

**SPORT  
NEW ZEALAND  
IHI AOTEAROA**



# **The future of sport and recreation for disabled New Zealanders: Part 1 – About the report**



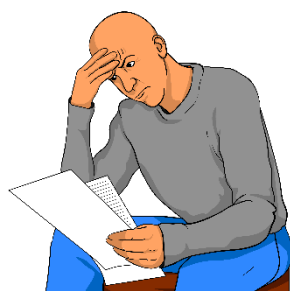
Image source: Parafed Bay of Plenty

**Published: July 2025**

# Before you start



This is a long document.



It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.



Some things you can do to make it easier are:

- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.



# What you will find in here



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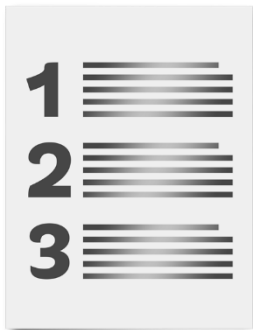


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# About this Easy Read



This Easy Read is a **summary** of a longer report.



A **summary**:

- is shorter than the full report
- tells you the main ideas.



The report is called **The future of sport and recreation for disabled New Zealanders**.

In this Easy Read we call this report **the report** for short.



You can read the full report on this **website**:

**<https://tinyurl.com/5a6vu7jk>**



The full report is **not** in Easy Read.



The report is by

**Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa.**



**Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa**

is the part of the Government in charge of making sure everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand can take part in:

- play
- sport
- **active recreation.**



**Recreation** means things you do for fun.



Here **active recreation** means physical activities like:

- walking
- running
- swimming
- cycling
- fishing
- yoga
- going to the gym.



In this Easy Read we call  
Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa  
**Sport NZ** for short.



In this Easy Read we use the words **intellectual disability**.

We know some people prefer the words **learning disability**.

We are using the words **intellectual disability** because those are the words used in the report written by Sport NZ.

This summary of the report is in 2 parts.

This is part 1.

It tells you:

- why Sport NZ wrote the report
- what the report found out.





Part 2 of the summary tells you:

- about the history of disability sport and active recreation in Aotearoa New Zealand
- what the future might be like for disability sport and active recreation in Aotearoa New Zealand.

You can read part 2 of the summary on this **website**:

**<https://tinyurl.com/5a6vu7jk>**



## Why did Sport NZ write this report?



1 out of every 6 people in Aotearoa New Zealand is disabled.



Image source: Sport NZ

Sport NZ thinks it needs to be easier for disabled people to do sport and active recreation.

They wanted to know what:

- stops disabled people doing sport and active recreation now
- might stop disabled people doing sport and active recreation in the future
- they can do to make it easier for disabled people to do sport and active recreation.





To find out the answers to these questions Sport New Zealand worked with:

- the **Halberg Foundation**
- **Paralympics New Zealand**
- **Special Olympics New Zealand.**



Image source: Halberg Foundation

The **Halberg Foundation** supports **physically disabled** young people to do sport and active recreation.



In this Easy Read being **physically disabled** means your disability makes part of your body work differently like:

- being blind
- something that means you need to use a wheelchair.



Image source: Sport NZ

## Paralympics New Zealand

supports physically disabled **athletes** to be part of big sports competitions around the world.



Here **athletes** means people who are very good at sport.

Some athletes play sport as their job.



Image source: Special Olympics NZ

## Special Olympics New Zealand

supports people with intellectual disability to do sport and active recreation.



To find out what doing sport and active recreation is like for disabled people in Aotearoa New Zealand Sport NZ:

- did **surveys**
- held **workshops**
- talked to **experts**.



A **survey** is a set of questions that lots of people answer.

Surveys are used to find out information like what people think about doing sport and active recreation.



**Workshops** are when a group of people work together to think of ways to solve a problem.



Here **experts** are people who know a lot of information about sport and active recreation for disabled people.



Sport NZ hopes **the disability sport and recreation sector** will use this report to make it easier for disabled people to do sport and active recreation.



**The disability sport and recreation sector** means all the organisations that support disabled people to do sport and active recreation.



Image source: Photosport

When you see the words **the sector** in this Easy Read they mean the disability sport and recreation sector.



Being able to do sport and active recreation will make life better for disabled people by making them:

- healthier
- happier.

## What did the report find out?

Sport NZ has a Disability Plan from 2019.



The Disability Plan tells Sport NZ how they can make it easier for disabled New Zealanders to do sport and active recreation.



You can read the full Sport NZ Disability Plan on this **website**:

**<https://tinyurl.com/yc3j97hv>**



You can read the Sport NZ Disability Plan in Easy Read on this **website**:

**<https://tinyurl.com/335uefc3>**





The Disability Plan says Sport NZ needs to focus on:

- working together with disabled people
- making sure everyone in the sector knows how to support disabled people
- including disabled people.



The report says these things are still important.



Some people think it is too hard to include disabled people in sport and active recreation.



This stops disabled people from doing sport and active recreation.



To make it easier for disabled people to do sport and active recreation the sector needs to:

- work together
- try new things.



The report says it is hard to know what will happen in the future.

The sector needs to be ready to change if it needs to in the future.



The report found there are 6 main **opportunities** for disability sport and active recreation.



Image source: Photosport

Here **opportunities** are things the sector can do to make it easier for disabled people to do sport and active recreation.

## Opportunity 1: Leadership



**Leaders** in the sector need to change how they think about disability.



Here **leaders** are people who run organisations like disability sports organisations.



Leaders can change how they think about disability by:

- talking to lots of different people
- trying new things.



It is important for leaders to learn about things like **neurodiversity**.



**Neurodiversity** is the idea that there are natural differences in how our brains work.



It says no to the idea that some people have brains that work in ways that:

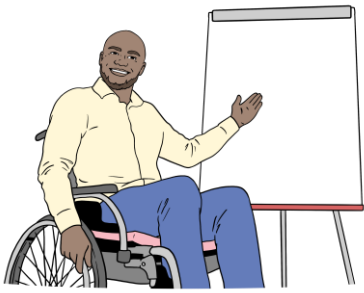
- are wrong
- need to be cured / fixed.



Neurodiversity says the world should work well for everyone.



Disabled people should have a say in how disability sport and active recreation is run.



The report says the sector should make sure:

- everyone in the sector gets training about disability
- more disabled people can work in the sector
- disabled young people get to:
  - do sport and active recreation
  - be **leaders** in sport and active recreation.



Image source: Sport NZ



Here **leaders** are young people who do things like:

- speaking up about what doing sport and active recreation is like for them
- supporting other people to understand what they can do
- showing people new ways to take part in sport and active recreation.



The sector should also keep asking what:

- disabled people think about sport and active recreation for them in Aotearoa New Zealand
- whānau / families of disabled people think about sport and active recreation for disabled people in Aotearoa New Zealand.





## Opportunity 2: Partnering



Partnering is about:

- Sport NZ supporting different kinds of organisations including ones that focus on disabled people
- different organisations working together to connect with more disabled people.



Image source: Halberg Foundation

The sector needs to find ways to pay for more types of disability sport and active recreation.



At the moment SportNZ mostly pays for sport and active recreation for physically disabled people.



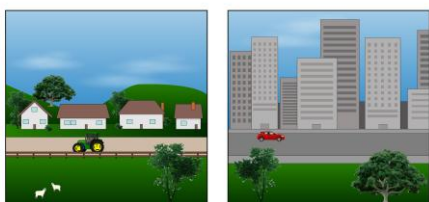


SportNZ should also pay for sport and active recreation for:

- people with intellectual disability
- people with **invisible disabilities**.

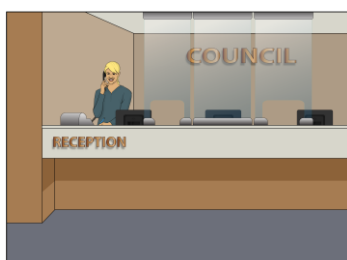


An **invisible disability** is when you cannot tell someone is disabled by looking at them.



The sector can make it easier for disabled people to do sport and active recreation by working with:

- **local government**
- **community providers**.



**Local government** means the councils that run things in each part of Aotearoa New Zealand.



Here **community providers** means organisations that run services for people in the place where they live like:

- soccer clubs
- disability support services.

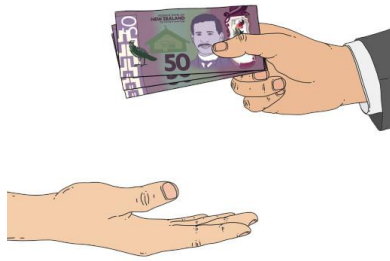


The report says the sector should work with:

- healthcare providers like doctors
- schools
- community providers.



The sector should work with disabled people to come up with new ways of paying for disability sport and active recreation.



**Funding** for disability sport and active recreation should be **flexible**.

Here **funding** means the money that pays for disability sport and active recreation.



Here **flexible** means the money can be used in different ways to meet the needs different people have.

### Opportunity 3: System capability



The **system capability** opportunity is about how the sector can work together to make it easier for disabled people to do sport and active recreation.



Image source: Photosport

Everyone in the sector should want to include disabled people in sport and active recreation.



**Policies** should support disabled people to do sport and active recreation.

Here **policies** are the rules that sport and active recreation organisations have about including disabled people.



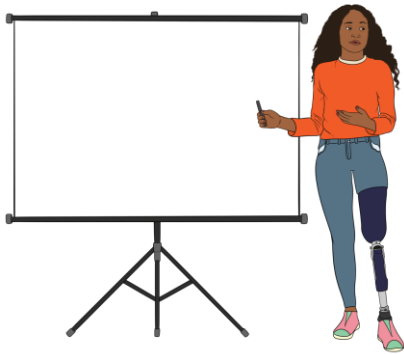
Organisations should share the information they know about including disabled people with each other.



Different parts of Aotearoa New Zealand have organisations that speak up about including disabled people in sport and active recreation.



These organisations should be the leaders in making it easier for disabled people to do sport and active recreation in their part of Aotearoa New Zealand.



The report says the sector should:

- make it easier for organisations to share information about including disabled people
- teach all New Zealanders about including disabled people in sport and active recreation
- include disabled people when choosing what sport and active recreation to pay for.



## Opportunity 4: Technological and digital access



The **technological and digital access** opportunity is about using technology to support disabled people to do sport and active recreation.



The sector needs to know about:

- **assistive technology**
- **virtual reality**
- **augmented reality**
- **AI-powered systems.**



**Assistive technology** is any technology a disabled person uses to support them like a:

- screen-reader
- text-to-speech app.



**Virtual reality** is a type of technology that uses special goggles so you feel like you are inside a computer game.





**Augmented reality** is technology that lets you use digital information in the real world.



For example you can use augmented reality to see what a painting will look like in your room.



**AI** is short for **artificial intelligence**.



**Artificial intelligence** means computer programs that can do some of the things humans can do like:

- learning
- solving problems.



**AI-powered systems** are computer programs that use AI to solve a problem.



**Digital** information about disability sport needs to be **accessible**.

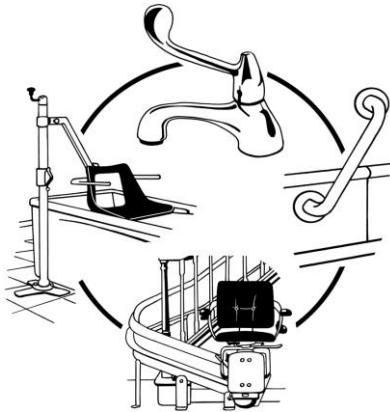


Here **digital** means anything to do with devices like:

- computers
- mobile phones.



Here **accessible** means easy for disabled people to use.



The report says the sector should:

- use digital tools to:
  - tell people about disability sport and active recreation
  - make it easier for disabled people to do sport and active recreation
- teach sport and active recreation organisations about making digital information accessible
- work together with the companies that make **adaptive devices**.



Image source: Sport NZ



**Adaptive devices** are tools that support disabled people to do sport and active recreation like:

- racing wheelchairs
- bikes you can use while lying down
- balls that make a noise so blind people know where they are.

## Opportunity 5: Agility



The **agility** opportunity is about making sure the sector is ready to change if it needs to in the future.



People keep making new assistive technology.



The sector should use this new technology.



The sector should provide **hybrid** ways of doing sport and active recreation.



Image source: Parafed Bay of Plenty



Here **hybrid** means that you can do sport and active recreation:

- in person
- online
- using virtual reality.



Image source: Sport NZ

The report says the sector should make sure:

- sport and active recreation can be run in different ways if they need to be
- people working in the sector think trying new things is important
- people working in the sector think it is important to keep learning.



The sector should run training on:

- including disabled people
- new technology.

## Opportunity 6: Individual and collective focus



The **individual and collective focus** opportunity is about making sure all the organisations in the sector know what their job is.

This will:



- make it easier for organisations to work together
- stop different organisations doing the same thing
- support different organisations to say the same things about including disabled people in sport and active recreation.



Image source: Special Olympics NZ





When different organisations do the same thing it is a waste of:

- time
- money.



The report says organisations in the sector should:

- plan for the future together
- meet often
- share the things they know about including disabled people in sport with each other.





Planning for the future together can happen:

- locally – meaning in 1 town or city
- regionally – meaning in a bigger part of Aotearoa New Zealand like Waikato.

## Where to find more information



If you have questions about the information in this Easy Read you can **email**:

**[accessible@sportnz.org.nz](mailto:accessible@sportnz.org.nz)**



You can find out more about Sport NZ on their **website** at:

**<https://sportnz.org.nz>**



This website is **not** in Easy Read.



This information has been written by Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa.



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



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