

# GIRL POWER - BUT STILL NO PLACE FOR TINKERBELL AT The Underwater Centre Fremantle

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Just as the world of recreational scuba diving was once male dominated until the likes of Valerie Taylor came along and showed the world that women can scuba dive too, the industry of commercial diving is a similar story. Traditionally you think of commercial divers as rough, tough, hard to bluff, no neck helmet wearing riggers that dive. Well all that is still true but not all commercial diving work is about how much muscle you have and there are aspects of this industry where women are more than capable of contributing. According to the Commonwealth Government anyone who works under the water to earn his or her living is termed an occupational diver and must have the appropriate certification through the Australian Diver Accreditation Scheme (ADAS). The standard of training required for ADAS certification however does not change just because you're a girl.

Just recently my wife Cheryl and another instructor Michelle McMartin completed their Part 1 ADAS certification with The Underwater Centre Fremantle. During the course the girls learned safety procedures for occupational diving such as lifeline pull signals in case of radio communication

failure as well as bail out systems for full-face masks. Various search patterns and survey techniques were carried out in 30 metres of water with zero visibility, as we all know that working under the water often means working in less than ideal conditions. (Just imagine doing what you normally do blindfolded and on roller skates and you get some idea). The course also included correct use of hand tools and a recompression dive in a Deck Decompression Chamber to 50 metres just so you can see how difficult it would be to actually have to complete even the most simple of tasks when you are affected by nitrogen narcosis. There is of course also a new set of dive tables to learn called DCIEM. And just when you thought you've done the hard yards the girls both agree that the final written exam made the Divemaster and Instructor Exam seem like a walk in the park.

While the girls were doing their Part 1 training I particularly enjoyed cracking the whip on the student divers while being assessed for my Supervisors Diploma.

The facilities owned by TUCF are first class and the staff make it all a very well run operation and we couldn't think of a better place to spend outside of course hours than fabulous Fremantle. Having a seafood lunch down at Cicerello's (a bit of an institution in Fremantle)

on the waterfront is a must while your there!! You'll even get to see a bit of countryside south of Perth when the course takes you to Collie and you get to dive a flooded open cut mine. A lot of planning and co-ordination is required to move 20 odd divers with all their equipment and a decompression chamber for a couple of days of diving in a remote area. Well done to Paul Masters who is now General Manager after returning from a three & a half year stint working in the Gulf of Mexico, Instructors Karl Andrews and James Wolfe and the rest of the TUCF team.

Cheryl and Michelle are very proud of their achievement and have already completed their first official jobs as commercial divers. Michelle is particularly keen and already planning to expand her certification with the Level 2 course later this year. So if you have considered a career in commercial diving whether you're male or female call the team at TUCF.



Getting ready for our chamber dive.



Paul Master and Karl Andrews.



Kev in the chamber.



Michelle and Cheryl celebrating their certification with a fresh seafood lunch at Cicerello's!!