



THIS IS  
**ME**®

---

**IMPACT  
REPORT**

---

**2020 – 2021**



**SPORT  
WAIKATO**  
*Hei painga mo te iwi*

# CONTENTS

- 3** Our Mission
- 4** Aims
- 6** Unite Delivery Partners
- 8** Change the Conversation
- 11** Grow Participation and Change Attitudes
- 14** Lessons Learned
- 15** What's Next?



# OUR MISSION

**This is ME® is an initiative led by Sport Waikato that encourages, supports and celebrates women and girls of all ages getting out there and being active THEIR way.**



## OUR AIMS



### UNITE DELIVERY PARTNERS

Growing the quality of delivery and opportunities to participate



### CHANGE THE CONVERSATION

Breaking down the barriers to participation through images, stories and women and girls sharing their message



### GROW PARTICIPATION AND CHANGE ATTITUDES

Connecting individuals with opportunities to be active and have fun together



## WHO/ WHAT?

- The participants (women and girls aged 5–65+)
- The system (stakeholders, funders, sport, recreation and cross-sector providers, conversations, imagery and perceptions)



## HOW?

**SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS  
SUPPORT**

**WEBSITE**

**LOCALLY-LED  
ACTIVATIONS**

**COMMUNITY  
WORKING  
GROUPS**

**FACEBOOK**

**INSTAGRAM**

**PARTNERED  
EVENTS**

**WOMEN  
& GIRLS  
SUMMIT**



# UNITING DELIVERY PARTNERS

**Facilitating cross-sector partnerships at local, regional and national levels to grow the quality of delivery and opportunities for women and girls to participate.**

This is ME® unites delivery partners to increase the number of physical activity opportunities available to women and girls that are relevant, inclusive and fun. The breadth, diversity and variety of sector involvement in This is ME® and the number of partners engaged continues to grow at local, regional and national levels. This is ME® partnerships have seen increases in participation opportunities, new and modified activities created and membership growth alongside increases in positive activity experiences being had among women and girls. Over the last year, This is ME® partnerships have facilitated beginner friendly boxing and squash combined sessions, ongoing cricketing opportunities through Backyard Smash, and workshops to remove barriers associated with menstruation and period poverty in conjunction with national brand, AWWA.

25

Local sport and physical activity partners

7

Regional sport and physical activity partners

5

National sport and physical activity partners

32

Cross-sector partners

4

New/modified activities created

430+

Number of participants

**Box & SQUASH!**

Proudly supported by

**THIS IS ME®**

Come along and have-a-go at Boxing and Squash!

A great opportunity to get your friends together and try your hand at a new sport and activity!

**4PM-5.30PM  
MONDAYS  
STARTING 15 FEB**  
Lugton Park Squash Club,  
Old Farm Road, Hamilton

**\$40**  
for 6 weeks

- Open girls and young women aged 13-18yrs
- All equipment provided

For more info and to register contact Richard Harris  
p 021 852 772 • development@squash.co.nz

[fb.com/thisisME2](https://fb.com/thisisME2) @thisisme\_nz



## HIGHLIGHTS



We were very honoured to receive the Northern Districts Cricket Community Engagement Strategy Award for the 2020-21 year, acknowledging our work on the Sista Smash and Backyard Smash initiatives. We provided thought leadership in the development of these activations, which drew in over 300 women and girls to participate in the game of cricket, but not as we traditionally know it. The initiatives focused on delivering a modified version of cricket for women and girls that addressed some of the barriers of the game (e.g. fast bowlers, hard balls, long days in the field) by offering alternatives that better met the needs of females (e.g. fun, social interaction and a more accessible, less intimidating format of the game).

Not only have these initiatives been piloted with great success, but they are now in the process of being implemented as regular opportunities for women and girls to engage with the game of cricket longer term.

## SUCCESS STORY

# This is ME® + She Loves Golf Twilight Series

In 2019, This is ME® Taupō hosted a have-a-go golf series for women at Taupō Golf Club, facilitated by Taupō Golf Coach Renee Fowler, in response to community requests for more women's opportunities.

This is ME® representatives worked alongside Golf New Zealand and Taupō Golf Club to secure support and facilities for a four-week series. The key premise was 4 holes with 4 friends, as an adaptation of the She Loves Golf 6's. Following disruptions caused by COVID-19 in 2020, the series went ahead in February-March 2021.

The Ambrose golf format provided a friendly and welcoming environment to give golf a go with the opportunity to gain tips and tricks to learn more about the sport. The ability to learn new skills alongside friends provided a social element we know women enjoy. There was also no requirement to commit to the series—in fact, teams often included a new member each week.

This initiative aimed to address previously identified barriers to women's participation in golf, such as cost, time, access to equipment, self-confidence, current ability and social connection. Each session cost participants \$10 and equipment was made available. The '4 holes with 4 friends' approach to the She Loves Golf Twilight Series encouraged women of all golfing abilities to take part, alongside their friends to build on established social connections and develop new ones.

The number of participants who took part over the 4-week



series reinforced a) the need for ongoing opportunities, b) the success of the 4 holes with 4 friends format, and c) the need for more inclusive and welcoming environments for women to participate in golf. Participants used the series as an opportunity to spend time with their friends and try something new, noting how much fun they had.

"It was a great series and I would definitely recommend it to friends. The casual nature made everyone feel comfortable and the format was great for beginners"

For This is ME®, an ongoing partnership with Golf New Zealand involves expanding this twilight series to other areas of the Waikato region, such as Hamilton. Building on the success of the She Loves Golf Twilight Series in Taupō, both This is ME® and Golf New Zealand would like to provide women around the region with similar golfing opportunities with the aim of breaking down barriers and presenting women with new and exciting ways of engaging in traditional sports, and to grow female representation in golf.



# CHANGE THE CONVERSATION

**Breaking down the barriers to participation through images, messaging and women and girls sharing their stories.**

This is ME® uses digital platforms to empower and inspire women and girls to get moving, to connect them with activity providers and one another, and to challenge dominant messages about females and physical activity.



## Website

A hub of inspiration and opportunity, the This is ME® website connects women and girls to the This is ME® team, and provides them with key messaging, stories about the physical activity journeys of women and girls like them, and opportunities to get moving in their community.

Enquiries

**40+**

Someone Like ME stories

**29**

Event and Get Moving listings

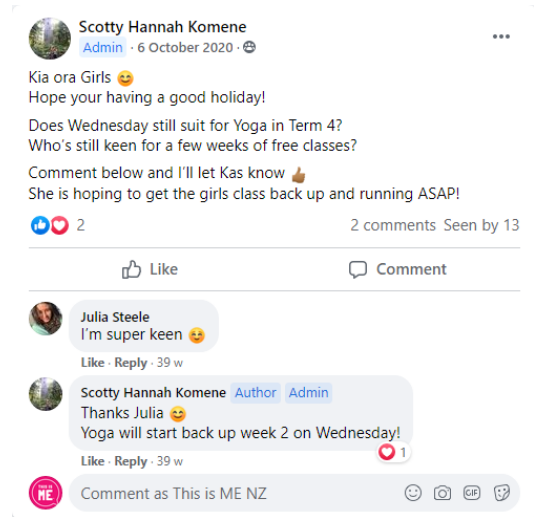
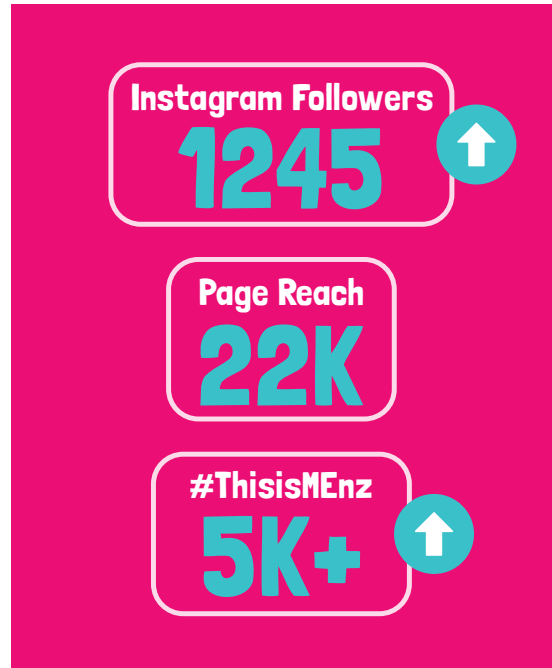
**1274**





# Instagram

The This is ME® Instagram page features user-generated content which is shared via the hashtag #ThisisMEnz. The page celebrates the various ways that women and girls get out there and moving and has created a community of support and encouragement to try new things, promoting the idea of feeling confident in your own skin through the celebration of real and raw imagery.

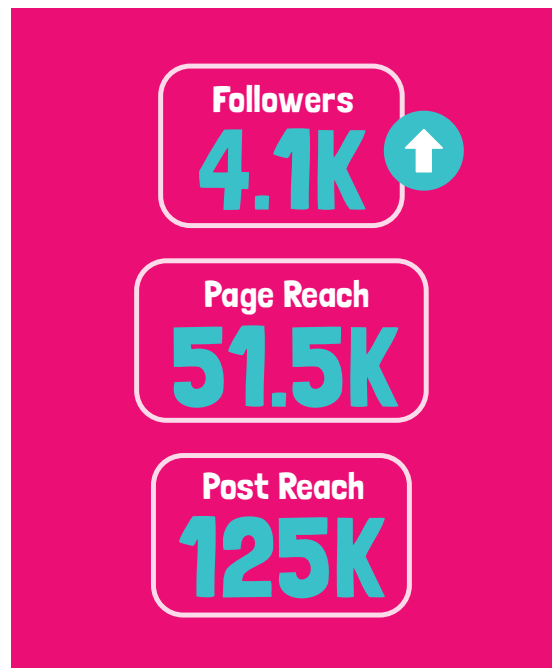


# Facebook

Facebook continues to be used as a tool to promote local opportunities to get women and girls moving, encourage the sharing of advice and experiences, and celebrate the physical activity journeys of women and girls.

Community Facebook groups continue to thrive with increased membership and regular conversations. The closed groups are administered by local This is ME® working groups and supporters as spaces for women and girls to connect with one another and learn about the opportunities available in their district and area.

2020 - 2021 Facebook and Instagram insights when compared to 2017 - 2020 Facebook and Instagram insights.



## SUCCESS STORY

CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO

**“If we’re able to be the example, or the taura, for other communities to do what we’re doing, then we’re doing our job. We’re breeding more than whaanau champions, we’re breeding a great society like we have in Te Kuiti”**

– Erina Wehi-Barton

# Let’s talk about periods!

A conversation between Kotahi Aroha’s Erina Wehi-Barton and Sport Waikato’s women and girls initiative This is ME® revealed that period poverty was a significant factor in preventing young waahine from the Waitomo district being physically active.

To help address the period poverty issue for the young women who attend her physical activity programmes, This is ME® worked with Erina to identify sixteen young waahine between 11 and 16 years old to participate in a facilitated workshop.

This is ME® partnered with national period underwear brand AWWA who generously donated three pairs of underwear to each of the young women who attended the workshop. The ability to remove period poverty as a barrier and empower women to participate in physical activity despite their period was the motivation behind the initiative.

“AWWA’s partnership with This is ME® represents our commitment to ensuring no individual misses out on opportunities to engage in sport, recreation or education due to having their ikura (period). We believe everyone should have the opportunity to participate in activities that are good for their wellbeing, and AWWA want to help remove the barriers preventing some waahine from doing so,” said Kylie Matthews, AWWA co-founder.

The workshop created a safe space for the young women to share their feelings and experiences, learn about ikura, understand how to use and care for the underwear provided by AWWA, and participate in a yoga session facilitated by local yoga instructor Ainslie Speedy (iamyoganz).

Erina says physical activity is important for young women as it empowers them.

“If we’re able to be the example, or the taura, for other communities to do what we’re doing, then we’re doing



our job. We’re breeding more than whaanau champions, we’re breeding a great society like we have in Te Kuiti,” Erina said.

The young women left the workshop with an understanding of how to use the underwear and increased confidence in their ability to manage their period. Their confidence to participate and be active has since increased further through using the period underwear provided by AWWA of how to use the underwear and 85% of the girls reported an increase in confidence in their ability to manage their period.

What Erina is doing to promote, support and encourage young women in her community to be physically active is just incredible – she’s an absolute powerhouse and positive influence on all those around her. This is ME® has been proud to support Erina and partner with AWWA, making a real difference to the young women she inspires.

The workshop and the resulting impact on the young women that participated shows the value of collaborative partnerships and what can be achieved when organisations work together at the local, regional and national levels to address personal and practical barriers to females’ participation in physical activity.



# GROW PARTICIPATION & CHANGE ATTITUDES

**Connecting individuals with opportunities to be active and have fun together.**

Engaging and enabling local communities to lead and deliver local activations has seen participation growth across various sport, recreation and physical activity opportunities and has led to positive change in the lives of women and girls.

**TAUPŌ  
Women's  
Golf**



**6**

Activations designed by communities

**380+**

Women and girls engaged in community activations

**6**

Secondary schools involved

**19**

School staff involved

**650**

Female students engaged in Voice of Rangatahi surveying

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Communities

The last year has seen This is ME® support activations in Hamilton, Taupō and Te Kuiti, by connecting local providers with potential participants to grow the quality of delivery to women and girls.

Such connections have allowed Muslim women in Hamilton to safely attend a Zumba class and participate in Futsal, offered women in Taupō ongoing opportunities to play golf, and supported women and girls in Te Kuiti to engage in community-led physical activity programmes.

Activations have included Coffee & Squash in Hamilton, a morning opportunity for women to learn to play squash in a welcoming and inclusive environment, followed by coffee and conversation. The initial pilot was attended by seven women, which led to the development of a 6-week programme and plans to adjust membership offerings and expand the programme into other squash clubs around the region.



### TE KUITI Kotahi Aroha



**"I enjoy the PE we do but feel we can do more on the fitness side of things, and not just sport skills"**

– Year 7, Female

**"They (the school) always say no matter your gender you will always do well and I really like that."**

– Year 7, Female

**"I'd like to see more non sport related ways of becoming physically active."**

– Year 11, Female

**"I always have something to do after school and my coaches care about me and always make it fun."**

– Year 9, Female

### Schools

The This is ME® Secondary Schools Programme has seen the continuation of inclusive and enjoyable opportunities that are based on data and insights to meet young women's needs.

Disruptions caused by COVID-19 meant that entry into secondary schools was limited throughout 2020. However, this time has been used to gain greater insights into young women and girls' experiences and feelings towards physical activity through Voice of Rangatahi surveying. This data has supported the capability building of key staff members to adapt and deliver inclusive opportunities through co-design that meet the needs of the females in their school.

In 2021, the This is ME® Secondary Schools Programme has been activated in six secondary schools and has not only engaged young women in more activity, but it has also facilitated policy and delivery changes, including the integration of a colour run into a cross country competition.

Quotes obtained through Voice of Rangatahi surveying, 2020 - 2021

## SUCCESS STORY

**“Most importantly, This is ME® has legitimised ‘women only’ sport and placed it at the centre of our school. The money is important for practical reasons, as we want this work to continue. It also signals Waihi College’s belief in the importance of providing opportunities that encourage our girls and address the barriers that prevent their involvement in sport and exercise,”**

**– Alistair Cochrane, Principal, Waihi College**

# Waihi College Funding Allocation

**The positive impacts experienced by girls and young women at Waihi College through the involvement of This is ME®’s has spurred the college to allocate funding from their operational budget towards female centred activations.**

A four-year partnership between the college and This is ME® has led to the decision to invest funding towards This is ME® activities within their school.

Principal Alistair Cochrane said that This is ME® has allowed the students to do things they wouldn’t normally do in a safe environment.

“Most importantly, This is ME® has legitimised ‘women only’ sport and placed it at the centre of our school. The money is important for practical reasons, as we want this work to continue. It also signals Waihi College’s belief in the importance of providing opportunities that encourage our girls and address the barriers that prevent their involvement in sport and exercise,” said Cochrane.

Over the course of the partnership, This is ME® has worked with students to help them design, lead and deliver various activities to the girls and young women at the college, including regular yoga sessions, surfing lessons, annual entries into Tough Guy and Gal, as well as pop-up lunchtime sport during girls-only gym days.

This funding allocation will support the continuation of these activations and encourage the integration of new opportunities for girls and young women who attend the college.

Sport Waikato are proud that the college has seen the value in the initiative and have chosen to continue the growth of opportunities for their young waahine to stay active and keep moving their way.

In 2018, Sport Waikato’s targeted women and girls initiative, This is ME®, was successful in receiving funding from Sport New Zealand’s Young Women Activation Fund. This fund has enabled the growth of the Secondary School Programme further into the Waikato region.

The team at This is ME® have been able to continue to build partnerships with existing schools, as well as bring new schools along on the journey, working alongside staff and students to provide welcoming, inclusive, fun and quality opportunities for girls and young women.



# LESSONS LEARNED

## Innovative Thinking in Changing Circumstances

Initiating change in sport and recreation involves finding new and innovative ways to engage women and girls in physical activity, outside of traditional approaches. COVID-19 taught us that change can happen very quickly, but it also created an opportunity to encourage providers to adopt an innovative approach to their delivery.

## A Systems Approach

To instigate real and meaningful change for women and girls in sport and recreation, a top down and bottom up approach is necessary. This involves influencing both grassroots and community systems and high level, social structures (e.g. the media, policy, legislation).

## Relationship Building

Building relationships and trust is key to initiating change. Whether this is at the community or systems level, it is important that people feel engaged in the process and that you bring them along on the journey to ensure that change is sustainable.

## Insights and Community Involvement

Insights, both numerical and anecdotal, provide a strong starting point for sustainable action. Every community is different and the ability to rely on evidence to co-design activations for communities, with communities, ensures the sustainability of physical activity opportunities for women and girls.



# WHAT'S NEXT?

Connecting  
to national  
outcomes

**Working to enhance the outcomes of the  
Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.**

## Leadership

***More women and girls are leading, working, coaching, and volunteering in sport and active recreation, at all levels.***

The This is ME® Secondary School Programme will continue to support partnership schools, with plans to engage a further five secondary schools. The focus will remain on developing young women as leaders, supporting increased activity opportunities and instigating policy change in secondary schools in ways that better meet the needs of females.

## Participation

***More women and girls are physically active through play, active recreation and sport.***

We will continue to work with women and girls to increase the opportunities they have to be active THEIR way. We will continue to work with local leaders, providers, and communities to support strategies designed to get more women and girls moving. We are currently in the process of designing a number of online modules to support providers to understand and deliver quality sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs and aspirations of women and girls. We'll provide further thought leadership to the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 and look to do the same for the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023. Our aim is to support the formation of strategies to engage more women and girls in these codes.

## Value and Visibility

***Women and girls in sport and active recreation are valued and visible.***

We'll continue our focus on celebrating women and girls getting moving THEIR way across our digital channels. We'll have a focus on generating more conversation and sharing – we want to privilege female voices and stories.



### **Matthew Cooper**

Chief Executive

**m** 027 545 0005 **e** matthewc@sportwaikato.org.nz

### **Amy Marfell**

General Manager Sport and Community

**m** 027 350 2606 **e** amym@sportwaikato.org.nz

### **Roxanna Holdsworth**

Women and Girls Initiative Advisor

**m** 021 210 9341 **e** roxannah@sportwaikato.org.nz

### **Jenna Keane**

Women and Girls Initiative Advisor (Youth)

**m** 027 974 9222 **e** jennak@sportwaikato.org.nz

## **REFERENCES**

Voice of Rangatahi Survey (2020-21). Sport New Zealand  
Women & Girls in Sport and Active Recreation Government Strategy (2018). *Sport New Zealand*.  
<https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Women-and-Girls-Govt-Strategy.pdf>

**[www.thisisme.org.nz](http://www.thisisme.org.nz)**



**[fb.com/thisisMENZ](https://www.facebook.com/thisisMENZ)**



**[thisisme\\_nz](https://www.instagram.com/thisisme_nz)**