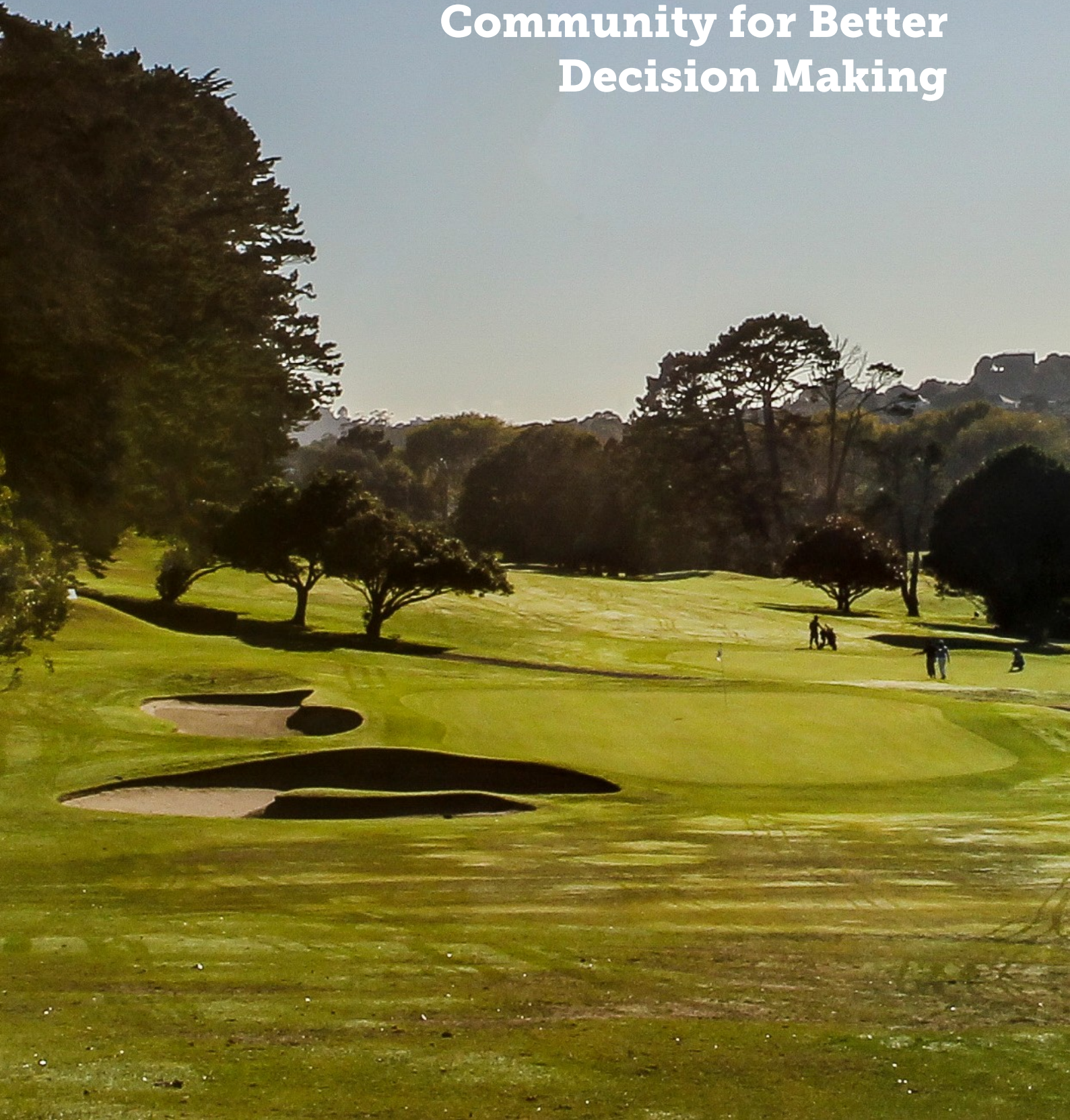




# Understanding Your Community for Better Decision Making



## Understanding Your Community for Better Decision Making

We know it is important to understand national and regional trends, but I question, is understanding and engaging your community the extra key to the success of your club?

Nationally we have a mix of both urban, rural and semi-rural areas. Our metropolitan areas experience pressure on land due to increasing population and increasing costs. Our rural areas face stagnant population growth and people moving to larger cities for more opportunities. This results in our regions being diverse which flows into our communities.

In Auckland we only need to drive from one suburb to another to realise the demographic changes and needs can vary significantly from community to community. For example, Whangaparaoa Golf Club has a substantial proportion of its community aged over 65, and over a third of its population are young families, in comparison to Maungakiekie Golf club in a community where half of its residents were born overseas. These two communities are very different, so should we take a different approach and is this information even helpful?

Knowing who we have in our community is crucial, but understanding the participants interests and desires are just as important to create initiatives that are relevant. Demographic information only gives us a piece of the puzzle to make better decisions.

To make relevant decisions we need to use multiple sources of information. We can gather regional insights and local knowledge, but then we must take a locally led approach to truly put the participant and the community at the heart of the decision making. Being locally led means we learn from the community and we work together to create meaningful experiences.

When deciding to become community focused, it is important to ask yourself:

- Why? Why is important to your club to be community focused
- How do you define 'community'? (Think the people, the businesses, the places and spaces, the leadership)
- How can we add value to these groups in a way that has mutual benefit?
- How can we empower people in our community to have a voice in decision making?
- How does this align to your overall vision for the club?

New Zealand Golf and Waitemata Golf club have recently developed a community engagement plan and supporting working document to develop the following outcomes:

- Become the heart of the community
- Increase facility utilisation and visibility
- Explore opportunities for collaboration and partnership
- Advocate to council and support local board outcomes to add tangible value to the community
- Create better experiences for our people, both golf and non-golf related.

A club's financial sustainability is dependent of the variance of revenue generators and the pressure on land in Auckland means we need to show tangible value to the community. Golf courses sit on beautiful land and huge facilities, the utilisation and shared usage of these, alongside having community involvement and a family focus is, in my opinion imperative to the success of a club.

Waitemata golf club and NZG believe golf can add value to the community through improved efficiencies, positive environmental impact, better health outcomes and social cohesion, the community engagement plan and working plan are a priority to the club in supporting these outcomes. The engagement plan is a rationalisation and over view and can be seen on the following page.



# Waitemata Golf Club Community Engagement Plan

Waitemata Golf Club define our community as the Devonport local board. This includes its people, leadership, businesses, places and spaces, and our own golfing community. Adding value to this community has been identified as a key strategic priority for the club and this has led to development of an engagement plan. This engagement plan has considered the priorities and goals from our own strategic plan, the Golf Sector plan for Auckland and the Takapuna-Devonport Local board plan 2017. The local board plans emphasis the voice of the community and the people stated that:

*"(It is) important that we have good-quality recreation areas."*

*Preserving natural spaces is our gift to our children."*

*"The ecosystem and the environment around us should always be priority."*

*"Community engagement initiatives produce a healthy well-connected community."*

The voice of the community has guided our thinking within this plan and we believe we can make a significant contribution to the local board desired outcomes;

**Outcome 1:** Quality parks, beaches and open spaces that everyone can enjoy

**Outcome 2:** Maintaining our areas of natural, cultural and built heritage is vital

**Outcome 3:** Our communities are empowered, engaged and inclusive.

Waitemata Golf Club aim to deliver a unique contribution to the community cohesion of the Devonport- Takapuna area. We believe our club can add significant value to our community through the following:

- Increased physical and mental health benefits
- Better social outcomes through a well-connected community
- Improved and safe accessibility to green space and enhanced walkways that connect the local neighbourhood
- A well maintained, consistently improved and prioritised ecosystem and environment for the community to enjoy
- A shared facility for multi-use opportunities

The outcomes we wish to achieve are:

- To share our facility with other community groups to fully utilise the space for golf and non-golf related activity
- Improve accessibility and safety of walk ways through our golf club for the community to enjoy
- Increase accessibility and visibility of the club to welcome our community and increase usage
- Increase opportunities in sport and physical activity
- Increase our sustainability standards through geo certification to provide a positive contribution to our ecosystem

to achieve these outcomes, we have created an action plan that uses the following engagement approaches:

## Consult

We will consult with targeted groups to ensure we our meeting expectations and to better understand how we can continue to add more value.

## Explore

We will explore the potential of collaboration and partnerships that will increase utilisation of our course and facilities.

## Activate

We will activate places and spaces to increase visibility of our club, to welcome visitors and provide more accessible opportunities to have a go at golf.

## Collaborate

We will collaborate with our local businesses, sports clubs and council to provide more value to the community and increased physical activity opportunities.

By focusing on community engagement, the scope and focus of our work can shift to a collective mindset, we can prioritise the inclusiveness of our community and provide a hub for the Devonport Takapuna area to enjoy.

Waitemata Golf Club are working on and evolving an action plan that supports this engagement document, some key outcomes for the club have been:

1. Bar profit 27k increase for the last 6 months compared to the same period last year.
2. Numbers have doubled for Friday night dinners and Sunday Thai night
3. 50 new members in the last 2 months
4. 4000 more rounds in the last 6 months compared to same period last year
5. 20% increase in Junior membership numbers plus between 10-20 turning up every week for coaching (previously there were none)

These are just some of the examples of the impact a community focused approach has had on the club. Some initiatives that have impacted these outcomes are:

- **The coffee shop:** 'Swingers' has recently opened and has sold 250 coffees on its first day to both members and public, the vibe at the club has changed significantly!
- **Junior coaching and member clinics:** Ongoing support and learning for participants to reach their level of aspiration.
- **The social events:** Non- golf related events and social activities are valuable to creating a better club culture and utilisation of club facilities. After opening the coffee shop the visibility of existing events has increased and is being taken up by locals.
- **The fun Zone:** Families and young people are identified as a priority at the club. The fun zone is in full swing with fun games and outdoor activities for the whole family to enjoy.
- **Ryman Health Care:** In partnership with Ryman, Waitemata Golf club are developing a 'never too old to start' initiative for residents due to be living in the centre. The golf club will also host evenings where residences can simply come for dinner.
- **The Croquet Club:** The golf clubs greenkeeping staff are supporting the maintenance of the Croquet turf of improving efficiencies.
- **Activations:** The club will host 'pop up' golf free for the local community. The events will be held in the Devonport and Takapuna area to increase visibility of the club and welcome families to spend time there for both non-golf and golf related activity.
- Exploration of more sport and recreation initiatives at the golf club such as yoga/other sport group
- Member and neighbour's consultation



These initiatives are just a few of the components of the action plan and we can already see obvious benefits to the club and the local community. The plans are being consistently adapted and evolved in response to consultation, feedback and reflection. The club acknowledge participation and commitment to sport is not only for the physical benefits, it is for the social connections, the health benefits and for a place to belong for the whole family and community. They are committed to creating the right environment and offer relevant initiatives with the vision of being the heart of the community. So, is understanding and engaging your community the extra key to success of your club?

Absolutely, understanding your community will help your club determine what matters most to local people and where and how you can add value. Creating new partnerships and networks will lead to more support and combined efficiencies. The increased visibility will lead to more participation in club events and facility usage, and the overall community cohesion will allow for continued evolution.

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