



## KIWIS ARE INCREASINGLY ENGAGING MORE CASUALLY IN SPORT CLUBS



**MEDIA RELEASE Friday, 13 October 2023**



The 2023 National Sport Club Survey (NSCS) reveals that New Zealand's sport clubs are increasingly catering for casual members. This is in contrast to the decades-old tradition of members paying an annual (or seasonal) subscription to belong. Over one-third of club respondents (35%) reported that the number of members "paying to play" is increasing. This has important implications for those who manage and operate sport clubs.

Insights from the 2023 NSCS are now available, focusing on important organisational metrics being tracked year-on-year, as well as new thematic areas specific to this year's survey.

The percentage of club respondents that reported losing money has dropped to 7.8%, a low for the last several years and an indication of post-pandemic financial stability. The average membership of a sport club in New Zealand (203 members) has been stable for the last two years, after dropping by as much as 12% in the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021.

Chair of the New Zealand Amateur Sport Association, Gordon Noble-Campbell said "the resilience of community sport clubs reported by the 2023 survey is a positive sign, particularly given the upcoming challenges they will face in complying with the new incorporated societies legislative and regulatory framework".

For the first time, the NSCS Project Team has honed in on the way Kiwis are engaging with sport clubs in their community. The NSCS reveals that sport clubs in this country are increasingly catering for casual members. This is in contrast to the decades-old tradition of members paying an annual (or seasonal) subscription to belong. Over one-third of club respondents (35%) reported that the number of members "paying to play" is increasing. This has important implications for those who manage and operate sport clubs. Clubs that wish to facilitate participation from those not wishing to become members will need to consider new technology, payment options and marketing strategies.

This year, club respondents were also asked to report on club practices related to disabled sport participants. While most club boards/committees (67%) rarely or never discuss disability sport at meetings, more than half (56%) have signalled an opportunity in future to engage a Regional Disability Sport Organisation on an initiative. NSCS researcher and Project Co-Lead Dr Mel Johnston notes that "there is some way to go in ensuring disabled sport participation is on the radar at a community level, but the willingness conveyed here is a positive sign".

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Data on clubs' involvement with schools was collected for the first time this year, with 65% of club respondents reporting some level of engagement with their local schools, while the vast majority that currently do not engage, feel that it is important to do so. Barriers identified included lack of time and resources, and receptiveness of schools, with the promotion of the club and recruitment of members being the primary benefits. The most popular ways of engaging with schools was reported to be through the exchange of facilities (35%) and/or coaches or coach training (36%), but a variety of other initiatives were also reported.

Further 2023 NSCS insights will be shared over coming weeks. This will include a workshops in partnership with Sport Manawatu on Wednesday, 8 November and with Active Southland on Tuesday, 14 November.

Visit [www.nscs.org.nz](http://www.nscs.org.nz) for more information on survey insights and upcoming community workshops.

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### **About The National Sport Club Survey (NSCS)**

*The NSCS is an annual snapshot of the management and operation of sport clubs.*

2023 is the sixth year for the NSCS project, which 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). The NSCS was conceived to complement a myriad of sport sector data at individual level by focusing on sport clubs as organisational entities and the hub of many communities across the country.

The 2023 NSCS was open from 17 August to 15 September.

Around 800 sport clubs engaged with the survey, across all 16 regions of New Zealand. Several important metrics are being tracked year-on-year relating to club membership, governance and finances. In 2023, a comprehensive set of items related to disability sport, integrity, schools and casualisation were included for the first time.

You can read more about AUT SPRINZ here:

[sprinz.aut.ac.nz/areas-of-expertise/sport-leadership-and-management/national-sport-club-survey](http://sprinz.aut.ac.nz/areas-of-expertise/sport-leadership-and-management/national-sport-club-survey)

Further information on the New Zealand Amateur Sport Association Inc. can be found here:

[www.asa.org.nz](http://www.asa.org.nz)

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