

New Plymouth District Council Long Term Plan 2018-2028

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NZRA requests an opportunity to speak to our submission at the Public Hearings.

Introduction

1. The New Zealand Recreation (NZRA) is a registered charity and the organisation responsible for providing leadership, advocacy and professional development opportunities for those involved in the broader recreation sector. We work at an agency, industry and professional level to build capability, develop partnerships, and equip individuals and organisations with the skills they need to deliver high quality recreation experiences that engage participants.
2. The New Zealand Recreation Association's membership includes recreation policy makers, territorial local authorities, voluntary organisations, regional sports trusts, outdoor recreation businesses, and others involved in the delivery of recreation in New Zealand.
3. Our role is to champion high-quality recreation for the benefit of New Zealand.
4. Our vision is that in 2020 New Zealand has a strong recreation industry that meets the needs of current and future participants, so that through recreation, New Zealanders are active, healthy, and connected
5. The New Zealand Recreation Association believes recreation is vital to New Zealand society. Recreation is not just about enjoyment. It is about being healthy, engaged and stimulated, having fun, and interacting with others, whether through outdoor recreation, community recreation, or aquatic and facility-based recreation.
6. Recreation is a major contributor to the physical and mental health of individuals, and to the resilience of our communities. 90% of New Zealanders believe being active keeps them physically fit and healthy, and helps relieve stress.

7. A thriving recreation industry can also help our nation prosper socially and economically. Sport and active recreation contributes \$4.9 billion or 2.3% to our annual GDP, and the sector employs more than 53,000 New Zealanders. The nation's recreation values and opportunities are fundamental to the nation's tourism industry. Approximately 50% of international visitors to New Zealand participate in one form of outdoor recreation or another.
8. Recreation is part of what it is to be a New Zealander. Many of us are members of clubs and groups that enjoy recreation for fun, health and social reasons. 84% of New Zealanders believe sport and physical activity bring people together and create a sense of belonging.
9. For individuals, recreation contributes to physical and mental wellbeing and provides an opportunity to meet new people. People define themselves and their communities through their recreation opportunities. Recreation fosters community cohesion and resilience, and supports the integration of diverse ethnic and other social groups. 74% of New Zealanders agree that sport and physical activity help build vibrant and stimulating communities.
10. Investment in recreation generates tourism opportunities and supports regional development by encouraging skilled professionals and migrants to consider business options in and beyond the main centres, and in areas which offer quality lifestyle and family options.
11. Research shows that recreation makes a significant contribution to social resilience. It allows individuals to thrive, and to connect with each other. This, in turn, makes communities stronger. A society in which people are active and healthy is also more economically sound.
12. Physical inactivity is associated with loss of productivity, health costs, as well as associated costs such as pain and suffering. Healthier, happier individuals are more likely to do well in other areas of their lives, whether it is in social or professional situations. This has a positive flow-on effect for communities and society as a whole.
13. Greater understanding of these benefits and their downstream impacts, along with awareness of how laws and regulations can influence recreation delivery, are key to ensuring that New Zealand's recreation opportunities remain among the world's best.

Recreation in the New Plymouth District

14. We acknowledge and thank New Plymouth District Council as the major provider of the areas sport and recreation facilities. By investing in recreation, Hutt City Council is helping to instil a lasting culture where active living matters. What Hutt City Council does makes a real difference.
15. The New Plymouth District Council has a critical part to play in ensuring people continue to enjoy quality recreation opportunities. These need to be available to everyone, regardless of age, fitness level or socio-economic background.
16. Council planning needs to adopt a long-term approach that takes into account factors such as urbanisation, population growth, an ageing population and the rise of tourism, to ensure recreation can continue to thrive amid change.

17. Research has found that in areas of activity decline, government and community-led interventions helped reverse the trend. When the infrastructure is in place (such as Aquatic facilities), people are more likely to be active.
18. Population growth and increased demographic diversity, has and will continue to place pressure on recreational infrastructure in the New Plymouth District.

Comments on key proposals

19. NZRA supports the overarching vision of “Building a Lifestyle Capital”. Green spaces and community facilities make any city a great place to live and play.
20. NZRA supports the development of sustainable community facilities and the provision of services that promote wellbeing.
21. **Consultation Topic # 3a.** NZRA supports Option 3 – Redevelop the TSB Stadium and the Todd Energy Aquatic Centre at an estimated cost of \$66.8 million. We note that that according to Sport NZ data, Swimming is the 2nd most popular form of Active Recreation among New Zealand Adults.
22. NZRA cautions the New Plymouth District Council that much work will need to be done to activate new recreational facilities. Rapid changes in demographics, participation trends and technology mean that a ‘build it and they will come’ approach doesn’t always work. Recreational assets need to be activated and programmed to make them more appealing and to break down barriers for low participation communities.
23. **Consultation Topic # 3b.** NZRA submits that the Flagship projects should be funded by a combination of rates increases, debt funding and withdrawals from the Perpetual Investment Fund.

General remarks

24. NZRA encourages New Plymouth District Council to be wary of a recreational workforce shortage and capability gap. NZRA submits that there will be significant challenges in recruiting and retaining appropriately capable staff for the new recreational facilities. NZRA encourages New Plymouth District Council to ensure there is sufficient operational resourcing and workforce development/capability to effectively activate recreation places and spaces.
25. NZRA encourages New Plymouth District Council to undertake playability benchmarking for its Parks and pay particular heed to the detail of park -maintenance contract specifications.
26. NZRA supports the Taranaki Regional Council Walkways and Cycleways Strategy, developed in 2007. We commend the recent work done by Sport Taranaki and the Walking Access Commission to provide momentum to integrated tracks and trails in Taranaki. We note that

according to Sport NZ data, Walking is the most popular form of Active Recreation among New Zealand Adults and Cycling is the 3rd most popular.