



MEDIA RELEASE

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FNHL MAKES FURTHER INVESTMENT IN MARITIME SERVICES

The development of the Bay of Islands as an internationally recognised maritime services centre has taken a further step forward with the opening of a new retail and charter services facility on the Opua wharf.

The new 575 square metre Opua Wharf Maritime Building has been developed by Far North Holdings Ltd and was officially opened by Far North Mayor Wayne Brown today (July 22).

FNHL chairman Tony Norman says the investment of close to \$1 million is part of an ongoing programme to expand the maritime services available at Opua and to develop world-class amenities for the international blue water and coastal cruising markets.

“We want to ensure the Bay of Islands maintains its dominance as the preferred port of entry for the international cruising fleet. This can only be achieved by enlarging and improving services as opportunities arise.

“The new wharf building will be a welcome adjunct to the range of maritime services already available within the Opua maritime estate,” he says.

Mr Norman says the new building has been designed to improve the visual appeal and amenity of the wharf area. It follows the construction of a new cruising club facility, the development of a harbour-side village green and improvements to the base of the main Opua wharf.

The amenity will be further improved with the demolition of the former harbour board building over the next few weeks to provide visitors approaching the wharf area with unobstructed views up the Waikare Inlet.

While there will be an ongoing programme of improvements at Opua, including plans to expand the availability of moorings, the company’s main focus over the next two years will shift to the Paihia waterfront.

“The Paihia waterfront redevelopment is potentially the largest single project ever undertaken by the company and is likely to prove demanding in terms of time and resources,” he says. The project is currently awaiting final consents before construction can commence.

Tenants in the Opua Wharf Maritime Building are more than impressed with the new facilities and positive implications for their businesses and for Opua and the Bay of Islands generally.

“The facilities create a great first impression for clients, particularly for offshore visitors to the Bay of Islands,” a director of Fairwinds Charters, Greta Simmonds, says.

“As a bareboat charter company it is important to have appropriate land-based facilities with a reception area in which we can brief clients in comfort and still be in the immediate vicinity of the boats they will be chartering. The convenience of having this right on the wharf and handy to back-up facilities is certainly a step up for our operation,” she says.

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Opuia Manager for the bareboat charter company The Moorings, Blake Cameron, says with a permanent base at Opuia the company now intends to make the Bay of Islands its New Zealand headquarters.

“We have closed our Auckland facilities and intend to channel all our operations through the Bay of Islands. This is a positive move forward for the company and for Opuia. If we can attract more people to the area it has to be good for everyone. The new facilities are certainly a move in the right direction,” he says.

Burnsco Marine & Leisure Managing Director Bruce MacLeod says his company is delighted with its new facilities.

“We like to be close to our customers but didn’t have a store in the Bay of Islands. This was an opportunity to put this right. Now we have 16 stores in locations ranging from Christchurch to the Bay of Islands,” he says.

The company feels that the finished product is modern and attractive while remaining sympathetic to the local environment.

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