



## New Zealand Amateur Sport Association calls on the Government to enable affordable access to community sport clubs



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**New Zealand's Children's Commissioner has reported that 21% of New Zealand children (236,048) live in low-income households, with over 13% (146,125) experiencing material hardship<sup>1</sup>. It is government policy to halve these statistics over the next seven years.**

The Association knows that low-income families experiencing material hardship are less likely to enrol their children in club-based community sport, owing to the financial barriers created by membership fees, costs of equipment to play and the costs of travel to regional sporting facilities, or out of community sporting hubs.

The Association believes that local sport clubs offer an effective way for children to connect with others in their community in pursuit of common sporting interests, with families also benefiting from the social interaction offered by a supportive club environment.

There are 817,040 children aged between 5 and 17 years of age in New Zealand. Up to 31% of the government's \$265 million Sport Recovery Package (between \$23 million and \$82 million<sup>2</sup>) could provide access to local community club-based sport for New Zealand children, if made available using a similar voucher scheme as provided by all Australian states, in which between \$100 and \$200 per year per child, is provided to pay for community sport club memberships.

The scheme would not only benefit families who elected to take-up the offer on registering their children with a local sport club, it would also provide the sport club with a much-needed financial boost to support the delivery of sport by the sport club's volunteers to their local community.

Wellington City Mission supports the aspiration of the Association to improve access of low-income families to club-based community sport. This is consistent with the work the City Mission does with those who are struggling in our communities, especially as the lasting effects of Covid-19 are evident in the lives of these families.

Wellington City Mission is a leader in providing free access for families to regional Community Sport Banks and Play Days, which are initiatives the Association strongly supports. Both the Association and the City Mission acknowledge that while volunteers in local community sport clubs create positive, life-forming experiences for young New Zealanders, which will equip them with relationships and skills for adult life, the costs of providing that experience (including providing equipment, maintaining infrastructure and paying local authority levies) mean that membership fees are necessary. However, they should not be a barrier to enabling all members of society to benefit from what New Zealand's sporting volunteers provide to their local communities.

**For more information please contact [office@asa.org.nz](mailto:office@asa.org.nz) or call 021 612 451.**

<sup>1</sup> Statistics New Zealand census data. <sup>2</sup> Between 21% of all children and 100% of all children aged between 5 and 17 years, based on a grant of \$100 per child.