



STRATEGY 2025



Te Ara Ranga Tira

The Rugby Way

BE WELCOMING

TE POU MAIOHA

RUGBY IS A GAME FOR ALL, REGARDLESS OF OUR BACKGROUNDS, BELIEFS OR IDENTITY

BE OUR BEST

TE POU HIRANGA

WE STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE ON AND OFF THE FIELD, DRIVEN BY A BELIEF THAT RUGBY CAN IMPROVE PEOPLE'S LIVES

BE PASSIONATE

TE POU IHIIHI

RUGBY IS MORE THAN JUST A GAME, IT BUILDS COMMUNITIES AND FOSTERS A LIFELONG LOVE OF THE GAME

PLAY FAIR

TE POU TIKA

WE DO WHAT WE SAY WE'LL DO, ACTING WITH HONESTY AND INTEGRITY AT ALL TIMES

Chair & CEO introduction

Ngā kupu whakataki a ngā rangatira



Kia ora koutou,

We are in a very special position at New Zealand Rugby. We are the kaitiaki of the game New Zealanders love – whether it’s down at the local club on a chilly Saturday morning or getting up in the middle of the night to support our Teams in Black overseas. Being guardians of something so treasured by Kiwis comes with great responsibility. This is something we are acutely aware of as we present our vision and commitment to reimagining rugby over the next four years.

This strategy comes at an intriguing time. We remain hopeful the world will emerge from COVID-19, but there is strong possibility of continued uncertainty and challenges. On top of the very human impact of the virus, every facet of life around the world has been impacted by the pandemic. Organisations have needed to reassess and retool on the fly in order to survive. At NZR, we’re excited about the opportunity for change at this time, a chance for us to demonstrate the ability of rugby to inspire and unify people following a difficult couple of years. A post-COVID re-set offers us a great launch pad to be bold in reimagining rugby – to look at every aspect of the game and ensure it is enjoyable, sustainable and well-positioned for any future challenges.

What follows are our commitments to rugby over the next four years. We’re future-focused while respecting where we’ve come from. Lessons from throughout rugby’s strong history, as well as more recent events, have informed our direction in a way that will look after the entire game, from grassroots to elite international performance. We intend to further grow rugby at the heart of our communities because we know that the strength of grassroots flows throughout the game. Teams across New Zealand are loved passionately here at home and admired overseas, and through increased understanding of our fans and customers, we know we can create world-class sporting experiences and life-long attachment to our brands and teams. Our Teams in Black will be enabled to win with mana, bringing together on- and off-field support structures to allow for

optimal performance, with a focus on key events like Rugby World Cups, Commonwealth Games, Olympics and World Rugby Sevens Series. To do all of this, we know we must seek increased investment and develop a sustainable operating model for the future. The opportunity to leverage our brands and create innovative partnerships will allow revenues to flow through all of rugby.

Those goals will be supported by three specific approaches underpinning everything we do. To have a thriving game, we must have thriving people at all levels, and make rugby a welcoming space for all. Similarly, we will prioritise the holistic welfare of our players at every turn through increased resource and education. Finally, we intend to harness technology wherever possible to chase innovation, be it providing for our elite programmes, connecting regional networks or enhancing the fan experience.

As we head into this period with these goals in mind, we’d like to express gratitude to our stakeholders and people that make the game happen at all levels, especially after the challenges of the last couple of years. It’s a privilege and honour for us to be guardians of the game we all love, and we know that rugby is only great because of the countless people who live and breathe it day to day.

We can assure you that everyone at NZR is energised by the challenge in front of us all, and with the support of the wider rugby whānau, we are excited where we can collectively take the game.

Ngā mihi,

Stewart Mitchell
Chair

Mark Robinson
Chief Executive Officer

Our story

A tātou kōrero

A lot has changed since the first game of rugby on our soil in 1870, but one thing has remained constant – Kiwis love the game.

Since the inception of the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (as it was known) in 1892, the organisation administering the game has had a significant responsibility as guardians of rugby. Today, as New Zealand Rugby (NZR), the health of our national sport remains our key focus. We strive to lead, grow and promote rugby from the grassroots level through to our Teams in Black.

The Rugby Way (Te Ara Ranga Tira) drives everything we do, which is about being welcoming, being our best, evoking passion and inspiring fair play. Our people are rugby fans first and foremost, dedicated to providing the very best experience to anyone who interacts with our game. They bring rugby to life at every level, from the management of our national representative teams, presentation of domestic competitions and Test matches, through to assisting the delivery of community rugby. They drive programmes focusing on injury prevention, mental wellbeing, respect and inclusion, positive sideline environments and making rugby accessible to anyone wanting to play it.

We stand for equity and inclusion and have learned valuable lessons from where we've come from. A close partnership with the Māori Rugby Board and the creation of a Pasifika Advisory Group is guiding

us towards an increased understanding and capability to provide positive rugby experiences for Māori and Pasifika. We're thrilled at the advancement of women and girls in the game, with the lasting legacy of Rugby World Cup 2021 (played in 2022) and momentum of Super Rugby Aupiki demonstrating the very real pathways for females who dream of a career in the game.

In Aotearoa, there's over 450 rugby clubs, more than 147,000 players, 9,500 coaches, close to 1,500 referees and countless volunteers who contribute to our game week in, week out. We know that when we have a strong, vibrant domestic game that our New Zealand teams excel internationally. Our Teams in Black represent our country with exceptional skill and massive pride, and our on-field performances and support structures are revered around the world. We're proud to work with a wide range of fantastic partners to help facilitate this. We're grateful for the support of our 26 Provincial Unions, Māori Rugby Board, Super Rugby clubs, sponsors, the New Zealand Rugby Players' Association, New Zealand Government and all who value the game like we do.

Parts of rugby have changed, but that core has remained. It's a game which inspires and unifies families, communities, regions and a nation, something we will always champion and cherish.

Strategy snapshot

Rautaki tāpoto

Our vision is to inspire and unify through rugby

Our strategic pillars are:



**Winning
with mana**



**Rugby at the heart of
our communities**



**Loved game,
loved brands**



**Unleashing rugby's
commercial potential**

We'll enable success through:



**Enhancing the
welfare of our players**



**Thriving people,
thriving game**



**Leading through
technology**

Te ara kākanorua

Our bicultural journey

“Kua tawhiti kē tō haerenga mai kia kore e haere tonu. He nui rawa ō mahi kia kore e mahi tonu.”

You have come too far not to go further. You have done too much not to do more.

Sir James Henare



Dr Farah Palmer
Chair, Māori
Rugby Board

“E aku nui e aku rahi nō te tī, nō te tā, tēnā tātou i runga i ngā ahuatanga o te wa nei, Paimārire. E te hunga wairua e moe e oki, tātou ngā mōrehu e oho, e ora e. Tīhei Mauri ora.

“The New Zealand Māori Rugby Board is proud to present its Strategic Plan for the first time alongside NZR’s strategic plan. Presenting both plans together conjures up the image of a waka hourua (double-hulled ocean-going canoe) which will provide safety and shelter for all in rugby as we navigate our journeys together to re-imagine rugby in times of ongoing uncertainty.

He waka eke noa ka tika – indeed we are all in this waka together.”



Stewart Mitchell
Chair, NZR Board

“New Zealand Rugby is invested in this journey from governance to frontline. We know that by working in partnership with the Māori Rugby Board, we can learn and implement respectful cultural practices which will enrich our organisation and people.”

New Zealand Rugby acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand, and Māori as tangata whenua of our land.

Māori culture forms a vital and valued part of our national identity, it is weaved through our society influencing how we see ourselves and how we are viewed by the world. It is unique to us here in Aotearoa, and something that we at New Zealand Rugby are incredibly proud of.

Recognising the significance of Māori culture and values to rugby, as well as the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles, New Zealand Rugby and the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board strive to develop better outcomes for not only Māori rugby, but Māori involved in rugby at every level.

We champion this within our Teams in Black by creating rugby environments that value and practice te ao Māori concepts, and within our community through the delivery of programmes such as Whatumanawa (mentoring), E Tū Toa (leadership) and Under 18 Māori regional development camps for young men (Whatukura) and women (Māreikura), which are delivered within a Māori context, for Māori and by Māori. We will continue to build on the success of these initiatives to enhance our reach and impact.

As an organisation, we know we must look internally and challenge ourselves to develop diversity of people, thought, decision making and strengthen our cultural capability. We strive to build our knowledge of te reo Māori, tikanga Māori, and Te Tiriti principles, and at the same time gain a better understanding of why these are important to tangata whenua and Aotearoa. Only then can we truly champion a bicultural environment in rugby that creates deeper connections and genuine partnerships with whānau, hapū and iwi for the betterment of our game, tangata whenua and Aotearoa New Zealand overall.

Te Rautaki Poari Māori

Māori Rugby Board strategy

Our vision is to reimagine rugby to ensure positive outcomes for Māori through rugby

Our four pou:

Tātakitanga

Uplift Māori
leaders

Build imminence within the NZR system, to achieve our cultural, social and commercial objectives.

Puawaitanga

Enhance Māori
through rugby

Develop opportunities for Māori in rugby to strive and achieve.

Hauoratanga

Promote holistic
wellbeing

Raise awareness of the importance of holistic wellbeing in and through rugby.

Angitutanga

Uplift Māori
lives

Create opportunities and build capacity through rugby for our communities and people.

Our five values underpin all that we do:

Whanaungatanga

Unify and connect

Rangatiratanga

Leadership

Poutamatanga

Achievement

Taumatatanga

Excellence

Kaitiakitanga

Guardianship

For more information on the Māori Rugby Board strategy, visit www.nzrugby.co.nz/maorirugby



Les Elder
Black Fern #188

“When I think about winning with mana, I don’t necessarily think about just the result of a rugby game. It means winning when no one is watching, even before coming into the Black Ferns environment. Our values and standards are written into our kawa (protocols) – the things which are non-negotiable and you have to display in your actions.”



Aaron Smith
All Black #1112

“The black jersey and winning is what drives us. The mana it takes to win, of never giving up and knowing you gave it everything. We’re gracious in defeat and humble with our victories. Winning with mana is the epitome of the Kiwi spirit.”



Our goal is to win pinnacle events and enhance the mana and legacy of rugby in New Zealand.

We will achieve this for our women and men by driving an aligned, world-leading professional rugby and performance environment that embraces Te Ara Ranga Tira through:

- 1.** Sustainable and engaging competitions.
- 2.** An aligned and effectively-resourced player development pathway.
- 3.** Identification, development and retention of our best people who work in the game.
- 4.** Effective investment in critical areas of competitive advantage.
- 5.** Enhancing care and connection and driving high standards of performance culture throughout rugby.
- 6.** Strong working relationships with key partners.

**Kia toa rangatira ai
Winning with mana**



Rebecca Stanaway
Referee and North
Harbour Rugby Union
Board Member.

“Ako Wāhine was my first opportunity to be amongst other women who live and breathe rugby. I had a great three days connecting with likeminded women who want to make a difference. It empowered me not only as a person but also in rugby. While it’s focused on driving better outcomes for women in rugby, I interact with men, women, boys and girls, and my takeaways from Ako Wāhine will contribute to the game as a whole.”

The Ako Wāhine programme brings women in our game together for education and development, with a strong focus on connection and community. Coaches, referees, managers and administrators share their experiences, upskill and grow their capabilities and take this back to their local communities. The programme has been run around the country since its inception in 2020.



Our goal is for rugby to be at the heart of our communities, and communities at the heart of rugby.

We will achieve this by:

- 1.** Supercharging women’s and girls’ participation in the game, springboarding off the success of an inspirational RWC2021 (played in 2022).
- 2.** Increasing opportunities to engage in rugby through a participant-centred approach.
- 3.** Enhancing players’ experiences through the quality of coaching and refereeing.
- 4.** Creating an inclusive, empowering and enjoyable environment for teenagers, women and girls.
- 5.** Future-proofing all parts of the rugby delivery system.
- 6.** Supporting Provincial Unions to sustainably deliver on their purpose.

Te tumu whutupōro

Rugby at the heart of our communities



Victor Walker
Ngāti Porou East
Coast superfan

“For me, Ngāti Porou East Coast is a form of true love – in sickness and in health. I’ve been there for 100-0 defeats, and there for the glory days like the Meads Cup win in 2012. I still have that game recorded and watch it regularly, cheering like it’s live – no one better tape over it ever!”

“Elite players are high performance athletes, and I think of myself as a high performance supporter. You’ve had all this adrenaline for 80 minutes, all these endorphins, and that sense of being in the right place at the right time transcends everything. That’s why you do it, for those moments.”

Victor Walker is a lifelong follower of rugby and a mighty presence at Ngāti Porou East Coast games, especially at Whakarua Park, Ruatoria.



Our goal is to ensure our game and our brands shine locally and on the global stage.

We will achieve this by:

- 1.** Embracing our role as kaitiaki of rugby, capturing and inspiring the hearts and minds of New Zealanders.
- 2.** Building a deep understanding of our customers through rich analytics and insights.
- 3.** Creating and building direct relationships with identified fans in target markets.
- 4.** Understanding and investing in our priority brands.
- 5.** Being a sustainable and socially responsible corporate citizen and outstanding commercial partner.
- 6.** Creating world-class customer and partner experiences.

Tākaro tūturu, waitohu pūmau

Loved game, loved brands



Mohed Altrad
President of the
Altrad Group, Major
Global Partner of NZR.

“The power and passion of sport transcends business. There are commercial opportunities in professional sport, but there’s also the possibility to inspire and unify people with the spirit of sportsmanship, respect, participation and community-building. Those are values that we hold dear, and we’re proud to partner with New Zealand Rugby to champion those through the growth of the game at all levels.”

In 2021, Altrad joined with New Zealand Rugby as our Major Global Partner and Official Front of Jersey Sponsor.



Our goal is to unleash rugby’s commercial potential and invest sustainably in the game.

We will achieve this by:

- 1.** Supercharging revenue streams through content, customer data and global connectivity.
- 2.** Exponentially growing our global connected and engaged fan database.
- 3.** Unleashing and maximising the unique value of our brands.
- 4.** Building innovative and world-leading partnerships.
- 5.** Creating an efficient and sustainable operating model, to support all of rugby.

Tukuna te pitomata pākihi whutupōro

Unleashing rugby’s commercial potential



Our goal is to ensure every player is safe and well.

We will achieve this by:

- 1.** Enabling environments that support the physical, mental and cultural wellbeing of all players.
- 2.** Continuing to review and evolve the laws and structures of the game to safeguard our players.
- 3.** Investing in research, data and education to ensure we are at the forefront of player safety and wellbeing initiatives.
- 4.** Focusing on the recruitment, retention and upskilling of medical staff and first responders who support player welfare across the game.
- 5.** Implementing leading edge programmes that reduce the incidence and severity of injuries across all levels of the game.
- 6.** Recognising the growth of female participation and delivering initiatives that address their specific needs for safety and wellbeing.

Hāpai hauora o te tangata
Enhancing the welfare of our players



Our goal is to enable a world-leading sports organisation and engaging, diverse and inclusive environments across rugby.

We will achieve this by:

- 1.** Realising our ambition through identifying, recruiting and supporting high-performing individuals at NZR.
- 2.** Building internal leadership capability to effect transformational shifts and impacts in rugby.
- 3.** Developing equitable, inclusive pathways for people of any gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation
- 4.** Working with Māori & Pasifika communities to build our capability and responsiveness.
- 5.** Creating safe rugby environments through the delivery of quality education and change programmes aimed at reducing harm.

Mauri tū, mauri ora
Thriving people, thriving game



Our goal is to become the most technologically-enabled rugby organisation in the world.

We will achieve this by:

- 1.** Identifying, creating and deploying best practice community rugby platforms to support how communities connect with rugby, and how rugby connects with communities.
- 2.** Enhancing existing digital platforms and pioneering innovative new ones to connect with our fans and partners.
- 3.** Harnessing the power of data and analytics to enable informed decision making and operational excellence.
- 4.** Identifying and developing leading edge professional rugby platforms to support our teams and maximise competitive advantage.



Rugby World Cup 2021 (played in 2022) will inspire the next generation and leave an incredible legacy for the game in Aotearoa New Zealand. By hosting this pinnacle event, our country will witness the world's best players and what's possible when we supercharge the women's game.



North Harbour



Counties Manukau



Waikato



Taranaki



King Country



Bay of Plenty



Whanganui



Horowhenua-Kapiti



Tasman



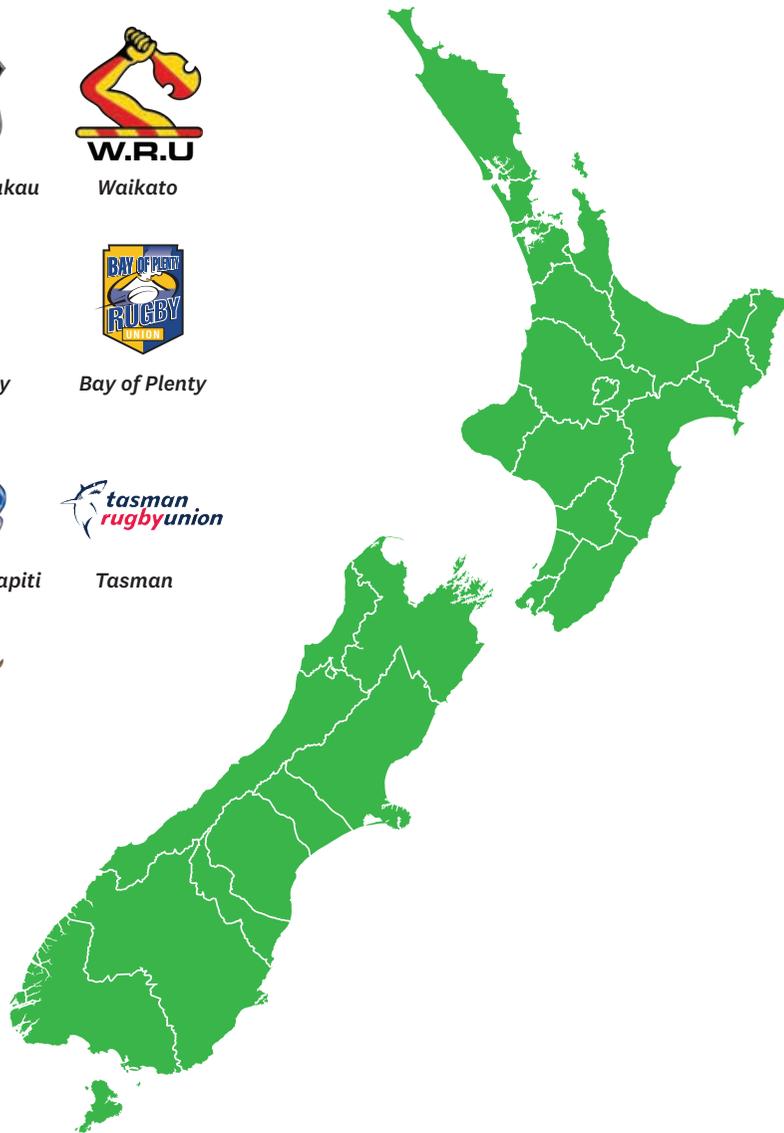
West Coast



Buller



Southland



Northland



Auckland



Thames Valley



East Coast



Poverty Bay



Hawke's Bay



Manawātū



Wairarapa Bush



Wellington



Canterbury



Mid Canterbury



South Canterbury



North Otago



Otago





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