



CANDIDATE BRIEFING INFORMATION Board Appointment

JANUARY 2026

This information is a reflection of the essential elements of the position and company history as represented to Sheffield by our client and is not intended as a formal position description. It will be subject to further elaboration or clarification at a later stage in the selection process and Sheffield accepts no liability for any representations made in good faith.



ABOUT NEW ZEALAND RUGBY

New Zealand Rugby (NZR) is one of New Zealand's largest sports organisations, with a team committed to ensuring that our national game is run smoothly and effectively at all levels, all over New Zealand.

OUR VISION

Inspiring and Unifying through rugby.

It's our goal to be a world-leading sports organisation, helping all of rugby to be the best it can be.

We lead, support, grow and promote New Zealand's game, striving for rugby teams in black that are unrivalled, a high-performance system that produces the world's best talent, competitions that fans love, and a community game at the heart of the sport that is strong.

We are committed to NZR being financially secure, attracting top partners and contributing actively to the global game.

We live by Te Ara Rangatira, the four pou of The Rugby Way

**Te Pou Maioha, Being welcoming,
Te Pou Hiranga, Being our best,
Te Pou Ihiihi, Evoking passion and
Te Pou Tika, Inspiring fair play.**





WHAT WE DO

NZR leads, supports, grows and promotes New Zealand's game from the community game through to our representative Teams in Black.

Rugby holds a very special position in our country, giving us an incredible opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of New Zealanders.

We aspire to take a holistic approach to the welfare of our people - physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social, focusing on the power of rugby to assist them to improve their lives.

NZR aims to create an environment that is attractive and welcoming, a game for all.





OUR BOARD

Our Board is charged with setting strategy, direction and policy for New Zealand Rugby (NZR), and is ultimately responsible for the decisions and actions of NZR Management and Staff.

Many of the decisions concerning New Zealand's national teams, domestic competitions, financial management and rugby traditions can only be made by a vote of the Board.

Following a governance review report released in August 2023 and subsequent constitutional changes made at general meetings this year the NZR governance structure is as follows:

The Board consists of nine Board Members, who select one of their number to be the Chair. The board members are appointed by the Appointments and Remuneration Panel subject to ratification by NZR's voting members.

One of the Board Member positions must be filled by a Board Member who whakapapas to Māori and has knowledge, understanding and lived experience of te ao Māori in a complex organisational context. Another position must identify and have lived experience as Pasifika with ancestral and authentic cultural connections and an ability to apply a Pasifika world view in a complex organisational context. Three Board Members must have served on the board of a New Zealand Provincial Rugby Union or have Provincial Union execution management experience. The constitution also requires the board to comply with its gender diversity targets, which currently require that at least 40% of the board are female.

All Board Members must during their term be independent of Provincial Unions and certain other rugby organisations.

Under the NZR Constitution, three of the nine Board members retire annually by rotation and are eligible for reappointment. For this appointment process there are three positions available. Existing board members are eligible to reapply for the positions currently held. The retiring members are expected to reapply.

The governance roles are paid. Formal board meetings are held 7 times per annum with further days of board strategy, committee meetings run alongside board meetings. Meetings are held in person or online. Directors will be expected to invest time outside of meetings in developing relationships and building consensus around board decisions with other board members and key stakeholders. Attendance at events, such as rugby matches (as appropriate) will also be expected.

Terms are three years and a maximum cumulative term of nine years (subject to potential extension in exceptional circumstances). These appointments are for a full term with the ability to be reappointed after this time for a further three year term.

Further information surrounding **NZR's governance, constitution and annual reports** can be found [here](#).





SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK FOR BOARD MEMBERS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this framework is to support the best possible governance structure, process, and organisational capabilities required for the effective governance of NZR.

NZR should be governed by the best possible mix of qualified directors with relevant experience to deliver the matrix of knowledge, attributes, and skills, required to govern NZR and its subsidiaries effectively and who, together, can engage authentically with the diversity of perspectives and interests that should inform NZR's decision making.

The full Skills & Competency Framework can be found [here](#).

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Any board must have the capability to address known challenges and opportunities between the current state and the desired future state (as expressed in the [strategic plan](#)).

For NZR, this includes:

- Societal and demographic change and the changing place of rugby within a rapidly changing world
- Player, coach, match official and volunteer attraction and retention
- The professional era and the advent of private equity investment
- The emergence and growth of the women's game and the need for understanding of girls' and women's experiences and aspirations in the rugby landscape from participation to leadership
- Declining live attendance within the context of a significant potential domestic and international fan base
- Developing sustainable business models
- Varied business and stakeholder relationships.

These, and other challenges and opportunities, will require the attention of the NZR Board in addition to understanding the commercial aspects of the game.





SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

The NZR Board must be able to govern at an expected level of professional practice.

This will require governance experience at a level commensurate with the NZR business. The attributes required by the NZR Board are outlined in **Schedule 1: 2026 Skills & Competencies Matrix**, but of equal importance are the soft skills required to govern effectively. **This framework is reviewed annually and is subject to change.**

Specifically, NZR Board members should have the following:

- Sound commercial skills
- Financial acumen (all directors need a level of competency)
- Deep knowledge of rugby at all levels of the game in New Zealand
- Experienced leadership capability
- Generic and domain skills as outlined in the **Skills & Competencies Matrix in Schedule 1**.

INDEPENDENCE

All Board members must be independent and should not be influenced by any specific interest group so they can respond to issues from a broad range of stakeholders across the wider rugby ecosystem.

DIVERSITY

The NZR Board should demonstrate diversity of thought and background.

Diversity is a broad consideration but at a minimum, the following three areas are required:

- i. The NZR Board shall comply with its gender diversity targets which currently require at least 40% of the Board to be self-identifying women.
- ii. At least one NZR Board member will have whakapapa lived experience in relation to, and knowledge and understanding of, Te Ao Māori in a complex organisational context (and the Appointments and Remuneration Panel must consult the NZ Māori Rugby Board In this regard), and the strong connection Te Ao Māori and tangata whenua have to rugby in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- iii. At least one NZR Board member must identify and have lived experience as Pasifika with ancestral and authentic cultural connections and an ability to apply a Pasifika world view in a complex organisational context, and the NZR Board will possess an understanding of the growing contribution of Pasifika players to the game.

To avoid box-ticking, all directors need to understand and consider matters ii & iii above.

It is not desirable to have a single voice of any kind on the NZR Board as it is too easily marginalised.

RUGBY KNOWLEDGE

The NZR Board requires experience and knowledge of rugby.

Understanding of the governance and management of the game at all levels is valued. Knowledge and understanding of community, schools, and provincial rugby is to be reflected on the NZR Board (at least as set out in the Skills & Competencies), as is expertise and proven leadership in high-performance rugby and sport. In order to satisfy this criterion, as it relates to community and provincial rugby, at least three members of the NZR Board must have served on the Board of a New Zealand provincial Rugby Board.

The ability to bring and apply up-to-date knowledge and experience of the professional and amateur game, accompanied by an understanding of the complex structure of rugby domestically and internationally, and the social, cultural, and economic trends that motivate interest in the sport today should also be accommodated.

It is anticipated that all Board members, whatever their background, make efforts to gain a perspective and understanding of the game at all levels and in a variety of contexts.

There is, across all sports governance, a tendency for boards to get involved in the game itself. That is not the job required by board members, that is the role of management and the coaching team. The NZR Board sets the desired outcomes and has sufficient understanding to ask the right questions.

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY COMMERCIAL

The advent of private investment in the game, and the creation of a separate New Zealand Rugby Commercial (NZRC) entity, has a fundamental impact on the desired make-up of the NZR Board.

NZRC is a subsidiary of NZR. As the 'parent' entity, NZR remains accountable for funding and the performance of this commercial entity and signs off on many of its important decisions. NZRC is a vehicle for NZR to achieve certain commercial objectives. NZRC is not independent, its strategy is a subset of, and a way to achieve, the NZR strategy.

For that reason, the NZR Board continues to need directors who are competent to oversee the relationship, approve and support the strategic plan including funding, to monitor that the subsidiary performs as required, and to manage the challenges and risks accompanying the partnership with private equity and, perhaps ultimately, other external investors.

This means two things, a general competency on the NZR Board and specific high-level competencies for those NZR directors who serve on the subsidiary NZRC Board. The interests of NZR are best served by having a mix of NZR and specialist appointments.

The NZRC Board has non-NZR directors with 'strong governance experience and technical competencies at the global level'. To have an effective working and oversight relationship the NZR Board needs commensurate skills around the table.

New Zealand Rugby (NZR) and the NZR Stakeholder Panel confirm the six-person Appointments and Remunerations Panel (ARP) have been appointed. The ARP plays a crucial role in the appointment process and will shortlist, interview and select the three NZR Board members. NZR's voting members will then vote to ratify the appointees in May.

TIMELINE

11 February 2026	Applications close Wednesday 11 February 2026
w/c 23 February	New Zealand Rugby Shortlist Interviews
30 Feb - 6 March	Due Diligence, Decision
April - May	Notification of nominations to voting members
7 May	Ratified NZRU AGM

HOW TO APPLY

Candidates can apply, in strict confidence, online at sheffield.co.nz/Job-Search. To apply in strict confidence now, email your cover letter and CV to cvakl@sheffield.co.nz quoting 9003. Applications close Wednesday 11 February 2026.

Emails will be electronically acknowledged, and further correspondence may be by email.

Any additional enquiries phone Raewyn Brown on +64 21 917 203 or Ian Taylor on +64 27 487 7424.

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