

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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# FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



KARL WHALEN

As the newly appointed Chair of UTSNZ, I'm proud to reflect on a year that once again showcased what makes university sport in Aotearoa so special: competitive excellence, genuine connection, and a shared commitment to delivering outstanding experiences for our students. Stepping into this role, it has been a privilege to witness the continued evolution of UTSNZ as we look ahead to a major milestone - our 10-year anniversary in 2026.

A standout moment in 2025 was the University of Canterbury securing the Championship Shield for the third consecutive year. Their consistency and ability to perform across multiple codes continues to set a high standard. I also want to acknowledge Massey University, winners of Te Kaitiaki, whose dedication to culture, community, and the spirit of university sport enriches our kaupapa. These achievements add meaningful chapters to the UTSNZ story.

Internationally, our student-athletes again demonstrated they belong among the world's best. The performances at the FISU World University Games in Germany were exceptional. Competing on that stage demands resilience, ambition, and significant preparation, and our team delivered all of this with pride and professionalism. Their success reflects not only individual dedication but also the collaborative systems across our university sport eco-system that enable high-performance student-athletes to thrive. Our sincere thanks go to everyone involved in this campaign.

These domestic and international successes don't happen by chance. They are the result of significant resource, commitment, and care from our members, sporting leaders and administrators, sector partners, and volunteers. We are deeply grateful to all who help create these opportunities for students across Aotearoa.

As a Board, we have remained focused on strong governance, long-term sustainability, and ensuring UTSNZ continues to be the trusted kaitiaki of university sport. I want to acknowledge my fellow Board members for the expertise, perspective, and commitment they bring. The stability and momentum we enjoy today is a direct result of your collective contribution.

Finally, I want to offer special thanks to our exceptional staff, Sarah and Tiwai. Their energy, passion, and professionalism sit at the heart of UTSNZ's success. The volume and quality of work produced by this team of two is remarkable. Whether delivering complex events, supporting athletes, or strengthening partnerships, they reflect the very best of who we are as an organisation. On behalf of the Board, thank you both for the enormous role you play in shaping UTSNZ.

As we prepare to celebrate ten years in 2026 and launch our new strategy, I'm excited for what lies ahead. With strong foundations, a clear purpose, and a community that believes in the power of sport to enrich the student experience, we are well positioned for the future. Together, we will continue to deliver exceptional tertiary sport experiences across Aotearoa.

Ngā mihi nui

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



SARAH  
ANDERSON

In 2025, we've continued to deliver a strong programme of high-quality, impactful tertiary sporting events, made possible through the collective efforts of UTSNZ, our member institutions, and our National Sporting Organisation partners. I am incredibly proud of the standard we have achieved together, particularly in an environment where resources are often limited.

Beyond delivery, it is the impact of these experiences that stands out. While all physical activity contributes to wellbeing, sport offers something distinct - combining activity with connection, belonging, and shared experience. Evidence shows that combining sport with other activity delivers the strongest wellbeing outcomes, particularly in mental health, life satisfaction, and social connection. This is especially important given the challenges facing today's students, many of whom experienced disrupted sporting pathways through COVID and are now among those most in need of these benefits.

While performance remains important, success is increasingly reflected in the growth, friendships, and broader experiences that participation enables. Through social media and direct engagement, we have captured more authentic glimpses into these journeys - stories that highlight sport's role in developing well-rounded individuals and fostering belonging.

Another highlight of the year was being involved in the 2025 FISU World University Games. Supporting athletes on the international stage is always a privilege and reaffirmed the strength of our international pathways for New Zealand student athletes.

What continues to stand out is the calibre of the athletes we work with - individuals eager to learn and make the most of their opportunities. Their energy and commitment make it a privilege to be involved. Equally, our collaboration with National Sporting Organisations remains vital in strengthening pathways and alignment across the sector.

More generally, across our programmes we have seen strong engagement through events, workforce development, and student-led initiatives. These experiences extend beyond competition - supporting wellbeing, connection, and enabling students to thrive both personally and academically. Under our new strategy, a key focus will be better measuring and demonstrating this impact.

At the same time, challenges remain. The value of the tertiary sector in supporting sport is not always fully recognised, and we will continue to advocate for its role within the wider sporting landscape, supported by our new strategic plan.

The commencement of developing this new plan has been a rewarding highlight of 2025. Reflecting on our progress while shaping our future direction has been an engaging process, and we look forward to finalising the new strategy in 2026. A key focus will be on positioning UTSNZ strongly for the years ahead, with an increased emphasis on measuring and demonstrating our impact.

Looking forward, our focus remains clear: to create meaningful opportunities for students, strengthen partnerships, and ensure tertiary sport is recognised for the value it delivers in developing well-rounded individuals.

To our member institutions, partners, NSOs, staff, and volunteers - thank you for your continued support. And to our student athletes, thank you for the energy and passion you bring to everything we do.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa

# OUR PEOPLE



**KARL WHALEN**  
Chair



**HEINZ FELLERHOFF**  
Treasurer



**ALBIE EATON**  
Director



**KAT IRVING**  
Director



**JOE HITCHCOCK**  
Director



**JO KELLY**  
Director



**CONNOR MILLS**  
Student Director



**SYLVIE TULLOCH GRAY**  
Student Director

Throughout 2025, UTSNZ was governed by a balanced and diverse Board comprising of three elected Directors from the university sector, three co-opted Directors, and two student representatives.

The operational team remained lean and effective, with two staff members: an Executive Director, as well as a Marketing and Events Manager, ensuring efficient delivery of UTSNZ's strategic goals.



**SARAH ANDERSON**  
Executive Director



**TIWAI WILSON**  
Marketing & Events Manager

# GOVERNANCE

2025 was a year of transition and renewal for University and Tertiary Sport New Zealand (UTSNZ), with several important changes to the Board that reflect our commitment to strong, effective governance.

In May 2025, elected Director Karl Whalen was appointed Chair by the Board. Karl brings extensive experience within the tertiary sport sector and a strong commitment to the role sport plays in supporting student wellbeing and connection. He succeeds Anne-Marie Parsons, whose second and final term concluded in 2025. Anne-Marie's time on the Board was marked by thoughtful leadership and a clear focus on student wellbeing. UTSNZ sincerely thanks Anne-Marie for her leadership and significant contribution to the organisation and the wider tertiary sport community.

Student Board representative, Connor Mills, also concluded his Board tenure at the end of 2025. The Board thanks Connor for his valued contribution and for the student perspective he brought to Board discussions during his term.

At the May 2025 AGM Albertine (Albie) Eaton, from the University of Auckland, was appointed to the Board as an elected Director. Albie brings strong experience in sport development and student engagement within the tertiary sector as University of Auckland's current Sport & Recreation Development Manager, continuing to ensure a student-focused approach is upheld by the Board as UTSNZ moves into its next phase.

These Board changes support continuity while introducing new perspectives and experience. The Board remains focused on providing effective governance, supporting the organisation's strategic direction, and ensuring UTSNZ continues to deliver meaningful sport experiences for tertiary students across Aotearoa.



## BOARD MEETINGS

In total, there were four UTSNZ board meetings held in 2025.

- 6 March
- 27 May
- 21 August
- 25 November

In addition, the 10th Annual General Meeting of UTSNZ was held 21 May 2025.



# MEMBERS & AFFILIATIONS

## MEMBERS

- The University of Auckland
- AUT
- Massey University
- Victoria University of Wellington
- University of Waikato
- University of Canterbury
- Lincoln University
- University of Otago

## AFFILIATIONS

- International University Sports Federation (FISU)
- FISU Oceania

# STUDENT ATHLETE COMMISSION



**HANNAH MACDONALD**  
UoA



**CONNOR MILLS**  
AUT



**ADAM BAYER**  
UC



**KATIE HOLLANDS**  
LU



**EMMA HOWIE**  
Massey



**ALEXA DUFF**  
Otago



**JACOB WATTERS**  
UoW



**HANNAH FRANCIS**  
VuW

The UTSNZ Student Athlete Commission (SAC) continues to be an essential voice for tertiary athletes, ensuring their perspectives help guide the evolution of university sport across Aotearoa New Zealand. Made up of dedicated student leaders from UTSNZ member institutions, the SAC offers first-hand insight into the student-athlete experience, helping shape initiatives that genuinely reflect the needs and ambitions of those participating in our programmes.

Throughout 2025, the SAC provided meaningful input across a range of areas, including event experience, sport pathways, digital engagement, and athlete support. Their contributions have further strengthened the connection between students and UTSNZ, ensuring that decision-making remains student-centred and responsive to a changing sport landscape.

The SAC also continued its leadership in activating International Day of University Sport activities nationwide. Through on-campus initiatives and student-led promotions, the SAC helped elevate awareness of the day and inspired greater participation, reinforcing the importance of sport and active wellbeing within tertiary communities.



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## LOOKING BACK: STAKEHOLDER REFLECTIONS ON STRATEGY 2022–2025

2025 marked the final year of UTSNZ’s Strategy 2022–2025, providing an important opportunity to pause, reflect, and listen. As part of this transition year, UTSNZ undertook a strategic review survey with key stakeholders, including member universities, National Sporting Organisations (NSOs), and Student Athlete Commission (SAC) representatives, to capture perspectives on performance, impact, and future priorities. The feedback provides a strong, affirming picture of an organisation that has delivered on its purpose: enabling more tertiary students to represent their institution in sport, while enhancing wellbeing, connection, and opportunity across Aotearoa’s tertiary sector.

### What Stakeholders Told Us: Key Highlights

Across all respondent groups, feedback demonstrated high confidence in UTSNZ’s leadership, professionalism, and value over the 2022–2025 period. Stakeholders consistently highlighted the following strengths:

- **High-quality event delivery** – the National Tertiary Championship Series was widely recognised for its consistency, professionalism, and atmosphere, with events described as “well-run”, “inspiring”, and “the highlight of the student calendar”.
- **Clear participation and performance pathways** – stakeholders strongly valued the role UTSNZ plays in bridging secondary, tertiary, and national sport systems, including domestic championships, international opportunities through FISU, and workforce development pathways.
- **Positive impact on student wellbeing and belonging** – participation in UTSNZ events was consistently linked to enhanced wellbeing, confidence, and connection. Students described a strong sense of pride in representing their institution and building friendships.
- **Trusted partnerships and sector leadership** – universities and NSOs described UTSNZ as a reliable, collaborative partner and an effective national coordinator in an otherwise fragmented tertiary sport landscape.
- **Improved profile and visibility of tertiary sport** – integrated communications, livestreaming, and storytelling were seen as significantly lifting the credibility and national visibility of tertiary sport and student-athletes.



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## Perspectives Across the Sector

- **Member Universities** emphasised UTSNZ's role as a unifying national body, providing leadership, advocacy, and cohesion. Strong relationships, responsiveness, and a clear student-centred approach were repeatedly noted, alongside alignment with institutional priorities such as wellbeing, engagement, and student experience.
- **National Sporting Organisations** identified UTSNZ as a critical connector within the sport system, filling a key participation and pathway gap for the 18–24 age group. Event professionalism, clear processes, and shared objectives through partnerships and MoUs were highlighted as major strengths.
- **Student Athlete Commission representatives** spoke powerfully about the personal impact of UTSNZ involvement. Students valued being heard, represented, and supported, and described UTSNZ events as offering a unique combination of high-quality competition, community, and personal development not replicated in community sport.



## Looking Ahead

The findings from this survey represent the first step in developing UTSNZ's next strategic plan. UTSNZ has now commenced a broader consultation process with members, students, partners, and the Board to shape a future-focused strategy for 2026 and beyond.

As we close this strategic chapter, stakeholder feedback confirms that UTSNZ is delivering meaningful impact - enhancing student wellbeing, strengthening pathways, and uniting the tertiary sport community. The next strategic plan will seek to build on this momentum, ensuring tertiary sport remains visible, valued, and accessible for future generations of students.

# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## ADVANCING STUDENT WELLBEING THROUGH FISU HEALTHY CAMPUS

The FISU Healthy Campus programme is an internationally recognised initiative developed by the International University Sports Federation to embed health, wellbeing and sustainability across all aspects of campus life. Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the programme provides a structured, evidence-based framework spanning seven key domains, including governance, physical activity and sport, mental and social health, nutrition, disease prevention and environmental sustainability.

Through its certification process, Healthy Campus enables institutions to benchmark progress, share best practice internationally, and demonstrate measurable impact on student and staff wellbeing, while also contributing evidence to support outcomes in initiatives such as the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

In 2025, representatives from five New Zealand universities participated in a national Healthy Campus workshop co-ordinated by FISU and UTSNZ and key partners, exploring how the programme supports multidisciplinary collaboration across sport, health, sustainability and student services, and aligns with institutional wellbeing priorities.

The **University of Auckland (UoA)** and **University of Waikato (UoW)** are officially signed on to the programme, joining a global network of more than 200 universities.



**FISU HEALTHY CAMPUS LABEL**

A new and exciting global initiative launched by FISU for universities, the **FISU Healthy Campus Label** embeds health and well-being into all aspects of campus culture, improving student lifestyle.

**Spread across seven domains**

- Physical activity and sport
- Nutrition
- Disease prevention
- Mental and social health
- Risk behaviour
- Environment, sustainability and social responsibility
- Healthy Campus Management

**Why should your university participate?**

Campuses worldwide can benefit from improved health and well-being of all university students and their communities, while being part of a network to share knowledge with other universities. Students will learn to enhance their everyday well-being, and carry this knowledge into their future endeavours.

This project shows knowledge of good practices that universities currently develop in all areas to promote benchmarking activities for creating exchange of knowledge and research.

**Healthy Campus 9-step process**

- Starting Blocks  
May 2020 onwards  
Registry on the FISU Healthy Campus platform
- 2 years  
Cycle of Healthy Campus label: bronze, silver, gold or platinum certified label
- 9 months  
University submits a self-assessment
- 10 months  
University receives first report evaluation
- 11 months  
University submits revised assessment
- 1 year  
At the end of the first year, university receives certified label
- 1 year 9 months  
External audit of university
- 1 year 10 months  
University receives report evaluation
- 1 year 11 months  
University submits revised reports

# EVENTS

## NATIONAL TERTIARY CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

In 2025, the National Tertiary Championship Series reflected the maturity and strength of tertiary sport in Aotearoa, delivering a nationally connected programme that continues to unite universities through high-quality competition.

The series provided student-athletes with meaningful opportunities to represent their institutions, reinforcing pride, performance, and a strong sense of belonging.

Consistent event delivery, a well-established national calendar, and professional broadcast coverage ensured the Championships remained accessible and visible, while the student experience, on and off the field, remained central to the programme.

As the final year of the current strategic cycle, the 2025 series stands as a clear demonstration of the impact and credibility of tertiary sport in New Zealand.



# 2025 NATIONAL TERTIARY CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES

## Aon NZ University Rowing Championships

University of Otago

## National Tertiary Badminton Championships

University of Auckland

## National Tertiary 3x3 Championships

Women: University of Waikato

Men: University of Canterbury

## National Tertiary Volleyball Championships

Women: University of Waikato

Men: University of Canterbury

## National Tertiary Futsal Championships

Women: University of Auckland

Men: University of Canterbury

## NZ Tertiary Ultimate Championships

University of Auckland

## National Tertiary Basketball Championships

Women: University of Waikato

Men: University of Canterbury

## National Tertiary Netball Championships

Women: AUT

POS	UNIVERSITY	PTS
1	UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY	67
2	UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO	61
3	UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND	59
4	UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO	57
5	AUT	39
6	LINCOLN UNIVERSITY	34
7	VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON	31
8	MASSEY UNIVERSITY	22

POS	UNIVERSITY	PTS
1	MASSEY UNIVERSITY	50
2	VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON	48
3	UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO	39
4	UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY	34
5	UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO	33
6	UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND	30
7	AUT	27
8	LINCOLN UNIVERSITY	23

## Aon NZ University Rowing Championships

Victoria University of Wellington

## National Tertiary Badminton Championships

Massey University

## National Tertiary 3x3 Championships

Victoria University of Wellington

## National Tertiary Volleyball Championships

University of Canterbury

## National Tertiary Futsal Championships

University of Otago

## National Tertiary Ultimate Championships

Massey University

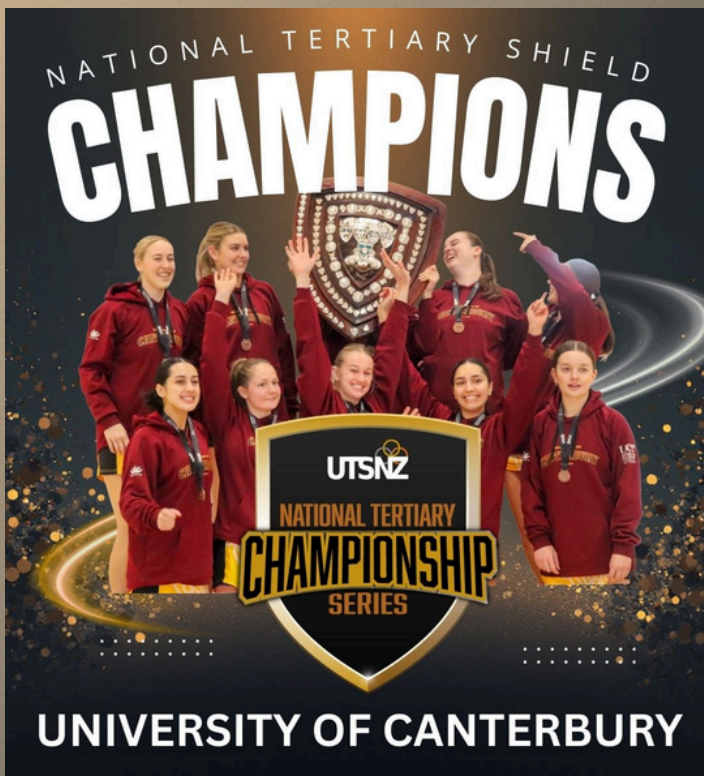
## National Tertiary Basketball Championships

Massey University

## National Tertiary Netball Championships

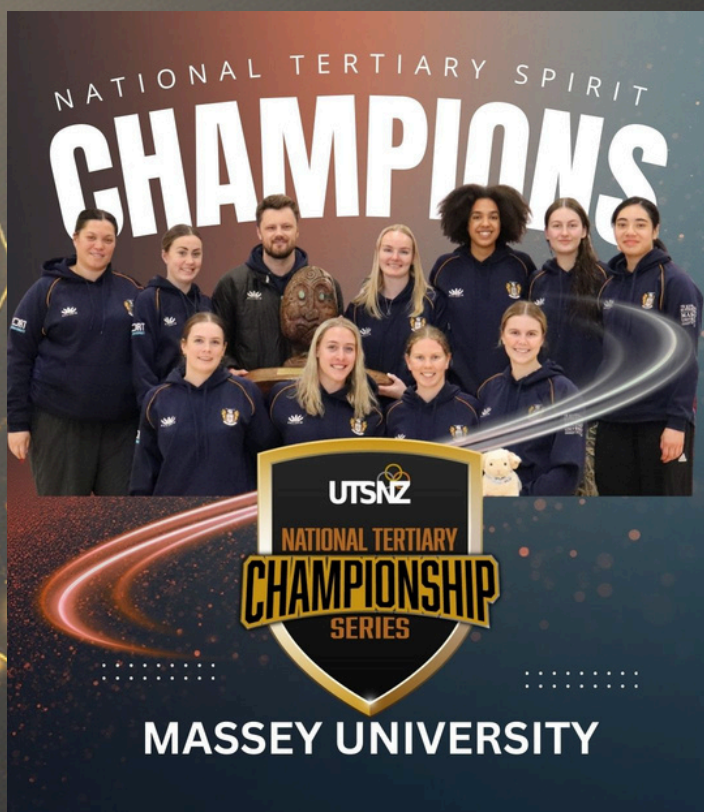
University of Waikato

# NATIONAL SHIELD AND SPIRIT CHAMPIONS 2025



\* The University of Canterbury accumulated the highest championship points total across the 2025 National Tertiary Championship Series, securing the prestigious Shield for a third consecutive year and reinforcing its sustained excellence in tertiary sport.

\* UTSNZ acknowledges the ongoing support of the University of Canterbury and recognises the commitment of its staff and students, whose collective dedication continues to foster a strong, connected and high-performing sporting culture.



\* Massey University was crowned the 2025 National Tertiary Spirit Champions, recognised for its outstanding demonstration of fair play, enthusiasm and sportsmanship throughout the Championship Series, marking the university's second Spirit Award title following its first win in 2022.

\* This achievement reflects the strong culture of support for sport at Massey University, and the ongoing collaboration between staff and students in fostering positive, inclusive and values-driven sporting environments.

# TERTIARY CHALLENGE SERIES

In 2025, the UTSNZ Tertiary Challenge Series continued to strengthen its role as an accessible and inclusive entry point into tertiary sport, offering flexible opportunities that complement the national championship pathway. The series engaged students across a wide range of institutions through team and individual sports, social and competitive formats, and both in-person and online delivery, enabling participation despite study, work, or geographic constraints.



In the final year of the current strategic cycle, the 2025 Challenge Series demonstrated UTSNZ's active commitment to broadening access to sport and supporting student wellbeing across Aotearoa's diverse tertiary landscape, while also highlighting a growing number of emerging and non-traditional sports seeking to establish tertiary pathways and connections not otherwise catered for.

Archery

Badminton

Beach Volleyball

eSports

Grappling Games

Lacrosse

Squash



**286** CHALLENGE SERIES PARTICIPANTS

















**7** ADDITIONAL SPORTS & EVENTS

# TERTIARY CHALLENGE TROPHY

A key milestone in 2025 was the introduction of the inaugural Tertiary Challenge Trophy, recognising institutions for sustained participation across the series rather than performance outcomes. The University of Auckland was awarded the inaugural Trophy, reflecting its strong commitment to broad student engagement across multiple Challenge Series events. The Trophy underscored the Challenge Series' purpose, rewarding engagement, inclusion, and connection, and highlighted the breadth of tertiary providers involved.



The graphic features a large, semi-transparent trophy in the background. At the bottom, there are four small images showing students engaged in various activities: a student playing a stringed instrument, a student in a martial arts stance, a student playing tennis, and a student playing a video game.

POS	INSTITUTION	PTS
1	 UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND	93
2	 UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO	28
3	 AUT	27
4	 UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO	23
5=	 VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON	14
5=	 UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY	14
7	 MASSEY UNIVERSITY	4
8=	 OTAGO POLYTECHNIC	2
8=	 WITT	2
8=	 LINCOLN UNIVERSITY	2
11=	 MEDIA DESIGN SCHOOL	1
11=	 OPEN POLYTECHNIC	1
11=	 ROYAL NEW ZEALAND NAVY	1
11=	 UNITEC	1
11=	 WELTEC	1
11=	 YOOBEE COLLEGE	1

# PATHWAYS

## INTERNATIONAL



**FISU**  
WORLD  
UNIVERSITY  
GAMES  
WINTER



## WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES - WINTER

In early 2025, UTSNZ was proud to support a New Zealand alpine skiing team selected to compete at the FISU World University Winter Games in Torino, Italy, marking a significant milestone for tertiary winter sport in Aotearoa.

After an eight-year absence of New Zealand representation in the winter Games, five talented student-athletes from the University of Auckland, University of Canterbury, and Massey University were selected by Snow Sports NZ to represent the nation in Super-G, Giant Slalom, Slalom, and Alpine Combined events at Bardonecchia.

This historic winter delegation underscored the breadth of opportunity that international student-sport pathways create, enabling athletes from snow sports to compete alongside peers from more than 50 countries on a global stage, foster cultural exchange, and showcase New Zealand's developing winter sport talent.

UTSNZ is delighted to have reinvigorated this pathway, in partnership with Snow Sports NZ, for our winter athletes.

# PATHWAYS

## INTERNATIONAL



**FISU**  
WORLD  
UNIVERSITY  
GAMES  
SUMMER

### WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES - SUMMER

In addition to the FISU World University Winter Games, UTSNZ led New Zealand's participation at the FISU Rhine-Ruhr World University Games (RR2025), delivering one of the largest World University Summer Games campaigns in New Zealand's history.

A total delegation of 113 athletes and support staff represented New Zealand across 10 sports, reaffirming the importance of the World University Summer Games as a critical international pathway for student-athletes.

#### *A High-Impact International Experience*

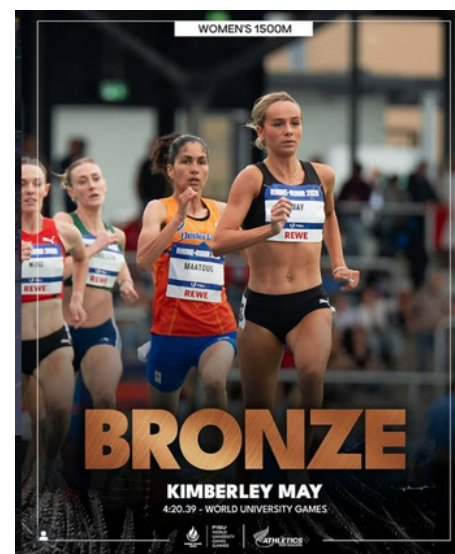
Feedback from athletes and support staff consistently highlighted the quality of the overall experience, with strong emphasis placed on team culture, pride in representing New Zealand, and the sense of belonging created within the delegation. Being part of a unified New Zealand team, despite the Games' decentralised, multi-city format, was described as one of the most meaningful aspects of the campaign.

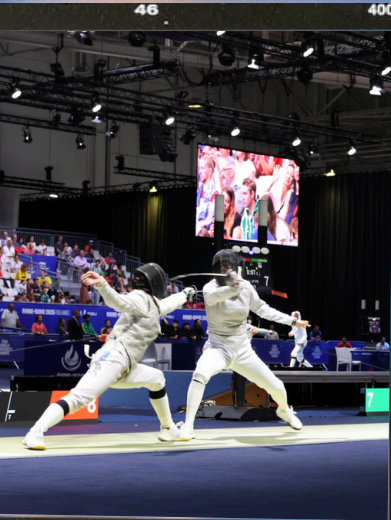
Athletes valued the opportunity to compete against world-class opposition, often for the first time in a major international competition environment. Beyond performance outcomes, participants highlighted personal growth, confidence, and learning gained through exposure to high-pressure international competition and diverse cultures.

#### *Performance and Participation Outcomes*

New Zealand athletes delivered strong performances on the international stage, highlighted by two bronze medals and a number of top-eight finishes and personal best performances. While podium results were celebrated, the broader value of RR2025 lay in providing athletes with a stepping stone between domestic competition and elite international sport, reinforcing the World University Games' role within the national performance pathway.

Insights from RR2025 are now informing UTSNZ's future international planning, including considerations around funding sustainability, leadership structures, and early preparation models. As UTSNZ transitions into its next strategic period, RR2025 stands as a clear demonstration of the organisation's capability to deliver impactful, values-led international experiences that enhance performance, wellbeing, and national pride, as well as contribute to New Zealand's high performance sector.





# PATHWAYS

## INTERNATIONAL

### FISU UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL WORLD CUP



FISU  
UNIVERSITY  
WORLD  
CUP  
FOOTBALL

The University of Auckland proudly represented Aotearoa at the 2025 FISU University World Cup Football in Dalian, China (17–28 September 2025), one of the premier events on the FISU calendar that brings together university teams from around the world. The Auckland men's squad qualified as Oceania champions and competed as one of 16 top international university teams, earning valuable match experience on the global stage. After qualifying for the knockout rounds by making it through the group phase, the team finished the tournament in an impressive 8<sup>th</sup> place.



### FISU OCEANIA 3X3 UNIVERSITY WORLD CUP QUALIFIER



AUT hosted the 2025 FISU Oceania University 3x3 World Cup Qualifier, delivering a high-quality international event on home soil. The top two men's and women's finishers from the UTSNZ National 3x3 Championships - University of Canterbury and University of Waikato in the men's competition, and University of Waikato and Lincoln University in the women's - competed against Australia's leading university qualifiers for a coveted place at the FISU University 3x3 World Cup, with AUT men's and women's teams completing the draw as event hosts.

New Zealand teams produced valiant performances across the tournament; however, neither the men's nor women's sides progressed to qualification. Despite this, the event provided invaluable exposure to top-level international competition, strengthened aspiration pathways for student-athletes beyond national events, and reinforced AUT's standing and recognition as a capable host of major international university sport events



FISU University World Cup events and corresponding Qualifier events like this continue to be a cornerstone of UTSNZ's international sport programme alongside the FISU World University Games, offering students exceptional opportunities to represent not only their university but also New Zealand, as well as for performance development, leadership growth, and meaningful cultural exchange that extends well beyond domestic competition.

# PATHWAYS

## VOCATIONAL

UTSNZ recognises that student potential reaches far wider than just elite athletes, the scoreboard and performance level events. Tertiary students are the workforce of the future and the breadth of opportunities to connect students to sport are wide and varied. In conjunction with targeted sport partners, the UTSNZ workforce development programme connects passionate and talented students wanting to put their studies to practical use with leading sport organisations, both nationally and internationally. In 2025, 20 students were able to develop vocational skills related to their interests/field of study in conjunction with UTSNZ events.

- EVENT ASSISTANTS - 10
- SOCIAL MEDIA ASSISTANTS - 4
- PHOTOGRAPHERS - 1
- VIDEOGRAPHERS - 1
- INTERNS/PLACEMENTS - 1
- COMMENTATORS - 2
- PHYSIOS - 3
- STUDENT ATHLETE COMMISSION - 8



"WORKING AT NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS REALLY SET ME APART WHEN APPLYING FOR INTERNSHIPS. IT SHOWED I WAS GAINING REAL, HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE IN SPORTS MEDIA. AND HAVING THOSE FIRST FEW OPPORTUNITIES UNDER MY BELT GIVES ME REAL CONFIDENCE STEPPING INTO THE INDUSTRY, KNOWING I CAN TAKE ON THE CAREER I'VE DREAMED ABOUT." - *MADELINE MANSFIELD*



**30**  
STUDENTS  
PARTICIPATING IN  
WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES

"THE REAL-LIFE COMMENTARY EXPERIENCE WITH UTSNZ WAS UNLIKE ANYTHING WE GET TO DO DURING STUDY. PUTTING MY KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE AND INTERVIEWING PLAYERS WAS AN AWESOME CHALLENGE. IT'S EXACTLY THE KIND OF LEARNING YOU CAN TAKE STRAIGHT INTO AN INTERNSHIP OR JOB." - *MIKAYLA LEMON*

# PARTNERSHIPS

## NATIONAL SPORTING ORGANISATIONS

UTSNZ thanks it's NSO partners for their on-going support in the planning and delivery of events.



**BADMINTON**  
NEW ZEALAND



**BASKETBALL**  
New Zealand



**New Zealand**  
Football



**VOLLEYBALL NEW ZEALAND**  
POIREWA AOTEAROA



**NETBALL**  
NEW ZEALAND

## OTHER PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to relationships with National Sporting Organisations, UTSNZ also thanks the New Zealand Community Trust (NZCT) and the Lion Foundation for on-going funding support, Christchurch and Palmerston North City Councils for support of national events, and Zensim for their support of the New Zealand World University Games Team.



# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## TRANS-TASMAN NETBALL EXCHANGE SHOWCASES OPPORTUNITY FOR FUTURE UNIVERSITY COMPETITION

In 2025, a landmark Trans-Tasman Netball Exchange brought together university teams from New Zealand and Australia in Auckland, providing student-athletes with a unique and impactful international experience that went far beyond the scoreboard.

Hosted by AUT, with support from the University of Auckland, the week-long visit from Australia's top two university netball sides, Australian Catholic University (ACU) and University of Technology Sydney (UTS), enabled spirited on-court competition alongside rich cultural and social engagement for all participants.

The calibre of play, shared experiences, and strong connectivity demonstrated the appetite and potential for a formalised annual trans-Tasman university netball competition, with UniSport Australia and UTSNZ now jointly exploring a structured event for the future.



This exchange exemplifies the opportunities that emerge through UTSNZ's strategic relationships with like-minded national university sport federations, such as UniSport Australia, to expand pathways for competition, cultural exchange and student development across borders. Athletes spoke of the value of facing unfamiliar playing styles, building whanaungatanga with peers, and engaging with Auckland's vibrant community - experiences that enhance performance, connections and intercultural understanding.

The success of the 2025 exchange reinforces UTSNZ's commitment to facilitating meaningful international opportunities that complement domestic competition and enrich the overall student-athlete journey.

# PROFILE

## BUILDING THE VISIBILITY, CREDIBILITY AND PERCEIVED VALUE OF TERTIARY SPORT IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

In 2025, UTSNZ made strong progress against the Profile pillar of the Strategic Plan by increasing the visibility, reach and perceived value of tertiary sport across students, member universities, partners and the wider sporting community.

Consistent, high-quality event communication plans were delivered across all national events, supported by strong branding, collaborative content creation with member universities, event partners and student-athletes, and a deliberate focus on video-led storytelling. This approach drove sustained growth across all digital platforms, with follower increases of 31% on Instagram, 46% on TikTok and 47% on YouTube. Engagement also strengthened significantly, with Facebook content interactions more than doubling (+108%), Instagram interactions increasing by 47%, and TikTok video likes and views more than doubling year-on-year. YouTube views and total watch time increased by approximately 55%, while Flickr views rose by 79%, reflecting strong demand for event content and imagery.

Event exposure remained a key contributor to profile growth. All National Tertiary Championships were live streamed in 2025, with several events also broadcast through national sporting partners and selected campus venues. Championship broadcasts attracted 49,921 views, continuing an upward trend from 2024 (+10%) and reinforcing the professionalism and credibility of UTSNZ events.

UTSNZ's profile-building efforts also focused on clearly communicating the value of tertiary sport. Athlete interviews, student-generated content, volunteer involvement and targeted campaigns highlighted tertiary sport as a meaningful part of the university experience.

Participation outcomes further demonstrate the strengthening profile of tertiary sport. National representation reached a new record of 1,508 students. International representation reached its highest level since the inception of UTSNZ, with 125 student-athletes participating on the international stage.

Together, these outcomes demonstrate clear, measurable progress against the Profile pillar of the Strategic Plan, with UTSNZ continuing to strengthen its visibility, credibility and perceived value across Aotearoa New Zealand.



# WELLBEING

## STUDENTS

Student wellbeing sits at the heart of everything UTSNZ delivers. In 2025, our events provided students with more than just opportunities to compete – they created spaces for connection, belonging, and balance alongside academic life. Across Aotearoa, students spoke of feeling supported, energised, and proud to be part of a wider tertiary community. The following reflections highlight the positive impact UTSNZ continues to have on student wellbeing through shared experiences, personal growth, and meaningful connections.



“ It boosted my confidence in the sport and made me continue to push further and aim higher. It deepened my connection with my teammates and made me feel valued which motivated me throughout the tournament. ”



“ Probably the best tournament experience I've had till this day. would very much recommend future students to take this opportunity before it passes. ”



“ I will remember this event for the memories I made with my teammates and the legacy we're building for our University. As I move further and further away from school, these events give me a reason to continue playing the sport I love. ”



“ Playing tertiary nationals is for everyone. I see players who are new to the sport enjoying the experience, and I see experienced players enjoying the challenge to play against some of the best in Aotearoa. ”



“ An unforgettable experience, filled with incredible team spirit, uplifting event energy, and a welcoming atmosphere that made it a joy to be part of. I had an amazing time throughout the weekend and would happily take part again in future years. ”



“ One of the top experiences to have as a tertiary student. You're able to make friends with people studying different courses whom you otherwise wouldn't have met if it weren't for the tournament, but also reunite with old friends who attend different universities. ”



“ This was my first tertiary experience and I had the most fun and welcoming experience, making friends and building on my connection with my team was super rewarding :) ”



“ The team spirits, competitive games, excellent organisation and facilities made this the best tournament I have ever played at without a doubt. ”



“ The event was so fun, it gave me a sense of belonging at my uni as I met lots of new awesome people and it was great playing competitively against friends at other unis. ”

# WELL BEING

## STAFF & COMMUNITY

### UTSNZ NZ TERTIARY RECREATION AWARDS

Outstanding achievements in student wellbeing, leadership, innovation and community engagement were celebrated at the 3rd annual UTSNZ New Zealand Tertiary Recreation Awards, held as part of the NZ Tertiary Recreation Conference hosted in 2025 by Massey University, Palmerston North from 18–20 November. These awards recognised the initiatives, partnerships, innovations, and individuals shaping the future of tertiary recreation in Aotearoa.

This year's winners included:

- Campus Impact Award: **University of Auckland** - Hiwa Recreation Centre Redevelopment
- Community Partnership Award: **University of Auckland** - Sports Leaders Programme
- Innovation Award: **University of Waikato** - Te Whare Whakakaha
- Service to Recreation Award: Sean Smith - **University of Auckland**

Recognising the importance of supporting staff to achieve their best, these initiatives contribute directly to a more positive student experience.



# TREASURER'S REPORT



HEINZ  
FELLERHOFF

UTSNZ continued to navigate a challenging financial environment in 2025. While funding sources remain relatively constrained, UTSNZ diversified its income streams through a combination of membership fees, event-related revenue, and community grant funding. Membership fees remained the primary source of income, contributing over \$239,000, while additional grant funding from organisations such as NZCT and the Lion Foundation supported key activities throughout the year.

In terms of financial performance, UTSNZ recorded a deficit of \$26,116 in 2025, compared to a surplus of \$30,440 in 2024. This shift was primarily due to the conclusion of the two-year Sport NZ funding contract, which provided approximately \$40,000 annually across 2023 and 2024 to explore initiatives within the wider ITP environment. With this temporary funding stream no longer in place in 2025, UTSNZ experienced a reduction in non-membership revenue, contributing to the overall deficit for the year. Total revenue increased significantly to \$460,262 (up from \$331,997 in 2024), primarily reflecting 2025 being a World University Games year - the first since 2019 - with UTSNZ acting as the delivery agent for campaign-related activities and associated revenue. However, this was offset by a corresponding increase in total expenses to \$486,378, with international event delivery representing a major component of this.

Operating costs rose in line with general inflationary pressures experienced across the sector, reflecting increases in the cost of goods and services required to support UTSNZ's operations. Employee-related costs increased moderately, reflecting ongoing investment in operational capacity, while costs associated with delivering services grew substantially due to the scale of events delivered in 2025. These investments align with UTSNZ's strategic priorities to enhance both national and international opportunities for student athletes.

UTSNZ's financial position remains stable, although net assets reduced to \$116,584 as a result of the operating deficit. Importantly, UTSNZ continues to operate without loans or significant borrowings, aside from standard trade payables and credit card liabilities, ensuring a relatively low-risk financial position heading into 2026.

We extend our appreciation to Sarah Anderson, Executive Director, and Tiwai Wilson, Marketing and Events Manager, for their continued diligence in financial management. Their oversight, alongside the governance and scrutiny provided by the Board, has ensured that UTSNZ continues to deliver high-quality outcomes despite financial pressures.

Looking ahead, the financial outlook remains challenging. Membership fees are expected to remain stable; however, sustainability of this model will depend on securing additional external funding and sponsorship. The Board remains focused on identifying new funding opportunities and strengthening partnerships to support long-term sustainability.

# FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

## University and Tertiary Sport New Zealand Incorporated

### Statement of Financial Performance

"How was it funded?" and "What did it cost?"

For the year ended

31 December 2025

	Note	Actual This Year \$	Actual Last Year \$
<b>Revenue</b>			
Donations, koha, bequests and other general fundraising	1	32,077	74,843
Membership fees and subscriptions	1	239,821	212,106
Revenue from commercial activities	1	184,951	41,714
Interest, dividends and other investment revenue	1	3,413	3,334
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>460,262</b>	<b>331,997</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Expenses related to public fundraising	2	-	-
Employee related costs	2	244,239	219,299
Volunteer related costs	2	-	-
Costs related to providing goods or services	2	222,526	68,672
Other expenses	2	19,613	13,586
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>486,378</b>	<b>301,557</b>
<b>(Deficit) / Surplus for the Year</b>		<b>(26,116)</b>	<b>30,440</b>

University and Tertiary Sport New Zealand (UTSNZ) financial performance report and final accounts presented as per Full Financial Audit completed Baker Tilly Staples Rodway 2025.

Note: The Statement of Financial Performance should be read in conjunction with the notes to, and form part of the Performance Report. Please contact UTSNZ if you wish to view the Performance Report in its entirety.

# FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

## University and Tertiary Sport New Zealand Incorporated

### Statement of Financial Position

"What the entity owns?" and "What the entity owes?"

As at  
31 December 2025

	Note	Actual This Year \$	Actual Last Year \$
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Bank accounts and cash	3	156,738	145,290
Debtors and prepayments	3	439	71,722
Investments	3	100,000	50,000
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>257,177</b>	<b>267,012</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	4	534	1,067
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>534</b>	<b>1,067</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>257,711</b>	<b>268,079</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Creditors and accrued expenses	3	59,824	53,680
Employee costs payable	3	23,096	16,379
Deferred revenue	3	58,207	55,320
Other current liabilities		-	-
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>141,127</b>	<b>125,379</b>
<b>Total Non-Current liabilities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>141,127</b>	<b>125,379</b>
<b>Total Assets less Total Liabilities (Net Assets)</b>		<b>116,584</b>	<b>142,700</b>
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>			
Accumulated surpluses or (deficits)	5	116,584	142,700
<b>Total Accumulated Funds</b>		<b>116,584</b>	<b>142,700</b>

University and Tertiary Sport New Zealand (UTSNZ) financial performance report and final accounts presented as per Full Financial Audit completed Baker Tilly Staples Rodway 2025.

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UNIVERSITY & TERTIARY SPORT  
**NEW ZEALAND**