

SPEARTIP

U S F A

NEWSLETTER



INTRODUCTION

FROM IAN BUCK, SECRETARY USFA

As one of the newest members of the USFA committee, I am excited for the new year ahead. We are bringing new energy, new faces and new ideas to the USFA. Under its new committee we are bringing an ambitious strategy to bring greater value to its members, the spearfishing community and the wider community at large. With our recent AGM, we are now undertaking plans with a focus on increasing transparency, stewardship and advocacy, new value for members and community engagement.

We look forward to and encourage the community to provide ideas on how improve the USFA and best represent your interests and spearfishing into the future. You can stay up to date with all the great content and value we will be rolling out this year as we update the website, launch the newsletter and social media.



Welcome the 2022 USFA Committee

Bios of some of the new USFA committee



Simon Trippe – Chairman

Simon, or “Tripper” as his clubmates call him, a proud Dolphins life member who enjoys his diving wishes to work with the new committee to continue the good work that has been done by past committee members of the USFA.

In further enhancing the relationships with all ocean stakeholders and government departments to ensure the spearfishers involvement in: issues of access and safety; assisting in the ethical behaviour and stewardship of the waterways and fishery; our rich history and culture is recognised and respected. Simon looks forward to good weather, clear water and fishy waters.



Lee Dalli – Sports Assistant Secretary

Not too much of an introduction is required for Lee. He is a well known and much loved member of our spearfishing community, the ever giving gentleman that has the glue that has held everything together for many, many years in the spearfishing association.

Current President of the Sydney Metro spearfishing zone, we are fortunate to have him holding a position on the committee.



Evan Leeson - Treasurer

I was first introduced to spearfishing in 2008. I was immediately captivated by the experience despite living my entire life with an irrational fear of sharks (I blame the movies). Spearfishing has enriched my life and showed me what I was capable of. Too many favourite moments but I love that no matter where, when or how many times I dive I always see something new that fascinates me.

There are only a few titles I give myself. An American, an Australian and a Diver. It's as much a part of me as anything else. I took the role in the USFA to give back to the sport that has given me so much and to protect it so that my son can one day enjoy the same experiences that I treasure.



David Lehā – First Nations Liaison Officer

I started SCUBA in 2019 at Terrigal, I noticed some guys a couple of times at comps at the Haven so I approached them as spearfishing was something I wanted to try since a young teenager. I had most of the gear and wanted to give spearfishing a crack.

I really enjoy spearfishing at the Haven, living in Sydney now I dive a bit off South Coogee.

My dream fish – a Kingfish for sure.

There's lots of benefits; non-strenuous on the body, I love being in nature, as a singer I love focusing on the breath element, love being engaged in hunting, love there's a cultural element there and the reconnection to old stories – all up and down our coastline there's rock engravings and middens.

It was a chance meeting at Curl Curl beach that lead to a committee position with former USFA chair Bob about getting First Nations people involved, at my age I'm taking on more responsibility and its and opportunity for me to do something for my people, I see an opportunity to get our mob back into the salt water.

Anyone wishing to contact David and talk more on First Nations david@radicalson.com



Ian Buck – Secretary

I'm an avid lover of the ocean as a spear fisher, surfer, free diver and scuba diver. I'm drawn to the ocean, in particular spearfishing as a place and activity of relaxation and rejuvenation, and also one of adventure and challenge.

For me spearfishing has been one of the most grounding and humbling of experiences, giving me a greater appreciation of our environment and our place in it.

I remember being hooked after taking a salmon with a hand spear down at Wilsons Prom as a teenager, in awe of the swirling vortex of schooling fish above me, taking it back to shore and sharing it with mates on the BBQ. From here, I moved up to Sydney and have been a member of the spearfishing community across the Eastern and Northern beaches ever since.

I joined the USFA to support and share my love for the activity so others may share in the experience.



Parry Gryllis – Vice Chairman

I began spear fishing around 2005 with some very basic gear and abilities, hunting fish slow enough to target with my aluminium hand spear in 5m of water or less. I slowly improved and upgraded to a fibre glass hand spear, then an undersea woody spear gun pushing my limits down to 8 or 9m.

I was introduced to the club late 2009. The increase in knowledge and opportunities was immense, and amazingly rapid. What I learned in a year being part of a club absolutely blew my mind. I was surrounded by amazing people who had abilities and achievements I thought unachievable and inhuman when I first started my journey.

My abilities now, still quite modest, I can only attribute to being part of this great community of like-minded passionate people.

An amazing moment for me was my first Coral Sea dive trip. It was an experience I will never forget. A trip which brought the years leading up to it to a pinnacle moment of being part of an amazing dive trip, with awesome people, and having the calm and confidence to participate and make the most of it.

Being on the committee to my mind is the least I could do to repay what I had gained by helping out how/when I could. Likewise, the USFA is striving to maintain and improve spearfishing for all involved now, and into the future.



Alistair Cooke – Public Officer Events Officer

I first started spearfishing in 1997 when I joined the local spearfishing club the Central Coast Sealions. I used a hand spear, surfing wetsuit and body board fins for the first year but quickly progressed to a speargun after seeing some other members catch some great fish.

I have now travelled the world spearfishing and met some incredible people along the way. I enjoy regular spearfishing competitions and just social days out diving with friends. I'm also a free diving instructor and compete in depth and pool competitions on a regular basis.

I love the ocean and the incredible places the sport has taken me over the years. I look forward to many more years of diving and adventures.

A recent social get together with well over 100 spearos present (spearos from every decade since the 1960's) and including podcaster Noob Spearo host "Shrek" Isaac Daley. More to come of this in the next newsletter.



CLUB REVIEW

Sydney Orcas Michael Song

2022 has been a successful year for several members of the Orcas. We have had trips to WA, SA Vic as well as NSW south coast. As life starts to normalise I expect club meetings to become more formalised & this will add momentum to participation in spearfishing competitions & events.

Photo is of our President Michael Song, a great guy & a great spearo. This striped marlin came on the back of a successful trip on bluefin tuna. Very proud of him & my club, go the Orcas!
Bob





MY FIRST FISH.

My name is Harrison Howes and I am 10. I will be telling you about how I got into spearfishing.

I'm a keen line fisherman and have caught hundreds of fish. Once my dad was watching YouTube videos about spearfishing and he asked me if I wanted to try it, so I said "OK." So, I watched more videos about it and thought it was a cool thing. Then one day my dad took me to a spot near where I live, and we went for our first dive. Once we hopped in my dad saw a blackfish, but it escaped.

My dad gave the gun to me to have a try, so I was swimming around until I saw a flash of an 83cm Kingfish in front of my spear so I shot it straight away, and I actually placed a good shot in its cheek. It was my first shot with the gun so I was really happy.

I later got scared that a shark would come due to the blood. So, after we got out of the water, I took a few pictures of it then put it on ice and ate some of it the day after, as sashimi. It is one of my favourite fish to eat as sashimi.

The other day I went spearfishing and also caught 2 blackfish with dad that were 36cm and 43cm. That was very satisfying to bring home to mum for dinner.

When I went to the Dolphins club meeting there was a raffle and my dad bought tickets. I really wanted the Spearo cap but unfortunately did not get it, until this very nice guy gave his prize to me. So, I want to say thank you to him and everyone at the club for making me feel welcome and sharing their tips.

Harrison Howes

Coming Up! Rubbish clean-up Malabar

Save the date.

Dolphins Rubbish Dive
Sunday September 18th 2022



In July 2019 the Dolphins held their first rubbish dive at Malabar beach.

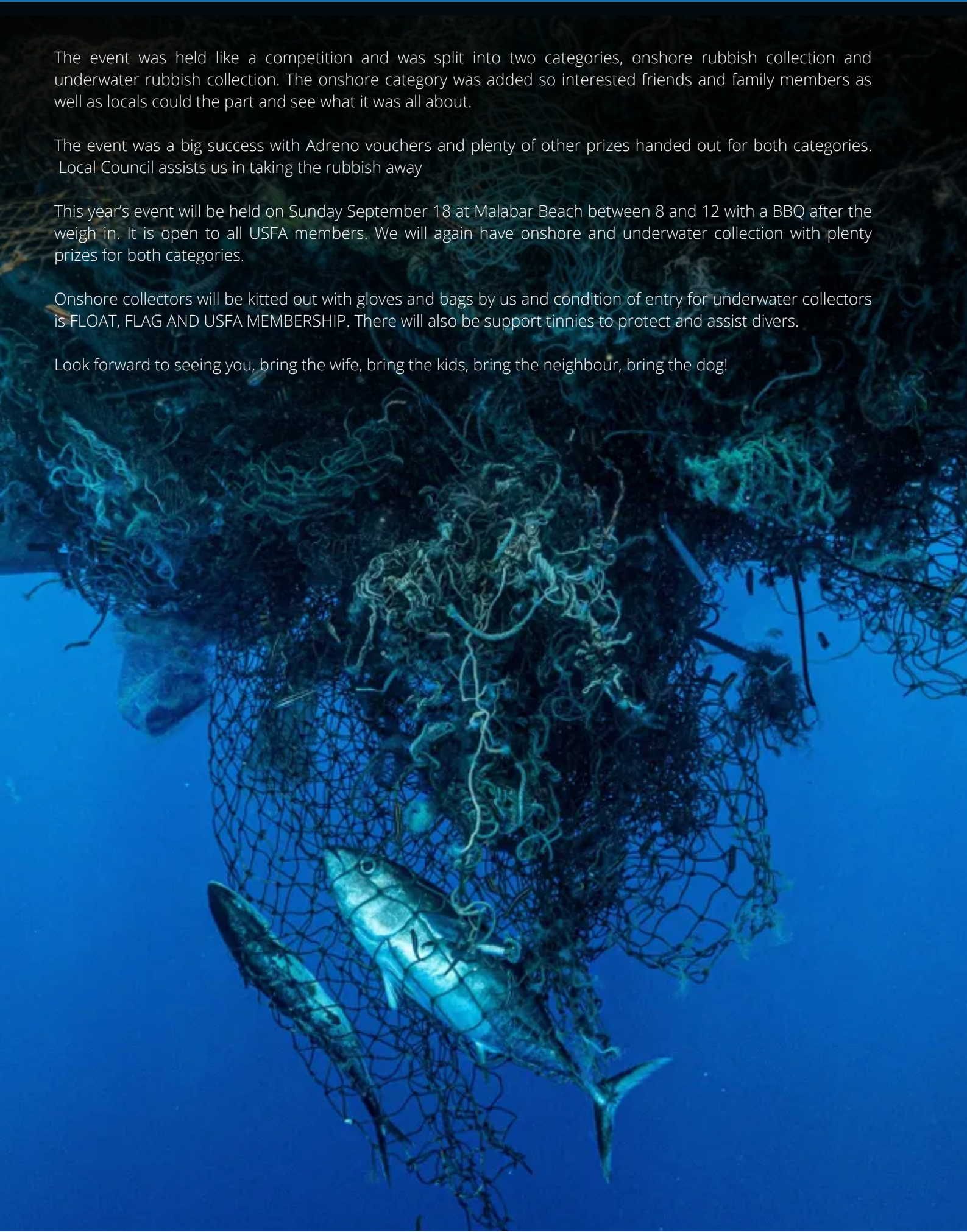
The event was held like a competition and was split into two categories, onshore rubbish collection and underwater rubbish collection. The onshore category was added so interested friends and family members as well as locals could take part and see what it was all about.

The event was a big success with Adriano vouchers and plenty of other prizes handed out for both categories. Local Council assists us in taking the rubbish away

This year's event will be held on Sunday September 18 at Malabar Beach between 8 and 12 with a BBQ after the weigh in. It is open to all USFA members. We will again have onshore and underwater collection with plenty prizes for both categories.

Onshore collectors will be kitted out with gloves and bags by us and condition of entry for underwater collectors is FLOAT, FLAG AND USFA MEMBERSHIP. There will also be support tinnies to protect and assist divers.

Look forward to seeing you, bring the wife, bring the kids, bring the neighbour, bring the dog!



Is Social Licence the new way to manage your fishery?

There's been a lot of discussion about Dusky Flathead since the introduction of new regs for this specie, a specie that is not in a critical state in NSW. To quote directly from DPI website on Dusky: "the stock in NSW is not considered to be recruitment impaired", another, "Commercial catch rates of Dusky Flathead have been remarkably stable, implying stability in the relative abundance of the fishable stock", and another "on the basis of the evidence contained within this assessment, Dusky Flathead is currently assessed as Sustainable for the NSW component of the stock". They who know best have spoken!

A trophy fishery is a protected fishery, is too an elitist and discriminatory fishery?

So, what happened?

Social licence is what happened.

Let's go back. A while ago an alleged rec fisherman put out a feel-good submission to look after the "old girls" (big female flathead aka "the breeders") in the estuaries. The "put the breeders back" catch cry caught on (supported unsurprisingly by commercial line fishing charter businesses) and thus thousands of submissions came in supporting a catch and release fishery for Dusky.

Think about this, a group of professional fishermen on the water, some every day of the week, will catch fish, will catch big fish, these pro's will witness things out on the water that 99% of people dream of experiencing, these people are listened to, they are influencers, and over the years the "put the breeders back" campaign caught on.



The emotional outcry on social media along with the submission caught the attention of DPI and hence a real submission was created for the public to submit, and now we have in place a new DPI Dusky Flathead regulation that brings in changes: a reduction in the bag limit, abolishing the one over maximum size (70cm), and what affects spearos is the introduction of a slot size (36-70cm), slot size is where the fish species needs to come in between the minimum and maximum length size.

Say goodbye to that big flathead you always thought you'd like to catch (and they eat up fine, believe me), as we now have an elitist trophy fishery. A sustainable fishery now made for the top percentile of skilled fishers to enjoy, or those who chose to pay a skilled licensed operator, or, the plain lucky fisher who hooks onto a fish of their lifetime (and would he know to put it back).

In a nutshell the main people who benefit from this decision are those who make a dollar out fishing both charter and professional, and good luck to them. Oh, I almost forgot, commercial fishermen can catch and keep as many of these big breeders as they want and put them through the market, they're untouchable on this fish.

Catch and Release.

"Catch and release" is not a thing amongst spearfishers. "Look, and don't touch" is, meaning "I choose not to take you today, perhaps ever", or even another of our ethical standards "I have enough for the family I do not need another." What will we do once we have mistakenly taken a sand covered 73cm fish? Throw it back?!? Not just a waste of several meals an aura of guilt resides, it would with me at least.

DPI have set a benchmark with this discriminating behaviour towards spearfishers and I am surprised at the lack of trust shown by these marine managers considering the runs on the board 99% of the spearo community, real custodians too, have with the marine environment. Who is to say what more accessible specie we like to target will be next with a slot size, tag and release mentality? Kingfish, Mulloway, Snapper, Bonito? Watch this space!

Spearos have been given the raw end of this deal. The popular line fishing haunts where the "big girls" reside and have been given pet names are areas you won't see a spearo because we don't have the access to most of these places due to restrictions, sub-par diving conditions and fishing traffic; the majority of us spear ocean far from these Flathead "sanctuaries" where the concerns are raised.

NSW DPI Fisheries should, with this fishery, go back to one of its previous regulations, reward the spearfisher with "one over 70cm" yet the estuaries where the commercial operators feel there is a concern still maintain the new rulings. Let's keep it fair for everyone, not just the influencers those minority who benefit the most from this decision. I meet with the Department of Agriculture next month, and this request, is on the agenda.

Simon Trippe



Photo Comp

\$50 Voucher for best photograph

Yes! A fifty-dollar spearfishing voucher will be given to the best photo submitted to chairman@usfa.org.au and will be published in the USFA Newsletter. The photo can be either on top or below the water, an action or passive shot.

We are giving the voucher for this first newsletter, and no surprises, it goes to Harrison Howes. Congratulations Harrison, a sterling effort for your first capture, a kingfish. Harrison tells his story in this newsletter.



Picture: Evan Leeson

JOIN THE USFA



The USFA would love you on board as a member, we would value it and our ongoing work to keep us all spearfishing safely in accessible and safe waters will be all the more inspired for you joining, if you would like to join, please either click the QR code here or the link here.



<https://usfa.org.au/membership/> then press the red MEMBERSHIP join/renew button, thank you.

Already a member, thank you for your membership, know that the committee is always here to listen to your opinions and voice and assist you wherever we can in our ongoing work to ensure we all can continue spearing a fish and enjoying the underwater world.

