

# Sport & Active Recreation Review 2025

Drawing on stakeholder engagement and sector insights, Community Trust South undertook a comprehensive review of its Sport and Active Recreation funding mechanisms to assess alignment with its new strategic direction: A thriving south - Murihiku Manawa tōnui.

The findings show that while some mechanisms are strongly aligned with strategic outcomes, others offer limited impact, particularly in areas such as grassroots, participation, access for priority populations and community level benefit.

Committed to contributing to community wellbeing, equity, sector sustainability and inclusion, the review identified opportunities that will improve strategic fit.

Thank you for to those who provided valuable contribution to this review. Your insights, experiences and feedback have been instrumental in shaping a comprehensive understanding of the sectors current state, challenges and opportunities.

## The Review in Numbers



\$1.9m granted to the Sport and Active Recreation sector in 2024/25



42,331 participants | 4,135 volunteers across the Trust's region



2,074 coaches | 2,591 officials across the Trust's region



91% of Regional Sports Organisations (RSOs) are supporting the Trust's priority populations



82% of RSO's are sharing and collaborating with other codes



84% of New Zealanders say sport fosters a sense of belonging and social cohesion.\*



28% decrease in volunteer numbers since 2018 across New Zealand\*\*

***"Clubs are deeply embedded in communities but need more support to manage assets and operations."***

*(Survey Respondent)*

***"Community funders like CTS are vital to this sector – they are the fabric of community sport."***

*(Stakeholder interview)*



# Key Findings

## Benefits

Funding for Regional Sports Organisations, community facilities, and franchise teams drive physical activity, social cohesion, and vibrant community spaces.

## Inclusive Practices

Encouragingly, 91% of Regional Sports Organisations (RSOs) surveyed reported actively working to improve access and inclusion for the Trust's priority groups: Māori, Pasifika, migrant, rangatahi/youth, rainbow, people with disability and older populations.

## Youth & Sector Trends

Young people prefer fun, flexible formats but face barriers like cost and travel; volunteer decline and financial strain persist, though collaboration across organisations is a strength.

# Next Steps

## Disestablishment of Sports Scholarships

Due to low strategic alignment, the Sport Scholarship funding mechanism, including support for Olympic and Commonwealth Games participation, will be discontinued from 1 April, 2026.

## Work alongside Regional Sports Trusts

The review identified the desire by the RSO sector for additional sector-wide capability, inclusion and volunteer development. Given the role Regional Sports Trusts (Active Southland and Sport Otago) play as the peak bodies regionally, the Trust sees an opportunity to work collaboratively with them to further strengthen sector-wide capability support for grassroots clubs and organisations.

## Support Collaboration

The Trust will prioritise investment in collaborative hubs and shared infrastructure, rather than standalone facilities, to improve sustainability, access, and regional coordination.

*The rugby game isn't the total focus, there is the pipe band playing at the start, half time arts or cultural groups, local teams fundraising on the side, ultimately, it is a community event."*

*(Interview participant)*

\*Sport New Zealand, (2017). The Value of Sport. Available at: <https://sportnz.org.nz/media/1312/the-value-of-sport-main-report.pdf>

\*\*New Zealand Amateur Sports Association Inc. AUT, National Sports Club Survey (July 2025). Available at: [heyzine.com/flip-book/fd05d3ce9f.html](https://heyzine.com/flip-book/fd05d3ce9f.html)

