



GLOBAL WARNING

THE TUTUKAKA SEABIN

When Ocean Spirit co-founder Glenn Edney proposed an idea to get a Seabin for the Tutukaka Marina, 16-year-old Interactor Pippa Benton put the idea into action.

**Let's
SAVE
THE WORLD**



TUTUKAKA Marina became the first marina in New Zealand with a Seabin, thanks to Pippa's energetic efforts.

A Seabin is an autonomous device designed to catch marine litter. It does so by sucking in seawater, then pumping it back out, leaving micro-plastics, surface oil and pollutant spills trapped in its catch bag. It can haul in 3kg of floating debris daily, including micro-plastics as small as 2mm.

The Seabin is the creation of surfing Aussies Pete Ceglinksi and Andrew Turton, who quit their day jobs to focus on its development. There are now over 250 Seabins in operation around the world, collecting nearly a ton of rubbish each day.

The mission to purchase a Seabin for Tutukaka began when Pippa, president of Huanui College Interact club, NZ, (sponsored by the Rotary Club of Whangarei City), encountered Ocean Spirit co-founder Glenn Edney on a scuba dive trip to the Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve.

"Ocean Spirit is working to rid the ocean of plastic," Pippa said. "Glenn mentioned what he was doing, and I took that to my Rotary club and said maybe we can help out. I contacted Glenn and he said he had a few ideas and mentioned the Seabin. I thought that sounded interesting."

It was the start of a two-year collaboration between Ocean Spirit, Tutukaka Marine Management and Trust Board, the Interact Club of Huanui College and the Rotary Club of Whangarei City.

Pippa and her fellow Interactors organised a Huanui College Carnival, raising \$1100 towards the Seabin, which costs around \$6000. The Rotary Club of Whangarei City received \$4000 to go towards the project from a district grant and Tutukaka Marina Management offered to cover the remaining costs.

The Seabin represents another important step in Tutukaka Coast Plastic Free Initiative, promoted by



Pippa Benton with a Seabin at Auckland Harbour, which was used in a Volvo Ocean Race research project in 2018. The data collected formed the basis of Pippa's school science project. (Photo: Jesús Renedo)

Ocean Spirit to eliminate single-use plastic.

Not only will the Seabin remove enormous amounts of waste from the marina, it will help prevent litter reaching it in the first place. The contents of the Seabin's catch bag will be studied by the students at Huanui College as well as the Ngunguru Primary School.

"It's really exciting, to say the least. The most important part is that we will be able to see what is being put in the ocean and that way we can make a difference. We can put a stop to it entering the water in the first place," Pippa said.

"I am a scuba diver, so I have a connection with the ocean and the health of the ocean. I've seen up close what it looks like to have a healthy ocean and what it looks like to have an unhealthy ocean. I want to keep the ocean healthy so future generations can see the things I see."

Pippa presented on the project at the District 9910 Conference, a shining example of a Rotary youth leader making a difference. The project was

further recognised by the New Zealand Marina Operators Association with a Best Environmental Initiative Award.

The Seabin project partners are continuing to look for ways to protect and preserve the local environment. The Rotary Club of Whangarei City arranged a collaborative meeting at the Tutukaka Marina, including members of the Tutukaka Marina Trust, Tutukaka Ratepayers Association, Ocean Spirit, Whangarei District Council and the Interact Club of Huanui College.

"If it wasn't for the foresight and energetic approach of the Huanui College Interact Club, and the leadership of president Pippa Benton, none of the aforementioned groups would have been in the same room together as part of a combined effort to focus on, and do something about, the plastic epidemic in our marinas and oceans," said Rotarian Peter Smith. "It couldn't be more representative of Rotary's vision statement 'Together we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves'."

