

The value of the preferred futures work is significant

What is 'the preferred future'?

The preferred future, represented by five pou (foundations) is a concise summary of the attributes of the preferred future described in three published futures reports available online at Sport NZ - Papa Noho, Futures Scenarios and Futures Summary Report. [read in full here](#)

Why is the preferred future important?

It represents a collective agreement by a broad set of external agencies on the vision of the future for a physically active New Zealand.

Who was involved?

A collaborative multi-stakeholder process facilitated and funded but not 'owned' by Sport NZ took place in the second half of 2020 to fast-track thinking about the future. This creative process brought together people from sport and recreation organisations, academia, central and local government, high performance sport, and community groups to rethink how our system could be made more relevant, fit for purpose and sustainable.

Why was the collaborative and creative process important?

- It brought new people and voices together to explore intersecting interests and found common ground.
- We listened to, learned from and incorporated diverse cultural perspectives and a strong Māori voice.
- The youth voice raised the rights of future generations and the intergenerational fairness of current policies
- The conversation explored multiple possibilities for the future, good bad and mixed, stretching participants to think beyond short term pressures and current concerns and interests.
- It questioned our environmental, social and economic assumptions about the future and gave people confidence to challenge the present state.

Why is the description of the preferred future so positive?

- The pou represents the active future we want for our children and the communities they will live in.
- Each statement represents a huge step from where we are today and expresses an aspiration for generational change.
- The preferred future is strongly values based, making explicit the things we value, and that should not be taken for granted.
- This puts ethics at the core of our problem solving because the challenges we face today are profoundly ethical challenges requiring us to apply universal ethical principles such as human dignity, social justice, freedom, equality, the common good and shared wellbeing.
- It learns from the past, and what we want to restore and protect for future generations.
- The reports highlight the areas where there is a gap between current state, and the preferred future where our actions and decisions can make a difference from today.

What are key shifts we want in the future?

- People in all their diversity – ages, genders, ethnicities, abilities and disabilities and economic circumstances – have equitable and inclusive access to opportunities to be active.
- Funding is devolved within a high trust model to local communities who develop initiatives that work for them.
- Boundaries and silos are broken down to reduce competition for money or memberships or ownership of facilities.
- Agents throughout the system (central and local government, iwi and Māori, community groups and businesses) collaborate to achieve shared goals for the wellbeing of New Zealanders.
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations are met, and Māori are empowered to bring Māori values to the table.
- The link between the health and wellbeing of people and the environment we live in spearheads regeneration and respect for the natural and physical world.
- Environmental sustainability is factored into all financial and operating decisions.
- Physical activity is embedded as a key aspect of individual, whānau and community wellbeing.

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Pou	Key Shifts	Change from Current Reality	How
Physical Activity	Everyone has the opportunity to be active, in healthy, safe, accessible environments, and in ways that are meaningful to them.	Currently, many people do not have the opportunity to be active in ways that are meaningful to them. There are significant barriers to being active, including lack of time, cost, and access to safe, accessible, and meaningful environments.	Everyone has the opportunity to be active in healthy, safe, accessible environments, and in ways that are meaningful to them. This shift requires a fundamental change in the way we think about physical activity, moving away from a top-down, prescriptive approach to one that is bottom-up, participatory, and inclusive.
Health	Everyone has the opportunity to be active, in healthy, safe, accessible environments, and in ways that are meaningful to them.	Currently, many people do not have the opportunity to be active in ways that are meaningful to them. There are significant barriers to being active, including lack of time, cost, and access to safe, accessible, and meaningful environments.	Everyone has the opportunity to be active in healthy, safe, accessible environments, and in ways that are meaningful to them. This shift requires a fundamental change in the way we think about physical activity, moving away from a top-down, prescriptive approach to one that is bottom-up, participatory, and inclusive.
Māori	Everyone has the opportunity to be active, in healthy, safe, accessible environments, and in ways that are meaningful to them.	Currently, many people do not have the opportunity to be active in ways that are meaningful to them. There are significant barriers to being active, including lack of time, cost, and access to safe, accessible, and meaningful environments.	Everyone has the opportunity to be active in healthy, safe, accessible environments, and in ways that are meaningful to them. This shift requires a fundamental change in the way we think about physical activity, moving away from a top-down, prescriptive approach to one that is bottom-up, participatory, and inclusive.
Environment	Everyone has the opportunity to be active, in healthy, safe, accessible environments, and in ways that are meaningful to them.	Currently, many people do not have the opportunity to be active in ways that are meaningful to them. There are significant barriers to being active, including lack of time, cost, and access to safe, accessible, and meaningful environments.	Everyone has the opportunity to be active in healthy, safe, accessible environments, and in ways that are meaningful to them. This shift requires a fundamental change in the way we think about physical activity, moving away from a top-down, prescriptive approach to one that is bottom-up, participatory, and inclusive.
Business	Everyone has the opportunity to be active, in healthy, safe, accessible environments, and in ways that are meaningful to them.	Currently, many people do not have the opportunity to be active in ways that are meaningful to them. There are significant barriers to being active, including lack of time, cost, and access to safe, accessible, and meaningful environments.	Everyone has the opportunity to be active in healthy, safe, accessible environments, and in ways that are meaningful to them. This shift requires a fundamental change in the way we think about physical activity, moving away from a top-down, prescriptive approach to one that is bottom-up, participatory, and inclusive.

In summary, the preferred future is significant. It guides us towards aligned action and collaboration by giving us:

- A concise articulation of the desired characteristics of the 'preferred future'
- Consensus on what matters most to New Zealanders and collective buy-in to the vision.
- Criteria to guide strategic and operational decisions for WHAT we do. (*See side-bar*)
- A model of what good looks like for HOW we work. (*See side bars*)
- An affirmation of good things that are already happening and insight into the aspiration for doing more. (e.g. *diversity and inclusion; addressing inequality, adopting a bicultural approach*)
- Examples of different ways of working already gaining traction that we can support and strengthen. e.g. *cross-government National Physical Activity and Play Plan, Te Tai Tokerau regional strategy, joined up spaces and places planning*
- An honest commentary from diverse groups about the current state, and the case for change.

How do we use the preferred future now?

There are simple questions we can ask ourselves and others before every action and decision we take from today. More guidance will be developed soon.

Challenge ourselves to ask whether what we plan to do is:

- building a just society that is inclusive, equitable and safe?
- empowering communities and devolving decision-making to community providers, hapu, iwi, Māori?
- honouring Te Tiriti by working in genuine partnership, protecting Māori culture and promoting culturally distinctive ways of being active?
- improving the relationship of people with their environment by safeguarding natural resources, enabling universal access and mitigating and adapting for climate change?
- promoting the wellbeing of New Zealanders by acknowledging the value that physical activity brings to our wellbeing and our nation's identity?



Challenge ourselves to ask whether how we are going about things demonstrates a model of engagement and practice that is aligned to the characteristics of the preferred future. Are we:

- Being inclusive and engaging with people of different ages, ethnicities, genders and abilities?
- Co-designing and collaborating with others?
- Sharing knowledge widely and committing to publish any collateral under open data / open government principles?
- Partnering with Māori and adopting a bicultural approach?
- Minimising the environmental impact, carbon footprint and waste created during the life of the programme / project?
- Accessing trusted research and evidence to justify the objectives of programme / project and to guide our communications?

