



# CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

9<sup>TH</sup> July, 2018

## MEDIA RELEASE: THAILAND CAVE RESCUE

### **FOREWORD**

*Many media outlets have contacted the Cave Divers Association of Australia seeking commentary about the rescue operation that is currently underway. Whilst some of the Australian contingent deployed by the Australian Federal Government are CDAA members, we must reiterate that the CDAA is not directly involved in the rescue operation.*

*Out of respect for the individuals involved, the CDAA is also not in a position to divulge any personal information, contact details, nor make comment about persons involved in the rescue operation. Inquiries for such information will not be responded to.*

*Until such time that the rescue operation has concluded, the CDAA will continue to refrain from providing commentary in direct response to individual media requests, however, in an effort to raise awareness and insight into the conditions the rescuers currently face, the CDAA provides the following statement;*

### **STATEMENT BY: THE CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**

**The Cave Divers Association of Australia were overjoyed to learn yesterday evening that 4 of the boys trapped in Tham Luang Cave have been successfully evacuated.**

**In response to widespread public interest, the CDAA has issued this statement in an effort to raise awareness and provide an accurate portrayal of the conditions and challenges currently faced by the rescue team in their effort to bring the boys to safety.**

**Members of the CDAA National Committee have had some contact with the rescue team and understand that, if conditions allow, further attempts will be made over the coming days to extricate the remainder of those trapped. The onset in the last 24 hours of heavy rains have caused grave concern that conditions inside the chamber where the boys are trapped would deteriorate rapidly.**

**The extraction team that has been assembled to undertake the rescue includes some of the best, most accomplished cave divers from around the world. We have been informed that the cohesion amongst the divers involved has been excellent. All members of this team are considered cave diving and dry caving experts of the highest calibre, have previous experience in search and rescue operations, and have been selected specifically by those coordinating the rescue operation as they all possess specialised skills and experience deemed critical to the operation.**

**Conditions faced by the divers and those providing in-water support are by all accounts some of the most challenging conditions they have ever faced. Whilst cave diving skills and training are considered an integral component to successfully carry out the rescue attempt and have therefore been the focus of much media attention, it must be noted that the challenges divers must overcome inside Tham Luang Cave are worlds apart from those typically faced by recreational cave divers.**



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The difficulties that the rescue teams must overcome are particularly hard to comprehend for those who are totally unfamiliar with the cave environment. To reach the chamber where the boys are trapped the divers must first make headway against a torrent of flowing water and mud. The sediment in the water, churned up by this flow, means that visibility is virtually zero. Subsequently, divers must navigate the contours and restrictions inside the undulating cave by feel alone. The distance from 'base camp' to the chamber where the boys are trapped is in excess of two kilometres and takes divers several hours to reach. Rescuers must negotiate numerous sumps (underwater sections), as well as a number of boulder-strewn passages of dry-cave over which the divers must haul their heavy life-support equipment. This terrain has the possibility of changing with the increased water level and well as the possibility of flood pulses.

Even with a large support network, each of the rescue team divers will be required to undertake the return journey multiple times to successfully bring each of the trapped children to safety. There is no doubt that this is an endeavour that will bring them close to the limits of human capability.

Having extricated 4 children thus far is a testament to the amazing effort, determination and teamwork of the rescue divers. The resilience, mental fortitude and courage of the boys who, having survived in the cave for two weeks, and who have now made this journey with the rescue team with no previous diving experience or training, is nothing short of incredible.

The CDAA could not be prouder of the efforts of all those involved. With 8 young boys and their coach still trapped inside the cave, we will continue to wait in hopeful anticipation, that they, too, can soon be reunited with their families and loved ones, and that all involved in the rescue operation emerge unscathed.

On behalf of the Cave Divers Association of Australia  
Pete Wolf, National Director