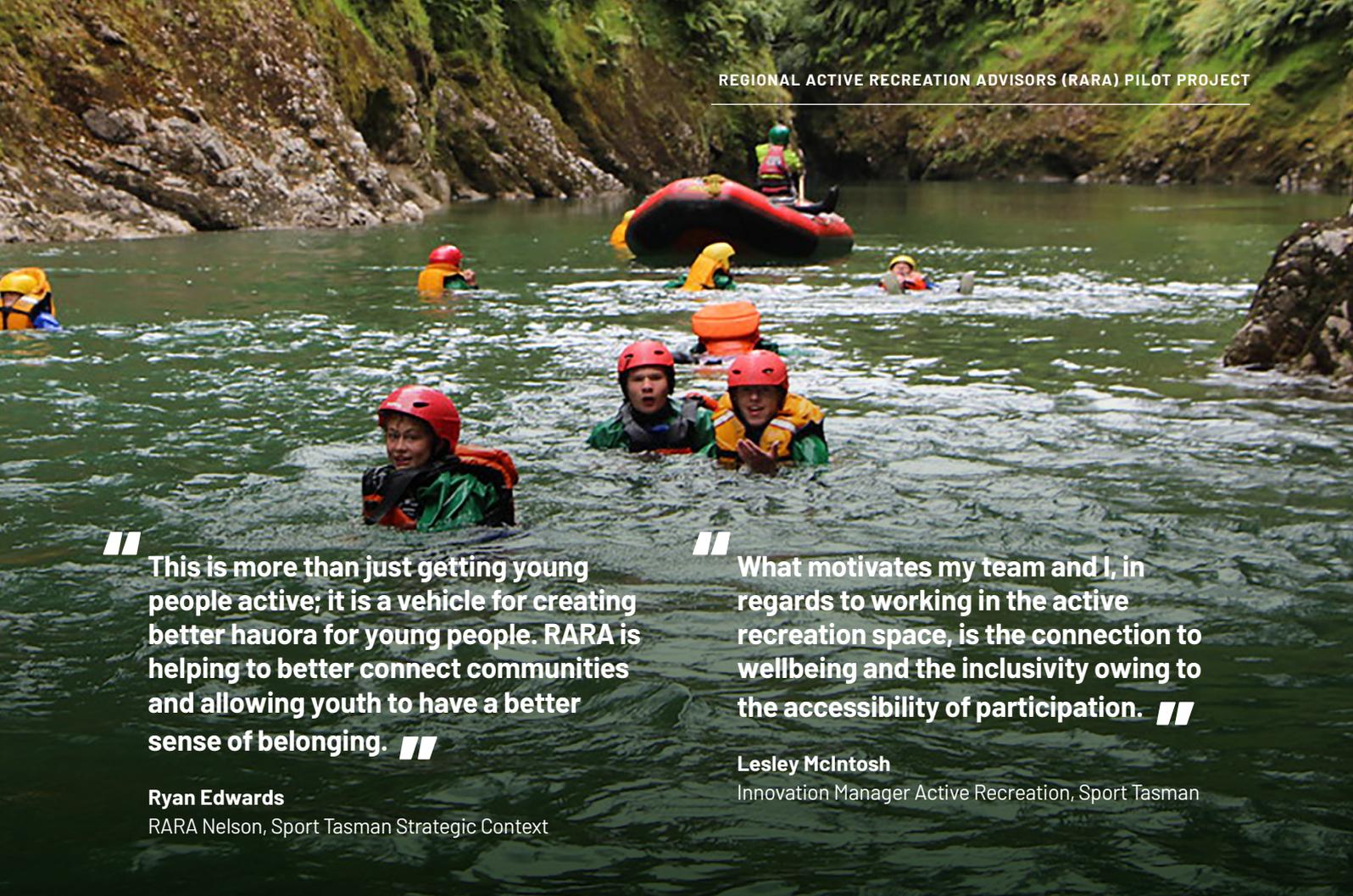


Regional Active Recreation Advisors (RARA) Pilot Project





“ This is more than just getting young people active; it is a vehicle for creating better hauora for young people. RARA is helping to better connect communities and allowing youth to have a better sense of belonging. ”

Ryan Edwards
RARA Nelson, Sport Tasman Strategic Context

“ What motivates my team and I, in regards to working in the active recreation space, is the connection to wellbeing and the inclusivity owing to the accessibility of participation. ”

Lesley McIntosh
Innovation Manager Active Recreation, Sport Tasman

Active recreation for rangatahi (aged 12-18 years) is a key focus of the Sport NZ Strategic Plan 2020-24 as we aspire to reduce the drop off in physical activity levels of young people and increase levels of activity for rangatahi who are less active.

Active recreation provides a key opportunity that encompasses such a diverse range of activities, is flexible and can be adapted to meet the individual needs of young people, allowing rangatahi to move in a way that feels right to them.

With new strategic priorities comes new budget to activate, and as Sport NZ was new to the active recreation for rangatahi space, it was decided a pilot approach was best. Sport NZ was aware that additional resourcing was needed regionally and didn't want to leap to a generic response. In July 2020, Sport NZ established a 12-month pilot project to investigate what impact a dedicated advisor within a Regional Sports Trust (RST) could have on the quality of active recreation opportunities and experiences for rangatahi.

RSTs were invited to submit proposals for leading prototypes in their regions. Sport NZ helped to shape these proposals by sharing the active recreation for rangatahi outcomes and asking for a clear explanation of who the RSTs intended to work with and what they hoped to do with the potential Regional Active Recreation Advisors (RARA) investment. Sport Tasman and Sport Hawke's Bay were chosen due to the potential learning opportunities offered through two very different projects, both demographically (migrant and refugee background, high deprivation communities) and geographically (rural, urban). Sport NZ then worked with Sport Tasman and Sport Hawkes Bay to co-design and co-implement the recruitment of the RARAs. This resulted in the establishment of three new Regional Active Recreation Advisors (RARA) which aimed to develop a model for the provision of active recreation, that is distinct from organised sport.

The Objectives

The objectives of these prototypes were:

1. Rangatahi are engaged and empowered through quality active recreation.
2. Selected active recreation providers are more capable of meeting the needs of rangatahi.
3. RSTs are more knowledgeable about active recreation for rangatahi.



The Regions

Sport Hawke's Bay

Hastings

The Sport Hawke's Bay project focused on communities within **high deprivation** areas in Hastings. The targeted communities were Bridge Pa, Camberley and Ōmāhu, all of which have limited access to active recreation providers and societal challenges including poverty, truancy, crime and unemployment.

The Humans



Jackson Waerea
RARA
Sport
Hawke's Bay

Originally from Bridge Pa, Jackson grew up in Flaxmere and experienced many of the same barriers rangatahi face in those communities today. After moving away for study and travel, Jackson returned to Flaxmere, where he now lives with his partner and 3 children. Jackson has spent the last 10 years working alongside communities as a youth worker and health promoter. He is extremely active in the Hawke's Bay community as the owner of a community gym, chairman of Bridge PA Sports Club and a coach of local and regional sports teams.

“ There was a lot of drugs, alcohol, gangs and violence in our childhood. Our neighbourhood was a tough place and you had to grow up fast. But there was always lots of love in our house and love for our community. Most of my approach I have learned through life experiences... I am heavily involved with rangatahi and these communities every day. I appreciate all of these experiences and learnings in life that help shape and inspire my mahi today. ”

Sport Tasman

Nelson/Tasman

The Tasman region has a large **former refugee community**, our new New Zealanders. The RARA project focused specifically on a group of rangatahi which was comprised of 4 different cultures; Columbian, Butanese, Kayah and Kireni.



Ryan Edwards
RARA
Sport Tasman
Nelson

Ryan's background is in traditional sport, both as a keen participant and through his professional involvement with clubs. Ryan has worked in many roles supporting youth participation, including facilitating workshops and supporting schools and volunteers to develop sport and physical activity opportunities in the Nelson region.

“ I spoke with the rangatahi about what they think is on offer and what they think is missing, but the key question came when I asked them what's important to them in their life currently. ”

Kawatiri/Buller

Buller was chosen due to its **geographic isolation** to providers, and proximity to other towns and colleges. Rangatahi from three differing towns; Karamea, Reefton and Westport, took part in the pilot project.



Dale Ashworth
RARA
Sport Tasman
Kawatiri/Buller

Dale grew up with a love of the outdoors, studying Environmental Science and exploring her passions as a scuba instructor. Dale is a dedicated mum and strongly believes in the importance of young people experiencing a fun and hopeful upbringing. She has experience in various community focused roles which have motivated her to share her love of the outdoors with rangatahi who don't have the same access to opportunities that she enjoyed as a young person.

“ These awesome rangatahi are not only just humans like us adults, I feel they are easily more intelligent because they have a view of the world that is open and hopeful. Learning that the most important things to rangatahi in Buller was friendship, family, and fitness, showed they were more in tune with the important things in life than many adults that I know. ”



The Planning

Sport Hawke's Bay

Snapshot: Camberley Community

Sport Hawke's Bay began their RARA journey by holding a lunchtime hui in the Camberley community at the kura, inviting local principals, youth development organisations and active recreation providers. This opportunity for introductions and whakawhanaungatanga helped establish connections within the community, and resulted in providers who hadn't previously engaged with Sport Hawke's Bay to leverage Tū Manawa funding to support more rangatahi to access active recreation opportunities.

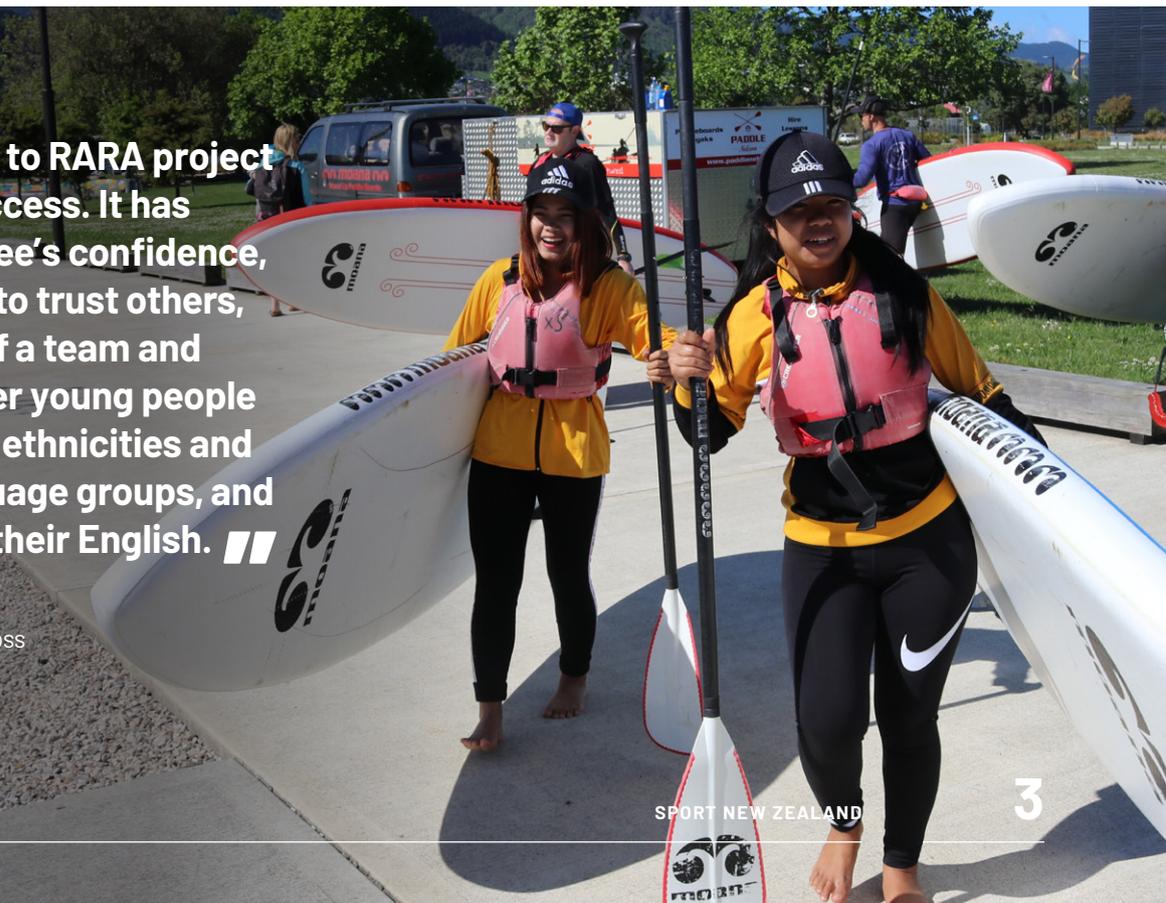
Sport Tasman

Snapshot: The Red Cross

For their project in Nelson, Sport Tasman started by mapping and building relationships with different organisations working with the refugee community, their target group. The Red Cross was identified as a key supporter of refugees with a strong connection to rangatahi within this target group. As a well trusted organisation, the Red Cross was able to assist Sport Tasman in establishing relationships, providing important cultural context and interpreters to remove language as a barrier.

“ Having access to RARA project has been a success. It has built the refugee's confidence, enabled them to trust others, work as part of a team and work with other young people from different ethnicities and different language groups, and even improve their English. ”

Megan Riddel
Nelson/Tasman Red Cross



Project Summary

Sport Hawke's Bay

The Hawke's Bay pilot didn't focus on one specific group of rangatahi, rather Jackson's role as a RARA for Hastings allowed him to act as a community connector, facilitator and/or link to Tū Manawa funding, depending on the specific needs of the groups he was working with. Over the course of the year, Jackson worked alongside 12 different providers, schools, kura and community groups to establish new connections, increase awareness and facilitate meaningful experiences for rangatahi through active recreation.

Snapshot: Te Aratika Academy

One of the key providers Jackson engaged with, was assisting Te Aratika Academy in shaping kaupapa that focused on enhancing the mana of the rangatahi and improving their matauranga/knowledge regarding significant Māori sites. Within this kaupapa, Te Aratika Academy were successful in securing Tū Manawa funding for a Pourerere based camp. Rangatahi explored this environment through snorkelling and freediving which enabled them to connect with Tangaroa and learn lifelong skills of gathering kaimoana. Insights from this camp have helped shape the development of a second camp, which successfully received further Tū Manawa funding.

“Overall, this experience has been something that all schools should be able to have. Yeah, can't wait for tomorrow!”

Ezra Rarere

Rangatahi, Te Aratika Academy

Sport Tasman

Sport Tasman's approach was to work with the same two groups of rangatahi over the course of the pilot project, building relationships within the groups and increasing their awareness of what opportunities for active recreation they can access.

Snapshot: The Red Cross

Through co-design principles, it became apparent that the migrant and refugee rangatahi in Nelson had a strong desire to integrate and connect with other rangatahi, as well as learn about Māori culture. As a result, the Nelson group expanded to include rangatahi from both Tuia Te Matangi and Whakatu Marae Whanau Ora.

Stand up paddle boarding (SUP) was identified by the rangatahi as an activity that they wanted to try. For many it was the first time they had connected with the moana in this way and some rangatahi had never touched the open water before.

“Mean just being on the water and cruising.”

Nelson rangatahi

Snapshot: Buller

The Buller rangatahi had identified **gaining a pride in where they come from** and a **greater knowledge of Māori culture** as two significant areas that they would like to RARA project to focus on.

These insights were used to develop a series of fun outdoor adventures with local providers, including a black water caving adventure, overnight rafting experience and three-day wilderness canoeing trip. The trips were accompanied by a cultural advisor, to help increase rangatahi knowledge of local tikanga and Māori legends.

“Wow, we've watched a sunrise and a sunset today.”

Buller rangatahi

“It creates a ripple effect within their whānau as well as their communities.”

Aurora Akauola

Pou Whenua, Te Aratika Academy



What Changed as a Result of these Projects

New and strengthened partnerships

Working with organisations and community groups from across the region has enabled Sport Hawke's Bay and Sport Tasman to leverage their existing partnerships and form new ones. Furthermore, the RARA projects have also helped to foster new relationships and partnerships between various providers. Sport Hawke's Bay and Sport Tasman have supported other regional and national organisations to develop their work in active recreation.

Sport Tasman supported Sport Canterbury with the shaping of their active recreation area by sharing their knowledge, journey and learning. They also supported Sport Canterbury with the recruitment of their Active Recreation Connector. Sport Hawke's Bay provided support, via webinar, to the partners of Recreation Aotearoa to understand Tu Manawa and what opportunities exist for active recreation.

“ A highlight of the RARA pilot has been local iwi and Red Cross emerging as key partnerships that will blossom into wonderful work. ”

Nigel Muir

Sport Tasman CE

“ Camberley School, Bridge Pa School and Te Aratika Academy have all formed relationships with each other to develop learning pathways through their schools. ”

Jackson Waerea

RARA, Sport Hawke's Bay

Improved understanding of rangatahi

Selected providers and RSTs have gained insight about how their activities are perceived and/or communicated and what changes could be made to better meet the needs of local rangatahi.

“ There is much more going on in young people's lives than we are often aware of. The RARA pilot was an opportunity for us an RST to pull back the veil and learn more about what young people are facing, especially those missing out. ”

Nigel Muir

Sport Tasman CE

Increased funding to targeted communities

The RARAs were able to play an important role in leveraging the Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa Fund for projects in communities that might not normally access funding.

“ There has been \$37,743 given out across four projects as a direct result of Jackson's mahi. ”

Ryan Hambleton

General Manager, Sport Hawke's Bay

Rangatahi social connectedness

Rangatahi were able to meet and connect with other young people from their region, including rangatahi from different backgrounds and cultures. This was identified as a priority for many rangatahi across the regions.

“ Even if our parents don't seek out connections with other Kiwis, this has been a great opportunity for us to bond with other rangatahi from various backgrounds and cultures. ”

Nelson rangatahi



What has been learnt through this pilot

The importance of hiring the 'right' person

The RARA role required someone who was capable of supporting (and influencing) the providers in the delivery space as well as advocating for active recreation more broadly. All three RARAs in the pilot project have a strong community development background, focusing on establishing and maintaining trusted relationships, which was vital to the success of the project.

“ The importance of Jackson being in the role was evident through his existing mana within the Hawke’s Bay communities we would be working in. ”

Ryan Hambleton,

General Manager, Sport Hawke’s Bay

The value of strong relationships, built over time

Establishing connections and partnerships between providers, rangatahi and communities took time as it requires trust, but ultimately enabled the RARA pilot to have a meaningful impact within the communities. Both RSTs acknowledged the importance of working at the pace of the provider/community and supporting existing relationships to understand the needs of the rangatahi.

“ I think you need to work collaboratively. Sport Tasman has the resources and the sporting know-how, the connections and the funding. We’ve got the relationship with the young people and with the families... together we have given these young people such an incredible opportunity. ”

Megan Riddell

Red Cross

Co-design is central to success

Co-design was a key component in the planning stage, allowing both projects to respond to what was important to the rangatahi in their region. Authentic co-design requires time and patience.

“ Start where is comfortable for the people you are working with and continue to work at their pace. This may be slower than you expected—trust the process. ”

Jackson Waerea

RARA, Sport Hawke’s Bay

Active recreation has potential to facilitate youth development

Active recreation has the potential to be more than just physical activity. Through the co-design process, it was evident that the rangatahi had other priorities including a strong desire to learn about Te Ao Māori, meet other people and connect to their environment. Engaging in active recreation was the vehicle for multiple wellbeing benefits such as improved social connections, enjoyment, and connection with whenua.

“ Engaging rangatahi in fun, meaningful and active projects has proven successful and has resulted in a positive sense of well-being, confidence, attendance, participation and transferable skills that naturally enhance their learning, and life in general. ”

Te Aratika Academy

Moving forward

Following two successful and insightful prototypes, additional investment has been approved for the wider RST network to increase their impact in the active recreation for rangatahi space. This has also meant Sport Tasman and Sport Hawke's Bay will retain their Regional Active Recreation Advisors for the next three years.

The findings from these prototypes have informed some iterations to their work, so they can continue to have a positive impact on the lives of rangatahi in their respective regions and promote the value of active recreation much more widely.





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