

## 2023 President's Report - NZ Sport Fishing Council

It has certainly been an interesting year. Looking back at the COVID times, we were reminded of the value of our own time, and how important relationships and interactions with other people are – reminded that we are only on this planet for a certain amount of time and that we need to ensure that we make each day count.

During the various COVID lockdowns and restrictions on movements, we all sought 'normality' – to do 'what we want to be doing' with those people that we enjoy being around. As a result, we have seen a new flexibility in the workplace, and an increased value placed on our quality of life.

As we exited the COVID period, we all thought that things would improve over time with regard to our lifestyles. Little did we realise that the COVID years were the best economically that we had seen for some time.

This year, 2023, has been the period where we have seen the cost of living pressures increase drastically. While wages have increased, they have generally not kept pace with the cost of living – creating the 'Cost of Living Crisis'. Things have tightened economically due to the deliberate cooling of the economy by the Reserve Bank (through higher interest rates). The rate of change has been the kicker.

Suddenly, the new 'Normal' includes our COVID learnings on the value of our own time and a higher cost of living, including higher cost of going fishing (e.g. Petrol more than \$3 / litre).

This new 'Normal' has seen increased pressure on the scarce pool of peoples' time to operate our clubs – both Volunteer and paid. It's simply getting harder and harder to find people to undertake key roles such as Club Committee's, act as weighmasters and support our Clubrooms, club bars and restaurants.

At the same time, on a number of fronts, we have continued to see increased challenges in accessing our wonderful coastal environment, and the marine life that live within it. Topics that have challenged us this year include the various Regional Council Plans, The RMA, Caulerpa, Climate Change / higher rainfalls/storms, localised depletion and Rahui, Fisheries Plans, The Hauraki Gulf, QMS Sustainability Reviews - the list goes on.

Speaking of challenges, a special mention goes out to all those affected by Cyclone Gabrielle – all clubs and club members affected – especially in Auckland, Coromandel, Hawkes Bay and Gisborne areas. Your response as clubs and a community was inspiring.

The social and economic environment around us has changed - and is continuing to change at a rate not seen for many years, if not decades. The quote 'The only constant in Life is Change' feels very relevant at present.

Now, more than ever, Fishing Clubs have relevance. The hardest part is resourcing them with the many necessary skillsets from volunteers, Club members and staff so that they can grow and adapt – generally so that we can do more with less.

In a world where there are many organisations attempting to influence people with a volume of communications, it is evident that NZSFC Clubs need to continue to invest in future generations, in order to ensure that the way of life we know today can be shared with the next generation.

To this end, NZSFC has this year progressed various initiatives including (but not limited to):

- Investing in the next generation - NZSFC Youth Programme and Youth Ocean Trust
- Club relationships and communications with the appointment of Mike Plant
- Club support – Tacklebox resource, Weighmaster Book update, Weighmaster training
- Fisheries Management – an unprecedented volume of input and submissions around NZ
- LegaSea – increased public profile and influence including Kai Ika.
- Sportfishing – Youth Nationals and Nationals

We are well positioned to continue the development of our support and initiatives into the coming season through our various interconnected organisations:

- NZSFC
- LegaSea
- NZ Marine Research Foundation
- Youth Ocean Trust

The key to us progressing is your involvement with your Club, and you Club's involvement with NZSFC. The more engagement and sharing of thoughts and ideas between us as Clubs, the stronger our Clubs are now and into the future.

As a Council of Clubs, NZSFC will facilitate Club development across a number of fronts. As a Council of Clubs, our Clubs do best when we engage and share what we know and any resource that we have created (either individually or as a group) – thereby being greater than the sum of our parts.

The scale of the challenges that each of our clubs and club members face means that we are best to pool our collective thoughts and resources so that all Clubs can continue to evolve in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Get involved. Do you or your club have an idea, learning or concept that you feel other clubs would benefit from? Get in touch, ensure that your club delegates are attending the bi-monthly Zone meetings with neighbouring clubs, and we can continue to propagate support for all NZSFC Clubs and their Club members.

Lastly – Thanks. A huge thank you to everyone that makes our Clubs happen day to day, and also to all those who make NZSFC operate. Regardless of your contribution, large or small - whether your contribution was at a Club working bee, participating in a club event, taking your child fishing, donating time or money (the list goes on) – it's the combined effort of everyone involved that means we all get to enjoy the fantastic New Zealand fishing lifestyle with friends and family. A lifestyle that's special and worth ensuring for future generations.



Ian Steele  
**President - New Zealand Sport Fishing Council**