

## WOW WHAT A YEAR!

On behalf of the Rugby For Life family we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and thank you all for your continued support in 2022 and into 2023.

Rugby For Life has had a huge year, it was our first year of working in what we refer to as 'Business As Usual' and we are very proud of the community outcomes we are supporting and driving. These outcomes are not only in the rugby community but spread across many other groups in Northland. Our heartbeat is provided by our club coordinators, who we have working with 14 clubs, and what they have achieved this year has been amazing. Our Coordinators are providing positive generational changes in their communities, and we couldn't be prouder. Some other notable areas of achievement were "Grow the Game" where we partnered with the Northland Rugby Union to grow junior rugby in Northland, this achievement was incredible as Northland was the only region in NZ to achieve significant growth in Junior Rugby. We also provided well deserved money back to clubs to help reduce the amount of fundraising they needed to do. We are driven by what the community needs and they asked us to help reduce volunteer burn out, the placement of club coordinators helps this and we have reduced the admin burden by centralising some processes – but we have gone even further and have led a complete review of the Northland rugby ecosystem and targeted a set of actions that can make the environment more efficient and fit for the next 100 years. The key outcome being circa \$8m of volunteer hours being given back to the community.

In 2022 we focussed all our attention to getting our Club Coordinators in place and community outcomes, not fundraising. In 2023 we will be working with partners again to fund some amazing programs we will be rolling out, as well as to increase the number of club coordinators and continue to provide more community outcomes. Oh, and also (watch this space) we are ready to pilot a unique commercial opportunity for the community which will provide much needed economic relief to our region and funding opportunities to our clubs. As this is a world cup year we are also planning a lot of fun events both here in NZ and the UK and France through our new RFL Members Club in the UK and NZ, another unique way for anyone to support our cause.

But a special thank you must go to Northland Rugby Union, The Council of Union, The Atlas Foundation, The Matt Ratana Rugby Foundation, Andrew Golightly and the MWIS team, and all our supporters and partners including the team at Colab Connects ... without you we would not be here ... and last but not least thank you to our community and our people, you have placed your trust in us and we will not let you down. It's been a scary few years and we have proved as a team that we can move mountains together.

Happy Xmas and New Year

Ajit Balasingham  
CHAIR

Riki Kinnaird  
DEPUTY CHAIR

## Making Direct Impacts In Our Communities 2022



### SUPPORT

Clear focus on long term club sustainability.

9 RFL coordinators in 14 Rugby clubs plus up to 20 more coming in 2023.



### EXPERTS

Led a complete review of the Northland rugby ecosystem, targeting making the volunteer environment more efficient and fit for the next 100 years.



### INCOME

\$700k directly passed back to clubs and union. Created a community led self-funding environment to inspire a hand up not a hand out ethos.



### PLAYERS

Grew the Rugby Community, creating stronger clubs and engaging a whole new tribe to give rugby a go, leading to 22% growth in Junior Rugby across Northland.



### COMMUNITY

Created in-house Union resources to focus community pathways and outcomes through our clubs.



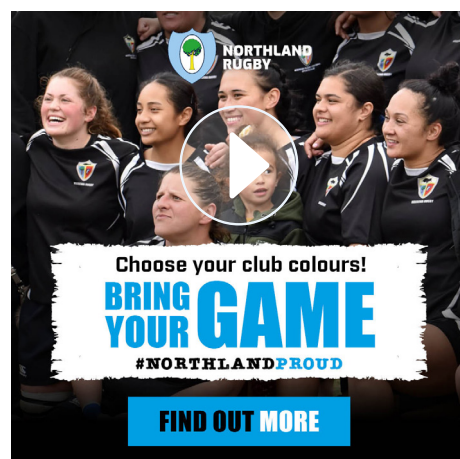
### FUNDING

Created a community outreach network now utilised by government agencies and commercial entities as the go to model for community outreach.

## GROW THE GAME 2023 EDITION

In 2022 we piloted the first ever Grow the Game campaign to engage the community get more of our tamariki involved in Junior Rugby. The campaign was a combined digital registration campaign with a supported club event.

- It was a game changer for clubs that participated, getting both a major increase in registrations as well as increased funding for the club.
- Northland was the only provincial union to show significant growth in junior player numbers - overall a massive success.
- The clubs asked for it and we have delivered an even bigger Grow The Game program for 2023. Working together with the Northland Rugby Union and The Council of Union to target growing participation across all areas of rugby.







## RFL CLUB CO-ORDINATORS

The introduction of club coordinator positions has been a major milestone for RFL and had a massive positive impact on the day-to-day operations of community rugby clubs.

Our coordinators help tackle the challenges their clubs face and are integral in helping their club make social and impactful change in their communities - they are our community club legends. These individuals' dedication and passion are critical for the future of community clubs.

*Being part of RFL has been a game changer for both the Kaihu Rugby Club and myself, it has meant the club is part of a group of people who have the same community focus and goals, and included in projects that may not have come our communities way otherwise. Personally I have been inspired by the work the other club coordinators are doing within their communities not just in a rugby sense but connecting with real people doing real stuff, making real change.*

- Claire Milner, Kaihu Rugby Club



*To have the opportunity to be able to make a positive impact on our communities is amazing. From being able to create opportunities for our tamariki, rangitahi and our whanau, to trying to help create a community hub from our rugby clubs and everything in between. It has been wonderful to meet and work with an amazing bunch of coordinators, the RFL board and of course the amazing Kellie and Potsy. It is going to be exciting to see what happens in 2023!*

- Aimee Ruka, Taiamai Ohaeawai & Okaihau Rugby Clubs

*Working for RFL as a Club Coordinator for the Western Sharks is very satisfactory as we can see small improvements happening each month. To start with, we have done different funding applications, for things they were not even considering yet as they thought it would be impossible for the near future. The club is very grateful to have someone taking action on areas where they were struggling due to lack of money and volunteers. This is only the beginning, and we are all very excited to see where it will take us!*

- Jose Maratea, Western Sharks Rugby Club

*The best part of being a coordinator for me is having a new whanau that has the same visions for our clubs, hapori (community), hapu and Iwi at the forefront of why we do what we do. The ability to reach out to each other is simply priceless for our rural communities. Rugby For Life is the best thing to happen to Rugby in New Zealand. Nga mihi Rugby For Life.*

- Nyze Manuel, Kaeo Rugby & Sports Club

*Being part of the RFL community is awesome, I know for sure without the support of RFL we wouldn't have been successful in our Bunnings Rugby Assist Funding. Having the other coordinators and RFL team is fantastic as our club is pretty isolated but now sure doesn't feel like it is.*

- Georgie Lidgard, Te Rarawa Rugby Club

### RFL Club Coordinator 2022 Outcomes Snapshot

- 10-fold increase in successful funding applications for RFL coordinator clubs including 2 RFL clubs receiving the very selective Bunnings Assist Grant.
- 14 regional Clubs working together and sharing knowledge for greater outcomes for their clubs and communities
- Top 5 to do lists ticked off for all 8 original RFL coordinator clubs, including such things as club room upgrades, community engagement activities, new teams/grades focus, forward thinking Club business plans.
- Saved and revitalising 2 clubs from extinction, bringing the clubs back to life and becoming active parts of their communities

A special thank you also to Kellie and Paul (Potsy) for their support and guidance of bringing this amazing team together and giving them the tools, energy, and direction to be kicking goals all over Northland.





## HERSTORY OF WOMENS RUGBY.

• 6 to 30 October 2022  
• 10am to 4pm daily  
**Free Entry!**



Rugby For Life along with our amazing partners bought the Herstory of Womens Rugby exhibition to Whangarei during the epic Women's Rugby World Cup.

The installation celebrates the journey of women's rugby in Aotearoa New Zealand.



## Rugby World Cup: Rugby exhibition Herstory tells tales of extraordinary women in the sport

By Julia Crenonatis

7 Oct, 2022 05:00 AM 3 mins to read

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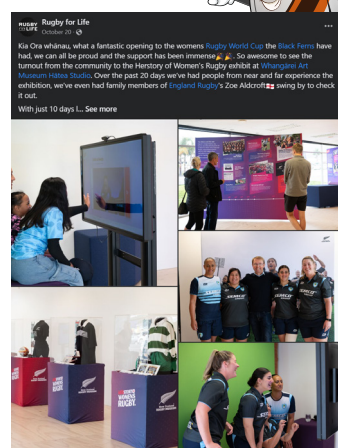


Curator Stephen Berg and Rugby for Life trustee Sharon Morgan with The Hits presenter Charmaine Soljak and Claudia Jones, Sue Ann Nesbit, Kahurangi Shellford and Oceane Donnelley from Semco Northland Kauri. Photo / Supplied

It's a tribute to women in sport and their fight to overcome prejudice and convention in a male-dominated world.

**Our very own Trustee Sharon Morgan starred on Breakfast TV to promote it, and what an outstanding job she did. There were even a few familiar faces in the interactive exhibition.**

The exhibition was widely enjoyed by the district and visitors to Whangarei for the carnival that was the Womens Rugby World Cup. We were so pleased to be able to bring this exhibition to Whangarei and tell this story at such a massive time for womens rugby.



## SLAM DUNK WE WON!

Rugby For Life® was honoured on a national stage this year, alongside New Zealand's top businesses, at the TVNZ Marketing Awards for the amazing mahi and achievements of Take 2 For The Team.

The award recognised the mahi in mobilising Taitokerau Northland communities, through rugby and other clubs, and helping educate and save lives.

The Rugby For Life Trustees and Colab Connects team accepted the Excellence for Not-For-Profit Marketing Strategy award. Rugby For Life Chairperson Ajit Balasignham said of the win "this is not for the mahi we have achieved, but for the wero of the mahi in front of us all".

While this journey is not about RFL or the individuals, it definitely showed that we are scoring goals and kicking it out of the park. Pardon the puns!



## LONDON'S CALLING!

We are now international, with our UK based ambassador Nigel Armstrong and a partnership with the Atlas Foundation and the Matt Ratana Rugby Foundation.

RFL was honoured to be featured as a charity partner at the London based Winchester Group Fundraising Gala, alongside Atlas and MRRF.

And our first UK members signed up for our UK Members Club getting a special invite to our first major international fundraising event in London at Boiler & Co. and hosted by Nigel Armstrong and our Chair Ajit Balasignham.





2023 is shaping up to be our biggest year yet with more community impact programs than ever being rolled out through our amazing club coordinators and rugby clubs across our rohe. Here is a quick snapshot of some of our planned activity and how you can get involved.

## RFL® Power Program Energy Hardship Assistance

Northland has the highest power bills by household and the lowest switch rates for a region. Rugby For Life thinks this is not ok and has been working with a major energy provider and their networks in Northland to build a community focussed program on helping Northlanders get cheaper power and keep more hard-earned money in their pockets.

Through our trusted club by club communication model, we will be approaching a power conversation as a safe and trusted partner, greatly increasing the chances of a successful switch and helping make a significant ongoing economic impact to our rohe.



## RFL® Northland Sports Club Raffle

We know that when a club is given the right tools, it can do amazing things. With wrap around support from Rugby For Life, our clubs and sports can do the mahi and generate the results to make our clubs stronger.

By providing the clubs an easy accessible raffle platform, adding in the full sponsorship and promotional support of Rugby for Life they will have the opportunity to fundraise for the good of their clubs like never before. This will be a cross code program and aims to raise awareness of sport in general, its health and wellbeing benefits, and ultimately help encourage more people to join a club and get moving.



## RFL MEMBERS CLUB United Kingdom

Our partnership with the London based Matt Ratana Rugby Foundation and the Jason Leonard led Atlas Foundation has allowed us to create a unique opportunity unlike no other.

Our Europe based membership club will make you a part of a growing dynamic NZ rugby enthused network with unparalleled access to rugby movers and shakers. With our partner Atlas Foundation being a principal charity partner for the 2023 Rugby World Cup in France, they also gain access to exclusive money can't buy events and opportunities.

## RFL MEMBERS CLUB New Zealand

Rugby For Life is creating a NZ Members Club to replicate and align with our successful UK members club.

The New Zealand Members Club will create more opportunities for networking, special hosted events and access to rugby's movers and shakers at special Rugby For Life events.

On top of this they will get special access to the 2023 Rugby World Cup in France and our UK members events.

## RFL® Community Club Events

Events are our way of helping the clubs make stronger community connections and a great opportunity for fundraising for the club.

Rugby For Life will pack in around our clubs to help them create the best event they can. We want the events to be fun and community focused, and the opportunity for the club to generate funding and bring in supporters and sponsors the community needs access to.



## RFL® Gala Dinner

Our third Rugby For Life Gala Dinner is going to be the best one yet, anyone that has been lucky enough to attend our previous gala events at Britomart or The Duke of Marlborough know these are fundraising events like no other.

This year is going to be no different, with an amazing event and auction planned with money can't buy auction items and entertainment all in the name of fun, laughter and helping change lives.



## How You Can Get Involved

Rugby clubs are at the heart of RFL, but our reach is further and includes other sports codes, schools and other rugby related organisations. Our community led, bottom-up approach means outcomes are focused on specific needs of regions and communities, and have proven a more successful mechanism for delivery of messages and programs than traditional top down methods.

But we can only do what we do with the amazing support of our sponsors and partners. With our increased activity in 2023 we have sponsorship opportunities like no other, with a chance for program naming rights, platinum, and gold level sponsorship of individual programs to gain unparalleled access to our deep RFL community and exclusive RFL events.

**Contact:** Kellie Mackenzie to get involved » [admin@rugbyforlife.org.nz](mailto:admin@rugbyforlife.org.nz)