

# Scuba Diving

MY EXPERIENCE OF GETTING MY OPEN WATER  
SCUBA DIVING LICENSE, AT JETTY DIVE COFFS  
HARBOUR, BY ADA SAGE, 13.

Hand over hand, you slide down a line, tiny shells stuck to the rope making small cuts on your hands. You feel the soft pink weed growing on the rope, the texture strange and wavy underwater. You glance down, looking beyond your finned feet to the bottom of the ocean. You marvel at the fact that you can't yet see sand or rock, and wonder how low it will be before the dark shadows begin to take on the shapes of rocks and coral.

Large silver bubbles come up from the person below you, looking like upside down silver bowls, or melted aluminium. You reach out to touch them, the distance seeming longer than you thought, and let your fingers break their perfect surface. You focus on your descent again, sliding your hands down the line and equalising frequently.

Finally, a rock takes shape below you and you let go of the rope to swim beside your buddy, checking that they are well so far. They grin back at you, as best they can underwater, and make the "ok" signal with their hand. You stay still in the water, occasionally getting pushed back and forth by waves, and stare at the creatures and plants around you. The small amount of underwater life that you have seen in rock pools amount as very little compared to this.

You take a breath and realise how well you have adjusted to being so deep underwater. You feel as though you belong here, among the fish and the coral, with the rhythmic movement of the water lulling you. You wait till everyone is ready, then start to kick your feet gently to propel you forwards and begin your exploration of this new realm. As you swim, you see more fish, and an occasional shark and again there is the feeling of belonging. Instead of shying away from the shark in fear, you watch it calmly as it swims below you, close to your legs, and continues on its journey.

At the end of the dive, as you reach the line to ascend to the surface, you look around you one more time, memorising the beauty of this ocean. You slowly move up the line, hand over hand, and as you reach the top, you look down again, only to see the rope lead into darkness, the water once again a mystery.

