



*NGA KAIHOE O AOTEAROA  
NEW ZEALAND*

## **3 Year Strategic Plan for the sport of Waka Ama**

**August 2009 to July 2012**

*Draft July 2009*

# Background

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Waka Ama or Outrigger canoes have always been part of the culture and life of the people of the Pacific. In Aotearoa most Māori trace their origins to ancestors who migrated here in voyaging Waka. Over the years the dependence on the use of Waka in everyday life declined and although Waka continued to be used in ceremonial and official functions interest in Waka for leisure purposes dwindled.

In the mid-1980s Māori observing Waka Ama racing in Hawai'i and Tahiti became inspired and the seed was sown for a revival of Waka Ama in Aotearoa New Zealand. Initially Waka Ama had two founding clubs, one in the North (Ngā Hoe Horo) and one on the East Coast (Mareikura). From these humble beginnings the national body, Ngā Kaihoe o Aotearoa, has grown into an organisation with six regions and 70 clubs spreading from Kaitaia to Dunedin.

From small beginnings Waka Ama now has a registered membership of 5,000 and estimates there are an additional 10,000 paddlers who are not registered members. The week long National Championships now consistently attracts upwards of 2,000 competitors. In addition Waka Ama is also the fastest growing team sport in secondary schools. Paddlers range in age from 7 to over 70 and although predominantly Māori and Pacific Island, Waka Ama includes paddlers from all ethnic backgrounds. The sport offers a unique whānau (extended family) atmosphere allowing kids, parents and grandparents to all paddle at the same event.

Unlike many sports Waka Ama is steeped in the history and traditions that reflect the power of Waka. Waka Ama is therefore not just a sport but also a vehicle for identity, pride and community. This is reflected in the values and tikanga (the set of beliefs associated with the practices and procedures to be followed in conducting the affairs of our sport) that underpin it.

This plan honours the culture and heritage that makes our sport unique and outlines what we will do to ensure it continue to flourish in coming years. Its purpose is to act as the stars to help us to navigate as an organisation into our future.

# How this plan was put together

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On the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2009 members of Council and regional representatives from around the country came together for a strategic planning session. We started off by brainstorming what the big issues are (political, economic, social and technological) outside our sport that will impact on Waka Ama in coming years. Once we had looked at the impacts outside our sport we turned to the issues inside our sport and brainstormed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that impact on Ngā Kaihoe o Aotearoa. You can see the summary of our work in the PEST and SWOT analysis in Appendix 1 and 2 at the back of this plan.

When we had identified all the issues we could think of we took a vote to identify what we saw as the big challenges, internal and external to our sport that needed to be addressed. The resulting list is covered in the key challenges section of this plan

Once we had done this we turned to reviewing the statement as it appears in Ngā Kaihoe o Aotearoa's constitution to see whether we believed it accurately reflects what we believe our organisation's purpose is and whether we felt this would still be true 100 years from now. The slightly amended wording in this plan reflects our thinking on this.

After we were clear about why we were here, we started capturing language for our vision for the sport in twenty-five years time. We wanted to describe this in a way that everyone could see and understand. We also got clear about our values – the ways of being that intrinsic to our sport and that we wanted to retain and reflect in everything we do.

From all this work it was quite clear what our goals would need to be to address the challenges we face, honour our mission and our values and strive to realise our vision. The rest of the strategic plan is devoted to outlining our goals, the measures we will use to assess our performance and the strategies we will employ to realise our goals.

Once we had a draft strategic plan we literally took it to the people by embarking on a six region road trip to get feedback. This was very successful and it was great to be out and about hearing what members have to say. As a result of this feedback we made changes to the original draft and this plan is the final version of our strategic plan which will guide our activities for the coming three years.

In addition to this strategic plan we have developed a detailed operational plan which will cover off the specific actions we will need to take in the coming year to move us toward realising this strategic plan. The operational plan details what we will do, who will do it, with the actions and the deadline for completion. The operational plan will also cover off the regular 'business as usual' tasks we need to carry out as a national body. We will review our strategic plan and write a new operational plan for each of the three years of the strategic plan.

# Mission and Values

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**Mission:** To lead the development, practise and promotion of the sport and culture of Waka Ama.

**Values:** ***Manaakitanga:*** We encourage the practice of reciprocity through sharing of ourselves and our resources, nurturing all people and accepting our differences.

***Whanaungatanga:*** Is our sense of belonging, identification and collective strength, not only through kinship but being related to all within the Waka Ama community.

***Hauora:*** We support and promote the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of all our participants.

***Tu Tangata:*** We are accountable for our actions. We have respect for each other, our waka and our environment. We stand proud in our integrity and passion.

## 25 Year Vision

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To realise Waka Ama's professional, participation and financial potential.

*In the year 2035, future generations will have a sport where:*

*“Waka Ama is a heavy weight in the Aotearoa New Zealand sporting psyche and is recognised as a global leader and significant influencer in the sport nationally and internationally ... Tikanga is second nature... competitor numbers have grown exponentially at all levels from participation to competitive... Waka Ama is a sport in all schools... we’ve won gold at multiple significant global events from IVF World Sprint Championships to Molokai Hoe... there are record crowds at races in Aotearoa New Zealand... our sport is in demand by the media ... Aotearoa New Zealand is leading the way in developing safe and fair race standards across the world... clubs are thriving... Our National Office is financially self sufficient, our national officers are salaried staff and our elite paddlers are professionals. Waka Ama is a New Zealand Sport for all New Zealanders... Waka Ama Aotearoa New Zealand is used as a model for other NSO’s for our systems, technology, event management and structure, which epitomises integrity, excellence & Mana.”*

# Key Challenges for Waka Ama

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## Infrastructure

Perhaps, because of the rapid growth of our sport, our structure of governance and administration has grown organically. Keen, dedicated people have stepped into the breach without clear structures or rules to guide them. At times this has not been in the best interest of Waka Ama and has put our sport at risk. We need to move to separate the governance of our sport from the day-to-day management of it. This means establishing a national board that includes those with the best skills and knowledge to govern our sport, and managers who are clear about their responsibilities for administering the sport and who are accountable to the board for doing so. In addition we need to redefine the roles and capability of our regions and clubs to ensure that it is in alignment with this and ensure that communication between all levels is clear and transparent.

## Perception of Waka Ama as Māori and Pacific Island sport

One of the aspects that makes Waka Ama unique as a sport is its foundation in Māori and Pacific culture. This means that part of the experience of Waka Ama beyond just participating in a sport is a sense of belonging to a community and a heritage that is bigger than individual participants. For those that participate in the sport this is a key part of what they value. The challenge is that people outside the sport can perceive this uniqueness as a barrier to membership. There is a perception by the media and the public that because participants are predominantly Māori and Pacific Island this is a race based sport. This means while the sport can attract funding and sponsorship from supporters of Māori and Pacific Island development it misses out on broader support from mainstream organisations and the general public. The challenge is to retain and leverage the whakapapa (history) and tikanga (customs) that make the sport unique while ensuring Waka Ama is seen as a sport that is seen as accessible to all and inclusive.

## Relationships and Communication

Historically Waka Ama has not been as effective at building relationships with other organisations as it could have been. As a result we have missed opportunities to grow and develop our sport. To succeed we need to engage with and work with a wide range of organisations. Instead of waiting for them to come to us we need to be proactive about approaching others with suggestions of where we see the opportunities for working together including other sports and organisations responsible for health promotion.

## Participation Pathways

Currently no-one is making sure that participants at all levels (paddlers and non-paddlers) have the events, coaching, pathways and support they need to progress through our sport. We need to develop a transparent pathway modeled on the SPARC Sport and Recreation Pathway to ensure we capture people for a lifetime of participation. We also need to provide documentation outlining these pathways to new and current members so they can choose how to progress in Waka Ama in line with their needs. In particular we need to be proactive in building stronger relationships between schools and clubs so that we can crack the code on the sport-wide drop-out of young people who fail to make the transition from school to club sport.

# Key Challenges continued

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## Capitalising on our technological strengths

As the result of internal expertise we have access to leading edge technology and practices in event management. The challenge is to extend this advantage by exploring new means of using technology to communicate and engage with our members and potential members and positioning us to compete with other entertainment options. We also need to find appropriate ways to identify, protect and leverage out intellectual property for the benefit of the sport.

## Accessibility

Waka Ama as a sport is one which allows the participation of all ages, races and abilities. The low-cost of entry to our sport also makes it attractive to a range of participants. We need to highlight these strengths to those outside Waka Ama so they understand the opportunity for engaging as a family with a sport that promotes a healthy lifestyle and is fun for all ages. We also need to build on this strength internally by developing a culture of inclusiveness and encouraging whānau (extended family) from all ethnic backgrounds to participate in our sport including administration and competitions. In addition we need to ensure this inclusiveness extends to adaptive paddlers at both club level and in the opportunity to participate in both regional and national events.

## Water Safety

As a water based sport our primary duty of care is to ensure those who participate are safe on and in the water. The absence of documented policies and the implementation of these leaves us vulnerable. We must work closely with MSA to further develop the Waka Ama Safety Guidelines that were developed in 2000. We need to promote safe practice around paddling in all conditions and waterways, so Water Safety becomes second nature and all regions/clubs and paddlers actively practice these skills. We should be viewed as best practice water sport when it comes to Water Safety.

## International Leadership

The International Va'a Federation is the body which governs the sport internationally and decisions at this level impact on the development of Waka Ama in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Historically Ngā Kaihoe o Aotearoa has not taken a leadership role in shaping the development of the sport internationally, however, we are now well positioned to influence at this level and need to be vocal and contributing our expertise to ensure effective decision-making that benefits the sport world-wide.

# 1. Maintaining Cultural Identity



Strategic Outcome	Performance Measure	Strategic Initiatives
<p>To maintain and develop the cultural identity which makes our sport unique.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tikanga for Waka Ama agreed and documented.</li> <li>• Each Waka Ama member is familiar with and can outline the core principles of Waka Ama Tikanga</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Capture and record Tikanga for Waka Ama (e.g. cultural background, care of waka, events, meetings and conduct) and make it available to individual members and consider introducing a protocol for sharing Tikanga with new members.</li> <li>1.2 Include Tikanga in the development of the policies and procedures manual, see initiative 3.2.</li> <li>1.3 Celebrate examples of Tikanga in action by sharing stories on a special section of the website.</li> <li>1.4 Develop guidelines for the construction of waka/canoe that embraces the best of new technology but stays true to our Tikanga.</li> <li>1.5 Develop initiatives to work alongside iwi.</li> <li>1.6 Ensure that while respecting our Tikanga we honour our value of manaakitanga and welcome people of all ethnic backgrounds to participate in our sport.</li> </ol>



## 2. Leadership



Goal	Performance Measure	Strategic Initiatives
<p>To establish best practice governance and management at all levels of the sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment of a Board and CEO by 2011</li> <li>• Constitution is amended to reflect Strategic plan by end of 2009</li> <li>• Regional and club constitutions are aligned with the national constitution</li> <li>• One years operational costs in reserve</li> <li>• Stronger relationships with key stakeholders and a 20% increase in revenue at all levels</li> <li>• Clubs have the information and resources they need to effectively lobby on behalf of our sport with outside agencies.</li> </ul>	<p>2.1 Establish a national Board structure that reflects best practice in the sporting sector while maintaining cultural values and amend constitution to reflect this.</p> <p>2.2 Review the current national structure to ensure the optimal delivery model for our sport to align with our participation pathways.</p> <p>2.3 Redefine the roles of regions and clubs so they align with the national structure and ensure that roles and responsibilities as outlined in the constitutions are amended to ensure they are transparent, clear and consistent.</p> <p>2.4 Put in place a succession plan for key personnel to mitigate the risk of loss.</p> <p>2.5 Develop mechanisms for ensuring that communication between those at all levels of our sport is clear, helpful and regular.</p> <p>2.6 Lead the development of a realistic financial plan in line with this strategy that ensures the establishment of sustainable and secure funding base for our sport and support regions and clubs to access local funding.</p> <p>2.7 Develop a stakeholder management plan detailing who we need to build relationships with and what actions we will take to strengthen our relationships including those with SPARC, TPK, local authorities, Iwi, potential sponsors/supporters and related sporting and health promotion organisations.</p> <p>2.8 Develop a document and a process regional and local clubs can use to lobby local authorities for access to waterways and assistance with storage of waka.</p>

### 3. Capability



Goal	Performance Measure	Strategic Initiatives
<p>To build a sustainable world class organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A broad base of skilled governance, management and operational expertise exists to efficiently and effectively manage, develop and lead waka ama</li> <li>• Participants have a consistent standard of experience of our sport wherever they are in the country</li> <li>• Club membership increases by 15% over three years</li> <li>• Have an accurate picture of who our volunteers are and what they do and have a plan to retain those we have and recruit more</li> <li>• Water Safety policies are adhered to in all clubs as an integral part of Waka Ama culture</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Develop and manage to a robust operational plan to ensure the implementation of this strategy.</li> <li>3.2 Lead the development of a policies and procedures manual to govern how our business is conducted e.g. process for tendering, decision-making.</li> <li>3.3 Establish and maintain an online database of all Waka Ama resources e.g. health and safety plans, event manuals etc.</li> <li>3.4 Devise a technology plan that capitalises on our technological strengths, clarifies and leverages our IP.</li> <li>3.5 Develop a club-kit based on SPARC resources and other relevant tools outlining technical requirements, policies and procedures and protocol.</li> <li>3.6 Devise formal coaching qualifications and resources to support coaches and run workshops to up-skill coaches and officials.</li> <li>3.7 Undertake a survey to better understand the needs and aspirations of volunteers and develop a strategy for encouraging Whanau from all ethnic backgrounds to volunteer in administration and event management roles.</li> <li>3.8 Improve and integrate water safety awareness for all Waka Ama participants and supporters.</li> <li>3.9 Develop a strategy to cope with the growth of the sport and how this may change the way current events are run.</li> </ol>

# 4. Participation Pathways



Goal	Performance Measure	Strategic Initiatives
<p>To ensure all participants can easily understand and access the appropriate pathway for them to enjoy and progress through our sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of young participants (aged up to 19) by 5% per year</li> <li>• Retain our young participants so we increase the number of open age paddlers by 5% per year</li> <li>• A national coaching level standard is certified</li> <li>• 50 nationally qualified coaches by end of 2011</li> <li>• Adaptive paddling offered in all National racing/events from 2010</li> <li>• Elite management and talent development plans in place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 Create identifiable pathways for all participants, coaches and administrators within our sport detailing what is expected at each level, how to progress and who to contact.</li> <li>4.2 Work with schools to ensure a seamless pathway between schools and club activities and leverage access to equipment and expertise as a means for cementing these relationships.</li> <li>4.3 Develop and introduce grading standards for races and paddlers.</li> <li>4.4 Undertake research to understand the reasons for young people dropping out and provide a development programme for Rangatahi (youth) that addresses the needs of those in the sport and attracts prospective Rangatahi participants.</li> <li>4.5 Include adaptive paddling as a core component of all racing and events.</li> <li>4.6 Review and improve regatta rules for sprints and long distance events.</li> <li>4.7 Develop a Racing/Event Calendar that provides for best participation growth along our Pathways.</li> <li>4.8 Clarify the pathways for elite athletes and put in place plans to support this.</li> </ul>

# 5. Branding and Marketing



Goal	Performance Measure	Strategic Initiatives
<p>Capture Waka Ama's unique brand and systematically market it for the benefit of the sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Messages about Waka Ama are consistent</li> <li>• Brand recognition of Waka Ama inside and outside the sport increases</li> <li>• Robust marketing plan in place that ensures positive outcomes with all media.</li> </ul>	<p>5.1 Clarify what Waka Ama offer participants (our brand) capturing both its appeal and what makes it positively unique and agree key messages.</p> <p>5.2 Develop a marketing plan designed to increase public awareness and participation levels in Waka Ama and broaden the appeal of our sport to a wider audience.</p> <p>5.3 Produce a written Waka Ama story that tells the sports heritage, culture and values and make it readily available on and off line.</p> <p>5.4 Formalise agreement with Māori television and where possible use this to leverage innovation for the sport and mainstream media opportunities for significant races.</p> <p>5.5 Seek and engage relationships with all media opportunities, Television, Print, Radio.</p> <p>5.6 Align the naming of the national organisation and the sport to ensure clarity.</p> <p>5.7 Seek out and foster relationships with iconic New Zealand companies whose brand values are consistent with those of Waka Ama which benefit both organisations.</p>

# International Leadership



Goal	Performance Measure	Strategic Initiatives
<p>To provide support and expertise to promote and influence the development of Waka Ama internationally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Va'a Federation (IVF) increasingly look to us for input and expertise.</li> <li>• The IVF is developing Strategic Plan by 2011</li> </ul>	<p>6.1 Assist in the development of a clear and agreed direction for the increasing professionalism of the sport internationally including the development of appropriate international competitions.</p> <p>6.2 Work with other members of the International Va'a Federation to make an informed decisions about the inclusion of Va'a/ Waka Ama as an Olympic sport.</p> <p>6.3. Lead from the front in encouraging the IVF to develop a long term plan for the growth and development of the sport internationally</p> <p>6.4 Develop a regular communication to inform the sport in Aotearoa New Zealand about developments internationally.</p>

# Appendix One – PEST Analysis For Our Sport



## **Political – political priorities, proposed legislation**

- Sport is perceived as “race-based
- Inadequate funding and changes to funding rules e.g. pub charities,
- Increasing regulatory environment e.g. international competition regulations, maritime safety regulations, local body by-laws, liability and insurance
- Impact of changes in government to sport polices and resultant changes to SPARC direction and priorities
- Increasing influence of youth, Māori and Asian/Muslim on New Zealand politics
- International rules on adaptive competitors impacting on recognition as official sport
- Relationship with pressure groups not currently supportive of sport
- International Va’a Federation – direction, governance, growth and development
- Lack of understanding by Councils about the needs of our sport

## **Economic – wealth, work patterns**

- Brand value of Waka Ama is marketable but not being marketed
- Cost of custom-made equipment
- Geographical isolation and cost of travel
- Impact of global recession and drop in value of NZ\$
- Low entry cost to our sport makes it more attractive in a recession and opens it up to different socio-economic groups
- Changing taxation regulations on non-profit organisations
- Lack of funding, reduced number of funders and everyone competing for the same funding.
- Opportunity to create a range of products/services aimed at different markets and available year round
- Prize money attracts the paddlers to races to GFC is a factor in increasing/decreasing the prize pool
- Non-spectator driven sport

## **Social – lifestyle patterns, attitudes, demographics**

- Mainly Māori and Pacific Island participants contribute to image of sport as non-professional and “brown”
- Tikanga and kaupapa make it more than just a sport
- Other sports more popular/exciting as spectator sport
- Not seen as a mainstream sport and thus difficult to market to media
- Despite ageing population increasing number of younger Māori participating
- Impact of iwi economic change impact on Waka Ama
- Association of sport with positive health promotion messages
- Expectations too high of small group of volunteers
- Apathy regarding governance
- Difficulty retaining junior paddlers into senior divisions (burn-out competing pressures and obligations including from whānau)
- Participation versus competition mindset
- Different expectations of younger generations

## **Technological – communications, information, transport, entertainment, media**

- Bringing sport to a wider community through technology: real time graphics using GPS (innovation potential), live broadcasting on different media
- Exponential growth/development of IT – impacts and opportunities
- Competing with others sports for media coverage
- Exposure to international and domestic events through IT
- Competing for kids and adults attention with non-activity based entertainment e.g. Wii, Playstation
- Advancement in Waka design and materials e.g. wood, fibre glass
- Compromises in traditional practices versus use of technology
- Use of technology to create/alter environment e.g. wave generation
- Using technology to market services and connect with current ad new members
- Retaining control of new “IP” and resulting economic return

# Appendix Two – SWOT Analysis For Nga Kaihoe o Aotearoa



## **Strengths**

- Sport is affordable and accessible to a wide range of people – sizes, ages, abilities and adaptive paddlers; facilities participation of whānau
- Our cultural identity and tikanga makes us unique as a sport
- Waka Ama includes a range of disciplines: flat, ocean, regatta and seafaring
- Positive relationships with SPARC, TPK, local authorities, Māori TV, regional sports trusts and support from iwi and marae
- Passionate leadership and sound financial situation with low debt level
- Effective communication through website and potential for earning money from intellectual property
- Use of the natural environment means plenty of options
- International culture and language of paddling and opportunities for kids to experience the big wide world in a supportive environment
- High class event management experience
- Willingness and opportunities to grow and market the sport

## **Weaknesses**

- Lack of national infrastructure to direct regions, clubs and paddlers
- Perception as brown sport = non-professional, non-achievers
- Tikanga based compromises marketability
- Small core of people administering, participating - everything
- Lack of governance knowledge, experience and application
- Lack of plans, accountability and workforce
- Lack of documented history – info goes when people leave
- Singular focus on Waka Ama not all forms of waka
- Volunteers selected on availability rather than skills
- “Old school”, relaxed. laid back attitude – she’ll be right
- Weak relationships with other waka organisations
- Finances – lack of funding and existing debt
- Not a strong enough base of non-paddlers to volunteer
- Lack of competition coordination/structure

## **Opportunities**

- Promote sport with urban Māori to reconnect whanau/ethnic groups
- Team building events to corporates as revenue generator
- Collaboration with SPARC, regional bodies, NSOs, universities etc
- More than just a sport can integrate into Tikanga Māori practices
- Brand Waka Ama - relationship with “Huffer” & other iconic NZ brands & international stars e.g. Ben Harper and moko
- Use technology to transmit races as a marketing tool
- Utilize existing web-based system for marketing to corporates
- Iwi funding, development and influence
- Use Waka Ama as a tool for addressing social issues e.g. crime
- Catering for adaptive paddlers
- USP – intergenerational and skills are transitional
- Including Waka Ama in education curriculum
- Utilizing unique knowledge base of participants e.g. Te Reo resources

## **Threats**

- “burn-out” of existing leaders and volunteers
- Ourselves- “wakatics” – power between regions, info gate-keeping
- Lack of infrastructure
- IVF the possible cost of making participation in the Olympics a goal
- Becoming “just another sport” and being purged of Tikanga
- Loss of identity – forced alliance
- Financial supporters dictating direction of Waka Ama
- Global increase in litigation and the need for liability insurance
- Change of government and subsequent changes in direction of SPARC
- Increasing cost of hardware – waka
- Increase in sedentary pastimes e.g. Wii and Playstation and competition from other sports
- Mindset/perception internally and externally of Waka Ama as a social sport rather than competitive