



Nautilus Scuba Club

Newsletter

December 2025

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From the President

It's hard to believe that we are at the end of the year but it's a good time to share some club news from 2025 and plans for 2026.

Thanks all the members who participated in club dives this year, both locally and internationally. I'd like to acknowledge our hard-working committee who makes these trips happen, with special thanks going to Danielle and Joe who organised two overseas trips (*Sipidan* and *Egypt*) and one major local liveboard charter (*Spirit of Freedom*).

Check out our website for [trip reports](#), which is also a great resource for those looking for ideas or useful information before booking themselves a trip. For the next edition of the Newsletter we are hoping for articles from members' trips so please start preparing your reports and photos now!

In 2025 we had 5 [Rum Runner](#) trips to the Ribbon Reefs and Coral Sea. These 3-night trips are fantastic value, lots of fun and very popular with members. We will soon be scheduling some more of these trips for 2026 so make sure you keep your eye out for the emails from Joe.

We have had a full calendar of local monthly dives but have had some trouble filling our reserved spots this year, mostly because we have been unlucky with the weather. Operators reserve 12 spots for us on these days and although they do accommodate cancellations, it doesn't give them much of a chance to offer unused spots to the public. In 2026 we are changing our approach slightly, so whilst we will still be running a monthly dive, it will be more about encouraging and coordinating members to dive together on particular days.

Please support our local sponsors/operators so that they continue to offer us those fantastic discounts and benefits, whether it's a club day or not.

We expect to reach around 400 members again this year which is a great reflection of the standing of our club. With a large local membership, and members also across Queensland and Australia, we can be very proud of our club and role within the diving community. We have a large and loyal group of members who renew each year, which combines with our new members to create a dynamic and varied member community.

The Club is in a sound financial position and this enables us to run social events, training and other programs in line with our [Club Plan](#). I want to ensure that we are providing benefits to all members and so will continue to look at new opportunities. If you have any ideas or suggestions then please reach out to me or other members of the Committee.

The Club is run by volunteers so I encourage members to volunteer some time or skills to the Club if possible. We are still 6 or 7 months away from seeking nominations for the next Committee but there is always room for more helpers, whether formal or not. If you are thinking about nominating in the future but are not sure, why not come along to a committee meeting to see if it's for you. Feel free to contact me if you'd like to join us.

Thank you for your support as members and I look forward to seeing many of you at the club meetings, socials or on our club dives. Enjoy your diving wherever you may be and finally, a very Merry Christmas and all the best for 2026!

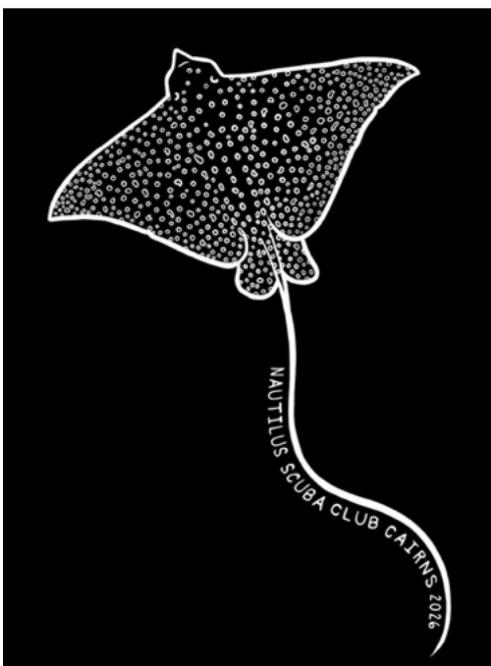
Dave George

Merchandise

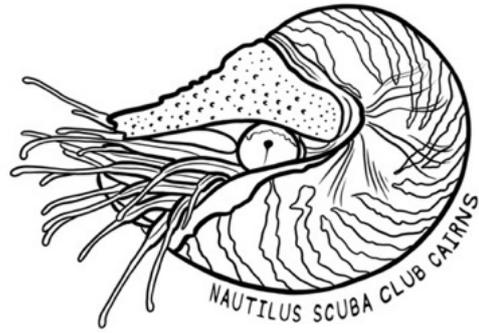
Some exciting news from the merchandise team is coming your way today...

Firstly, however, we'd like to take a moment to thank you for the year. We really appreciate your support, kind words about our display, your suggestions for the future, and feedback on current and previous products.

As promised, the exciting news... today we can reveal the designs for next year's t-shirts! We will have two designs on offer, which we will launch early next year, so keep an eye out in your inbox. One will be our annual design, which is an **eagle ray**, and we also have a **nautilus** which we will continue to use in future years. We have been working with the very talented Alex from 'Drawn of the Sea' again this year and we thank her for her time and hard work. Please head to her website www.drawnofthesea.com, and check out her amazing artworks.



Our 2026 T-shirt design



Thanks again from the merchandise team. We hope you all have a wonderful festive season and look forward to seeing you all and what becomes of next year!

Sharyn and Josie

Monthly Club Meetings

Our Monthly Meetings are scheduled on the last Wednesday of the month at the Junior Eisteddfod Hall, Greenslopes Road, Edge Hill. In May/June 2026 we expect to have a couple of changes to the club and committee meetings due to the State of Origin series and the availability of our meeting hall. We'll let you know details closer to the time.

The next few monthly meeting dates are:

- Wednesday 28th January
- Wednesday 25th February
- Wednesday 25th March

We are seeking interesting guest speakers for our meetings so please let us know if you have any ideas or recommendations, at: guestspeaker@nautilus-scuba.net

Big thanks to Tegan Proctor who was Guest Speaker Coordinator for the last 18 months. We wish her all the best as she returns to Victoria. We now welcome *Lidia del Pozo Ramos* to the committee and this role.

2026 Nautilus Underwater Photography Competition

Our [2025 Underwater Photography Competition](#) was a great success, and our Exhibition at the Tanks Arts Centre proved very popular with locals and visitors alike, with around 7000 visitors through the door. The Committee is working with Tanks Arts Centre to secure the venue for our 2026 event. Cairns Regional Council is still reviewing their overall exhibitions program for 2026 and a decision on Tank 4 availability is expected in January.

Once a venue is secured we will be able to announce plans and dates for the 2026 competition.

We are always looking for ways to improve the competition and part of this process is to review categories and entry rules. We would like to see photographers of all levels of experience involved and aim to have categories to suit everyone.

In the new year we will be establishing a sub-committee to plan and run the 2026 competition and exhibition. We welcome non-committee members to join and it's a great way to volunteer, support the club and help us to have another successful event.



Winner – Members' Choice – Phil Woodhead

Diver Training Subsidy

In November we announced the continuation of our popular Diver Training Subsidy. This subsidy, consistent with our [Club Plan](#), focus area of promoting safe diving practices and providing education opportunities for skills development. Through this program we are offering to reimburse eligible members \$100 on completion of an *Advanced Open Water* or *Rescue Diver* course with one of our club sponsors. To be eligible for reimbursement members must have pre-approval, complete a course within an agreed time period and be willing to share their training experience at a club meeting. We have a total of 10 places available for this financial year, and still have a number of unused places left.

To lodge an application, please visit our webpage: [Dive Course Subsidy Application Form](#)

Social events

It was another busy year for social events with 5 dinners in venues in Cairns and the northern beaches.

Our 2025 social calendar finale was the Christmas social at the ever popular Salt House, following a fabulous Christmas Dive which saw 45 festive divers heading out on Aquaquest with Divers Den.

Big thanks to Akiko for stepping in to organise the last few social events. From now on keep an eye out for emails from our new Social Coordinator, Tiah, who will be planning some fun events in 2026.

CLUB NEWS

Meet Matilda – our new Master Scuba Diver

Special mention and congratulations to Junior member Matilda Serré for achieving her Master Scuba Diver certification at just 12 years old! This is the highest non-professional rating in the PADI program and awarded to a Rescue Diver who completes 5 additional Specialty certifications. This is an outstanding achievement and demonstrates Matilda's commitment to excellence. We are very proud to have such a skilled and enthusiastic junior diver in our club.



Social dinner at Vitalia's in October.



A fantastic achievement Matilda!



Proud Dad - Joe with Matilda

MONTHLY DIVES

Monthly Dives

We continue to organize day trips with one of our local operators each month. Whilst we get everyday member discounts with our sponsors, I encourage members to join the organized club dive days whenever possible. It's a great way to meet members, make friends, find buddies, promote the club, and when we get a crowd on board we have more chance of being taken to the best spots ;-)

Emails for the monthly dives, with the booking reference details, are released a few weeks prior to the day.

31 January - Passions of Paradise



28 February – Pro Dive



21 March – Fitzroy Is (Octopus Dive)



February 2025 club dive with Divers Den



On board Aquaquest in October 2025



July 2025 with Divers Den on board Tusa

OVERSEAS TRIPS

We have some great trips organized for 2026, plus some exciting news for 2027!

Palau, Micronesia - March 2026

This trip proved to be very popular and filled in no time. If any spots become available they will be advertised through email to all members. Check out the webpage for the trip here: [Palau trip 2026](#)



Lembeh & Bangka, Indonesia **18-25 July 2026**

Lembeh, in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, is a macro divers paradise, and probably the most famous location in the world for seeing weird and wonderful critters.



The Lembeh trip is fully booked, but Diveplanit are maintaining a Wait List, so if you are interested in this trip then do put your name down, just in case!

As an "optional extra" there an extension trip to the fabulous Bangka Island. This is a direct

boat transfer from the resort in Lembeh and offers totally different kind of diving, with vibrant coral gardens, soft corals and schools of fish.



The extension trip can be for 5 or 7 days (7 aligns better with Singapore Airlines flights) and it can also be booked as a standalone trip. At the time of writing we have 2 places left in a twin/double room, but like Lembeh, a wait list is also available. See the flyer further down this newsletter for further info and links to the Diveplanit booking page.



Late 2026 ?

The Club is considering a possible additional overseas trip in late 2026, if there is enough interest.

We'll be working on this early in the New Year so keep your eye out for an email. If you have any ideas or suggestions then please reach out to Asa, our Overseas Trip Coordinator.

OVERSEAS TRIPS

[Raja Ampat, Indonesia](#) [March/April 2027](#)

Raja Ampat is a famous dive region in the very heart of the Coral Triangle. It was the “most wanted” destination in our overseas trip survey to members in early 2025 and should be on every diver’s bucket list. We are excited to be organizing not one, but TWO fantastic options for 2027!



First up is a 9-night liveaboard trip on [Emperor Raja Laut](#), a schooner-style yacht that takes just 12 passengers. This trip will take in the “best of Raja Ampat”, including the more isolated Misool region in the south.

An all-inclusive package (except for flights) on this beautiful boat is expected to be around AU\$6,760, with up to \$1000 cashback possible if we have a full charter.



Second is a land-based 7- night stay at the [Raja Ampat Biodiversity Resort](#). This relaxing eco-resort is located on Gam Island in the

very heart of central Raja Ampat with easy access to some of the best dive sites in the region. Accommodation is in beachfront bungalows with room for up to 18 guests.



A package including accommodation, meals, transfers and 3 dives a day, is expected to be between AU\$3340-3500 for 7 nights.



These two options offer different ways of experiencing the wonders and magic of this region and can be booked individually, or done back-to-back for the full Raja Ampat experience.

Keep your eyes out just after Christmas for the official email launch and booking page!



OVERSEAS TRIPS

Photos from 2025 overseas trips



Sipidan 2025



Borneo land trip 2025



Every dive boat needs a Nautilus sticker!



Red Sea - 2025



Blue Melody Liveaboard – Red Sea 2025

TRIP REPORT – SPIRIT OF FREEDOM – Nov 2025

Far East Exploration

Nautilus Club whole boat charter

Report by Joe Serré

With all 24 Nautilus members checked in, the [Spirit of Freedom](#) (SOF) departed the wharf at 3pm for an overnight transit to the first Coral Sea reef to be explored. The departure was a different experience for members who had been on SOF before as the late afternoon departure meant no diving on the first day, just an overnight transit so we were all able to chill out with the bar open and enjoy a drink and dinner before settling in for our first night at sea with very calm sea conditions.

We awoke at 6:30am on **Day 1** of diving at Flinders Reef being greeted to flat sea conditions and a 40 plus meter visibility experience for the first dive, an absolutely breathtaking way to start our dive trip and the incredible visibility continued throughout the trip. Throughout the first day, we had four amazing dives at three locations at Flinders Reef and departed late afternoon to commence our overnight trip to Magdelaine Cays.



Day 2 of diving had us up again at 6:30am experiencing our first live drop in fantastic conditions to dive a wall at Magdelaine Cays. A wonderful way to start the day with the divers ferried back to the SOF via the tenders on completion of the dive. Getting into the tenders after the dive was an interesting

experience and provided a lot of laughs amongst the members. Day 2 offered four dives at 3 sites before we commenced the late afternoon transit overnight to Lihou Reef.



Day 3 had us up early again at Lihou Reef to beautiful sea conditions and starting our morning with a live drop followed by 2 more dives at different locations before we went ashore for a short exploration of Hermit Crab Island. Large amounts of bird life and hermit crabs on the island as well as heaps of turtle nests and fresh drag marks where the females have come up the beach to lay their eggs. After we were all back on board, the SOF headed back to the last dive site and settled in with dinner and then a night dive prior to moving to a lagoon area to anchor for the night.



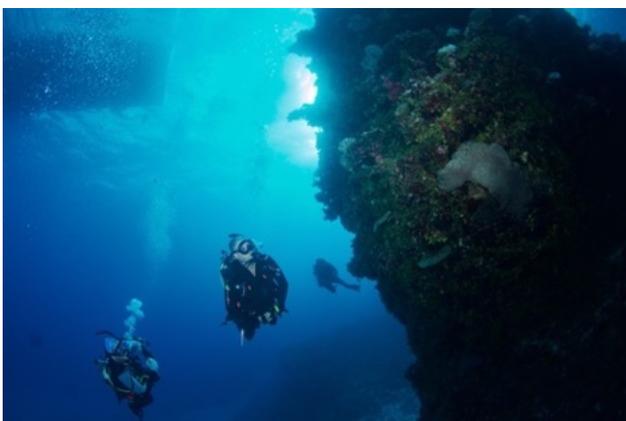
Day 4 had us up early again at Lihou Reef and doing 2 live drops for the first dives of the day at different sites before heading to our last site to do the last 2 dives at Lihou Reef so we could depart for our overnight passage to the next reef. Lihou Reef was definitely a

TRIP REPORT – SPIRIT OF FREEDOM – Nov 2025

fabulous spot to visit and marked the halfway point for us to start the journey back to Cairns.



Day 5 was scheduled to have us at Herald Cays however with the northerly winds, sites we could use were not going to offer the best diving, even with the good conditions we were having. The crew put the options on the table and we decided to sacrifice a night dive planned at Herald Cays (was going to be a 5 dive day) and go the additional distance to dive Willis Island which turned out to be a great decision. The four dives were at newly discovered sites with two live drops in the morning and two dives in the afternoon at different sites (at anchor/rear mooring) before heading off in the afternoon for the overnight passage to Holmes Reef. Willis Island was a great experience and enjoyable diving.



Day 6 had us arriving at Holmes Reef in flat conditions but overcast with the weather changing during the day. Holmes Reef offered great diving at the 3 sites (4 dives

total) with great visibility even with the changing conditions. It was a surreal experience to be on a dive trip with absolutely perfect conditions and have the weather change like it did on the last afternoon with high winds and storms.



Holmes Reef was a perfect way to finish our trip and strap in for a very bumpy overnight passage that was ahead of us.



Day 7 had us arriving at 6am to a very dark grey sky in Cairns with scattered showers. Although most were looking very tired as it was a bumpy night, everyone was happy to be back and reflect on what an incredible trip this was and the fact that every dive was a new site for all 24 Nautilus Members on board.

The trip offered heaps of shark activity with sightings of silvertips, grey reef sharks and a bull shark. Large green turtles were seen at multiple sites along with marble rays, eagle rays and a porcupine ray at Holmes Reef. Live drops provided direct descents into

TRIP REPORT – SPIRIT OF FREEDOM – Nov 2025

clear water and a variety of terrain including caverns, walls and open blue. Pelagic schools, barracuda, dogtooth tuna, Maori wrasse and macro life such as a leafy scorpionfish, nudibranchs, a juvenile rock mover wrasse and a flame hawkfish added to the diversity.

I have to acknowledge the incredible food that was served during the trip as well as the super informative presentations at night by the crew. This brought us together as a group and we really got to know each other through the trip. The presentations inspired many of us to search for those hard-to-find critters during subsequent dives and discuss and review photos with our fellow divers.



Statistics of this trip.

- Seven night trip
- 24 dives (including 1 night dive)
- 5 reef systems visited
- 18 dive sites (12 new sites to SOF)
- Crew put in 11 temporary moorings
- Main Engines ran for 116 hrs
- 9000lt fuel used
- 925.53 nm travelled
- Lihou Reef is 362nm/670.4km from Cairns
- Furthest from coast Lihou Reef to Georges Point (north of Whitsundays) 267nm/494km
- Youngest Diver - 12 yrs old
- Oldest Diver - 84 yrs young
- Visibility 25 - 40 plus meters (40 plus on majority of dives)



A special thank you has to be made to the SOF team in Cairns for organising this for the Club and to the 12 Crew on the SOF for making this such an incredible trip.



Without a doubt this Far East trip should be on your bucket list so that you can experience diving the remote reefs and varied diving of the Coral Sea; it is so different to what we see on the Great Barrier Reef.



Photos taken by crew member Taku

Between Dives: volunteering, books, & unexpected connections by Libby Sterling

I recently spent an epic three weeks aboard [Mike Ball Spoilsport](#), two of them as a volunteer, helping Chef Emily and Host Mel in the galley, servicing cabins, & keeping the living areas shipshape.

What an adventure it was.

The first two weeks delivered fabulous weather, giving me time to find my sea legs before the wind increased in week three (think sharp knives & rocking boats). Long days & hard work were balanced by plenty of fun, two dives a day, & the shared camaraderie that comes from living & diving together at sea.

I'll share more about the volunteering experience another time, but the real reason for this story is the people you meet along the way.

As an avid reader and audiobook listener, I'm always on the lookout for adventure, mystery, and crime novels that include *realistic* scuba diving. There aren't many of them, so when I found myself chatting with one of the guests, Cheryl, my interest was immediately piqued. She mentioned that her husband, Nick (and dive buddy), was a fiction author.

As she talked more about his books, something clicked. I suddenly realised I'd already listened to the first book in the **AJ Bailey Adventure Series** some time ago and had really enjoyed it. Out came my phone to double-check Audible, and there it was, confirming the connection. One of those lovely full-circle moments you don't expect to have while sitting around on a dive deck.

Nicholas Harvey is a USA Today bestselling author, also known for the **Nora Sommer Suspense** series and the **Investigator Kat Cromwell Mysteries**. The AJ Bailey books are set in the Cayman Islands, where the characters live and dive, and the scuba diving is woven into the story in a way that feels authentic and immersive.

By the end of the trip, I was completely hooked again. I spent the rest of the voyage listening to the AJ Bailey series and have since started the Nora Sommer books too. I'm loving them both.

So, if you're looking for an adventure series that truly understands diving in the Cayman Islands, these books might be right up your alley. You can also follow their adventures on Facebook at [Facebook: CaymanNick](#)

Sometimes the best discoveries don't happen underwater. Sometimes, they happen during a casual conversation on deck between dives.



L-R F: Lib & Cheryl Harvey, L-R B: Emily (Chef) & Nick Harvey

It was a fabulous two weeks of being an honorary Gally Girl, some fabulous diving & the chance to meet the most wonderful people & as anyone who's been on the boat, knows, a wonderful crew who work incredibly hard to ensure you have a great time, safe diving and a week full of adventure.



Gally Girls: Emily, Mel, Lib & Helen (Video Pro extraordinaire)



Diveplanit Travel
Your personal dive travel agency



LEMBEH

NAUTILUS CLUB TRIP TO NORTH SULAWESI

- * From AUD 2,220 pp twin share
- * 7 nights accom inc all meals
- * 18 guided boat dives and unlimited unguided shore dives
- * Return airport transfers

Why This Trip Will Amaze You: The Lembeh Strait is celebrated as the "Muck Diving Capital of the World", where volcanic black-sand slopes are home to some of the ocean's most unusual creatures.

Why not add a side trip to Bangka? Guests have the option to add-on a 5-day trip to Bangka, the perfect contrast to Lembeh's muck sites, with vibrant soft corals and sloping walls bursting with life.



Scan the QR
code for more
information

<https://tri.ps/pytGE>

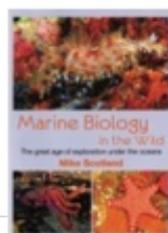
DATES: 18 - 25 JULY 2026
\$500 deposit to secure a space

Booking Terms: Non-refundable deposit of AUD 500 due now, balance 4 June 2026. All payments made are non-refundable. Diveplanit T&Cs apply: diveplanit.com/booking-terms.

Any questions:
simon@diveplanit.com
Ph: 0423 603 753



Supporting the Nautilus Scuba Club in 2025



PARTING SHOT



Best dressed divers on the surface interval!



Christmas Dive 2025 – on board Aquaquest