

Principles of inclusion

We understand the benefits of recreation, but are they available to all New Zealanders? What stands in the way? How can we make recreation inclusive?

The big picture

Disabled people, older adults, refugees and migrants, Māori and Pasifika, [one in nine children](#), and young people with poor mental health are more likely to be living on a lower income.

Great recreation experiences are out of reach for many because they lack disposable income and transport. We see this in [lower participation rates](#).

In previous [Insights Reports](#), we focused on some low participation groups – identifying barriers and potential solutions.

Rangatahi: Many rangatahi experience poor mental wellbeing and benefit from recreation opportunities tailored to their needs. **Action:** *Listen to young people and act on what you hear.*

People over 65: Low income or lifelong health issues impact on some older adult's ability to access quality experiences. **Action:** *Design inclusive environments – physical and social!*

Mental Wellbeing: Many factors impact on peoples' wellbeing, including inequality. **Action:** *Take a whole person, whole system approach.*

Invisible Disability: Many New Zealanders experience invisible disabilities. **Action:** *Apply mental models of capability and integration.*

Equity and Leisure: Complex barriers to participation exist including poverty; addressing these can make a difference. **Action:** *Remove cost as a barrier and address other barriers to participation.*

Enabling Play: Children raised in urban environments need access to places and spaces for play and the conditions that foster 'playfulness' – near to home. **Action:** *Maximise the use of natural features and green spaces.*



Figure 1 Makotuku swimming hole, photo/Lin Ferguson. Source: <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/whanganui-chronicle/news/summer-heaven-dozens-loving-swimming-hole-after-makotuku-clean-up/RTW323NA25I3JWMZ4JJAQ7PFQY/>

Equity of access

It's important to remember that **every person has equal opportunity, access and participation in cultural life, leisure and sport**. This right is enshrined in [legislation](#). So why do we continue to see people excluded? We need to think more holistically about the impact of [inequalities on wellbeing](#).

A different approach

An Australian/New Zealand team of researchers¹ investigated modes of delivery and the [use of everyday patterns](#).² They identified the following.

- *Moving beyond services* to a broader concept of support for wellbeing
- *Starting differently* to achieve different outcomes
- *Challenge indicators* to make explicit the underpinning worldviews
- *Collective action and ownership* -wellbeing as the responsibility of the collective not the individual
- *Whanau and relationships* as the unit of wellbeing
- *Connecting to place* and being in place
- *Right scale* – allowing for work across multiple levels.

Benefits of Participation

There are many benefits of participation, and recent [research](#) by Sport New Zealand explored this in more detail.

- Improves overall health and wellbeing
- contributes to quality of life
- fosters a [sense of belonging](#)
- impacts beyond participation
- Recreation outdoors has [many benefits](#) for wellbeing.

Emerging Patterns in Practice

Moving beyond services to a much broader concept of support for wellbeing

[Wairoa Community Centre](#) re-purposed their building and staff to assist people unable to inhabit their homes and schools.

Starting differently to achieve different kinds of outcomes.

[First Steps Outdoors](#) for young Muslim women - a collaborative project; all-women; culturally safe and working with whanau.

Challenge indicators to make explicit the underpinning worldview or values.

[Aroha Ngā Mokopuna](#) project connects Kaumātua and school students. Indicators are centred around healthy lifestyles and cultural connection.

Collective action and ownership – wellbeing as the responsibility of the collective not the individual

The Wellington city council [Leisure card review](#) led to partnering with holistic providers of support, empowerment and access to leisure card, and promoting equity of access.

Whanau and relationships as the unit of wellbeing – working with people in the context of family and whanau.

Nuku Ora staff in Wellington [changed their delivery after Covid](#) lockdowns to support whanau engaged in Green Prescription, developing new resources and online support direct to the people.

Connecting to place and being in place – the role of spaces in supporting wellbeing

Raetihi residents worked together led by two locals to create [a new walkway](#) along the [Makotuku River](#) restoring access to picnic sites and historic swimming holes.

Right scale – allowing for fluid movement between big and deep; work across multiple levels.

[Learn Active](#) staff work at several levels; providing outdoor recreation opportunities and focusing on health/wellbeing/learning, family/whanau.



Figure 2 Learn Active students developing bush skills, Canterbury. Source: <https://learnactive.co.nz/>

Insights to action

Insights	Action
Support wellbeing	Work with people to design solutions that meet their needs Take an holistic perspective
Different start for different outcomes	Identify those who are excluded Find the place where they belong
Respect the values and world views of others	Listen to the people who have the relevant lived experience
Collective action and ownership	Value the wisdom of groups within the community as a legitimate source of expertise
Whanau and relationships	Work with people in their social context
Connecting to place	Recognise the significance of spaces and places as enablers of wellbeing
Right scale	Design and deliver consistent services Tailor services to meet specific needs

References and further reading

¹ Blog; Everyday Patterns for Shifting Systems, Griffith University, The Southern Initiative, and Auckland Co-Design Lab

² 'patterns are interconnected behaviours, relationships and structures that together make up a picture of what 'common practice' looks like and how it is ultimately experienced by people interacting with and in the system... everyday patterns...can fundamentally shift people's lived experience of systems'