



MASTERS' ROWING NEW ZEALAND

5 Year Strategic Roadmap 2025

Presentation 14th October 2025



Masters Rowing in New Zealand

Masters are the heart of New Zealand's rowing community — the second-largest and most stable participation group. They're not just athletes, but also volunteers, coaches, fundraisers, and administrators who keep the sport thriving. Yet despite their value, they remain under-supported and under-represented within the national structure.

Strengths

- Passionate, skilled, and community-driven
- Diverse participation — regattas, long-distance, and coastal events.
- Well-resourced and committed to the sport's growth.

Challenges

- Limited access to adult-focused coaching.
- Fragmented communication and coordination.
- Competition and equipment access clashes.
- Lack of structured development pathways.



Research Process

1. Two questionnaires to Rowing Clubs and Masters groups across New Zealand - Qualitative and Quantitative - which provided clear guidance for masters rowing.
2. An international search for best practices for Masters rowers was carried out.

These rich insights informed this strategic plan.

A photograph of two rowers in a boat, overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The rower on the right is cheering with his mouth open and arms raised. The rower on the left is looking towards him. The boat has "UNION ROWING CLUB EST. 1864" written on the side. A decorative horizontal bar with a white-to-blue gradient is positioned above the text.

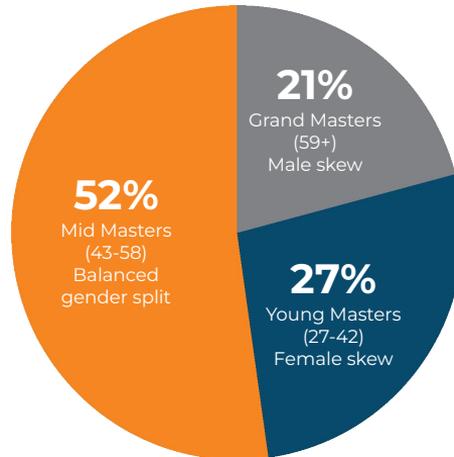
Research Findings

UNION ROWING CLUB EST. 1864

The New Zealand Picture

The research paints a clear picture.

- Masters second largest group - nearly 1,200
- Roughly evenly between men and women
- Half started rowing as adults—women are more likely to be complete beginners, men often returning after school careers.



Peak participation hit in the 50s and 60s.



The New Zealand Picture

Masters integration

- Some Associations and Clubs treat masters as an afterthought or administrative burden.
- Others recognise them as a vital, growing demographic that deserves proper support and strategic attention.

Access to equipment remains a challenge

- 1,800 boat seats exist, access to these varies in clubs across the country.
- Coastal boats remain scarce despite growing demand from recreational rowers.

Three priorities emerge clearly

1. Establish a coordinated calendar of regattas/events, look at scheduling by moving nationals to warmer months and add regattas of varying formats throughout the year.
2. Build dedicated masters coaching capacity and improve club-level equity.
3. Raise masters' visibility and enable community and social connections.



The Current Set up of Masters Rowing

Rowing New Zealand, Associations, Coastal Rowing

- Rowing New Zealand offers the Masters Facebook page and a representative on the community rowing committee where Associations meet.
- Association-level engagement is varied, with the main focus on School and Club rowing
- Coastal rowing hubs are being resourced and competitions developing

North Island (Legion of Rowers)

- Runs two annual regattas (including North Island Champs in May and Spring regatta both with KRI).
- Funds support junior rowing;
- Monthly newsletter (700+ reach) and website.
- Long distance racing organised by Associations.

South Island

- Associations host inclusive regattas (Masters, Clubs, Schools).
- South Island Rowing supports multiple events, most including Masters.
- Different clubs organise the annual South Island Masters regatta on Anzac weekend
- Regional focus remains on junior development.

Other (Masters included)

- Te Awamutu, ARA and BOPRA organise regattas
- Long distance racing organised by Associations.

A photograph of two rowers in a boat on a body of water. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The rower in the foreground is wearing a dark cap and a white and dark long-sleeved shirt, looking upwards with an open mouth as if shouting or exerting effort. The second rower, wearing a white visor and a white shirt, is leaning forward and touching the first rower's shoulder in a coaching or encouraging gesture. The boat's hull is visible at the bottom, with the text "UNION ROWING CLUB EST. 1864" printed on it. A decorative horizontal bar, white on the left and blue on the right, is positioned above the main text.

Strategic Direction

UNION ROWING CLUB EST. 1864



Strategic Priorities

Six priorities have been identified, these are listed in order of priority

1. Regattas and Events

- Streamlined calendar
- Varied formats
- National coordination
- Support for officials and volunteers

2. Value and Voice

- Respected voice with Rowing NZ and Associations
- Improved communications
- Cultural change valuing Masters and their contributions.

3. Coaching and Development

- Development pathways established
- Masters coach development
- Peer-led learning
- Best practice sharing



Strategic Priorities

Six priorities have been identified, these are listed in order of priority

4= Resourcing and collaboration

- National Masters committee
- Inter-club, inter-island cooperation
- Resource collaboration

4= Promotion and visibility

- National storytelling
- Use online communications
- Programmes to attract new and returning rowers

4= Future opportunities

- Expand social events
- Coastal rowing experiences - tours
- International tours/regattas
- Innovative race formats



Implementing the Strategic Plan - Form National Masters Committee

What?

- Form national committee - 3x North and 3x South
- Coordinate and Communicate
- Advisory Board to RNZ
- Members - voluntary and actively engage in owning and implementing the Action Plan

Coordination support from Rowing New Zealand.

How?

Through existing entities

- Coordinate implementation of Masters Strategy working
- Initiate new activities and rowing opportunities

Improve communications and information flow to and from Masters

Enable the sharing of knowledge and tools



Establishing the National Masters Committee

The Process

- Form subset of the Masters Strategy Working Group into the Transitional Committee (TC)
- Terms of Reference drafted by RNZ and finalised with input from the TC
- RNZ call for applications from Masters
- RNZ and TC identify the candidates
- Decision by December 2025

Setting up for Success

- Face-to-Face induction workshop for National committee (early 2026) - funded by RNZ - \$2,500 to 3,000
 - Introductions
 - Hand over of the strategic plan
 - Identification of priorities and focus
 - Allocate responsibilities
- Online meetings



National Masters Committee

Measuring Success

Measure coaching experience and access.

Review social media engagement as an indicator of community health

Annual satisfaction surveys and monitor trends over time.

Track Masters membership trends – by gender, age, and total numbers.

Monitor regatta participation by category.

Monitor Masters representation on Association committees.

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Thank you.

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