

National Outdoors Hui: Spring Forward

Group analysis session: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Strengths:

The outdoor sector's main strengths rest with its passionate and motivated people who have a depth of expertise and knowledge, and who deliver a wide range of quality activities. These people are willing to collaborate more and promote the sector's ability to support the Living Standards Framework.

Weaknesses:

There is a very strong consensus that the sector is fragmented and separated by space, time, resources, and a silo mentality. There is a risk of a "Tragedy of the commons" scenario playing out during this time of change. This is supported by a perception that the sector lacks clear leadership and is busy focusing on the "how" and "what" of each organisation, and forgetting the overarching "why" of the sector. Coupled with this is the concept that the sector is undervalued by society, possibly due to a lack of equity and engagement with youth, elderly and minority groups. This has led to an issue of working in the sector being seen as a lifestyle or job-phase option, rather than a sustainable career choice.

Opportunities:

There is very strong support for the sector to collaborate more and engage with promoting the sector's ability to support the Living Standards Framework by having a common voice - 100 voices singing the same song. This should be achieved by engaging with youth, supporting sustainability, Kaitiakitanga/Atua Matua frameworks, and aligning with the Sport NZ pivot towards active recreation.

Threats:

Lack of funding and government recognition, changes to legislation, political changes, and compliance costs are seen as the main threats to the sector. There is also a perception that the sector lacks strategic direction and does not provide equal pastoral care to all aspects of outdoor recreation participation, and may not be evolving to meet the changes in how NZ recreates, spends leisure time or deals with environmental issues. Also raised was the lack of younger leaders in the sector... Where is the next generation of sector leaders coming from?

Summary:

He Waka Eke Noa, we are all in this together! There is very strong belief that the outdoor sector is made up of motivated and passionate people who strive for quality and wish to remain a fundamental part of the fabric of NZ. However, the sector needs a kaitiaki group (either a designated umbrella organisation or a national council of organisations) with a mandate to speak for the sector from a universally endorsed manifesto that captures and protects the sector's "why", and supports and promotes all aspects of the sector through embracing diversity, equity and Kaitiakitanga. It is suggested that this kaitiaki group holds more regular hui to bring the sector together and promote greater collaboration.