



12 May 2019

## **Dive! Tutukaka celebrates twenty years in business.**

New Zealand's largest diver charter operator has recently celebrated its twentieth year of taking visitors to the Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve.

Based in the small coastal village of Tutukaka, 2.5 hours north of Auckland, on the east coast outside Whangarei, Dive! Tutukaka has focussed on professional, and fun marine experiences, accumulating multiple national and international awards during its twenty year tenure, the most recent being a finalist in the Qualmark 100% Pure New Zealand Experience Awards.

Coinciding with the celebration, the Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Kelvin Davis opened their newly built state-of-the-art centre in the heart of Tutukaka, gateway to the Poor Knights.

Operating in the pristine waters of the world famous Poor Knights Islands Marine reserve, Dive! Tutukaka has core values of whanaungatanga, kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga and kotahitanga. (Maori concepts meaning shared experiences and connections, guardianship, hospitality and warm welcome, and collaboration.)

Employing over 60 people annually in the summer season, the company has a strong focus on sustainability and the marine environment.

Owner Jeroen Jongejans, joined forces with retired cabinet minister Aussie Malcolm in 1999, and together Dive! Tutukaka broke ground with a marketing strategy, a re-branding, consistent opening hours, collaboration and innovation that has changed the face of the NZ dive industry.

Now the sole shareholder, the company has taken over 200,000 people to the islands, and as a PADI dive centre, certified over 5000 new divers.

*Jongejans says "The full Marine Reserve status of the Poor Knights Islands are the foundation of our business. Our challenge has been to match this world class destination with world class service, and, I think we have managed that rather well over the last 2 decades"*

Since then the fleet has grown to six vessels, the largest in NZ, with an electric boat currently being trialled, and maintains a strong supportive staff culture, and a belief in making a difference to the environment in which it exists.

The small coastal village of Tutukaka is the base of Dive! Tutukaka's dive fleet and they have expanded their operation, to include Perfect Day - a popular boat dedicated to snorkelers, and Lodge9 - a 4.5 star boutique lodge, as well as Shed7 - a function and training centre.

PADI Territory Manager Thomas Knedlik also presented the company on the night with several awards, including a plaque marking the anniversary.

The Poor Knights Islands also recently celebrated its twentieth year as a full marine reserve, restricted fishing was allowed from 1981 until becoming a total no-take zone in 1998.

The May the Fourth celebration moved from the brand new building, to its Shed7 and Lodge9 courtyard where over 250 members of the local community celebrated the many stories and achievements of the past two decades in true Tutukaka style.

**Dive! Tutukaka**

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