

Manawatū District Council

SIX MONTH PARTNERSHIP REPORT

July 2025 - December 2025



**SPORT
MANAWATŪ**

[SPORTMANAWATU.ORG.NZ](https://sportmanawatu.org.nz)

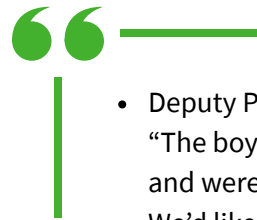
THE MANAWATŪ DISTRICT DEVELOPS A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING THROUGH PLAY, ACTIVE RECREATION, AND SPORT.

Hato Paora – Rangatahi Activation

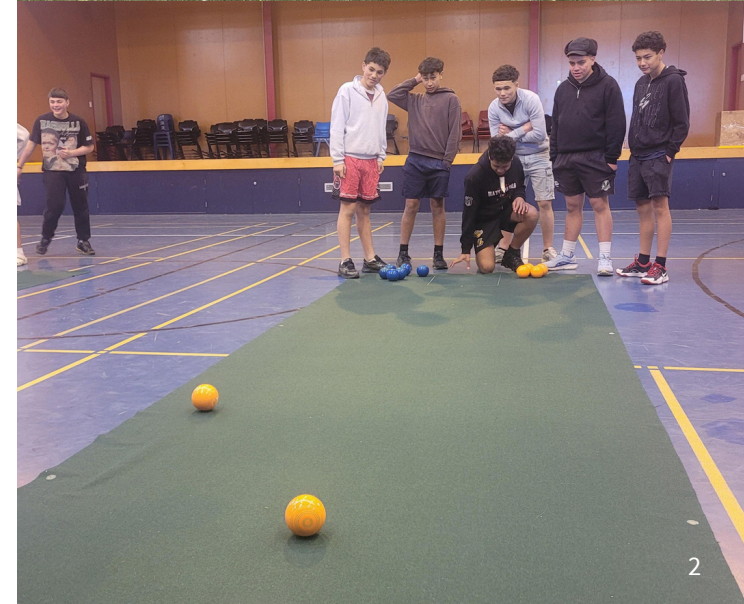
On Tuesday 23 July, Sport Manawatū staff, supported by kaimahi at Hato Pāora College, delivered a co-design session with rangatahi to understand which physical activities they were most interested in beyond mainstream sport. This feedback informed the Rangatahi Activation Programme, delivered during the College’s teacher only day on Tuesday 26 August.

Students participated in boxing, indoor bowls, paintball and golf, delivered by local clubs. The activation encouraged rangatahi to step outside their comfort zones and try new activities, with several students discovering new interests. Clubs were able to connect directly with rangatahi about future opportunities. Arena Paintball, responding to strong interest, has since registered as an incorporated society and is exploring funding options to improve youth access.

The activation was enabled through connections established by Joey McKechnie, Youth Connector at Manawatū District Council. The event strengthened relationships between the school, community and clubs, creating momentum for ongoing engagement.



- Deputy Principal, Hato Pāora College: “The boys absolutely enjoyed the day and were buzzing for many days after. We’d like to keep the momentum and work together again.”
- Hato Pāora kaimahi: “Those who excelled at paintball don’t normally participate.”
- Reuben, Feilding Golf Club: “There is strong potential to build on the momentum and offer ongoing opportunities.”
- Hyrum, Arena Paintball: “We’re already looking at how this can become something sustainable.”



OUTCOME 1

Replay NZ – Sanson School

In term two, Sanson School reached out to their Healthy Active Learning advisor for some support with shoes and large balls to be used at recess time. In partnership with Replay – NZ, shoes and large balls were delivered to some very happy tamariki shortly after the request was made.

“We want to send a massive thank you to Replay - NZ for their extremely kind donation of sports balls and shoes, and to Joel from Sport Manawatū for all your help. Our students were so excited to see some new gear for the PE shed, which will be a huge help for our PE lessons and lunchtime games. Your generosity means a lot to us!!!! Thank you!”



Kind Hearts Collaboration

Sport Manawatū delivered a second year of sessions at the Kind Hearts events, engaging 1,100 tamariki from schools across the region, including three MDC schools and 131 tamariki, in activities focused on promoting kindness and positive sporting environments.

- Day 1 (Juniors): Activities included Animal Aerobics and creating “Positive Vibes Only” supporter signs for tamariki to take home to their whānau.
- Day 2 (Seniors): Sessions began with an active icebreaker, followed by the same sign-making activity.



The sessions shared how feedback from tamariki in the previous year shaped the Positive Vibes Only campaign, which works with local codes to support positive, fun, and inclusive sport environments. Poster messages showed strong positivity, such as “You can do it” and “Go team,” reinforcing the campaign’s impact. Following the event, Raewyn requested this segment be booked again for next year, highlighting the strength of the partnership and the success of Sport Manawatū’s involvement.



Next Level Rangatahi – Manawatū Turbos

On Wednesday 17 September, Sport Manawatū’s Sports Advisor for Leadership and Coaching, David King, connected Manawatū Turbos players Kyle Baker and Drew Wild with Next Level Fitness on their final day of term. Together, they shared encouragement, guidance, and practical tips with student leaders who had been supporting

younger athletes throughout the programme. Supported by the NZCT Manawatū Active Communities Fund, the programme highlighted strong potential within these young leaders and supported their continued development in coaching and leadership.

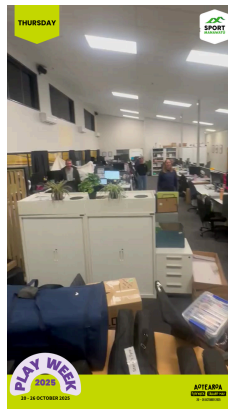
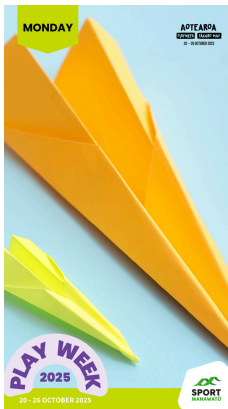
OUTCOME 1

Tākaro Mai Aotearoa Play Week 2025

Play Week Aotearoa 2025 celebrated the value of play for tamariki, whānau and communities across Aotearoa. Play provides freedom and opportunities to take risks, supporting tamariki to build a lifelong love of being active, make sense of the world, express creativity, build friendships, and develop key skills.

To promote the week, Sport Manawatū delivered the Play Week Bingo Challenge, a free initiative designed to encourage whānau to explore local play spaces and complete playful activities throughout the week. The challenge was shared widely by local organisations and schools through both printed and online channels.

To build momentum and strengthen community engagement, Sport Manawatū also assigned a bingo activity to each day of the week for staff to take part in. This supported staff to increase their understanding of the value of play and build confidence promoting play within their own areas of mahi.



Find out more > SPORTMANAWATU.ORG.NZ/PLAY Proudly supported by PALMY and SPORT MANAWATU

Tākaro Mai Aotearoa Play Week 2025

The Quick Release Play round allowed various Manawatū District Council based organisations to deliver Play projects while promoting Play Week.

For this "Play" round, organisations can apply for up to \$1,000 to support Play related projects for tamariki and rangatahi.

Two organisations received \$1,531 to support the delivery of play-based activations across the district.

2 applications

\$1,531

funded

OUTCOME 1

Play Along the Way

Due to weather conditions, the Play Along the Way event scheduled during Play Week Aotearoa 2025 was cancelled after two attempts.

Despite this, Sport Manawatū progressed other elements of the initiative by working alongside James at Manawatū District Council to install a new swing beside the skatepark, supported by the NZCT Manawatū Active Communities Fund.

A range of organisations continued to support the kaupapa, including Manawatū District Council, Manawatū Community Hub Libraries, Feilding Volunteer Fire Brigade, Feilding Blue Light, Feilding Lions Mini Golf, Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngāti Kauwhata, Makino Aquatic Centre, Next Level Athletes – Rangatahi, and the Manawatū Skateboard Association.

While the event was not delivered this year, strong collaboration and community support were maintained, and Sport Manawatū will be delivering Play Along the Way in February 2026.



SIX MONTH PARTNERSHIP REPORT | Manawatū District Council | July 2025 - December 2025

Feilding Farmers Market

On 11 July, Sport Manawatū delivered a pop-up play session alongside the Feilding Farmers Market, in partnership with the Manawatū Community Hub Library and their play trailer.

Recently refreshed with new equipment, the trailer attracted strong engagement, with around 150 people taking part before rain brought the session to an early close.

The activation promoted the play trailer, encouraged active play, and provided an opportunity to gather quick insights from tamariki and whānau about how they spend their school holidays and what they would like to see more of.

Feedback highlighted interest in organised games, obstacle courses, and active outdoor play, with many families already making good use of parks, beaches, and time with whānau. These insights were shared with the Hub team to support future planning.



Play, Pass it on, Replay

On 26 September, Sport Manawatū delivered Play, Pass it on, Replay on the green space outside the Manawatū Community Hub Library, supported by Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngāti Kauwhata, Manawatū Community Hub Library, and Replay NZ.

Over the previous 12 months, Sport Manawatū had collected sports and play equipment and redistributed it back into the community, enabling schools, organisations, and whānau to access gear and reduce barriers to participation in sport, active recreation, and play.

The event created a relaxed and welcoming environment where people could view available equipment and take items home to support being active. Around 100 people attended throughout the day, ranging from preschool tamariki to older adults, with more than 60 items rehomed, including rugby balls, cricket bats, boots, and footballs.

The initiative demonstrated immediate value, with equipment costs identified as a barrier for many whānau. By providing free access to quality gear, the event supported participation straight away and reinforced the value of community-led solutions.



OUTCOME 1

Basketball Pop-Up Session

Sport Manawatū partnered with Basketball Manawatū to deliver a school holiday Basketball Pop-Up session at the Civic Centre on 29 September.

Building on learnings from previous sessions, the partners strengthened community connections and promotion to improve engagement. Demand exceeded capacity, with registrations closing early. Two sessions were delivered, with 21 girls participating in the morning and 35 boys in the afternoon. The sessions focused on skill development, drills, and 3x3 games. Parent feedback was very positive, with strong appreciation for having local opportunities available. Tamariki also completed a short survey, with 85.7–90.5 percent indicating they would like to see more sessions like this.

As a direct outcome, a three-week 3x3 competition was established at the Civic Centre, attracting 17 teams from schools across the Manawatū District. Basketball Manawatū has since explored funding options to continue the programme into 2026.



Rural Day Relay

On Friday 3 October, Sport Manawatū worked alongside Feilding & District Promotion and Allan McLean to support and deliver the Rural Day Relay as part of Feilding’s annual Rural Day event.

The relay attracted businesses, schools, and community teams from across the Manawatū, creating a fun and competitive atmosphere in the town centre. A new Rangatahi Open/Family category was introduced, encouraging participation from a wide range of ages, whānau, and community groups.

New obstacles were added this year, including digging through lambs’ tails to find ear tags and a slide, both of which were crowd favourites and added energy and enjoyment to the event. The relay reinforced the value of connection, play, teamwork, and friendly competition within the community.



Thank you so much for your incredible support and contribution to Rural Day last Friday. It was a fantastic celebration of our community, and we truly couldn’t have done it without your support.

— Sarah Gilbertson, Feilding & District Promotion.

Disability Sports Festival

On 18 and 19 October, Sport Manawatū partnered with ParaFed Manawatū and the Halberg Foundation to deliver a two-day Disability Sports Festival at the Civic Centre. Thirty participants, alongside their whānau, took part in a range of inclusive play, active recreation, and sport activities.

Activities were delivered by local providers and included boxing, golf, football, pilates, pickleball, basketball, volleyball, boccia, and wheelchair basketball. Guest speakers shared their experiences, inspiring participants and encouraging conversation about opportunities in play, active recreation, and sport.

The festival provided opportunities for participants to try activities outside their usual routines, with some discovering new interests and connections. Local clubs were also able to engage directly with participants about ongoing opportunities.

The event was made possible through strong collaboration between Sport Manawatū, ParaFed Manawatū, and the Halberg Foundation, and strengthened connections between participants, whānau, clubs, and community organisations, supporting future inclusive opportunities.



OUTCOME 1

Feilding Blue Light Street Parties

Sport Manawatū supported the Feilding Blue Light Street Parties held on 13 November in Campbell Street and 4 December in Fitzroy Street, Feilding.

The events brought together local organisations to create a safe, community-focused environment that engaged tamariki and rangatahi in active play. Sport Manawatū delivered a vertical jump activity, which attracted strong participation, with many tamariki returning for repeated attempts. Whānau also took part, with encouragement from the crowd creating a positive and connected atmosphere.



- “I wish we had one of these at school to practise my basketball jumps with my friends.
- It was fun that Mum and Dad had a turn too.

Allan from Police noted Sport Manawatū’s ongoing support and the popularity of the vertical jump challenge, which contributed to the positive atmosphere at each event.

The street parties provided opportunities for play, connection, kōrero, and insight gathering around participation and perceived barriers for tamariki. Insights from these events are being collated following the final street party in March.



Saint Dominic’s Programme

Sport Manawatū worked alongside staff and whaiora at Saint Dominic’s to increase activity levels and build staff capability. The focus was on developing staff confidence to independently deliver sessions, with a longer-term goal of transitioning some participants into Feilding GRx classes.

A co-design session at the start of the term provided clear direction, with interests identified including darts, basketball, art, biking, table tennis, and volleyball. This feedback informed the development of a programme schedule running through to March 2026, after which staff will be well positioned to continue delivery independently.

Engagement throughout the programme was strong, with ongoing improvements in confidence, participation, and teamwork observed each week. A highlight was the cycle session, where bikes and scooters created a high-energy and inclusive environment and proved to be the most successful session to date.



OUTCOME 1

Youth Advisory Panel

The Sport Manawatū Youth Advisory Panel was established to create a centralised group of rangatahi within the organisation, embedding a culture of working alongside young people and ensuring their voices informed day to day operations. The panel was designed to provide advice on areas such as funding panels, including Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa, co-design of relevant events such as Manawatū Secondary School Sports Awards, and feedback on past, current, and future Sport Manawatū initiatives.

Nineteen applications were received, with 11 rangatahi selected to form the panel, including two representing the Manawatū District. No applicants were excluded, with some choosing to withdraw or being unable to be contacted to confirm interview times.

As at 1 December 2025, the panel had held three meetings with distinct objectives. These included an initial whanaungatanga session and project overview, a full-day onboarding focused on team building, professional development, and future planning, and a Tū Manawa fund development and upskilling session.

To support ongoing development, further meetings are planned for the new year, alongside the development of a 2026 work plan. The focus remains on building capability in key areas, including funding processes, with the intention of the panel advising on applications once the fund reopens.

What Moves You Campaign

The What Moves You campaign is running during December and January and encourages community members to share how they stayed active in everyday life. The campaign showcases a wide range of activities and reinforces the message that movement looks different for everyone. Through community stories, the campaign normalises simple and achievable ways to be active, increases engagement across platforms, and supports the goal of building a more active, connected, and healthier community.

The campaign features a range of local voices, including Mayor Michael Ford and Manawatū District Council executive staff members Lyn Daly and Hamish Waugh.



Advocacy on Online Casino Gambling Bill

October 2025

Sport Manawatū undertook advocacy to highlight the potential impact of the proposed Online Casino Gambling Bill on grassroots sport and recreation funding across the Manawatū, Tararua, and Horowhenua districts. This included bringing together Regional Sports Organisations and the local Member of Parliament to discuss concerns and gather evidence of local impact.

Sector insights informed a media release outlining risks to community sport funding if no replacement mechanism is introduced. In addition, Sport Manawatū's Chief Executive presented to the select committee at Parliament in Wellington on Monday 8 October, advocating for amendments that protect community benefit from gambling revenue.



RSO / Sport Codes Dinner

1 December 2025

Sport Manawatū hosted the RSO and Sport Codes Dinner as an end-of-year opportunity to bring codes together to reflect on 2025 achievements and discuss shared challenges facing the sector. Attendees included representatives from Rugby, Football, Basketball, Hockey, Touch, Rugby League, Gym Sports, Netball, Softball, Badminton, Parafed, Cricket, Volleyball, and Lawn Bowls.

The evening provided a valuable forum for open discussion on priority issues, including governance and volunteer capacity, facilities pressures, financial sustainability, and competition structures. These conversations have helped inform Sport Manawatū's focus for targeted support and sector-wide initiatives in 2026.

Feedback from the event was positive, with high overall satisfaction and a Net Promoter Score of 67, indicating strong value in Sport Manawatū's role as a connector and facilitator across the system

Key Insights

A capable and sustainable sport system

Local sports organisations are experiencing increasing pressure from volunteer shortages and governance capacity constraints, limiting long-term planning. There is strong interest in shared services and capability support to improve sustainability and reduce duplication across the sector.

Safe, inclusive, and equitable experiences

Facility access and quality are emerging as key barriers to participation, particularly for the growth of girls' and women's sport. Sports organisations also seek practical support to translate safeguarding policies into consistent behaviour across coaches, parents, and sidelines.

Strong and trusted partnerships.

Sport Manawatū is valued as a neutral connector between sports organisations and Council, with a clear preference for coordinated, system-wide approaches over individual code solutions.

Effective use of data and evidence

Sports organisations want clearer benchmarks and shared measures to better understand demand, organisational health, and what 'good' looks like.

Priority issues across the sector

Ongoing challenges include financial sustainability, volunteer recruitment, governance capability, and competition structures that attract and retain participants.

Impact

What we did and why

We hosted the RSO and Sport Codes Dinner to celebrate sector achievements, strengthen relationships, and create a shared forum for codes to discuss challenges and inform Sport Manawatū's support priorities for 2026.

How well we did

The event was well received, with 100 percent of respondents satisfied or very satisfied and a Net Promoter Score of 67, indicating strong value in the opportunity to connect and engage.



overall satisfaction



net promoter score

What difference we made

The discussions provided clear, sector-led insights into governance, facilities, funding, and competition challenges, directly shaping Sport Manawatū's targeted support and advocacy approach for 2026.

PEOPLE HAVE THE SKILLS TO SAFELY AND CONFIDENTLY RIDE A BIKE ON OUR ROADS, SHARED PATHS, AND CYCLEWAYS.

Cycle Skills in rural schools

This year, Sport Manawatū strengthened engagement with rural schools to build understanding and awareness of cycle safety on country roads. Planning was completed to deliver the cycle skills programme in Term 2, 2026, for students and teachers from Kimbolton, Waituna West, Sanson, Kiwitea, and Colyton Schools.

The programme was designed to build confidence and practical skills for both students and teachers, supporting safe and active travel within rural communities.

Homeschool Session

On 10 December, Sport Manawatū worked alongside the home-school community to deliver the Cycle Skills programme for the first time. A total of 26 students participated, with eight riding on the road and 18 using the court area.

The session was successful, with strong engagement from tamariki across a wide range of ages and skill levels. The session established a positive foundation for future delivery with the home-school community.



SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES (PLACES AND SPACES) ACROSS THE DISTRICT MEET COMMUNITY REQUIREMENTS. SPORTS AND COMMUNITY SPORT EVENTS CREATE SOCIAL AND PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS ECONOMIC BENEFITS.

He Rā Ki Tua

Sport Manawatū, in partnership with Sport Whanganui and Sport New Zealand, hosted a Regional Steering Group meeting at Te Āhuru Mōwai in Feilding on 9 October. The Steering Group included representatives from all councils within the Horizons region.

The meeting began with a guided tour of the recently redeveloped Te Āhuru Mōwai Library and Community Centre, the Makino Aquatic Centre, and surrounding park facilities. The tour provided attendees with a clear overview of the range and quality of facilities available in Manawatū, with the redevelopment positively received by participants.

The meeting also included discussion on a new initiative led by Whanganui District Council, involving the establishment of a Citizens' Assembly to inform decision-making on the future of the city's 100-year-old aquatic facility. The Assembly comprised 39 residents aged between 14 and 80 years, selected to reflect community demographics. Participants followed a structured deliberative process, supported by expert input and facilitated discussion, to assess eight options while balancing community need, feasibility, and financial considerations. The process supported increased public understanding of council decision-making and resulted in strong participant engagement throughout the process.



Manawatū Funding Forum

The Manawatū Funding Forum, held on 20 August at Te Āhuru Mōwai, was delivered by Manawatū District Council in partnership with Eastern & Central Community Trust and the Department of Internal Affairs. The forum brought funders and community groups together and provided a valuable opportunity for connection and information sharing.

Sport Manawatū participated in the forum and connected directly with community groups about the Tū Manawa, Sports Event Partnership, and Active Communities funds. Across the afternoon and evening, more than 10 meaningful conversations took place, strengthening relationships and improving understanding of available support. Attendees valued the opportunity to speak face to face with funders, particularly around eligibility, legal entity requirements, and application processes.

The forum reinforced the importance of ongoing, accessible support for smaller community groups, and Sport Manawatū welcomed the opportunity to be involved in future funding forums.

Tū Manawa Fund

Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa is an activation fund designed to provide quality opportunities for tamariki and rangatahi and support a lifelong love of being active. The fund supports locally led projects that reduce barriers and enable young people to be active in ways that suit them. To date, six organisations within the Manawatū District Council catchment received a total of \$22,259.07 to support locally delivered projects. These initiatives supported approximately 530 young people to overcome barriers to participation in play, active recreation, and sport.

Organisation	Amount
Hato Paora College	\$3,000.00
Central Football	\$2,419.00
Colyton School	\$4,049.63
Skills Academy	\$2,382.00
Manchester Street School	\$4,792.00
Basketball Manawatū	\$5,886.44
Total	\$22,529.07

OUTCOME 3

Manfeild Indoor Facility Needs Assessment Assistance

Sport Manawātū supported the Manfeild Park Trust Chief Executive to develop a needs assessment for a proposed indoor arena facility. This included facilitating an information-gathering session on 2 December to identify capacity constraints across Regional Sports Organisations and potential user groups.

The session included codes such as volleyball, basketball, netball, futsal, tennis, pickleball, badminton, and bowls. Surveys were also distributed to potential users to gather wider feedback.

Sport Manawātū continues to support Manfeild Park Trust through this process to inform future planning and development.

Manawātū Secondary School Sports Awards

The Manawātū Secondary School Sports Awards were held on 13 October 2025 and celebrated achievements in sport, active recreation, and sporting administration by secondary school students across the Sport Manawātū region. A total of 72 students were nominated across 10 award categories.

Students from Feilding High School were recognised as winners in the following categories:

- Athlete with Disability: Jonty Howland
- Female Athlete of the Year: Zahara Slatter
- Team of the Year: Clay Target Shooting Team

It is wonderful to see such a high calibre of success from across region and puts the Manawātū in good stead for future representation.



Athlete with a Disability: Jonty Howland



Female Athlete of the year: Zahara Slatter



Team of the Year: Clay Target Shooting Team

OUTCOME 3

National School Road Cycling Championships

26 - 28 September 2025

The 2026 National School Road Cycling Championships were held across the Manawātū region from 26 to 28 September, delivered by the Cycle NZ Events Team. The event brought together the country's top emerging cycling talent, with competitors travelling from across New Zealand to race across multiple districts.

Local schools were well represented, with Palmerston North Boys' High School, Palmerston North Girls' High School and Bike Manawātū Composite team including Feilding Ag High School placing in the top ten overall, and Palmerston North Intermediate School finishing second at the conclusion of the Championships.

The event was delivered across three locations:

- Saturday: Team Time Trial in Rongotea
- Sunday: Road Race in Halcombe
- Monday: Points Race at Manfeild

The Championships showcased the Manawātū region's ability to host high-quality national sporting events while supporting youth development and local school participation. Sport Manawatu worked along organising committee to ensure a positive experience was had by all participants.

NZ Road Relay Championships Awards

4 October 2025

The event was run on the roads around Feilding and Halcombe with about 1000 runners and walkers representing 145 teams from Auckland to Dunedin entered.

The Whippets Running Project, which featured runners from Auckland and Christchurch, made it three years in a row when winning the senior men's title, with the finish line at the Halcombe Recreation Reserve.

Hosting these large events has a positive economic benefit across the entire region.

Sport Manawātū utilising its positive relationship with Athletics New Zealand has secured a number of future events including New Zealand Masters Marathon Championships.



OUTCOME 3

NZCT Manawatū Active Communities Fund

Sport Manawatū successfully secured the NZCT Manawatū Active Communities Fund (MACF) for a second consecutive year, providing a \$100,000 funding pool to support individuals, clubs, schools, kura, and community organisations working to remove barriers to physical activity for residents within the Manawatū District Council boundary.

The fund was established in partnership with New Zealand Community Trust (NZCT) in response to ongoing financial barriers that limit participation in sport and active recreation. The application process was intentionally designed to be clear, flexible, and accessible, ensuring funding could reach those most in need with minimal administrative burden.

To date, 33 applications have been approved, with \$58,000 distributed across the district. Funding has been used to directly reduce cost and access barriers through support such as gym memberships and swimwear for individuals, delivery of free self-defence workshops, reduced-cost or no-cost access to programmes and activities across the district, equipment purchases for clubs, venue hire, school swimming lessons, and instructor and coaching costs. This practical approach has enabled both individuals and organisations to participate in, or deliver, activities that may otherwise have been inaccessible.

The initiatives supported through the fund reflect the diversity of the Manawatū community and cover a wide range of sports and physical activities, including kung fu, swimming, pilates, tennis, rugby league, gymnastics, boxing, running, rugby, and kapa haka. The diversity of activities ensures opportunities for people of different ages, abilities, and cultural backgrounds to engage in regular physical activity.

In its inaugural year (2024–25), the MACF supported 103 successful applications and positively impacted 2,122 people aged between 7 and 73 years, demonstrating strong community demand and reach. The second year of the fund was officially launched in September at the Feilding Civic Centre, attended by representatives from NZCT, Manawatū District Council, local organisations, businesses, and previous fund recipients, highlighting strong community partnerships and alignment with local wellbeing outcomes.

Sport Manawatū acknowledges the continued support of NZCT and local partners. The 2025–26 NZCT Manawatū Active Communities Fund remains open, with applications remaining open until all funding is allocated.



“Sport Manawatū have been fantastic funding partners. They are really well embedded in the community and have been able to channel our funding into previously hard to reach places.” — Ben Hodges, New Zealand Community Trust (NZCT).



Active NZ Survey

The 2024/25 Active NZ* regional data indicates that the majority of adults in the Manawatū region are physically active, with around three-quarters reporting participation in physical activity in the past seven days. This reflects a strong base of everyday movement and highlights the importance of environments that support people to be active as part of daily life.

Walking is the most frequently reported form of physical activity. For Manawatū District, this reinforces the value of well-connected towns, safe footpaths, local parks, and open spaces that support walking for recreation and transport. These environments enable participation across a wide range of ages and abilities and support activity outside of organised sport settings.

Participation patterns also show a decline with age, underlining the need for age-friendly infrastructure. Accessible parks, flat walking routes, seating, and safe crossings help older adults remain active and socially connected. Investment in these features supports wellbeing outcomes and aligns with the needs of an ageing population across the district. Young people remain active overall, but participation drops during the teenage years. This points to the importance of informal, flexible activity opportunities that do not rely on structured sport or formal facilities. Public spaces that support social recreation, casual play, and free access activity are particularly important for rangatahi, especially in smaller towns where options may be limited.

Cost and time pressures continue to be key barriers to participation. While councils cannot address all barriers directly, the provision of free and low-cost opportunities in public spaces plays a significant enabling role. Multi-use parks, shared paths, and adaptable community spaces help reduce access and affordability barriers while supporting high levels of community use.

Overall, the Active NZ data supports the continued focus of Manawatū District Council on place-based approaches to physical activity. Investment in parks, reserves, walking and cycling infrastructure, and community spaces supports the most common participation behaviours and helps sustain activity levels across the district.

Insights

- Around **three-quarters** of Manawatū adults were physically active in the past seven days, indicating a strong baseline of everyday activity.
- **Walking** is the most common form of physical activity, highlighting the importance of walkable neighbourhoods and quality open spaces.
- **Participation decreases with age**, reinforcing the value of age-friendly parks and low-impact outdoor activity options.
- **Young people remain active overall**, but participation drops during secondary school years, pointing to the need for informal, flexible spaces.
- **Cost and time remain key barriers**, with free and accessible public spaces playing a critical role in reducing these barriers.
- **Informal, self-directed activity** accounts for a larger share of participation than organised sport, emphasising the value of multi-use, adaptable public spaces that support different ages and abilities.

*Active NZ was refreshed in 2024/25 and, due to smaller regional sample sizes, results should be interpreted at a regional level only, with deeper analysis of sub-groups not possible.

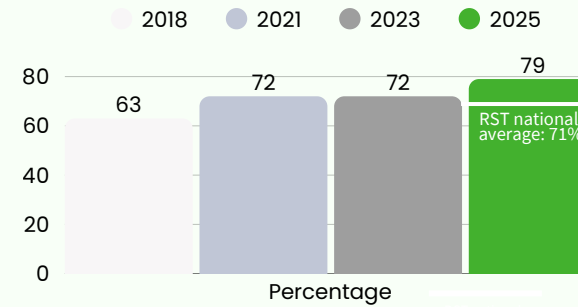
RST Stakeholder Engagement Survey

16 September - 9 October 2025

The national RST Stakeholder Engagement Survey, conducted by Sport NZ in September and October, provides insight into how the sport and recreation system is performing and where pressure points are emerging. Stakeholders continue to view Sport Manawatū as a credible and trusted organisation with a strong understanding of the regional sport and recreation landscape, supporting effective collaboration and system leadership. Thank you to all of our key stakeholders who took the time to complete this survey, your feedback is invaluable.

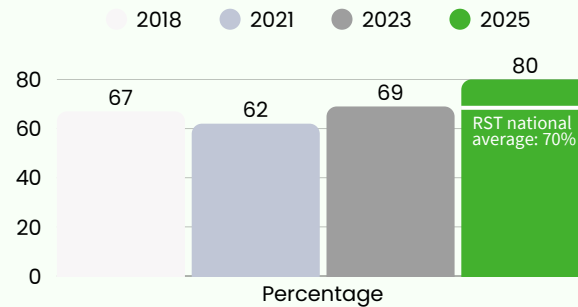


Overall performance



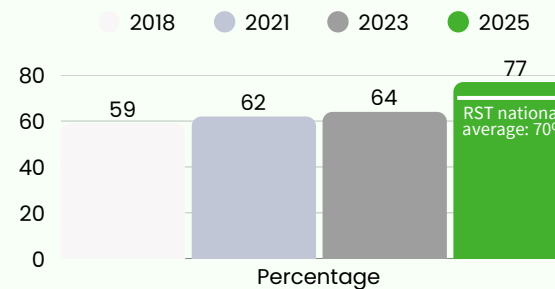
This shows that the lift in our systems, planning, communication, and sector support is being noticed.

Works in partnership to achieve shared outcomes



Partnership performance has lifted to 80%, and is notably higher than the national average, reinforcing our reputation as strong collaborators.

Shows leadership in the play, active recreation, and sport community



Our leadership across play, active recreation, and sport is rated at 77 percent, showing a strong improvement and trust in our regional role.

Incorporated Societies Act 2022 – sector readiness update

The Incorporated Societies Act 2022 replaced the 1908 legislation and introduced new governance, reporting, and constitutional requirements for all incorporated societies. From 5 October 2023, existing societies were able to begin re-registering under the new Act. All societies incorporated under the 1908 Act are required to re-register and adopt a compliant constitution by 5 April 2026. Organisations that do not meet this deadline will be removed from the register and will no longer be legally incorporated.

Across the Sport Manawatū region, progress towards compliance is tracking steadily. As at January 2026, approximately 60 percent of incorporated societies have completed re-registration, with around 146 organisations still to transition.

Regional Sports Organisations (RSOs) are generally well advanced in their own compliance and are actively supporting affiliated clubs through the process. While some clubs are expected to re-register later in the transition period, it is also anticipated that a small number of organisations may choose not to re-register due to size, inactivity, or a decision to operate without incorporated status.

Sport Manawatū has taken a proactive, system-based approach to supporting the sector through this change. Since the Act came into force, Sport Manawatū has delivered and promoted governance workshops, circulated information and webinar opportunities provided by Sport New Zealand and NZASA, and shared access to compliant constitution templates and guidance materials.

Regular follow-ups have been undertaken with RSOs to track re-registration progress and to support them in assisting their affiliated clubs. In addition, Sport Manawatū staff have provided direct guidance to organisations that have requested assistance.

Support is delivered through RSOs as the primary connection point to clubs, reflecting the structure of the sport system and the practical challenges of maintaining current contact details for volunteer-led organisations. Sport Manawatū will continue to monitor progress, share updated information, and support RSOs and clubs as they work towards compliance ahead of the April 2026 deadline.

WHAT'S COMING UP

- Have-a-go Day 2026
- Play Along the Way
- Street Parties – McCorkindale Street & Monmouth Street
- Family Fun Day
- Tough Kids Challenge
- Fall Prevention Workshop
- Tamariki Toa
- Regional Play Hui
- Rural school cycle delivery



APPENDIX

Green Prescription – Getting the Manawatū active!

Insights

89%

of participants reported being **more active** since engaging with the programme

100%

of participants feel **more confident** about doing physical activity since engaging with the programme

67%

% of participants have developed **better nutritional habits** since engaging with the programme

100%

of participants have noticed **positive health changes** since engaging with the programme

100%

of participants feel that they have been prescribed activities that are **relevant and appropriate** to their needs/wellness goals

About the programme

The Green Prescription programme (GRx) is about engaging Manawatū residents into sustainable physical exercise and giving them the skills and educational advice to make healthy nutritional and lifestyle choices. Community classes are offered in Feilding, which run for four 10-week cycles through- out the year.

A component of the GRx programme is to support sustained positive health outcomes for participants upon graduation from the programme. Education on the opportunities available in the community is key to supporting this outcome, and is achieved through collaboration with local health agencies, sports clubs, and recreation providers. Promotion of local sports clubs and events, local parks, and reserves, including walking, tramping and cycle tracks throughout the district is a continued focus.

Key statistics

- A total of 147 Manawatū District residents were referred to the GRx programme during July - December 2025.
- Seven Manawatū residents who could not attend Feilding classes engaged with the GRx Phone Support programme, benefiting from health, activity, and nutritional guidance.
- Sport Manawatū continues to link participants in with Evolve Gym, and the Makino Aquatic Centre, to deliver the GRx programme.

147

GRx referrals from the Manawatū District.

SUCCESS STORY: NGĀTI KAUWHATA COMMUNITY

Sport Manawatū, in collaboration with Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngāti Kauwhata, delivered a GRx programme tailored to the needs of the community.

The five-session programme provided participants with clear, practical education focused on a range of health initiatives, supporting improved health literacy and long-term outcomes for whānau. Participants across a wide age range were actively engaged, with strong participation throughout all sessions.

Kirsty Kauri, Kaitiaki Toiora Māori and Whānau Wellbeing Practitioner, noted that the sessions were highly valuable and inclusive, with age not acting as a barrier to learning. The programme was supported by strong community connections and local knowledge, ensuring the content was relevant and well received.

Clear structure, consistent facilitation, and opportunities for participant feedback supported a community-led approach, with participants contributing to the focus of the final session.





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