

ADAS Newsletter Issue 41, April 2025

Welcome to Issue 41 of the ADAS Newsletter

In this issue of the newsletter we share the news of the closure of ADAS school Professional Divers Training Academy (PDTA); and Joel O'Brien, Lead Organiser for Divers at the Maritime Union of Australia raises the important issue of divers' pay and conditions.

The safety article in this issue gives details of three IMCA safety flashes, including a saturation diver being exposed to chemicals.

In ADAS news, we are pleased to introduce three new members to our Board of Directors, who bring a diverse range of skills and experience from offshore and onshore industry, the legal sector and police diving, and share updates including an increase in student feedback.

Finally, IMCA (the International Marine Contractors Association) have released two new guidance documents, covering a global overview of offshore legislation and deck decompression chamber operations. The Australian Offshore Infrastructure Regulator (OIR) has launched an interactive map showing the status of management plans for offshore projects such as windfarms and pipelines.

As always, your thoughts and comments, or any ideas for future issues of the ADAS Newsletter, are both welcome and appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Sordes', with a small dot at the end.

Amanda Sordes

Executive Director

ADAS Board of Directors Update April 2025



The ADAS Board of Directors has welcomed three new members in 2025.

As a result of the recent recruitment drive, the ADAS Board of Directors is excited to announce that three new members have now joined the Board. These members collectively fill skill and knowledge gaps that had been identified by the Board Recruitment Working Group, and bring with them a varied range of expertise.

The new members include:

- Blair Smith
- Karl von Minden
- A'ishah Sahar



Blair Smith has 16 years of experience with the State and Australian Federal Police, and 12 years as a HSE Manager in the Oil and Gas industry. He has extensive expertise managing HSE activities for Dive Support Vessels (DSVs), including working with regulators and third-party diving contractors.



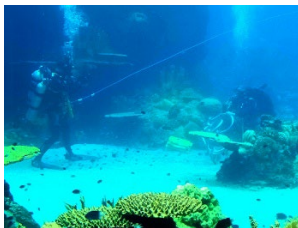
Karl von Minden brings a wide range of experience, with a background in law enforcement, aquaculture and commercial diving. As a Police Officer with the Northern Territory Police, Karl serves as both Police Dive Supervisor and a Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator (SARMC) within the Territory Specialist Services Division.



A'ishah Sahar is a dedicated legal professional with over nine years of in-house experience, primarily in the oil and gas sector. A'ishah's career in the oil and gas industry includes diverse experience in various aspects of the sector, and her legal knowledge and expertise offer valuable insights. Currently, she serves as Legal Counsel for Subsea 7 Asia Pacific.

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Closure of Professional Divers Training Academy



PDTA Aquarium training at SeaWorld on the Gold Coast, Feb 2021

ADAS school Professional Divers Training Academy (PDTA), part of the Professional Divers Group, has announced the closure of their ADAS training operations after 14 years.

An ADAS accredited training establishment since 2011, PDTA has delivered ADAS training to hundreds of students. A key provider of Aquarium diver training at locations including SeaWorld, Sydney Aquarium and Taronga Zoo, PDTA has trained and certified students in the fields of SCUBA and Surface Supplied Diving, Dive Supervision and Chamber Operations.

The Professional Divers Group, which is in its 45th year of operation, will continue to operate and deliver services to industry, and is shifting its focus from a combination of training and marine operations to primarily marine operations, where a lot of work is being conducted in the areas of maritime archaeology and supporting the United States Military in the recovery of missing US service personnel.

Mal Venturoni, CEO of Professional Divers Group says "Professional Divers Group enter our 45th year of operation and although this is a change in direction for our business, we still operate across many sectors of the occupational diving industry and look forward to dealing with ADAS in other capacities and work with ADAS where required."

ADAS and the ADAS Board thanks Mal Venturoni, and the whole PDTA team, for their commitment to the diver training industry and for their ongoing support in ADAS' development.

For all enquires on ADAS accredited Aquarium diver training, [please contact ADAS](#).

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Improving and Defending Divers Pay and Conditions



Diver at work

By Joel O'Brien, Lead Organiser for Divers at the MUA

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) is the union that has coverage of offshore and inshore diving workers. In the offshore sector in particular, the union and its strong membership has secured excellent pay and conditions for many decades. The union also has an official on the ADAS Board, Thomas Mayo. Thomas is the MUA's Assistant National Secretary and he represents divers interests in the standards, accessibility and application of diving qualifications and training.

As the lead organiser for divers in the MUA it has become clear that many Inshore Divers are being paid less than the minimum Award entitlements. As is seen across the maritime sector, Employers tend to put workers on flat rates, not taking into account the Modern Award that underpins the industry.

While there is nothing wrong with a flat rate or a day rate, the rate must ensure the employee is better off overall as compared to the Award. For example, under the Professional Diving Industry (Industrial) Award, a Casual Diver working on a Sunday should receive \$81.58 per hour. If a diver is employed on a day rate of \$600 for a 12-hour shift on Sunday and covered by the Award, then they would've been underpaid by \$378.96 for that shift.

There are instances where diving companies are not paying allowances also. For example, the Award provides for a Depth allowance, Fares allowance, Travelling time allowance, clothing and equipment allowance, Meal allowance, NDT allowance, Protective clothing and safety equipment reimbursement and Safety footwear allowance. This all adds up.

It's imperative that Divers invest time in understanding their rights and entitlements under Professional Diving Industry (Industrial) Award or the relevant Enterprise Agreement that covers their employment.

It is important that Divers are aware that when they accept a job with just a handshake deal as to what they will be paid, they may find that when they arrive on the job, the employer may pay them less than what was agreed verbally. When accepting any work with an Employer, it is advisable to secure a signed contract of employment before mobilising. Contracts, Awards and Enterprise Agreements are legislative documents and can be enforced at the Fair Work Commission or the Industrial Magistrates Court if the Employer is found to be underpaying.

Recent legislation passed by the Labor federal government has now criminalised intentional wage underpayments, which include penalties and imprisonment. The maximum penalties for committing each criminal underpayment offence are:

- For individuals: a term of imprisonment not more than 10 years and/or: if the underpayment amount can be calculated: the greater of 3 times the underpayment amount and \$1.65 million.
- For corporate or commonwealth entities: if the underpayment amount can be calculated: the greater of 3 times the underpayment amount and \$8.25 million; or— if the underpayment amount cannot be calculated: \$8.25 million.

These new laws should go some way toward cleaning up the employment landscape and see employers start to do the right thing. But the greatest protection a diver can have is to learn their rights and entitlements and to join the MUA. We are the experts in negotiating pay and conditions in the industry, established in 1872, and it is the union's strength that has succeeded in pursuing unpaid entitlements. The union also protects divers interests politically and industrially so that our industry never goes backwards.

If you believe you have been underpaid or are seeking any assistance in understanding the wages and conditions that apply to you get in touch with the MUA National office who can then direct you to the relevant organiser that covers the location where you work. Phone: 02 9267 9134 or Email:

muano@mua.org.au

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Safety



Three diving-related safety incidents have been shared in International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) Safety Flashes to date in 2025.

- IMCA SF 02/25 [Saturation diver exposed to chemicals from pipeline](#)
- IMCA SF 04/25 [Divers helmet struck and damaged subsea by crane hook](#)
- IMCA SF 04/25 [Diver lifted off seabed](#)

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ADAS Updates



ADAS has seen a busy start to 2025. We are preparing our courses reaccreditation application with ASQA, engaging in discussions with potential new training establishments and pursuing quality assurance through desktop audits and an increased volume of student surveys.

Internal and External Stakeholder Engagement and Participation

- Standards Australia participation: 2 meetings (SF-20) and final drafting of AS4774 (SF-46)
- ADAS Board of Directors: Annual General Meeting held in March

Quality assurance

- Desktop Audits
 - 3 desktop audits finalised
- Student surveys
 - 283 students contacted by phone, text or email for their feedback on training undertaken in 2024 and 2025.

ADAS Accredited Training Establishment (ATE) support

- ADAS has begun working on our 5 yearly re-accreditation application with an 'Intention to Renew' submitted to the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). The whole project will take us well into 2026 with the accredited ADAS courses both expiring in June 2026.
- 1 ATE Extension to Scope application received and reviewed
- 1 ATE Reaccreditation application received, currently being reviewed
- Discussions held with 3 potential ATEs, with 2 preparing to submit accreditation applications
- 2 onsite school audits completed
- 1 ADAS face-to-face Trainer course delivered

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IMCA Updates



The International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) has released two new guidance resources: a global overview of offshore legislation; and guidelines on deck decompression chambers (DDCs) for support of diving operations.

IMCA Publishes Comprehensive Catalogue of National Diving Regulations

The newly published document *Catalogue of National Diving Regulations (IMCA D086)* provides a detailed reference to help diving contractors and other stakeholders identify and navigate the specific health and safety requirements applicable in countries where offshore energy diving operations take place.

[Find out more on the IMCA website](#)

IMCA Publishes New Guidance on Deck Decompression Chamber Operations for the Therapeutic Treatment of Divers

IMCA has also published new guidance on the use of deck decompression chambers (DDCs) to treat divers with decompression illnesses.

The document *IMCA D085 Guidance on deck decompression chamber (DDC) operations for the therapeutic treatment of divers* emphasises the importance of having DDCs on site and the development of emergency response plans to ensure immediate treatment, as time is critical for the successful recovery of divers exhibiting decompression illness symptoms. It is noted that, while relevant to all diving contractors, IMCA guidance is only mandatory for IMCA member companies.

[Find out more on the IMCA website](#)

[Click here for the article online](#)

Offshore Infrastructure Regulator Launches 'What's Happening Offshore' Page



Photo by [Shaun Dakin](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The Offshore Infrastructure Regulator (OIR) has launched a new What's Happening Offshore page, designed to enhance transparency and provide stakeholders and interested parties with timely, accessible information.

The page includes an interactive map that shows the status of management plans for offshore projects, such as wind farms and pipelines, in Australian waters.

[Visit What's Happening Offshore](#)

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