



Welcome home - heroes who did the nation proud

CLAIRE BICKERS
PAUL TOOHY

ADELAIDE "smoothie" and cave diver Dr. Richard Harris, along with the 19 other Australians involved in the dangerous Tham Luang cave rescue, arrived home last night as more than 32,000 people petitioned for them to be awarded



give credit to all the people who were involved. Craig and I have had a spotlight on our efforts and we want to make everyone realise that while we might have become the face of this rescue, the role we played was no more or less important than all the many hundreds (perhaps thousands) of people I have mentioned

dipping along cave, she said. "Night was but the coach huge teaching everyone to prevent excessive and to not feel hungry. The father of 14 kids said the coach did not see their circumstances

Humble heroes just 'went cave diving for few days'



GREG BROWN

Richard Harris and Craig Challen will "clear the cobwebs" and go for a dive together next weekend after receiving one of the nation's highest bravery awards for their role in rescuing 12 children and their soccer coach from a cave in Thailand.

Dr Harris and Dr Challen yesterday said they were "embarrassed and a bit shocked" for receiving the Star of Courage medal at Government House in Canberra, as they humbly played down the significance of their role in the Tham Luang cave rescue.

"We went cave diving for a few days and we were able to help the kids out, but, honestly, the media storm and the awards have been completely unexpected," Dr Harris said.

"Can't emphasise what a part so many people played in this and we are not quite sure why the spotlight has shone on us as a pair, but it is all quite exciting but we need to get back to work and stop my head swelling."

Dr Challen, a Perth-based vet, said they were "just two ordinary blokes that have an unusual hobby."

"We are just glad we were able to help," he said.

Dr Harris, an Adelaide-based anaesthetist, found out his father had died when he completed his role in the rescue.

Malcolm Turnbull and Bill Shorten took time out of the bye-election campaigning yesterday to attend the ceremony in Canberra, along with Governor-General Peter Cosgrove.

There were also seven Australian Federal Police divers who were awarded the Bravery Medal for their role in the rescue. Troy Ether, Robert James, Kelly Boers, Benjamin Cox, Matthew Fitzgerald, Justin Bateman and Chris Marknow.

All nine Australians were also awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia.



The Star of Courage is the second-highest Australian bravery decoration, awarded for an act of conspicuous courage in circumstances of great peril.

Recipients include Senior Constable Karen Elizabeth Lowden of the NSW Police, who in 2011 sat with the then 18-year-old Madeleine Puler for 10 hours after a bullet-wad intruder broke into her Sydney home and attached a suspicious device around her neck.

19 people have received the Star of Courage.

All nine Australians involved in the 18-day cave rescue were also awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the international community.

appointed by the Governor-General.

Mr Turnbull said the award recipients undertook "extraordinary deeds."

"We are not surprised to be told that the Thai and the others in the rescue team appreciated the very Australian way in which you were always ready to have a go, lend a hand, improvise and never give up," Mr Turnbull said.

"You were a mission of practical love. To save the lives of others, weaker, younger, more vulnerable."

"You saved those young men and, as you did, so inspired not just your own nation, our nation but holding its breath, and praying for your success — you inspired the whole world."

Dr Harris said he never believed the children would be rescued when he first arrived at the cave where they were trapped 3km inside for 18 days.

THE FIRST OUT



PRAJAK SUTHAM, 14



PIPAT BOONL, 15



DOCTORS RICHARD HARRIS, LEFT, AND CRAIG CHALLEN WITH THEIR MEDALS AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE

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BRAVERY BEYOND BELIEF



Rescue showed humanity's best



The Heroes of the Thai Cave Rescue



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No. 145 - SEPTEMBER 2018

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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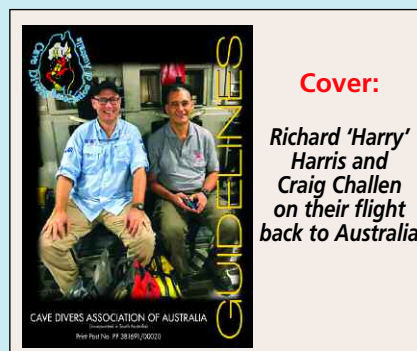
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CONTENTS

Editorial - Meggan Anderson	5
National Committee Updates	7-9
AGM & Symposium 2018	10-11
Preci's for Elections 2018	22-23
Site Access	36-37
Instructor List	39

Articles...

OzTek Guest Speakers 2019	12
Story of Harry Bear by Meggan Anderson	14-15
My Dive with TERIC by Joseph Bicanic	16-17
Book Review by Ian Lewis	18-19
Sistema Huautla	20
Into the Realm of Xibalba by Pierre Constant	26-35
Routes from Melbourne to MG by Cameron Lewis	38



Cover:

Richard 'Harry'
Harris and
Craig Challen
on their flight
back to Australia

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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Policy Type: Affinity Combined General & Products Liability Policy - LIU-CAS-AEAL-14-01
Insurer: Affinity Insurance Brokers Level 1, 1265 Nepean Highway, Cheltenham, VIC 3912.
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Pine Tank Lodge



Photo by Liz Rogers

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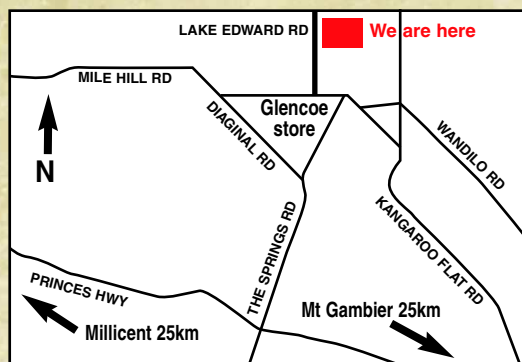
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EDITORIAL MEGGAN ANDERSON



Dear members

I didn't have any grand plans for this issue of Guidelines but then some major events happened and my vision had to change. Obviously the Thai cave rescue story has dominated the headlines and suddenly everyone from the boss to the yoga instructor is talking about cave diving. Our website and Facebook page traffic has spiked and Craig and Harry are now household names. Quite a few of us have certainly learnt a lot about the media during this time. As the Publications Director, I have to confess that I do not have an exclusive interview for this issue as I felt Craig and Harry needed a break (and well because all the other media outlets beat me to it). However they will be taking you behind the scenes at our upcoming symposium and allocating a lot of time for your burning questions – so I do encourage you to come along (if you can't make it they will also be presenting at OzTek). I will also be reporting on their talk in the next issue. We also have a whole lot of other exciting speakers for the day that you can read about in this issue.

This issue we also farewell our Standards Director John Dalla-Zuanna, who has not re-nominated. It has been good to get to know JDZ this year and I wish him all the best for the future, I am sure we'll still see him around. I want to thank my fellow directors for their ongoing support and our National Director for his exemplary leadership, the last few months have certainly brought the team closer together. I look forward to working with whichever Joseph becomes our new Standards Director!

To end, I'd like to dedicate this issue to the brave children and coach from the Wild Boar Football Club and to Craig and Harry and all those parties involved in the Tham Luang Cave rescue. A particular mention goes to Saman Gunan, who sadly lost his life during the rescue – our condolences to his family and friends and may we never forget the brave sacrifice he made.

I hope you enjoy this issue.
Meg

Meggan Anderson #4942 | Publications and Records Director
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Did you know?

You can opt for an electronic copy of Guidelines rather than a paper copy. **Simply login to your CDAA online account**, select the dropdown menu under the My Records tab and click on Update My Details. Handy for those who have multiple CDAA members in their household or for those wanting to do their bit for the environment!

Articles for Guidelines Dec. 2018 - Deadline is Nov. 15th

- Send articles and jpeg images by email to guidelines@cavedivers.com.au

NATIONAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2018

What a couple of months it has been!

In the space of a few short weeks, Australian cave diving was catapulted from relative obscurity to a topic of household discussion. The events in Thailand, as well as events much closer to home, have made life for the CDAA National Committee busier than ever during the last few months.

I'd first off like to acknowledge once again the amazing efforts of CDAA members Richard Harris and Craig Challen for their selfless achievements in Thailand, along with all those involved in the rescue operation. You have made everyone in the CDAA community very proud.

The amazing story of the Thai Cave rescue has generated an enormous amount of public interest in cave diving across Australia. Between the NC and selected representatives, we conducted approximately 60 interviews in an attempt to provide some broader understanding of the challenges of cave diving, and the general risks faced by both the rescue teams and the trapped boys and their coach. Managing the media was, at times, a bit of a struggle, however I feel it really brought us together as a committee. Aside from the rescue itself, the biggest positive to have come from this is that the interest has now shifted to cave diving as a sport in an extremely positive way.

Closer to home, the connection between Fossil Cave and Tank Cave has resulted in the need to reassess the access conditions for both sites. The NC have now had a chance to carefully consider the many implications and have approved a set of draft Site Access Regulations that have gone to the landowner for consideration. In short, the aim is to dual-rate Fossil Cave, with a number of additional measures to ensure that specific safety and

conservation concerns are fully addressed. Once we are in a position to implement the new Regulations, a formal notice will be sent to all CDAA members. Until this time the site will remain open to Advanced Cave members only. My role as a CDAA director has now spanned almost a year, and it's been a largely enjoyable experience. The workload for all the directors is significant – more-so when we are required to deal with unplanned issues. This can be equally stressful, challenging and ultimately, when we get it right, very rewarding.

Unfortunately, one of the less satisfying aspects of the role has been dealing with a number of potential breaches over recent months.

I would like to remind members unequivocally that the CDAA Member Regulations are not merely guidelines, subject to creative interpretation, or "bending". They also apply to all members equally, regardless of standing. The time the NC has spent on dealing with these issues is time that could better be invested in endeavours that benefit the CDAA and its members.

I am a big believer that the majority should not have to suffer for the actions of a few. If you show disregard for our Standards and Regulations, particularly in a way that jeopardises safety or site access, sanctions will be imposed. At a bare minimum, all members are expected to be well acquainted with the Regulations and Standards that are relevant to the diving they do. If there is any ambiguity, assume the most conservative approach, or contact one of the directors for clarification.

Moving on to more positive things, the competition for the new logo has received many excellent entries. The Directors will create a short list and by

the time this issue goes to print you should have received an invitation to vote for your preferred CDAA logo.

This year a motion has again been put forward to amend our Constitution to allow for electronic voting. We need at least 25% of members to vote via this year's postal ballot to get it across the line. The ability to vote electronically will give you, the members, much more scope and control over the future direction of the CDAA, and I therefore implore you to vote in favour of electronic voting. On the topic of voting, I'd like to applaud all the nominees who have put up their hand to take on a Director role. The seat of Business is uncontested, and I welcome back Mathew Rochford to the role and look forward to working with him on a number of projects we have planned to tackle over the next few months. With Joseph Bicanic and Joseph Monks running for Standards, regardless of the outcome it is reassuring to know that this portfolio will be in excellent hands for the

next couple of years.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge JDZ for all the work he has put into his various Director roles over the last few years. It is a tremendous commitment, and far more work goes in behind the scenes than most members will ever realise. Without members like JDZ the CDAA would not be where it is today. On behalf of the CDAA I wish you all the best on your next adventure.



Warm Regards, Pete
CDAA National Director

On behalf of the National Committee



Mathew Rochford,
Business Director



Kelvyn Ball,
Site Director



John Dalla-Zuanna,
Standards Director



Meggan Anderson,
Publications and
Records Director



Firstly, Big Congratulations to Harry and Craig on their overseas efforts, a great achievement and awesome results.

Another well done to Ryan Kaczowski in breaking through from Fossil's Cave to Tank Cave. Always good to hear of more passages being discovered.

For the interim Fossil's Cave will be Advanced Cave rated. We are asking divers to please give us time to work out which way this site goes ahead. Discussions will be made with DEWNR regarding this.

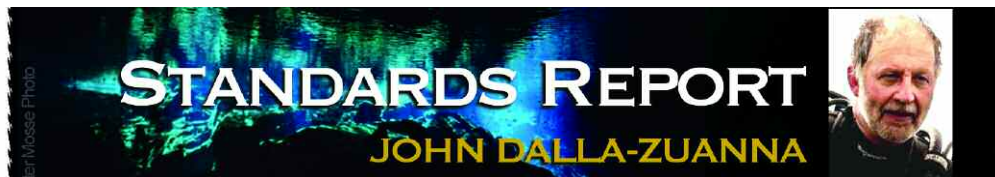
SHAFT NOTICE From October 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 the Shaft will be closed at the owner's request due to the paddock being cropped to maize (a tall growing crop) therefore making access unavailable.

Pannikin Plains documents are still being worked on.

Kilsby trial period has come to an end with great

success and Leon Rademeyer is now the access officer and will be organising bookings. 2 Slots, once a month and weekday bookings on request with a minimum of 4 divers. Thank you Leon.

Goulden's has had a bit of discussion going on about toilets and a shed at this site. I have spoken to DEWNR and there is no chance of toilets of any kind being installed at this location and they have asked that we Keep Australia Beautiful by taking any rubbish/used paper home with us please. The site is becoming a little untidy. DEWNR recommend the use of the public toilets located a few minutes away at Mount Schank. DEWNR are discussing with us about the possibility of revamping the pump shed for future use as a change shed. A big Thank You to Benn Walton who has managed to get a grant for trees that can be planted at Tank Cave in the Spring. A working bee will be organised by Benn, so keep an ear out for that. Regards Kelvyn Ball, Site Director.



What a great couple of months the CDAA has been through. With the recent events in Thailand where two of our members, Richard "Harry" Harris and Craig Challen were part of an international team that were able to successfully rescue the boys from their entrapment within the Tham Luang cave system.

I wish to acknowledge their outstanding efforts on behalf of the CDAA.

One of the key strategies used by the CDAA was to initially inform the media of the real problems facing the task of the search and rescue/recovery. Once the boys were found, we clamped down on further reports allowing the rescue process to unfold without responding to the "possible outcomes had the mission gone astray...". Finally, as with the rest of the world, we were able to talk to the media to celebrate the remarkable results.

This strategy path showed the Association in the best possible light and I would like to thank all the CDAA officers, instructors and members who were hounded by the media for comment and were able to deflect them towards us, the directors. I believe that the entire event was managed well. Needless to say, the communication networks with the CDAA were full on over the last month or so...

Prior to this event... A number of the Vertical Access Assessment programs have been conducted (mainly in Melbourne) and many members have also sent in their RPL documents to get their endorsements directly. So as a reminder, if you don't have a prior certification equivalent, and are keen to be assessed for CDAA Vertical Access Level 2, contact your CDAA State Rep for further details.

Card endorsements are being received, thanks all. To clarify, these endorsements are a substitute for carrying multiple cards especially when travelling and are there for your convenience. If

you wish to carry all your required cards separately, that is fine. If the endorsements are online in your members file, then they will be printed at the next run of cards based on your renewal. If you require a card made up especially, you will need to process and order a replacement card.

Two cave survey workshops (dry) were also conducted, hopefully similar workshops will be made available in all the States shortly, stay tuned.

A CDAA Instructor workshop will have been held the weekend of 18/19th August, 2018. The two key focus areas are 1) the streamlining of administration and conducting CDAA courses and 2) the focus of CDAA training into the next 5 years. A full report on this will be presented following the workshop.

The next Sump Rescue Orientation Program (SROP) would also have been announced, to be conducted over the CDAA Symposium weekend. In this program, we will be introducing Phil Croker who will be coordinating the future programs for the CDAA, with the assistance of the some of the previous SROP presenters. I encourage all Cave & Advanced Cave certified members to enroll into the SROP program at some stage. Phil is a highly qualified paramedic with extensive aero-medical experience, thus giving Richard Harris a well-deserved release from this role.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the two candidates for the next Standards Director position, Joseph Bicanic & Joseph Monks. Both have demonstrated exceptional contributions to the CDAA by assisting me with the developments in the CDAA Courses and with the Vertical Access Program, and have my complete support. I wish both of them good luck!

Cheers all! JDZ.



It's AGM and Symposium time, which will see us again in Mount Gambier, Saturday, 20 October. This year we have local explorers, local authors, international explorers, and international heroes. Yes, Harry and Craig will be along to talk about Thailand and answer your questions.

Reef2Ridge, Scubapro, TFM Engineering, and others will again be supporting our event and providing door prizes on the day. The City of Mount Gambier has again provided us with use of their facilities. We appreciate the continued generous support from these businesses, so please remember to support them in turn.

The social event this year will be free for members, with tickets available for partners. Further details and reservations in the coming weeks.

Our International Guest speaker, Patrick Widmann, will be presenting in Brisbane, Newcastle, and Perth at State Events. I know your State Representatives have begun promoting dates and times. Also keep an eye out for Social Events in the lead up to the Symposium weekend in South Australia and Victoria.

In other business matters, looking forward to a new logo and a refresh of our products. Are there any branded products you want to see added to our line-up? Working with Peter on exploring Office365 for some back-office operations, and exploring better account keeping options with our banks. You'll also note PayPal no longer requires an account to transact with the association. Planning is also underway for next year's OzTek and our 2019 Symposium already. If you're interested in getting involved, please reach out.

Voting season is upon us again. With two candidates for Standards Director, and a proposal to change our constitution, ballot papers can be found in your mailout Guidelines, or download from the Members Document Library if you want to get your vote in early.

I am a keen supporter of changing our constitution to allow for electronic voting, and I encourage everyone to get out and have your say on this proposal. We had a turnout of less than 20% of eligible members voting last year. I've spoken to many

members about the proposal put forward, and feel it strikes the right balance. This is an important change in making our association more responsive and transparent for you, our members. Electronic channels are secure, readily accessible from almost anywhere, and how we interact with the association for all our other business.

And finally, as the only candidate for Business Director, I'll have the privilege of running our associations business operations again. I do encourage anyone interested in the business portfolio to reach out, it really is an interesting area to be involved in. I hope to see many of you in the Mount on Saturday, 20 October.

Mathew Rochford #4827
Business Director

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Members Symposium

Sat. 20th October 2018

Main Corner, 1 Bay Road, Mount Gambier.

The symposium will be held in the Dress Circle commencing at 9:00am.

**The Annual General Meeting will commence at 11.00am,
and complete no later than 12.00 Midday.**

Drinks and Canapes will follow at 7:00pm.

Note that there will be no symposium activities on the Sunday, freeing up members to Dive!

For any questions, please contact Mathew Rochford (Business Director)
at business@cavedivers.com.au or **0411 529 512**



**Rod O'Brien will be on hand at the Symposium
to sign copies of his new book,
Australian Cave Diving - New South Wales**

AGM Door Prizes:

In 2018, we have been lucky enough to secure sponsorship from:



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2018 Annual General Meeting & Members Symposium

~ AGENDA ~

- 9:00 Welcome and opening remarks
- 9:10 Australian Cave Diving: New South Wales Rod O'Brien
- 9:40 Sistema Huautla - Dr Andreas Klocker
- 10:30 Morning Tea - *Catered*
- 11:00 Annual General Meeting - *Agenda published separately*
- 12:00 Lunch break
- 13:00 Thailand - Craig Challen & Dr Richard Harris
- 14:00 Break
- 14:10 Madagascar - Patrick Widmann
- 15:15 Afternoon Tea - *Catered*
- 15:45 Nullarbor debrief
- Stephen Fordyce, Ryan Kaczowski, Liz Rogers
- 16:15 Break
- 16:25 Dominican Republic - Patrick Widmann
- 17:20 Symposium concludes & closing remarks
- 19:00 Evening event start - *Reservations and tickets available soon*
- 23:00 Evening event concludes



Andreas Klocker



Richard Harris



Craig Challen



Liz Rogers



Stephen Fordyce



Ryan Kaczowski



Patrick Widman

Australia's Inspiring Cavers - Richard and Craig upfront at OZTek

Last month, the world held it's breath watching the unfolding story of the 12 Thailand football players and their coach trapped, and subsequently rescued, from a flooded cave.

At OZTek2019 in March hear the real story, upfront and in person. Richard Harris and Craig Challen

will be presenting the complete story of this incredible rescue - the logistics, the politics, the hardships, the worry, the equipment, the schedule. Explained by the people who were there, ask questions and shake the hands of our real life cave diving heroes.



Richard Harris



Craig Challen

All about the Adventure...

Celebrating 20 years of diving adventure, OZTek2019, is the only Australian bi-annual one-stop adventure into the dynamic world of diving, bringing together the world's greatest divers, scientists, explorers, trainers and photographers. Impossible to replicate, prepare to absorb the excitement, discover new adventures, destinations and possibilities.

Each presenter brings unique, inspiring, exciting and sometimes, sober-

ing topics, directly to you. They provoke awe, provide knowledge, improve methodology and above all, entertain.

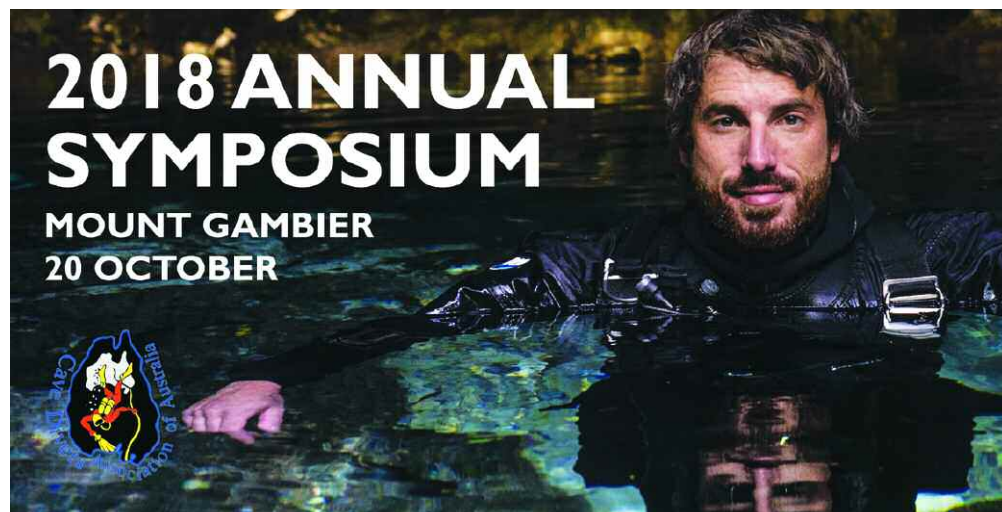
Richard and Craig are two wonderful examples of the calibre of OZTek presenters.

When: March 16-17, 2019

Where: OZTek2019 held at the International Convention Centre Sydney, Darling Harbour

All the details at

www.OZTek.com.au



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THE STORY OF HARRIS BEAR

by Meg Anderson

I heard of Tasmanian teenager Campbell Remess (nicknamed Bumble because his little sister couldn't say his name when she started talking), when I watched a video on Facebook a couple of years ago. I'll admit that the video made me cry and I have been a huge fan and follower of him since. Bumble brightens the lives of sick children by making them teddy bears. He started out small a few years ago - he is one of nine children and therefore used his pocket money to fund his project. However as his story has spread, his mission has become bigger. He now has a charity called "Project 365" as he makes one teddy bear a day (although looking at his social media, sometimes more!). In researching Bumble, it has been said by the recipients of his bears that they are magic because they are made with love and kindness. He has previously said in interviews that the most special bear he made was for his father when he was diagnosed with cancer a few years ago. His father's cancer has not returned. Bumble is well known - his Facebook group has over 40 000 followers while his Facebook page has 25 000 followers. Google his name and you will find him featured in the media both nationally and abroad.

While in Hobart in July I saw on Facebook that Bumble had made a bear for Harry (CDAA member Dr. Richard Harris). This got me very excited. I sent him a message, explaining I was a director from the CDAA visiting Hobart and offered to get Harris Bear to Harry in Adelaide. Bumble and his mother couldn't believe it, as they had been trying to work out where to send the bear. Bumble's mother Sonya told me that he had been moved by the Thai cave rescue story, as the boys were around the same age as him. She said no one tells him who to make his bears for and that he had decided to make Harris Bear for Harry. Bumble thinks Harry is a special doctor and was sad to learn his father had passed away. I met Bumble and his mum Sonya at Hobart Airport (I may have been slightly starstruck) and Harris Bear joined me on the plane. He has since been dropped off at his new home.

Bumble uses his pocket money and donations to make his bears. These days he is also using money



raised through donations, bear auctions (his bears fetch thousands of dollars each) and fundraisers to book cruises for sick people who've been through a hard time. He is also looking to fund PhD research scholarships and has just written his first book "Changing The World One Bear at a Time." You can read more about him at his website <https://project365.org/> and can find him on Facebook by searching "Project 365 by Campbell." If you want your own bear, he regularly holds raffles.

In a world that is becoming more about selfies than selflessness, it was an honour to play a small part in connecting two people - Harry and Bumble - who have used their talents to help others. Even a cynic like me has to admit that after the Thai cave rescue and the work that Bumble does, it has me believing in magic once more. Hopefully Bumble's path will cross with the CDAA's again and we can take him to see Ewens Ponds!

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My Time With a TERIC

By Joseph Bicanic

Funny who you bump into when on a dive trip! In June this year I went to Chuuk Lagoon with a local Perth dive club. While awaiting our final flight export Moresby the 5 of us were having a chat about Gas Density when we found Harry and Fiona Harris in the Executive Lounge. Bonus! Who better than Harry to weigh in on the conversation.

So we land in Chuuk and as we board our bus to the resort we are seated beside Bruce and Lynn Partridge from Shearwater Research. Double Bonus. Of course it does not take long for the conversation to move towards the new Teric. Ironically 12 months earlier Bruce and Lynn, were by chance, staying at Bali Dive Trek while I was on a course. During a dinner conversation I had asked if they had ever contemplated making a Shearwater "watch." Of course the answer was no (keeping their secret Teric project under wraps). As a complete Shearwater fan I was delighted with the Teric's release.

So on the bus Lynn said "We bought a spare Teric on the trip in case someone wanted one." AWE-SOME! Or so I thought. I had taken the comment "wanted one" as "available for sale." I was saddened by the fact that I could not buy it then and there but at least I had the chance to play with one.

Harry had a few days with the Teric - then it was MY turn! I was a bit concerned that with my ageing eyes the device may be hard to read. That certainly was not the case. It was very easy to read even when using the small font interface.

I have a Predator, Petrel and a NERD and in my opinion the Teric is the easiest Shearwater to read underwater. The AMOLED (active-matrix organic light-emitting diode) technology is really very impressive to say the least.

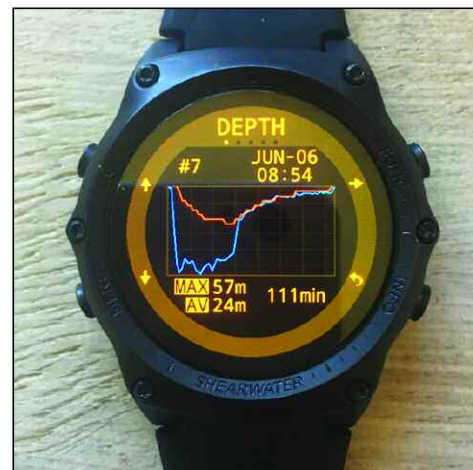
My dive buddy Paul had a day with the Teric. It sat beside his Predator. As his buddy I was able to read the Teric as easily as the Predator and, considering the size difference between devices, that made it all the more impressive.

The personalisation of the interface is rather cool as well (I think the pics say it all).

So who would benefit from a Teric?

Smaller people with less real estate on the arms, Divers wanting a discreet backup computer taking up less wrist space, Divers who like a bit of extra bling before, during and after the dive.

I think most divers that own a Shearwater Computer will want the Teric because they are just too cool not to have one.



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AUSTRALIAN CAVE DIVING – New South Wales

Written by Rod OBrien. Published Sydney August 2018. Overview by Ian Lewis

The high-profile focus of cave diving in Australia is on Mount Gambier and the Nullarbor Plain. Cave diving first started in Mount Gambier in 1961 and on the Nullarbor in 1972.

The CDAA formed in 1975 but the 5,000 CDAA members over 4 decades may not realise that Australian cave diving began in an eastern State 20 years before and only 7 years after World War 2 ended. Brave, energetic, innovative and well-organised divers in Sydney were drawn to the popular underground river featured in the famous Jenolan Caves in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, three hours from Sydney.

We all know that limestone is the main rock in which caves form. Most of the world's limestone formed on sea floors which have become exposed as landscapes after being uplifted. Where the limestone is flat and full of fossils, groundwater has dissolved our horizontal tunnels, sinkholes and massive passages – fantastic cave diver territory in Mount Gambier, the Nullarbor, Mount Gambier, Florida, the Bahamas and the Yucatan in Mexico. However, when limestone gets squashed, squeezed and hoisted into mountain chains, it becomes much harder and riddled with fractures. Caves formed in marble, dolomite and hardened limestones are carved by streamways through the fractures which bring gravels, sands and muds through the systems. Most of the world's cave diving in Britain, Europe, Russia, North America and New Zealand are in these conditions. Here in Australia they are found in cave systems throughout the hills and mountains of the Great Dividing Range of eastern Australia and Tasmania. Rod's book is about the extensive diving in these conditions throughout the NSW section of the Great Divide. It's all about a 'parallel world' to our world of large white-rock sinkholes and huge clear passageways.

Rod is one of Australia's leading cave divers and has poured all his experience and knowledge into a simply huge effort over the last 7 years to produce this book about the beginnings of cave diving in Australia. It started in the famous Jenolan Caves where the two underground river systems flow from the south and the north into the multi-level-cave tourist complex, forming a series of sumps and concealing hidden chambers within the mountainsides. A combination of cave explorers and cave divers have been trying to reveal secrets of the Jenolan Limestone for 7 decades now and Rod documents in full all those explorations, through the development of gear improvement and cave diving techniques. On page 45 he lists a number of important 'firsts' in cave diving in this country. New South Wales cave divers have much tougher

and muddier current conditions to traverse and dive compared to the clearwater sinkholes and caves of South and Western Australia. That's why they made the excellent and appropriate decision to undertake UK Sump Diver Training with Rob Palmer in 1993 and 1995 rather than try to adapt the CDAA system which is better designed for sinkhole and stillwater territory.

Rod is a specialist in several areas – working for years as a commercial diver, a wreck diving specialist, helping discover advanced caves like the Olwogin and Burnabbie systems on the Nullarbor and receiving an 'Award of Distinction for Exploration' from the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF). His diving life has been an adventure in itself and there is another book to be written about all that some day! I am quite comfortable to say that Rod's experience in cave diving efforts and achievements stand alongside those of Ron Allum who figures prominently in NSW cave diving history too and the contribution of both of them to Australian cave diving has been outstanding. They have shared much of their NSW work with prominent Sydney University Speleological Society (SUSS) cave divers Keir Vaughan-Taylor, Simon McCartney and Greg Ryan.

This is a very well-written, readable book with an attractive, professional layout, clear subheadings, lots of excellent color photographs of beautiful places and tough exploration and many good yarns and reports about the efforts of more than 100 cave divers in NSW caves over the time. Rod is generous and thorough about crediting and attributing the achievements of others with many trip descriptions and personnel, and listed all cave divers who've helped in NSW at the back of the book with thorough references and a detailed index, features essential to any quality book. His crediting of assistance lists many prominent members of the ASF fraternity in SUSS, SSS and CDAA who have all contributed to the book but it is Rod himself who has pulled all this information

together expertly. Rod covers the changes in techniques utilised for NSW cave diving and has included a special chapter on foul air detection and management, as NSW cave mountain caves have vegetation and soil inwash from stream systems that can decay and trap CO2 in airbells and pockets – not a problem in any SA and WA cave diving except for the Tommy Graham's Inner Sanctum Chamber.

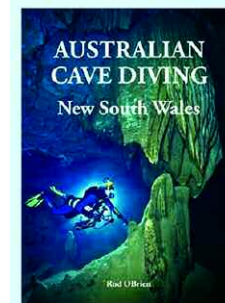
But it is his detailed coverage of Australia's cave diving pioneers commencing in 1952 in Jenolan with a series of well-publicised Sydney newspaper articles that is an outstanding contribution to our sport and our science. Rod has obtained many excellent and comprehensive black-and-white photographs of those who were tackling this tricky exploration a full 10 years before the first divers even jumped into the first Mt Gambier sinkholes and 20 years before the CDAA formed and the first Nullarbor caves were dived. This is real national cave diving history and excellent for all CDAA and current cave divers in this country to learn about and acknowledge resourceful and courageous pioneering when dive lights were motorcycle batteries in sealed World War 2 ammo boxes. Rod describes all sorts of early equipment and modifications in a sequence so we can really appreciate how our forebears were able to innovate in their drive to discover underwater caves. He backs this with a simply great montage of photos of these divers and on-site support parties on pages 116-121. The leader of the original Jenolan cave dives was Dr Denis Burke who I met and caved with years later when he and his caving family moved to South Australia and joined CEGSA. His other prominent Jenolan partner was Ben Nurse who later led the SSS (Sydney Speleological Society) for many decades. Rod provides full coverage throughout NSW caves with a great chapter and photos on the beautiful Wellington cave diving and photos and the exploration of drowned caves at Burrinjuk Dam. CDAA members will recognise a number of

CDAA names involved with these areas working alongside NSW cave diving specialists in these explorations eg Ken Smith pingin, JDZ in the mud, Neil Vincent's many photos, Ronnie Allum everywhere in NSW (of course!), Peter Rogers, Phil Prust, our Agnes Milowka, and even yours truly's Ice Pick Lake story. The book then covers Coolleman Plains and Yarrangobilly cave dives in the Snowy Mountains (where there's also interesting low-viz freshwater diving on the drowned towns in Lakes Jindabyne and Adaminaby), sumps at the base of the vertical shafts of the Bungonia Caves Gorge caves, even the pool at the bottom of Wyanbene Big Hole, a 100m drop to water three times the drop to water in Hells Hole at Mt Gambier.

I love maps from the early days when we mapped the sinkholes to help in dive planning at Mt Gambier. Rod's book contains many maps of all styles, some from trip reports and sketches, but it also has several excellent detailed long sections of the complex Jenolan system showing tourist caves, other dry caves up the mountainside and the underwater sections and their connections (pp's 48, 78-9, 98-9, 124-5) which show their relationship and complexity. Some maps contain eye-catching and witty names of various chambers and extensions – part of the speleology culture around the world. One sketch of a tight passage on p65 shows the gravel challenge – spot the diver! The Mammoth Cave Lower River (Slug Lake) dive is NSW's greatest challenge – it's now 96m deep (text p 66) and opening out below the chamber sketched on p65. In a geological paper I gave there a couple of years ago, my estimation is that the near-vertical limestone plunges several kilometres deep at Jenolan and this 94m underwater chamber is the top of a large deep 'reservoir' of groundwater feeding the northern river system. Rod Obrien and Ron Allum have both done this epic dive. Cave dives in NSW require good fitness, tough equipment, tough discipline and close cooperation with that State's cave divers compared to our calmer water experiences. We have much to learn from them. Rod's book is a brilliant effort and deserves success and great respect. Its collection of history and activity underpins nearly 70 years of cave diving in this nation. Outstanding!

And one PS: Can anyone find the photo of several of us kneeling in the underground Imperial River streamway at Jenolan in front of a party of cave tourists where we are holding up handfuls of pennies, shillings and florins thrown in there over 100 years of public visitation!? Real treasure on a cave dive!

Ian D Lewis, Life Member of CEGSA (#6701) and CDAA (#258).



AUSTRALIAN CAVE DIVING: New South Wales

By Rod OBrien

Published August 2018, Paperback

This 288 page book describes cave diving and its history in New South Wales, Australia. It is full colour throughout with 254 photos including 58 historical photos from the 1950s, and 51 maps. Chapters include Cave Diver Training, Cave Diving Equipment and detailed descriptions of cave diving at 15 caving areas in New South Wales.

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SISTEMA HUAUTLA – Cave Diving for Exploration & Science in One of The World's Most Spectacular Deep Caves

Andreas started his caving career in the Junee-Florentine in Tasmania which is seen by most as Australian's most challenging caving area. He has since been caving and cave diving on several big expeditions in Mexico, New Zealand, the Nullarbor, and West Papua.

In 2015, Andreas and American cave explorer Zeb Lilly led a successful push in the 1.5km deep, 85km long Huautla cave system in the Mexican state of Oaxaca to explore beyond several sumps in a part of the cave known as Redball Canyon. This trip involved several sustained camping trips underground, daily commutes through several sumps, and multiple aid climbs to work from a depth of 750m towards the surface.

It was on this expedition that those two decided to restart efforts to connect Sump 9, a.k.a. "The Mother of all Sumps", in Sistema Huautla to its resurgence in the 10km distant Santo Domingo canyon. When the connection between Sistema Huautla and its resurgence is achieved, the world's deepest cave traverse will have been navigated.

This talk will first give a summary about this project of connecting Sistema Huautla with its resurgence, and the first two trips, in 2016 and 2017, which focused on pushing the Huautla Resurgence upstream towards Sump 9. The main focus will then be on the two-month long expedition in 2018 to the Cueva de la Pena Colorada, which is thought to be the overflow resurgence to Sistema Huautla. In 1984, during the last expedition to the Pena Colorada, led by American cave explorer Bill Stone, the team pushed over 5km into the mountain,



through six sumps, to discover Sump 7 – at the bottom of a 55m vertical drop, without any place to gear up. They dived this sump to a depth of 50m, until the logistics of diving in such a remote sump, at that depth, on air and open-circuit dive gear, forced the team to turn. It was this sump that led Bill Stone to develop the famous CIS-Lunar rebreather.

It has taken 34 years until a team finally returned to this remote place to continue exploration of Sump 7. To get to Sump 7 took several years of planning, three tons of gear to be hauled to Mexico, and three weeks to carry enough gear to put divers into Sump 7 to continue exploration. This talk will tell the story of this epic expedition, including accounts of what happens if an overflow resurgence overflows.

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CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA NATIONAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS OCTOBER 2018

BUSINESS DIRECTOR

Nomination for Business Director – Mathew Rochford #4827

Proposed by Peter Wolf CDAA #4419 Seconded by Meggan Anderson CDAA #4942

In putting myself forward as a candidate for the role of Business Director for a second term, I seek again to bring my experience as professional manager to the role. My professional life has seen me with oversight of multidisciplinary teams, operations, finances, strategy, policy development and change projects. I joined the professional ranks of the dive industry in 2009 as a PADI Divemaster, the CDAA in 2013, and now a PADI instructor; I also bring my broad experience in the dive industry to the role.

A Bachelor's degree in Information Technology, and a post graduate Masters in Business Administration, sees me with a strong academic background to complement my professional experience.

As a returning member of the national committee, I will continue development of the associations' business plan, electronic voting reforms, and product refresh. I would like to see the association continue in its efforts to make strategy, goals, financial position and planning more reflective of member's wishes, and actions transparent and accountable to the members. I continue to see a role for more extensive use of technology to engage members in planning, decision making and particularly voting.

Having sat on the National Committee this past two years, I retain my passion for promoting and developing our association. I believe I continue to have a lot to offer and want to be part of shaping our future. I am seeking your backing to continue in the role of Business Director.

STANDARDS DIRECTOR

Nomination for Standards Director – Joseph Bicanic #4691

Proposed by: John Dalla-Zuanna CDAA #236 Seconded by: Meggan Anderson #4942

Anyone who knows me at all is aware of my obsession with all things Scuba Diving. Even my cars personalised plate is "UNDAWATER". I started Scuba Diving in 1999 and have been obsessed with it ever since. In early 2014 I completed my Advanced Cave certification and by the end of that year also completed my CDAA Instructor Internship.

How can I contribute as the Standards Director?

- 1. I'm an Active CDAA and TDI Instructor.*
- 2. Over the past 15 months I've worked closely with John Dalla-Zuanna in the re-vision of the new Basic Cave and Cave courses especially in comparing CDAA Diver Level Standards to sister Training Agencies as well as working with him on the associated documentation and presentation materials.*
- 3. For the past two years I have been helping our WA State Representative in respect to his functions as well as participating with the State Representatives phone conferences and activities.*
- 4. Separate to diving I am a small business owner of 11 years with a "Will Do" attitude. As a business owner I understand the difference between an emotional and commercial decision. Prior to having my own small business I worked in a large corporate environment where rules and regulations were the cornerstone of success.*
- 5. Having both big and small business mind sets puts me in a good commercial position for Standards Director as I have the ability to think local and global on the same issue and weigh the outcomes of both.*

Thank you for taking the time to consider my nomination.

Joseph (Josip) Bicanic

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA NATIONAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS & CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS - OCTOBER 2018

STANDARDS DIRECTOR

Nomination for Standards Director – Joseph Monks #4653

Proposed by: Peter Wolf #4419 Seconded by: Damian Bishop #4738

Hello.

I am seeking your vote for Standards Director.

I believe that I could bring a fresh approach to this position. I am hard worker, diligent and I hold the CDAA Regulations and Standards in the highest regard. I am also a person who will always look to help my fellow divers in and out of the water.

Over my time with the CDAA I have tried to be a productive member and held a variety of different positions within the organisation. I am currently the CDAA state representative for QLD and have had this position on and off for a few years now. I have also done a tenure on the Tank Cave Management Committee (TCMC). Lately I have been working with the current standards director JDZ and a group of fellow divers to develop the new vertical access standards.

I know it's not an easy job and there will be times where I will not be able to answer all the questions, but I will get the answers by using the vast knowledge base of the CDAA – you the members. I will follow the examples left by previous people in this role and draw on their experience to help me maintain, make or improve current standards.

Thank you for reading and dive safe

Joseph Monks #4653

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Proposed by: Mathew Rochford #4827 Seconded by: Peter Wolf #4419

The following motion(s) for Constitutional Alteration, as per Section 19 of the Constitution, have been proposed. Refer the Cave Divers Association of Australia website (cavedivers.com.au) for the context in which these motion(s) have been proposed, and to access the marked-up Draft Constitution (Proposed October 2018 CDAA Constitution (Electronic Voting amendments).pdf) which contains the specific wording for each of the following motion(s).

Electronic Voting: Mail-out ballots to be replaced by use of electronic voting software.

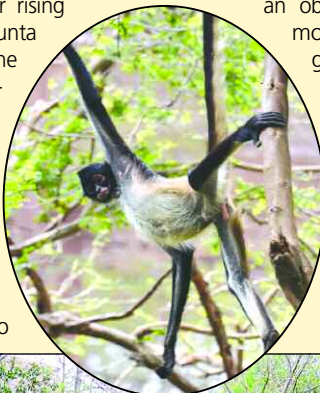
Into the Realm of Xibalba

Story and photos by Pierre Constant ~ www.calaolifestyle.com

Part 1 of Pierre's adventure featured in Guidelines, September 2017.

"Cenote" originates from the Mayan word 'dzonot', meaning something deep, a chasm or cavern filled with water. These symbolize entrances to 'Xibalba', the underworld.

Sliding down the Tyrolienne at hair rising speed over the placid waters of Punta Laguna, one could only hope for the best. And enjoy the views of the surrounding Mayan jungle. Thank heaven, some friendly natives are waiting for you upon reception, otherwise slamming full on into a big tree trunk, would be a dreadful option. Minutes later, Max has us having a refreshing dip into the water, "No crocs here" he promises, before we paddle across the lake to



an obscure patch of green forest. Spider monkeys, aka 'Mono arana', "Ateles geoffroyi", white chested and in black colour, are gracefully swinging from the branches. Further on, black howler monkeys, "Allouatta palliata" are angrily answering the local guide's pestering noises, with a deafening chorus of guttural calls. This ecotourism reserve would be an adequate introduction to a new experience in Yucatan, one year after my last visit.



Hanging roots of Alamo tree, Yokdzonot cenote



Pic: Alison Perkins
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Sunbeams into Yalutzil cenote

Harness still on, we reach cenote Calavera on foot. In the darkness of a nearby cave, a couple of mottled owls "*Strix virgata*" are staring at us from their hiding place, perched on some 'Alamo' roots. A mere hole in the limestone bedrock, with a rope ladder dropping straight down 10 metres into the water, is our next plan. "Just bring your mask and a lamp, but no fins", was the advice. Water temperature is a cool 25°C. Skin diving down to a depth of 5m to 8m, one is suddenly struck by a macabre vision. Bones and human skulls are literally covering the silty bottom, in oblivion. There lays a

collection of 120 skeletons of ancient Maya people. Human sacrifices of a bygone age, that leaves one with a chill up the spine.

According to the Clovis theory, native Americans originated from central Siberia, through the Behring Strait about 13500 to 13000 years before present (BP). Other theories stipulate trans-Pacific arrivals by ancestors from Mongolia, Australia and Melanesia. Example given is that of the site of Monte Verde in southern Chile, where human artifacts and gomphotere bones have been discovered, dating back 14000-14500 years. Soon after the arrival of paleo-Americans, a massive extinction of megafauna occurred between 13300 and 12000 years BP. It is due to human hunting and climate shifts. The first migration of settlers was to reach Mexico at about 11000 years BP.

Fossil bones of the paleo American horse, "*Equus conversidens*" and of the extinct bison "*Bison antiquus*", were unearthed at Loltun Cave in southern Yucatan. The first human in the Yucatan were indeed the Mayas. The region is therefore the heartland of Maya civilization. The Mayan culture extends from 1500 BC to 1697 AC. The 'Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Historia' (INAH) initiated a project to explore cenotes in year 2000, ie. register fossils and archeological sites in the cave system. Fossils of animal bones appear in the late Pleistocene, as well as lithic tools and charcoal,



Coming out of a dip at cenote Calavera



Moving tanks down at Yalutzil cenote

proof of human occupation and campfires. Three nearly complete skeletons of pre-ceramic age were discovered, whose remains are the oldest known to southern Mexico and Central America. An underwater cave known as 'Chamber of the Ancestors' was revealed at Aktun Ha cenote, west of Tulum. 'La Chimenea' prehistoric site, part of Taj Mahal cenote, south of Playa del Carmen, gave concentrations of charcoal at a depth of 23m, with molars, mandible, vertebrae and camelid bones of "*Hemiauchenia macrocephala*". The fossil material was partly burnt, with cut marks on bones. In the Naranjal cave system, fully submerged and 4,5Km south west of Tulum, the skeleton of a woman was found on the cave floor at 22,6m. She was 25-30 years of age, 1,40m tall, 53Kg, 80% complete and was carbon 14 dated to 11670 + or - 60 years. At Las Palmas cenote, a second skeleton was found at the same depth, with charcoal, 90% complete, also from a female, 1,52m, 58Kg and 44-50 years old, with remains of a small fox nearby. The skeleton was dated to 8050 years.. A third skeleton was identified at 'El Templo' cave, 18Km north of Tulum, at a depth of 23,5m, 185m from the cenote entrance, of a man 25-30 years old, 70% complete. No carbon dating was possible because of the deterioration due to salt water.

Formed during a period of low sea level, ie. glacial periods of the Pleistocene, the cave systems where

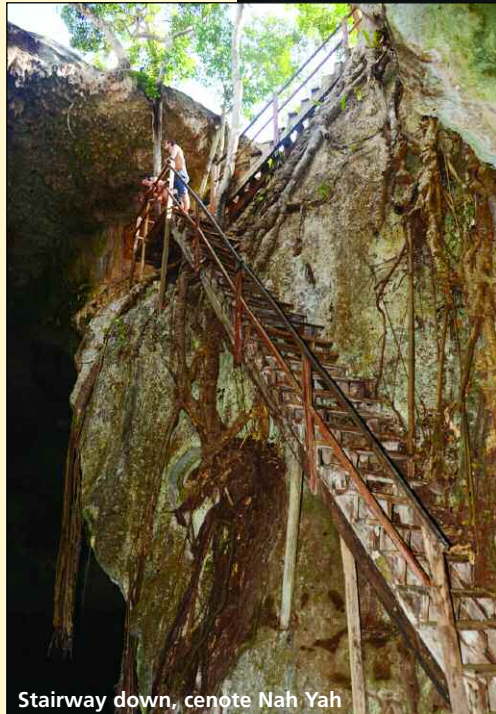


cenote Chacinixche, cenotes de Cuzama

early Mayas lived have been dry for many thousands of years. The systems were subsequently drowned during early Holocene, between 13000 and 7600BP, as sea level rose with the melting of ice caps in the northern hemisphere. Following a drive from Playa to Valladolid and a quick look at typical Yokdzonot cenote, a stop is scheduled at Izamal, in the late afternoon. The sun shines beautifully on San Antonio de Padua convent (1550), a colonial building in ochre yellow and white colour, against the cobalt blue sky. Thirty minutes south of Merida, San



Balcony over cenote Noh Mozon



Stairway down, cenote Nah Yah

Antonio Mullix will be the call for a night in 'palapa' cabanas. A rounded bungalow design, with a cone shaped roof made of 'paja toquilla' palm leaves aka 'palapa', Yucateco style. "The idea is to be next to the cenotes where we'll dive first thing in the morning", confirms Max.

The striking difference between Quintana Roo cenotes – of the Playa del Carmen-Tulum route - and the Merida cenotes in the Yucatan state, is the depth. Whereas caves and cenotes are rather shallow on the Caribbean seaside, with depth averaging, 10m, 15m, 25m, allowing cave penetrations for extended periods, it is unlikely on the Merida side, where cenotes and cave entrances are deep, usually starting at 40m+. Cavern diving is more the norm in the west, to avoid long decompression times and higher costs related to logistics and Nitrox use.

Early mornings are rather cool. The forest is teeming with birds, and God knows Yucatan has a rich avifauna: motmots (Toh in Maya), Caciques and Yucatan lorries –apple green with a red face and white cap on head-, among others. Obliging Max's suggestion, we ride 3km with poorly shaped bicycles on a bumpy dirt road to Xbatun cenote. Rounded, the sinkhole has a 10m drop to the water table. The cliffs are classically covered by the hanging roots of a strangler fig tree, known as 'Alamo' in Spanish and 'Kopo' in Maya. There are commonly 8 species in Yucatan, but only 2 species coincide with Alamo/Kopo, ie. "Ficus cottonifolia" and "Ficus maxima". Very impressive trees with a smooth whitish bark and oval shaped leaves, growing up to 15m in height. Octopus like roots grow over old hacienda ruins, destroying walls that crum-



Diver over fossil mud cakes on the bottom, Kankirixche cenote



Max being lowered into the well cenote of old hacienda 'La Ruina'

ble in time. Curiously, strangler figs always find their way to waterholes where they pump up water. 300 metres further, Dzombacal cenote is already glowing blue in the sunlight. A wooden stairway comes winding down to the water.

Ulysses the driver, is already waiting for us on location, with the equipment. Underwater, the slope plummets down into a funnel to a depth of 50m +. My Nitrox 32% tank will not allow a dive deeper than 40m. Oblivious of the above, I feel the sudden effect of O2 intoxication, when Max frantically calls my attention and pushes me up. The computer marks 43m, when I realize my mistake. Back in the shallows, at 14m, the skull of a Maya dignitary sit neatly on a tiny cement block, with a wooden signboard behind it. "No tocar. No remover. INAH", it reads in Spanish. Do not touch. Do not remove, INAH 'Instituto Nacional de Antropologia'. It feels like being in a museum. The water temperature is 27°C, 2 degrees warmer than the cenotes on Playa del Carmen side. At Yalutzil cenote, the slope is mainly bat guano. Cow skulls, as well as painted Mayan potteries are found on the bottom. At the cave entrance, a tree trunk with spread out branches, make a good photo subject in the shaft of light.

Kankirixche cenote, further east, has interesting fossil formations of parched

clay, at a depth of 25 metres. It forms conspicuous ridges that imitate a crocodile's skin. The Mayan name means: 'Snake comes down from the tree'. Bulky stalactites and pillars adequately ornate the entrance of the cave, for the best wide angle effect with the sunlight in the background.

Merida is in fact a very convenient place to be based. First of all, because this bustling colonial city has a lot of charm and attractions – restaurants, bars, night life, museums -, but also because it is a short distance away from all the sinkholes in the south and in the south east. Not to mention archeological sites.

Nah Yah, near Pixya village, south of Tecoh, is a large cenote with a vertical square structure and a flat top on one side. The sunbeams are almost vertical at 10 am. Caretaker Leo and his lovely, but shy children, come along to help out. Access is by a steep, cranky wooden stairway, down to a small platform. The pit plunges down to 40m + underwater. Lots of cattle and bull skulls with large horns are seen on the slopes, and one broken human skull with jaws a little distance away. A few rubble piles are found on the sides of the cenote. Nah Yah means 'Zapote' (in Maya), name of a fruit. The water temperature is 1°C cooler at 26°C.

Noh Mozon cenote, south of Telchaquillo, lays 56Km from Merida. The water mirror is 30m long by 20m wide, with a max depth of 45m. Large and rounded, this cenote has a steep stairway again, with a balcony platform half way down. Cattle skulls and Mayan potteries are spread about. A fascinating Maya skull in copper brown colour, with a

broad face, rests naturally half buried in the sediment, at the foot of a boulder.

A late afternoon dive at Kampepen, is a totally different setting. Here is the pit hole of a cenote in formation. Meaning a small opening between the spider like roots of an Alamo tree. A vertical metallic ladder comes straight down 10 metres to a small



Stairway down into cenote Dzombacal



Mayapan archeological site (1100-1450AC)



Decorations of the wall with diver, Kampepen



Entrance light into sinkhole, Nah Yah



Divers in search of old bones, La Ruina cenote

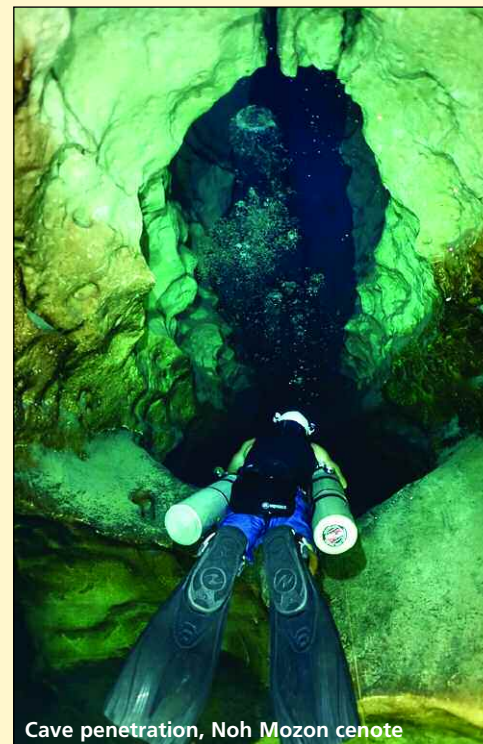


Sunbeams at decompression stop, Yalutzil

wooden platform. Tanks and gear are lowered with a rope. As one climbs down cautiously, the pit hole opens after a few metres, into a bell shaped chamber, which is large, circular and obviously hot! The roots of the Alamo follow you like witches hairs in conspicuous reddish brown colour. The atmosphere is hallucinating. Very clear water. The maximum expected dive depth is 14m. A dog skull rests next to a human skull. Mayan offerings did not only include human life, but also that of animals, food, flowers, potteries. Fish life everywhere as well, such as the dark grey catfish "*Rhamdia guatemalensis*", but also the translucent or golden shrimp "*Creaseria morleyi*" with long pincers, and the pearly white brotulid, "*Typhliasina persei*", a 9cm long blindfish with no eyes, found in caves and cenotes of Yucatan.

After a last night in Merida, another dive day in the south east, takes us through the dry spiny forest of the Yucatan limestone plateau. A god forsaken place in the middle of nowhere. "This site is not open to the public", confesses the guide. "You will soon understand why, however we are fortunate to be granted special access, for the time being...". These are the crumbling ruins of an old hacienda under the scorching sun. 81 year old Eduardo

recalls the days when he was working here, exploiting 'henequen' or sisal, as it is otherwise known: the green gold of Yucatan. "People made fortunes in those days". The plan is to enter the old well, with some human hands of course. "You'll see, it is an Indiana Jones experience!...holly shit", laughs Manu, who has been here before. We are lowered into the pit, with harness, rope, pulley, helmet and fins on, for a 15m drop to the water table. Max goes first to receive the tanks. Finally, crates come down too, with the cameras. Beyond a mound of rubble and stones, the depth reaches a maximum of 20m. Stalactites and pillars ornate the walls. A 3m stalagmite stands majestically tall on one side, like a frozen sentinel in time, aged at least 30000 years. A pretty cave it is. However, the hidden treasure here is a mind blowing collection of ancient bones. Not only from cows or bulls, but also skulls of the extinct American horse "*Equus conversidens*", which disappeared 10000 years ago with the last ice age. Ancient Maya human bones and skulls are scattered everywhere about, in very dark brown colour, almost black. The full skeleton of a young woman lays under an overhang, staring at the void. Elsewhere, a frightening skull has its jaws twisted to the side, in an atrocious grimace that



Cave penetration, Noh Mozon cenote



Manu and the skull of prehistoric horse, La Ruina



Diver at entrance of Yalutzil cenote



Stalactites + stalagmites, Gruta de Chihuan



Alamo tree at the entrance of cenote Chaosil

could even suggest pain. A trick of your imagination, for sure, but so vivid, that one is struck with horror and respect. Catfish and spotted golden shrimps swim about randomly, as if to add a detached touch of life to this otherwise 'mortuary'. Time erases memory. Life goes on no matter what. After 45 minutes, my body shakes like a leaf, even though the water temperature is still a balmy 27°C. An interval time in the sun will be more than welcome, before a consecutive dive 30 minutes later.

According to the Popol Vuh, the historical bible of the Mayas, early Maya people are a peaceful race of agriculturalists and horticulturalists, growing corn, dedicated to art, architecture, stone carving, astronomy and venerating the gods. Self control, pacifism, altruism, social justice, humility, love of work and truth, respect of others, were fundamental virtues of the Mayas. Black colour, symbol of barbarity, was also that of the 'Came', evil spirits of the infraworld of Xibalba, and death. In the Classic period (250-1150 AC), Mayas increased their contacts with other people of Meso-America. The Post-Classic period (1150-1524) sees a cultural change in Yucatan, when Itza groups from Mexico's central highlands, conquer Chichen Itza and Mayapan, introducing Toltec influence and the new appearance of human sacrifices. Until then, war and sacrifices were considered traits of a lower barbaric culture, such as the one practiced by Aztecs. Sacrifices became wide spread at the end of the 9th century, and warfare played a major role in preserving power.

Passing by Tecoh, on the way back to Merida, Max wants us to experience a dry cave. Nevertheless filled by 13 pools of water - not cenotes, as advertised on the sign-board - including a subterranean lake. 'Las Grutas de Tzabnah' are in fact reminiscent of an underground river system. "Do not bring your camera, or at your own risk", we are warned. To the delight of the guide, we end up squatting in tight passages, walking on all fours and even crawling in mud through restrictions, getting dirty in the process. Wading through water and swimming across the lake, while we are at it! Max enjoys the ordeal like a naughty kid, happy about his surprise treatment, while Manu growls and mumbles with disapproval.

A worthwhile encounter deserves a mention though. In the shallows of a pool, swimming over the muddy bottom, we fall upon the ravishing undulating shape of a juvenile blind swamp eel, "Ophisternon infernale". Pearly white in colour, wormlike with a bulbous head, smooth with no scales, it is about 15cm long, blind with no visible eyes. This eminently curious species - which Max had never gazed upon before - is endemic to Yucatan. The only regret is the absence of the camera, for this is such a rare sighting.

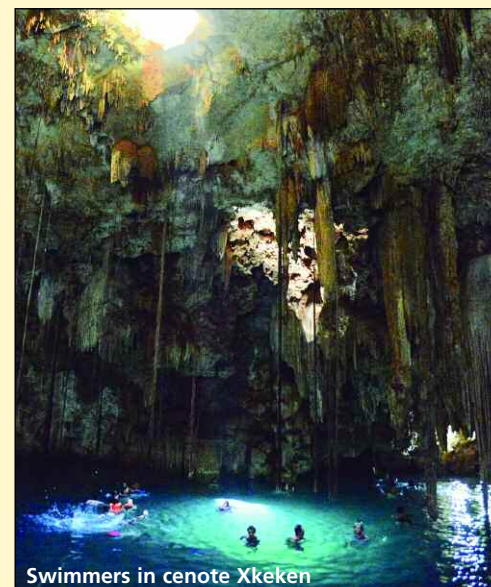
One entertaining experience you definitely wish to add to your bucket list, is that of the cenotes de Cuzama,

Located 59km south east of Merida. These 3 awesome sinkholes, lost in the dry Yucatecan forest, are only accessed by a traditional mean of transport from the old hacienda days: the horse drawn cart on wheels. It accommodates up to 4 passengers for a 3 hours tour, at a fixed price of M\$400. Thank heaven, this can be shared among people that do not even know each other. The return circuit is 20Km long, with a first stop at Chacsinixcche, where one is allowed a 30 minutes visit, then onwards to Bolonchojol for a second stop and finally Chaosil for a third and last visit. The horse gallops enthusiastically on the side of the railway, while the Mayan fellow in control of the reins, makes sure the cart remains on track in some of the sharp curves! Should another cart arrive from the opposite direction and has the right of way, your cart will come to a full stop and taken off the rails for a minute or

two. A chance for the horse to go grazing happily. Chacsinixcche, 'The tree of the red ants' in Maya, is a sinkhole, 18m deep below ground level, with the roots of an Alamo hanging down like plaits, into the water. The round chamber below is 55m wide. The cenote was first explored by divers in 1980, with 670m of explored passages. A halocline has been found at a depth of 67m. A wooden stairway gives way to the water where one can swim. Bolonchojol, is 3km further to the west. No proper cenote is manifest from the surface, but the name in Spanish suggest it all: 'Nueve agujeros de raton', which translates as: '9 rat holes'. These allow sunbeams to shine creatively into the rounded sinkhole underneath. A vertical ladder allows access to a cement platform 6m down, from where one may climb down the rocky edge to the attractive pool, 12m below the ceiling. The water temperature is above 28°C and catfish invite you for a dip. Two tunnels in opposite directions disappear into the darkness, at the bottom of the central rubble mound. Bolonchojol was first dived in by Fernando Rosado in 1980, to a maximum depth of 36m and max penetration of 116m.

Chaosil, the last stop, is more like a cave experience, with stalactites, pillars and a cement stairway going down to a fracture filled with water, deep enough to dive...

Some pretend that there are up to 10000 cenotes in Yucatan. The realistic count is probably more like 6000, which is already a mind blowing number. The variety of cenotes and caves will never stop to surprise you. Once hooked, you become helpless and only craving for more.



Swimmers in cenote Xkeken



CDAA SITE ACCESS - www.cavedivers.com.au

Remember: Access is a privilege, not a right. Please be considerate of landowners wishes.
BC = BASIC CAVE C = CAVE AC = ADVANCED CAVE

SITE	LEVEL	OWNER	ACCESS DETAILS
MT. GAMBIER - SA Ewens Ponds	Nil	DEWNR	Groups of 6 or more, phone DEWNR on (08) 8735 1177 for booking. Smaller groups, no need.
Gouldens	BC	DEWNR	<p>Complete a permit and indemnity online at: https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/find-apark/Browse_by_region/Limestone_Coast/piccaninnie-ponds-conservation-park/booking/diving/diving-indemnity-form</p> <p>Bookings for Piccaninnie Ponds can be made online at: https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/booking#Piccaninnie Piccaninnie Ponds Conservation Park</p> <p>To Book Gouldens, The Sisters and Fossil phone DEWNR on 08 8735 1177.</p>
The Sisters	BC	DEWNR	
Fossil	C		
Piccaninnie Ponds	BC	DEWNR	
Horse & Cart Tea Tree	BC BC	Dale & Heather Perkins Dale & Heather Perkins	Phone (08) 8738 4083 or email dhperkins@bigpond.com at least 24 hours in advance.
Little Blue	BC	District Council of Grant	Booking can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au .
Allendale	C	District Council of Grant	Obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Information Centre.
Ela Elap	BC	Dean & Carol Edwards	Obtain key from Management at Bellum Hotel.
One Tree	BC	Mr. Peter Norman	Visit the house before diving. If no one is home - no dive!
Dave's Cave	C		Maximum 3 divers all weekends between May & November inclusive (check and update on CDAA website).
Hells Hole	BC	Forestry SA	Booking can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Show ForestrySA Permit to obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Ctr.
Pines	C/AC	Forestry SA	Bookings can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Cave Rated divers cannot enter Advanced Cave Section of Pines.
Mud Hole	C	Forestry SA	Bookings can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au
Nettle Bed	AC	Forestry SA	Bookings can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Show ForestrySA Permit to obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Ctr.
Stinging Nettle Cave	AC	Forestry SA	Bookings can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Show ForestrySA Permit to obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Ctr.
Iddlebiddy	AC	Forestry SA	Bookings can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Show ForestrySA Permit to obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Ctr.
Kilsby Sinkhole	BC	Kilsby Family	Bookings can be made online at www.cavedivers.com.au Email: kilsby@cavedivers.com.au

CDAA SITE ACCESS - www.cavedivers.com.au

Remember: Access is a privilege, not a right. Please be considerate of landowners wishes.
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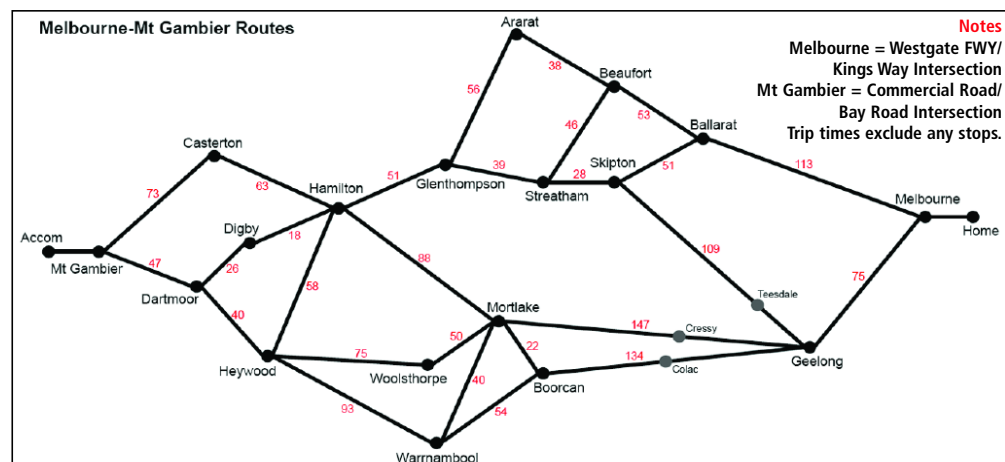
SITE	LEVEL	OWNER	ACCESS DETAILS
MT. GAMBIER - SA (continued) The Shaft	BC/C	Trevor Ashby	Booking can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Landowner mandates Dive Supervisors (with their own Insurance) leading all dive trips.
Engelbrechts - East - West	C AC	Mt Gambier Council Lessee: Ph: 08 8723 5552 Owner:	Obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Information Centre. Diving should be avoided after heavy rain due to possible water contamination. Diving hours are now restricted to 8am to 8pm CST.
Three Sisters Access available for	AC	Wattle Range Council	Download Indemnity from www.cavedivers.com.au and email to council@wattlerange.sa.gov.au . A \$30 processing fee can be made over the phone on (08) 8733 0900 after Council has received your indemnity. Allow 4 wks for indemnities to be processed.
Tank Cave	AC	CDAA	Bookings can be made online at www.cavedivers.com.au Booking Officer is Noel Dillon Email: tankcave@cavedivers.com.au
Baker's Cave	C	Janet & Bruce Saffin	Bookings can be made online at www.cavedivers.com.au Booking Officer is Matthew Skinner. Email: bakerscave@cavedivers.com.au Climbing equipment required. One member must have previous dive experience at site.
NULLARBOR - WA			
Cocklebiddy	C/AC	WA Dept of Parks & W'Life	Apply in writing for permission to dive at least 4 weeks in advance of trip to:
Murra El Elevyn Tommy Grahams	C/AC C	WA Dept of Parks & W'Life WA Dept of Parks & W'Life	District Manager, PO Box 234, Esperance, W.A. 6450. Phone: (08) 9083 2100.
Burnabbie	AC	WA Department of Lands	Apply in writing or email for permission to dive at least four weeks in advance of trip.
Olwolgjin Cave	AC	WA Department of Lands	Miss Shannon Alford, E: Shannon.Alford@dplh.wa.gov.au Department of Lands, Planning and Heritage, P.O. Box 1143, West Perth WA 6872. Phone: (08) 6552 4661 Fax: (08) 6552 4417 P.O. Box 1143, West Perth WA 6872.
Weebubbie	S/C	WA Department of Lands	A site indemnity form must be filled out for each visit to the site. Form can be downloaded from the CDAA website. Diving permission acknowledged by official letter from Land Owner.
WELLINGTON CAVES - NSW			
Limekiln (McCavity) Cave	C/AC	Wellington Caves Management	Access coordinated by Greg Ryan Email: giryan@gmail.com Ph: (02) 9743 4157 Both Cave and Advanced Cave Level are being accepted for this site depending on its water level at the time. When entrance is under water, Advanced Cave Divers only!
Water (Anticline) cave	C	Wellington Caves Management	Access coordinated by Greg Ryan Email: giryan@gmail.com Ph: (02) 9743 4157 Affected by high CO ₂ levels during Summer/Autumn.

Routes from Melbourne to Mt Gambier

By Cameron Lewis


















After driving from Melbourne to the Mount several times and hearing from many divers that this route is better than that one, and faster than this one, I thought I would show some of the alternative routes, distances and durations. Each of the routes displayed have been driven at least 3 times. An earlier version of time frames was published in Guidelines around 2010, so I hope you find my newer calculations valuable.

Route Distance	(km)	Time (Mins)
Melbourne - Ballarat - Beaufort - Ararat - Hamilton - Casterton - Mt Gambier	447	283
Melbourne - Ballarat - Beaufort - Ararat - Hamilton - Digby - Dartmoor - Mt Gambier	402	275
Melbourne - Ballarat - Beaufort - Ararat - Hamilton - Heywood - Mt Gambier	456	286
Melbourne - Ballarat - Beaufort - Streatham - Hamilton - Casterton - Mt Gambier	438	278
Melbourne - Ballarat - Beaufort - Streatham - Hamilton - Digby - Dartmoor - Mt Gambier	393	271
Melbourne - Ballarat - Beaufort - Streatham - Hamilton - Heywood - Mt Gambier	447	282
Melbourne - Ballarat - Skipton - Streatham - Hamilton - Casterton - Mt Gambier	418	281
Melbourne - Ballarat - Skipton - Streatham - Hamilton - Digby - Dartmoor - Mt Gambier	373	273
Melbourne - Ballarat - Skipton - Streatham - Hamilton - Heywood - Mt Gambier	427	284
Melbourne - Geelong - Skipton - Streatham - Hamilton - Casterton - Mt Gambier	438	281
Melbourne - Geelong - Skipton - Streatham - Hamilton - Digby - Dartmoor - Mt Gambier	393	273
Melbourne - Geelong - Skipton - Streatham - Hamilton - Heywood - Mt Gambier	447	284
Melbourne - Geelong - Cressy - Mortlake - Hamilton - Casterton - Mt Gambier	446	282
Melbourne - Geelong - Cressy - Mortlake - Hamilton - Digby - Dartmoor - Mt Gambier	401	275
Melbourne - Geelong - Cressy - Mortlake - Hamilton - Heywood - Mt Gambier	455	286
Melbourne - Geelong - Boorcan - Mortlake - Hamilton - Casterton - Mt Gambier	455	301
Melbourne - Geelong - Boorcan - Mortlake - Hamilton - Digby - Dartmoor - Mt Gambier	410	294
Melbourne - Geelong - Boorcan - Mortlake - Hamilton - Heywood - Mt Gambier	464	305
Melbourne - Geelong - Cressy - Mortlake - Woolsthorpe - Heywood - Mt Gambier	424	266
Melbourne - Geelong - Cressy - Mortlake - Warrnambool - Heywood - Mt Gambier	452	291
Melbourne - Geelong - Boorcan - Warrnambool - Heywood - Mt Gambier	443	297



1. All times travelling at speed limit. 2. Bad weather and/or heavy traffic will increase travel times.
3. Mt Gambier is Cnr Commercial Rd & Bay Rd.
4. Routes from Pine-Tank Lodge and western dive sites to Bellum Hotel and southern dive sites bypass Mt Gambier via Kongorong.
5. Routes from Just-a-bed to Bellum Hotel and southern dive sites bypass Mt Gambier via McKay Rd- Grant Ave-Orchard Rd (Blue Lake Golf Course).

CDAА INSTRUCTORS

NAME	Basic Cave	Cave Cave	Adv.	NAME	Basic Cave	Cave Cave	Adv.
NEW SOUTH WALES				VICTORIA Continued			
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QUEENSLAND				 DALE, Steve (CDAА 3926) Mob: 0468 417 211 E: info@extremewatersport.com.au	Yes	Yes	
 HODALIN, Dominic (# 4782) Mob: 0418 870 202 E: dominic_hodalin@yahoo.com	Yes			 DALLA-ZUANNA, John (CDAА 236) Mob: 0407 887 060 E: jdz@paintandcustom.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
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 PAYNE, Timothy (CDAА 2640) Mob: 0448 147 927 E: Tim@diveessentials.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	 MONACO, Rubens (CDAА 1731) Mob: 0413 429 533 E: info@idcscuba.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
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