

AK Have Your Say

Auckland Council – Emergency Budget 2020/2021

Our request: please keep investing

This submission is made on behalf of Aktive and its delivery partners in Auckland, CLM Community Sport, College Sport, Harbour Sport, Sport Auckland and Sport Waitākere.

Aktive, a charitable trust, is a key strategic partner of Sport NZ, Auckland Council and major grant-makers and funders. Aktive invests more than \$11m per annum in a range of delivery partners, organisations and projects that will get more people recreating and playing sport in Auckland, with focuses on young people and communities. It plays a lead advocacy role for the sector in Auckland which includes 62 Regional Sport Organisations (RSOs), an estimated 1,500 clubs, and more than 450,000 members and 300,000 volunteers.

Covid-19 is having widespread adverse effects on every part of our daily lives, causing economic hardship and isolating people from one another.

Auckland Council is the main provider of sports and recreation facilities in Auckland. We appreciate the partnership with Council and thank it for its support. We also appreciate that now more than ever Auckland Council has to consider the choices it makes about the mix of services it provides. The fact is however that without Auckland Council investment, much of what happens in the sector would not be possible.

As recently emphasised by the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Hon Grant Robertson “*Sport, recreation and play are vital for the health and wellbeing of our communities.*” (Source: Stuff). Over one million Aucklanders are active each week which provides significant economic, health, social cohesion and wellbeing benefits to communities and whānau¹:

- \$2.0bn economic value including, \$1.2bn participation consumption, \$800m workforce contribution and 25,000 jobs for Aucklanders
- \$585m health value, including \$213m productivity savings and \$372m healthcare savings
- \$8.6m social value, including \$8.6m GDP growth driven by increased education performance and 3.4% increase in rated happiness.

Over 300,000 volunteers contribute more than 22 million hours of their personal time per annum, worth \$337.3 million. These volunteers are the backbone of the sector in Auckland.

Without sustained investment, our sector and communities will suffer, which will create significant consequences for Aucklanders into the future, resulting in wider issues for us all to manage, noting that there are documented and well-researched current, short-, and medium-term gaps in facility provision across the region.

We believe all Aucklanders regardless of age, ethnicity and ability level should be able to participate in sport, recreation and physical activity in fit for purpose facilities and spaces to enable them to connect with their community and live active, healthy lives.

Given the above, we submit that Auckland Council:

- **protects sport and recreation budget lines in recognition of the importance of sport and active recreation in Aucklanders’ lives**
- **protects sector grants that support the work of sporting and community groups (external agencies)**
- **protects the Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund**

¹ ACW Auckland City Report 2019, Portas Consulting

- ensures that the proposed \$3m deferral of the Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund is for one year (2020/21) only consults with the sector before any changes are made to the Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund, specifically if any redeployment is proposed at any stage.

Overview

We all recognise that Auckland sport and recreation facilities require ongoing attention. They need to be upgraded and maintained to ensure their longevity, and new indoor facilities and outdoor spaces are required to address the known current shortfall and the rapid growth in Auckland's population.

The impact of Covid-19

The sector is already struggling with the effect of Covid-19 and with shortfalls in spaces and facilities:

- Covid-19 has had a serious effect on the sport and recreation sector. At the beginning of Alert Level 4, two thirds (66%) of organisations in Auckland reported current cashflow and reserves to last less than six months without Government support². Sport NZ's Community Resilience Fund purely helps organisations survive the 10+ weeks of lockdown caused by COVID-19.
- This impact is exacerbated by the closure of gaming facilities and severe reductions in class four funding.
- It is therefore more important than ever that Council continues to provide grants to community and sporting groups.
- Shortfalls in the city's spaces and facilities are documented in known, current, and well-researched regional facility plans prepared by sports codes. These demonstrate current, short-, and medium-term gaps in facility provision before this current Long-term Plan period is over, including these specific sports details³:
 - Indoor courts shortfall of at least 30 courts right now, rising by an additional 24 within the life of the Long-term Plan
 - Winter sports fields shortfall in hours the equivalent of circa 30 artificial turfs within the life of the Long-term Plan
 - Outdoor netball courts shortfall of more than 70 courts
 - Outdoor tennis courts shortfall of approximately 40 courts.

Underinvestment in sport, active recreation and Auckland's spaces and facilities will have a negative effect on Auckland, our communities, and the economy.

Snapshot of our city

In addition to the pressures of Covid-19, Auckland is anticipated to grow significantly over the next 30 years. To make sure that we build on its strengths and hold on to the things that are dear to us during this growth, we ask Council to prioritise good quality facilities in our growing city.

Currently around 1.6 million people live in Auckland. Over the next 30 years this number is expected to grow by another 740,000 people to reach 2.4 million⁴.

Our love of sport and recreation

The statistics prove what we know – Aucklanders love physical activity – it is incredibly important in our lives and the lives of our whānau and friends, which was highlighted further during Covid-19 lockdown.

There is clear evidence of the huge and wide-ranging benefits of sport and recreation – improved physical and mental health and wellbeing, social connectedness, economic and productivity gains, and educational outcomes⁵.

Our 'team'

In addition to the more than 300,000 volunteers, the sport and recreation sector in Auckland comprises 62 Regional Sport Organisations (RSOs), an estimated 1,500 clubs, and over 450,000 members.

² Aktive Sector Support Survey, 2020

³ National Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy updated by preliminary findings from Auckland Indoor Courts Facility Plan; individual code facilities' plans supported by findings from Auckland Council Sport Field Capacity Development Plan; individual code facilities' plans produced by independent consultants

⁴ [The Auckland Plan 2050/Our development strategy/Future Auckland/What will Auckland look like in the future](#), Auckland Council

⁵ Sport New Zealand Value of Sport and Recreation Auckland Report 2015, Sport New Zealand Regional profile Auckland 2013-2014 and the 2013 New Zealand Census and ACW Auckland City Report 2019, Portas Consulting

The value of sport and recreation

Sport and recreation connects people – belonging and participation are valued outcomes of this. 78% of Auckland adults take part in physical activity each week⁶.

This point and others highlighting the positive benefits of physical activity are documented in Sport New Zealand 'The Value of Sport' research:⁷

- 92% of respondents agree that being active keeps people physically fit and healthy
- 89% agree that being active helps relieve stress and is good for mental health
- 85% agree that being active keeps their children physically fit and healthy
- 84% agree that sport and physical activity bring people together and promote a sense of belonging
- 82% agree that sport and other physical activities help to motivate people and create a sense of purpose
- 73% agree that sport and other physical activities help build vibrant and stimulating communities
- Evidence indicates a positive association between children's physical activity participation and academic achievement.

In addition, there is significant research demonstrating the broader benefit of sport and recreation:

- Physical activity brings \$372 million of healthcare cost savings for Auckland, as well as adding 15,949 additional years of healthy life and contributing to 657 fewer deaths⁸
- Participation in sport brings 74.3 million hours of meaningful, positive social contact each year⁹
- Evidence is emerging that underspending on facilities leads directly to lower participation levels¹⁰
- Sport and recreation operating spend has a direct and significant correlation with participation levels¹¹
- Physical activity has a positive link to improved educational outcomes, leading to an increased \$8.6 million of GDP growth for Auckland¹²
- Physical activity is delivering \$0.2 million in annual savings through reduced crime rates¹³
- Physical activity brings \$213 million of savings to Auckland through increased productivity levels, due to lower levels of sickness and reduced friction costs¹⁴.

Our challenges

Covid-19 has presented a number of challenges, and opportunities. It is important we consider these, as well as the extensive benefits of sport and recreation, and our growing city.

From the view of sport and recreation, it is essential that growth in population, both at the urban fringe and in the existing urban area, is matched by sufficient investment in new and existing facilities to meet the new demand that will be generated.

⁶ Sport New Zealand Value of Sport and Recreation Auckland Report 2015, Sport New Zealand Regional profile Auckland 2013-2014 and the 2013 New Zealand Census and ACW Auckland City Report 2019, Portas Consulting

⁷ Sport New Zealand 'The Value of Sport' Main Report, March 2018

⁸ ACW Auckland City Report 2019, Portas Consulting

⁹ ACW Auckland City Report 2019, Portas Consulting

¹⁰ ACW Auckland City Report 2019, Portas Consulting

¹¹ ACW Auckland City Report 2019, Portas Consulting

¹² ACW Auckland City Report 2019, Portas Consulting

¹³ ACW Auckland City Report 2019, Portas Consulting

¹⁴ ACW Auckland City Report 2019, Portas Consulting

Portas' 2019 Active Citizens Worldwide (ACW) research proves a direct link in Auckland between sport and recreation facilities and the increased participation rates of surrounding local communities¹⁵.

Physical inactivity already costs New Zealand's health system hundreds of millions each year (\$200 million in 2013 alone). 32% of New Zealand children are expected to be overweight or obese by 2025, with 21% of 4-year-old children in Auckland already in this category. These obesity rates are crippling our communities and our economy¹⁶.

¹⁵ ACW Auckland City Report 2019, Portas Consulting

¹⁶ Sport New Zealand Value of Sport and Recreation Auckland Report 2015 and Sport New Zealand Regional profile Auckland 2013-2014