



LONG-TERM PLAN FOR SOFTBALL IN NEW ZEALAND

2009-2012

INTRODUCTION

Change is all around us and is constant. While some change can be predicted when we follow trends others, such as the economic situation we find ourselves in at this time, are less apparent. One of the biggest challenges facing softball in New Zealand is not so much that change is happening but how prepared and willing we are to be able to respond to change. Many of us are still operating on the 'way it used to be' and this will not serve us well as a sport of the future.

Our key challenges are:

- ***Moving into the 21st century***

We live in changing times. In order for softball to remain relevant as a sport in New Zealand we have to anticipate and adapt to the changing needs of people who may want to play our game, people who are already playing our game; people who may want to volunteer to support our game. The people we want to play our game have a whole lot of other things they could use their free time for so we need to be able to tell people about what's great about playing softball and then make sure we give them that experience. This means thinking and acting differently about what we do, how we do it and why we do it

At the same time other things in society are changing rapidly - technology, for example. We need to embrace this change so we can be competitive on many fronts and use it to our benefit. The database project is just one opportunity to do this – there are and will be many others.

- ***Working together***

The most appropriate place for competition in softball is on the diamond. If we are going to be successful we have to have better teamwork off the diamond. We are all different; associations and clubs have different needs and different levels and types of available resource but we all want the same things. Why not work more closely together to share ideas, maybe some resources and help each other out. If we are going to be competitive in the current sporting landscape we need to work together to compete with other sports not compete with each other.

- ***Looking after and growing our resources***

The types of resources we are talking about here are either financial or human resources. At present we are all heavily reliant on gaming funds to support many of our activities at all levels of the game. Many organisations in softball do not always have enough money to run their activities meaning that some services are compromised. We need to take a fresh approach to increasing our revenue and look for new and different ways to diversify our income. We need to be savvier about what properties we have that might be of interest to sponsors. This is not just about getting money into the sport but is, just as importantly, about building partnerships in our communities. As well we are constantly looking for more people either as coaches, umpires, scorers or administrators to help run our game effectively. We are not always great at holding onto the volunteers we have so we are often trying to find new people to replace the ones who were previously involved. This means that we have to get better at retaining the people we have and then trying to find others so the load is shared and not carried by a few dedicated volunteers. We need to think about how we look after, develop and value the people who give up their time to make softball happen.

To be a leading sport on and off the diamond we need to re-focus our efforts where they can make real difference and we need to step up to plate in order to be successful in an increasingly competitive environment. The challenge is ours to take up.

THE BIG PICTURE

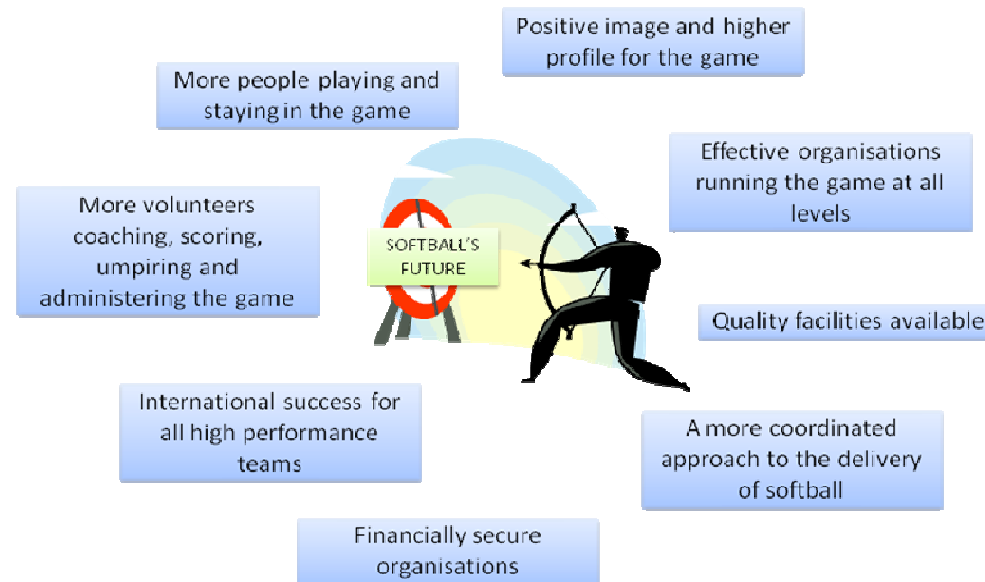
Our vision is to be a leading sport – on and off the diamond.

A leading sport **on the diamond** means:

- good numbers of people playing the game and staying in the game (from beginners to experts);
- a range of opportunities for people to play the game;
- enough volunteers to support the playing numbers across a variety of roles; and
- international success for our expert teams.

A leading sport **off the diamond** means having:

- capable, effective organisations;
- sufficient resources – both financial and non-financial;
- a range of quality facilities appropriate for hosting regional, national and international tournaments;
- an aligned approach to service delivery; and
- a positive brand and profile.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Softball New Zealand has a number of key roles. It will:

- **Lead** the development of the game and the implementation of softball's strategy;
- **Enable** associations and clubs to contribute to softball's vision by providing support to help them achieve softball's vision of being a leading sport on and off the diamond;
- **Partner** with groups and organisations that align with and create benefits for softball;
- **Manage** our national teams and programmes that support softball's development at community level; and
- **Invest**, where possible and appropriate, to support the development of softball.

Softball Associations have a number of key roles. Associations will need to:

- **Lead** the development of the game at community level;
- **Enable** clubs and schools to contribute to softball's vision by providing support to help them achieve softball's vision of being a leading sport on and off the diamond;
- **Partner** with groups and organisations that align with and create benefits for softball in their region;
- **Manage** their high performance teams;
- **Implement** programmes that support softball's development at community level; and
- **Coordinate** the delivery of softball in their region.

Softball clubs will need to:

- **Enable** players and volunteers to become part of the softball community; and
- **Implement** programmes that support softball's development at community level.