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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Auckland is undergoing significant change. Rapid population growth, a shift in ethnic profile and changes in lifestyle trends, mean that the future Auckland will look remarkably different. As Auckland changes, so must we. Our facilities, community presence, balance of competitive and recreational opportunities and industry scale, provide the golf sector with a unique opportunity to support the changing landscape of Auckland and be an integral part of its future.

While the golf sector adds significant value to Auckland, there is a great opportunity to grow this contribution. In a rapidly expanding and diversifying city there are always competing priorities. The golf sector understands and embraces this. We believe that the contribution to our local communities and greater Auckland will be the driving force behind our sustainability as a sport in Auckland’s future.

As a sector, we truly believe we can play a role in enriching Auckland and the lives of its people. This plan, developed by the sector and its partners, has committed to four key priorities:

• Deliver a recognised, unique contribution to the cohesion of Auckland’s communities.
• Provide physical & mental health benefits to Aucklanders & contribute significantly to more Aucklanders being active more often.
• Provide a unique, positive impact on Auckland’s environment.
• Have a significant, positive impact on the Auckland economy.

To achieve these priorities the sector must perform at a high level. The plan has identified six workstreams that will support the sector towards high performance:

• The growth of visible & enjoyable ways for Aucklanders to experience golf.
• Advocating for a network of appropriately-located, fit-for-purpose facilities that meet the needs of current & future markets and deliver greater value to Auckland communities.
• Supporting excellence through a visible, accessible & thriving talent development pathway.
• Supporting Auckland’s tourism economy by providing unique golf experiences & a calendar of quality events.
• Adding greater value to Auckland’s environmental profile & becoming a leader for environmentally sustainable sport.
• Fostering robust partnerships that enhance the ability to deliver the objectives of the plan.

Auckland has an exciting, expansive and diverse future and the golf sector wants to play a significant role in supporting it.
WHAT IS THE GOLF SECTOR?

The golf sector is large and multifaceted. When referencing “the golf sector” we include all people, places, industries and formats associated with the game:

- **People**
  - Participants
  - Workforce
  - Volunteers
  - Supporters
  - Partners
  - Associations

- **Places**
  - Courses
  - Driving ranges
  - Mini-puts
  - Multi-use facilities
  - Schools
  - Community

- **Industry**
  - Retail
  - Food & beverage
  - Media
  - Technology
  - Property
  - Sponsorship
  - Education
  - Golf delivery

- **Formats**
  - Community events
  - Urban golf
  - Virtual golf
  - Hybrid golf
  - Traditional golf
  - Alternative formats

DEVELOPING THE PLAN

The Golf Sector Plan for Auckland has been developed by a working group with representatives from the following organisations:
- Auckland Council
- Aktive Auckland Sport & Recreation
- New Zealand Golf Inc.
- PGA of New Zealand
- Harbour Golf Association
- Auckland Golf Inc.
- Golf Managers Association of New Zealand
- Golf Managers Association of Auckland

A draft discussion document was developed and put through two stages of consultation.

STAGE ONE CONSULTATION

An open survey was promoted to the wider golf sector with responses collected over a six-week period. The discussion document was adjusted in line with the feedback before moving to stage two consultation.

STAGE TWO CONSULTATION

The adjusted document was ratified by the working group before presentations to industry influencers such as Auckland Councillors, Auckland Council staff, Regional Sports Trusts and New Zealand Golf Industry Council board representatives.

PUBLISHING THE LIVE DOCUMENT

While the purpose, outcomes and workstreams of the plan are complete, the golf sector and its partners consider this a live document. The significant scope of the sector and its multiple partners mean it will take a concerted, ongoing effort from the working group to onboard individual organisations across Auckland. The working group will continue to review the plan annually to ensure its relevance, report on its progress and make any required adjustments.

WHY CREATE THE PLAN?

Auckland is a city undergoing immense transformation. This is characterised by rapid population growth, an age profile that is markedly younger than the rest of New Zealand and a shifting ethnic profile that currently represents around 220 ethnic groups, ranking it as the fourth most diverse city in the world. We believe golf provides value to Auckland in an entirely unique way and that there is an opportunity to grow that value in line with a changing Auckland.

There are a number of challenges golf needs to be prepared for:

- Auckland has a current population of 1.6 million and the population is projected to increase to 2.2 million residents by 2033, the equivalent of absorbing Tauranga’s population in Auckland every four years.
- Auckland has the highest percentage of youth aged 0-24 years compared to any other region in the country with 500,000 children and young people in Auckland and is expected to grow to 625,000 by 2031.
- The ethnic makeup of Auckland differs vastly from the rest of New Zealand and is characterised by rapid population growth, an age profile that is markedly younger than the rest of New Zealand and a shifting ethnic profile that currently represents around 220 ethnic groups, ranking it as the fourth most diverse city in the world. We believe golf provides value to Auckland in an entirely unique way and that there is an opportunity to grow that value in line with a changing Auckland.

As well as preparing to serve the changing profile of Auckland the golf sector must be prepared to offer solutions to the macro trends shaping the way Aucklanders live their lives. These trends are influencing decisions on how to spend their leisure time:

- Across all generations, health has never been more important to New Zealanders.
- There is a desire for flexibility in the way people participate and pay for their recreational experiences.
- There is a marked growth in the number of sport, recreation and entertainment opportunities available.
- There is an increase in the growth of individualised sport and fitness.
- Social reasons, enjoyment and relaxation are key drivers for activity.
- Individuals are more conscious about how they spend their discretionary income, especially when it comes to long term commitments such as club membership.
- Increased work and family commitments mean more people feel ‘time-poor.’

For golf to grow its contribution to Auckland and ensure it is delivering positive outcomes for Aucklanders, the sector requires a singular voice from Auckland’s golf stakeholders, robust partnerships and a co-ordinated, well-articulated plan.
THE CONTRIBUTION OF GOLF TO AUCKLAND

The golf sector has a positive impact on Auckland currently;

$54 MILLION GDP

Golf contributes significantly to Auckland’s economy - an estimated $54 million in regional GDP per annum.

Through operations and attracting visitors, golf courses generate an estimated $53.45 million in new expenditure annually for Auckland. This expenditure contributes about $54.1 million in annual GDP. XV

AN ESTIMATED:

$43.1m of annual expenditure is generated by course operations.

$8.4m in GDP is generated annually through visitor expenditure and golf tourism XV

There are three types of visitors that have different spending patterns:

International visitors to golf courses ($5.6 million in GDP)

Domestic visitors from outside Auckland ($2.8 million in GDP)

Students international & out-of-region ($10.0 million)

749 FULL TIME JOBS

Golf provides 749 full time equivalent jobs for Aucklanders. XVIII

These roles are based across golf professional services, retail, food and beverage service, amenities and maintenance activities.

Golf in Auckland is growing.

Traditional membership within Auckland grew 2.26% from 2015 to 2016. XVIII

Since its inception in 2015 registered casual golfers have increased to 32,976 in under three years.

Golf facility construction has a very positive impact on Auckland.

Three new courses, Windross Farm, Wainui, and Tara Iti are estimated to have generated $252.7 million in output, $101.4 million in GDP and 1,175 FTE jobs for Auckland through construction. XIX

AN ESTIMATED:

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Domestic visitors from outside Auckland ($2.8 million in GDP)

Students international & out-of-region ($10.0 million)

FACILITY PROVISION

Over 94,000 Aucklanders play traditional golf formats. XXII

A large number of others engage through driving ranges and mini putt facilities.

Golf is the largest club based sport in the country. 
With over 500,000 participants.

Over 1 million rounds of golf are played in Auckland annually. XX

This has been a consistent average over the last 5 years.

These are competitive rounds of golf that are used for handicapping purposes, it does not include the large number of events, charity days, corporate days or training rounds.

Major golf events showcase Auckland to the world.

The MCKAYSON New Zealand Women’s Open LPGA event held at Windross Farm Golf Course in 2017 was broadcast to over 150 countries and over 250 million homes worldwide.

The 2017 World Masters Games played host to nearly 700 golf participants from around the globe, delivering an estimated 7,200 visitor nights, spending an estimated $1.3 million and generating $1 million in regional GDP. XIX

Green Space Facilities

The golf sector maintains all of these green spaces at no cost to council or other third parties.

Supplementary Facilities

1 27-hole facility
18-hole facilities
31 9-hole facilities

8 Driving ranges
11 Mini putting

xiv}

xv}

xvi}

xxi}

xxii}
Enriching Auckland through Golf

As a sector, we truly believe that the innate value of golf and its contribution to Auckland can enrich the lives of its people.

**OUR MISSION**

Enriching Auckland

The act of adding greater value or significance.

The full sector including all people, places, industries and formats.

A game that provides diverse and wide-ranging experiences for participants including a unique set of values, healthier and longer lives, lifelong competitive opportunities and unique friendship and camaraderie attributes.

Golf plays a large role in the environmental landscape of Auckland.

More than half of Auckland Council-owned or managed golf courses act as green buffers to reserves and areas of native bush protecting them from soil erosion, extreme temperature fluctuations, dust and noise pollution and ground water contamination.\textsuperscript{xiii} Facilities support the maintenance and retention of diminishing green space.

Auckland’s courses contribute to the North-West Wildlink corridor of ecosystems linking biodiversity hotspots on Auckland’s east and west coast.\textsuperscript{xiv}

A variety of research has been published on the ecological value of golf courses. A University of Auckland baseline study of Remuera Golf Course found 99 different plant species, 27 of which were native to New Zealand. Further, the wood vegetation lining the fairways provided a well-connected series of habitats for avian species and other fauna.\textsuperscript{xv}

Golf courses provide a valuable stormwater function. For example, Takapuna Golf Course collects surface water and run-off from neighbouring streets and properties. Damage to neighbouring residential and business properties is effectively mitigated in the event of a major weather occurrence such as a 10-year flood.\textsuperscript{xvi}

Golf delivers recognised physical and mental health benefits for Aucklanders.

The opportunity for lifelong activity supports healthier longer lives for Aucklanders and a genuine lifelong contribution to the prevention of disease.

Regular participation in physical activity provides significant health benefits to individuals from both a physical and mental perspective. Research from Golf Victoria to understand the value of golf’s health contribution found that:

Golf’s physical health benefits contributed to the prevention of ischaemic heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, colon-rectal cancer and breast cancer.

Golf’s mental health benefits significantly contributed financially to the state through the prevention of anxiety and depression.

92% of the burden of disease resulting from physical inactivity is borne by people aged 15 years and above - it is imperative that sport participants are encouraged to play into adulthood. Golf is the largest participation club sport for adults in the country.\textsuperscript{xvii}

The sector aspires to grow this contribution delivering greater value to Auckland.
OWNING OUR CHALLENGES

While the golf sector provides great value to Auckland, it still faces many challenges. To deliver real value to Auckland and play a role in building its future, these challenges need to be addressed.

PERCEPTION OF THE GAME

A significant challenge facing golf is its public perception. Research shows that golf in New Zealand is moving in the right direction and is increasingly seen as a sport on its way up. It has made positive moves in being seen as more fun, accessible, cool, popular and ageless. While golf has many positive perceptions, there are also a few negative ones. Some perceptions are more accurate than others. In either case, poor or inaccurate perceptions reduce the ability of the sector to deliver on the plan and drive positive outcomes for Auckland. Below are the most relevant perceptions that need addressing:

ELITE

Due to its history, golf has the perception of being an elite sport that operates on an exclusionary basis. It has the perception of serving the affluent portions of society while offering little to no value to the rest of the population. This is not accurate for New Zealand. Golf in New Zealand is a remarkably accessible pastime. In a uniquely kiwi fashion, many facilities are community organisations with strong volunteer support. Mini putt, driving ranges and the overwhelming majority of courses within Auckland encourage public access and are not members-only, exclusive facilities. Despite this, the elite perception of the game is a challenge and one that the golf sector must continue to address.

OLD

For older generations golf activity offers positive health and well-being outcomes and the opportunity for social connectedness. However, the perception that the golf sector only serves this generation is inaccurate. Traditional members of golf clubs across New Zealand are an average age of 59, but the game serves a broad range of ages. One of traditional golf’s greatest strengths is that the handicap system allows equitable play across ages and skill levels. Within Auckland, there is a growing younger market of golfers playing traditional 18-hole golf in a much more casual way. Outside of traditional golf, driving ranges, mini putts, virtual golf simulators and hybrid golf games serve varied age groups also. The sector can serve people of all ages but must ensure experiences are meeting the needs of all age groups and that those offerings are well articulated and highly visible.

MALE

Nothing about golf precludes it from being an inclusive and diverse sport. While the wider golf sector serves all people relatively equitably, the profile of golf club members within Auckland is predominately male. The golf sector must ensure that the offering and environment at golf facilities supports inclusiveness and that all contributions to the sector are valued and recognised. Specific campaigns along with sector education are required to ensure the positive benefits of the sport are equally accessible.

COSTLY

Linked to the perception of elitism is the perception of golf being costly. Dependent on which part of the sector a person engages in, the costs can be remarkably low, particularly for youth. Like most sport or recreation, the largest cost is incurred when a person chooses to involve themselves in regular participation and take the sport more seriously. At this stage, better quality equipment can be purchased to support their endeavour. However, initial entry to the game can be low cost and shouldn’t be a barrier to participation. The golf sector needs to ensure that the costs for entering the game are well articulated and managed to ensure they are not a barrier.

LAND INTENSIVE

The golf sector has varied facilities of wide-ranging size. Auckland is a rapidly growing city that has competing priorities and pressure for land use. It is imperative that golf facilities, particularly the larger ones, have a good connection with their surrounding communities and offer tangible value to them. As the demand for golf increases there is a risk that demand will exceed facility supply and there will be the requirement for more golf facilities. These facilities need to be appropriately-located, fit-for-purpose and have a diversified offering that adds value to Auckland communities.

TIME CONSUMING

The traditional 18-hole golf experience can take anywhere from 3 to 5 hours. While this is suitable for some people, macro trends show there are less people willing or able to dedicate this amount of time to sport or recreational activity. The golf sector in Auckland can own this challenge by embracing and promoting alternative formats of the game. Shorter formats of the game provide a pathway between introductory facilities (driving ranges, mini putts) and traditional golf facilities and allow those not physically able to play 18 holes the opportunity to stay engaged with the game. Shorter and alternative formats of the game also present an opportunity for time poor markets to stay engaged in the game and feel valued.

CHANGE RESISTANT

Parts of the golf sector are more adaptable to change than others. In general, the privatised, for profit entities are more adaptable organisations who embrace change to meet the needs of their market. The not for profit entities have a governing structure of voted board or committee members. Ordinarily this structure is not as well suited to rapid change. While it meets the needs of its current members well, it does not lend itself to meeting the needs of future customers as easily. Particularly if any required change will have a perceived negative impact on the current membership. Highly skilled, well organised governors supported by robust process and structure are required to ensure the not for profit entities are market facing. Golf needs to own this challenge and strive to ensure that the sector is adaptable to meet the needs of current and future Aucklanders.

The challenges noted were key drivers in the development of the strategic framework, the goals and workstreams. The success of the strategic framework will drive golf towards addressing these challenges.
The golf sector will focus on the following workstreams to create a thriving environment, increasing the sectors value to Auckland and delivering on the above priorities.

**WORKSTREAM BREAKDOWN**

**GROWING PARTICIPATION**

**GOAL:** The growth of visible and enjoyable ways for Aucklanders to experience golf leading to increased participation.

**SUPPORTED PRIORITIES**
1. Social and Community
2. Health and Wellbeing
3. Environmental
4. Economic

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**
The demographics of Auckland are rapidly changing. For golf to add long term value to Auckland, the sector must ensure it develops relevant offerings to meet the needs of each market segment. Golf is a game for life so it is imperative that the offerings are highly visible and well-articulated, ensuring ease of starting and progressing through the pathway and simplicity of re-entering the game for those who disengage.

**ENRICHING AUCKLAND THROUGH GOLF**

**GOAL:** An influential and well-represented sport with a strong impact on Auckland’s economy.

**SUPPORTED PRIORITIES**
1. Social and Community
2. Health and Wellbeing
3. Environmental
4. Economic

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**
A golf’s influence extends well beyond the game itself, creating a significant multiplier effect for the broader economy of Auckland.

**ENABLING FACTORS**
- Leverage demand and tourism
- Leverage demand and tourism
- Leverage demand and tourism
- Leverage demand and tourism

**ACTIVITIES:**
- Develop partnerships for tourism
- Enhance the golf sector’s capability to deliver
- Develop partnerships for tourism
- Enhance the golf sector’s capability to deliver

**A HEALTHY FACILITY NETWORK**

**GOAL:** A network of appropriately-located, fit-for-purpose facilities that meet the needs of current & future markets, are financially sustainable and deliver value to Auckland communities.

**SUPPORTED PRIORITIES**
1. Social and Community
2. Health and Wellbeing
3. Environmental
4. Economic

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**
Participation in golf activity is dependent on access to the correct facility. Although all markedly different, driving range, mini-golf, hybrid golf and traditional golf activity require fit for purpose facilities as a pre-requisite to positive experiences. These facilities allow golf to deliver its unique and lifelong enrichment to those involved in the game and are a central driver for the positive outcomes golf can deliver to Auckland. With Auckland’s rate of population growth there is a risk that demand for golf could exceed facility supply by 2030. This growth increases the competing pressures and adjusted priorities for land use meaning that golf facilities need to offer tangible value to Aucklanders irrespective of whether they are participants of the sport or not. Adjustments in regulations have meant that parks and school fields are no longer accessible for new participants to learn the game, creating a gap in the provision of introductory spaces. There is also an identified lack of performance facilities allowing aspiring Aucklanders to fulfil their potential. The role of facilities as a driver in delivering positive outcomes to Auckland cannot be understated.

**ACTIVITY:**
- Advocate for and support the diversification of offerings at current facilities
- Advocate for more fit for purpose, multi-use facilities to meet the needs of Auckland’s growing population.
- Ensure further development or repurposing of current facilities is in line with the hierarchy of facilities approach.
- Ensure the provision gap for introductory/learner facilities is prioritised.
- Advocate for a performance facility allowing aspiring Aucklanders to fulfil their potential.
- Ensure new or repurposed facilities diversify offerings ensuring the greatest value to their surrounding communities.
- Ensure facilities achieve environmentally sustainable certification and/or adopt an environmental responsibility policy.
FULFILLING AUCKLANDERS POTENTIAL

GOAL: Support excellence through a visible, accessible and thriving talent development programme and performance pathway.

SUPPORTED PRIORITIES
1. Social and Community
2. Health and Wellbeing

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
Auckland is a city that is proud of its achievements and its people. A thriving, visible and accessible performance pathway takes talented Aucklanders to the world allowing aspiring athletes to reach their full potential and inspire the growth of the game at grass roots. This growth has a direct impact on the number of Aucklanders introduced to the unique and lifelong enrichment golf offers.

ACTIVITY:
- Support the development of well-articulated and understood talent development pathway connecting club to regional and national programmes.
- Align programme philosophy and place the development needs of the athlete at the centre.
- Actively support the growth of quality coaching.
- Ensure events support the needs of identified athletes.
- Advocate for a performance facility within Auckland.

THRIVING GOLF TOURISM AND EVENTS

GOAL: The golf sector contributes significantly to Auckland’s tourism economy by providing unique golf experiences that meet the needs of the tourism market and through a calendar of quality events.

SUPPORTED PRIORITIES
1. Social and Community
2. Health and Wellbeing
3. Economic

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
Auckland is not only a tourism destination but the global gateway to New Zealand. Golf tourism adds to the profile of Auckland as an international city and supports a strong and prosperous regional economy. A strong calendar of events enriches golf offers.

ACTIVITY:
- Support the provision of a quality, centralised hub for promotion of golf sector events.
- Promote and support the development and growth of introductory events for Auckland’s communities.
- Advocate for, and support the delivery of, world class events.
- Advocate for the continued support and growth of the Golf Tourism New Zealand approach to Auckland.
- Ensure events support the performance pathway, supporting aspiring Aucklanders to reach their full potential.
- Ensure events support the needs of identified athletes.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL: The golf sector adds greater value to Auckland’s environmental profile and is a leader for environmentally sustainable sport.

SUPPORTED PRIORITIES
1. Social and Community
2. Health and Wellbeing
3. Environmental
4. Economic

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
Aucklanders identify with their natural environment. As Auckland’s population swells there are many challenges to maintaining a positive environmental profile. While golf already provides some positive outcomes, there is a great opportunity to do more. In line with Auckland Councils Long Term Plan the golf sector shares responsibility for living sustainably and looking after our environment.

ACTIVITY:
- Encourage all golf facilities to adopt an environmental responsibility policy outlining their commitment to positive environmental practices by 2025.
- Encourage all courses on Auckland Council land to be certified as environmentally sustainable by 2022.
- Encourage all courses within Auckland to be certified as environmentally sustainable by 2030.
- Advocate strongly for all new golf facility developments to be established in line with environmentally sustainable certifications and operate under an environmental responsibility policy.
- Encourage all not for profit golf organisations to actively use the LiteFoot/LiteClub services to reduce power, water and waste.

ROBUST PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL: The golf sector has strong partnerships that enhance the ability to deliver on the objectives of the plan.

SUPPORTED PRIORITIES
1. Social and Community
2. Health and Wellbeing
3. Environmental
4. Economic

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
The golf sector strives to add value to Auckland and maintain and grow its position as an important part of Auckland’s community profile. As a multi-faceted sector, trying to serve a rapidly growing and remarkably diverse city, collaboration with external partners is crucial. Robust partnerships will help accelerate the outcomes of the plan and ensure the value is widespread. Collaboration and alignment within the sector is also key to ensuring resource is allocated wisely towards the Auckland Golf Sector Plan.

ACTIVITY:
- The working group will take an active role in developing and fostering both internal sector relationships and external partnerships.
  - Develop a stakeholder management plan.
  - Identify key industry influencers and ensure they understand the philosophy of the Golf Sector Plan for Auckland.
  - Advocate for a partnership approach towards the positive outcomes identified in the plan.
  - Advocate for a shared resource approach in delivering the best outcomes for golf in Auckland.
- Where appropriate, advocate to industry influencers for the positive outcomes in line with the Golf Sector plan for Auckland.

Where appropriate, advocate to industry influencers for the positive outcomes in line with the Golf Sector plan for Auckland.
PLAN DELIVERY

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A PLAN IS IN THE QUALITY OF ITS DELIVERY

Below is an outline explaining how the working group will bring the Golf Sector Plan for Auckland to life.

ANNUAL PLANS

Annual plans will be created by the working group. This will outline the key activities within the six workstreams which will deliver the four priority outcomes for Auckland.

DELIVERY AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Current benchmarks have been identified for the four priority outcomes for Auckland and the six workstreams that support them.

• EVIDENCE THE WORK
  The working group will develop an annual report of work completed in line with the annual plan.

• EVIDENCE THE IMPACT
  The working group will review the golf sector value to Auckland across the four priority outcomes every 3 years. This will be reported to the industry and its partners with the goal of greatly increasing the value.

TIMELINE

This plan is a long-term document that aims towards 2030.

While there are a number of pieces of work underway already and a number that will commence shortly, others will take a longer period of time to achieve. Where relevant the working group will promote the progress of specific initiatives to the industry and its partners.

INFORMING DOCUMENTATION

The Auckland Golf Sector Plan has considered the content of the following documentation when creating its approach.

• Auckland Sport and Recreation Strategic Action Plan
• 2013 O’Connor Sinclair Auckland Golf Facility Report
• The Auckland Council Long Term Plan
• The New Zealand Golf Strategic Plan 2014-2018
• The Auckland Golf Strategic Plan
• The Harbour Golf Strategic Plan
• The Aktive Auckland Strategic Plan 2015-2020
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• Sport New Zealand Strategic Plan 2015-2020

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