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# **Sport New Zealand Disability Inclusion Fund Impact Report Summary**

Adapted in 2025 by Accessible Formats Service,  
Blind Low Vision NZ, Auckland.

**Transcriber's Note:** The logo at the top of the page is  
**Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa.**

# **Sport New Zealand Disability Inclusion Fund Impact Report Summary**

## **Introduction**

In 2019, Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa launched the Disability Plan, which included funding to help bring the plan to life. One of the plan's key commitments was to invest in partnerships, programmes and funds that support disabled tamariki (children) and rangatahi (young people) to be active.

To help deliver on this commitment, the Disability Inclusion Fund was created in 2021 with a \$3.6 million investment. The fund was designed to improve the quality and equity of participation opportunities for disabled tamariki and rangatahi, especially those with intellectual or invisible impairments. It also aimed to promote inclusive practices and build long-term capability across the sector.

Sports organisations could apply for funding by showing how they would meet the goals of the Disability Inclusion Fund. Eighty-one organisations applied, requesting a total of \$12.6 million. This strong response showed the sector's commitment to inclusion.

Sixteen organisations were selected to receive funding, with each project receiving between \$30,000 and \$300,000 for initiatives running over two or three years, starting in early 2022 and finishing in mid-2025.

This commitment continues in Sport NZ's 2024–2028 Strategic Plan, which identifies disabled tamariki and rangatahi as a priority population, ensuring they have more opportunities to participate and better experiences in play, active recreation and sport.

This report summary shares the outcomes, impact and lessons learned from the Disability Inclusion Fund initiative.

## **Outcomes and Impact**

### **Increased participation**

The Disability Inclusion Fund supported a wide range of initiatives that increased participation for disabled tamariki and rangatahi. These can be grouped into four key areas:

#### **1. New roles created to drive inclusion**

These organisations created new roles to help expand their reach and deliver more inclusive opportunities.

- **Sense Rugby NZ's** General Manager expanded delivery from 8 to 15 locations across Aotearoa, supporting participant numbers to grow from 400 to 643.

- **Parafed Northland's** Inclusion Coordinator, Far North, strengthened local presence in the Far North, enabling more regional events and programmes.
- **Boccia NZ's** Sport Development Lead increased participation from 83 to 161 participants and expanded delivery from 8 to 12 regions.
- **NZ Riding for the Disabled's** Roving Coach supported RDA groups to include riders with high support needs.

## 2. Partnerships with schools

These organisations brought inclusive play and sport directly into classrooms.

- **Basketball Hawke's Bay** delivered 48 training sessions across six schools, engaging 84 disabled rangatahi.
- **Parafed Bay of Plenty's FLIPA programme** reached 250 tamariki, 70% were disabled.
- **Sport Otago's Play Lab** enabled 340 disabled students to participate alongside their peers, integrating movement into everyday learning.
- **Swimming NZ** improved water safety and confidence for disabled tamariki, with strong school engagement.

### 3. Partnerships with clubs and centres

These organisations created inclusive experiences in community settings.

- **Athletics NZ** held 13 regional Para athletics events, engaging 192 disabled tamariki and rangatahi.
- **Canoe Racing NZ** engaged 119 disabled tamariki and rangatahi in PaddleAble sessions.
- **Netball NZ's No Limits Netball programme** was delivered across 12 centres, engaging 835 regular participants.

### 4. Programme development

These organisations created tailored, inclusive programmes.

- **Golf NZ** created six All Abilities Hubs, with over 60 regular participants, and developed an All Abilities Championship.
- **YMCA Southland** launched the Y Not Squad, engaging 18 disabled young people who meet weekly for recreation and sport.

## Increased system capability

Other initiatives focused on strengthening the sector's capability to support inclusion long-term. These can be grouped into three key areas:

## 1. Disability awareness and inclusion training

Many organisations delivered training to improve understanding of disability and inclusion across the sector. Others delivered training within their own organisations.

- **Athletics NZ** trained over 550 teachers, coaches, and officials, with 22 officials passing WPA officiating courses.
- **Swimming NZ** trained over 500 coaches to work with disabled swimmers.
- **New Zealand Riding for the Disabled** reached 1,186 coaches and volunteers through 64 in-person workshops and 32 webinars.
- **Aktive** provided training that resulted in a rise in Tū Manawa disability-related applications.
- **Canoe Racing NZ** held 12 PaddleAble workshops, training 67 participants, and Parafed Bay of Plenty trained 196 people online to support inclusive play.

Other organisations focused on embedding inclusion into their core operations and developing new resources.

- **Sport Hawke's Bay** maintained a dedicated Disability Advisor role, which helped ensure inclusion was embedded across all programmes and events.
- **Golf NZ** embedded its All-Abilities programme into PGA training, resulting in 80 PGA trainees completing the training.

- **Sport Otago** integrated inclusive movement into everyday learning through their Play Lab.
- **Sense Rugby NZ** developed an occupational therapy-led, Aotearoa-specific training module.

## 2. Developing resources to support the sector

Several organisations created practical tools and resources to help others deliver inclusive play, active recreation, and sport.

- **Aktive** developed the "Understanding Disability Toolkit" and "Accessible and Inclusive Physical Activity Guidelines."
- **Athletics NZ** developed the Para Athlete Handbook and the Adaptive Run Jump Throw Coaching Resource.
- **Recreation Aotearoa** created a new Disability and Inclusion Programme Manager role and developed the Outdoors Accessibility Design Guidelines.
- **Boccia NZ** created a delivery resource in collaboration with Disability Sport Wales and distributed 30 Inclusive Boccia Kits.
- **Canoe Racing NZ** developed and delivered PaddleAble resources to support coaches and clubs.

### 3. Sustained capacity within the sector

To ensure long-term impact, many organisations are continuing the work they started through the Disability Inclusion Fund.

- **Five organisations** will maintain the positions they created, ensuring continuity and deeper impact.
- **Nine organisations** will embed project responsibilities into existing staff roles, helping to sustain momentum.
- **One organisation** created a local resource which will now be rolled out nationwide.

## Lessons Learned

Across the 16 funded projects, there were three main reflections highlighted by the project leads:

- **Change takes time.** Creating sustainable, inclusive change doesn't happen overnight. It requires patience and persistence.
- **Collaboration is essential.** Working together, both within organisations and with others in the sector, leads to better outcomes.
- **Local leadership matters.** Disability projects are most effective when they're shaped and led by local communities, because every region has different needs.



Read the full Disability Inclusion Fund Impact Report on Sport NZ's website or by clicking this link

<https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/disability-inclusion-fund-impact-report-2022-2025/>, (<https://tinyurl.com/2s4h47uv>).

## **End of Sport New Zealand Disability Inclusion Fund Impact Report Summary**