



Australian Underwater Federation

Federal President
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President's report To the board 15/3/08

Dear colleagues,

There are a number of changes on the agenda for consideration; these changes will impact on our organisation in a number of ways. They have been proposed to strengthen our membership base and to offer better services to our members at the grass roots level.

At our meeting I hope to be able to give you a live demonstration of our online payment system, with this system in place it will be easier for our members to pay their membership fees. It will also provide us with the means to better track our members and keep in touch with them. We will have their email addresses contained on our data base and we will be better equipped to inform them, of AUF events and be able to provide them with our future planned online e-newsletter.

We have been asked for some time to look at an insurance cover that will reduce this financial burden to our commissions, state and federal. We believe we have come up with a proposal that will do exactly that by providing cover to all AUF members at a competitive rate.

Underwater Hockey

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome and introduce Helen Canavan to her first board meeting, as the chairperson of the Underwater Hockey Commission. Helen has filled the position that was held by Simon Talbot in a caretaker role.

I attended the underwater hockey nationals in early January and all seem to run well, the men's division numbers were down slightly on other years and I am sure Helen and her committee will be addressing this. Underwater hockey numbers have remained stable over the last few years but I am sure with proper strategic planning those numbers can be increased.

It is good to see we are sending strong representative teams to the world Championships to be held in Durban, South Africa in April. We are also attending a junior's competition against New Zealand in Singapore just prior to the world championships. It is good to see our juniors getting some good strong competition and I am sure we will see some of them in our future elite teams.

Spearfishing

Once again Adam Smith has done an excellent job in promoting the AUF to the wider diving community; this has been mainly done through the Spearfishing committee initiative of the Great Australian Shark Count project.

This particular project has generated quite a lot of media interest and has given the AUF some good exposure across the board, please pass on to all our members our web address and ask them to become part of this project.

Membership numbers in Spearfishing have shown an increase and this is mainly due to good strategic planning on behalf of the commission. The alliance with Recfish has also proved fruitful for our spearos and these sorts of associations should be fostered.

Finswimming

I take this opportunity to welcome Matt Edmunds to our board as the Finswimming Commission Chairperson. He has taken over the mantle from Helen Lane who has served finswimming well over a number of years; Helen is still on the committee and continues to do her best for finswimming.

Finswimming numbers have remained stable and this is an area where the AUF needs to do more to raise the profile of the sport. With the possible adoption of an insurance policy this will go a long way to reducing the financial burden that is especially felt by our finswimmers being such a small group.

Recreational diving

We still do not have a functioning recreational diving commission; this is something that needs to happen as a matter of priority. We are getting increasing membership numbers in this area and they are not getting the formal recognition they deserve.

If anybody knows of anyone who would be interested in forming the recreational diving commission please let me know.

Snorkel and coaching commission,

We have had a number of enquiries of recent times, especially from school teachers asking about our coaching programs. The numbers of members in this area has grown and it is an area that we need to further promote. I will leave it to Mary-Anne and Sue to better speak about the future possibilities in this area.

CMAS

As most of you would know there has been a breakaway group formed to administer underwater hockey at a world level, the World AquaChallenge association, of which I am president.

The new association is having its inaugural meeting in Durban at this year's world Championships. CMAS has said that any person that competes under the auspices of the new IF will have their sports licenses cancelled for a year. Following this any federation after that will be expelled from the sports committee.

I assume that after that then they will be expelled from CMAS, I do find all this a little hard to believe as so far 10 federations including the stronger federations of Europe are competing in Durban.

France is one of these federations and they supply about two thirds of the total CMAS revenue through diving certifications, so it is unlikely that CMAS will do anything other than make allot of noise about it. It would not surprise me if the current leadership of CMAS did do something to get at the federations that have ignored them.

Having said this I am not about to second guess what CMAS will do, and personally knowing their leadership, they are capable of doing a number of things that are not in the best interest of underwater activities. I feel we have no alternative other than to take a wait and see approach and if we need to we will react when the time comes. There are a number of ways that we can insulate the AUF from any CMAS attacks, so we will see what happens and react appropriately.

It appears that the CMAS games in Bari ran at a loss and were not organised very well, I saw a number of complaint letters from various federations. Also at this time CMAS is in financial difficulty and does not have any money to put into the games, and needs to look at its recourses to keep CMAS going.

Lastly on the issue of CMAS meetings it has been our policy to send a delegate to the CMAS GA, they now have a GA every year. I feel we should only attend their elective GA which is every four years, the next one being in 2009.

It is important that we still attend the elective GA as that is where we select the people to run our sports and the leaders that take us into the future with CMAS. It is also where we can have meaningful policy discussions on items that affect our sports.

In closing I would like to thank all the members of the board for their efforts over the year, and make a special mention of the work Sue has been doing with our memberships and Adam Smith for his forward thinking leadership of the Spearfishing commission.

Yours in Diving,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Henderson', written in a cursive style.

Graham Henderson,
President