

Surfing NZ chairs report 2021

Kia ora SNZ membership

First of all as Deputy Chair I would like to thank the previous Chair Greg Alnutt for all the work he has done this past year since becoming Chair. He has taken the Board from strength to strength and given us a strategic pathway to a sustainable future. Greg regretfully resigned due to an increase in his companies workload. Surfing NZ introduced a new constitution at the 2020 AGM and thanks to the leadership of Greg we were able to transform our process and practice. As a board we continue to work well together with several sub committees to make the transition easier for staff and to provide the skills the new constitution required.

The Board would also like to thank Mark "Vinny" Pevats who has spent the last couple of years revamping the Surfing NZ financial reporting systems. Thanks to Covid and the cancellation of numerous events we have had to keep a very close eye on the financial side of things to keep the organisation afloat. Mark and our newly appointed CEO Ben Kennings have done a fantastic job on this front and we are very grateful for their work. Mark is stepping down but will continue to assist Ben with the finances.

I was on hand with 3 other SNZ board members to welcome the first group of Olympic athletes out of MIQ in August in Christchurch after their return from the Olympics. It was fantastic to see our surfers mixing with the rest of New Zealand's high performance/elite athletes as equals and I was impressed with the respect that they were shown by all the other sports. The Board would like to congratulate Billy Stairmand and Ella Williams for first achieving their goals to make the Olympics and secondly the way they conducted themselves during surfing's first Olympic event.

The Board and staff have been updating the SNZ strategic plan and core values. This is likely to be a fluid plan with the ever developing Covid situation.

The 2021 ISA world surfing games were a very testing time for Surfing NZ and our top athletes. The Covid travel restrictions and related risks had several of our men opt not to travel to the event. A very special mention has to be made of Paige Hareb and Saffi Vette who put everything into going to the event with the hope of qualifying for the last spots available for Olympic qualification. Paige fell agonisingly close and missed out by one spot. I believe both Paige and Saffi both have a very strong desire to qualify for the next Olympics in France and we wish them well.

With Surfing's inclusion in the Olympics we have received development money to work with the current crop of top & up-coming athletes. We have run one junior development camp in the South Island and the first of what we hope will be many more elite training camps in the Mount. We have another junior camp happening in the North Island on the last weekend of November.

The 2020 AGM saw Allan Te Moananui elected as the Maori representative to the Board. Allan's input and direction has been invaluable in our desire to introduce Tikanga across the organisation.

The Board would like to extend their congratulations to Ben Kennings for his appointment as CEO for Surfing New Zealand. Ben has been acting CE for the last 12 months and was considered to be the best person for the role. He has tirelessly supported, promoted & developed SNZ during a challenging year and we are delighted to have him at the helm.

Nga mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.
Russell Ritchie
Deputy Chair
Surfing New Zealand