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New Zealand Handball Federation  
PO Box 9697, Marion Square  
Wellington, NEW ZEALAND



25 September 2022

## 16<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Handball Federation Incorporated – Executive Committee Annual Report

### President's foreword

It is with great pleasure that I present the NZHF Executive Committee's annual report, covering the period from the 2021 AGM held on 11 September 2021 to date.

Particularly pleasing is being able to look back to where we were a year ago, with all attempts at national tournaments subsequent to the Auckland 2021 Open thwarted by the impact of Covid-19 and massive uncertainty as to what the future may have in store for national and international events, to having just concluded a well-attended National Club Champs and seen our national representative Beach Handball teams compete overseas, with the prospect of a Regional Champs and the recommencement of the IHF Trophy for our Under 20 players coming up. A massive thanks to all our players and supporters for sticking with it through the tough times, and ensuring Handball Aotearoa has survived all that has been thrown at it. We can look to the future with confidence thanks to the efforts of our wonderful community of handball enthusiasts.

It has been another busy year for your National Executive Committee, with lots of activity promoting various Handball initiatives around the country. We had some major wins over the past year. However there is always more to be done to ensure handball continues to grow in Aotearoa New Zealand. Each of our key portfolio holders has provided a report on their particular areas of focus below.

### Governance and strategic partnerships

#### *Goethe Institut partnership*

Probably the most significant achievement over the past 12 months on the governance front has been locking in a partnership arrangement with the Goethe Institut. For those of you not familiar with their work, the Goethe Institut exists to present important positions, ideas and arts practices of contemporary German and European culture to New Zealanders. Handball is an integral part of German culture, with the first ever 'official' game of handball in a form similar to our current game being played in Berlin over a century ago – so it is only fitting that we should partner with the Goethe Institut to promote our respective interests. It was great to see the Goethe Institut so well represented at the National Club Champs on 9-11 September this year. We greatly appreciate their contribution of Erima handballs for both playing around the country and for prizes at Club Champs, and supply of official refereeing tops for all our newly minted referees.

A major part of what we have done with the Goethe Institut (and are committed to continuing to do) is to work together to bring handball opportunities to primary and intermediate schools throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, primarily through Das Kiwi Handball Projekt. It is a great way to combine an exposure to our great sport with an exposure to the German language and European culture in a fun learning environment. Thanks to all the volunteers who have helped deliver that – and thanks in advance to all those who we hope will feel inspired to volunteer over the year ahead.

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The future of Handball in our country relies on our ability to inspire the next generation to take it up, so we encourage all handballers in New Zealand to step up and help with our Goethe Institut junior initiatives.

#### *Development Fund*

We continue to enjoy strong funding support from TAB NZ, which flows into a Development Fund the Executive Committee is tracking alongside the NZHF accounts. The Development Fund is used to fund handball development-related initiatives around the regions, either as identified by the Executive Committee, or on application from our stakeholders. Over the past year the Fund has been used for initiatives as diverse as funding venue hire for junior regionals and junior training sessions, venue hire for our developing Clubs, travel costs for those attending junior regionals, beach lines, a gazebo and advertising flags and benefits for our official referee development programme.

We also dipped into the Fund to help our Men's Beach Handball Team travel to the World Champs and World Games, recognising the development opportunities presented by competing on the international stage and making connections around the globe.

Optimising the benefit of the Development Fund is dependent on the regions being strategic with applications to use this money. Please take the time in the off season to come up with regional initiatives that you believe will grow the Handball community where the only blocker is funding.

#### *International*

The Executive Committee was able to participate in various virtual gatherings of the international handball community over the year, including the 38<sup>th</sup> Congress of the IHF and the rejuvenation of the Commonwealth Handball Association. All nations and international competitions have been impacted by COVID-19. Hearing of the massive challenges faced by our fellow nations in the Oceania Continental Handball Federation put our own challenges in perspective – while we had plenty of frustrations, unlike others we were at least able to maintain some handball over the period.

In December 2021 we had former Executive Committee member Gaston Fuso appointed as the Oceania representative on the IHF Playing Rules Commission. Having a direct line into the global handball network and being able to contribute to international initiatives in this way is invaluable for us, and we thank Gaston for taking on the role.

#### *Other policies, strategic plan and stakeholder engagement*

In the year to September 2021 we took the Federation through a period of significant change, with a constitution update and some key policies adopted, many as part of our commitment to becoming recognised as a National Sporting Organisation with Sport NZ. The past year has been all about implementing these policies. You can find them all in the 'About NZHF' tab of the website – <https://handball.org.nz/about-us>.

Throughout the past year we have endeavoured to keep the New Zealand Handball community abreast of what we are up to and what lies ahead, through the monthly President's updates, bi-annual Regional Association forums and ad hoc communications with Clubs. We have had some good engagement through those channels and trust the information flow has been of value (or at least interest!). We are always happy to receive more feedback and ideas for growing Handball from any of our stakeholders – especially if that feedback or those ideas come with offers of hands-on voluntary support!

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The day-to-day administration of handball initiatives absorbed most of the National Executive's time over the past year, with limited capacity to focus on strategic initiatives and the long term vision. With the borders now open again and the new world now taking shape, we hope that the year ahead will provide more opportunity to step back and focus a bit more on re-strategizing the best way forward for New Zealand Handball.

A key initiative that we were able to implement has been the referee qualification framework. Huge thanks to Antoine Desnos for stepping up and taking on the role of Referee Co-ordinator. A highlight of the past year was seeing all the referees who made it through the programme get recognised at the National Club Champs with the awarding of their Goethe Institut uniforms and whistles from NZHF. There are some fantastic pathways in international handball for those with the necessary whistle-blowing skills, and developing good pathways for our referees is an important strategy for us.

### Treasurer's Report

The financial statements for the year to 31 March 2022 have been circulated with this report. In summary, we continue to keep our heads above water, with the funding stream we receive from TAB NZ an important component for us to be able to fund development-related initiatives through the Development Fund – see the earlier comment in this report regarding the Fund.

In more detail, for the year to 31 March 2022 we made an overall profit of \$8,312, compared with \$4,274 from the year before. The increased profit is largely due to our first full year of an income stream from TAB funding (\$20,012) and a return to pre-pandemic levels for Player and Team Income which had been significantly affected by COVID-19. Anticipation of that profit enabled us to significantly reduce Club fees for the current financial year, with the Club levying system restructured from player-based to team-based which simplifies the process.

In our High performance accounts we started to use previous surplus to pay for events such as training and youth camps. Due to COVID-19 disruptions we had to write off some small costs related to Gym hire for Youth tournaments. Beach Handball strengthened its fiscal position with a successful tournament, which is its only direct revenue stream.

For a couple of key costs (namely the late payment of Subs from a Club and the early payment of accommodation in Australia from Beach Handball players for an April tournament) a profit shifting Accounting Technique has been used behind the scenes. This ensures that the financial statements are as representative of the current financial year as practical. For example, it would not be representative if we showed a larger profit this year and a lesser profit next year for money that was paid by members of the beach Handball squads in advance in March, ahead of invoice payments made in the subsequent financial year (see "Accrual" in the Balance Sheet).

### Competitions and Youth

It was fantastic to see a youth tournament finally get off the ground in August – thanks to Auckland Regional Handball for taking that on. Although referring to it as getting 'off the ground' is a little unfortunate, given that having finally shaken the COVID-19 lockdowns, the weather ended up stranding most of the Canterbury team and throwing the playing schedule into disarray. It was also unfortunate we could only get the numbers for a male division to run. We are optimistic our initiatives in the female youth space will make that a goer next year, especially with the prospect of an Oceania IHF Trophy qualifying tournament on the horizon for our junior and youth ladies.

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On the subject of the IHF Trophy, we are looking forward to seeing our Junior and Youth Men (Under 18 and Under 20) compete in their Oceania Qualifiers at the end of November. There has been a lot of work put into developing a competitive squad, and we wish coaches Jack Gallagher and Hayden Juranovich and Head of Delegation Thomas Schmider and all the squad all the very best for both their preparation and the tournament itself.

On the adult front, it was again great to see the usual social-based tournaments take place in May before the indoor season proper took shape, with the Auckland-hosted regional tournament and the traditional Queenstown tournament successfully staged. The period between the end of the Beach Handball season and the serious business of mid-winter indoor Handball is an important one, and while numbers were down a little this year it is still heartening to see the wonderful camaraderie we enjoy as a handball community at these annual events.

After COVID-19 restrictions forced us to cancel the last two years of planned National Club and Regional Champs, we were delighted to be able to have finally been able to host the National Club Champs at Wellington's fabulous ASB Centre from 9-11 September. With a generous grant received from the Wellington City Council Sports Event Partnership Fund we were able to run the event with a relatively nominal registration fee per team, and having over 160 players from around the country with some top flight handball played made it a memorable event. Thanks to the Goethe Institut for supplying balls for both game time and for prizes. Congratulations to the Canterbury Quakes Handball Club for taking out the Women's division, and the Northern Aguilas Handball Club for taking out the Men's division – and thanks to all those others who either took part or turned out to support.

At the time of writing we were all on track for the Regionals to be held at Christchurch's Pioneer Stadium to conclude the indoor season for another year.

## Beach Handball

What a year it has been for New Zealand Beach Handball!

The summer programme centred around camps at Pioneer Stadium's beach court. Good numbers attended once again, despite the challenges thrown up by both the weather and COVID-19 restrictions.

All the work put in over the past two summers all paid off at ANZAC Weekend when our Men's and Women's Beach Handball Teams journeyed to the Gold Coast to take on Australia in the Oceania qualifiers for World Champs and World Games. While we have never taken a game off the Australians in a full blooded international competition before, both our Men's and Women's Teams finally got the monkey off their backs with wins recorded in an incredibly tight fought series, with many of the games going to penalty shoot-outs. The Men's Team went one better, recording two wins to go on and represent Oceania at the Beach Handball World Champs in Crete at the end of June, and the World Games in Alabama in July, with a European Beach Tour tournament on the North-West coast of France and an exhibition game against the French in between. Heady stuff!

At both the World Champs and the World Games our Men did us proud, recording New Zealand's first ever wins at an international tournament, including triumphing over the African champions Egypt to put themselves in a position to contest the 13<sup>th</sup> place play-off match (and not the wooden spoon play-off!) after narrowly missing out on a top 12 finish in a penalty shoot out with the United States. While the Men weren't able to repeat the wins at the World Games, they were competitive with current World Champs Croatia and perennial favourites Brazil, in particular, and returned to New Zealand after a five week odyssey away with our reputation as a Beach Handball nation greatly enhanced.

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We now look forward to the chance to qualify for the World Beach Games in Bali in August next year – with the International Handball Federation pushing hard to get Beach Handball included in the Olympics. The fact that teams from Oceania are now able to foot it with the big boys can only enhance that mouth-watering prospect.

### High Performance

As mentioned in the Youth section of this report, our young men return to IHF Trophy competition in late November in the Cook Islands. The boys' campaign is well and truly underway with squad members from all four of our playing regions currently participating in trials to select the final representative teams. We are a good chance to bring home both Trophies, with the U18s defending their title from the last time the tournament was held way back in 2018 in New Caledonia, and the U20s likely to boast a few members from the successful 2018 U18 team.

We are also looking forward to the IHF Trophy return for your girls' teams in 2023. After a disruptive last few years for our age grade girls we hope to get more stability in 2023, with the same vision & targets for our U17 & U19 squads being represented by players from all four of our playing regions. Coaches and Management team are still to be appointed so watch this space, but most importantly we need to grow the junior athlete base for this campaign.

Both our senior indoor squads are seeing the effects of COVID-19, with disrupted preparations and a struggle for stable numbers. The women's indoor squad was re-built in 2021 and saw a great commitment to come together: the numbers dwindled in 2022 but a strong core still remain. Cyprien Pesques has recently been appointed as interim Head Coach for our women's squad, bringing enthusiasm and optimism to get more women into the High Performance environment. Our men are in a similar boat, starting strong with their campaign at the start of 2022 but with numbers falling away as the challenge of maintaining the required high performance commitment took its toll and a number of the squad opted to focus on the Beach Worlds campaign.

Beach Seniors saw 2 successful campaigns with both the men's and women's teams achieving wins against Australia in April and the men going on to Worlds, as reported earlier in the Beach section of this report. Both men's and women's Beach Handball Teams have a current EOI out looking for the next round of athletes keen to continue the High Performance environment that has been created in Beach. Next goal is for both teams to qualify for World Beach Games in August 2023 in Bali.

Closing out our High Performance report is the expectation of seeing the return of age grade competition in the Beach scene. The first ever age grade beach comp in Oceania was in 2017 that saw our boys go to a Junior World Champs in Mauritius. We were unable to get a girls team along to the Oceania qualifiers in 2017. 2023 will be a different story and we hope to get both teams through to World Champs and possibly a Junior Olympics campaign.

One take home message from all of our high performance work, and a common theme in the above, is the use of the word "hope". To be able to continue to provide High Performance opportunities for our athletes – and turn that hope into reality – we need to boost our infrastructure of coaches, managers, referees, and coordinators to ensure we are growing our grassroots, and athletes have opportunities to use handball as a way to experience the great experiences that are on offer.

Grassroots is the cornerstone for us to be able to both keep the game going and become more competitive on the international stage. We can't simply rely on finding players at schools, Uni's, friends, and family and throwing a New Zealand jersey on them. New players need support in their regions to be able to develop. That doesn't happen without the existing handball community rolling up their sleeves and committing to help. So if you are not sure what to do but do want to help, please reach out to a board member or your local Regional Association.

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### Final word

A big thank you to your hardworking Executive Committee – Secretary-General Frank Stoltenberg, Treasurer & Beach Handball Director Willy Silcock, High Performance Director & Men's Beach Handball Coach Tim Rayner, and Women's & Youth Handball Director Maddie Stephen – for all the hours put in behind the scenes and the support you have provided over the past year.

Special thanks also to Antoine Desnos for making the referee development space his own, Daniel Triebisch for his efforts to get a national player registration system up and running – and most significantly, our tireless Media Officer Jun Tanlayco for the fantastic camera and media liaison work he has put in over the past year, including travelling with the Men's Beach Handball Team to Crete on his own steam to capture a slice of New Zealand Handball history on film so professionally. It is with great pleasure that the Executive Committee puts Jun's name forward to be elected a life member of the New Zealand Handball Federation, and we hope our members will join with us in recognising his wonderful 15 years of service to New Zealand Handball in this way.

Ngā mihi

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