

Dr Richard “Harry” Harris SC OAM

***Australian of the Year 2019, Thai Cave Rescue
Diver, Anesthetist and Keynote Speaker***

Dr Richard “Harry” Harris has worked in anesthesia, diving and aeromedical medicine around the world.

His passion for cave diving goes back to the 1980’s and has taken him to the corners of the globe in search of new adventures.

Harry has a professional and voluntary interest in search and rescue operations, establishing the first flooded cave rescue capability in Australasia. The 2018 Thailand cave rescue was an opportunity to put this training to work.

In 2018 he received the Star of Courage, Australia’s second highest civilian award for bravery, and the medal of the Order of Australia for his role in the Thailand cave rescue. Harry was the joint 2019 Australian of the Year with his dive partner Craig Challen. He is now primarily working as a speaker, author and film maker.

Harry is an advocate for sensible risk taking in young people, encouraging youth to get off their screens and get outside to build independence, resilience and improved mental health.

More about Dr Richard Harris:

Richard Harris has enjoyed an extraordinary career in medicine, which has enabled him to combine his expertise in diving, wilderness and remote area health. Now practising in Adelaide, he worked with AusAID in Vanuatu for two years providing anaesthesia and intensive care services in the setting of a developing medical system.

Richard’s passion for cave diving goes back to the 1980’s and has taken him to the corners of the globe in search of new adventures. As a member of a diving group called the Wet Mules, he has explored some of the world’s deepest caves, among them the Pearse Resurgence in New Zealand to 229m depth, Daxing Spring in China to 213m and Song Hong Cave in Thailand to 196m to name a few.

His love of underwater exploration has led him to work on National Geographic documentaries, feature films and with various teams worldwide in the role of diver, underwater cameraman and of



course medical support. A member of the Explorers Club of New York, in 2015 he was recognised with an Australian award for Outstanding Contributions to Cave Exploration and in 2017, he was awarded The Australasian Technical Diver of the Year. Richard's efforts to free the young soccer players in the Thai cave were recognised when he was named South Australia's Australian of the Year in 2019 and later, Australian of the Year 2019.

Richard has a professional and voluntary interest in search and rescue operations. He established the first sump rescue training course in Australasia, and has built relationships with emergency services locally. The 2018 Thailand Cave Rescue was an opportunity to put his training and expertise to work.

Client testimonials

“ Dr Richard Harris was a sheer delight to work with. He went over and above to customise his presentation to our audience which certainly did not go unnoticed. The feedback for his session was amazing with phrases such as “humble hero” and “true Australian legend” and being used freely. There was not a dry eye in the house.

- *eBusiness Media*

“ Our conference delegation was riveted by Dr. Harris' presentation. The story of the Thai cave rescue and decision-making in the face of adversity was incredibly inspirational. His talk was one of the highlights of our conference. I could not recommend him enough.

- *Crowe Global*

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