

RUGBY FOR LIFE[®]

CHARITABLE TRUST

2026

Q2 REVIEW



Whānau and friends of Rugby for Life

Quarter two of 2026 has been another busy and rewarding period across our Rugby for Life clubs and communities. Our coordinators, committee members, coaches, managers, volunteers, players and supporters have once again given countless hours to keep rugby and other winter sports thriving across Northland.

From cutting oranges and washing jerseys to preparing fields, coaching teams, driving players to games and working behind the scenes, every contribution helps create opportunities for people of all ages to participate, connect and belong. That commitment remains both inspiring and the foundation of strong, sustainable clubs.

As the winter season winds down over the next month or two, clubs will celebrate with prize giving recognising players, volunteers and supporters. Attention will then turn to off-season programmes and community initiatives that keep members connected, support summer sports and build momentum for an even stronger 2027 season.

Our clubs have again shown real resilience and initiative, collectively raising more than \$117,000 through sponsorship, fundraising events, merchandise sales, annual tournaments, sausage sizzles and infrastructure projects. These funds are being reinvested into facilities, equipment and programmes that keep our clubs sustainable, now and for future generations.

A highlight of the quarter was the Rumble in Russell fundraising event, bringing together players and supporters from across the region for a great celebration of community rugby. We were proud to see eight players representing Rugby for Life from seven affiliated clubs, showcasing the strength and camaraderie that defines our organisation. Events like this raise valuable funds while strengthening relationships between clubs.

Through our partnership with the ReSport Charitable Trust, many Rugby for Life clubs have received rugby boots and balls, ensuring financial hardship is never a barrier to participation. Every child deserves the chance to play. To support this initiative, visit www.resport.co.nz.

Finally, our sincere thanks to our funders, sponsors, donors and community partners. Your continued support enables us to strengthen clubs, back volunteers, develop young people and build healthier, more connected communities. Together, we are ensuring rugby remains far more than a game, a vehicle for wellbeing, belonging and opportunity across our clubs.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Ngā mihi nui

Ajit Balsingham
Chair of the Board
Rugby for Life






Reflecting on a Partnership That Has Strengthened a Club and Its Community

Whangaruru Rugby Football Club is moving into a new chapter this quarter, one shaped by several years working alongside Rugby for Life. It is a good moment to reflect on what the club, its volunteers and the wider community have built during that time, and on a partnership that has left both strong.

Working together, Whangaruru RFC and Rugby for Life have opened opportunities that reached well beyond the club itself. Players travelled overseas for the first time in the club's history, and junior members took part in major rugby events and leadership training at Blues Rugby HQ. A coordinator role, supported through Rugby for Life, gave the committee extra capacity to pursue funding, build relationships and manage administration, so volunteers could keep their focus on running the club day to day.

The club's committee led a full revision of the constitution, achieving Incorporated Society status and opening up eligibility for the New Zealand Rugby Legacy Fund. With that groundwork in place, Whangaruru RFC became the first club in Northland to receive funding through it. The grant will restore the clubrooms into a vibrant community hub, a place to showcase the club's whakapapa, preserve its taonga and honour the generations who built Whangaruru Rugby Football Club. strengthening community sport across the wider region.

Alongside this, the partnership delivered two years of Whangārei District Council funding for:

- Matariki celebrations, a covered deck extension worth more than \$40,000.
- An after-school programme at The Farm in Whangaruru North, giving tamariki access to horse riding and other farm-based activities.

What began with the Whangaruru RFC Senior Committee grew to include:

- The Junior Management Board
- The Netball Club
- the Whangaruru Coastal and Community Sports Association

● **Strengthening community sport across the wider region.**

This next stage is a natural evolution of the partnership, one that builds on everything Whangaruru RFC and Rugby for Life have achieved together. As Rugby for Life's coordinator model continues to grow and support clubs across the region, Whangaruru RFC moves forward with strong foundations already in place, a confident committee, deeper funding relationships and a community well practised at working together. That same resilience has been on show this year too, with the club and community coming together after major weather events closed the region's main arterial route early in 2026.



THE FUTURE FOR WHANGARURU RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

is bright



Junior numbers continue to grow across the U5, U7, U9 and U11 grades, netball is thriving, and the club has its sights set on fielding a Senior Women's team for the first time. Rugby for Life is proud to have stood alongside Whangaruru RFC through this chapter, and even prouder of a club and community ready to keep leading the way forward.

WHAT WHANGARURU RFC AND RUGBY FOR LIFE HAVE ACHIEVED TOGETHER:

- First club in Northland to secure New Zealand Rugby Legacy Fund investment, restoring the clubrooms into a community hub
- A first overseas trip and Blues Rugby HQ leadership experiences for players
- A revised club constitution and Incorporated Society status, opening new funding pathways
- Two years of Whangārei District Council funding for Matariki celebrations
- A new covered deck and an after-school programme at The Farm in Whangaruru North
- An expanded partnership spanning the Senior Committee, Junior Management Board, Netball Club and the Whangaruru Coastal and Community Sports Association



EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING & EDUCATION (E, T&E) **SNAPSHOT**

Momentum Built on Real Connections

Quarter two has shown what happens when rugby clubs, schools and local employers move in the same direction. Rugby for Life's E, T&E programme keeps anchoring rangatahi to their club and community while opening doors into training, education and work. The stories below capture the momentum building across the region.



2026 PARTNERSHIP GROWTH

Keen to offer apprenticeships or work-experience?

Email matthew.d@rugbyforlife.org.nz

REFLECTING ON RECENT SUCCESS



1.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS OPENING DOORS

Following the Rumble in Russell event, Lynley Reid, owner of every McDonald's franchise in and north of Whangārei, reached out to Rugby for Life directly.

Since meeting with Lynley and her HR lead, the two organisations have begun shaping a partnership with real scale, one expected to deliver employment outcomes across the region for years to come.

Direction Recruitment also approached the programme after learning about its work, with a specific staffing need. The Rugby for Life team filled the role immediately by connecting with the Northland High-Performance squad, matching a real job to a rangatahi ready for the opportunity.



2.

SCHOOLS AND CLUBS LEADING THE WAY

At Dargaville High School, an introductory workshop drew six young men who stayed back long after the session ended to talk through their options.

The school and Rugby for Life have already agreed on a return visit in term three, with two to three full days set aside to build transition plans for students leaving school at the end of the year. At Onerahi Rugby Club, a targeted workshop in June brought together eight rangatahi at Northland Rugby, every one of them keen for follow up transition support. One young man used the session to identify a clear interest in the fire service, and he is now set to join the Northland Taniwha on upcoming careers visit to Whangārei Fire Station, a tangible outcome for a programme built on listening first.



3.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SEPTEMBER

The Blues Leadership Trip returns on 2 September at Northland Rugby, when selected rangatahi will take part in a two-hour leadership workshop with Rob and Rosey from the Blues Charitable Trust.

The day continues with the chance to watch the Taniwha train, closing with an informal barbecue lunch alongside the team.

None of this happens without the clubs, schools and employers willing to open a door. Rugby for Life is grateful to Northland Waste, Manaia Scaffolding, McDonald's, Direction Recruitment, Dargaville High School and the Blues Charitable Trust for backing rangatahi across Te Tai Tokerau this quarter.

SOUTHERN UNITED RFC - 25 YEARS, ONE COMMUNITY



Marking a Milestone Anniversary Through the Club's Own SURF Foundation

Southern United Rugby Football Club, known across Tokoroa as SURF, marked a significant milestone this quarter, 25 years since Tokoroa RFC and Pirates RFC consolidated to form the club as it stands today.

Player numbers had dropped away at both clubs and bringing them together was the surest way to keep rugby strong in Tokoroa. That decision shaped a club now built on resilience and shared history.

To mark the anniversary, the senior team played the season in specially commissioned heritage jerseys, a tribute to the two founding clubs. Twenty-five jerseys went under the hammer at an auction night, raising \$32,000.

Southern United RFC chose to split the proceeds between Te Rau Āwhina Tokoroa Women's Refuge, the Tokoroa Community Foodbank, Hospice and the club's own SURF Foundation, with the remainder covering the cost of the night. That same spirit of giving back reaches beyond the club gates, with members regularly supporting the Tokoroa City Lions Club with trailer loads of firewood for elderly residents across the district.

For Southern United RFC, the philosophy is simple. As a community-based sports club, whatever it can do to help the people of Tokoroa, it will find a way to do. Using rugby as the vehicle, everyone in the community stands to benefit, exactly the kind of grassroots leadership Rugby for Life is proud to support across the region.

Southern United RFC's 25th Anniversary Jersey Auction

- Formed in 2001 through the amalgamation of Tokoroa RFC and Pirates RFC
- Senior team played the season in specially commissioned heritage jerseys
- 25 heritage jerseys auctioned off in one night, raising \$32,000
- Proceeds split between Te Rau Āwhina Tokoroa Women's Refuge, the Tokoroa Community Foodbank, Hospice and the club's own SURF Foundation
- Ongoing community support includes Tokoroa City Lions Club firewood deliveries for elderly residents



CLUB IMPACT *highlights*



ONERAHI

✓ COMMUNITY

- New men's sponsor signed on, the club's first ever team sponsorship
- 28 Golden Oldies (aged 40 to 73) travelled to Rarotonga, a major highlight for the group
- Free club jackets funded for all tamariki, building a sense of belonging at no cost to whānau
- Weekly tackle box sessions running for junior teams, building confidence and safety for first time tacklers
- Five rangatahi gained valuable first work experience at a community event

✓ FUNDRAISING

- \$4,800 raised through sheep raffles, a hangi and a raffle for the junior



OTAMATEA

✓ COMMUNITY

- Compulsory scrum safety clinic run with the NRU NPC coach for all IMB coaches, putting player safety first
- Pilates recovery sessions introduced for seniors, well received amid a high rate of injuries
- Senior players volunteering to support IMB and JMB coaches, plus an end of season dinner bringing the U14 and U15 teams together

✓ FUNDRAISING

- \$1,000 grant from the Oxford Trust towards a gazebo for IMB teams



AUPOURI

✓ COMMUNITY

- New full club uniform introduced, reinforcing identity and pride
- Club space provided for a local health provider to run strength and balance classes for kaumātua
- Partnership with Te Rūnanga Nui o Te Aupōuri funding Māori League Tāne team jerseys for an upcoming Rotorua tournament

✓ FUNDRAISING

- \$10,000 raised through a mystery envelope fundraiser and canteen, gate and bar profit, going towards plumbing costs



WESTERN SHARKS

✓ COMMUNITY

- Partnership with the E,T&E programme helping school leavers into apprenticeships with local employers
- Sharks Day held, combining Sponsors Day, Ladies Day and Heritage Day into one well attended event

✓ FUNDRAISING

- \$80,500 secured through Lotteries funding for volunteer costs and operating expenses, Grassroots funding for field mowing, and stage two of the clubroom upgrade



OHAEAWAI

✓ COMMUNITY

- New TV purchased with the help of two sponsors, supporting sponsor visibility and community game nights
- Whānau afternoon of Tiakana teina games held over King's Birthday weekend, keeping players and whānau engaged
- Midweek training now shared with Hokianga Rugby League at a central venue, bringing more people into the club



**COMMUNITY SPORT DEVELOPMENT IS ALIVE
AND GROWING ACROSS OUR NETWORK**



TO OUR FUNDERS, PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Your support strengthens Rugby for Life clubs and the communities around them.

With your backing, we are building more than teams. We are developing youth leadership, creating employment pathways, and supporting sustainable community sport environments across Northland.

Every dollar invested creates opportunity. Every partnership strengthens resilience. Every shared belief grows momentum.

The Quarter Two results show what is possible when clubs lead and communities unite.

Thank you for standing alongside us. Your support fuels leadership, builds connections and strengthens long-term social impact through rugby.

Together, we are building strong communities.

Ngā mihi nui,
The Rugby for Life Team



RUGBY **FOR LIFE** CHARITABLE TRUST

**BACK OUR KAUPAPA
SCAN TO SUPPORT**



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