

Australians of the Year

<https://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/2019-award-recipient/>

Dr Richard Harris OAM and Dr Craig Challen SC OAM

Dr Richard Harris OAM from South Australia and Dr Craig Challen SC OAM from Western Australia are the 2019 Australians of the Year for their heroic efforts as part of an international rescue mission to save 12 boys from flooded caves in Thailand.

In July 2018, anaesthetist Dr Richard Harris and retired vet Dr Craig Challen made worldwide headlines when they joined an international team to rescue a group of boys and their soccer coach from a flooded cave in Chiang Rai, Thailand.

Richard is a diver with 30 years' experience and a specialist in aeromedical retrieval. He has previously participated in complex diving recoveries, appeared in National Geographic documentaries and, in 2015, was recognised for his outstanding contribution to cave exploration. In 2017 he was awarded The Australasian Technical Diver of the Year.

Craig has dived some of Australia's deepest wrecks and has set depth records in diving, including diving to 194m in the Pearse Resurgence, New Zealand in 2011. He was awarded Technical Diver of the Year 2009 at the Australian technical diving conference Oztek.

Both Craig and Richard were awarded the Star of Courage for unwavering and selfless bravery following the successful rescue of the trapped soccer team.



Cave Dive find in Mt Gambier

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-12-13/cavediver-finds-large-fauna-bones-south-australia/10599218>

Cave diver finds prehistoric bones in 'new room' of underwater cave network

A cave diver has uncovered a globally significant collection of ancient bones from Australia's prehistoric period in the dark depths of South Australia's underwater caves.

The jaw bones and teeth from extinct megafauna were in a chamber about 1 kilometre from the entrance to Tank Cave, located on private property.

Local cave diver Ryan Kaczowski said he was exploring the cave system when he found the "new room" containing the bones.

"It's a large collection of bones and they're strewn about the place, so I was able to document them and take photos and get some sizing," Mr Kaczowski said.

He sent the images and details to palaeontologists and was told the bones belonged to several extinct species, including the short-faced kangaroo and the marsupial lion.

One of the species identified among the fossils — the marsupial lion (*Thylacoleo carnifex*) — was the largest carnivorous Australian mammal in the Pleistocene epoch.

An ambush predator, the animal's enormous scissor-like teeth, used in conjunction with a large thumb claw, meant it would be able to dispatch much larger prey quite easily.