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***ĀKARANA ZONE RUGBY LEAGUE (INC)***

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND INTENT: 2018-2020**

The Ākarana Zone Rugby League Inc. is a regional body of the NZ Rugby League Inc, established in 2010, with its primary purpose to promote, foster, grow and develop the sport of Rugby League throughout the central, western and North Shore suburbs of Auckland.

It represents the core interests of the NZ Rugby League and its affiliates, seeking to quantifiably “*improve community outcomes through the sport of Rugby League*”, across the full spectrum from "grassroots participation" through to national representative level.

Ākarana Zone RL Board is a governance body within the NZRL framework with its primary role to:

• ***Work alongside existing and future rugby league entities to enable productive and sustainable clubs and communities***

• ***Collaborate and improve relationships with all stakeholders***

• ***Vigorously promote the brand of Rugby League; and the related pathways for players, officials, volunteers and club supporters***

• ***Encourage quality competitions through engagement with members and staff of our district league – the Auckland Rugby League Inc. (ARL)***

• ***Actively engage in socially responsible activity in community rugby league***

Together, the Ākarana Zone and the ARL are engaged in a working relationship through the provision of information and activities to advance game participation across Auckland.

The initial confusion between Ākarana and the ARL is quickly subsiding, with constituents now fully understanding that the ARL run weekly interclub competitions across the greater Auckland region, and develop coaching and player capability, while Ākarana is charged to innovate and grow and expand community activities inside two thirds of the region’s catchment area. As well, as one of the seven zonal bodies throughout the country, Ākarana is charged to provide representative teams to the NZRL national competitions, having enjoyed considerable success in all three grades of inter-zonal competition since inception.

The Zone’s intention and desire is to build on its successes; to continue to collaborate, coordinate and facilitate successful community outcomes for rugby league stakeholders, most importantly both on and off the playing fields, including Ākarana RL Clubs, Affiliate Bodies providing service and outcomes to Rugby League, key donors and partners such as Government, Community and Private entities, and to the wider Auckland sporting public.

Ākarana’s challenge is to develop a sustainable, accessible and a quality rugby league environment through independent and community focused league clubs; and the promotion of opportunities for the wider enjoyment of rugby league in central, western and northern Auckland.

We fully recognize that Ākarana would not have achieved the successes to date if it were not of the support of our funders and sponsors:

**Lion Foundation Supercity Towing**

**NZCT NZ Rugby League Inc. Pub Charities Infinity Trust**

**Turkish Bread**

**Four Winds Foundations Ltd**

**Durable Medical Equipment Ltd (DME)**

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**The Regional Sporting Trusts of Auckland**

The body known as the Ākarana Zone was established Seven years ago as a result of a wide ranging governance overhaul for rugby league in New Zealand. A number of challenges had arisen over the previous decade which required the intervention of Sport New Zealand, previously known as SPARC, to facilitate and assist in a strategic governance review.

Part of that Review was the formation of seven Zones throughout the country, presiding over the thirteen Districts which had previously represented the grassroots clubs of the sport. In Auckland, which has the largest playing population in the country with 32 clubs, two Zones were formed of which Ākarana is one and has responsibility to support 20 clubs.

In 2012, following protracted negotiations between the ARL and NZRL, an initial strategic plan for Ākarana was formulated which established a number of priorities for the Zone.

Ākarana has also initiated new relationships between clubs and the Regional Sporting Trusts

(RST’s) to assist those clubs in their strategic planning processes.

With the identity of the Ākarana Falcons now firmly established in the mindset of Auckland clubs, and the ever increasing workload, we find it necessary to employ a second person to work alongside the General Manager.

Since the inception of the Zones and the national competitions, the Ākarana Falcons have selected and provided representative teams at all levels of play as required under our constitution (Under 15 and Under 17,Womens and Premier Men; In all grades, our Ākarana players have represented the Zone with distinction and pride; with a very good proportion gaining national honours. Through hard work, family support, dedication and committed coaching/support staff we have repeatedly secured national titles in all grades of NZ rugby league competition.

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The Ākarana” Zone Rugby League Zone (Inc.) strategy and key priorities 2018-2020

**VISION**

***“Strengthening communities through rugby league”***

**VALUES**

**INTEGRITY: *Openness, Honesty, Transparency***

**RESPECT: *Respect for All Participants (across our game)***

**FAMILY: *Communities and Whānau Together (strength and resilience)***

**PASSION: *Commitment, Loyalty, ‘Never Give Up’***

**MISSION**

The Ākarana Zone’s mission is to:

 **Improve the ‘quality of life’ for all in our rugby league community;** *and*

 **Assist in the delivery of rugby league administration, governance and excellence;** *and*

 **Provide a foundation of individual improvement to support and develop our whanau**

*“Rugby League enriches our culture, improves our well-being; it develops participants’ bodies and minds and makes us resilient as a community. It strengthens and promotes improved social and community standards through successful rugby league identities”*

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1. Robust and knowledgeable clubs that understand the NZRL and Ākarana business plan

2. Sustainable clubs and quality volunteers through increased participation

3. Our relationships and collaboration within the community and Auckland Rugby

League are trusting and equitable

4. New pathways that build high performance environments giving new opportunities through innovative initiatives for all ages and gender

**5.** Quality focused competitions through district league coordination

**KEY RELATIONSHIPS**

**1. New Zealand Rugby League (NZRL)** is the Zone’s parent body and its performance is monitored through its annual service agreement upon sign-off of the Zone’s Strategic Plan (SOI & Business Plan)

**2. Auckland Rugby League** (ARL) is the Zone’s working partner commissioned through a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly improve Auckland’s rugby league environment, the provision of quality rugby league competition(s), and are fully accessible to the public

**3. Ākarana Zone Rugby League Clubs** are locally governed sports entities; community operated under the operating guidelines of the NZRL; and by agreement (registration) with the Zone and ARL

**4. Affiliate Bodies** such as the referees, tertiary institutions, women’s league

**5. Auckland Council** is the local body authority which governs and provides sporting facilities across the greater region

**6. NZ Warriors** are the flagship of professional sport in this country with many ex Ākarana players in their ranks

**7. Regional Sports Trust(s)** operating in Auckland (Auckland, Waitakere and North

Harbour)

**8. Funders and sponsor** who support the vision and goals of the Ākarana Zone

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**9. Other New Zealand Zones**

**Strengths**

Financial Management

Player base & capability History of *‘Auckland Rugby League’*

Well established clubs

Relationships with other RL bodies’ Effective program delivery to date Quality General Manager in place

On field representative teams

Experience of the Board

Volunteer base

Events Organization

**Opportunities**

Build and leverage player skillsets.

 Further improve ARL& NZRL support proactively increase all forms of participation. Build trust & respect with RL communities.

Employ a second person

 **Weaknesses**

Lack of financial resource

Differing levels of club competence

Lingering confusion with Auckland RL

Brand awareness

**Opportunities**

Develop a funding program

Identify & develop clubs with biggest needs –

Offer clubs help

*Unashamedly* differentiate Akarana successes – explain WHAT we do

Discussion and focus from the Board;

Communication to the clubs

 **Threats**

Competing sports and activities

Dwindling volunteer base

Lack of sponsorship

Lack of funding

Zone changes

Loss of key staff

**Opportunities**

Promote benefits of our RL community

Proactive identification and recruitment campaign

Confirm relevance & value to the clubs

Collaboration for the game across

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Auckland, incorporating 3 bodies

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| **Ākarana Priorities** |
| Promote the profile of the Ākarana Zone to increase participation in rugby leagueDeliver community outcomes through the NZRL Champion Club programme | Proactively reinforce Akarana’s role with all our stakeholders add value and improve deliveryEngage with clubs to improve our community |
| Increase the number of our valued rugby league volunteers (coaches , managers , committees, club support people etc) | * Inspire people to lead positive and healthy lives through RL
* Deliver workshops for volunteers; educate and support our volunteers
* Promote NZRL volunteer management processes
* Recruit, reward and retain this vital resource
 |
| Ensure the ongoing financial viability of the Ākarana Zone | * Identify income streams with establishes and enduring private and public funders
* Identify collaborative funding opportunities with district and NZRL (“Clubs of Auckland” ADRL & NZRL collaboration)
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| National Tournament  | * Akarana teams in all NZRL National tournaments
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| Deliver community outcomes through the NZRL Champion club programme | * Deliver Champion Club programme to the two identified clusters to increase volunteer capability
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| **Ākarana Aspirations** |
| Compete in and win the NZRL Zone Rugby League competitions  | * Improve capability of coaches, managers & players
* Provide pathways for elite players and coaches
* Achieve success in all zonal competitions
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| Sustainable National female program & competitions Develop district/zone strategic plan for females game  | * Zone representative team competing at all females national tournament
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**KEY RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objectives**  | **What**  | **How** | **Who**  | **When** |
| 1 Promote the profile of the Ākarana Zone to increase participation in RL | Clarify and foster understanding of the role and benefits that the ZK Zone brings to all constituents and stakeholdersUphold the values of the Zone (integrity, respect, family & passion)Develop a marking plan including Akarana web site |  | All Zone MembersAll MembersSimion | On-goingOn-goingNov 2017 |
| 2 Deliver community outcomes through the NZRL Champion Club programme5 | Initiate Champion Club programme in target clubsEngage community and club leaders to promote RL Improve health, social and educational outcomes for our RL whanau,Promote the notion of ‘self-improvement’ through Champion Club |  | General Manager | 2018 and 2020 (reviewed annually) |
| 3 Increase and support the number of our valued RL volunteers (coaches, managers, committees, club support people etc)Page102 | Encourage ‘grassroots’ RL people to engage and provide time as club volunteersPromote pathways / workshops for success through ‘being a volunteer’Ensure all volunteers are registered on leaguenet |  | AKZ Board, with General Manager | 2018 and 2020 (reviewed annually) |
| 4 Ensure the ongoing financial and operational viability of the Ākarana Zone33 | Formulate a structured funding strategyEnsure enduring relationships with interested fundersDevelop an operational funding plan |  | AK Zone Board | 2018 and 2020 (reviewed annually) |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5. Compete in and win Zonal rugby league competitions4 | Select Coaches, Managers and Players to deliver the very best results at all levels of NZRL competitionProvide pathways for elite and developing RL players and coaches | General Manager and appointedCoaches | 2018 and 2020 (reviewed annually) |
| 6. Establish a sustainable womens programme | Recruit and develop volunteers specifically for the female programme.Recruit & develop players for the representative programme Ensure funding and resolves secured to cover womens representative programme  | AKZ Board, with General Manager | 2018 and 2020 (reviewed annually) |

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