Maybus 9727 1568	Mt Hotham Friday Night
13 Sep	Submarine Dive	John Lawler 95894020	Sorrento 10.00am
17 Sep	General Meeting Bell's Hotel Cnr. Moray & Coventry Streets, Sth. Melbourne		8.00 pm
20 Sep	Treasure Hunt Dive	Pat Reynolds 9789 1092	Sorrento 10.00am
4 Oct	The Pinnacles	Robert Birtles 9725 2816	Flinders 9.00am
10 Oct (Sat)	Night Dive	Leo Maybus 9727 1568	Mornington Pier 6.00pm
15 Oct	General Meeting Bell's Hotel Cnr. Moray & Coventry Streets, Sth. Melbourne		8.00 pm

18 Oct	Heads Area (Slack Water)	Leo Maybus 9727 1568	Sorrento 10.00am
31 Oct	Melbourne Cup Weekend	Pat Reynolds	
3 Nov	Tidal River Wilsons Promontory	9789 1092	
8 Nov	Charter Boat Dive Ship's Graveyard area	Mick Jeacle 0359 712786	Barwon Heads T.B.A.
26 Dec	Christmas Trip 1998/99 Wallaga Lake Caravan Park Bermagui NSW	Gerry DeVries 9725 2381	Details to be advised

**NOTICE: BOAT OWNERS INTENDING TO BRING THEIR BOATS  
PLEASE RING THE DIVE CAPTAIN BEFORE 6.00 PM ON EVENING  
PRIOR TO THE DIVE.**

**DIVERS PLEASE RING BETWEEN 6.00 PM - 7.00 PM.**

**FOR NIGHT DIVES (USUALLY SATURDAYS) PLEASE RING BY 8.00 PM**

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION MORNINGTON PENINSULA AREA

	PHONE
POLICE - AMBULANCE - FIRE	(000)
PENINSULA AMBULANCE (ROSEBUD, SORRENTO)	(008) 137333
(MORNINGTON)	(03) 9783 2222
SOUTHERN PENINSULA HOSPITAL	
1527 NEPEAN ROSEBUD	(0359) 86 8444
FRANKSTON HOSPITAL	
HASTINGS ROAD FRANKSTON	(03) 9781 3111
MORNINGTON BUSH NURSING HOSPITAL	
MAIN ST MORNINGTON	(0359) 75 2009
MORNINGTON BAY RESCUE SERVICE	(0359) 75 2733
SOUTHERN PENINSULA RESCUE	(0359) 84 2000
DIVING EMERGENCY SERVICE	1800 088 200
COAST GUARD	(03) 9598 7003
STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE (S.E.S)	(03) 26 1468
WATER POLICE	(03) 9662 0911
MELBOURNE AMBULANCE	(03) 9662 2533
<b>DOCTORS DIVING MEDICINE</b>	
DR. GUY WILLIAMS	(0359) 81 1555
DR. J De B.J. DADE	(0359) 75 5288
DIVING EMERGENCY SERVICE	1800 088 200

V.H.F. EMERGENCY CHANNEL..... (16)