

Skydive Franz is now the highest tandem skydive in the southern hemisphere.

This year Skydive Franz has begun offering jumps from 18,000 feet ensuring an unequaled freefall of more than 75 seconds in the most scenic part of the country.

This jump height is more than 1000 feet higher than any other tandem skydive in New Zealand and nearly 6,000 feet above New Zealand's highest mountain Mount Cook (3754 metres, 12,316 ft), which is right next to the Skydive Franz dropzone.

“It's a unique place to jump, with the highest mountains, glaciers, ocean and rivers below and now the highest altitude,” says Skydive Franz co-owner and tandem instructor Leigh Ainsworth.

“It gives clients a huge sense of achievement to do the highest jump in New Zealand and it also gives more time to look around, take in the view and relax during the experience. When there is a longer freefall the photographers also have more time to get optimum footage of the skydive.”

The dropzone is only five minutes from the check-in office in Franz Josef village and clients are provided with all the gear needed and a short training session. Those on the higher altitude jumps are provided with oxygen above 12,000ft during the 20 minute ascent in a Pilatus Porter aircraft. This Swiss made turbine aircraft is one of the ultimate skydiving planes used at top dropzones around the world including Skydive Everest.

It's not only clients who are excited about the high altitude adrenaline activity, the spin off benefits for other Franz Josef businesses have already become apparent as customers have specifically come to the Coast to do the highest skydive. They're also prepared to stay multiple days in the region to get the best weather for their jump.

“We recently had a couple who waited five days to do their skydive and we've had other clients leave and come back to Franz when the weather has cleared up again,” says James Meldrum Skydive Franz director and pilot. “It's great to have a direct impact on increasing guest night numbers in the region.”

Skydive Franz is the only company offering 18,000ft jumps and is also unique in that one of the main tandem instructors is female. Leigh Ainsworth is only one of four woman tandem instructors in New Zealand.

“Sometimes there's cultural reasons for a client to request a female instructor, most Muslim woman for example will only jump with another woman,” says Leigh. “And sometimes woman only feel comfortable jumping with another woman strapped to their back!”

Our tandem instructors are highly experienced, copied below are some details from our website:

**Leigh Ainsworth**

**Age:** 26

**Jump #'s** 7500

**Position:** Instructor

Leigh performed her first tandem skydive at the age of 13, she loved it so much but was unable to obtain her license until she was sixteen. On her 16th birthday she had already done 6 tandem skydives and was employed as a parachute packer, she was in the plane early that morning working

towards her skydiving license. At the age of 18 she was a full time commercial skydiver with over 1000 jumps, at 21 she had a world record and now at 26 years old she has over 7500 jumps, 2 world records, 2 national records, has competed at the world championships three times representing NZ in freestyle skydiving as well as other international events. Leigh has jumped on every continent with the exception of Antarctica (that is still to come).

**Rhys Kempen**

**Age:** 35

**Jump #'s** 6500

**Position:** Chief Instructor

Rhys began skydiving at 27 years old, he competes with his wife Leigh as the videographer for the New Zealand freestyle skydiving team last ranked at 10th in the world, he is also an active canopy piloting/swooping competitor representing New Zealand. Rhys has well over 6500 jumps and a true passion for skydiving.

Please don't hesitate to contact us and please visit our website for more information

[www.skydivefranz.co.nz](http://www.skydivefranz.co.nz)

[info@skydivefranz.co.nz](mailto:info@skydivefranz.co.nz)

Phone: 03 752 0714

Leigh Ainsworth – Tandem Instructor

Rhys Kempen – Chief Instructor

Craig Clark – Flight Ops Manager

James Meldrum – CEO (027 655 8167)