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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

9 October 2020

### **Tough Road Ahead For Sport Clubs: COVID-19 Financial Pain & Membership Shrinking**

Insights from the 2020 National Sport Club Survey (NSCS) are now available. Over 1,100 sport clubs responded across 80 sports and all 17 regions of New Zealand. The 2020 NSCS is the third annual and is undertaken in collaboration between the New Zealand Amateur Sport Association (NZASA) and the Sport Performance Institute New Zealand based at Auckland University of Technology (AUT SPRINZ).

NSCS data indicates that many more sport clubs are losing money in 2020 (11%) than were in 2019 (5%).

A higher proportion of clubs connected to New Zealand's most traditional sports like rugby, cricket and netball report being "hit hard" by the impact of COVID-19 (15%) compared to other team sports (6%), primarily individual sports (4%) and racquet sports (3%). Further, less clubs from traditional sports indicate they will "shortly be back to normal" (31%) compared to other team sports (46%), primarily individual sports (49%) and racquet sports (56%). Fewer Auckland sport clubs anticipate being shortly back to normal (38%) than other regions of the country (up to 65%).

A minority of sport clubs received COVID-19 financial relief. More than two-thirds of sport clubs report receiving no financial support from central or local government. Those who did receive funds reported an average of \$6,100. More than three-quarters of sport clubs reported no support from a regional or national sporting organization. Most of those that did, reported receiving \$1,000.

Sport club representatives were asked to rate how helpful sport organisations at regional and national levels were, as well as local and central government, in relation to COVID-19. Overall, a mostly neutral perspective of "helpfulness" was reported, but it was noteworthy that local councils were perceived as significantly less helpful.

Based on longitudinal NSCS data, it's emerging that sport club membership is shrinking around the country. The average membership of a sport club in New Zealand has decreased from over 200 in 2018, to 190 in 2019 and now 175 in 2020. This corresponds with an increase from 22% of clubs reporting their membership shrinking in 2018 to 30% in 2020. Digging deeper, it has emerged again in 2020 that smaller clubs are shrinking further and most clubs that are growing were already large.

NZASA Chairman, Gordon Noble-Campbell is aware of the significant operational challenges facing sport clubs in 2020. "In the wake of the pandemic, the normal environment for community sport has been severely disrupted, with the financial impact of reduced income from all sources likely to increase pressure on club volunteers to make ends meet", he says.

Dr Michael Naylor the project co-lead from AUT SPRINZ notes that COVID-19 has "significantly impacted" New Zealand's sport clubs and that more comprehensive support from both sport organisations and the public sector is required. Furthermore, he states that "those sports with mostly smaller clubs must urgently explore innovative operational models for ongoing viability".

Other 2020 NSCS insights related to governance, management, volunteers, funding, sponsorship, resilience, innovation and more will be circulated through regional workshops, social media and infographics in upcoming weeks.

For further comment on the 2020 NSCS, please contact Gordon Noble-Campbell, Chairman, NZASA on 021 612 451, or Dr Michael Naylor, AUT SPRINZ, [mnaylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:mnaylor@aut.ac.nz).

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