



**ONE SOFTBALL
PLAN
2019-2029**

ONE SOFTBALL: KIA WHAKAKOTAHI TE HOE O TE WAKA



One Softball, as the name suggests, reflects our need to be more collaborative in our approach to softball provision throughout the country. There is no one organisation that can single-handedly achieve the outcomes we all hope for so we must work together in the interests of progressing the game nationally.

Every softball organisation, while having different priorities, can contribute something towards the outcomes identified in this strategy and realise the potential of softball to provide exciting and positive experiences for all involved.

This cooperative approach is necessary as our sport faces, and responds to, the fast-paced change occurring in sport in New Zealand. With collaboration we will be able to ensure softball's future as a successful and relevant sport.

Our plan provides a vision for the game as we head into the future and is intended to provide a strategic framework within which every softball organisation can work to secure softball's position in New Zealand's sporting landscape.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari, he toa takitini

My strength is not the strength of one, it is the strength of many

Lynda O'Cain

Chair, Softball New Zealand

SOFTBALL IN NEW ZEALAND: POIUKA AOTEAROA

Participation

Our participation numbers have remained relatively stable with growth and decline in different groups occurring over time. In 2018 (2017 numbers in brackets) our numbers looked like this:

- Open Grade: 397 (418)
- Social Grade: 109 (119)
- School Children: 1256 (1254)
- Coach accreditations: 604 (493)
- Registered umpires: 159 (201)
- Registered scorers: 124 (130)
- National age grade tourneys: 91 teams (89 teams)
- National senior tournaments: 51 teams (50 teams)
- Social media engagement: 22,551 (20, 126)



Voice of the participant (VOP)

Softball is a club-based sport. VOP is a nationwide survey that aims to capture the voice of sport club members. In general people were likely to recommend their club to others if they perceived the club provided: value for money; fair and equal opportunities; and was professional and well-managed. From the softball VOP survey we know that two thirds of respondents are more than satisfied with their club experience, 67% of members perceive value for money for their club, and 82% said they were likely to re-join their club the next season.

Areas where things could be better from a player’s perspective include:

- Club support from associations (19%) – specifically with things like draws, season structure, communication
- Having qualified/experienced officials in competition (18%) – specifically coaches having to umpire instead of coaching and the need for more clinics for umpires

Areas where parents think improvements could be made include:

- Quality of coaches or instructors – specifically things such as better targeted skill development and keeping things interesting at trainings

SOFTBALL IN NEW ZEALAND (cont.)



Delivery system

The 'delivery' of softball is about the provision of learning and development opportunities and/or programmes that provide a pathway for players to participate in softball over a lifetime. The delivery of softball is managed by clubs and associations and relies on coaches, umpires, scorers, administrators and supporters to provide softball experiences that encourage existing players to stay in the game and attract new players.

Current delivery is variable and sometimes inconsistent. We are not a particularly well-aligned sport tending to do our own thing with little collaboration. We have pockets of good practice and variable access to the resources required to deliver softball well.

Operating environment

The environment in which we are delivering softball is changing constantly and rapidly, making it difficult to remain current. We need to access available information and be prepared to effect change in order to remain relevant and successful. There are participation and societal trends that we also need to respond to. A sample of these is provided below.

Participant trends	Industry trends	Societal trends	Government trends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreasing participation in sport • Increased trend towards informal, individual physical activity over organised, structured sport • Increasing use of short competition formats • Increasing aversion to environments deemed 'too competitive' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing advances in sports science and uses of technology • Aging network of facilities in most regions • Emergence of commercial sport and recreation opportunities • Increasing diversity of sport offerings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased levels of inactivity and obesity • 'On demand' everything • Increasing empowerment of women • Increasing consumer expectations • Increased levels of social isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing awareness of health and community cohesion benefits of sport • Increased complexity and compliance for clubs and their volunteers • Big emphasis on wellbeing as an indicator of success

OUR STRATEGY: MAHERE RAUTAKI

OUR VISION: WHAKAKITENGA

We want softball to be a sport for life. One that evolves as it needs to, is enjoyed by all those who connect with the game in any capacity and is characterised by success.

OUR COLLECTIVE PURPOSE: HE KAUPAPA

We are all tasked with working together to enable Kiwis to participate in softball in whatever way they choose and to have a great time doing so to ensure that they stay involved and get the best experiences from the game.

OUR APPROACH: NGĀ HUARAHI MAHI

To be successful we will need to:

- **Focus on the needs of the people wanting to be involved in our game** and work hard to meet these. This is about taking a participant-centred approach to planning and decision-making where the participant may be a player, coach, umpire, scorer, administrator, supporter, sponsor or funder.
- **Open to change and doing things differently.** In today's sporting environment our success is built around our ability to adapt to changing situations and circumstances. Whatever made softball successful in the past won't necessarily make it successful in the future. At the heart of this is being open to new ideas and information and trying different ways of responding in order to make continuous progress and improvements.
- **Inclusive.** In New Zealand today our communities are becoming increasingly diverse and as a sport we must respond by finding ways to make softball a game for all ages, abilities, genders, and ethnicities.
- **Play to our strengths.** Softball has a lot going for it. Let's accentuate the strengths while quietly working on areas that need improvement. This extends to softball being more than just a game. We should not lose sight of the opportunity that softball provides in developing individuals' personal and social wellbeing and capability
- **Work together.** Softball is a team game. In teams there are a variety of skills and different strengths that when combined and contributed towards a common purpose can be quite formidable. This can be us if we are open to sharing ideas and information and working together for the greater good of softball.



OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: POU TARĀWAHO

We have four strategic outcomes which, if we can progress towards, will help us to achieve our vision. These are represented in the diagram below.



**A BIGGER, MORE
DIVERSE
PARTICIPANT BASE**

Players (members and participants) | coaches | umpires | scorers | other volunteers | places to play softball |

Softball offers people of all ages, genders, abilities and ethnicities an opportunity to participate as players, coaches, umpires, scorers, administrators and other volunteers. We want to grow our participant base by holding on to the people already involved and recruiting new people into the game. To be successful we need to understand what people want to get from their softball experience and ensure that this is realised through the provision of quality softball opportunities and experiences. One of the keys to successful growth is access to adequate places to play softball.



DESIRED RESULT A bigger, more diverse participant base

KEY OBJECTIVES

- National participation programmes that encourage targeted growth and retention
- National coaching development plan outcomes are realised
- Softball's facility plan is implemented
- Quality domestic events and national competitions

SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Participation growth overall and in targeted groups – young people, women and girls,
- Coach development opportunities provided and attended across all coaching communities
- No of teams attending domestic events increases

**CAPABLE, ALIGNED
AND CONSISTENT
DELIVERY**

Delivery system improvement | organisational capability | workforce development (paid and volunteer) | governance excellence | constitution review | standardised policies and practices |

Currently the delivery of softball is variable and inconsistent across the country as is the connection between national and local softball management and within regions. Softball organisations have differing levels of access to the resources (human, financial and facilities) to support delivery. We have an opportunity to work more collaboratively and deliver a one softball approach. The success or otherwise of softball organisations is often very much dependent on the capability of people inside these organisations. Volunteers are critical to our success at every level of the game. Anyone connecting with softball in any capacity should have a consistent and high-quality experience.

DESIRED RESULT Delivery of softball is consistent and of high quality and the efforts of all softball organisations are towards achieving the strategic outcomes of our One Softball plan.

- KEY OBJECTIVES**
- Softball’s workforce plan outcomes are realised nationally and regionally
 - Build diverse governance expertise within softball
 - Organisational capability development is supported
 - Investigate a regional delivery system for softball
 - Review and update softball’s constitution

SUCCESS INDICATORS

Associations’ plans align to the One Softball plan

Capability development opportunities for paid and volunteer workforce are realised

Regional delivery model operational

Softball’s constitution updated



**STRENGTHEN THE
BUSINESS OF
SOFTBALL**

Commercial development | International influence | event management | relationship management | national database development |

The business of softball has both an internal and external perspective. On one hand it is about the financial sustainability of softball organisations brought about through different softball activities and on the other it is about the quality of our relationships with funders and key commercial partners. When we are seen to be capable organisations that run in a sound business-like manner with viable products and opportunities, we are better placed to develop long-term and successful commercial and funding relationships because we can deliver value. This is relevant at all levels of our game.



DESIRED RESULT	Softball organisations are more financially sustainable, have a variety of strategic and commercial partnerships and are guided in their work by improved softball data
KEY OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commercially strong organisations• Stakeholder relationships that enhance the delivery of softball at all levels• National softball database• Maximise social and other media to position softball in a positive frame• Engage with and influence international softball at Oceania and World Baseball/Softball levels• Host and deliver high quality national and international events
SUCCESS INDICATORS	Increased number of commercial partnerships at all levels National database operational More and better strategic partnerships at all levels Positive media presence of softball Successful international event hosting – financial, profile, event partners,

**HIGH
PERFORMANCE
SUCCESS**

White Sox | Black Sox | Junior White Sox | Junior Black Sox | Talent pathways and succession planning for players and coaches | Quality competition | An enabling high-performance environment | Association representative teams |

High performance sport is cut-throat and expensive. Remaining competitive and winning is challenging and reliant on good development systems, a deep understanding of what high performance means and having the best people in the right places. Success at this level creates profile for the game from which we can build other activities that enhance the game at other levels. High performance success is supported by quality domestic competitions, a talent pathway that provides a pipeline of talent into the high-performance environment, quality venues and facilities for hosting international events that allow our teams to compete at home, and media support to take the game to the wider population.

DESIRED RESULT Our Black Sox and White Sox teams remain competitive and successful on the world softball stage

- KEY OBJECTIVES**
- Build the depth of talented players and coaches in our softball system through our junior programmes
 - Improve the performance of New Zealand's elite women's teams
 - Expose our athletes and coaches to regular high-quality competition
 - Refresh softball's high performance and talent plan
 - Optimise our high-performance environment
 - Continue to advocate internationally for men's softball

SUCCESS INDICATORS Individual team performances at key competitions
World rankings for our White Sox and Black Sox teams



STRATEGIC PROJECTS UNDERWAY IN 2019-20

- Constitution review
- National database development
- Regional delivery model investigation

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2019-20:

- Delivery of Junior Mens World Championship
- White Sox plan to 2026 development
- Refresh softball’s high performance and talent plan
- Begin implementation of softball’s workforce plan
- Develop a participation growth plan targeting women and girls/secondary schools
- Commercial strategy development



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Softball NZ Board	Softball NZ	Associations	Clubs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic guidance • Effectively monitor management of softball nationally • Make decisions in the best interests of the game • Guardians of the future of softball • Focus on long-term strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guardianship and leadership of softball nationally • Promote and develop softball nationally • Manage international relationships • Manage our national teams and tournaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and develop softball locally • Maximise participation in softball • Provide quality support to clubs • Manage local talent development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct opportunities for people to participate in softball and develop as players, coaches, umpires, scorers

IMPLEMENTATION and REVIEW:

Softball NZ will develop a three-year business plan and budget (to the extent it can) to support implementation of this strategy. Progress against the outcomes of this strategy will be reviewed at the end of three years with any necessary tactical changes made at that time.



ONE SOFTBALL 2019-2029

VISION	Softball is a sport for life. One that evolves as it needs to, is enjoyed by all those who connect with the game in any capacity and is characterised by success.			
GOALS	PARTICIPATION	CAPABILITY	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	HIGH PERFORMANCE SUCCESS
	A bigger, more diverse participant base	Aligned and consistent delivery of softball	Financially sustainable softball organisations	NZ teams are competitive and successful
STRATEGIC INTENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National participation programmes that encourage targeted growth and retention – especially women and girls and secondary schools • National coaching development plan outcomes are realised • Softball’s facility plan is implemented • Quality domestic events and national competitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Softball’s workforce plan outcomes are realised nationally and regionally • Build diverse governance expertise within softball • Organisational capability development is supported • Investigate a regional delivery system for softball • Review and update softball’s constitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercially strong organisations • Stakeholder relationships that enhance the delivery of softball at all levels • National softball database • Maximise social and other media to position softball in a positive frame • Engage with and influence international softball at Oceania and World Baseball/Softball levels • Host and deliver high quality national and international events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the depth of talented players and coaches in our softball system through our junior programmes • Improve the performance of New Zealand’s elite women’s teams • Expose our athletes and coaches to regular high-quality competition • Refresh softball’s high performance and talent plan • Optimise our high-performance environment • Continue to advocate for men’s softball internationally
IMPACT	Percentage participation increase overall and in targeted groups	Improved alignment and planning at all levels	Increased commercial and other revenue in softball	Improved world rankings of our senior high-performance teams

