

# SPORT & RECREATION ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

GIVING YOUR SPORT A VOICE





# OVERVIEW

In the sport and recreation sector, there is, from time to time, a need to influence policy, align with others' strategies where appropriate and influence allocation of resources. Given this, there is also the need to deliver coordinated leadership and advocacy in a compelling voice for the sector.

In 2017/18 the Auckland sport and recreation sector participated in a [Sport Matters](#) campaign in response to Auckland Council's call for submissions on the Auckland Plan and Long-term Plan. This toolkit has been developed as result of this campaign for use by the sector as appropriate.

The purpose of this advocacy toolkit is to provide information, insights and ideas that will assist codes, clubs, community groups and lobby groups to advocate effectively.

It is available for groups to tailor and implement as they see appropriate for their situation.

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# 01. WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

The definition of advocacy is:

*“The act of speaking on the behalf of or in support of another person, place, or thing.”*

It is the process of supporting and enabling people to: express their views and concerns; access information and services; and defend and promote their rights.

Essentially, advocacy is a set of actions to create support and momentum behind a policy or chosen pathway and influence change in a concrete way. It can be implemented on local, regional and international levels, targeting anyone with decision-making power.

When advocating there are a number of questions that need to be asked:

- What do you want?
- Who can make it happen?
- What do they need to hear?
- Who do they need to hear it from?
- How do they need to hear it?
- How will we know they heard us?



ADVOCACY INVOLVES	THIS COULD LOOK LIKE
Awareness raising, communications and media work	Delivering persuasive, evidence-based messages to the public
Developing partnerships/coalitions/alliances	Connecting groups towards a common goal
Lobbying and negotiating	Discussions with decision makers
Campaigning	Mobilising the public around an issue
Research/publications	Illustrating the research behind an issue
Working with children and young people	Creating a platform for people to have their voice heard
Social mobilisation	Engaging multiple levels of the sector
Conferences/events	Bringing people together in one place

# 02. PREPARATION

There are a number of aspects to consider in preparation for your advocacy campaign:

- 1 Identify the risk or opportunity; this may include cyclical issues/risks
- 2 Build platform/ paint picture to define the issue
- 3 Consider if it is a broad scale risk (potentially impacting the sector) or a small-scale issue (primarily in-house)
- 4 Build and maintain important relationships so you know a risk is emerging
- 5 Once the risk or opportunity is acknowledged, identify and build relationships with decision makers, key stakeholders and allies
- 6 Consider if it is a broad scale risk (potentially impacting the sector) or a small-scale issue (primarily in-house)
- 7 Prepare evidence base/case with references and clear proof – wherever possible ensure key pieces of research are refreshed so they are timely and compelling
- 8 Take a broad context to support your position, for example consider health and/or education aspects
- 9 Ensure your database is comprehensive and up-to-date
- 10 Develop a timeframe, working back from key deadline and nominate responsibilities accordingly
- 11 Establish project team
- 12 Establish position, agree key messages and set objectives

# 03. IMPLEMENTATION

When implementing your advocacy campaign, the following are important factors that will assist:

- Maintain regular briefings of key stakeholders, consider the following:
  - Who are the decision makers?
  - What are the decisions they want to (have to) make?
  - What may impact their decision?
- When noting down decision makers, also identify the influencers of the decision makers and ensure they are targeted.
- Maintain methodical assessment of decision makers including if, when and how they have been contacted and their position on the identified issue – this is helpful when determining the rate of approval required to get decision over the line. A rule of thumb is to use three sources of data for assessment, for example:
  - Measurement – what can be quantified
  - Dialogue - what people say
  - Observation – what people do
- Assign project team responsibilities and have regular accountability reports

## COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Develop a communications plan that covers:

- Objectives
- Strategies
- Key audiences
- Activities
- Timing
- Results

[Click here for a Marketing and Communications toolkit specifically developed for the sport and recreation sector](#)

Ensure you make it easy for others you want to support you, for example colleagues and others in the sector - distil the important information clearly and use plain English to assist this.

Identify others who can speak for you, including ambassadors

Consider various communication channels, such as media and social media, and make it easy for people to understand and relate to. The following aspects may assist:

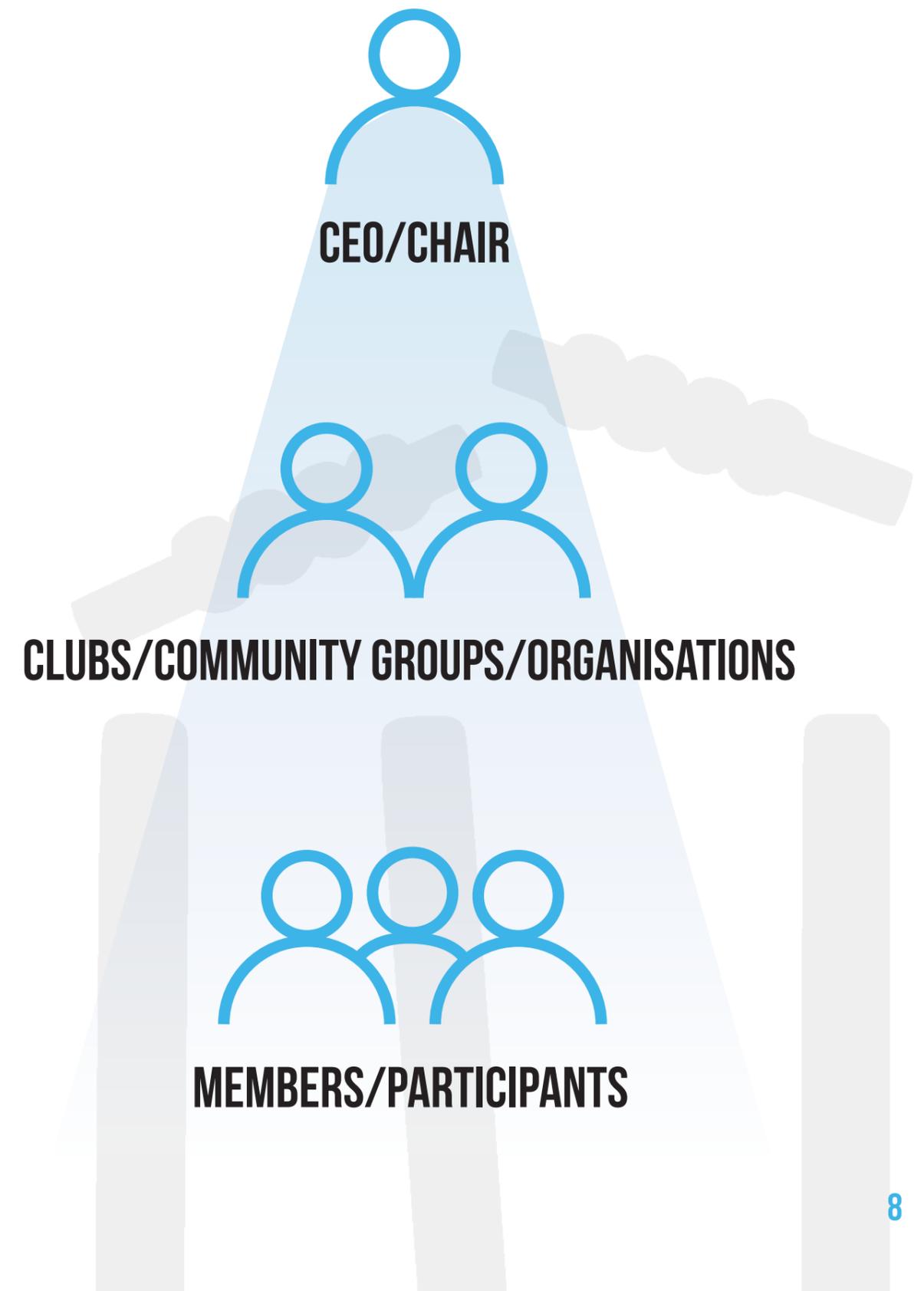
- Key messages
- Different languages
- Famous faces
- Infographics
- Call to action
- Identify major employers and/or those with significant databases
- Produce pre-paid postcards to capture messages from the public
- Consider asking members for permission to make submissions on their behalf
- Address major sporting and community events with call to action
- Bumper stickers and signage
- An ad in national and/or regional media

If running a media campaign, there are elements to consider, including:

- Using a spokesperson
- Find media advocates
- Regular media releases
- Focus on organisations/individuals who get media pick up
- Use talk-back radio
- Possible opinion pieces
- Refer to local examples

If encouraging others to participate, provide clear steps, timelines, suggest key points and local examples. A short, personal submission is more effective than a templated approach.

## **DON'T RELY ON INTERMEDIARIES. USE A CASCADING APPROACH SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE:**



# 04. POST CAMPAIGN

The campaign may have wound up, but the work isn't over!

The following aspects are crucial to a comprehensive and effective advocacy campaign:



**COMMUNICATE RESULTS**



**ACKNOWLEDGE HELP AND THANK THOSE INVOLVED**



**SCHEDULE REGULAR UPDATES**



**REFRESH TOOLKIT**

## REVIEWING (DEBRIEFING) THE CAMPAIGN

As part of the reflective process it is useful gather feedback from multiple resources and refine for next time. The following questions and diagram on page 10 are a good starting point for this process.

What did you expect to happen?

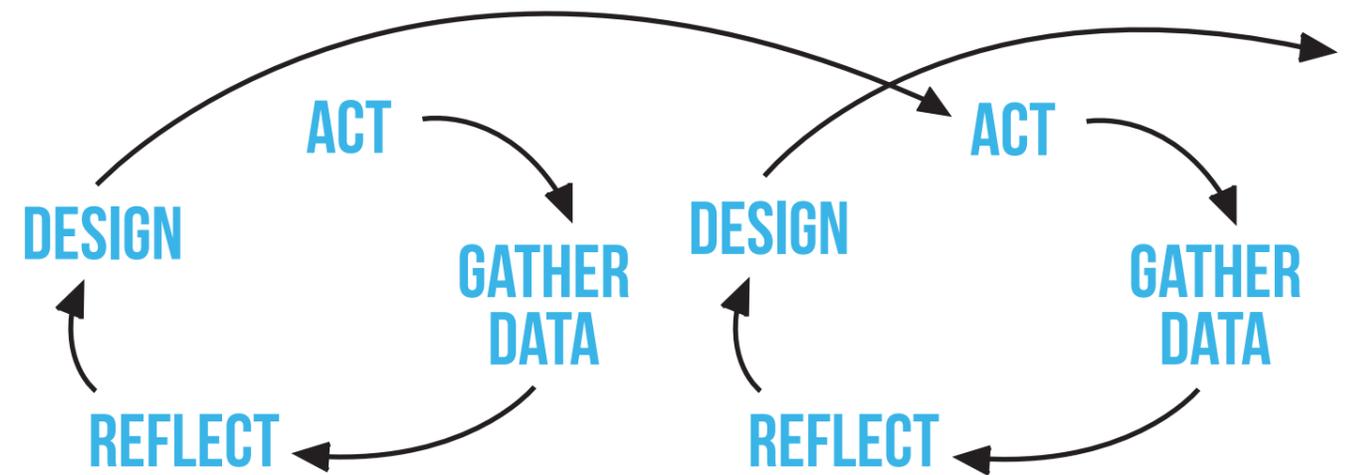
To what degree were your advocacy objectives met?

What actually happened?

What went well?  
What didn't go so well?

What can we learn from this?

What should we start doing?  
What should we stop doing?  
What should we keep doing?



By using data to review your advocacy campaign actions will enable you to identify any outstanding issues. This will allow you to then come up with what you need to do next to keep the momentum going.

# 05. TIMELINE

Timing is obviously dependent on several factors including information and resources. The following is an indicative timeline that can be tailored to meet a specific campaign and timeframe:

### PREPARATION

Two to four months ahead of due date.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Concentrated at least one month ahead of due date.

### POST CAMPAIGN

Within two weeks of due date.

