

2025 Sport Waikato Annual Report

Mahia te mahi hei
painga moo te iwi

*We strive every day to 'do the work
for the betterment of the people'*

- Te Puea Herangi



**SPORT
WAIKATO**

Hei painga moo te iwi



Sport Waikato Good Sorts for Sport staff working bee for Pirongia Rugby Club's 150th anniversary in 2026

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Sharleen Nathan
Board of Trustees Chair



Matthew Cooper
Chief Executive

REFLECTING ON 2025 – A YEAR OF CONSOLIDATION, INFLUENCE AND FORWARD MOMENTUM

This year has seen Sport Waikato continue to embed our strategic role as a regional leader and system influencer. With the halfway point of the *Moving Waikato 2020–2030 strategy* now behind us, we have used 2025 to reflect, recalibrate and prepare for the road ahead.

Horizon 3, which will guide our mahi through to 2030, sets out an intentional shift:

- from planning to execution
- from regional strategy formation to localised delivery
- from a focus primarily on tamariki and rangatahi to a broader view that includes whaanau and adult participation
- from traditional approaches to embracing digital, innovation and future-focused movement opportunities

We know that the world our young people live in is changing rapidly. If we want participation to remain relevant and sustainable, our system must adapt with pace and creativity.

Seeing exciting early progress of digital and virtual initiatives through our secondary school team, are early wins of this shift and opportunity to complement traditional.

To support the outstanding commitment, mahi and impact, we are deliberately ramping up our focus and intent in innovation and digital to support the quality insights and evidence internally as well the 'voices' of those we connect with in the greater Waikato region. *Moving Waikato Horizon 3 in action!*

INFLUENCE THROUGH EVIDENCE, RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIP

Throughout 2025, our people have continued to demonstrate the strength of a regional model grounded in collaboration and quality evidence. The progression of:

- All 10 Territorial Authorities have now completed/adopted local Play, Active Recreation and Sport Plans (PARS).
- Significant work in Spaces and Places – underpinned by a national bench-marked *Waikato Regional Active Spaces Plan*.
- Deepened engagement across primary, intermediate and secondary education settings.
- And a continued rise in *Voice of Tamariki* and *Voice of Rangatahi* participation demonstrates the influence Sport Waikato now holds as a trusted regional partner.

The changing policy, economic settings and New Zealand economy in general, amplified by this year's local elections, have brought a sharper national and regional focus on what is considered 'core business'. Across our long standing and genuine partnerships with all 10 Territorial Authorities, education providers, iwi, sporting bodies and community organisations, this environment creates both challenge and opportunity.

As funding pressures increase and service demands evolve, the evidence remains clear... physical activity is one of the most effective levers for strengthening wellbeing, resilience and social connection. Our responsibility as a regional leader is to provide the insight, data and strategic guidance that enables partners to see movement not as a discretionary add-on, but as essential social infrastructure.

Whether in schools, kura, clubs, marae or neighbourhoods, active communities are healthier, safer and more vibrant. In this context, the coordinated partnerships we hold across sectors remain central to ensuring informed planning, coordinated action and long-term outcomes that extend well beyond any single investment cycle.

For the full 2024-2025 financial year, we are reporting a total surplus of \$575k which includes unrealised gains from investments of \$348k. This means that our normalised operating surplus was \$227k against a budgeted \$181k, a \$46k positive variance.

Our investment portfolio continues to play an important role for Sport Waikato, giving us

the ability to supplement our income from our funding partners to support our operating budget as well as supporting projects of scale that sit outside the focus of our day-to-day mahi but still aligns with the objectives of the Trust.

An example of this is that in February, we were delighted to be able to support the Home of Cycling Charitable Trust with a grant of \$500k to support the construction of the new home of the New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame at the Grassroots Trust Velodrome based in Cambridge.

This investment is more than a one-off financial contribution to the construction of the facility and represents a true partnership between the Home of Cycling Charitable Trust and Sport Waikato, with a shared vision of leveraging the exciting development of the Sports Hall of Fame to motivate and inspire the residents of the Waikato, and particularly our young people, to be active.

When constructing the 2024-2025 operating budget, we made the decision not to renew the long-standing funding arrangements we have had with Grassroots Trust, New Zealand Community Trust, and the Lion Foundation. Our rationale for this was two-fold – the strength of our own financial position and the income we are now deriving from our own investments and with that, giving the ability for these fantastic organisations to support other organisations within our region whose need was greater than ours.

While we have stepped away from the financial support from these partners, our relationships remain strong and sees us partnering with them in other ways that still support the activation of quality physical activity experiences for our region.

OUR PEOPLE – HEART OF THE ORGANISATION

The last 12 months have seen a strong and deliberate balance emerge across our organisation as we move firmly into Horizon 3 of *Moving Waikato* (2025–2030).

Our external regional leadership team continues to deliver outstanding results and real impact across the region, while our internal capability has been further strengthened via personnel to enhance the innovation and digital development offer to our very targeted rangatahi audience.

We have also welcomed valuable new additions to our Insights & Data and Communications &

Marketing teams, areas that are critical to our role as an informed and influential regional leader with aspirations to contribute on an even wider platform. All of this is underpinned by the professionalism and stability provided by the 'engine room' of Sport Waikato, our Organisational Performance team whose expertise ensures our people, systems and processes remain strong, connected and future focused. A sincere congratulations on the last 12 months and thank you to you all.

TŪ MANAWA, EQUITY AND TARGETED IMPACT

The impact of the Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa Fund continues to be felt across the region, with over 34,000 tamariki and rangatahi supported in 2024/25. Demand for active recreation remains strong, and our intentional focus on participation barriers, disability access, young women and girls, and high-deprivation communities is creating pathways that matter.

The introduction of a new ringfenced investment to reduce youth offending and recidivism signals a significant expansion of our responsibility in this space. This investment will allow us to further support young people who are disconnected from activity and opportunity, ensuring active recreation and sport remain accessible vehicles for confidence, belonging and hope.

We acknowledge Sport NZ's outstanding advocacy and support with the Tū Manawa fund. A very smart fund that complements local funding and Sport Waikato's organisational structure to lead and influence.

MOVING WAIKATO – THE ROAD AHEAD

As we enter Horizon 3, Sport Waikato is well-positioned to deliver genuine system change. Our priorities are clear:

- **Quality experiences** - that build lifelong habits of participation
- **Locally led solutions** - that reflect the strengths and needs of unique communities
- **Strategic leadership** - grounded in evidence, partnership and advocacy
- **Innovation** - including digital and tech-enabled pathways to movement
- **Equity** - ensuring those who often miss out can participate in ways that work for them and their whaanau

This next horizon is not simply an extension of our work to date. It is an evolution, one that acknowledges emerging trends, community realities and the dynamic environment our sector operates within.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To our partners across the region; Sport NZ, Trust Waikato, Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ, our 10 Territorial Authorities, Iwi partners, education providers, regional sport organisations, and the many funders and collaborators who walk alongside us, thank you for your continued confidence in our direction and the collective impact we strive to achieve. Your support strengthens our ability to lead, influence and deliver meaningful outcomes for our communities.

To the Sport Waikato team - your quality, dedication, professionalism and adaptability remain the backbone of our organisation. The way you embrace challenge, pursue improvement and place people at the centre of your mahi continues to inspire us and elevate the impact of what we do across the region.

To our Board, past and present, thank you for your governance leadership, strategic guidance and unwavering commitment to our vision. Your insight and stewardship enable Sport Waikato to operate with confidence, stability and ambition as we step into *Moving Waikato* Horizon 3.

GOVERNANCE

Sharleen Nathan – Sport Waikato Chairperson

As the new Chair for 2025, I want to begin by acknowledging Phil Taylor for his dedicated service to our Board over the past eight years, including three years as Chair. Phil's leadership has been thoughtful, steady and deeply considered, and we remain grateful for the strong relationship with Tompkins Wake that he helped nurture. I would also like to acknowledge the appointment of Regan Webb as Deputy Chair and the valuable guidance he brings to our governance team.

This year we welcomed Candra Pullon to the Board. Candra brings wide experience in youth engagement and a solid background in technology and innovation. Her insight will support our focus on rangatahi and strengthen our capability as we move forward.

We also extend our sincere thanks to Susan O'Regan for her contribution as Mayor during

her tenure and for the thoughtful perspective she brought to our Board. As she steps away, we acknowledge her service and contributions with huge appreciation. At the same time, we farewell Parekawhia McLean, who has served on the Sport Waikato Board for ten years. Her depth of governance and CEO experience, as well as her sound advice and strategic thinking, have been invaluable.

Several highlights stand out from the year. The marae noho was especially meaningful. Attending the poowhiri and staying for waananga deepened my understanding of the history of Puurekireki Marae and its region, and reinforced the importance of grounding our mahi in place and relationships.

Another memorable moment was joining Sport Waikato staff and their partners for a celebration ahead of the All Blacks versus France match. The energy and sense of connection across the team was wonderful.

Our staff attendance at Koroneihana was also significant, and our Kaumatua, Sam Toka offered valuable insight into the scale and coordination behind this major event.

The Board continues to hold a strong governance platform that enables the executive and wider team to carry out their important mahi of supporting more people to be active across our rohe. I am grateful for the commitment, insight and spirit of my fellow trustees.

You are outstanding people who bring heart, clarity and purpose to every discussion. It is a privilege to serve as Chair, and I look forward to the year ahead as we continue to champion the wellbeing of our communities together.

FINAL COMMENT

Matthew Cooper – Sport Waikato Chief Executive

As we look to the future, it is fitting that we conclude this 2025 Annual Report as we began it - grounded in the gifted Tongikura of Waikato Tainui that continues to guide our intent and action:

***“Mahia te mahi hei painga moo te iwi —
We do the work for the betterment of the people”***

This is more than a whakataukii, it is a responsibility. It reminds us that our work is ultimately about improving lives, strengthening communities and building a region where



movement is recognised as a foundation of everyday wellbeing. It also speaks to our commitment as an organisation to own our responsibility and accountability to deliver genuine impact.

On 20 March 2026, we will celebrate 40 years of Sport Waikato, a significant milestone made possible by the founders, communities, partners, volunteers, trustees and staff (past and present) who have walked this journey with us. The journey toward 2030 will bring both opportunities and challenges, but we enter Horizon 3 of *Moving Waikato* with clarity, purpose and a collective determination to lead boldly. With strong partnerships, an exceptional passionate staff and a region rich in potential, we are ready to continue shaping an active, connected greater Waikato region for all.

Ngaa mihi nui ki a koutou katoa

Sharleen Nathan
Sport Waikato Chairperson

Matthew Cooper
Sport Waikato Chief Executive

STATEMENT OF SERVICE PERFORMANCE

“Mahia te mahi, hei painga moo te iwi – do the work for the betterment of the people” (Te Puea Herangi)

Our gifted Tongikura from Waikato Tainui is our constant reminder of the impact we seek to have as an organisation on the work we do within our region.

“Kotahi te koohao o te ngira e kuhuna ai te miro maa te miro pango me te miro whero - There is but one eye of the needle through which the white, black and red threads must pass” (Kingli Pootatau Te Wherowhero)

The role we play for the play, active recreation and sport sector within the Waikato region is articulated through our second gifted Tongikura which talks to partnerships, collaboration and the sharing of knowledge to achieve a common goal. The manifestation of this is through *Moving Waikato*, the partnered, regional strategy for play, active recreation and sport for which Sport Waikato is the lead partner.

Sport Waikato's specific role as lead partner is to be a strategic influencer and guide which sees us as the provider of high-quality data, insights, metrics and research, supplemented by the practical working knowledge of our team of subject matter experts. This evidence-led approach enables us to work collaboratively with those that either make decisions about or deliver, play, active recreation and sport opportunities.

Moving Waikato was first developed in 2015 and has been broken into distinct stages (or 'horizons') of which we have just completed Horizon 2. The focus under *Moving Waikato* for Horizon 2 has been the provision of quality experiences for play, active recreation and sport opportunities, with an emphasis on the 5-18 year old age group,

Maaori, young women and girls, high deprivation areas and those that are less active. Much of our work has been conducted within the primary, intermediate and secondary school settings, and the tables below highlight both the increased reach and impact over time.

The quality of experience for physical activity for young people

Understanding what a positive experience means for our tamariki and rangatahi is key to us being able to support those that deliver play, active recreation and sport opportunities.

As a quality experience is a predetermining factor for a lifelong participation in physical activity, we use key metrics from our *Moving Waikato Youth Survey (MWYS)*, for which we partner with Sport NZ, and our own *Voice of Tamariki Survey (VoT)*.

The *Voice of Tamariki Survey* was first launched in 2022 and is a partnership between Sport Waikato and primary and intermediate schools that we directly work with. After three years, we have grown the survey both in terms of the number of schools, and students participating.

This enables Sport Waikato to gain a more accurate picture about the participation in physical activity amongst our tamariki, and to use this data in meaningful ways with the schools that we work directly with.

Of the 49 schools participating in VoT in 2024, 41 were 'first time' participants, which demonstrates the increased reach and influence of Sport Waikato in our region's primary and intermediate school network.

Tamariki (1-8 school years) results for 2024

Key indicator question - “I like doing Physical Education with my class”

Voice of Tamariki survey	Total Responses	Schools Involved	Response to question “Yes”
Baseline measure from VoT Survey 2022 calendar year	1828	24	62%
Voice of Tamariki 2023 Calendar year	2345	36	62%
Voice of Tamariki 2024 Calendar year	6094	49	65% (67% ¹)

Further evidence of our impact can be demonstrated from the graph below which chart an increase in satisfaction across all three aspects of physical activity surveyed via the *VoT survey*:

Quality of Experience Focus Area	2022	2023	2024	3 Year Shift
Playing Games	69%	73%	76%	+7%
Sport	68%	66%	73%	+5%
Physical Education	62%	62%	66%	+4%

Rangatahi (7-13 school years) results for 2024

Key indicator question - “How satisfied are you with your overall experience of physical activity at school?”

	Total Responses	Schools Involved	Very/Extremely Satisfied
Baseline measure from VoR Survey 2021 calendar year	1070	9	27%
Voice of Rangatahi 2022 Calendar year results	4937	20	22%
Voice of Rangatahi 2023 Calendar year results	3699	14	34%
Moving Waikato Youth Survey 2024 Calendar year results	7436	27	28%

Of the eight ‘repeat’ schools, they returned a higher-than-average positive response to the physical activity question (‘67% vs the blended 65% result for all participating schools). This shows the influence of Sport Waikato on quality of experience for those schools who partner with us over a sustained period of time.

The *Moving Waikato Youth Survey* is an initiative built on Sport NZ’s *Voice of Rangatahi* national survey which Sport Waikato now runs exclusively in our region. Over the last four years, Sport Waikato has made a concerted effort to engage both schools and students to participate so that we can accurately assess the satisfaction levels of rangatahi with their experience of physical activity in a secondary school setting.

Completing surveys such as this during class time is challenging, and it is not Sport Waikato’s expectation that every school we work with completes the survey every year. However, we do encourage schools that wish to partner with us

to participate in the survey at some point, and preferably early in the partnership to allow us to establish good baseline data to work with.

The 2024 survey saw eight new schools participating in the programme and the largest number of schools and students participating in the survey. The satisfaction result needs to be read in context of the socio-economic background of the schools surveyed. 15 of the 21 schools participating in the survey in 2024 are from highly deprived areas of the region. Of the eight new schools involved in the programme, eight are also from socio-economically challenged communities.

This has been a deliberate focus for Sport Waikato, as targeting high-deprivation areas has been a priority under *Moving Waikato* Horizon 2 and will remain so under the next iteration of the strategy. As can be seen when comparing physical activity satisfaction levels between primary and secondary school

environments, there is a marked difference for rangatahi and shifting the dial for this age group is challenging, particularly when overlaying deprivation challenges.

Concluding Statement

The information contained within this Statement of Service Performance gives a vital snapshot

of two specific target groups for Sport Waikato. Greater context and a deeper look at the many initiatives Sport Waikato has underway to understand and overcome the barriers to physical activity as part of its revitalised strategy is contained within the rest of the annual report, and this statement needs to be read in conjunction with it.



Sport Waikato Professional Learning Partner Anton Barr speaks with Putaruru College Principal Rob Rogers about their new school/ community turfed courts.

OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS: MOVING WAIKATO

Since 2016, our mahi has focussed on guiding the key decision makers within the Waikato region via *Moving Waikato*, the partnered strategy for play, active recreation and sport. Originally designed to be a phased strategy over the three 'horizons', the first half of 2025 saw us refreshing *Moving Waikato* for Horizon 3 which will take us through to the end of this decade.

Horizon 3 builds on the strengths of the first two phases, with the intent of gathering more momentum in order to achieve the vision of having 'everyone active'. Horizon 3 will see an even more localised approach using the data, insights and intelligence Sport Waikato has built up over the last ten years alongside local knowledge that contextualises things and allows us to implement physical activity solutions that are appropriate for the individual communities that make up our region.

While guiding planning and the development of district and regional strategies has been a focus of the last five years, the next five will see us guiding the shift from planning to execution.

Likewise, the last ten years emphasis has been on tamariki and rangatahi which we will continue to focus on while at the same time, extending our work into the wider whaanau and adult communities.

The three pillars of *Moving Waikato* have been refreshed as part of this year's review to ensure that the focus areas of each element reflects the intent of Horizon 3:

- **Our People:** A focus on increasing the equitable access, and participation in quality physical activity experiences for tamariki, rangatahi and their whaanau.
- **Building Communities:** A focus on enabling locally led design, delivery and execution of plans and strategies.
- **Regional Leadership:** A focus on strategic relationships and partnerships, the use of data, knowledge and insights to inform quality planning, strategy development and advocacy for the region.



HEALTHY ACTIVE LEARNING (HAL) IN PRIMARY AND INTERMEDIATE

Healthy Active Learning is a partnered, national initiative developed and endorsed by Sport NZ, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health that seeks to elevate the levels of physical activity among tamariki in schools by growing teacher capability, confidence and commitment to deliver regular and quality Health and Physical Education (HPE) lessons for students, while increasing connections between schools and communities to ensure tamariki are engaged in regular opportunities to be active through play, active recreation and sport.

It is an initiative based on a broad methodology of assessment, action planning and implementation that sees schools and kaiako empowered to deliver regular and quality HPE, physical activity through play and sport, and strengthen connections to the community.

The initiative has been delivered in the Waikato since 2021 by Sport Waikato, in partnership with Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ (Waikato), Sport NZ and schools across the region. Its introduction coincided with the disestablishment of the long running Project Energize programme – an initiative based solely on implementation that saw a local workforce enter primary schools to deliver physical activity and nutrition sessions to tamariki.

Since its inception, HAL Waikato has significantly influenced the physical activity levels and overall health and wellbeing of tamariki in the region. School and kaiako engagement remain high, and targeted interventions are effectively ensuring that the schools and tamariki most in need are receiving the necessary support.

the need to deliver HPE differently and in more tamariki-centred ways, throughout all levels of schools.

85 schools that have **moderate to high levels of engagement with Sport Waikato** have made positive changes to physical activity delivery.

Perhaps the most important marker of the impact of HAL Waikato is the change in both quality and quantity of physical activity delivery happening in schools across the region. As is evidenced throughout this report, a number of schools have made positive strides with the support of Sport Waikato and are now facilitating increased levels of physical activity among their tamariki.

88% have been in both quantity and quality
80% have been an increase in quantity (e.g., number of days, length of session)
85% have been an increase in quality (e.g., HPE is now planned and delivered in a meaningful way)

** Importantly, change has also been observed in schools with low engagement*

The Sport Waikato team are proud of the continued progress being made through HAL Waikato and we are buoyed by the level of ongoing engagement of our partner schools.

We very much look forward to continuing to support school senior leadership and kaiako to understand their role in the provision of quality physical activity and to find ways to incorporate this regularly and meaningfully into their daily teaching practice.

18 Kaahui Ako engaged in HAL

120 HAL Champions developed in primary and intermediate settings

Over **27,000** tamariki impacted, over

38% of tamariki impacted are **Maaori**

Our approach of working alongside and through Kaahui Ako (clusters of schools), is unique to the Waikato and one that is proving instrumental when it comes to influencing system-level change in schools – there is a commitment for



Lichfield School new pump track

Sport Waikato Professional Development (PD) Evaluation Survey

Results in 2025 showed:

Professional development is a core component of the mahi the Professional Learning Partners engage in, and these results indicate that the team is highly capable and consistently functioning at a high standard.

Professional development is delivered to key staff (principals, physical education lead teachers etc) with the intention that those staff will take their learnings back into their school to develop other staff.

96% of respondents were **extremely or very satisfied**

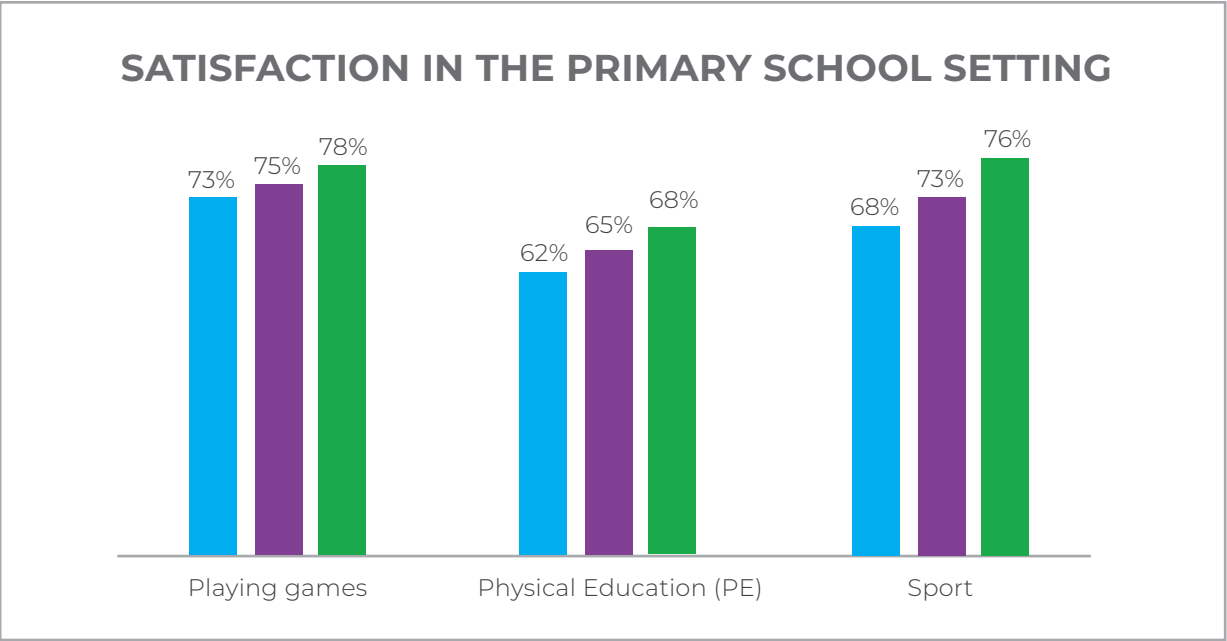
99% overall satisfaction

88% of respondents felt **extremely or very confident**

100% overall confidence level

The team is delivering professional development that is both impactful and empowering, ensuring attendees leave well-prepared to put their learning into practice.

From the *Voice of Tamariki* Survey, we can see the shift that is happening across all areas of primary school, from play to PE and sport.



Lichfield School new pump track

New bike track and play areas a school and community asset

Strathmore School, South Waikato



Strathmore School in Tokoroa has turned underused and outdated play areas into a dynamic school and community asset, supported by Sport Waikato and a range of funders.

With an Equity Index of 530 and 151 students, Strathmore School is the nearest play space for many local whaanau. However, facilities were old and limited - a decaying playground, unused sandpit, minimal court space, and no access to bikes for many students.

Sport Waikato's Professional Learning Partner, Anton Barr supported the school throughout the process, helping them to assess the existing environment, think differently and envisage the physical education opportunities for students at their school. He also connected them with bike track, playground equipment and turf contractors, funding opportunities, and cycle education providers.

"The Principal and Lead Teacher identified that students did not have enough equipment available to them and that they would love to see enhancements to the physical environment in terms of needing to upgrade the facilities - in particular the old courts and school playground," said Anton.

“

Before we started upgrading our facilities, break times at Strathmore weren't always the best for our tamariki. The playground was unsafe and the main option was ball games on the field, which often led to behaviour issues. We had some skipping ropes, gutterboards and PE gear, but these wore out quickly and didn't give kids many choices for active play.

Without proper fixtures or variety, it was hard for everyone to get involved and enjoy themselves. That's why this project was so important - adding things like the bike track, scooters, basketball hoops and astroturf has not only made play safer and more fun, but also encouraged leadership and teamwork, with our student leaders stepping up to help run activities.

Anton was instrumental in supporting us through the entire project, helping us to see what was possible, how we could connect it to our student's learning and curriculum, and his advice and connections to providers and contractors invaluable.

Noa Tereu, Principal/Tumuaki of Strathmore School

”



Anton also carried out global observations during break times alongside capturing student voice through a 'Voice of Tamariki' survey to help inform the guidance he would then give to the school in terms of creating a play zones project.

New Playground

The first part of this project was to demolish the old playground which had become a health and safety concern due to rotting timber and exposed nails and screws.

Although the school has not had the full funds to complete the entire new playground, the newly built playground has been future proofed in terms of the layout and design, so that it is able to have further playground accessory products added over time as funding is secured.



Bike Track

The second part of the project involved the scoping and building of a 260m asphalt flat bike track with some wooden challenge obstacles and a large shed to store bikes and scooters.

This involved connecting with the Bike on Charitable Trust who oversees the Bikes in Schools programme. They have supported the school with track design and construction as well as supplying helmets and supporting with the opening of the track event.

A large bike shed was built to contain the new bikes, with the bikes funded by Sport New Zealand's

Tū Manawa fund, which are supervised and distributed to students by nominated senior student leaders in the school. These senior students help get the bikes out, ensure they are put away and note anything that needs fixing.

New turf for the old courts

With the old courts in need of an upgrade, the initial funding did not cover the cost of new turf for both courts. Rather than wait for funding for the full cost, a decision was made to put new turf on one court, allowing for the students to utilise one court and new basketball goals immediately.



“

I think what's been good for all of us is, it's kind of broadened our view of what physical education looks like at school.

- Noa Tereu, Principal/Tumuaki

”





BEFORE



AFTER

“Now there's a range of options for the kids... before it was just a lot of ball sports if they played soccer or touch or whatever. But not every child would engage in that. So we do have some of our quieter kids who really like the bikes and the scooters... it's just given a range of activities for the kids to do.

And because they're a lot busier, we have found a reduction in our behavioural issues, which has been great,” said Noa Tereu, Principal/Tumuaki of Strathmore School.

The community has access to the spaces after school hours and on weekends, with families making great use of the play opportunities.

Next Steps

- Discussions with South Waikato District Council to support community access to the school's spaces, creating a welcoming, active space for the community to enjoy outside of school hours
- Secure funding to finish the bike track, turf the second court and turf under the junior playground

“It has helped me move a lot because I want to play on the astroturf. I like riding bikes but I'm not allowed to do wheelies so that makes me play on the basketball courts more. I really enjoy the spinner because it makes me dizzy and it's fun to try to walk around afterwards.” - Quade, 10, Yr 6

“I like playing on the big playground because I like to climb things. I enjoy riding bikes. I can ride on a BMX bike now.” - Wolfe, 6, Yr 2

“Because I play on the bike heaps and I sometimes go on the basketball court. I really like the swings on the playground.” Archie, 7, Yr 3

“I like playing on the basketball court. I sometimes go on the bikes but I run on the field too.” Lorelle, 8, Y4

Teachers have enough bikes for a whole class session

Some kids who have not had bikes at home have learnt to ride at school

Students have lots of options to be active - there is something for everyone

Because they're a lot busier, there has been a reduction in behavioural issues

“Because the school's not fenced off, we do have lots of people coming through on the weekends and we're happy for that. The basketball courts are also very popular and with the turf even more so. So it's popular with our kids but even in the community, and when the weather's really good we have families having picnics while they're playing basketball. We love it, we just think it's pretty cool!

- Noa Tereu, Principal/Tumuaki

“When I am in the school now, I can see how students are physically engaging with their environment. There is laughter, social interaction and a love for moving in multiple ways that reinforces for me the reason why this play zones project was so important.

Anton Barr, Sport Waikato Professional Learning Partner

SPORT
WAIKATO
Hāi painga mō te iwi

SECTOR CAPABILITY

Informed by insights and evidence that rangatahi are engaging in a much broader range of physical activity than mainstream sport, the Sport Development team was this year re-scoped as the Sector Capability team.

This has allowed the team to support stakeholders to identify physical activity initiatives and opportunities through play, active recreation and sport.

Positive Vibes Only (PVO)

Underpinning our work, is the Balance is Better framework with a focus on People, Programmes and Environments, with *Positive Vibes Only*



(PVO) proving an effective tool to bring this to life in school and community settings.

We now have over 25 secondary schools and regional organisations in the Waikato who have implemented *PVO*. We support our regional organisations to connect and collaborate over common sector work, share latest research and best practice, and identify partnership opportunities to enhance the work they do.

The *PVO* movement has extended to Regional Sports Trusts (RSTs) around the motu, with Sport Bay of Plenty, Sport Taranaki, Sport Whanganui, Sport Manawatū and Sport Hawkes Bay all coming on board in the last 12 months.

These RSTs are doing amazing work with their own communities to show that the *PVO* kaupapa can, and does, cross boundaries and they help elevate the impact through a collaborative approach.

Another huge success in the *PVO* space was Year 2 of implementation at the Zespri AIMS Games. We partnered once again with the Zespri AIMS Games Trust and Sport Bay of Plenty to build on the success in 2024.



Positive Vibes Only

Zespri AIMS Games - Year 2

CASE STUDY

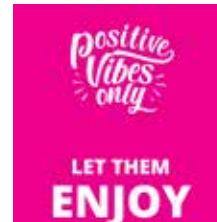
The 2025 Zespri AIMS Games involved 14,022 athletes – the highest in its 22 year history! There were 431 schools represented across 27 sporting codes and 29 venues, making it the perfect event to showcase Positive Vibes Only once again.

Sport Waikato's alignment, in partnership with Sport BOP, to a youth sports event that also embeds values such as inclusion, environmental stewardship (kaitiakitanga), collaboration, partnerships, healthy communities, and cultural appreciation has been hugely valuable.

Creating great sporting experiences for athletes as the common goal, with Positive Vibes Only the mechanism to recognise and celebrate those adults who bring this to life.

As in Year 1, Sport Waikato provided the leadership and guidance to develop a Positive Vibes Only programme and enhanced presence in 2025. Our strengthened partnership and collaboration with Sport BOP was also a highlight of Year 2.

The initiatives in 2025 included:



A digital campaign across social media, newsletters and event platforms

Pre-event webinars for coaches, managers, and supporters

Bespoke resources for coaches and managers to support positive sideline conduct

Onsite signage and event ambassadors promoting the message

Launch of the Positive Vibes Only Champion Awards



Digital campaign

Imagery and wording provided by Sport Waikato that linked to the PVO experience, coach appreciation, keeping sport fun, measuring success, supporting officials, and the car ride home

Bespoke resources

Development of a **guide** for parents, coaches, managers and supporters

Onsite signage and ambassadors

Development of an **Ambassador Guide**

98% of coaches, managers and sport coordinators noticed the presence of PVO with the following ranked as the top sources:

- Visually at the event
- **Website**
- Ambassadors
- Newsletter
- The **AIMS Gamer** publication

Players frequently approached ambassadors for stickers, often excited by the pink branding and high-vis vests, whilst supporters and coaches responded with smiles, shared stories of positive sportsmanship, and expressed familiarity with the kaupapa.

Ambassadors noted that this year's AIMS Games felt like the most positive yet in terms of sideline behaviour and sportsmanship. The campaign's visibility, tone, and engagement tools (stickers, costumes, games) were effective in sparking conversations and reinforcing the kaupapa.

70% of coaches and managers said that they felt more supported and encouraged to act on creating a positive environment because of PVO

Pre-event webinars

154 webinar participants

"So helpful to have space to intentionally think about these things. Great work!"

"Thanks for a great inspirational talk! Feeling positive already!"

Champion Awards

Recognising individuals and teams who exemplified the campaign's values.

180+ nominations with 8 trophies awarded throughout the week.

The nominations helped to showcase what a **PVO Champion** looks and sounds like, and encouraging everyone to look out for and celebrate these individuals.

"She is such an awesome coach and mentor to our girls. Always going above and beyond for them and as a parent watching from the outside in, it's so cool to see her calm and positive vibes as she encourages our girls. Our girls are so blessed to have her as their coach."

"He celebrates effort as much as achievement, teaching his team the importance of hard work, resilience, and teamwork. His ability to uplift the players, even in challenging moments, sets him apart as a coach who leads with heart and passion."

"...welcoming and encouraging to our new kids, and our team is a credit to his positivity"

"He was friendly, warm and encouraging, making connection a priority and the team gave a similar vibe too"

45% of coaches/managers and 51% of school sport coordinators said that sideline behaviour was better

45% of coaches/managers and 50% of school sport coordinators said that team culture was better due to PVO

"I attended a webinar prior to the event and at our final training and team meeting we did an activity where players wrote on a big piece of paper, what is their why for AIMS, what does success look like at AIMS, and what support could the adults (coaching team and parents) give them so they could be successful at AIMS. Parents got to read the things that were written and we took our pages with us to AIMS. As a school we sent out the blurb that was sent out by the positive vibes only and a couple of the attachments to all of the parents whose children were in a team sport at AIMS."

COACH AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Our Sector Capability Advisors primarily work alongside schools and clubs to create systems and processes that support coaches and volunteers. We know from the 2024 *Voice of Coach Survey* that having access to a mentor or other coaches is the number one factor that has assisted, or would assist, in their development and enjoyment. However, only 17% of coaches have received this type of support.

Some of this system change work has included:

- Supporting schools and clubs to collect their own specific volunteer and coach voice and how they might implement changes to better support and recognise coaches and volunteers.
- Working alongside Regional Sport organisations and schools to develop a community of practice for 'coaching champions' – those community coaches who have the passion and ability to mentor and support others.
- Through *Positive Vibes Only (PVO)* helping secondary schools to offer meaningful coach connection and support. Eighteen secondary schools indicated they would

like to integrate coach support and development as part of *PVO*.

- Collaboration with the Waikato Institute of Leadership and Sport Studies (WILSS) and Coach for Life on local and national projects designed to enhance the coach experience in school and community settings

RE:PLAY PROJECT

In partnership with the University of Waikato, Sport Waikato delivered the *Re:Play Project* across three community sport sites to measure the impact of a person-centred and game-based coaching resource, and to assess improvements in physical literacy. The three sites were:

- Ngatea Netball
- Te Awamutu Intermediate
- South Waikato Events Centre/Bishop Edward Gaines School, Tokoroa

Each site had one Lead, 2–4 coaches and 20–35 tamariki per site and participated in 10-week sessions (1 hour/week). The leads supported coaches in delivering the sessions. Five key insights that were identified from the research were:

CASE STUDIES

Coach Connection

A Case Study on Supporting Community Coaches

Volunteer coaches are the backbone of school and community sport, but many feel isolated and unsupported. The Sport Waikato Voice of the Coach Survey confirmed that coaches learn best when they're connected with others. However, most schools and clubs struggle to build strong support systems for their coaches.

“Bevan has made a significant impact on the HBHS hockey programme by actively engaging with, mentoring, and developing volunteers who coach across the programme. His proactive involvement has strengthened our ability to attract and retain committed, capable coaches, which has directly improved the overall student experience.”

At Hamilton Boys' High School (HBHS), the hockey programme had passionate volunteer coaches - but they needed more guidance, connection, and resources. Coaches wanted:

- Mentorship and development opportunities
- Practical coaching tools
- Help managing expectations with players and parents

The Solution: Introducing the Coach Connector Role

To meet this need, HBHS created a new role: the Coach Connector. Bevan stepped into this position with a clear mission—to support, connect, and grow the school's coaching team.

CASE STUDY



Hamilton Boys' High School

Coach Connector
Bevan Sam



VIEW



Hamilton Boys' High School Coach Connector Bevan Sam (middle)

Coach Connection

A Case Study on Supporting Community Coaches

Research consistently shows that volunteer coaches thrive when provided with proper support networks. The recent Sport Waikato Voice of the Coach Survey reinforced this finding, highlighting that both new and experienced coaches reported their greatest learning comes from connections with fellow coaches.

Unfortunately, many community coaches operate in isolation with limited resources and support. While schools and clubs strive to deliver quality experiences for participants and players, they often struggle to create meaningful coach support systems.

This case study examines how the Coach Connector Role has supported rugby coaches at Te Awamutu College, by removing administration duties and setting up a support network around coaches that allows them to focus on the coaching of the participants.

“For me, Carl has been great to work with. He's honest, reliable, and always open to catching up about anything. He has also made me and my crew feel welcome and well-informed.”

The Te Awamutu College Rugby Programme has significantly benefited from the implementation of a dedicated Coach Connector role. This case study examines how Carl, serving in this position, has transformed the coaching environment by providing comprehensive support, removing administrative burdens, and fostering strong communication networks among coaches. His person-centered approach and willingness to share expertise have created a more efficient, focused, and collaborative rugby programme.

Prior to establishing the Coach Connector role, Te Awamutu College rugby coaches faced numerous challenges:

- Administrative responsibilities that diverted time from actual coaching
- Limited communication between different teams and coaching staff
- Inconsistent access to resources and equipment
- Coaches working in isolation without adequate support systems

The Coach Connector Solution

The school created the Coach Connector role to address these challenges. Carl's primary

1. **Establishing Support Networks:** Connecting coaches with committee members, managers, and other coaches.
2. **Administrative Relief:** Managing logistics so coaches can focus on player development.
3. **Resource Coordination:** Ensuring timely access to equipment and training facilities.
4. **Knowledge Sharing:** Distributing coaching insights and best practices across teams.
5. **Communication Facilitation:** Creating channels for effective information exchange.

CASE STUDY



Te Awamutu College

Coach Connector
Carl Sheridan

VIEW



Te Awamutu College
Coach Connector
Carl Sheridan (right)

1. Developmental trajectory matters

Older children made the largest gains in movement literacy, showing that scaffolding activities to developmental stage is crucial.

2. Play fosters creativity and variability

Children in Re:Play environments experimented with more diverse and creative movement solutions than those in drill-based programmes.

3. Exposure and equity are essential

Not all children begin with the same movement history. Early, inclusive access to play-based coaching prevents inequities by age, gender and opportunity from widening.

4. Delivery design shapes impact

Children's outcomes were strongest when coaches were consistently supported through mentoring and modelling.

5. Frameworks and mentoring empower coaches

The Coaching Framework and Champion Coach model gave coaches confidence, clarity, and alignment with child-first values. Without these supports, coaches risked reverting to traditional, drill-based methods.

The next phase for Sport Waikato will be to develop the Re:Play 'toolkit' so it can be used in school and community settings to support the delivery of quality coaching and practice design.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In 2025, we had over 4,500 students across 13 schools completing the Moving Waikato Youth Survey. We now have over 75% of Waikato schools who have collected student voice which is helping shape valuable projects and initiatives to get more students active.

Whaanau and peers continue to be key drivers for participation in this age group, and our Youth Engagement Advisors have expanded their support into schools to identify ways to reduce barriers and meet the needs of their students. Locally led delivery, minimising travel and costs and time commitment, are some of the main considerations.

Many of the identified projects also qualify for funding through the Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa Fund and in 2025, eight schools were recipients of the fund, with many focusing on activating

spaces with sport and active recreation during the school day.

This year, our secondary team has also led work to identify how digital technology can connect or lead to increased physical activity:

- **Gamefit** – a Virtual Reality headset based physical activity programme
- **'Karawhiua' App** – we have co-designed a physical activity recording platform that encourages rangatahi to track their participation, to score points for their school/kura. It provides opportunities for inter-school competition in the future.
- **Virtual Cycling League** - currently in development phase, our Youth Engagement Advisors are approaching schools to be part of the pilot, which includes providing them with a Smart Bike, and connecting with virtual cycling platforms to host the competition.



GameFit virtual Reality pilot at Thames High School

Our partnership with the Waikato Secondary Schools Sports Association (a Principal led executive board) continues positively with exciting outcomes from the *Positive Vibes Only* implementation fund they provided. The fund, designed to assist schools to create positive environments for players, coaches, officials and parents within the school has been very successful in Year 1.

Some of the mid-year feedback highlighted some early impact:

“Lots of positive feedback from parents, coaches”

“Students and staff are beginning to see PVO as part of the wider sports culture rather than just a campaign”

“Students who wouldn't normally give sport a go are having a go”

ACTIVE AS

The six schools identified as part of the *Active As* project (Thames High School, Ngā Taiātea Wharekura, Te Kuiti High School, Taumarunui High School, Piopio College and Ōtorohanga College) have completed the second year of their three year projects to grow and improve the physical activity, wellbeing and achievement levels of their students.

Year 2 has seen schools continue to co-design physical activity projects with student ambassadors. This has also involved a customised student leadership programme, delivered by the Waikato Institute for Leadership and Sport Studies (WILSS).

Many of the schools have also chosen to invest in a dedicated role within the school to ensure that the *Active As* initiatives can be progressed. There are a number of initiatives that the schools have put in place to encourage students to be more active:

- **Activation of spaces and activity hubs** through the purchase of equipment and/or through space and facility upgrades
- **Invigorating school wide events** e.g. colour runs, mana week
- **Student reward systems** established for being active
- **Education Outside the Classroom** (EOTC) activities and leadership opportunities
- **Integration of physical activity** through the classroom
- **Sensory pathways** throughout the school
- **Digital technology pilots** (as mentioned above)

Data and insights for 2025 are showing improved happiness, wellbeing and sense of belonging amongst students at these schools, with slight increases in satisfaction with their PE and sport experiences.



Active As Karawhiua Day - over 400 students from Active As schools participating in new activities



TŪ MANAWA ACTIVE AOTEAROA – WAIKATO 2024/2025

AT A GLANCE:

\$1.95m invested in tamariki and rangatahi across the Waikato

107 projects approved from 213 applications

Around 34,800 young people reached

Investing in young people

From July 2024 to June 2025, Sport Waikato distributed \$1,946,663.73 in Tū Manawa funding across the Waikato region. 213 applications were received, and 107 projects were approved, with an average grant size of \$18,654.98.

This investment supported schools, kura and community organisations to create quality opportunities for tamariki and rangatahi to be active through play, active recreation and sport – often removing cost, access and confidence barriers that would otherwise stop them from taking part.

What kind of projects applied?

Looking across all 213 applications:

- 52% were for active recreation
- 38% were for sport
- 10% were for play

This shows strong interest in flexible, less formal active recreation opportunities, while still supporting a wide range of sport-based projects and a smaller but important number of play-focused initiatives.

Who was involved and who was reached?

Across all funded projects, an estimated 34,806 tamariki and rangatahi took part:

- **22,636 tamariki**
- **12,170 rangatahi**

Within this:

- At least **5,435** from projects targeted specifically to **young women and girls** (around 16%)
- At least **3,485** tamariki and rangatahi who live with a **disability** (around 10%)

The mahi was strongly community-led. A wide mix of organisations engaged with the fund, including incorporated societies, not-for-profit organisations, primary and secondary schools and kura, social enterprises and regional councils.

Surf Coromandel



Parafed Powerchair Football



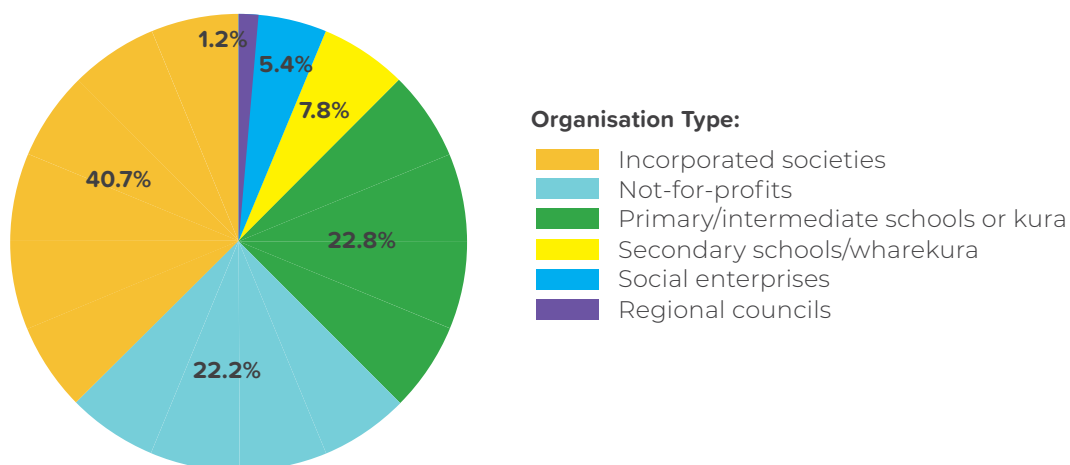
Tauwhare School Mindful Movement



Swimming Waikato Water Safety



Tū Manawa 2024/25 - Types of Organisations Involved



The above pie chart shows the proportion of each organisation type involved in *Tū Manawa* during 2024/25, highlighting the strong contribution of community organisations alongside the school sector.

Where did it happen?

Tū Manawa-funded projects reached communities across the Waikato region. Hamilton City accounted for around one-third of projects (35 in total, about 32%), with a further 21 projects in Waipā (around 19%).

South Waikato and Waikato District each hosted 10 projects (around 9% each), and eight projects (about 7%) were delivered as Waikato-wide or regional initiatives. Thames-Coromandel received seven projects, with smaller but important numbers in Hauraki (5), Matamata-Piako (4), Taupō (4) and Waitomo (3). Otorohanga was supported by one project.

Tamariki and rangatahi experience

Across funded projects, tamariki and rangatahi most often talked about feeling welcome, supported and excited to be active. Having the right gear, safe spaces and no cost barrier meant they could turn up, join in and try new things – from basketball and trikes to skipping, surfing, yoga, equine programmes and dance.

Providers reported previously less-active tamariki becoming much more involved at break times and in sessions, with noticeable lifts in confidence, smiles and general happiness.

Consistent, skilled coaches and instructors made a clear difference. Regular sessions, simple structure and strong relationships helped tamariki feel safe to try new things, be challenged and keep coming back.

Where projects built strong connections with whaanau and schools – with parents, volunteers, teachers and youth leaders actively joining in – the impact was even stronger, creating a sense of belonging and fun, and giving some tamariki and rangatahi the chance to step into leadership roles.

In the 2025/2026 financial year, our *Tū Manawa* approach in the Waikato will remain relational and locally led, with a stronger focus on rural communities. We'll prioritise local organisations who know their own communities best and are well placed to make a big difference for tamariki and rangatahi.

By spending more time in koorero, listening to local aspirations and walking alongside partners, we aim to grow opportunities that are community-owned, sustainable and truly reflective of the lives of the young people they serve.

“Without the grants we would not be able to hire the gym and have a safe open place for 40–80 kids daily rolling through and getting a bit of a workout in and learning a little more about basketball.”

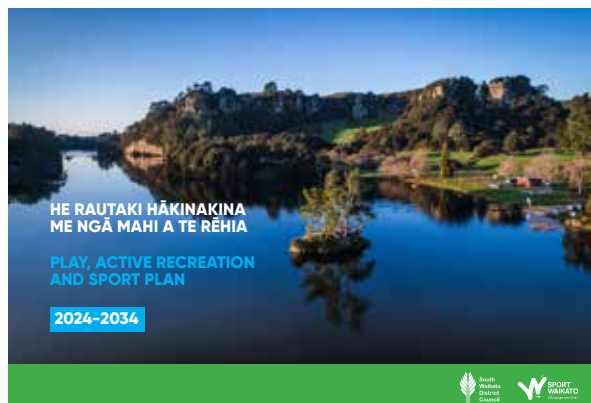
REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SPACES & PLACES PLANNING

Sport Waikato staff continue to work closely alongside our region's ten Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs) to support decision-making about and investment into play, active recreation and sport in our Waikato communities. This is supported through a partnership approach and collaborating on key local and regional strategies that support community physical activity outcomes.

Local Plans

Over the past 12 months, all ten Territorial Local Authorities have continued to advance their Play, Active Recreation and Sport (PARS) Plans, now into implementation phases. Developed collaboratively with council staff and informed through workshops with elected members, these plans now provide a shared strategic direction for play, active recreation and sport across the Waikato region.

The PARS Plans are designed to align council and Sport Waikato workstreams, ensuring a coordinated approach that strengthens community wellbeing and supports increased physical activity.



They offer a clear evidence-based platform for prioritising investment, optimising existing facilities, and identifying future opportunities where collaboration will deliver the greatest impact for communities.

Importantly, the plans are increasingly being used by councils to guide long-term planning and investment processes. Their recommendations - covering priority projects, facility development and system-level improvements - are helping shape decisions within Long-Term Plans (LTPs) and other major funding pathways.

As councils operationalise their PARS Plans, the region is better positioned to deliver sustainable, community-led outcomes that enhance access to quality play, active recreation and sport for all.

Waikato Regional Active Spaces Plan

First published in 2014, the *Waikato Regional Active Spaces Plan (WRASP)* focuses on the ongoing provision of a network of facilities, spaces and places for play, active recreation and sport that are affordable and accessible to meet the changing needs of participation for people and communities of the Waikato region.

As regional leaders of this space, we continue to ensure that the *WRASP* remains up to date and provides sound and expert guidance to facilities and spaces and places planning in the Waikato region following the endorsement of the 4th edition at the Mayoral Forum in 2024.



In the 2025-year, engagement with the stakeholders and partners of the *WRASP* has been high and centred around the advancing the 24 facility development priorities, the ten optimisation and operation initiatives and 13 strategic focus areas which focuses on overcoming barriers to participation for a region that is in growth mode.

From a strategic and advocacy standpoint, 2025 saw the development of three Regional Strategies which were priorities in the *WRASP*, the *Waikato Aquatics Strategy*, *Waikato Indoor Courts Supply and Demand Assessment*, and *Sub-Regional Sports Field Demand Assessment* (across Hamilton, Waikato District and Waipa District).

We partnered with Hamilton City Council to deliver the *Hamilton City Partnership Pool Review* which was completed in October 2025 and are subsequently coordinating a *Social Value Infrastructure Study* to be completed for aquatic venues, with this study being one of the first completed on aquatic venues nationwide.

2025 also saw Sport Waikato partner with data intelligence group ActiveXChange based in Australia to assess participation behaviour including community engagement trends with sport and recreation infrastructure across 100 sites in Taupo and South Waikato, starting with Owen Delany Park.

Key findings from the studies highlight:

- **Aquatics** - there is a significant under supply of leisure focused water, with learn to swim water at the benchmarked level, while by 2038 there will be a shortfall of year-round water space of 2,000 square metres with Hamilton City and Waikato District having the greatest deficit to meet future community needs. Year-round aquatic venues account for 1.7M visits with an average distance travelled of 14km to these venues, however 40% of our region's population would have to travel more than 20km to access aquatic venues, posing a massive barrier.
- **Indoor Courts/Spaces** - currently regionally there is a deficit of 25 indoor courts (growing to 34 by 2038) vs national benchmarks, highlighting partnership opportunities across Waikato District, Hamilton City and Waipa District where this largest deficit exists. This has led to sub-regional discussions and advancement of planning on projects relevant to this research.
- **Visits to Owen Delany Park** saw visitation of 45% from outside of the town with over 600,000 visits, while average dwell time increased by 30 minutes during events, highlighting the importance of sub-regional venues in social wellbeing outcomes.

The intent of these insights is to continue to provide partnership support, ensuring informed decision-making around future investment and planning for recreational spaces in the region is made.

As we move into Horizon 3, Sport Waikato will continue to ramp up support in the strategic advocacy space with important foundations being made in 2025, including:

- **Exploration of a Partnership arrangement with [Future Proof](#)**, which will see Sport Waikato fed directly into the future social infrastructure planning of Future Proof Districts (Hamilton City, Waikato District, Waipa District and Matamata-Piako District)
- **Long-Term Plan Submissions to Waikato District and Waipa District** – Submitted on 13 investment items providing information on key findings from the WRASP and PARS plans to inform council decision making around investment, of which one item was recommendations around sub-regional funding into sport and recreation infrastructure. Feedback from Waipa District highlighted they were willing to explore this opportunity in partnership with Sport Waikato.
- **Advisory Group Engagement and Partnership with Ministry of Education** – Sport Waikato continues to provide

leadership via leadership of the WRASP Advisory Group with the group including executive representation from councils across the region, Trust Waikato, Sport NZ and the MoE. Spaces and Places Partnership Arrangements are being explored at a local level between Hamilton City Council, MoE, Sport NZ and Sport Waikato as a result.

- **Continuation of Regional Spaces and Places Forums** – During 2025, Sport Waikato facilitated two council workshops/webinars with a focusing on several key areas: hubbing, partnership approaches, the role of technology in spaces and places, and the importance of data collection to support more informed and effective decision-making. Feedback included attendees describing the sessions as “informative and inspirational”.

In 2025, progression was made towards regional infrastructure priorities of which Sport Waikato have been actively involved. Key highlights include:

- **Open Country Community Stadium** in Matamata. Sport Waikato are a project partner, with facility development progressing in 2025 ready for opening in 2026.
- **Owen Delany Park**. Sport Waikato have been supporting Taupō District Council via involvement on the project steering group for this sub-regional project which includes completion of a full site masterplan and the commencement of development for phase 1 (community hub building and new changeroom block).
- **Progression of Sport Field Artificial Turf Projects** in line with the Sport Waikato led [2023 Sub-Regional Artificial Turf Study](#).

Open Country Stadium, Matamata





This has seen the development of the region's first sport field [artificial turf in Hamilton](#) while Sport Waikato are facilitating a coordinated approach to artificial sport field investment in partnership with council, Waikato Rugby Union, WaiBOP Football, clubs and funders via Waikato Regional Sport Precinct Charitable Trust. Sport Waikato assisted Hamilton City Council with the funding and planning aspects of Korikori Park Sports Turf which has seen the project receive full funding (60% external) and are working with partners on planning the next sites.

- **Progression of Indoor Court and Aquatic Investment Options** across Hamilton. We continue to work with Hamilton City Council via involvement in the project steering group, assisting with the planning of future indoor sport and recreational spaces (courts), while coordinating partnership conversation with the MoE and Sport NZ.

Regionally and nationally, we continue to work with key funders to support investment in play, active recreation and sport infrastructure outcomes that align with the WRASP. Examples include:

- **Working with Wel Trust around investment into lighting** across key sport fields and courts – including Waikato Tennis (Lugton Park), Korikori Park, Waikato Hockey Centre, Frankton and Te Rapa Rugby Sport Clubs and Hamilton Girls High School Artificial Turf
- **Assisted project partners of Matamata Community Stadium Project** in closing funding gap by obtaining \$1M from JC Endeavour Trust, \$500k from John and

Glenice Gallagher Foundation of which Sport Waikato led these funding discussions

- **Supporting successful submission to the Lotteries Facilities Grant** including Matamata Community Stadium (\$400k), Owen Delany Park Community Facility Development (\$300k), Hamilton Artificial Turf (\$200k) and Matamata Accessible Destination Playground (\$175k)

Locally, Sport Waikato continues to support local community projects through contribution to conceptual planning, sector leadership and funding advocacy support, examples include:

- **Centennial Park Masterplan** – Te Kuiti
- **Reserve Strategy Development** – Otorohanga
- **Matamata Accessible Playground** – Matamata
- **Kotahi Hub Development** – Morrinsville
- **Squash & Community Hub Proposal** – Taupo
- **Gallagher Hockey Centre** – Hamilton
- **Hopuhopu Sport Precinct** – Hopuhopu
- **Munro Sports Park** – Pokeno
- **Open Recreational Water Spaces** – Hamilton Lake, Lake Ngaa Roto, Lake Karapiro and Lake Taupo
- **Cambridge Town-Belt**

While all facility development initiatives prioritised in the 2024 edition of WRASP in years 1-3 are currently progressing:

Facility Development Priorities

Facility Type	Recommendation (Facility Lifecycle Stages 2024-27)	Partners (and location of opportunity where applicable)	Progress
Indoor Courts	HAMILTON - 8 Courts	Hamilton City Council, Neighbouring Territorial Local Authorities, Key Sports Codes, Community and Education Partners, Iwi, Venue Managers	Sport Waikato continues to work with Hamilton City Council via the Community Facilities Working Group to progress detailed options with discussions and planning occurring in collaboration with MoE
	PLAN > DESIGN		
Community Indoor Aquatic	HAMILTON	Hamilton City Council and Neighbouring Territorial Local Authorities	Sport Waikato continues to work with Hamilton City Council via the Community Facilities Working Group to progress with detailed planning on options in line with Sport Waikato's research provided across 2024 and 2025.
	PLAN > DESIGN		
Indoor Courts	MATAMATA-PIAKO - 2 Courts	Matamata Piako District Council, Matamata College, MoE and Iwi	Support by Sport Waikato via Project Steering Group, this project progress to development in 2025 and is due to open in February 2026.
	DESIGN > BUILD		
Sub Regional Indoor Aquatic	THAMES-COROMANDEL/HAURAKI	Thames Coromandel District Council and Neighbouring Territorial Local Authorities	Concept design completed for local and sub-regional aquatic options. We continue to work with council around advancing preferred options via involvement in the Steering Group.
	PLAN > DESIGN > BUILD (Complete a business case to determine appropriate Sub Regional need)		
Gymsport - Regional Hub	HAMILTON (Eastlink)	Hamilton City, Matamata-Piako, Waipa and Waikato District Councils and Gymnastics NZ	Following the Sport Waikato commissioned Gymnastics Network Plan for Hamilton City in collaboration with Gymnastics NZ and the two city clubs, Council has approved in principle support for the development of a Gymnastics Facility at Eastlink which has received funding from Trust Waikato and is in detailed design and resource consent phase.
	PLAN > DESIGN > BUILD (Explore as part of Eastlink Hub Masterplan – Hamilton)		
Squash – National Level Facility (Regional Hub)	HAMILTON (Eastlink)	Hamilton City and Squash NZ. Neighbouring Squash Facilities (Hamilton, Ruakura, Huntly, Cambridge, Te Awamutu and Morrinsville)	Sport Waikato continues to support Hamilton City Council and the Eastlink Board via progressing planning for squash facility development. We are collaborating with the Squash Clubs, Squash Waikato and Squash NZ.
	CONCEPT > PLAN > DESIGN (Explore as part of Eastlink Hub Masterplan – Hamilton)		

Facility Type	Recommendation (Facility Lifecycle Stages 2024-27)	Partners (and location of opportunity where applicable)	Progress
Badminton – Regional Hub	HAMILTON (Eastlink) – Regional Hub Extension/ Upgrades	Hamilton City and Waikato Badminton	Sport Waikato supported Hamilton City Council and the Eastlink Board through the development of an Eastlink Master Plan which has identified opportunities for Badminton facility enhancements. Work is ongoing to identify next stage for Masterplan implementation.
	CONCEPT > PLAN > DESIGN (Explore as part of Eastlink Hub Masterplan)		
Hockey	HAMILTON - 3rd Turf Development Hamilton	Hamilton City, Waipa District, Waikato Hockey, Satellite Sites Hauraki District, Valley Hockey	Sport Waikato continues to support Waikato Hockey with their Waikato Hockey Centre investment strategy which includes renewal of existing turf and placement of possible 3rd turf at Innes Common while ongoing discussion around Hockey Turf in Cambridge.
	HAMILTON/HAURAKI – Hub Upgrades (amenities/ changerooms) PLAN > DESIGN > BUILD		
Sport Fields Artificial Turf	Increase capacity of fields through provision of targeted flood lighting, reallocation of users, improved turf management or multiuse artificial turf (cost benefit required for each)	Artificial Turf Hamilton City Council, Waipa District Council, Waikato District Council, Iwi, Rototuna High School, Cambridge High School, WaiBOP Football, Waikato Rugby Sport Field Hubs – Key Investment Opportunities • Te Kuiti/ Otorohanga • Pookeno • Northern Hamilton/ Waikato District • Southern Hamilton/Waipā • Thames-Ngatea • Morrinsville • Te Awamutu	Sport Waikato continues to provide regional stakeholders with relevant research such as Sub-Regional Artificial Turf, updated Supply and Demand capacity assessments for sport fields. Learnings have led to the implementation and progression of: • Development of artificial turf at Marist Park • Progression of planning for 3 artificial sport field within Hamilton • Investment in lighting across several sport field sites Stakeholders continue to progress planning and development of key sport grounds across the region including: • Munro Sports Block – Pookeno • Centennial Park – Te Kuiti • Otorohanga Reserves Strategy • Morrinsville Recreational Ground • Campbell Park – Morrinsville • Owen Delany Park – Taupo Sport Waikato continues to partner with ActiveXChange to populate regional membership data to predict future demand requirements. 8 Regional Sport Organisations have signed up to the platform, including WaiBOP Football which has 16,000 members.
	Ensure any new Sport Fields have adequate amenities, shade, parking and storage facilities where required and that there is a focus on climate change initiatives DESIGN > BUILD		

Facility Type	Recommendation (Facility Lifecycle Stages 2024-27)	Partners (and location of opportunity where applicable)	Progress
Tracks and Trail Network	<p>Waikato Cycle Network - boundaryless regional cycling network. Maintain experience of Regional Trails including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Awa and Waikato River Trails (Enhancements) and connection via NZTA planned works (SH1/SH29) • Otorohanga and Waitomo Trail Connection • Taupo (Enhancements) • Hauraki Rail Trail (Enhancements) and explore extensions (i.e Waihi Beach) 	Territorial Local Authorities, Waikato Regional Council, Iwi, Trail Trusts, NZTA, MBIE, Timber Trail, Hauraki Rail Trail, Waikato River Trails, Te Awa Cycle Way Trust, Bike Taupo	<p>Tracks and Trail Project Investment were outlined in Councils' long-term plans including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Hauraki Rail Trail extension • Continued Partnership investment into Hauraki Rail Trail <p>Sport Waikato continues to support these groups where needed.</p>
	CONCEPT > PLAN > DESIGN		
Sport and Community Hubs	TAUPO - Owen Delany Park	Taupo District Council, and Neighbouring Territorial Local Authorities. Key Sports Codes, Iwi	Owen Delany Masterplan was completed in 2024. Sport Waikato maintains a presence on the Steering group with the development of Stage 1 of the masterplan commencing in July 2025 (development of community hub facilities and changerooms block).
	PLAN > DESIGN > BUILD		
Indoor Courts	TAUPO – Taupo Events Centre and Turangi Community Hub	<p>Taupo District Council, and Neighbouring Territorial Local Authorities.</p> <p>Key Sports Codes, Community and Education Partners, Iwi, Venue Managers</p> <p>Including considerations around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rock-climbing Wall • Squash Centre Report • Tauhara College upgrades 	<p>Sport Waikato will continue to support Taupo District Council around options analysis for indoor sport provision. In 2025 we continued to work with Council and community groups such as Taupo Indoor Sports Hub in exploring options. Council have included the following in the long-term plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$17.8M for Turangi (27-29) • \$12.9M for Taupo (28-30)
	CONCEPT > PLAN > DESIGN (District Wide Indoor Court Options Analysis)		

PLAY

Sport Waikato advocates for play opportunities for tamariki in a range of settings, including communities and education, and defines play as much broader than the use of formal play infrastructure (e.g., playgrounds). Play is freely chosen activities with no predetermined outcome. Play is spontaneous, fun, accessible, challenging, social, repeatable and occurring anywhere at any time.

Play for tamariki is personally directed with limited or no adult involvement but can also be undertaken together with whaanau. Play can occur anywhere, including facilities, spaces and places for sport and active recreation (e.g., parks, gullies, waterways and open spaces for tree climbing or kicking a ball), as well as 'playing on the way' and neighbourhood play in streets and on footpaths.

Sport Waikato supported a wide range of play initiatives across the region this year, enhancing access, safety, and playful experiences for tamariki and whaanau.

Taupō District Council is installing shade sails at five playgrounds ahead of summer, while South Waikato District Council upgraded Lake Moananui Playground to rubber surfacing and is preparing to launch the new Playler play trailer for community events.

Work in Ōtorohanga and Waitomo District Councils included staff workshops, PARS planning, and co-design with youth and schools to develop 'play on the way' opportunities that make neighbourhood travel safer, more active

and more enjoyable.

A major focus this year was the Neighbourhood Play System project in Matamata. This work places the experiences of tamariki and rangatahi at the centre of neighbourhood design by considering the built and natural environment, access and mobility, community awareness and overall enjoyment of local spaces.

Through engagement with schools, whaanau and community stakeholders across six Matamata schools, an action plan is in development to improve independent movement and play. The plan identifies short, medium and long-term opportunities that align with existing council programmes and will be reviewed regularly to ensure meaningful impact.

Regionally, Sport Waikato contributed to inter-council collaboration through the Spaces and Places network, identifying shared project opportunities such as portable pump tracks, Play Boxes/Paataka Kootui, no-mow activity areas, Play Streets and creative low-cost play interventions like footpath games and swings in trees. These conversations continue to highlight the value of playful neighbourhoods in strengthening community wellbeing.

Sport Waikato also presented to regional Civil Defence, outlining the role of play before, during and after emergency events. Drawing on national examples from earthquakes, wildfire recovery and terrorism responses, this work supports a more resilient, connected Waikato region by recognising play as a vital component of community recovery and preparedness.



South Waikato District Council's newly launched and bookable Playler the Play Trailer



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE AND EXPENSES

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	NOTES	2025	2024 (RESTATED)
REVENUE			
Revenue from non-exchange transactions			
Events and activities		33,592	113,038
Lion Foundation Grant		30,000	120,000
Other Government Grants		1,423,595	1,372,475
Other Grants	5	583,485	749,881
Sport NZ Grants		1,677,830	1,754,874
Trust Waikato Donations		750,000	750,000
Total Revenue from non-exchange transactions		4,498,502	4,860,268
Revenue from exchange transactions			
Dividends		84,000	86,224
Other Operating Revenue		111,687	96,351
Realised gain/(loss) on investments		492	(18,610)
Unrealised Gain/(Loss) on Investments		347,868	237,934
Total Revenue from exchange transactions		544,047	401,900
Total revenue		5,042,549	5,262,168
Expenses			
Amortisation	12	16,923	994
Audit Fees		22,900	23,000
Employee Related Costs		3,146,687	3,096,618
Events and Activities		442,115	577,850
Depreciation	11	69,107	80,870
Donations		2,200	1,339
Grants Paid		-	500,000
Other operating expenses	6	1,021,550	919,031
Total expenses		4,721,482	5,199,702
Surplus/(Deficit) before Net Financing Costs		321,066	62,467
Net Finance Costs			
Interest Received		253,850	259,010
Total Net Finances		253,850	259,010
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year		574,917	321,477
Total Comprehensive Revenue and Expenses for the Year		574,917	321,477

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2025

	NOTES	2025	2024 (RESTATED)
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	8	1,250,922	1,143,438
GST		33,844	50,758
Investments	9	2,432,179	2,956,786
Receivables from Exchange Transactions	10	13,699	24,414
Receivables from Non Exchange Transactions	10	408,239	371,820
Total Current Assets		4,138,883	4,547,216
Non-Current Assets			
Intangible Assets	12	152,307	124,831
Investments	9	5,792,392	5,224,921
Property Plant and Equipment	11	273,866	297,803
Total Non-Current Assets		6,218,566	5,647,555
Total Assets		10,357,449	10,194,771
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and Other Creditors	14	233,023	664,120
Employee Entitlements		255,936	201,969
Income in Advance		135,849	170,957
Total Current Liabilities		624,808	1,037,046
Total Liabilities		624,808	1,037,046
Net Assets		9,732,641	9,157,724
Equity			
Trust Fund		1,500,000	1,500,000
Accumulated Comprehensive Revenue and Expenses		8,232,641	7,657,724
Total Equity		9,732,641	9,157,724

These financial statements should be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements (full financial statements available on our website). Signed for and on behalf of the Board of Trustees who authorised these financial statements for issue on 9th December 2025:



Matthew Cooper
Chief Executive



Sharleen Nathan
Board of Trustees Chairperson



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