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“I forget I have a disability”:

Understanding young peoples’ experiences in disability
sport and active recreation in Aotearoa New Zealand.

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy in Health, Sport and Human Performance
at
The University of Waikato
by
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THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2023

It was an amazing feeling learning something that I can do
and be good at. Ella

Abstract

In Aotearoa NZ, although 1 in 4 people identify as disabled, participation rates of young people with impairments (YPwI) in sport and active recreation is lower than their non-disabled peers. Over the last 85 years, the Aotearoa NZ Government has been aware of this disparity and has attempted through policy intervention to increase participation. However, the Aotearoa NZ sport system is inherently ableist and these policies have been ineffectual. Fortunately, opportunities for YPwI to participate in sport and active recreation do exist especially at the local club level.

Drawing on the social relational model of disability, I give agency to the voices of four YPwI, their parents and coaches/leaders. Through their lived experiences in sport and active recreation, these participants present unique narratives on how participating with non-disabled young people have shaped the YPwI's experiences. From their experiences, I sought to understand how sport organisations can improve opportunities for YPwI's participation within a sport system dominated by ableism and where discrimination through disablism goes unchallenged.

The sport system, as a reflection of society, has a responsibility to address the inherent ableism endemic within sport and active recreation and reposition disability as a priority. Building on previous research focused on personal and societal barriers and constraints to participation, I challenge the dominance of activity adaptation and modification as a means for systemic change. To achieve an anti-ableist sport system, what is needed is more fundamental – an improved understanding of disability, flexibility around prescriptive ableist standards and rules, and increased accessibility to opportunities where YPwI can exhibit their capabilities. Integral to providing quality opportunities for YPwI, change in how the sport system considers and represents YPwI, from policy through to practice. I caution organisations to avoid enlightened ableism – where what is said and what is done are misaligned.

I present an anti-ableist framework, co-created with the YPwI, as a way of improving disability sport provision in Aotearoa NZ that enables the social relational model to be actualised within a sport and active recreation context. The framework presented encapsulates three levels – individual, organisation and system – premised on enhancing the knowledge and understanding of disability, creating more flexibility around what participation means to YPwI

and how deliverers of sport and active recreation, regardless of size or capacity, can work individually and/or collaboratively to provide more opportunities for YPwl.

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Definitions

The following definitions are used throughout this research. Some of these definitions will be consistent with international convention, while others may be New Zealand-specific or research-specific. While there may be debate about whether these definitions are accurate, they provide a defined context for the following work.

Definitions


| | |
|--|---|
| Active Recreation | <p>An activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team participate. It includes unstructured, spontaneous and ad hoc activities, which are not bound by predefined rules and guidelines, e.g., Scouts.</p> <p>Does not include passive activities such as e-gaming, or physical activity associated with rehabilitation and therapy, active transport and commuting, shopping, or socialising.</p> |
| Disability Sport | <p>Disability sport refers to any sport, whether impairment-specific, Para sport or adapted versions of mainstream sport that is provided specifically for disabled people.</p> |
| Disabled (Young) Person | <p>Consistent with the social model of disability, a disabled person is a person with an impairment – physical, intellectual, mental or sensory – who identifies as disabled.</p> <p>For the purposes of my research the term disabled person/young person will be used to describe those who are not actively participating in sport and active recreation or who whom participation is difficult due to the influence of ableism in the provision of sport and recreation opportunities. Disabled young people is used in contrast to YPwI (see definition below).</p> |
| International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) | <p>The ICF is a classification of health and health-related domains. ICF is the World Health Organisation (WHO) framework for measuring health and disability at both individual and population levels.</p> <p>https://www.who.int/standards/classifications/international-classification-of-functioning-disability-and-health</p> |
| International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) | <p>The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP). The theme of IYDP was “full participation and equality” of disabled people.</p> <p>https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/the-international-year-of-disabled-persons-1981.html</p> |
| Pākehā | <p>In Te Reo Māori, Pākehā refers to New Zealanders of European descent.</p> |

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| Para sport | Para sport refers to the Paralympic sports that are sanctioned by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and are on the Paralympic Games programme. Currently 28 sports have been designated Para sports. For more information see https://www.paralympic.org/sports . |
| Physical Impairment | Adapted from the UNCRP Article One, a physical impairment relates to any long-term or permanent condition that affects a person's mobility and agility to the extent that it hinders their full participation in society. It includes both congenital and acquired conditions. Examples include cerebral palsy, paraplegia, tetraplegia, spina bifida, and vision impairment. |
| Regional disability sport organisations (RDSO) | <p>A regional disability sport organisations provides dedicated programmes and services disabled people in their area. Historically called Parafeds, RDSOs are now know by various names and not all are affiliated to Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ).</p> <p>See the Organisations list for definitions of these organisations and sport organisations.</p> |
| Sport | An activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others. Structured and bound by predefined rules and guidelines for either competitive or participative motivations and reasons. |
| Sport and active recreation organisations (sport organisations) | <p>A collective term used to encompass all organisations at local/community, regional and national levels including – clubs, regional sports organisations (RSO), national sports organisations (NSO), regional sports trusts (RST), and territorial local authorities (TLA) that provide mainstream (i.e., non-disabled) sport or active recreation programmes.</p> <p>See the Organisations list for definitions of these organisations and disability sport organisations.</p> |
| Tamariki and Rangatahi | Sport NZ age groupings for children and youth in te Reo Māori Tamariki - 5 – 11-year-olds. Rangatahi - 12 – 18-year-olds |
| United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) | The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities came into force in May 2008. The convention changed the narrative of viewing disabled people as 'objects' of charity, medical treatment and social protection to persons with rights who can and should make free and informed decisions. |
| Young People with Impairments (YPwl) | I will use the term YPwl rather than disabled young people to align with the social relational model of disability. These YPwl are actively participating in sport and active recreation and reflects the extent to which the barriers and constraints of opportunities in sport and active recreation are minimised, as compared to their engagement in everyday/community life and spaces. While within this context they are not 'disabled', I acknowledge the effects of disablism may also be psycho-emotional such as emotional, motivation and confidence, while external barriers within sport and active recreation may have been removed, these other effects may remain. |

Organisations

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| Advisory Committee on Recreation for the Disabled (ACORD) | ACORD, a committee of representatives from within the sector created to advise on matters relating to disability sport, replacing ad hoc decisions by the Ministry for Recreation and Sport on disability sport issues (1979-1987). |
| AUSTSWIM | AUSTSWIM is Australia's national organisation for the teaching of swimming and water safety. AUSTSWIM has developed quality aquatic education programmes for those wishing to enter the aquatic industry as teachers of swimming and water safety. https://austswim.com.au |
| CCS Disability Action (previously Crippled Children's Society) | Founded in 1935. Provided a range of services including vocational training, family support, orthopaedic clinics, residential facilities, recreation opportunities and the total mobility scheme. www.ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz |
| dsport | Founded in 1969, dsport (previously known as Parafed Wellington) is a charity providing sport and active recreation opportunities. Its vision is for Wellington to be a diverse and inclusive region. dsport is underpinned by the principles of inspire, enable, achieve. www.dsport.nz |
| Halberg Foundation (formerly Halberg Trust) | The Foundation is a charitable organisation founded in 1963 by Olympic legend, Sir Murray Halberg on the belief that all people, regardless of their ability, should have equal opportunity to enhance their lives through sport and recreation. Originally called the Murray Halberg Trust for Crippled Children, the trust later became known as the Halberg Trust (1993-2012), Halberg Disability Sports Foundation (2012-2019), and Halberg Foundation (2019-current). www.halberg.co.nz |
| Hillary Commission | The Government agency charged with promoting, encouraging, and supporting physical recreation and sport in New Zealand between 1987-2001. The Hillary Commission was established under the Sport, Fitness and Leisure Act 1987 and replaced the Council for Recreation and Sport (1973-1989) and was subsequently succeeded by SPARC (2002-2012) and Sport NZ (2012-). |
| International Paralympic Committee (IPC) | Founded in 1989 as an international non-profit organisation, the IPC is an athlete-centred organisation with 200 plus members. The IPC's responsibilities include the development of Para sport and the organisation of the Paralympic Games. The IPC is also an advocate social inclusion and acts as the international federation for 10 Para sports. www.paralympic.org |
| National Recreation Organisation (NRO) | NRO is the national membership-based organisation representing a recreational activity or group of activities within New Zealand, for example Scouts NZ. Some may be affiliated and aligned to international bodies. Recognised by Sport NZ. https://sportnz.org.nz/find-a-sport-or-recreation-activity/ |

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| National Sports Organisation (NSO) | NSO are recognised by Sport NZ as the national membership-based organisations representing a sport within New Zealand, such as Snowsports NZ. Most NSOs are affiliated to an international sports federation (IF). |
| Ministry and NZ Council for Recreation and Sport | The Government agencies charged with promoting, encouraging, and supporting physical recreation and sport in New Zealand. The Ministry and Council were established under the Recreation and Sport Act 1973. These were superseded by the Hillary Commission (1987-2001), SPARC (2002-2012) and Sport NZ (2012-current). |
| Parafeds | Regionally based sport and recreation organisations established to provide opportunities specifically for physically disabled people. Seventeen of these organisations were founded between 1966 and 2010. Eleven remain operational in Northland, Auckland (now named Disability Sport Auckland), Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, Taranaki, Manawatu, Wellington (now called dsport), Canterbury, Otago and Southland and are members of Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ). www.parafednetwork.co.nz |
| Paraloan | Paraloan is the trading name of the New Zealand Paraplegic and Physically Disabled Foundation. The foundation was established in 1974 to manage the funds raised from a nationwide appeal to help New Zealanders with physical disabilities. Parafeds were the founding organisations. www.paraloan.org.nz |
| Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ) | PNZ is the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) for New Zealand. PNZ is a registered charity, and its vision is “ <i>Through Para sport, lives will be transformed</i> ”. As a member of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), PNZ is part of a worldwide social change movement which uses the power of sport to positively influence community perceptions of disabled people and to promote a more diverse and inclusive society. PNZ was formed in 1968 and originally called the New Zealand Paraplegic and Physically Disabled Federation, then became Parafed New Zealand during the 1990s. www.paralympics.org.nz |
| Regional Sports Organisation (RSO) | An RSO is a regional membership-based organisation representing a sport within a New Zealand region. Regions are self-defined by sports but often align with TLA areas. Usually affiliated a corresponding NSO. |
| Regional Sports Trust (RST) | RSTs are independent, not-for-profit organisations charged with increasing regional levels of physical activity and strengthening regional sport and physical recreation infrastructures. Established in the early 1990s, Sport NZ currently recognises 18 RSTs. https://sportnz.org.nz/find-a-sport-or-recreation-activity/ |
| Rehabilitation International NZ (RINZ) | RINZ (1979 – c. early-1980s) affiliated to Rehabilitation International (RI Global) was established as a standing committee of the Rehabilitation League. RINZ represented 38 organisations and assumed responsibility for promoting rehabilitation programmes and was charged with coordinating the Aotearoa NZ International Year of Disabled Persons Bolt and Heggie (1982, p. 3). |

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| Rehabilitation League | Originally the Soldiers Civil Re-establishment League (1931-1939), Disabled Servicemen's Re-establishment League (1939-1974), the Rehabilitation League NZ (1974-1990) is now known as Workbridge (1990-). Initially involved in the training and re-training of disabled returned servicemen and latterly a dedicated employment service for disabled people. https://workbridge.co.nz |
| Rehabilitation International (RI Global) | A worldwide organization comprised of people with disabilities, service providers, government agencies, academics, researchers and advocates working to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities. RI created the original International Symbol of Access  in 1969. It is said to be one of the five most recognized signs in the world today. |
| Rotary | Rotary is a global network of service-minded community volunteers who work towards improving the lives of those in the community through leadership, goodwill and fellowship. https://www.rotary.org |
| SPARC | The Government agency charged with promoting, encouraging, and supporting physical recreation and sport in New Zealand. SPARC was established in 2002 under the Sport and Recreation New Zealand Act 2002 until rebranded Sport NZ in 2012. The antecedent organisations were the Hillary Commission (1987-2001), and the Council for Recreation and Sport (1973-1987). |
| Sport and Recreation New Zealand (Sport NZ) | The Government agency charged with promoting, encouraging, and supporting physical recreation and sport in New Zealand. Sport NZ was established in 2012 and remains the Government agency for sport. Antecedent organisations are SPARC (2001-2012), Hillary Commission (1987-2001), and Council for Recreation and Sport (1973-1987). www.sportnz.org.nz |
| Territorial Local Authority (TLA) | A territorial authority is defined under the Local Government Act 2002 as a city council or district council. There are 67 territorial authorities consisting of 12 city councils, 53 districts, Auckland Council, and Chatham Islands Council. www.lgnz.co.nz/local-government-in-nz/new-zealands-councils/ |

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Thanks to Alan and the dsport board who recognised that my decision to study was not only important to me but also to those young people with impairments (current and future members) who will be able to choose to engage in a wider range of sport and active recreation, which enabled me to juggle work and research commitments. To my colleagues on the Paralympics New Zealand board, your interest in my work and the discussions we have had. I am gratefully appreciative of your support.

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Catriona McBean

Chapter 1 Introduction

Positioning myself with disability

The degree of researcher's personal familiarity with the experience of participants potentially impacts all phases of the research process, including recruitment of participants, collecting data via interviews and/or observations, analyzing and making meaning of the data, and drawing conclusions. (Berger, 2015, p. 11)

Reflexivity, the recognition and acknowledgement of what Berger refers to above, can enhance the quality of research. A researcher who is an 'insider' has the opportunity to understand the information gained through their research differently from those without this 'insider' knowledge. However, attention is needed to ensure the researcher's position does not dominate those being researched. Stone and Priestley (1996) and Townsend and Cushion (2020) similarly caution non-disabled researchers to be cognisant of their position, particularly when the researcher's position results in the continued oppression and disempowerment of disabled people.

My experiences come as a person who has had close personal and professional experiences with those who do live with impairments and experience disability. As such, when I commenced my research, I was challenged to consider at an academic level how I fitted in. I am not disabled, nor was I a young person with an impairment. Unbeknown to me as a child, my father could have chosen to identify as disabled, but he did not. Injuries sustained during WWII while a navigator in RAF Bomber Command left him wearing a caliper (now referred to as an ankle foot orthosis or AFO) and walking with a stick. His aspirations to represent NZ, wearing the silver fern, as a runner ceased. For my father, reparative surgery decades later enabled him to pursue his other passion for the mountains. For him, trekking in the Himalaya was a lifelong dream which he was able to continue into his early 80s. Always active, my father did not let this injury define who he was. My Dad taught me several life lessons – strength through adversity, perseverance, and never giving up on your dream.

My university years were formative to my interest in Para sport. My friend's sister, a Paralympian, represented NZ in Para alpine skiing at the Innsbruck 1988 Winter Paralympic Games. I recall my friend talking about his sister's skiing exploits and as someone who could not ski myself, but loved the mountains, I was captivated by these stories. Our paths have crossed over the years, both personally and professionally, and when they do, we take the

opportunity to share our stories of the power of Para sport. A friend of Dad's was also actively involved in Para sport as an athlete, coach and manager. He has a wealth of experience in Para sport and today I am fortunate to consider him a colleague and friend I can call upon for his insight, advice and guidance.

Professionally, my involvement with disability sport can be traced back to the early 2000s. As Executive Director¹ of Swimming New Zealand, I was instrumental in the development of a swim teaching qualification, *Teaching Swimmers with a Disability* and the inaugural integration of Para swimming into Swimming NZ Division 2 competitions. Cameron Leslie (Paralympian #164, World Champion and Wheel Black) and current Swimming NZ Disability and Para Swimming Participation Manager first competed nationally at this inaugural Division 2 competition. Both initiatives were not immediately or widely accepted in the swimming community despite Aotearoa NZ Para swimmers successfully performing on the international stage. For example, my colleague Duane Kale (Paralympian #96) won six medals (4 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze) at the Atlanta 1996 Paralympic Games. At this time Para swimming was not identified as an integral part of Swimming NZ's mandate, in fact many high-performance coaches were quite vocal against Para swimming. The international swimming federation World Aquatics did not, and still does not, oversee Para swimming, which remains under the umbrella of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). As a member of World Aquatics, Swimming NZ saw no natural alignment with Para swimmers, although many were training in swim clubs alongside non-disabled swimmers. Nationally, Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ) oversaw Para swimming – securing funding, appointing coaches, and selecting athletes and teams. This experience in swimming not only shaped my interest in Para sport but was also the catalyst for my continued involvement in the wider sector of disability sport.

In 2012 I was approached to manage dsport. dsport is a regional disability sport organisation based in Wellington that provides sport and active recreation opportunities for people with physical impairments. At dsport the principles that underpin everything are: inspire, enable, achieve.

We inspire people with physical impairments to believe in themselves.
We inspire them to aspire to being involved in sport and active recreation. We inspire them to dream.

We enable people with physical impairments to get into sport and active recreation. We don't believe in can't. We believe in how we can.

1 The title Executive Director has subsequently renamed Chief Executive.

How can we make this fun? How can we make this work? We persevere and we build strength collectively.

But more importantly, our members achieve. They overcome adversity. They find workarounds and creative solutions to achieve. And for some, they will achieve their dreams. (dsport, 2018)

These principles, developed as a reflection of conversations with members, articulate their aspirations and the advocacy work done to improve sport and active recreation opportunities for disabled members of the community. Each day at work, I strive to honour these principles.

Through my work with dsport I was elected to the PNZ board in 2014 and continue in this role today. This involvement in Para sport has opened doors and other opportunities for me to expand my understanding of disability and sport, including: training as an Agitos Foundation Educator for the International Paralympic Committee (IPC); working with the Kiribati National Paralympic Committee to gain membership to the IPC and establishing a pathway for their Para sport athletes; volunteering at the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Paralympic Games; and recently attending the Beijing 2022 Winter Paralympic Games as the New Zealand President. Furthermore, in late 2021 Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ) formerly transitioned high performance Para swimming to Swimming NZ. Two decades on from my involvement, when swimmers were disabled by the dominance of ableism within the sport, Swimming NZ has not only created two dedicated roles addressing inclusion but now has a clear statement around where Para swimming is now positioned within the organisation.

It is from this background, these experiences and opportunities that I present this research. Through reflexivity, I reconciled that I was a researcher, 'insider' and a partner (see Stone & Priestley, 1996). As an 'insider' in the sport sector in Aotearoa NZ, I used my knowledge and understanding from working in disability sport for nearly two decades, experiencing and navigating the challenges of an ableist system to better understand the issues surrounding disability sport provision. I have observed disabled young people missing out and I have also seen some fully engaged in sport and active recreation. As an advocate and partner, I question and challenge policy and decision-makers on their ableist assumptions, critiquing how disability sport and disabled people are positioned and situated within policy. But during this research, there is an ongoing battle to balance my position between me as the researcher and me as the practitioner. I acknowledge my lived experiences have influenced my research and while they provided valuable insight, but I was always conscious of ensuring the balance of my voice and that of my research participants.

Detractors may argue that being an 'insider' has constrained my critical thinking and limited the knowledge generated from this research. There is validity in questioning the 'insider' position; do the benefits of the 'insider' perspective outweigh any limitations the research presents? For me, being aware of my positioning within the research was acknowledged from the beginning. There is no doubt, reflecting what Berger (2015) identified above, my research process was influenced by my lived experiences: the research question came from my frustrations from working as a practitioner in disability sport; the need to investigate lived experiences directed the information collection and the analysis of the guided conversations and documents; and the research findings were framed to provide more practical guidance for those delivering disability sport opportunities in Aotearoa NZ. To this end, my research focused on what contributes to the positive engagement of YPwI in sport and active recreation in Aotearoa NZ, reflective of my experiences in disability sport over the last decade.

The engagement of young people with physical impairments (YPwI²) in sport and active recreation, their voices and stories, as well as the policies, initiatives and programmes provided the foundation for my research and recommendations. In addition, my practical background has juxtaposed this theoretical background, enhancing my knowledge and understanding of the models of disability and the concepts of ableism and disablism, and giving name to what I see and do day-to day. I bring to the attention of the reader my research has focused on physical disability and impairments, not all impairments. My decision to limit my research to physical disability was deliberate; disability is not homogenous and the impairments of those within disability community are extensive, and too wide to cover within this research.

My research not only relates to my personal interests and professional experiences in disability sport but also is the best way to reflect the dominance of ableism in sport and recreation. Despite enlightened rhetoric and renewed focus on disability, research continues to suggest that in Aotearoa NZ, as elsewhere, ableism impacts greatly the opportunities for disabled people with physical impairments to participate in sport and active recreation. My motivation for this work is embedded in my experience as a practitioner working day-to-day with disabled young people and YPwI, navigating frequent policy changes, limited resources and support and a desire to see change. This has led me to seeking answers from those that matter the

² I will use the term YPwI rather than disabled young people to align with the social relational model of disability. YPwI are actively engaged in sport and active recreation. YPwI are actively and successfully engaged in sport and active recreation and therefore within this context they are not 'disabled'. In contrast, I will use the term 'disabled person' or 'disabled young person' to describe those who are not actively engaged in sport and active recreation.

most in this, the young people. First, though it is necessary to 'look back to look forward' and provide some context for this work. It is to this that my attention now turns.

Disability sport – a problematic issue in Aotearoa New Zealand

Disability – in its myriad forms and understandings – has been a focal point of government policy in Aotearoa NZ for over 85 years. In November 1937 in the New Zealand Parliamentary Chamber, the Minister for Internal Affairs the Hon Mr William Parry, presented the Physical Welfare and Recreation Bill³ stating “physical fitness gives confidence to the individual; its absence weakens the moral fibre of the nation” (Parry, 1937, p. 415). His speech extolled the merits of science, surgery and medicine. He paid tribute to organisations that “have played a large part in the physical development of our people” (Parry, 1937, p. 416). The Bill provided the machinery for promoting physical education and training, sport and recreation, and making the Dominion of NZ (as it was known at the time) and its citizenship better, because “the most precious jewel in life is good health and physical fitness” (Parry, 1937, p. 415). During the Bill’s second reading, Mr Cotterill MP for Wanganui, tabled the Auckland Primary Schools Sports Association *General Benefit of Organised Games* report. This report identified the benefits of participation as physical, social and moral, leading to better physically functioning children and social unity. More concerning, the report also highlighted that some school children were prohibited from participating in organised games, including the 3 per cent suffering physical disabilities [who] would be shown how to participate safely in some form of game activity. (Cotterill, 1937, p. 525). The 1930s discourse framed disability as an individual issue, something that could be fixed through physical fitness and education. This discourse dominated Government policy for next 50 years.

In contrast, in 2019 when the Minister of Sport, the Hon Grant Robertson, announced the Government’s intent “to improve the wellbeing of disabled New Zealanders by addressing inequities in play active recreation and sport” (Robertson & Sepuloni, 2019), he acknowledged this was essential for building a truly inclusive society. Not only had the Government recognised the need to establish equity for disabled people to participate in sport and active recreation, but also supported this initiative with financial support. A \$7 million commitment through investment into national and regional disability sports organisations along with a contestable fund, was provided for an initial 3-year period. This commitment, albeit long

³ Independent MP Colonel Hargest challenged Parry on the resemblance of this Bill to the British Physical Training and Recreation Act passed five months earlier. While no acknowledgement of the influence of the British Act was made by Parry, it cannot be presumed this was not so.

overdue, recognised the importance of supporting the vast network of sport organisations to lead the changes in the provision of disability sport opportunities, particularly for disabled young people.

I open my thesis with these ‘bookend’ political positions, as it is important to understand that after more than 85 years, the nature of disability sport provision and participation remains contested, and in many ways, somewhat static in Aotearoa New Zealand (Aotearoa NZ). Importantly, this situation continues to impact on the opportunities available for disabled young people. It is essential to understand why this happened and how it can be avoided in the future. Furthermore, for the rhetoric of inclusive policy to truly make sport and active recreation accessible, there is a need to consider the voices of YPwL.

Significance of the topic

In Aotearoa NZ our most recent statistics suggest that 1 in 4 people identify as disabled (Statistics NZ, 2013). In 2013, this represented 95,000 young people (0-14 years) and is now estimated to have grown to around 143,000 (0 – 20 years) (Murray, 2019), accounting for 11 percent of the population in this age group. In recent years, the importance of recognising and acknowledging disabled people in all facets of society has increased for Government. Internationally, Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) explicitly requires governments to take appropriate measures to encourage and promote disability-specific sport. As a signatory of the convention, the Government of Aotearoa NZ is obliged to provide such opportunities and must be held accountable for our country’s performance in this area. When Sport NZ presented the *Disability Plan* in 2019, Peter Miskimmin, CE of Sport NZ, stated “we want a system that is equitable and where disabled people can be as active as non-disabled people” (Sport New Zealand, 2019b, p. 1). Improving engagement by disabled people in sport and active recreation is important because “sport and active recreation creates a happier, healthier people, better connected communities and a stronger New Zealand” (Sport New Zealand, 2018d, p. 2).

The latest Sport NZ strategic direction, *Every Body Active* (Sport New Zealand, 2019c), using survey data from the 2017 *Active NZ* survey (Sport New Zealand, 2017), noted that disabled people have lower participation rates in sport and active recreation than non-disabled. Participation rates included physical activity, sport, physical education (PE), exercise and activities for fun (see Figure 1). The participation rates for disabled and non-disabled people

pre and post school-age periods showed that despite the policy rhetoric of the last forty years, opportunities for disabled people remain limited.

As illustrated in Figure 1, during the school years participation rates are relatively similar. Forty seven percent of participation by all young people was in school. However, participation in organised sport and active recreation participation, outside of school, was lower for disabled young people (77%) as compared to non-disabled (82%). More disabled young people participated only in informal activities (16%) as compared to non-disabled (14%). Like its predecessors, Sport NZ has identified disabled people as a priority group for policy under the *Every Body Active* strategy and *Disability Plan*.

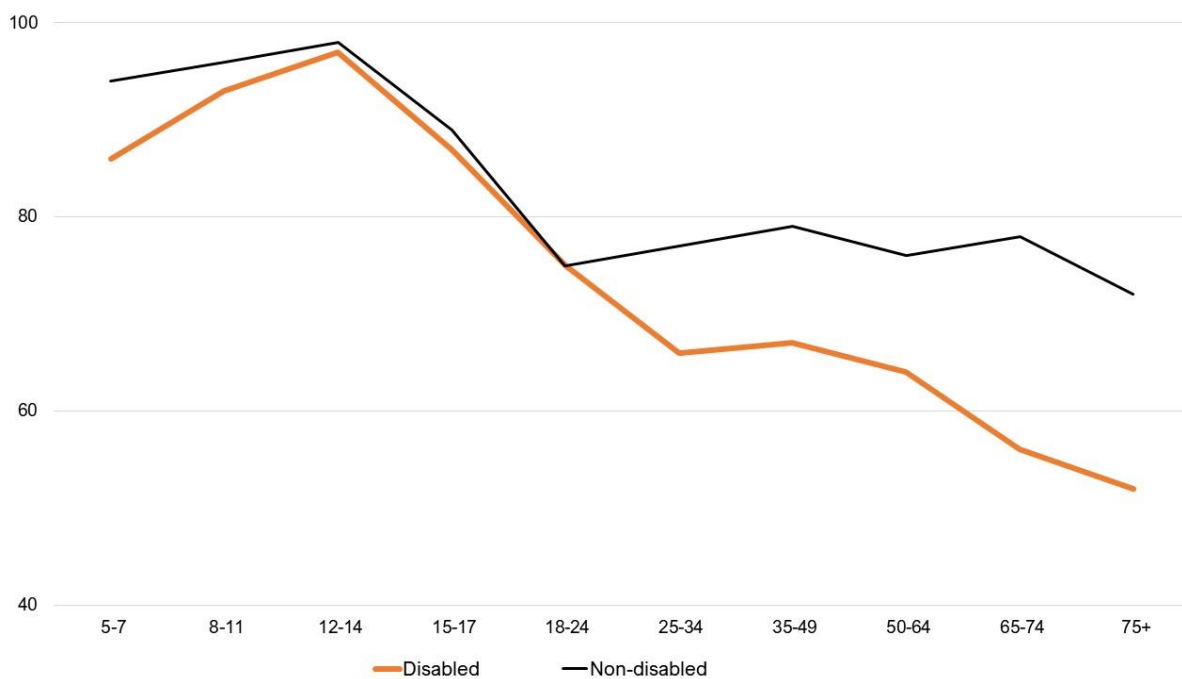


Figure 1 Sport and active recreation participation rates by age

Reprinted with permission (Sport New Zealand, 2019b)

While results from the latest 2021 *Active NZ* survey (Sport New Zealand, 2021a) indicate the gap in participation between disabled and non-disabled young people has narrowed, this data should be used with caution and not attributed to the success of these policy initiatives. This survey was undertaken during the second year of Covid-19 disruptions when Aotearoa NZ was placed into a variety of lockdowns and most organised sport was cancelled. The gap

closure may therefore be more representative of non-disabled young people's lack of opportunities, than of improved opportunities for disabled young people. More concerning, however, is the fact that the number of disabled young people not participating in any form of physical activity has more than doubled since the 2017 survey. This increase in non-participation can partly be explained by the impact of Covid, but there is also the underlying issue of a lack of opportunities for disabled young people, which needs to be addressed urgently.

From my experiences working in disability sport, there is little evidence to suggest the numerous policy changes have affected practice, enhanced the provision of opportunities, or increased disabled peoples' sport and active recreation participation rates. While successive Governments recognise that better and stronger communities are enhanced through sport and recreation participation, the facilitators (and/or barriers) of/to participation in the disability sport sector are multiple. Historically described as complex (Cockburn & Atkinson, 2018a; Gourley & Dwyer, 2005; McEwen, 2008; McKinley Douglas Limited, 1998), the availability of resources (both financial and people), facilities, equipment and access (Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 1991; SPARC, 2005), when overlaid with the needs of disabled participants, is seen as challenging for organisations. However, disability sport is being delivered in the community (see Figure 2). Figure 2 presents a simplified overview of the disability sport sector in Aotearoa NZ. Possibly unique to Aotearoa NZ, regional disability sport organisations are the mainstay of disability sport, with a long and proud tradition of delivering both Para sport and generic disability sport opportunities. In addition, national and local sports organisations deliver sport-specific opportunities for disabled people.

National federations (such as Paralympics New Zealand), national sports (e.g., Athletics New Zealand), disability sport organisations (e.g., New Zealand Wheelchair Rugby), regional disability sport organisations (e.g., dsport), local clubs are delivering a range of opportunities. Annual events provide both dedicated (e.g., Halberg Games⁴) and inclusive opportunities for disabled young people (e.g., Weet-bix TRYathlon and AIMS Games) are also expanding the range of choices now available. In addition, organisations such as the Halberg Foundation and Recreation Aotearoa support the sector through training and advocacy. These organisations, providing opportunities for non-competitive and competitive participation, enable disabled young people to participate for fun and enjoyment or aim towards international representation

⁴ The Halberg Games is a 3-day sports event including competition and participation 'have-a-go' opportunities, open to 8–21-year-olds with a physical or visual impairment.

as a Paralympian. Opportunities for participation vary depending on organisational capability, and the resulting inequities, evident in the Aotearoa NZ sport system need improving.

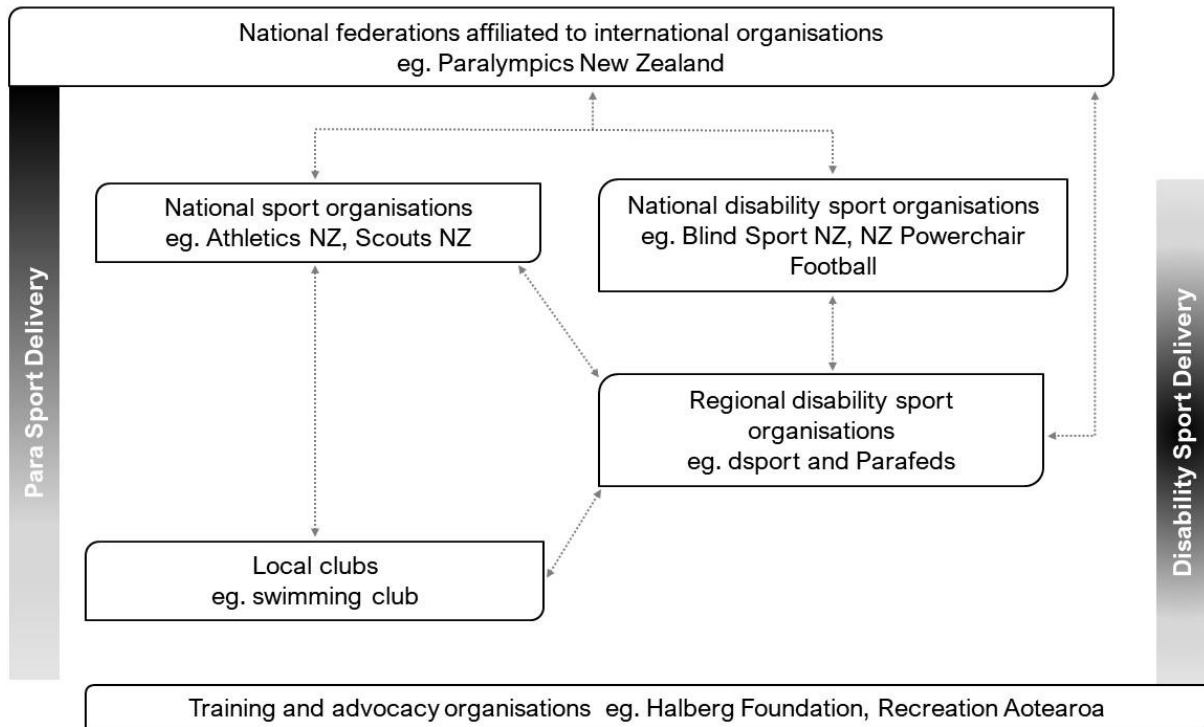


Figure 2 Aotearoa NZ Para and disability sport deliverers

Research purpose

The purpose of my research was to understand how the provision of disability sport by sport and recreation organisations influences the participation of YPwl. Currently, there is little research evidence nationally or internationally which identifies the factors that contribute to successful engagement and participation (Jeanes et al., 2018; Wicker & Breuer, 2014). While research on the barriers and constraints to participation is extensive, a gap in the research on organisations involving disabled young people acted as a catalyst for my research (see Darcy, Ollerton, & Faulkner, 2020). By identifying factors and practices and using illustrative case studies of what enables successful participation, my research adds to the knowledge and understanding of disability sport in both the academic and practitioner realms. In addition, my findings and recommendations will assist in the development of future Government initiatives, supporting a move from a sport system which provides few opportunities for disabled people, to a true ‘sport for all’ system.

In Aotearoa NZ, the population of disabled young people represents a diverse group with physical, intellectual, neurodevelopmental, and sensory impairments. As such opportunities for participation in sport and active recreation is based on a person's impairment and their level of support needs (Darcy, Lock, & Taylor, 2017), with barriers described as physical, logistical and psychological (Kung & Taylor, 2014). Refining this population from all impairments to physical and sensory impairments only, has been identified as important to provide meaningful insight into sport and active recreation provision. Physical impairments account for 14 percent of all disabilities in Aotearoa NZ and sensory 11 percent (Statistics NZ, 2013). A person with a physical impairment is likely to face additional constraints to participation due to multiple and sometimes complex barriers such as specialist equipment requirements (e.g., sports wheelchairs), transport and sport support requirements (such as ramp assistants for boccia players or tappers for swimmers with vision impairments). Furthermore, although the total population who identify as disabled is 24%, limiting my research to under-15 age group aligns with the current Sport NZ focus to promote a clear participation pathway for disabled young people and enabled conversations around participation in structured sport and active recreation outside of the education setting. Sport NZ recognise the importance of introducing sport and active recreation into the lives of young people early (Sport New Zealand, 2019c). Tamariki⁵ (5-11 years) and rangatahi (12-18 years) are a priority. For Sport NZ increasing opportunities for young people is not only important to get them active, as participation levels in these age groups are declining (see Figure 1), but also it creates a greater chance of staying physically active throughout a lifetime (Sport New Zealand, 2019c).

While focusing on Government and policy, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that participation in sport and active recreation is personal. In focusing directly on the factors required to facilitate participation, critical insight will be generated from those actively engaged in disability sport in Aotearoa NZ. From listening to the voices of YPwI actively participating in sport and active recreation I aimed to glean greater understanding of what sport and recreation participation means to them. According to the young people involved in my research, it is about their love of being active, being able to give their 100%, and being treated the same as others that drives their participation. These insights provide valuable contribution not only for the future of disability sport and active recreation in Aotearoa New Zealand but also how we as a nation can achieve sport for all (see Fitzgerald, 2018). Through my research, I aim to

⁵ In the recent Sport NZ Strategic Plan, tamariki and rangatahi are specifically defined in the age ranges listed and identified as a key target group for improving sport participation.

increase the number of disabled young people engaged in sport and active recreation in the future and help to make their experiences positive and rewarding. To achieve this aim, my research seeks to identify the factors that contribute to the successful participation of YPwl in sport and active recreation. By hearing from the YPwl themselves, centralising their voices, and understanding participation and quality experiences from their perspective, sport organisations will be better placed to deliver improved opportunities for disability sport and active recreation in Aotearoa NZ.

Young people with impairments (YPwl)

Throughout my research I will be using the term young people with impairment (YPwl). I use YPwl to differentiate between those young people actively engaged and participating in sport and active recreation from those who are not and aligns closely with the social relational model of disability (see Chapter 2). While describing these young people as YPwl, I acknowledge their impairments are inherent in who they are, their identity and lived experiences, and in no way do I intend negate the effects of ableism and disablism, but I concur with the position of DePauw's seminal work on the *(In)Visibility of DisAbility* (1997) that there is "a time when an athlete's disability is no longer visible" (p. 425). YPwl reflects the extent to which the barriers and constraints of opportunities in sport and active recreation are minimised for these young people. I acknowledge that disability is contextual and in different situations these young people may be disabled by external barriers imposed by society, including psycho-emotional barriers such as, motivation, self-esteem and confidence, but within their experiences of sport and active recreation participation – as they have described themselves – they are not 'disabled'. Examples of YPwl are shown in Figure 3, fully engaged, actively participating as part of mainstream sports teams. In contrast to YPwl, I will refer to the young people not actively engaged or participating in sport and active recreation as disabled and to signal the influence of ableism inherent within the sport system and the disablism experienced by these young people.



Figure 3 Young people with impairments playing rugby and basketball

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Thesis outline

This thesis is presented as an amalgam of my experiences working within disability sport and the research I have undertaken in the completion of this study. As a practitioner, I have searched for pragmatic recommendations and advice as to how to increase sport and active recreation opportunities for, and the participation of, disabled young people in a positive way. With recommendations not forthcoming, I have resorted to 'best-guess' solutions or foregoing providing opportunities for YPwl. Neither of which are acceptable. To gather insights into the arrangements and practices influencing the provision of sport and active recreation opportunities for disabled young people in Aotearoa NZ, it was essential in my research to give agency to young people's points of view. I examined Government policy, funding, and the capacity and capability of the sport system to provide a context for delivery and present findings suitable for implementation by sport organisations.

In Chapter 2, I present a critical summary of disability, including the evolution of how disability has been defined and understood from a medical perspective to a social construct. I review the international and national literature on disability sport, highlighting the influence of ableism within sport and active recreation, participation barriers and constraints, and the centralisation of disabled peoples' voices. In Chapter 3 I outline the case study methodology, including participant recruitment and selection and document analysis. Chapter 4 provides a critical historical journey through Government involvement in disability sport policy and initiatives. While policy advocates for increased opportunities, as presented in Chapter 4, my experience (to date) suggests this has not translated into improved practice and better experiences for disabled young people. The disability rights catch-cry of "nothing about us, without us" applies equally to decisions relating to sport and active recreation opportunities as it does other aspects of disabled peoples' lives. Therefore, providing agency to and centralising the voices of young people has been integral to my research. These voices are introduced as individual narratives in Chapter 5 and then synthesised and analysed further in following chapters. Chapter 6 locates my analysis within a framework of ableism and disablism, illustrating the dominant discourses that remain in sport and active recreation. The purpose of my research was to help improve the provision of opportunities in the future and this is presented in Chapter 7 as an anti-ableist framework. This framework encapsulates the learnings created from the case studies and the historical document analysis, as discussed in the cross-case analysis. Examples from sport organisations bridging the gap between policy and practice illustrate that the efficacy of change in disability sport in Aotearoa NZ can be real while others are used as cautions to the traps of enlightened ableism. Finally, in Chapter 8, I present my conclusions, including suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

Over the last 40 years, interest in and the study of disability has grown across many academic disciplines. Internationally, studies on disability have been widely researched across the disciplines of medicine, sport and exercise science, sociology, law, policy and politics, and hospitality, through to tourism, education, public health, paediatrics and psychology, rehabilitation and disability studies (Aitchison, 2003). Mirroring international disability research, the predominant focus of Aotearoa NZ research has its genesis in the functional, medical model paradigm. Emphasising medical and health needs, disability research has addressed Māori health care (Wiley, 2009), population size estimation of disabled young people (Clark & Gerrard, 2008), injuries in high school students with a disabling health condition (Peiris-John et al., 2015), and service provision gaps (Clark & MacArthur, 2008). Disability research is expanding the knowledge and understanding of the lived experiences of disabled people and disability sport research is an evolving field of academic enquiry which is challenging the foundations upon which sport based. Little research on disability sport for young people has been undertaken internationally or nationally, emphasising the urgent need for my research.

In this chapter 'disability' and 'disabled' are used as overarching terms to describe people who do not meet non-disabled (able-bodied) norms and expectations. Firstly, I define sport and disability sport to provide the framework within which the literature was reviewed. Given this vast array of topics now being researched, the literature review I present has been targeted to consider those areas directly related to my research. Starting with defining disability and disability models, I also review ableism in sport, inclusion models, benefits and barriers to participation, and centralising disabled peoples' voice. While considering disability within the international sporting context I underscore the need for further research within the Aotearoa NZ context.

Defining sport and disability sport

Carlson (2017) when summarising the debate between sport philosophers Bernard Suits and Klaus Meier on characterising sport, highlighted two core elements of sport the philosophers both agreed upon. The first characteristic was related to skill. The second characteristic was

that it was physical. Sport therefore is a physical game of skill. However, across the literature the use of 'sport' in the context of disabled people varies widely (see Bailey, 2005). As a generic term, disability sport has been used to describe any physical activity (e.g., rehabilitation or therapeutic intervention, to everyday physical activity such as walking), sport (including physical education (PE) in schools), recreation activity which caters for disabled people (Khoo, Li, & Ansari, 2018), as well as sports specifically designed for athletes with impairments (see Thomas & Smith, 2009). For the purposes of my research, I use disability sport to describe sport and active recreation in terms of physicality and skill – be it for competitive or non-competitive purposes and either as an individual or part of a team, participated in voluntarily and not undertaken as part of curriculum-based activities in school, such as PE, or as rehabilitation or therapy. Examples of disability sport include sports such as wheelchair basketball or boccia, as well as those where disabled athletes are welcomed and supported in participating with non-disabled (or mainstream) athletics or swimming, and active recreation such as Scouts.

Disability is becoming increasingly visible in sport, including physical education e.g., physical activity (Ma & Martin Ginis, 2018), sport coaching (Townsend, Smith, & Cushion, 2015), sport psychology (Goodwin, Johnston, & Causgrove Dunn, 2014) and the sociology of sport. Qualitative disability sport research in the field of sport management is still in its infancy (Brown & Pappous, 2018b; Kitchin & Crossin, 2018; Kitchin & Howe, 2014). In addition to this scholarly research, grey literature such as government and sport organisations' documents (see Chapter 4) provides a policy framework for the governance of disability sport in Aotearoa NZ (McBean, Townsend, & Petrie, 2022). This widespread interest in disability is connected by a shared focus on improving participation in all parts of society, including sport, for disabled people.

Internationally, disability sport research has considered a range of topics, predominantly from the participants perspective. These topics include the definition of disability (Fitzgerald, 2008; King et al., 2003); ableism (DePauw, 1997) and inclusion (Darcy et al., 2017; Kiuppis, 2018), identity and meaning derived from sport participation (Allan, Smith, Côté, Martin Ginis, & Latimer-Cheung, 2018; Kristèn, Patriksson, & Fridlund, 2002; Lumsdaine & Thurston, 2017); barriers to participation (Bedell et al., 2013; Clark & MacArthur, 2008; Vogts, Mackey, Ameratunga, & Stott, 2010); benefits to participation (Evans et al., 2018; Lord & Patterson, 2008; Martin, 2013); participation discrimination (Pearce, 2017; Wiley, 2009); motivation (Cottingham et al., 2014); coaching (Townsend & Cushion, 2020; Townsend, Cushion, & Smith, 2018; Townsend et al., 2015), and high performance and the Paralympic Games (Bundon,

2013; Kohe, 2016; Legg, Wolff, & Hums, 2003/2015). In contrast, research on the provision of disability sport (Wicker & Breuer, 2014), and the impact of government policy (Piggin, Jackson, & Lewis, 2009), have received little academic attention. In Aotearoa NZ with its small population along with the lack of policy and funding, sport has not been thoroughly researched, let alone disability sport. The policy influence and control over local sport (Sam, 2015; Sam & Jackson, 2004; Sam & Ronglan, 2016); identity (Borell, 2016; Hapeta, Stewart-Withers, & Palmer, 2019; Ryan, 2018); the provision of opportunities for children (Walters, Payne, Schluter, & Thomson, 2010); and the history of sport (Ryan & Watson, 2018), all impact the operationalisation of sport and active recreation at grassroots level. The little disability sport research in Aotearoa NZ that does exist includes: a case study on the Christchurch City Council *KiwiAble* inclusive recreation programme (Stensrud, 2004); inclusive physical education in schools (Petrie, Devcich, & Fitzgerald, 2018); physical activity and leisure participation (Kanagasabai, Mulligan, Hale, & Mirfin-Veitch, 2018 and 2019; Vogts et al., 2010); and most recently the impact of policy influencing sport and active recreation provision (see McBean et al., 2022). This dearth of disability sport research is inextricably linked to the lived experiences of disabled people in Aotearoa NZ, i.e., the invisibility of disability, and the ableist agendas displayed in sport and active recreation.

Defining disability

In this section I outline the different ways in which disability has been defined, the evolution and revolution of ideas and the emergence of modelling of disability within sport and active recreation. Defining and redefining disability reflects how an improved understanding and acknowledgement of disability within society has evolved over time. In international policy rhetoric it is now generally accepted that a person does not 'have' a disability, rather an individual may have an impairment, and through limitations, barriers and attitudes imposed by society (Oliver, 1996) or through the interplay between their impairment and society, they may identify as, or be labelled, disabled. This perspective is captured under the umbrella of the social model of disability. However, 'disabled' is not singular or heterogenous (Oliver, 1996), nor is there a disabled/non-disabled dichotomy but a "continuum of the human condition that can be generative, creative, affirmative and enjoyed" (Martin Ginis et al., 2021, p. 443). This diversity of disability has been captured in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) definition of disability.

Disability

is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (United Nations, 2006, p. 1)

This definition includes visible and invisible conditions broadly categorised as physical, intellectual and neurodevelopmental, and sensory impairments (Misener & Darcy, 2014). While the CRPD draws on the two primary definitions of disability (as outlined below), and is generally accepted and used in public discourse, policy and practices, alternative definitions and models of disability exist. Each model with its orienting assumptions and principles offers a perspective on the ontological foundations of disability, with implications for policy, service provision, activism and education. Figure 4 provides a summary of how I have interpreted each model as they relate to disability sport and active recreation.

| Model | Principles and focus | Level of influence |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Medical | Functionality and capacity of the individual. Attempts to “fix” the individual. Binary disabled/non-disabled. | Historically the definition of disability which remains dominant in medical and clinical interventions |
| Social | Society creates barriers that preclude individuals from engagement and active participation in society. | Societal and policy level. |
| Social Relational | Considers the influence of disablism and impairment together. | Can be applied to individuals’ lived experiences, programme and service delivery, and societal and policy levels. |
| Human Rights | Lived experiences of disability founded on a rights-based approach. | Human rights and political activism. |

Figure 4 Disability models

Models of disability

The two primary definitions of disability have been the medical model (Leonardi, Bickenbach, Ustun, Kostanjsek, & Chatterji, 2006) and the social model (Oliver, 2009; Smith & Bundon, 2018). The medical model of disability is based upon individual functionality, in terms of how the body or mind works differently, i.e., a person is disabled because they have an impairment. Impairments maybe physical, sensory, intellectual, or neurodevelopmental. Such a definition implies that at a personal level, an individual with an impairment is unable to undertake, achieve or complete certain tasks and is, as a consequence, disabled (Leonardi et al., 2006). In contrast, the social model apportions disability to society. An individual with an impairment is disabled by the barriers created in society, be they environmental barriers such as inaccessible buildings or attitudinal barriers around capacity and capability (Oliver, 1996). Evolving from the social model are two contemporary refinements that centralise disability slightly differently: the social relational model (Thomas, 2004a) and the human rights model (Degener, 2016), both of which extrapolate the original premise of the social model to wider considerations and foci.

The medical model of disability

For over a century, the medical model has been the dominant perspective on disability, grounded in the economic commodification of disability (Thomas, 2004a). Unsurprisingly, the medical model dominated the medical profession (Brittain, 2004) and permeated into other sectors and service provisions, such as sport and active recreation. For proponents of the medical model, disability is a result of a physical and/or mental impairment decreasing the physical or cognitive function of the body from what is deemed 'normal'. The cause of disability therefore is attributed to the lack of bodily function, often referred to as personal physical tragedy (Smith & Bundon, 2018) which creates a perception of biological injustice (Townsend et al., 2015) that needs to be overcome and cured.

Measuring body functionality and structure and establishing degrees of limitation of functionality is an example of how the medical model is applied and is the foundation of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) International Classification of Functioning (ICF) system. This classification system provides a base for international comparability and standardisation of impairment and has been used extensively within the medical and education sectors. This model however does restrict the concept of disability to long-term impairments irrespective of their impact on a person's life, lifestyle and quality of experience (Leonardi et al., 2006). This classification (or framework) for measuring health and health-related disciplines, was endorsed

by the 191 WHO Member States, including Aotearoa NZ, in 2001 (World Health Organisation, 2001) and continues to dominate the health sector's perspective on disability. The dominance of this model was so entrenched in the way society in general addressed ability that it was exemplified in the Aotearoa NZ Parliamentary debates in 1937 as presented in Chapter 4.

A consequence of the medical model, was the creation of a dichotomy of 'disabled' and 'non-disabled', based soundly in the notions of capability and dependency, and the idea that disability is a personal medical problem, which requires a personalised medical intervention (Areheart, 2008). Critics of the medical model (Brittain, 2004; Shakespeare, 2018), highlighted the negative perceptions of disability in relation to the power of the medical profession; the consequences of a person's medical condition, or impairment, becoming the focus, and by inference the identity of the person, rather than the person themselves; and the pressure on disabled people to conform with societal norms as necessitating a change in the way disability is considered within society. Smith and Bundon (2018) suggested that the focus on the individual and their impairment and the perpetuation of a 'normal'/'abnormal' binary was misguided and misrepresentative of the real cause of disability. The real cause, according to these critics, is society, thus leading to the social model of disability.

The prominence of the medical model of disability in Aotearoa NZ can be traced back to the late 1800s. From the late 1870s through to the early 1910s the Government Census was focused on identifying disabilities in Pākehā⁶. As a new colony, the "Acts under which the Census was taken do not apply to the aboriginal Native race, the Maoris are excluded" (Brown, 1874, p. 13). Census respondents were asked to declare any sickness or infirmity so as to ascertain "the proportion of the population incapacitated from performing the ordinary duties of life [... and] unable to follow the usual occupation by reason of illness or accident" (Brown, 1887, p. Part VIII). Specified infirmities were identified as deaf and dumb, deaf only, blind, paralysis, crippled and deformed, lunatics, idiots, and debility and infirmity (later retitled feeble-minded); and persons of the colony were described as 'suffering under each affliction' (Brown, 1874, p. 22). The terminology for these "afflictions" is reflective of the linguistic conventions of the 19th century and most of these pejorative infirmities are now be considered offensive and objectionable. The intention of the classification process was clearly grounded in the medical model and the identification of physical dysfunction and deviation from the norm. Within sport

⁶ In Te Reo Māori, Pākehā refers to New Zealanders of European descent.

and active recreation, the remnants of this model remain influential in the way disabled people are still positioned as 'other'.

The social model of disability

In contrast to the medical model, the social model of disability evolved from disability activism in the United Kingdom during the 1970s when the *Fundamental Principles of Disability* (Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), 1976) was published. Now known as the Social Model of Disability, this model focuses on how society fails to accommodate all members of society equally through social norms, values, actions and behaviours (Oliver, 2009; Owens, 2015). Society disables people with physical impairments, and disability is a form of social oppression imposed on top of impairments (Finkelstein, 2001) resulting in social exclusion (Shakespeare, 2014). According to Oliver (2009), the differences between the models lay in the overall intent of each model. Within the social model it is the systemic and symptomatic issues that require attention, "not the functional limitations of individuals with an impairment" (Oliver, 2009, p. 45). By focusing on these wider issues rather than individuals, any change should affect a wider population and society in general.

Since it was proposed, the social model has become accepted as the preferred definition of disability by governments and government agencies outside of the health and medical sectors. Understandably, health and medical agencies are still grounded in the medical model and rely on the use of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) for medical and clinical intervention. Increasingly, public health policy is being underpinned by the social model in response to increasing recognition of the need for cultural considerations for groups such as disabled Māori and other vulnerable populations in Aotearoa NZ (see Wiley, 2009). By positioning disability as a societal rather than an individual issue, the CRPD legitimised the social model definition. Although the Aotearoa NZ Government recognised this definition in the first New Zealand Disability Strategy (NZDS) in 2001, it was not until the second iteration of this strategy in 2016, 15 years later, that many Government agencies fully adopted the social model of disability and their obligations therein (Office of Disability Issues, 2019). As was emphasised in the 2016 NZDS strategy, and reflective of the evolved understanding of disability through the acceptance, promotion and assimilation of the social model, the Government's vision for Aotearoa NZ was articulated as a non-disabling society where disabled people have equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations (Office of Disability Issues, 2016). While Sport NZ has championed the social model through discursive policies and strategies, the provision of opportunities remains the responsibility of sport

organisations who lack knowledge and understanding of disability theory. So although the government is conditioned to need for the social model, sport and active recreation provision remains entrenched, by default, in the medical model of disability.

The social model of disability, like the medical model, is not without critique. Oliver (2009) was concerned that many had interpreted the social model as precluding the needs of individuals, while Shakespeare (2018) argued more strongly that the model was “a crude approach to disability” which was “never intended to be a social theory to explain everything” (p. 19) . Shakespeare (2014), rejected the social model because disability is more complex and is a consequence of the interrelationship between many factors. Smith and Bundon (2018) were similarly critical of the social model, arguing that the model is idealistic, ignores disabled people’s lived experiences and finally, that it separates impairment and disability in relation to the physical body. These criticisms have laid the foundations for the social relational model (see Thomas, 2004b), which builds upon the social model of disability while recognising and acknowledging the influence of a disabled person’s impairment on their experiences.

The social relational model

The third model, the social relational model, centres on understanding how disability as defined by the social model, and impairment (see Jenks, 2019) as implicit in the medical model, interact, often at the individual personal level. The social relational model recognises disability as a social construct reflective of the world disabled people experience (Townsend et al., 2015). Central to the social relational model is the notion of disablism; avoidable physical restrictions and barriers (Thomas, 2012), discriminatory attitudes, which affect disabled persons’ lived experiences and positions disability as a form of social oppression. Proponents of this model (see Martin, 2013; Thomas, 2004b) recognise the influence of society as well as that of an impairment simultaneously, where “disability and impairment are inextricably linked and interactive: *disability is social exclusion on the grounds of impairment* [original emphasis]” (Thomas, 2004a, p. 46). Understanding the impact of social influences gives meaning to how disabled people experience the world (Townsend et al., 2015, p. 86) and disablism and impairment (Smith & Bundon, 2018). Understanding impairment and individual needs includes acknowledging skill and ability in sport or active recreation may not be static and is often contextual, differing between activities, situations and moments in time (Martin, 2013). Watson, Shakespeare, Cunningham-Burley, and Barnes (2011) found young people.

displayed fluidity in claiming disability as an identity. They described how they were not always disabled. One girl talked about how wheelchair basketball equalised social relationships and, as she put it, “in some situations I’m not, we’re not, always disabled”. (p. 19)

The contextual and situational considerations that the social relational model enable provides a model more reflective of disabled young people’s lived experiences. The ‘not always disabled’ resonates with the voices of the YPwl in my research who explained participation in sport and active recreation allowed them to forget their disability, to be treated the same as other participants and enabled them to excel and give their 100 percent.

Human rights model

The human rights model is the second extrapolation of the social model of disability. Based on the fundamental principles of the CRPD, this model considers disability from a rights-based approach (Degener, 2016). This model, unlike the social model, recognises that all people have inalienable rights to equality and non-discrimination (United Nations, 2006). For those working with disabled people in the legal and civil rights movement, the ability to argue inalienable human rights as fundamental principles is integral to those movements. In addition, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides the guiding principles for young people’s participation in society (Hart, 1992). The convention states that governments are expected to recognise disabled young people’s right to “enjoy a full and decent life, ... and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community” (United Nations, 1989, p. 8).

In sport however, this principle of rights is less ingrained, and this model is yet to gain widespread traction in sport. Sport is acknowledged as an arena in which non-conforming groups are marginalised (DePauw, 1997) and there are no absolute rights per se. High-profile litigation such as the PGA Tour ‘walking rule’, requiring all competitors to walk the course during competition and the IAAF case against Paralympian Oscar Pistorius’s use of prosthetic legs when competing against non-disabled athletes (Hums, Moorman, & Wolff, 2009), are illustrative of the underlying bias of ableism and the use of human rights principles in sport. Townsend et al. (2015) present the human rights model as a meta-model for sport coaching and coach education researchers. They argue that by using this model, disabled athletes will be centralised alongside other marginalised and oppressed groups, which should lead to more equitable access and increased engagement in sport and the influence of ableism challenged.

Ableism in sport

Ableism, integration and inclusion are concepts that are intimately associated with disability. As Campbell (2001) argues, ableism is a network of beliefs and practices that privilege the non-disabled 'norm'. This privilege is exhibited through discriminatory and devaluing behaviours underpinned by normative values and perpetuated by non-disabled toward disabled participants (Brittain, Biscaia, & Gérard, 2019; Brown & Pappous, 2018b; Ives, Clayton, Brittain, & Mackintosh, 2019). Deeply and subliminally embedded within the culture (Campbell & Campbell, 2009), practices and actions of communities, ableism is a conceptual tool framed as a set of social structures and values which promote certain abilities while constraining and oppressing other abilities (Wolbring, 2012). In turn this acts to reinforce the expectation that disabled people must emulate and assume a 'normal' identity to fit into society (Goodley, 2014), limiting participation in society by those disabled people who are unable to achieve this 'normal' (see, for example, Carroll, Witten, Calder-Dawe, & Morris, 2019; Carroll et al., 2018; Clark & MacArthur, 2008 inter alia).

While discrimination is unlawful in many countries, including Aotearoa NZ, "the ableist construct of sport presumes an ability to compete in a way that is fair" (Pearce, 2017, p. 146). Sport is reflective of society, its values, norms and standards (DePauw, 1997, p. 418) and therefore it is not surprising ableism is ever-present in how disability sport is perceived and enacted. Brittain et al. (2019) assert that ableism is a useful lens for interrogating sport and active recreation practices as "it encompasses both the impact of the environment and societal attitudes as forms of social oppression that can lead to barriers to participation" (p. 210). DePauw (1997) contended that the way sport is defined impacts on how disability and disabled people are viewed. Sport (rather than active recreation) is defined by rules designed to ensure fairness. However, the imposition of rules that accept exclusion as compliance with the rules is inherently ableist. Ableism, therefore, perpetuates social norms of discrimination into sport and in so doing, highlights the biases that exist in sport. It is these biases that impact upon disabled people's ability to engage and participate in sport.

Nixon (1984) argued that disabled people who were denied access to sporting opportunities their non-disabled counterparts took for granted were victims of "paternalistic or discriminatory exclusion" (p. 185). As Goodwin and Peers (2011) attested, those who control sport are often complicit in preventing/limiting disabled people from participating through policy and practices that demonstrate an unwillingness to make adaptations and adjustments to structures, equipment or facilities to make them more accessible. And while a range of

sports have worked hard to improve participation in sport and active recreation for disabled people, in the forms of assimilation (Goodwin & Peers, 2011; Kitchin, Peile, & Lowther, 2019), integration and more recently inclusion, and in doing so address issues of ableism, these attempts have yet to convincingly ensure meaningful participation for disabled young people (Pearce, 2017). When assimilation (see Sorensen & Kahrs, 2006), i.e., 'join in with what is already on offer for non-disabled', is the only option, disabled people (and YPwl) have little opportunity to experience meaningful engagement and depending on what is on offer may still be excluded (see Carter et al., 2014; Darcy et al., 2017; Jaarsma, Dijkstra, Geertzen, & Dekker, 2014). While the move towards integration (Nixon, 1984) where there is the provision of equivalent sporting opportunities cognisant of impairments, was seen as an anti-ableist approach, Reiser (French & Swain, 2004) contended that integration still required the young person to fit into the opportunities being offered to non-disabled people. While integration was not the panacea for ableism in sport; rather it was ableism repackaged, and still discriminatory, this early work on integration established the foundation for further work on inclusion and cannot be dismissed as inconsequential.

Inclusion, in contrast to integration, is presented as means of redressing ableism and the inequities in participation for disabled people (Anaby et al., 2013; Cunningham & Warner, 2019; Fitzgerald, 2008; Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013; Pearce, 2017). Inclusion is far more complex than just providing a range of opportunities (Hammond, Bundon, Pentifallo Gadd, & Konoval, 2022). Opportunities that value, welcome and incorporate disabled people into society are central to inclusion (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2018; D'Eloia & Price, 2018). In sport, inclusion is present when disabled people are "involved, accepted and respected at all levels of the competition or organization" (Nixon, 2007, p. 419). Feelings of belonging and equality and the underlying principle of independence and self-determination are the goals of inclusion (Brittain et al., 2019; Kiuppis, 2018). Ironically, while notions of inclusion, independence and choice are entrenched within the education system and policy in both in-school and after-school physical education programmes (Martin & Speer, 2011; Petrie et al., 2018; Taylor-Winney, Giordano, Lesmeister, Fenn, & Krahn, 2018), this is not reflected in sport and active recreation. While not suggesting that organisations, coaches and programme managers deliberately exclude disabled people from sport, as evidenced by Lyons (2013), it is necessary to acknowledge that ableism acts as a regulator of inclusion and its enactment in sport (Brown & Pappous, 2018b; Howe & Silva, 2018).

The influence of ableism extends also into policy (cf. Lyons, 2013). Described as 'enlightened ableism', it masks the continuation of practices which, despite the widespread rhetoric of

inclusion and equality, perpetuate the marginalisation of disabled people including disabled young people. While Lyons highlighted enlightened ableism in early childhood education policy in Aotearoa NZ, enlightened ableism is also observable in sport. Jeanes et al. (2019) noted

policy is often conceptualized and developed with the idea that it will be implemented in an ideal environment. However, the local context heavily mediates responses to policy and the extent to which policy leads to actual changes in practice. (p. 998)

The influence of enlightened ableism apparent in sport and active recreation policy and practice has recently been analysed in Aotearoa NZ by McBean et al. (2022) (see Chapter 4) and in Canada by Hammond et al. (2022). Congruent to the issues expressed by McBean et al, the work of Hammond et al., suggests sport organisations' reluctance to enact external changes (i.e., government policies and initiatives) is not confined to Aotearoa NZ. The emergence of disability sport organisations in both countries is indicative of the sport system's failure in the past to provide suitable opportunities for disabled people and the ongoing difficulties of sport organisations experience providing quality opportunities for YPwl.

Critics of inclusion contend that policies explicitly aimed at improving diversity and inclusion have been ineffectual in improving opportunities for disabled people due to a lack of authenticity in the motivations for moving towards more inclusive sport (Kitchin & Crossin, 2018). Fitzgerald (2018) argues that few inroads into achieving full inclusion have occurred as committed guardians within sport preserve the exclusionary features of sport (i.e., the focus on physical performance and winning). This protectionism perpetuates and reinforces the dichotomy of disabled and non-disabled people, and the inherent discrimination around the concept of athleticism (DePauw, 1997; Nixon, 2007). Other critics present inclusion not because of external policy initiatives (Spaaij et al., 2018), but in response to a demand from within an organisation, thereby negating the influence of ableism, even if only on an organisational level.

If the influence of ableism is to be abated so disabled people can experience full participation in sport and active recreation, "providers and participants in sport itself [must be] open and willing to change" (Fitzgerald, 2018, p. 190), and not rely on "structural solutions to make sport accessible" (Kitchin & Crossin, 2018, p. 28). The stakes are high, however. Will sport continue to 'mainstream' disabled people, reflected by a rationalisation of systems and structures; i.e.,

assimilate and integrate, rather than be truly inclusive (Kitchin & Howe, 2014) or will sports “become very adept at learning how to present themselves as more integrated” (Hammond et al., 2022, p. 9). Both outcomes, integration and enlightened ableism are “unlikely to lead to more inclusive outcomes for people with disabilities” (Hammond et al., 2022, p. 10). The risk of not attempting to embed anti-ableism in sport is the continued segregation of disability sport where the normative sporting values remain dominant and disabled people’s participation is devalued and prioritised below non-disabled sport (Brown & Pappous, 2018b).

As greater understanding and knowledge developed, the definitions of disability have expanded from a medical-based perspective to those that consider the influence of society and human rights. It is unsurprising that the medical model has dominated the understanding of disability in sport and active recreation. Physical competence and capability are believed integral to successful participation and competition (Aitchison, 2003; Lundquist Wanneberg, 2017; Martin, 2013). The way in which sport is governed (e.g., Kitchin & Howe, 2014; Misener & Darcy, 2014) is underpinned by ableism, the implications of which will be addressed later. Simplifying participation to the physical functionality and capability of an individual has ignored the significance social barriers have on participation levels, such as a lack of awareness and understanding; limited opportunities and programmes; inaccessible facilities and transport; and limited resources (Misener & Darcy, 2014). In addition, the often-complex relationship between how disability and impairment interact within a sport and active recreation context has been ignored.

Within Aotearoa NZ, the influence of the medical model and its inherent disablism, especially at the operational level, is slowly being challenged with an emphasis upon policy constructed under the social model (such as Sport New Zealand, 2019b). Implicit within this transformation is the recognition of the need to remove ableism in sport and the exclusionary value system (i.e., disablism) so disability sport and active recreation can be better understood and ultimately participation by disabled people can be improved (cf. Carroll et al., 2019). Understanding disability provides the foundation from which the following international and national disability sport literature was reviewed. In addition, the underlying influences in society regarding how disability is viewed and exhibited in sport and active recreation were highlighted.

Disability sport literature exclusions

In reference to sport and disability, dominant discourses have often framed sport and physical activity and primarily linked to rehabilitation and therapy and high performance (i.e., Paralympic competition and coaching). Yet this focus, often grounded in the medical model of disability, neglects the greater influence of YPwL's participation on the provision of opportunities at the local level in sport and active recreation clubs and groups. Although physical activity and rehabilitation are closely align with my research, based on the assertion that sport is a physical game of skill (see Carlson, 2017) and participation is voluntary. Similarly, Paralympic performance and coaching which is a consequent of participation at the local level is also excluded from a full literature review. However, in the interests of signalling the influence these two fields of study have on the wider disability sport discourse, a summary of each is provided below.

Physical activity and rehabilitation

Physical activity (see Ma & Martin Ginis, 2018; Martin Ginis et al., 2021; Rimmer & Marques, 2012), and rehabilitation and therapy (see Claassen et al., 2011; Nyquist, Moser, & Jahnsen, 2016; Reedman, Boyd, Elliott, & Sakzewski, 2017) have been researched extensively in relation to disability. Most research in these three areas has been dominated by the medical model of disability, also known as the 'personal tragedy theory of disability' (Australian Sports Commission, 2010). The reasons and motivations for participating in physical activity, rehabilitation and therapy differ markedly from sport and active recreation. Irrevocably, rehabilitation relates to clinical recovery or amelioration of impairment effects on the lives of disabled people, while physical activity encapsulates everyday activities of life. Impairment-specific physical activity research has been predominantly focused on adults with spinal cord injury (SCI) (Martin Ginis et al., 2012; Perrier, Smith, & Latimer-Cheung, 2013), amputations (Wadey & Day, 2018), and vision impairments (VI) (Haegele, 2015) while paediatric studies have been dominated by Cerebral Palsy (CP) participants (Claassen et al., 2011; Lauruschkus, Westbom, Hallström, Wagner, & Nordmark, 2013; Majnemer et al., 2008; Reedman et al., 2017; Shimmell, Gorter, Jackson, Wright, & Galuppi, 2013). Although acknowledging the influence impairment exerts on participation in every-day activities, quantitative studies based in a medical model paradigm tend to have an interventionist focus. Individual intervention, such as rehabilitation, is designed to address a lack of function (Majnemer et al., 2008), to 'fix' or ameliorate the impact of an impairment so the disabled person can resume 'normal' living and is similarly grounded in the medical model of disability. In contrast, research drawing from a

social relational model perspective/anti-ableist focus directs attention towards the barriers and constraints imposed by society and the varying degrees these affect the lived experiences of disabled people.

Paralympic performance and coaching

The often-narrow focus on elite and high performance that has dominated research since the London 2012 Paralympic Games has neglected the importance of participation of YPwl. The growth in elite sport disability performance and coaching research has been rapid, reflecting the impact of the Paralympic movement (Brown & Pappous, 2018a; Legg, Fay, Wolff, & Hums, 2015; Pullen, Jackson, & Silk, 2019) and the positioning of Paralympians as inspirational role models (Bundon & Smith, 2017). Unsurprisingly research on disability sport coaching has mirrored that of the Paralympic research, highlighting the need for greater knowledge and understanding of coaching disabled athletes (see Kohe, 2016; Townsend, Huntley, Cushion, & Culver, 2021; Townsend et al., 2015), while recognising the difficulty of recruiting and retaining coaches (Wareham, Burkett, Innes, & Lovell, 2019). Focusing on elite performance, while enhancing the knowledge and understanding of Para sport participation (Bundon, 2013; Howe & Silva, 2018; Purdue & Howe, 2012) and the importance of the international Paralympic Movement, overlooks the issues of equity and access that are present in community and youth disability contexts. As such, presenting a more detailed review of high performance and coaching literature would become a distraction from the central focus of my research.

Conceptualising inclusion

As an antithesis of exclusion where individuals lack “access to power, knowledge, services, facilities, choice and opportunity” (Bailey, 2005, p. 76), inclusion has been advocated as a means of addressing these inequities, including sport for disabled people. Typically, the provision of opportunities focuses on reducing the disparity between participants from different backgrounds (i.e., spatial inclusion) and the enhancement of knowledge and skills (i.e., functional inclusion). In sport and active recreation, opportunities range from provision with non-disabled participants and no modification (‘mainstream’) through to segregated opportunities for disabled people only, represented as a sport continuum model (Winnick, 1987). Disability sport provision as articulated by inclusion models requires varying levels of adaptations and modifications to facilitate participation (see Misener & Darcy, 2014). Although not all inclusion models present as linear progressions (see Nixon, 2007), they are

based on the premise that the nature of the impairment and ability to perform the sport results in the need for a range of opportunities to be available. Underpinning this range of opportunities is the principle of fairness and choice. Grounded in empiricism, inclusion and inclusion models have been generally accepted by practitioners in disability sport delivery, although as observed by DePauw and Doll-Tepper (2000) because sport remains a reflection of an inherently ableist society, inclusion "is still framed in the context of normal" (p. 138).

Government policy has used inclusion models to enhance the "understanding of the type of engagement and level of modification that may be required for participation of people with disability (sic)" (Australian Sports Commission, 2010, p. 15). In contrast to these activity-based models, an alternative holistic model proposed by DePauw (1997) saw inclusion changing the status quo in sport to achieve social equality. This social transformation should not be seen as a one-size fits all solution or defined as a place, "rather inclusion must be reconceptualized as an attitude or process" (DePauw & Doll-Tepper, 2000, p. 139) – thus addressing relations of power that exclude disabled people. Like the models of Winnick (1987) and others, the aim of the social transformation is for disabled people to have equitable access to a range of opportunities on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers.

Unfortunately, despite repeated calls for inclusion in sport by researchers (such as Nixon and DePauw), little significant change appears to have occurred in the intervening years. The success of conceptualising inclusion (and the inclusion models) in improving participation remains unproven. As evidenced by Valet (2018), the gap between inclusive rhetoric and practice still exists. There are very real difficulties in sport design and the inability of 'mainstreaming' to address these limitations has yet to be overcome. For Valet, participation and inclusion are not synonymous and "while more inclusion means more participation, ... more participation does not always mean more inclusion, because segregated participation is possible" (p. 139). Critical reviews of inclusion in sport and active recreation are sparse, but within the education sector the presumption that integration equates to inclusion has exposed the capability of this sector to fully grasp that fundamental to inclusion is the acceptance diversity and the necessity for different constructs of teaching and learning environments of disabled young people (Wilson, 2017). In contrast, within the sport system, the diversity of opportunities, as represented by inclusion models, does create a semblance of equity not replicated in education. Despite these critics of inclusion, participation in sport and active recreation by disabled people is shown to have significant benefits, such as self-esteem and peer acceptance in addition to physical fitness and skill acquisition.

Benefits of participation

The benefits of sport and active recreation participation are well established. Research continues to outline the psychological, personal development, enjoyment and satisfaction, physical health and wellbeing, social and cultural, economic and environmental impacts for all participants (see Driver, Brown, & Peterson, 1991). Similar benefits have been acknowledged for disabled peoples' participation (Aitchison, 2003; Lord & Patterson, 2008; Misener & Darcy, 2014; Shields, 2012), along with disability-specific attributes such as self-perception and independence (Brittain, 2004; Lundberg, Taniguchi, McCormick, & Tibbs, 2011) and social connectedness (McKenzie, Willis, & Shields, 2021). Being part of a group or team, having fun, escaping the family, meeting new people (Lord & Patterson, 2008); developing skills, such as independence (Lumsdaine & Thurston, 2017); and participation in sport were considered a platform for empowerment and identity-making (e.g. Ashton-Shaeffer, Gibson, Autry, & Hanson, 2001; Lundberg et al., 2011).

Reflecting other disability research, the systematic review of disability sport literature by Jaarsma et al. (2014) found most studies on the benefits and facilitators of participation used questionnaires to understand adult participation. Few centralised young people, and only one study used a qualitative methodology to gain greater insight into YPwL's participation in sport. This absence of research on the benefits of sport and active recreation participation by YPwL juxtaposes the physical activity research on disabled young people's participation. Recognising the limited literature on disabled young people, the retrospective study of childhood experiences by Lumsdaine and Thurston (2017) noted that the impact of sport was more than a "depth of feeling about the activities undertaken in that there were not merely seen as a hobby but almost as a lifeline" (p.192) to overcome emotional difficulties (see Allan et al., 2018) as well as provide wider health and well-being outcomes (Ives et al., 2019). For disabled young people, parental support and influence were central to participation and success in sport (Kristèn, Patriksson, & Fridlund, 2003). Optimal benefits from participation do, however, reply on the quality of experience (Evans et al., 2018). Participant-centric research has provided little insight for sport organisations. Meaningful recommendations and guidance for organisations for providing quality experience have, until recently (see Evans et al., 2018; The Steadward Centre for Personal & Physical Achievement, 2021), been conspicuous by their absence from the literature. The Canadian Disability Participation Project (2018) used applied research to create a framework for quality participation. Six building blocks provide sports organisations with a meaningful way to assess their programmes and service delivery for disabled people. Though conformity of the framework rests on subjective judgement by

sport organisations, the intent is not to demonstrate compliance but instead facilitate education and understanding of what quality disability sport delivery means. Having used this framework myself to assess dsport's delivery of programmes, I can attest to its value in conveying the nuances of disability sport provision to sport organisations in a pragmatic and practical way.

Barriers and constraints to participation

Research on barriers and constraints has dominated the disability sport literature (Smith & Sparkes, 2020). In an attempt to better understand why some communities participate less in sport and active recreation than others, barrier and constraint models have been used (see Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991). Barriers and constraints classified as intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural (see Crawford & Godbey, 1987) are presented as a dichotomy influencing participation versus non-participation. Intrapersonal constraints, such as a lack of time or motivation, impact all participants whether disabled (see Ives et al., 2019; McKenzie et al., 2021) or not (Sport New Zealand, 2019c).

For disability sport researchers, such as Darcy et al. (2017) and Smith, Austin, Kennedy, Lee, and Hutchison (2005) the nuances of disability are accentuated by barriers and constraints. For example, health-related issues (physical, psychological and cognitive), a lack of self-esteem, lack of enjoyment, fear of the unknown, limited peer support, fear of injury or falling and physical health issues play a significant role in determining the level of sport participation by disabled people (Ives et al., 2019; Smith, Perrier, & Martin, 2016). Interpersonal constraints are also a factor for disabled people's participation. These constraints include the level of family support (Eminovic, Nikic, Stojkovic, & Pacic, 2009; Kristèn et al., 2003; Martin Ginis et al., 2021), and perceptions of parents, coaches, teachers (Darcy et al., 2020). Structural constraints represent those foundations that are key to participation (Jaarsma et al., 2014; Kung & Taylor, 2014; Saebu & Sørensen, 2011; Wiley, 2009). Structural constraints include a lack of information on opportunities (Ives et al., 2019), finance and funding (Evans et al., 2018), suitability of facilities and accessible transportation (Martin, 2013), availability of equipment, and coach knowledge and understanding (Spencer-Cavaliere, Thai, & Kingsley, 2017; Townsend et al., 2015). Darcy et al. (2020) present a corollary that a lack of participants, i.e., a critical mass of numbers, creates a dearth of opportunities, particularly for YPwl.

However, in assessing the literature it is clear that addressing barriers to participation for disabled young people (see King et al., 2003) has been considered less than for adults and

without the voices of the YPwL. Research has tended to concentrate on physical education (PE) in schools (for example Clark & MacArthur, 2008; Dixon, Braye, & Gibbons, 2021) or in dedicated community youth programmes (Cunningham & Warner, 2019; Taylor-Winney et al., 2018). While this need for better understanding by practitioners has been recognised in non-school environments (Anaby et al., 2013; Cunningham & Warner, 2019; Fitzgerald, 2008; Pearce, 2017), few have considered the issue from a sport management perspective (cf. Jeanes et al., 2018; Kitchin & Crossin, 2018; Kitchin & Howe, 2014; Kitchin et al., 2019; Sorensen & Kahrs, 2006). Organisational and sport management centric research on disability sport provision limited (see Di Palma, Raiola, & Tafuri, 2016). Shapiro and Pitts (2014) claimed that between 2002 and 2012 only 0.016% of sport management articles related to disability sport despite the growth in interest in disability and Paralympic sport. The gap between policy and practice in disability sport provision remains (Kitchin et al., 2019) as sports organisations, often run by volunteers, have limited resources (Hall et al., 2003) to overcome these barriers (see Martin Ginis, Ma, Latimer-Cheung, & Rimmer, 2016) and increase participation by disabled young people (Maher & Haegele, 2021).

Furthermore, Smith and Sparkes (2020), argue the dominant focus on barriers and constraints has provided little in the way of guidance and support for those delivering sport for disabled people. They argue that “research is needed on how barriers in society can be lowered so that disabled people, if they wish, can participate fully in physical activity” (Smith & Sparkes, 2020, p. 401). Minimising the impact barriers and constraints experienced by disabled people should not be understated, however translating recommendations into action is often difficult for sport organisations when based solely on the participants perspective with little consideration of the environment within which sports organisations operation. The *raison d’être* of sport organisations is to deliver opportunities to participants (Spaaij et al., 2018), but sport organisations are not immune to constraints themselves (Brown & Pappous, 2018b; Darcy et al., 2017). Organisational capacities, such as the availability of funding and their reliance on volunteers (see Doherty, Misener, & Cuskelly, 2014; Hall et al., 2003), often limit their ability to provide adequate programmes and services for disabled people. For sport organisations to effect change in the provision of opportunities for YPwL, it is evident further research on the wider sport system is required. However, a focus on the barriers and constraints is redundant if the voices of the actual participants are not heard.

Centralising disabled young peoples' rights and voice

Without the experiences and opportunities for YPwI and their voices, disability sport research cannot be advanced. Giving agency to disabled people to elicit meaning and understanding of disability sport experiences is gaining prominence. The richness and depth of data obtained from disabled people themselves provides a better perspective from which to understand athletes' experiences and identities (Allan et al., 2018; Fitzgerald & Kirk, 2009). However, despite this growing knowledge base in disability sport, little research has centralised disabled young people's voices in sport and active recreation (cf. Culver & Werthner, 2018; Powis, 2018). Much of the research centralising young disabled people's participation rarely empowers disabled young people to be the drivers of research. Often based on the medical model of disability, medical, paediatric and rehabilitation/therapeutic perspectives (for example Anaby et al., 2013; Claassen et al., 2011), physical activity (PA (see Imms, 2008; Majnemer et al., 2008), focus on the quantity of participation. Those who have taken a qualitative approach, have tended to focus on participation within an educational context (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2018; Bassett-Gunter, Ruscitti, Latimer-Cheung, & Fraser-Thomas, 2017; Ross et al., 2021) and in schools (Petrie et al., 2018; Sherrill, 2004), resulting in little understanding of disabled young people's experiences in sport and active recreation where participation is voluntary and opportunities delivered within an extensive sport system.

Most conceptual models for disabled young people's participation (see King et al., 2003) and models of participation (see Block, Taliaferro, & Moran, 2013) lack the voice and agency of participants. Not including disabled young people in research does have an impact upon the delivery of sport and active recreation opportunities for them. Maher and Haegele (2021) observed that by

having conversations *with* [original emphasis] disabled children and young people about their experiences, rather than *about* them and with other stakeholders, the emphasis moves to the voice of the disabled young person and allows for their perspective to be central to constructions of their experiences. (p. 2)

Within the context of young disabled people's involvement in sport, experiences and participation were contextualised by their interactions and relationships with others (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). Recognising this gap, researchers such as Goodwin (2008) and Wright, Roberts, Bowman, and Crettenden (2019) are centralising the voice of disabled people to gain a better understanding of inclusion, begin with the child's perspective. Kembhavi and

Wirz (2009) contend that the “voices of adolescents with disabilities have been silent for too long. We must engage and allow them to tell us how we can better facilitate their future successes” (p. 295). This acknowledgement of the need to centralise and give agency to disabled young people in research (Allan et al., 2018; Enright & O’Sullivan, 2012) echoes the disability catch cry ‘nothing about us, without us’.

Chapter summary

In summarising the available academic literature, it becomes evident the coverage of studies has concentrated on a small number of areas – such as ableism and inclusion, barriers and constraints, and the benefits of participation in disability sport. Repeated research in these areas continue to reinforce generalisations around disability sport provision with little agency given to the voices of disabled young people. Innovative and creative research in disability sport is lacking. Practical guidance for sport providers is sparse, although the recent work by Darcy et al. (2020) and Carroll et al. (2019) does establish a benchmark for well-presented discourse for academics and practical application alike. As Martin Ginis et al. (2016) noted, researchers needed to do more than just generate lists outlining factors impacting upon participation and instead use this knowledge for enhancing disability sport provision. Addressing this gap will better equip sport and recreation organisations to provide quality experiences for disabled young people. Ultimately, with better disability sport research, Aotearoa NZ can become a place where “athletes with disabilities are visible in sport as athletes [and] an athlete’s disability is no longer visible” (DePauw, 1997, p. 425).

In the following chapter, I outline my research methodology, introduce the research participants and describe how the guided conversations were impacted by Covid-19. Using case studies, I give agency and voice to the YPwI, for whom the provision of sport and active recreation opportunities has been successful, despite the subversive influence ableism plays in the Aotearoa NZ sport system.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

Buoyed by the knowledge that YPwI are participating in sport and active recreation, such as netball, basketball, football and rugby (see Figure 3), I set out to investigate more about their experiences. The aim was to identify the facilitators and nuances of disabled young peoples' engagement in sport and active recreation within Aotearoa NZ. By giving agency to these YPwI regarding their lived experiences, and garnering evidence from those providing sport and active recreation, my research study highlights the positive influences of sport and active recreation participation. Importantly, I want this knowledge to help frame future opportunities and improve the Aotearoa NZ sport system.

In the three decades since I left university, while much has changed in research – theory, method and analysis replaced by ontology, epistemology and methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013) – much has remained the same. As a researcher, I come to this study with a wealth of knowledge and experience as a practitioner working in disability sport. Framing this work alongside an academic methodological perspective was essential to ensure the quality and credibility of my work and the credibility of my recommendations. Sparkes and Smith (2014) argue “we conduct inquiry via a particular paradigm because it embodies assumptions about the world that we believe in and supports the values that we hold dear” (p. 9) . In acknowledging my practitioner experiences, I draw upon the interpretivist paradigm (as seen in Figure 5) as a meaningful representation of the world I have experienced, especially in disability sport.

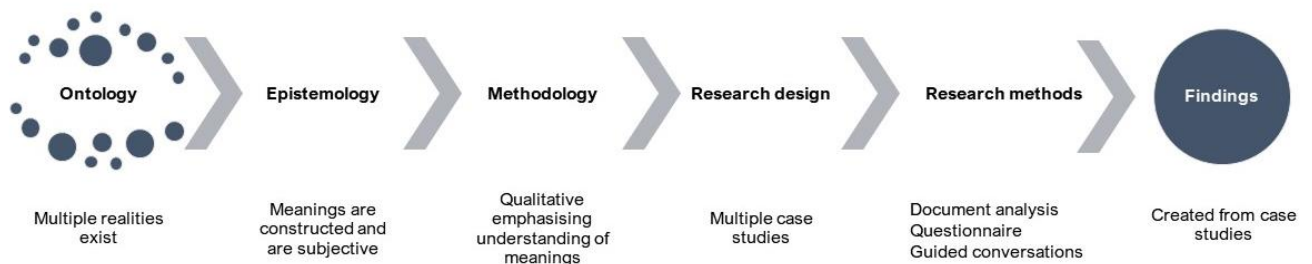


Figure 5 Interpretivist paradigm research strategy

Figure 5 illustrates the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm research strategy I followed. Throughout the process the underlying principle of understanding and interpreting the meanings of the participants was continually reviewed, emphasised and reiterated.

In this chapter, I outline the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm and detail in chronological format, my research process from recruitment through to the selection of case study participants. Accepting that experiences are framed and constrained by societal conditions and are subjective, congruent with the social relational model of disability, my research lent itself to the qualitative research approach of case studies. Case studies are an appropriate method of addressing the 'how' and 'why' questions of real-world phenomena which align with the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm (Yin, 2018). Successes of the research design are included, as well as limitations, which are illustrative of the agility and flexibility needed in my process to accommodate unforeseen circumstances (e.g., Covid-19) without diverging from the overall design intent.

Constructivist paradigm

The constructivist (sometimes referred to as interpretivist) paradigm “assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple [social] realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 27). More simply put researchers using this paradigm recognise the lived experiences of research participants (Schwandt, 1998) while acknowledging the impact of their own background and experiences on the research (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). A constructivist researcher positions their enquiry within the context of the understanding and meaning of those being researched, in contrast with positivism, which is grounded in single objective ‘truths’. The aim is to understand how meanings are shaped through contextual settings of interactions and experiences with others (Poucher, Tamminen, Caron, & Sweet, 2019; Schwandt, 1998; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). To illustrate differing realities, a YPwI may describe themselves as a daughter/son, sister/brother, niece/nephew, cousin, friend, squad/teammate or classmate. Each of these describes a relationship, a social context, which positions them and creates meaning and understanding between themselves and others. No description is incorrect, and none are independent of each other. They are all related to the individual in terms of how they see themselves at that moment in time, within a particular context. Outsiders, such as coach/teammate/teacher, will describe the young person in different terms, again framed by different contextual situations.

Like the YPwI, none are necessarily incorrect, except when they are described as 'disabled' when they are not (Wickenden & Kembhavi-Tam, 2014).

The realities in the above example are contextually bound. Depending upon the situation and recognising there are different realities, a researcher's interpretation will also be shaped by the level and depth of understanding from the insider's perspective (Jones, 2015). Extrapolating this to my ontological position, I acknowledge there is no single reality, but rather multiple realities (Slevitch, 2011) in which meanings and understanding are framed. As a 'passionate participant' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013), I undertook this research to see whether my knowledge and understanding of disability sport, gained from my personal experiences, were reflective of others. In keeping with this premise, my research investigated these realities and understandings from differing perspectives including those of YPwI, their parent(s), and coaches/leaders to better understand the facilitators of disability sport in Aotearoa NZ.

Meanings are constructed and are subjective

From an epistemological perspective, I understand that meanings are constructed out of interactions between humans, objects and actions (Crotty, 1998; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Denzin and Lincoln (2013) argued that qualitative researchers stress "the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 17). Schwandt (1998) states that "meanings are created, negotiated, sustained, and modified within a specific context of human action" (p. 225), while English (2014) contends that meanings more simply come from understanding and making sense of life's experiences.

In taking an epistemological stance that recognises meanings are socially constructed and subjective, my research neatly aligns with the social relational model of disability. The social relational model extrapolates from the social model of disability that claims society disables people with impairments, through interactions and perceptions (Finkelstein, 2001). Inherent within this relativist paradigm is the understanding that disability is imposed on, rather than chosen by disabled people. Underpinning my research, the social relational model of disability and the use of an interpretive approach creates a meaningful synergy between paradigm and phenomena. This model recognises the meaning disability is not only socially constructed, but that impairment and disability are inextricably linked and are also situational. As such, the constructivist paradigm provides an appropriate platform from which I interpret how different

contexts influence meanings associated with participation for YPwI in sport and active recreation.

Social relational model of disability underpinning this research

Disablism, discrimination and barriers do exist within sport, inherent not only in the evolution of sport, but also in the persistent and dominant manifestation of athleticism and masculinity in sport (Bryson, 1987). It is increasingly recognised this has created an environment that today is being challenged by many groups who feel marginalised and disempowered, including those involved in disability sport (see Shuttleworth, Wedgwood, & Wilson, 2012). As such, the value of the social relational model of disability, not only to my research but to others, is to better understand and inform the nuances surrounding disability and sport, and YPwIs' experiences in disability sport.

As outlined in the literature review, sport is a reflection of society and culture. The social relational model recognises disability as a social construct which represents disabled people's lived experiences (Townsend et al., 2015). In addition, this model centralises the notion of disablism; discriminatory attitudes and avoidable physical restrictions and barriers (Thomas, 2012), and how these manifestations affect a disabled person's lived experiences (Darcy, Maxwell, Edwards, & Almond, 2022; Martin, 2013). At the same time, the social relational model acknowledges 'impairment effects' are individual and contextual, recognising that impairment does have an impact upon a disabled person's life, often restricting their opportunities and experiences. For the purposes of this research on sport and active recreation, the social relational model provided an appropriate valuable and theoretical perspective to underpin this research to help understand disability sport in Aotearoa NZ. In particular, the relational nature of the model is reflected in the conversations with the YPwI, their parents and coaches/leaders who often indicated that despite the YPwI being regularly being defined as 'disabled' in other areas of their life, within their chosen sport or activity they were fully participating and actively engaged. As such, taking a social relation model perspective recognises the fluidity of disability. Under this model, a YPwI with an impairment can be both enabled and disabled depending upon the situation or context. For example, when YPwI are participating in sport or active recreation, they are enabled, not disabled. In another situation where the YPwI's impairment may restrict their opportunities and experiences, they can be disabled. Therefore, this contextualisation of disability and the influence of impairment effect by the social relation

model is more representative of the multifaceted lived experiences of YPwl rather than the more rigid binary able/disabled construct presented by the medical model.

Through their case studies, these YPwl will explain later, that while their impairments do have an impact of how they participate and achieve tasks (see Thomas, 2004a), their impairments alone do not preclude them from participating. Understanding the contextual nature of disability and how it does, or does not, manifest itself in sport and active recreation is paramount for those involved in the sport system, particularly those wanting to enhance disability sport for YPwl, be it in the development of policy or the provision of opportunities.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research supports the assertion that social reality is based upon our interpretations, perceptions and meanings that are context bound (Slevitch, 2011). Allender, Cowburn, and Foster (2006) comparing quantitative and qualitative research for determining sport participation, noted that qualitative research provides “in-depth insight into individuals’ experiences and perceptions of the motives and barriers to participation” (p. 827). Schwandt (1998) described the process more eloquently, as “all interpretive inquirers watch, listen, ask, record, and examine” (p. 222). I chose to adopt a qualitative approach in addressing my research question – what are the facilitators of YPwls’ engagement in sport and active recreation? – because it enabled me to ask, listen, examine and interpret the varying positions of participants involved in disability sport in Aotearoa NZ.

Although a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach was the desirable and original method for this research, the impact of Covid-19 (outlined in detail later in this chapter), meant to capture and give agency to the voices of YPwl an alternative method was required. In determining how best to ensure the voice of the YPwl were not lost, I undertook an investigation into identifying alternative research methods which could be employed for my research. Consequently, the case study approach outlined below was used with a focus on empirical evidence, and in so doing acknowledge Pitts and Shapiro (2017) who advocated for more practically-based disability sport research.

Case Studies

Case studies provide a method for asking and listening. Case studies can range from one individual to multiple or collective cases. Multiple case studies with individuals can allow researchers to inquire and gain different perspectives on issues (Creswell et al., 2007). Hodge and Sharp (2016) characterise case studies as intrinsic, instrumental and collective. Intrinsic studies focus on a particular case “because in all its ‘particularity and ordinariness’, the case is itself of interest”, whereas instrumental cases are “examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to draw a generalization” (Hodge & Sharp, 2016, p. 64). Collective cases refers to more than one case study. Adopting these characterisations, my research can be described as instrumental and collective, and expands the utility of my research findings, allowing analytic generalisations to be drawn (Smith, 2018; Yin, 2018).

While Hart (1992) noted that the benefits of participation are strong for young people who are the beneficiaries of projects or programmes, their participation in the development and design of such programmes is rare. The inequity afforded to disabled young people has been systemic in disability research. Although it is increasingly common to include young people as research participants, this invitation

is rarely extended to those with disabilities. Arguably, they are accidentally forgotten, assumed to have nothing to say or perceived to be methodologically difficult to include. Thus, disabled children and young people’s perspectives are overlooked. (Wickenden & Kembhavi-Tam, 2014, p. 400)

This lack of engagement of disabled young people is a gap and a weakness which requires addressing. I chose to use case studies for my research not only because of the alignment with the constructivist paradigm and social relational model of disability, but also to centralise and give agency to the voice of YPwl.

Researching case by case

Using case studies allows for specific issues to be explored within defined contexts (Creswell et al., 2007). Yin (2018) promotes case studies as a means of enabling a researcher from a relativist perspective to “capture the perspectives of different participants [by] focusing on how their different meanings illustrate your topic of study” (p. 16). I needed to centralise and give agency to the participants’ voices and lived experiences. Choosing a research design that

generated rich and in-depth information was essential. Gitlin (2000) noted that telling stories is more than just facts, it provides a plot which has meaning and through this meaning asserts authority and the right to enter the political debate and influence change. Furthermore, the strength of case studies is the ability to use a variety of evidence, such as documents, as sources of information⁷ to provide different perspectives. This flexibility enabled the policy frameworks around which sport and active recreation in Aotearoa NZ is delivered to be considered as a case for study, as well as those from each of the YPwl.

Document analysis

To help reveal the landscape in which disability sport has been created in Aotearoa NZ and to locate my participants' experiences, I employed document analysis. Document analysis included Government as well as sport organisations' documentation. Policy statements, legislation, memoranda, government reports, minutes, and correspondence, as well as commissioned reviews of government agencies charged with oversight of sport, were included in the archival records reviewed. The primary data source of grey literature was from official government archives from the Ministry and Council of Recreation and Sport, Department of Internal Affairs (1935 -1986), held by Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, and from the Hillary Commission⁸ (1986-2001), SPARC (2001-2008) and Sport New Zealand (2008-current), held by Sport New Zealand. For expediency, information from the archives was limited to disability sport-related files only.

The archival information was analysed with the intention of providing an insight into the historical development of social policy and its impact on the provision of disability sport in Aotearoa NZ. Disability sport-related archives were identified as original and primary sources of information (see Wangard, 2017). Documents considered important to this research were copied for later reference in response to Covid-19 restrictions limiting in-person access to Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga. Like most original documents, those reviewed provided a snapshot of a topical issue or decision at the time and required additional and supporting information (third-party information) to assist with interpretation and scrutiny. Little analysis of official sport archival information has previously been undertaken, and none

⁷ I use the term information in preference to 'data'. Constructivists recognise that information is constructed and contextual in nature of qualitative data, whereas for the positivist and postpositivist paradigms data can be found and infers fact.

⁸ As with much archival research, the availability of documentation is reliant upon the relevant organisations' interpretation of what is valuable to file and save, and to archive. Records from the latter two organisations were limited, having been disposed of after a mandatory holding period of ten years by SPARC. Sport NZ has acknowledged the lack of these historical records and believes the enacting of the Public Records Act 2005 will provide greater safeguards for future public records and archival information.

on disability sport, thereby creating an opportunity for original analysis. As outlined in Chapter 4, my analysis contextualises how the Aotearoa NZ government positioned disability sport in policy over the last 85 years. In addition, the consequential impacts on disability sport and active recreation delivery from these policies are elaborated on further in Chapter 6.

Reflecting the observation by Jeanes et al. (2019) that “few studies have explicitly focused on sport policy implementation and, specifically, the extent to which sport policies shape, or otherwise, practice on the ground” (p. 987), my analysis of this archival information was influenced by my ‘insider’ position. During my professional experiences working within sport and disability sport over the last few decades, I had both experienced and/or witnessed the outcomes of these top-down policies. I not only have an intimate knowledge of their impact on the sector, but as a deliverer of disability sport opportunities it could be argued I have also been an integral part of some policy process. However, the analysis presented in Chapter 6 will attest, this ‘insider’ position was beneficial. Underpinned by these experiences and my knowledge of the dominant disability model of the time, disability sport policy in Aotearoa NZ is presented contextually for better understanding of how the sector has evolved to where it is today. Recognising the influence of ableism in sport provided an analytical perspective, a more informed lens, to better critique these sport and disability sport policies. Consideration was given to how the structures, perspectives and producers of these policies conceptualised and positioned disability sport provision and the implicit and explicit expectations of the impact the policies on sport organisations and YPwI’s participation.

At a more personal level, in addition to the historical and current document analysis, research participants were invited to provide any documentation they thought important and illustrative of their participation experiences. Examples of organisational resources included strategic plans, and training manuals such as that from The Scout Association of New Zealand (2004) *Special Needs Awareness* manual. This documentation provided background information on how sport organisations include disability or not.

Participants

While recognising that the voice of YPwI are central to my research, the value of parents’ and coaches’/leaders’ voices cannot be negated. These adults, who may best be defined as the enablers/champions, were also included in the case studies. It is well recognised that parents in particular play an important role in enabling and supporting young people’s engagement in sport and active recreation (see Allender et al., 2006). But so too do those directly involved in

the delivery of these opportunities – the coaches/leaders (Cushion, Huntley, & Townsend, 2021). The selection of which coaches/leaders to include was decided by the YPwl and their parents about who they believed had been instrumental in enabling engagement. Gathering information from the lived experiences of these three different groups of ‘participants’ in disability sport enabled rich in-depth information and meaning to be sourced. Each YPwl, their parent(s) and coach/leader was treated as an independent case study and also as a collective case.

Participant recruitment

While research based on case studies cannot be extrapolated across an entire group or population (Creswell et al., 2007), ensuring participants are representative of the group or population being researched is important. Participants in my research reflected, where possible, those YPwl aged 10 to 14 years engaged in sport and active recreation. Key research participants had either been born with or had acquired a physical or sensory impairment. To be considered for this research, YPwl were required to be currently engaged in organised sport and/or active recreation.

Participant recruitment drew on my professional networks (see Ellard-Gray, Jeffrey, Choubak, & Crann, 2015) within disability sport as well as electronic snowballing (Darcy & Dowse, 2013) through social media channels (e.g., Facebook). Originally, my recruitment plan was timed to coincide with the Halberg Games in Auckland (September/October 2020). Support from Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ) nationally and regional disability sport organisations (RDSOs) would rely upon direct referrals and personal contact in the first instance. Face-to-face meetings were considered important for building rapport (Hart, 1992; Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2015), providing adequate time for the YPwl to contribute to the research (Hill et al., 2016) and creating a more authentic opportunity for the YPwl to have agency of their voice (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012).

Unfortunately, Covid-19 resulted in the disruption and cancellation of many sporting opportunities and competitions for months including the Halberg Games. A revised recruitment strategy, a ‘call-to-action’ campaign relying on snowball sampling was implemented. Snowball sampling is a commonly used method to sample hard-to-reach or hidden populations (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015). My ‘call-to-action’ campaign aimed at capturing the attention and imagination of YPwl, their parents, and others who may know of eligible

participants. Covid-19's impact was on more than just the recruitment plan. The way participants were engaged in the latter phases of my research was similarly impacted, moving from in-person meetings to relying on online interactions.

Two-phase co-design recruitment approach

A two-phase recruitment approach was used to recruit the participants. The first – the call-to-action – used digital and social channels to distribute recruitment fliers. The second phase involved a vetting/screening questionnaire to elicit more information on participants from parents. The purpose was to recruit participants from different backgrounds participating in a variety of sports and forms of active recreation to determine if there was any commonality that would allow for analytical generalisations (Yin, 2018, p. 40). The recruitment flier was co-designed with the support of two highly experienced sports coaches (WT & SE). Their advice to simplify the flier, be targeted in what was being asked and be clear on what was needed from the reader were integrated into the final design, because the flier was a call-to-action where parents were directed to a dedicated website to complete a nomination questionnaire.

Seven parents from the dsport youth group with children aged 10-14 years, were invited to pilot and test the nomination questionnaire. These parents were asked for feedback on whether the website information made sense, the instructions were clear, and the questionnaire was easy to complete and follow, as well as the functionality of the questionnaire. These parents – as representatives of the target group of the questionnaire – were also invited to provide suggestions and improvements to the questionnaire. Responses from parents included, for example:

In your question about mobility aids – you probably want to include a cane as the most common mobility aid for the visually impaired.
(RH, father of CH aged 16)

The questionnaire was great, easy to follow, I thought your range of answers were thorough (often we can't 'tick a box' and I could with all your questions – easily). I have no specific comments at all, it was excellent.
(TS, mother of HS aged 9)

The parents also noted the need for research that attempts to centralise and give agency to the voices and experiences of disabled young people. For example,

Ooooooh, this is awesome ... I wish there were more people like you in the world, that can actually make a difference! If only everyone understood how important these things are to our kids. (TS, mother of HS aged 9)

Website development

Recognising the need to provide additional information supporting the call-to-action I developed my research website, www.weareintheteam.com (see Figure 6). I provided detailed information on the purpose of my research as well as providing the functionality to administer the nomination questionnaire.



Figure 6 We are in the team research logo

In addition to promoting the call-to-action, blog posts outlined my research and reflections of my research journey. Joining as a subscriber enabled anyone interested in this research, whether as a participant, parent, coach/leader, sports organisation or fellow academic, to receive notifications of updates or independently return to the site for news on progress and findings.

Recruitment fliers

The purpose of the recruitment flier was two-fold. Firstly, the aim was to promulgate information about my research through the sport system to seek potential participants, and secondly, to act as an initial screening for the case studies. Ethical approval was received for a draft flier based on the original premise of meeting potential participants face-to-face. A participant vetting process presented the opportunity to convey additional information on my research prior to committing, meeting the preapproved ethical principles. Two designs were tested again using members of the dsport youth group – one targeting the YPwl, the other parents. In response to feedback, one revised flier was used for the actual participant recruitment.

Research criteria clearly articulated the boundaries for participant recruitment. Participants must be aged 10-14 years, have physical or sensory impairments, and be currently engaged in sport and active recreation within a sport, not an education context (see Figure 7). Because the focus of this research was YPwl participating in sports teams and active recreation groups, this third criterion was included to provide an exclusionary filter. Exclusions included participation in only specific disability groups, such as the dsport youth group, in-school sport and PE, and school-only sports teams. The dsport youth group members, with whom I have worked with for many years, were excluded to remove any semblance of bias in my research.

The recruitment flier was sent to 110 organisations via email in late 2020: 16 national and regional disability sport organisations including Paralympics New Zealand, the Halberg Foundation and Parafeds; 28 national sports organisations representing IPC recognised Para sport in New Zealand; 24 disability-related organisations including Government agencies – such as Sport NZ and Ministry of Education; 33 national sporting organisations and 8 national recreation organisations, including Scouts NZ, Girl Guiding and YMCA. Forty-eight national sports organisations were excluded. Exclusion rationale included: outside of target population (such as Special Olympics); age and membership (e.g., motor racing and flying which have minimum age limits older than my research age range), lack of YPwl as members (e.g., American football and MMA) and non-active recreation definition (e.g. e-sports).



I'm looking for:

- **4 or 5 young people**
- **aged 10-14 years**
- **with a physical impairment**
- **who participate in sport and/or active recreation**

I want to hear from them about their experiences in sport and active recreation as a disabled young person.

Why? So I find out what contributes to their positive experiences and how this can be used to help get more disabled young people participating.

About me I'm Catriona McBean and I am doing my doctoral research at the University of Waikato in Disability Sport. I work for [dsport](#) in Wellington. I am a Paralympics New Zealand board member and in 2018 I volunteered at the Winter Paralympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Next year I hope to be at the Tokyo Paralympic Games.

[Nominate here](#)



For more information, you can contact me Catriona McBean cm289@students.waikato.ac.nz

Figure 7 We are in the team recruitment flier

The email included the call-to-action and a request for their support in promoting my research. Organisations were asked to help circulate my fliers through their networks, including circulating to their members and posting on social media. The aim was to create a 'snowball' effect for participant recruitment (see Ellard-Gray et al., 2015). Random tracking of organisations' actions to my request indicated organisations did circulate this call-to-action to their members through newsletters and on social media (see Figure 8).

Although organisations such as Netball Southland promoted my research, disappointingly, this method was less successful than anticipated. Within the first 6-week recruitment window, only 10 nomination questionnaires were completed.

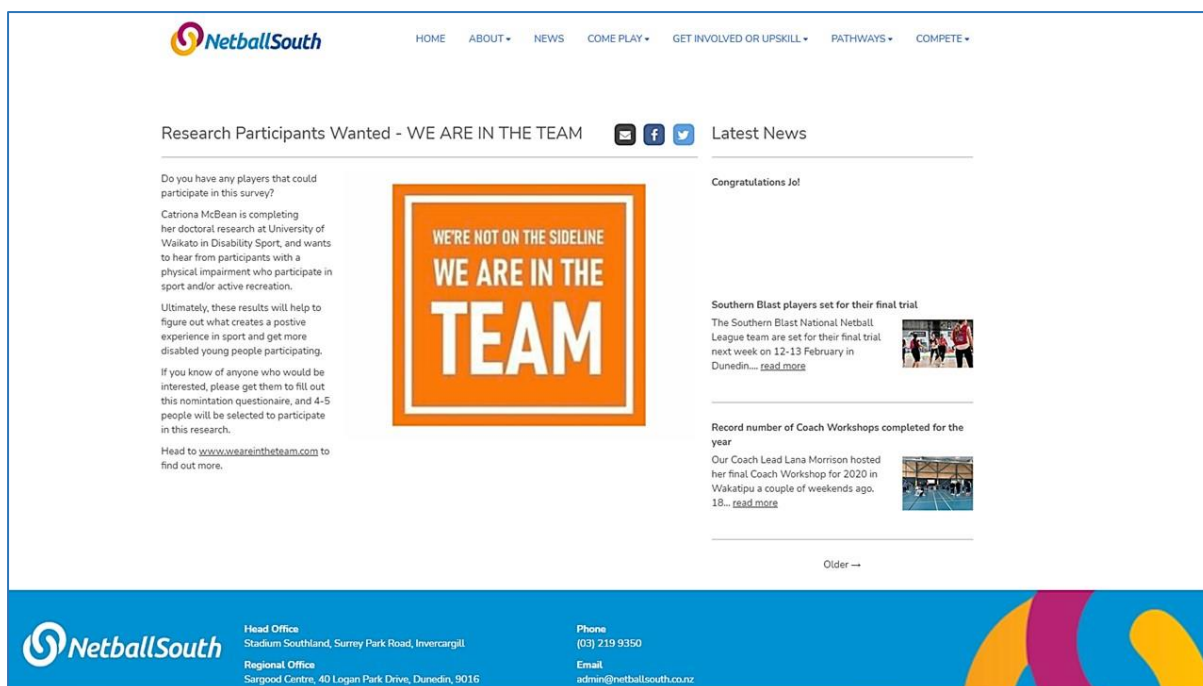


Figure 8 Research promotion by Netball South

Reprinted with permission (Netball South, 2020)

Connecting with Māori and Pacific participants/communities/groups through usual European/western methods, such as social media, emails and fliers does not always result in engagement. These groups often prefer face-to-face approaches (Dyall et al., 2013). Unfortunately Covid-19 impacted on face-to-face approaches and identifying which groups to approach online to assist with Māori and Pacific participant recruitment was difficult. Information on who to approach was not readily available through the normal sport or disability sport avenues. Tofa Mamao, an independent grassroots collective of Pacific disabled peoples, their families and carers (www.tofamamao.com), was contacted after an online search for disability groups. In response to my approach to Tofa Mamao, I was invited to talk about my research on breakfast radio on the dedicated Pacific radio station Pacific Media Network 531pi⁹. Sadly, no Pasifika participants were nominated for my research. Kāpo Māori Aotearoa, a membership-based organisation for Māori and non-Māori with vision impairments and disabilities was also located online and contacted via email (their only advertised contact method at the time). My email seeking advice and guidance as to how to engage Māori in this research went unanswered despite follow-up emails.

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/531pi/videos/catriona-mcbean-talks-to-pacific-breakfast-regarding-a-research-study-into-young/154487149699684/>

A second recruitment drive occurred in late April and early May 2021 to coincide with the Halberg Games. Recruitment fliers were distributed to teams and most team members during evening mealtimes. Following the games, team leaders were sent an email outlining my research and asked to circulate the recruitment material amongst their team members. A similar email was also sent to an updated circulation list of the national sports organisations, disability organisations and other interested organisations. Support and promotion for this second recruitment drive was noticeably higher within disability organisations than sports organisations. Facebook posts by the NZ Disability Rights Commissioner, with nearly 3,000 followers; Parafed Auckland; Wheelchair Rugby; Blind Sport NZ; Muscular Dystrophy Association of NZ; and Peke Waihanga Artificial Limb Service (see Figures 9 and 10) all promoted my research. Potential research participants were recruited through these promotions.

Paula Tesoriero - NZ Disability Rights Co... [Send Message](#) [Liked](#) [Search](#) [More](#)

Paula Tesoriero - NZ Disability Rights Commissioner [More](#)
7 May at 10:13 · [Public](#)

We're not on the sideline we're in the team! I What a great refrain and how important it is for disabled people not to be sidelined right? According to Sport NZ, disabled people are under represented in taking part in sport and active recreation - <https://bit.ly/3xSy9ak> If you want to play a valuable role in helping get more opportunities for young people with physical impairments (YPwL) in sport and active recreation, I encourage you to take part in this study to identify... [See more](#)

I'm looking for:

- 4 or 5 young people
- aged 10-14 years
- with a physical impairment
- who participate in sport and/or active recreation

I want to hear from them about their experiences in sport and active recreation as a disabled young person.

Why? So I find out what contributes to their positive experiences and how this can be used to help get more disabled young people participating.

About me I'm Catriona McBean and I am doing my doctoral research at the University of Waikato in Disability Sport. I work for dsport in Wellington. I am a Paralympics New Zealand board member and in 2018 I volunteered at the Winter Paralympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea. I was selected to volunteer at the Paralympic Games in Tokyo later this year, but Covid-19 restrictions have changed so sadly I am unable to attend.

Find our more at www.weareinthe team.com

For more information, you can contact me Catriona McBean cm289@students.waikato.ac.nz

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Figure 9 Research promotion by the NZ Disability Rights Commissioner

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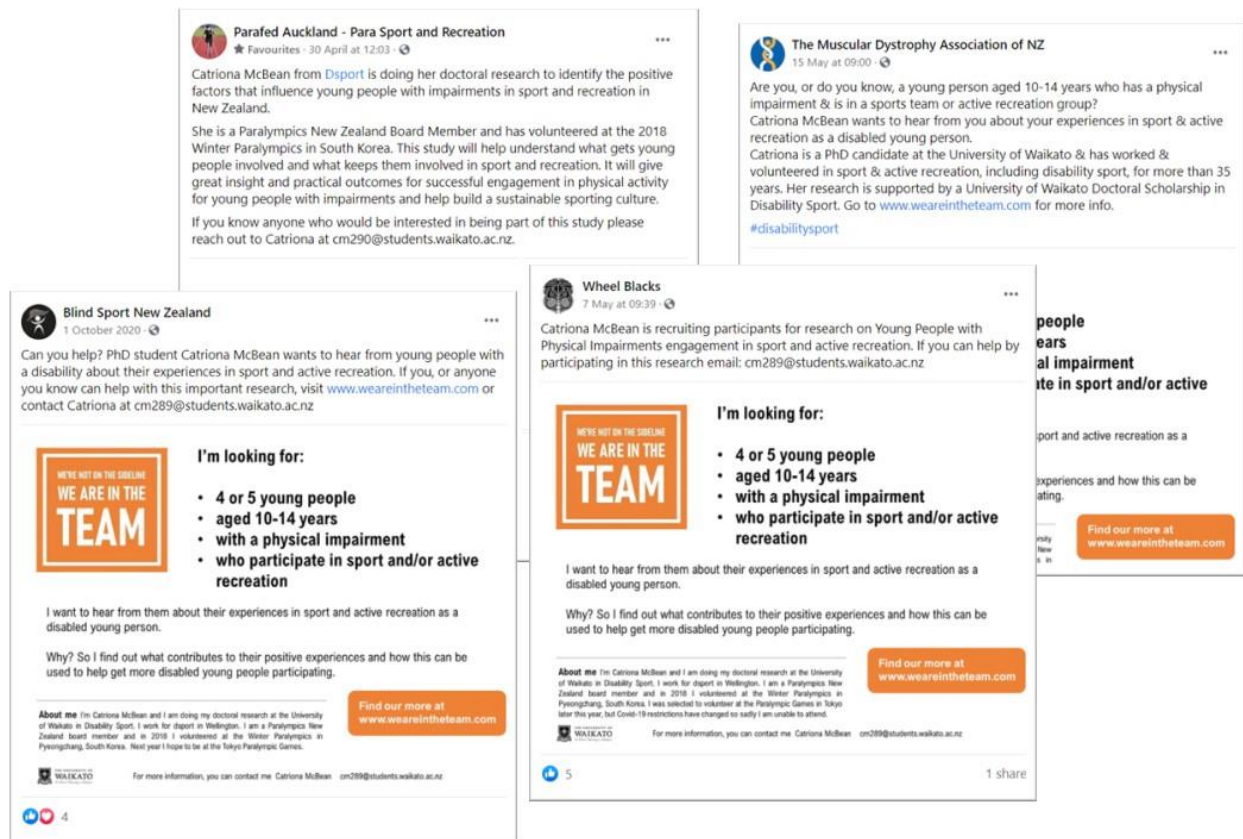


Figure 10 Social media promotion

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Nomination questionnaire

I employed a nomination questionnaire for parents to nominate their YPwI for inclusion in my research (see Appendix 1). While questionnaires have traditionally been used by quantitative researchers to gather data and facts, their use in qualitative research is suitable when answers may be complex but the “respondent’s own words are important” (Jones, 2015, p. 154). Questionnaires also give respondents more time to consider and complete the questions, allowing for reflection and revision (Gratton & Jones, 2009). Consistent with the relationship between research based from a constructive paradigm and the participation of research participants, my questionnaire was one method of multiple methods I used for creating the constructed knowledge (see Romm, 2013) used in this study.

I used an online questionnaire designed in Qualtrics software and administered via my website. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, the first relating to the YPwI and the second

on to family/whānau¹⁰. Closed and more structured questions, such as biographical information, including sport and recreation behaviours, as well as open-ended questions seeking more detailed information from those defined as enablers/champions, were included. Each response was assessed against the overarching criteria to determine eligibility for a case study. Information provided in the responses supplemented the YPwl's later conversations.

Seven (7) responses were received within the first 7 days of the second recruitment drive. On review of the initial responses, answers to one question raised a red flag. This question asked respondents to list all sports and active recreation the YPwl participated in. Nearly 60% of the responses listed cycling. Critically assessing these responses, I concluded these were a misinterpretation (substantiated later during screening interviews) and referred to casual informal cycling, not club-based organised cycling. Unlike swimming which I listed with the disclaimer 'not learn-to-swim lessons', cycling was not listed with a caveat. A revised version of the questionnaire was reposted, with this question reworded to "Cycling – club and group-based". In the second cohort of responses (following an email reminder to the 110 organisations) the few who selected cycling did refer to participation in organised cycling.

Nominations received

In total, 17 nominations, via the questionnaire, were received prior to the selection of the case study participants. Of these nominations, three were incomplete. Two dsport youth group members, who had received the recruitment call from other sports and organisations they were involved with were excluded from the case-study recruitment pool (see Figure 11). In total, 11 eligible responses were considered eligible for the case studies.

¹⁰ In Te Reo Māori, whanau describes a wider and extended family group, often multi-layered, flexible and dynamic.

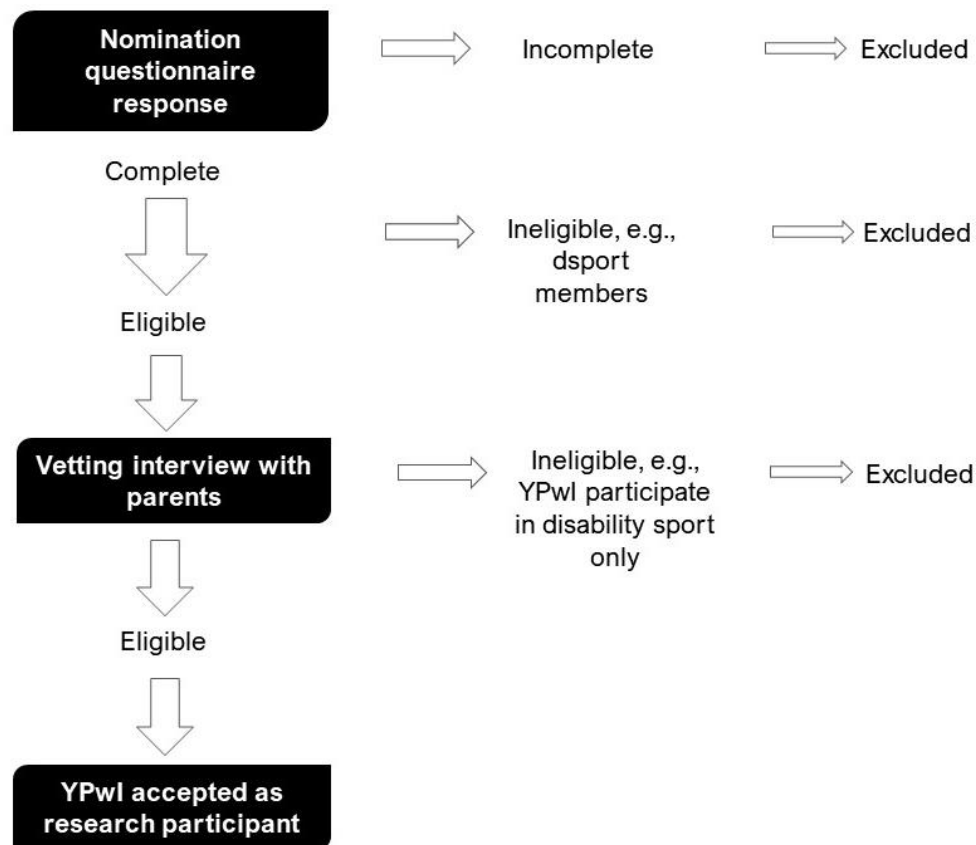


Figure 11 Case study participant recruitment process

Nominee demographics

Of the eligible nominations, most nominees were Pākehā males aged 13 or 14 years with cerebral palsy (CP) (see Figure 12). This demographic is consistent with the research participants of Kanagasabai (2016) (Pākehā (70%) males (68%) with CP (45%)), and comparable to the *Active NZ* surveys (Sport New Zealand, 2017, 2021a) where twelve percent of the 6004 young survey respondents (aged 5-17 years) identified as disabled. Only five geographical areas were represented but these included nominees from large cities and smaller towns. Empirically, Auckland, Wellington and Canterbury are not only the larger cities in Aotearoa NZ, but they are serviced by well-established regional disability sport organisations who helped in promoting my research. The similarities of my nominees with the other data provided confidence that my case studies can be used to provide generalisations (see Yin, 2018) constructed from the voices of the YPwl.

| | | | Sports | % |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Age | 10-12 years | 27% | | |
| | 13 years | 40% | | |
| | 14 years | 33% | | |
| Gender | Male | 73% | Swimming | 40 |
| | Female | 27% | Cycling | 40 |
| Ethnicity | Pakehā | 73% | Athletics | 33 |
| | Pakehā/Māori | 13.5% | Disability sport | 33 |
| | Pacifika | 13.5% | Football | 27 |
| Impairment | Cerebral Palsy | 40% | Sailing | 13.5 |
| | Vision impairment | 33% | Snowsports | 13.5 |
| | Other | 47% | Triathlon | 13.5 |
| Residence | Auckland | 43% | Badminton, Basketball, | 7 |
| | Wellington | 21.5% | Cross fit, Gymsports, Rock Climbing, | |
| | Canterbury | 21.5% | Rugby, Rugby League, Sea Scouts, | |
| | Hawkes Bay | 7% | Surfing, Touch Rugby and Volleyball | |
| | Waikato | 7% | | |

Figure 12 Nomination questionnaire demographics

While not all nominations were selected to participate in the case studies, the information they provided via the questionnaire did provide a useful overview of YPwI in Aotearoa NZ. Nineteen (19) sports and active recreation activities participated in by the respondents (Figure 12) cover a breadth of individual and team sports and activities. Most YPwI were recorded as participating in three or more sports or active recreation activities.

The clustering of participation (see Figure 13) is reflective of the influence of impairment (vis-à-vis the social relational model of disability). Not all impairments exhibit the same influence on participation in different sports. For example, contact team sports such as basketball and rugby were played by an amputee but not represented in responses from athletes with CP or vision impairments, who tended to favour individual sports.

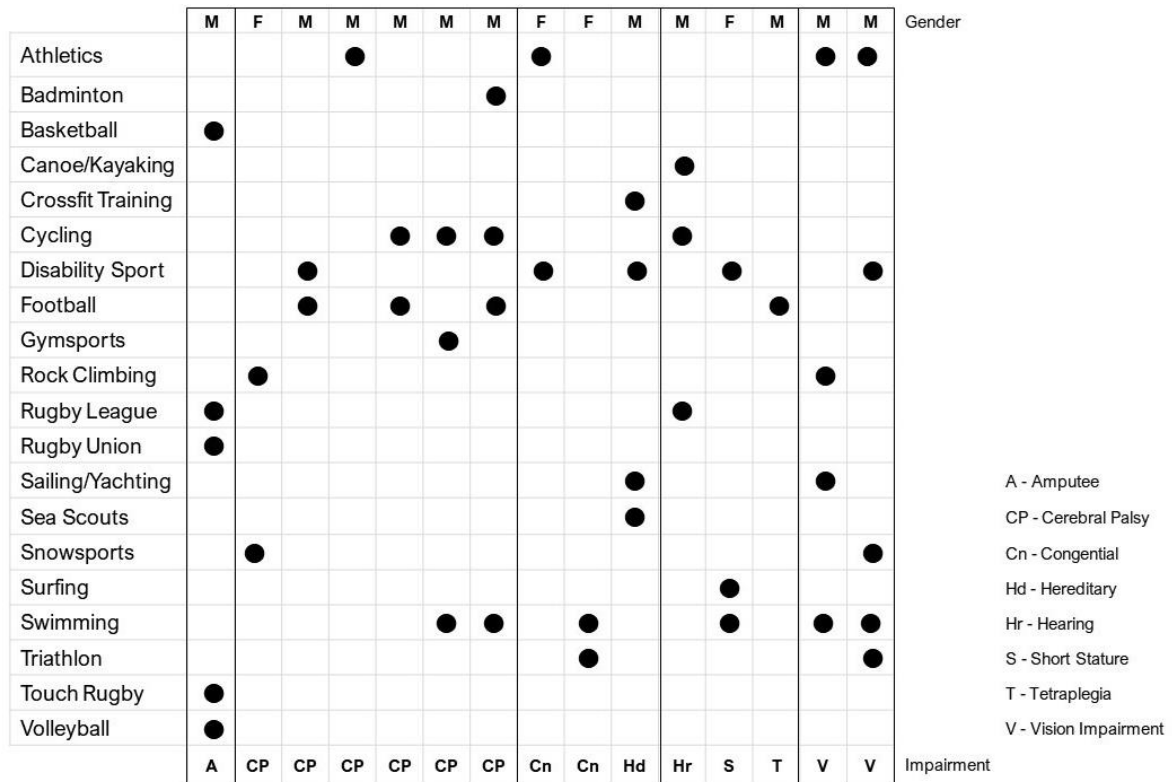


Figure 13 Sport participation response by gender and impairment

Case study selection

Yin (2018) describes multiple-case study research as following analogous logic. “Each case must be carefully selected so that the individual case studies either (a) results (*a literal replication*) [original emphasis] or (b) predict contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons (*a theoretical replication*)” (p. 55). Using this logic, the selection of case study participants was based on a two-part assessment: firstly the nomination questionnaire responses, and secondly a screening interview with parents. The aim was to achieve a balance of representation across:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Sport and active recreation participation
4. Impairment
5. Residence

Sport and active recreation participation and impairment were also considered to facilitate as wide a representation as possible for the case studies.

Nominee screening interviews

From the 11 eligible nominations, each nominator, i.e., parent, was invited to a screening interview. Nine responded to this invitation. Questions sought more context to validate the candidacy for the case study selection. Specific attention was paid to whether the nominee was actively involved in group/club-based sport and active recreation, and their level of involvement.

Participation exclusions included involvement in only PE and school-based activities or individual/family active recreation/physical activities, e.g., going to the gym, and only participating in disability sport opportunities. Five nominees were excluded through this screening process. Level and type of involvement was also an exclusion. This exclusion covered the situation where the parent, as the coach/group leader, actively facilitated the participation (i.e., parent-driven rather than YPwI-led). Further participation exclusions addressed activities such as one-off events or 'have-a-go' experiences, and where the participation was tokenistic, such as being a cheerleader. Nominees were asked to commit to the entire research period (12-18 months). If unavailable, they too were excluded.

Participant selection

Four (4) YPwI were selected for the case studies. This number was considered sufficient for my research, recognising as Yin (2018) alluded to, the time and resource constraints which must be considered when undertaking case study research.

Selected participants were:

- 2 females – Ella and Gaby and 2 males – Andrew and Quinn
- 13 or 14 years
- Impairments – cerebral palsy (Andrew and Ella), congenital limb deficiency (Gaby) and hereditary condition (Quinn).
- all live with their nuclear families – two parents and siblings – in large cities (Quinn and Gaby) or towns (Andrew and Ella).
- All four participated in a range of sports, with one identifying active recreation as their primary activity.

Socio-economic factors were not included as part of the participant selection process, but subsequent conversations with parents indicated all were able to support their YPwI's

participation. This finding is consistent with research by Wilson (2002) and more recently Andersen and Bakken (2019) who concluded that these factors, and most notably financial resources, contributed significantly to young people's involvement in sport. Further research might find the experiences of other YPwI from different socio-economic backgrounds differ from those represented by the four participants chosen. In this regard, I would like to highlight the use of alternative recruitment methods to locate research participants as the snowball method I employed alongside the timing of Covid-19 generated a narrower pool of potential participants than anticipated.

Guided conversations

Yin (2018) described case study interviews as guided conversations rather than structured queries (p. 118). Conversations were held with the YPwI, their parent(s) and coaches/leaders, using semi-structured questions (see Appendix 2) which helped me navigate the conversation towards key topics while giving agency to participants' voices and experiences (Greig, Taylor, & MacKay, 2017). Conversations were conducted online with each participant separately. Because parents and others often act as proxies for disabled young (Wickenden & Kembhavi-Tam, 2014), separate conversations gave the YPwI the opportunity to talk candidly as they are the best narrators of their needs (Note: in some cases, a parent was still within hearing distance of the YPwI's conversation, but not actively involved in the conversation). This issue of proxies has been acknowledged as resulting in disabled young people being "regularly spoken *about* [original emphasis], rather than *to*" (Kembhavi & Wirz, 2009, p. 410). Furthermore, my approach recognised that relying solely on assumptions from parents and those without impairments about what is best for young people will only perpetuate the status quo and is unlikely to change or enhance opportunities (Oliver, 1996; Vogts et al., 2010). Not giving disabled young people the opportunity to express their own views, but relying on others, precludes their perspectives from being voiced and these may be different from parents' and coaches'/leaders' perception of their views and needs (Kembhavi & Wirz, 2009).

I acknowledge that my experiences in the disability sport sector impacted these conversations "because it allowed me to approach the study with some knowledge about the subject and to address certain topics more easily or even be aware that I should address them" (Berger, 2015, p. 5). I am conversant in the language and vernacular of disability sport and am aware of the nuances and subtleties of participation. This familiarity enabled me to stimulate discussion on areas which may not otherwise have been considered to gain a better

understanding of the participant's experiences. For example I was able to delve into what makes the YPwl want to go to their sport or activity each week/session; or from a parent's perspective, what can a sport offer to enhance their YPwl's experiences. Understanding the complexity of lived experiences, better positioned me to obtain detailed and rich information without steering the participants to a predetermined or particular 'issue'. Aware that previous research, as presented in Chapter 3, has tended to focus on the barriers and constraints of participation and less so on the positive attributes which help engender the participation of YPwl, I used my 'insider' position to build on existing research and expand the knowledge base on disability sport.

The semi-structured questions, pre-determined follow-ups and prompts (see Rubin, 2004) were reviewed by PM, a schoolteacher with 25+ years' experience teaching teenagers. As a 'critical friend' (see Handal, 1999) who provided "alternative perspectives, support, and protection from bias and self-delusion" (Foulger, 2010, p. 140), PM's personal integrity, professional competence, trust and honesty, along with my willingness to change, were integral to the guided conversations. In response to PM's feedback, I modified the language and restructured questions to direct the ebb and flow of the conversation. I removed potentially dichotomous questions from the YPwl conversations where it was identified that the YPwl were more likely to answer the question literally (e.g., yes or no) than provide more detailed and elaborate answers.

The questions used for each group of conversations were different. Questions were grouped by topic applicable to each audience. For example the YPwl questions included: a) introductory and warm-up questions, such as "Can you tell me a bit about yourself" or "Tell me about the sports you play"; b) main questions, for example "What is it that makes you want to go to [*sport*] each week/session"; and c) closing questions, including "Do you have any suggestions for people who want to provide opportunities for YPwl". While the YPwl and parent questions centred on their participation experiences, the coach/leader questions were designed to gain wider insight into key areas around organisational capacity and capability. The coach/leader conversations were framed towards how the sport structurally includes and supports YPwl; for example "Do you think your club/team/group made any special efforts/adjustments to help [YPwl] join in?" or "From your experience, do you think some sports are easier to achieve inclusion in than others?" to help determine whether these evolved organically for individual YPwl or because of policy. While I was careful not to impose my opinions, I did share and disclose some experiences and stories, especially with the YPwl. The purpose was to build trust and enable them to feel more comfortable sharing their stories and

experiences. This was pertinent because building rapport in online conversations is sometimes more difficult than when conversations are in-person.

Each participant and I engaged in one-on-one conversations, independently of any other participant. Each conversation lasted between 50 and 110 minutes and was recorded via audio and video using Zoom videoconferencing software. Conversations were sequenced to start with the YPwI, followed by their parent(s) and finally their coach/leader, over a period of a few days/weeks depending on the availability of each participant. This sequence allowed for information presented in earlier conversations to help guide and elicit more detailed information on topics for further enquiry, as well as informally check for factual accuracy. For the YPwI, a parent was often within hearing distance of the conversation (e.g., the computer was located in a communal room at the YPwI's residence) but generally did not engage in the conversation except at the beginning and end of the conversation. Once or twice a parent provided a prompt for the YPwI to help them answer the question in more detail than a monosyllabic response typical of a young person (for example "Tell her what you do there").

For the parent conversation, parents were invited to attend as one parent or both parents. Two parents (both mothers) attended as the sole parent participant, while the other YPwIs' parents both participated in their conversation. The coach/leader conversations were held with the coach/leader nominated by the YPwI, in consultation with their parents. Parents provided the contact details of the coach/leader after confirming with them their willingness to participate in this research. All coach/leaders indicated their experiences of coaching/leading YPwIs often came from personal lived experiences with disability rather than any structured education. They recognised the importance of this research to improving other YPwI's opportunities in sport and active recreation by sharing their experiences as a coach/leader.

All participants were invited to provide further information via additional conversations or by email. Only one YPwI requested a second conversation, elaborating a little more information provided during their first conversation.

Impact of Covid-19 on conversations and going online

Taking a lead from Teachman and Gibson (2013) who recommended a toolkit of methods for interviewing disabled young people, I was cognisant of the need to be agile and flexible in my conversations. Recognising the differences in participants' age, ability and potentially their communication styles, I was prepared to use different methods to provide a welcoming and

supportive environment conducive to hearing each participant's voice. Originally the guided conversations were to be administered face-to-face, either in the home for YPwI or at an alternative neutral environment, such as the local sports centre. For coaches/leaders conversations were expected to be conducted at their home or office or a neutral environment – whichever was most applicable. It was anticipated that after the initial face-to-face conversation, any subsequent conversations could then be either in person or online.

While the preferred method was face-to-face, to establish trust, build rapport and create a welcoming environment for the YPwI to share their stories (see Bassett, Beagan, Ristovski-Slijepcevic, & Chapman, 2008), the reality of researching in a Covid-19 environment required a revision of methods. Government restrictions and uncertainty around the Covid-19 alert level changes meant planning for face-to-face conversations was untenable. In February 2021, for example, the Aotearoa NZ Government implemented in quick succession three alert level changes within three weeks, including placing limitations on non-essential travel and introducing 'stay-at-home' protocols.

This prohibition of travel and interactions outside of personal households, resulted in the guided conversations being undertaken online, using Zoom video conferencing software (see <https://zoom.us/zoom.us/>). The consequence of this change was a different 'feel' to the conversation including taking a little longer time to build rapport. In addition, while young people are generally seen as being technically savvy and online communication is the norm for their generation, technology itself did have an impact on interviews. For example, during my first conversation after a long pause, Quinn stated "Oops, my internet went out". At other times I had to rely upon descriptions of actions, such as Andrew trying to express in words the actions of a swimming stroke, as his camera could not capture it this visually. While the nuances of body language were possibly missed by going online, one positive of using Zoom to record conversations was an accurate record to refer back to.

Conversation transcriptions

Despite the concerns highlighted above, Zoom functionality provided both audio and video recordings that helped facilitate the creation of verbatim transcripts. Permission was sought from all participants before recording these conversations. Various transcription software was trialled, but successive incomplete transcripts identified the inability of the software to accurately interpret and understand accents, and vocal and vocabulary nuances. Otter (see <https://Otter.ai>) was selected not only for the software functionality and integration with Zoom,

but more importantly for the software's ability to understand and interpret New Zealand accents and speakers with imperfect speech patterns. Otter.ai transcripts were approximately 90-95% accurate and required minimal manual editing.

Completed transcripts were emailed to each participant for review, correction (such as misinterpreted team names), and approval, similar to a form of member reflections (Smith & McGannon, 2018). With the exception of changes correcting names, all participants agreed the transcripts were accurate and represented their experiences. No participant sought to provide alternative responses to those originally provided or present new insights despite a few parents stating in their original interviews that they would think further about a question and come back with a more detailed answer if they had anything further to add. This lack of additional information was taken as tacit acceptance that no additions were required.

Transcripts from all participant conversations were collated and used as the primary information source for the case studies in Chapter 5 and subsequent cross-case analysis and recommendations.

In vivo coding

The importance of understanding lived experiences is fundamental to the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm (see Schwandt, 1998) and provided a framework for my research. Using NVivo software (see <https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home>) each conversation was analysed and coded inductively. Inductive coding is empirically grounded and codes are constructed "progressively during data collection" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020, p. 81). Conversation transcripts were manually coded using the lived experiences and voices of the case study participants (i.e., in vivo coding).

A two-cycle inductive coding process began with conversations from YPwI, parents and coach/leaders coded independently, e.g., the YPwI who "loved running and playing" or "finding their purpose" from the parents, highlighting key words or phrases. The second cycle amalgamated the conversations from the three different perspectives for analysis and interpretation across the cases (see Appendix 3). Based on my personal and professional experiences in and understanding of sport, active recreation and disability sport, the key words and phrases were grouped together to represent common and consistent topics and themes. For example, 'things to do with friends', 'fun and enjoyment' and 'happiest' were coded

together as they were interpreted to relate to friendship and friends, while “loves to give everything a go’ and ‘self-awareness, can do, can’t do’ were considered representative of commitment and dedication, and coded accordingly.

Further cross-case coding, collating the responses from the YPwl, their parents and coaches/leaders together, and the subsequent analysis enhanced the ability of the findings to be generalised and transferable (see Miles et al., 2020). Although the cross-case coding incorporated the perspectives from all participants, in subsequent analysis I was aware of the importance of affirming the agency of the YPwls’ voices. Parent(s) and coaches/leaders’ input was used to substantiate and enrich that of the YPwl perspective, rather than dominate it. Themes, created from the cross-cases (see Chapter 7), were the catalyst for the anti-ableist framework designed to assist in the understanding and meaning of disability sport and help improve the delivery of opportunities for YPwl.

Co-created understanding and meaning

As iterated in Chapter 1, my experiences in sport and disability sport span a number of decades in the roles of active participant, event management, sport administration and governance. There is no doubt all these experiences were influential in how I undertook, analysed and interpreted the conversations with all participants. Similar to Berger (2015), I was able to position myself as an ‘insider’ researcher, sharing my own experiences working for dsport and with PNZ, knowledgeable about the organisations many of them were directly involved with, such as local Parafed’s, using the correct language and my understanding of the wider sport system created a strong practitioner research lens.

While Fitzgerald and Kirk (2008) argue non-disabled ‘parasite’ researchers often marginalise disabled young peoples’ experiences by only seeking opinions of parents, teachers or coaches, and not the young people themselves, I believe my experiences spending time with YPwl in disability sport positioned my interpretation and analysis towards understanding their experiences and perspective. As mentioned earlier, my motivation for undertaking this research was based on my observations of disabled young people missing out on sport and active recreation and the challenges I have faced as a practitioner attempting to redress this issue. While understanding how YPwl experienced sport was important, for me it was also important to reflect on my position as a researcher and ‘insider’. I was challenged by my supervisors to step back from being purely a practitioner to being a critical researcher, basing

my analysis and findings in disability theory, supplemented by practice. The social relational model of disability provided a theoretical position which helped provide a more meaningful way to understand disability than other models. It resonated with my experiences as a practitioner while providing an analytical lens applicable to the document analysis and guided conversations alike. The model helped me better understand the relationship between the experiences of individual YPwI and the disabling effects inherent in the ableist provision of sport in Aotearoa NZ.

In representing their experiences, I was conscious of the need for the YPwI to speak in their authentic voice and “make themselves visible and define themselves as authors of their own world” (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 309). Inherent within my approach was acknowledging the power dynamics of me, as a non-disabled person in a position of privilege, ‘giving voice’ to YPwI. In creating an approach that centralised the voices of the YPwIs, I employed a process that layered the YPwI’s narratives (see Chapter 5) with my experiences to create an anti-ableist framework (see Chapter 7). The intent of this approach was not only to identify and clarify the inherent ableism within sport, but also to enhance the understanding of YPwI and provide signposts for the sport system as to how to navigate and evolve from an ableist system to one which enables YPwI’s participation in the sport system.

Creating understanding and meaning from these YPwIs’ lived experiences was a fundamental phase of my research methodology. A summary of key themes created from the case studies and cross case analysis was presented to the YPwI to review and critique. They were invited to identify any omissions and share any further examples of their experiences, which few did, as they indicated these themes were comprehensive. During a further online conversation with each YPwI, they were asked a series of questions designed to test the validity of these themes (see Figure 31) by sense-checking them against their own lived experiences. All agreed the themes were representative of their experiences and believed they were important for sport organisations to understand. The overarching premise of this approach was to improve how organisations deliver quality sport and active recreation opportunities for YPwI, and disabled people generally. By hearing from the YPwI themselves, a group previously omitted from engagement in research, oppressed by perceptions of competency and capability and positioned as ‘other’, my approach has enabled these YPwI to co-create understanding and meaning, bringing a new perspective and lens to disability sport research in Aotearoa NZ.

Ethical considerations

Assumptions around the lack of capability of disabled people and young people has resulted in their under-representation in research (Martin & Franklin, 2009; Tisdall, 2012; Underwood, Chan, Koller, & Valeo, 2015). In terms of vulnerability, it is recognised there are some groups more likely to be labelled vulnerable than others. Lahman (2018) argued that just because children are young, this does not make them any more vulnerable than other groups within society. Child participants can be “capable and competent, yet vulnerable” (p. 19) but should be treated with dignity and respect. As such, disability or youth, in and of themselves, are not criteria for vulnerability. People “want to be treated with respect and in a moral manner” (Lahman, Geist, Rodriguez, Graglia, & DeRoche, 2011, p. 1401). Providing a framework for ethical participation in my research, Culturally Responsive Relational Reflective Ethics (CRRRE) presents eight points for a researcher to be cognisant of. The points describe ethical research as being a study where the researcher:

- a) is socio-culturally conscious
 - b) is able to operate from an asset-based framework seeing all participants’ backgrounds as opportunities for research
 - c) sees herself/himself as a change agent responsible for creating environments for all participants to be successfully heard
 - d) is able to creatively navigate varied participants’ communication styles and preferences in order to co-construct knowledge
 - e) utilizes the individual participants’ stories to expand and build their knowledge base, [...]
 - f) seeks the good through research
 - g) is reflective throughout the research process, and
 - h) cultivates culturally responsive relationally reflective research practices.
- (Lahman et al., 2011, p. 1404)

In total, 12 participants were included in my research – four YPwI, their parent(s) and their coaches/leaders. Consent was sought through both written consent and verbal corroboration of consent prior to conversations. All participants participated voluntarily and were advised during the written consent stage by their parent(s). This was reiterated again before the first conversations, including advising the participant they could withdraw at any time without cause. No participant withdrew from my research (see Appendix 5). While requiring parental consent may preclude some from participating in research (see Chabot, Shoveller, Spencer, & Johnson, 2012), because the parents were the nominators, no YPwI was precluded from participating. Consent to record conversations with YPwI was reconfirmed prior to any recording to reduce any inferred coercion of YPwI by the parent(s) consent. At no time was there any indication that a YPwI was coerced into participating in my research.

Privacy and confidentiality of information was important given the age of my research participants. Each YPwl was invited to choose a pseudonym for use in my research. After discussions with the YPwl and their parents about the purpose of a pseudonym, each YPwl was asked to take time to consider a name. After much consideration, each YPwl chose to use their real name, recognising this would mean their identity was publicly known. While my research gives agency to the voices of YPwl, they are still legally minors and as such, consent from each parent was sought, again ensuring the parents were aware privacy and confidentiality would be relinquished by this decision. Each parent agreed, having confirmed they had discussed this with the YPwl and were comfortable with information they provided being identifiable. Parents and coaches/leaders are not named, instead referred to by their relationship to the YPwl.

This research was approved by the University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Committee HREC (Health) 2020#25.

Reflection on the agency of YPwl voice

Reflection is an integral part of many qualitative research methods, and I used it to help consolidate my interpretation and understanding of my findings. Designed to enable the YPwl to be active collaborators as well as agents of change (see Cahill, 2007), my research addressed the gap in agency and voice of YPwls in previous research (see Anaby et al., 2013; see Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2018). Giving agency to the voice and perspective of the YPwl (see Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012) conjoined with my practical knowledge and understanding of sport and recreation management, gives this research a unique perspective. Remaining cognisant of the need to further bridge the gap between participant and organisation, other research methods such as Participatory Action Research (PAR) would not only facilitate centralising the participant but also provide a meaningful way for sport organisations to navigate the balance between participant needs and organisational capability and sustainability of disability sport.

Chapter summary

Selecting the best methodology to give agency to the voices of the YPwl, while recognising the value of my 'insider' position to this research, was fundamental. Case studies offered the best method for capturing their lived experiences in sport and active recreation. Choosing this case

study methodology enabled me to use corroborating information from conversations with parents and coaches/leaders as well as historical and current document analysis. Recruiting and engaging research participants, although impacted by Covid-19, was still achieved albeit using digital technology rather than face-to-face meetings. Four (4) YPwl were recruited varying in gender, age, location of residence, impairment and sport and recreation participation. This breadth of participants was sufficient for cross-case analysis and the construction of generalised findings. Common themes constructed from the cross-case analysis, were acknowledged by the YPwl as reflective of their lived experiences.

Chapter 4 Aotearoa NZ disability sport landscape – ableism in action

Introduction¹¹

The purpose of this research is to understand how the provision of disability sport by sport and active recreation organisations (sport organisations) influences the participation of YPwI. In so doing it is important to consider the historical and context within which young peoples' participation is situated, understanding through the social relational model of disability how the relationship between disability and impairment has evolved over time. In this chapter I address the evolution of Government policy and the disability sport sector in Aotearoa NZ generating an historical and critical assessment to inform future policymaking. Furthermore, reviewing and analysing historical information provides a contextual backdrop to the stories of the YPwI outlined in Chapter 5. Four pieces of legislation: (1) *Physical Welfare and Recreation Act 1937*; (2) *Recreation and Sport 1973 Act*; (3) *Sport, Fitness and Leisure Act 1987*; and (4) the *Sport and Recreation Act 2002* provide the foundation for guiding this archival research. Each Act signposts a key period in which successive Labour Governments articulated their concern for disabled New Zealanders and the enactment, or lack thereof, of subsequent policy initiatives (see Figure 14). Policy in the government arena not only directs Government action and interaction in the sector, but also influences, primarily through the allocation of funding, how disability sport initiatives are developed by different sport organisations.

Government and disability policy

Even before Aotearoa NZ became a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the Government had taken steps towards meeting their commitment to improving the lives of disabled New Zealanders. Government reports, strategies and plans document this policy framework within which disability services and delivery, including sport and recreation organisations (sport organisations) in Aotearoa NZ, operate. Disability has predominantly been anchored within health and education mandates, reinforcing the influence of the medical model of disability. Illustrative of this influence was the government interest post-WWI on social security and welfare, employment and education for

¹¹ The information presented in this chapter provided the basis of the peer-reviewed article McBean et al. (2022) An historical analysis of disability sport policy in Aotearoa New Zealand, *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 14(3), 419-434.

| | SPORT & RECREATION POLICY | Year | OTHER DISABILITY POLICY | INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Medical Model of Disability | Physical Welfare and Recreation Act | 1937 | | |
| | | 1968 | | NZ inaugural Paralympic Games Tel Aviv 1968 |
| | | 1972 | Accident Compensation Act | |
| | Recreation and Sport Act | 1973 | | |
| | Ministry and NZ Council for Recreation and Sport (NZCRS) established | | | |
| | | 1974 | | 4 th Commonwealth Paraplegic Games, Dunedin |
| | Advisory Committee on Recreation for the Disabled (ACORD) established | 1975 | Disabled Persons Community Welfare Act | |
| | ACORD becomes an official NZCRS standing committee | 1979-1984 | | |
| | | 1981 | | International Year of the Disabled Persons |
| | Sport on the Move: Report to the Minister of Recreation and Sport | 1985 | | |
| Social Model of Disability | Sport, Fitness, and Leisure Act | 1987 | | |
| | Hillary Commission replaces NZCRS | | | |
| | | 1992 | | International Day of the Disabled Persons |
| | Hillary Commission No Exceptions Policy | 1998 | | |
| | | 2000 | | Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games |
| | Getting Set for an Active Nation report | 2001 | New Zealand Disability Strategy 2001 | |
| | Sport and Recreation New Zealand Act | 2002 | Office of Disability Issues established | |
| | Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) amalgamates the Hillary Commission, Sports Foundation and Office for Tourism and Sport | | | |
| | SPARC No Exceptions Strategy | 2005 | | |
| | | 2006 | | United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) |
| | Sport NZ and High Performance Sport NZ (HPSNZ) replace SPARC | 2012 | | |
| | | 2014 | NZ Disability Action Plan 2014-2018 | |
| | 2016 | New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-26 | | |
| Sport NZ Disability Plan | 2019 | NZ Disability Action Plan 2019 | | |
| Sport NZ Disability Direct Investment | 2021 | | | |
| Sport NZ Disability Investment Fund | 2022 | | | |

Figure 14 Key disability sport legislation, government initiatives and international influences

disabled people, founded on the principles of rehabilitation and culminating in the passing of the *Accident Compensation Act 1972* and the *Disabled Persons Community Welfare Act 1975* (Bolt & Heggie, 1982). Through the *New Zealand Disability Strategy (NZDS)* (Ministry of Disability Issues, 2001) and the various iterations of associated action plans, the Government's commitment to enacting social change is measured against fifteen objectives.

Within the health sector the disabled population, impairment rates and strategy targets have been the focus of research (Ministry of Health, 2015), while in the education sector the attention understandably has targeted strategies and funding for supporting learning outcomes (Creech, 1997; Ministry of Disability Issues, 2001). Of significance for my research is Objective 9 of the NZDS which relates to the Government supporting the recreation choices for disabled people through creating and promoting access to recreation by educating sport organisations about disability issues and inclusion (Ministry of Disability Issues, 2001).

Through research, the low participation rates of disabled people in sport and active recreation has been identified, resulting in Government strategy and policy designed to improve access to opportunities for disabled people. However, little is known about the disabled population participating, or not, in sport and active recreation (see Chapter 6). Anecdotally participants in disability sport number less than 7,000, but neither Sport NZ nor its antecedent organisations know much more than the information obtained from general population-wide surveys such as *Active New Zealand* surveys (Sport New Zealand, 2017, 2018a, 2019a, 2021a). Furthermore, no census of sport and active recreation provision has ever been attempted. As such, while Objective 9 presents a target by which to measure the Government's commitment to disability sport, without a baseline to work from, any assessment of the trickle-down effect from this commitment to the UNCRPD, through the NZDS, can only be conjecture.

Over the following sections I analyse in more depth the Government initiatives, their intent and the successes and failures regarding the impact of disability sport provision in Aotearoa NZ. Four periods represent the evolution of disability sport from a Government perspective. These periods are bounded by the introduction of generic sport and recreation legislation, the establishment or amalgamation of government agencies charged with overseeing sport and active recreation, and the subsequent development of strategies and policies related to disability sport.

Context

The influence of Government and government policies on sport and active recreation provision cannot be overstated. In terms of the sport system and structures, in Aotearoa NZ it can be generalised that traditionally sport (not so much active recreation) follows the federal structure with local clubs making up the majority of opportunities. Clubs are overseen by regional associations, fewer in number and more administrative than delivery-focused generally flowing up to a national organisation that aligns with an international federation. This hierarchical structure allows athletes to participate and compete at various levels, providing a pathway for skill and excellence, culminating in international representation. Bounded by international rules and regulations to ensure fairness of competition, sport in Aotearoa NZ has been driven by a system that is delineated by roles and responsibilities and lacks the agility and flexibility to accommodate change (see Ryan & Watson, 2018). In contrast, disability sport in Aotearoa NZ is a co-operative structure where separate organisations, not formally associated via hierarchical pathways, work collaboratively for the collective good – in this case the provision of disability sport opportunities. Running parallel to sport is active recreation. Active recreation, while providing for participation, skill enhancement and sometimes competition, is not grounded in the pursuit of competitive excellence. Organisations delivering active recreation range from small to large and are not generally constrained by a hierarchical pathway structure. They tend to be more adaptive, flexible and agile, and more responsive to the individual needs of participants, including disabled participants.

In line with broader governmental shifts in policy related to disability – awareness of the importance of providing opportunities for disabled people to choose to participate in all facets of society, including sport, has increased (Office of Disability Issues, 2019). As a result, in the last twenty years several reviews have been commissioned across the sport and recreation sector aiming to provide a wider picture of participation trends and the general disability sport sector (Cockburn & Atkinson, 2018a; McKinley Douglas Limited, 1998; Sport New Zealand, 2018a). Indeed, the most recent review into the disability sport sector described it as complex (Cockburn & Atkinson, 2018b) and disparate, with a large number of disability sport organisations with differing roles and responsibilities. The report further reiterated low participation rates of disabled people (Sport New Zealand, 2019c) and resulted in disabled people being identified as one of two priority groups in the new Sport NZ strategic direction *Every Body Active* (Sport New Zealand 2019b). Targeted plans, including a *Disability Plan* underpin this overarching strategy with the intention of creating “a system that is equitable

and where disabled people can be as active as non-disabled people” (Sport New Zealand, 2019c, p. 1).

The NZ disability sport policy landscape through time

As alluded to earlier, Aotearoa NZ, is a signatory to the UNCRPD and is obliged to take appropriate measures to encourage and promote disability-specific sport, with the Government be held accountable for our performance in this area. However, few would realise that government enquiries into disability started in the early 1860s. Census data as far back as 1864 were used to report and track the progress of Aotearoa NZ societal development as well as the status of the Pākehā population. Early census not only sought information relating to ‘the domestic condition’ of the population (e.g. sex, age, marital status), but also the number of ‘deaf and dumb or blind’ (Bennett, 1866). Later censuses expanded the enquiry to sickness, debility, and accident, and by this time disabilities were couched as ‘infirmities’ and were identified by ‘affliction’ – “deaf and dumb”, blind, paralysis, “crippled” and “deformed, lunatics and idiots” (Brown, 1874, p. 22). Definitions and distinctions of impairments were blunt and clinical by today’s standards and contextualised, unsurprisingly for a new colonial country, around the notion of a person’s ability to work and create economic value, i.e., the medical model of disability (cf. Oliver, 1996). Disabled peoples’ right to participate in sport and active recreation was not officially recognised in government policy until the 1930s. By this time, according to Ryan and Watson (2018), “few could doubt that New Zealand was a land of sporting opportunities to suit most tastes. But the question in some minds was whether everyone was willing and able to pursue these opportunities” (p. 193). The following discussion outlines the government initiatives from which the current sport system evolved and the impact on those who were unable to pursue the opportunities and the successes or otherwise of their outcomes.

The Aotearoa NZ sport policy landscape, like that in Australia (Hammond & Jeanes, 2018), Canada (Hammond et al., 2022), the United States (Hums, Moorman, & Wolff, 2003) and the United Kingdom (Kitchin & Howe, 2014), has been framed by government ideologies and priorities with outcomes influenced by funding provision. Notably, most of the policies reviewed focused on physical disability, representative of government policies and initiatives

underpinned by an instrumental view of inclusion and a hierarchy of disability. Labour-led¹² Governments, credited for establishing the ‘welfare state’, have championed all disability sport initiatives in Aotearoa NZ, aligning with their core philosophy focus on improving the lives of New Zealanders. The interim periods, under National-led¹³ governments, witnessed few sport, and no disability sport, initiatives introduced, illustrating the differing party philosophies. National’s early position was cautionary and conditional – sport and active recreation were individual choices and freedoms that should remain removed from Government intervention (Hargest, 1937). This position however evolved over the intervening years to active non-partisan support in recognition of the demonstrated public benefits sport and recreation offer (McCully, 2002). While Labour-led Governments introduced initiatives that were community-focused, National-led Governments became involved in high-performance sport, for example, the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games (Lawrence, 2008), and sporting events that left an indelible mark on Aotearoa NZ’s sporting legacy, such as the 1981 Springbok tour (New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2020).

Over the period 1930-2022, Government intervention in disability sport has been premised on improving the lives of disabled New Zealanders, accepted by all as valuable to the entire sport system. The benefit of hindsight is that by looking back to look forward, opportunities exist for the government agencies responsible for sport and active recreation not to repeat the failures of the past. However, even today, Sport NZ’s rhetorical discourse, as seen in the *Every Body Active* strategy and *Disability Plan* (Sport New Zealand, 2019b, 2019c), actively promoting the virtues of disability sport relies on a disablist sport system lacking in motivation, desire and capability to improve sport and recreation opportunities without the incentivisation from Sport NZ. If those who oversee sport and active recreation, whether at Government or club level, do not chose to acknowledge and address the influence of ableism and give agency to the voices of disabled people calling for change, then the shifting landscape of disability sport in Aotearoa NZ will continue to fail YPwl.

¹² Established in the mid-1910s with the merger of socialist political organisations, the Labour Party was founded on workers’ rights and democratic reform. Concerned with improving living standards through health, education, housing and public infrastructure the party became known for its social welfare initiatives. Today these foundation rights and priorities are still central to the party and their government-led initiatives. Retrieved from <https://www.labour.org.nz/history> 19 July 2022.

¹³ The National Party, in contrast to the Labour Party, emerged from the rural sector and has focused on economic deregulation and reform, anti-crime, and the dissolution of union power in the workforce. Large-scale infrastructure development in the 1970-80’s was the antithesis to the emerging environmental movement. Retrieved from <https://www.national.org.nz/our-history> 19 July 2022.

1930s Physical welfare and recreation

Starting in the late 1930s, the 85-year journey of Government commitment to improving the physical and mental well-being of New Zealanders through sport began with *The Physical Welfare and Recreation Act 1937*. Not to be misled by the title, the purpose of the Act was to “provide for the development of facilities for, and the encouragement of, physical training, exercise, sport and recreation”. The Minister of Internal Affairs noted at the time “it must be recognized, not only in New Zealand, but in the world over, notwithstanding the great advancement made in scientific surgery and medicines, the average illness of the people, generally, is gradually on the increase” (Parry, 1937, p. 415). Although not directly referring to disabled people, the benefit of sport participation was arguably reflective of the dominance of the medical model of disability alongside an individualistic perspective that was at the forefront of parliamentarians’ thinking at the time and which has been regularly reiterated since (Lawrence, 2008).

Right from the beginning, despite the well-intentioned rhetoric of participation, ableist practices and discourses underpinned sport policy and provision. By inference, disabled people were situated as passive recipients of non-disabled (i.e., able-bodied) values and preferences (cf. Lyons, 2013). While most Members of Parliament agreed in principle “to the necessity of improving the physical well-being of every man, woman, and child” (Wright, 1937, p. 528), there was an acknowledgement that some of the population was missing out, including physically disabled young people. Findings from an Auckland Primary Schools Sports Association investigation, presented in Parliament at the time summarised the benefits of participation as physical, social and moral. The report went further, stating that 15 percent of school children were debarred from participating for a range of reasons, including having a physical impairment. To address those non-participants, solutions proposed included showing those “suffering physical disabilities ... how to participate safely in some form of game activity” (Cotterill, 1937, p. 525). The language of these policies illustrate the deficit view of disability contributing to ableist discourse in sport where ability is dominant. Individuals who did not fit the ‘norm’ (read: non-disabled, able-bodied) required improving and ‘fixing’. The presumption that physically impaired young people were incapable of participating in school sport as other young people did, because of their ‘disability’, perpetuated issues of segregation and discourses of dependency while at the same time restricting opportunities for integration and inclusion.

This heightened attention on physical impairment and the need for special attention was also evident outside of government. The Crippled Children's Society (now CCS Disability Action) was established in 1935 by civic-minded Rotary¹⁴ members. Over 1000 'crippled' children were identified as in need of support, such as vocational training and the provision of residential and sanatorium facilities, all provided by private benefactors (CCS Disability Action, 2020). The presumption that these children were incapable of being included within society without additional support is a reflection of how pervasive the influence of the medical model of disability. By the 1960s, their support had expanded into sport provision (Schorer, 2012) and by the mid-1970s was a catalyst for a new national advisory committee on sport and recreation. While CCS Disability Action continues to provide support and lifestyle services for disabled people today, their role in sport and active recreation has retrenched to the provision of opportunities for their own clients rather than wider community advocacy as seen in the 1970s.

Within Government, under the Department of Internal Affairs, a National Council of Physical Welfare and Recreation, and latterly district committees, were established to provide advice and guidance on sport provision. Understandably, but unfortunately, these committees' efforts were redirected towards supporting the war effort during WWII. While during the earlier period the necessity for disability sport provision was recognised, albeit not actioned, the following 25+ years saw disability sport languishing through an absence of Government involvement in sport in general. Post-war all initiatives essentially disappeared entirely through a lack of leadership or engagement with sport organisations (Lawrence, 2008). This lack of prioritisation of sport was reflective of the National-led governments that favoured a non-interventionist approach (Sport New Zealand, 2021d) and for disability sport this resulted in disabled people, their families and whānau establishing dedicated regional disability sport organisations providing disability sport opportunities regionally. It was not until the early 1970s that the Governments interest in sport was reignited.

1970s the establishment of dedicated support

In the early 1970s sport was re-established on the Government agenda. A new *Recreation and Sport 1973 Act* and new Ministry and Council for Recreation and Sport replaced the 1937 Act and the redundant National Council. An Advisory Committee for Recreation for the Disabled

¹⁴ Rotary is a global network of service-minded community volunteers who work towards improving the lives of those in the community through leadership, goodwill and fellowship. <https://www.rotary.org/en/about-rotary> retrieved 19 July 2022

(ACORD) was created, replacing ad hoc decisions by the Ministry with a committee of representatives from within the sector to advise on matters relating to disability sport. This policy was the first to signal a shift in how disability was understood, mirroring the disability rights movement in the 1970s (Finkelstein, 1980) and later the birth of the social model of disability (Oliver, 1996). However, this initiative placed disability sport as an adjunct to, rather than an integrated part of, sport. Members of ACORD were selected for their general knowledge and interest in disability sport, rather than sector representation. This initiative, albeit specifically designed to increase participation by disabled people and provide more representation of those working within the sector (ACORD, n.d.), did little to initiate change within sport organisations or local authorities. For example, a policy paper to ACORD members, acknowledged that the “lack of access to the majority of public recreation facilities is one of the greatest barriers to social integration of the disabled ... that they [people with disabilities] have a place in society and share the same recreational interests as the ‘average’ New Zealander” (Lavender, 1979, p. 2).

While ACORD was positioned to advise on “all policy matters relating to recreation for the disabled, and also on Ministry proposals for grants and subsidies to organisations seeking assistance for the disabled under the National Scheme of the Recreation and Sport Programme” (Lavender, 1979, p. 1), there is little evidence of its successful implementation across the sport system. Serving as the principal point of reference for disability sport policy in Aotearoa NZ between 1979 and 1985, subsequent ACORD projects placed emphasis on professional development seminars and workshops for those working in disability and sport, and the production of a film *The Fun Gap* (ACORD, n.d.). Support for the professional development of those working and volunteering in sport was identified as means of overcoming the lack of opportunities for disabled people, who were “hampered by the low expectation of their potential by parents and professionals working in the field of disability” (Lavender, 1979, p. 2). Early efforts towards professional development thus recognised that sets of values and attitudes favouring non-disabled able-bodied norms (i.e., ableism) were held and acted on by various groups including teachers, coaches and administrators and that these social relationships and attitudes, creating restrictions of activity were open to change. These interpersonal constraints to participation were not unique to Aotearoa NZ and remain a recurring theme internationally in disability sport provision and research (see Darcy et al., 2020).

Dedicated disability sport and active recreation opportunities

Understanding how disability sport provision in Aotearoa NZ impacts upon YPwI's ability to participate in sport and active recreation today, necessitates an understanding of more than just government policy and initiatives. Delivery of opportunities for YPwI has evolved, not in direct response to government policy and directive, but the converse, the ineffectual impact policy on mainstream sport organisations to provide opportunities for YPwI. Aotearoa NZ has a long and proud tradition of dedicated disability sport organisations delivering sport and active recreation. Since the late 1930s non-governmental charity and not-for-profit organisations have been established to address the gap in provision for disabled people. Many of these organisations were instrumental in the disability sport sector and remain present today, delivering sport and active recreation to YPwI and disabled adults. Outlined below is a summary of the key organisations and their impact and influence on the disability sport and as advocates, champions and agents of change in the sport system.

CCS Disability Action

Preceding the introduction of the *Recreation and Physical Welfare Act 1937* was the establishment of the CCS Disability Action (previously the Crippled Children's Society) by Rotary. The society was the first organisation to focus on disabled young people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Over 1000 'crippled' children were identified at the time. Supported by private donations and endowments (CCS Disability Action, 2020), CCS Disability Action has over the decades provided a range of services and support to disabled children and their families including sport and active recreation opportunities, such as the Crippled Children's camp at Riversdale beach. CCS Disability Action was instrumental as a catalyst for providing sport and active recreation across the country through its regional branches, although as mentioned earlier, it no longer provides this type of support.

Regional disability sport organisations

The period 1966 to 1982 can be described as the first era of disability sport. The establishment of regional disability sport organisations (RDSOs) providing dedicated programmes and services for paraplegic and physically disabled people occurred. In total 17 regional organisations were established, of which 10 remain operational. Collectively referred to as Parafeds (a truncation of the full Paraplegic and Physically Disabled Federation name), many of these organisations are now renamed to better reflect the wider membership and focus for their region, such as dsport in Wellington, Disability Sport Auckland. In addition, new

organisations such as Disability Sport and Recreation Hawkes Bay and Inclusive Activity Murihiku in Southland have recently been established to cater for demands within their communities for disability sport opportunities.

These organisations provide a variety of disability specific sport and active recreation opportunities, such as wheelchair rugby, wheelchair basketball and boccia, responding to regional needs as well as taking advantage of local opportunities. For example, in the lower North Island, dsport offered an annual camp for disabled people on the Kapiti Coast during the 1970s-80s (New Zealand Council for Recreation and Sport, 1975-1985). This annual camp was reinstated in 2016 in response to growing demand from disabled young people and continues to be a highlight of the youth group programme.

Paralympics New Zealand

During the 1970s Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ), (previously named the New Zealand Paraplegic and Physically Disabled Federation), was formed by the Parafeds to provide athletes with the opportunity to represent New Zealand and compete internationally. The first New Zealand team to compete at a summer Paralympic Games was in Tel Aviv 1968 and a team participated in the winter Paralympic Games in Geilo 1980. New Zealand has been represented at every summer and winter games since. Until recently, PNZ, rather than national sport organisations, managed the Para sport programmes of athletics and swimming. In recognition of the need to integrate Para sport into mainstream sport, PNZ transferred management, athletes and coaches to their respective sports. This transformation aligns with the International Paralympic Committee transfer of sport governance of nine international sports (International Paralympic Committee, 2018). Overseeing the New Zealand Paralympic Games teams, PNZ has been a long-term partner of High Performance Sport NZ, but less involved in the community sport space, which was left to members organisations – national sport organisations and regional disability sport organisations. However, PNZ's new vision "*Through Para sport, lives will be transformed*", values the positive influence sport has in disabled people's lives and better positions PNZ to help make system-wide change in Aotearoa NZ sport. As will be discussed later, this new vision has helped PNZ gain greater support from Sport NZ, including significant investment for community-based initiatives aimed at improving the opportunities for YPwI to participate in Para sport.

Disability and impairment-based sports organisations

As discussed earlier, this disability sport delivery model has evolved in response to a non-performing ableist sport system failing to recognise disabled people's desire to participate in sport and active recreation. Reflective of a disablist presumption that the number of participants interested in participating is low and therefore the critical mass required for the effective delivery by sport organisations is unmet, dedicated disability sport organisations have evolved to fill the gap in provision. Enhancing the opportunities offered by regional organisations, the late 1990s through to the mid-2010s saw a second wave of national and regional sport-specific organisations, such as wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby as well as impairment-specific sports organisations, blind sport and deaf sport were established. Further demand for impairment-based sports resulted in sport-specific national organisations established for boccia, goalball and powerchair football. The regional distribution of these sport-specific organisations is limited, with the majority in Auckland, but this does not preclude the delivery of these sports elsewhere. Regional disability sport organisations delivering in other areas have incorporated many of these sport-specific and impairment-specific sports into their delivery portfolio, creating the critical mass needed to support the sustainable delivery of these opportunities, especially for YPwI (see Darcy et al., 2020).

Halberg Foundation

Renowned Olympian Sir Murray Halberg established the Halberg Trust (now called Halberg Foundation) in the mid-1960s with the aim of getting disabled children into sport. Sir Murray, although an Olympian, did himself have an impairment as the result of a rugby accident, and "witnessed first-hand how sport can be a stepping stone to enhance the lives of disabled people. I've seen how sport can provide health benefits, new skills, social networks, confidence and ambition that can be transferred into many other parts of their lives" (Halberg Foundation, 2021). Today the Foundation is an advocate for disability sport, providing advice and guidance to families, delivering inclusion training to schools and sport organisations, offering equipment and activity grants for young people with disabilities, and hosting the annual Halberg Games (see Figure 15).



Figure 15 Halberg Games 2022 website banner

Reprinted with Permission (Halberg Foundation, 2022a)

International initiatives in Aotearoa NZ

Running parallel to the establishment of ACORD were two major international initiatives, both of which may have provided significant impetus for disability sport in Aotearoa NZ. Firstly, the *4th Commonwealth Paraplegic Games* were held prior to the *1974 British Commonwealth Games* in Aotearoa NZ (McDonald, 2017). These games were not only successful in terms of showcasing performances and raising the profile of disability sport through media coverage and the design and issuing of commemorative stamps (see Figure 16), but they also created a legacy fund for disability known as *Paraloan*¹⁵. While this fund leveraged the visibility and awareness of the games to fundraise, the beneficiaries of the fundraising were disabled people in need of social, health and access related support, such as the provision of below market rate mortgages. Paraloan continues today providing financial support to disabled New Zealanders and is currently reviewing its purpose and strategic objectives¹⁶.

¹⁵ Paraloan, the trading name of The New Zealand Paraplegic and Physically Disabled Foundation. Paraloan was established in 1974 after a national appeal to set up a trust fund for New Zealanders with physical disabilities (<https://www.paraloan.org.nz/4/about-paraloan>).

¹⁶ I have been a Trustee of Paraloan since October 2021.

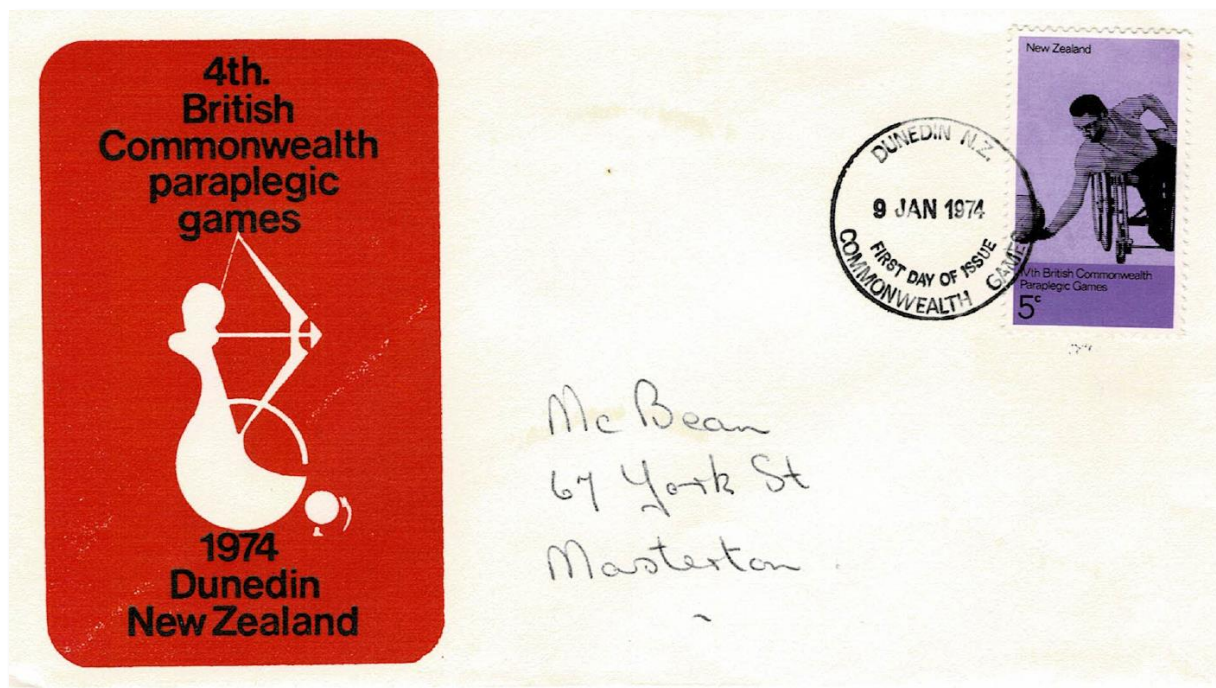


Figure 16 First day cover 1974

The second international initiative was the 1981 *United Nations International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP)*. The tenet of the IYDP was a call-to-action against disablism and to raise awareness and understanding of disability and improve disabled people's lives. However, in Aotearoa NZ this initiative was heavily criticised by disabled people for their minimal involvement in key events and the objectifying manner in which disabled people were portrayed (Hunt, 2021). Indicative of the dominance of medical model of disability, the organisation and coordination of the IYDP in Aotearoa NZ was delegated to Rehabilitation International New Zealand (RINZ) (Geddes, 1981), an organisation originally established to assist with the training and retraining of returned servicemen. The year was organised into six areas of concern for disabled people, including sport and recreation, which were illustrated through the "*One kiwi in ten is disabled*" campaign (see Figure 17) and supported by other promotional collateral. A *Recreation is for Everyone* pamphlet produced by the IYDP National Secretariat promoted disability sport and included tips on how to help engagement and participation. However, perhaps as a harbinger of the campaign's outcome, the pamphlet quietly noted that "The New Zealand IYDP Committee does not expect that there will be a

significant progress overnight, but it does hope that some changes will be apparent by the end of 1981 and that the trend will continue” (IYDP National Secretariat, 1981, p. 2).



Figure 17 1981 International Year of the Disabled Person poster

Disappointingly, despite a 24-hour televised fundraising event to raise money to support the lives of disabled people, none of the \$5.8 million raised by the telethon was ever allocated to ACORD or disability sport (O'Brien, 1983). It was little wonder disability sport organisations felt aggrieved and the momentum created slowly dissipated with the legacy of the 1974 Commonwealth Paraplegic Games and the proceeds from the 1981 IYDP telethon both excluding sport as a beneficiary (O'Brien, 1983), focusing instead on other community initiatives such as a teletext service to provide news and information for the deaf (Stuff, 2012) and *Total Mobility* as a subsidised disability transport service (NZ Transport Agency, 2017). A review of the IYDP initiative found that while the regional committees worked to promote participation of disabled New Zealanders in 'normal' sport, and sport deliverers became more

aware of the needs of disabled people, areas for improvement were identified. Specifically, more inclusive physical education, accessible sport facilities, and increased funding were required (Brereton, 1982), not dissimilar to the issues raised by ACORD a few years earlier. While the campaign, and even the IYDP, signalled increased visibility and awareness of disability in society, the extent to which such initiatives were able to drive long-term and sustainable societal change in the social, cultural and attitudinal structures of sport remains questionable. While the work of ACORD, focused on addressing barriers to participation for disabled people signalled a shift from an interventionist focus in policy, nationally the momentum was unsustainable as a key group – sport organisations – were displaying disablism by not considering disability sport as part of their mandate.

1980s Sport on the Move

In 1984, the *Sport on the Move* report under a newly elected Labour government signalled a change in direction, disbanding the Council for Recreation and Sport (and consequently ACORD) and establishing the Hillary Commission alongside increased funding for the sector (The Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985). Two key functions of the new Commission were to facilitate equal opportunities for participation by all New Zealanders and encouraging people to make the most effective use of their abilities and aptitudes (Sport, Fitness, and Leisure Act, 1987). Fifty years on, the Parliamentary debates and the issues raised were reminiscent of the *Physical Welfare and Recreation Act 1937*, illustrated by the Minister of Sport's acknowledgement that sport opportunities for the disabled were being denied and the Sport, Fitness and Leisure Bill was "for the disabled who are locked out" (Moore, 1986, p. 2184). By this time, international disability rights movements had begun to gather momentum, particularly in the United Kingdom (*The Disabled Persons Act, 1981*), and the United States (*Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990*). Furthermore, widespread lobbying of Government to encourage disabled peoples' involvement in policies meant to serve them (cf. Dargan, 2016) was observable.

In Aotearoa NZ, progress was drawn-out, and it was not until the inaugural board of SPARC, which replaced the Hillary Commission in 2001, that a disabled person was appointed to a governance position. It took a further two decades before the second disabled person was appointed to a (now rebranded) Sport NZ board position. Despite the political rhetoric and legislative obligations for inclusion of all New Zealanders being clearly articulated in the 1987 Act, and the establishment of the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities

in 1992, no specific national initiative from the Commission for engaging disabled people in sport was realised until a decade later.

KiwiAble

With one exception, disability sport organisations continued with their primary responsibility to manage and implement regional initiatives aimed to increase opportunities and participation of disabled people. The Christchurch *KiwiAble* programme, a local disability recreation initiative in Christchurch during the early 1990s, was the exception. Adapted from an Australian model (Broadening Leisure Options Support Scheme (BLOSS)), this initiative enabled disabled people's participation by removing barriers to participation (Christchurch City Council, 2000). Segregated and inclusive sports programmes and disability awareness training were delivered with funding from the Hillary Commission, Intellectually Handicapped Children (IHC) and Christchurch City Council (Stensrud, 2004). By the early 2000s, the Commission proposed the expansion of the *KiwiAble* programme nationally; however, no evidence exists to indicate whether this programme was ever rolled out nationally. Instead of the *KiwiAble* programme, an alternative advocacy initiative and training programme was rolled out nationally in partnership with the Halberg Trust (Dale, 2000). Called *No Exceptions*, this initiative still being delivered in 2022, aimed at providing advice and guidance to organisations wanting to provide inclusive sporting opportunities for disabled young people aged 21-years and younger.

1990s No exceptions policies

In 1998, following several reports into disability sport and physical activity (Hillary Commission & Workbridge Inc, 1994; McKinley Douglas Limited, 1998), the Hillary Commission produced its *No Exceptions Strategy* (Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 1998) (see Figure 18). The inaugural strategy's mission was to "improve the quality of life for all people with a disability through participation and achievement in sport" (Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 1998, p. 2). This shift in social policy contained competing and not necessarily compatible expectations reflective of a neoliberal healthism and a socially liberal recognition of the barriers constituting disability. The Hillary Commission defined *No Exceptions* as:

Developing a culture that gives people with a disability access to sport ... in their choice of segregated or integrated environments; developing an environment where all national and community organisations support the involvement of people with a disability; and creating an environment where people with a disability have the same opportunities as all New Zealanders to participate, enjoy and achieve in sport. (Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 1998, p. 3)

Another key shift evident in policy, and in stark contrast to the 1960s was the move towards integration, focusing in particular on the school PE curriculum, partnerships with national and regional sporting organisations, and developing resources for junior sport (Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 1998). As noted earlier, while integration and ‘mainstreaming’ is often a default policy response (Thomas & Guett, 2014) it is not unproblematic. As Kitchin and Crossin (2018) argued, attempts to integrate sport do not always achieve the desired outcome. ‘No Exceptions’ became the catch phrase for several disability sport strategies and funding initiatives over the next two decades. The key principles of *No Exceptions* related to the benefits of participation in quality sport and active recreation to the quality of life of disabled people and to the population as a whole (see Figure 18) and aimed to increase the participation of disabled people, including YPwl.

The Government officially positioned the social model as the standard by which disability would now be addressed, including within policy, with the acceptance in 2001 of the New Zealand Disability Strategy (NZDS), nearly 8 years before the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Titled *Making a World of Difference – Whakanui Oranga*, the strategy aimed to guide the Government towards a more inclusive Aotearoa NZ. The intention of this pan-agency strategy was for government agencies to plan, and report against, how they would fulfil the Government’s vision of “a society that highly values our [disabled peoples’] lives and continually enhances our full participation” (Ministry of Disability Issues, 2001, p. 1). Objective 9.4 provided for supporting the development of recreation and sport for disabled people, but the Hillary Commission’s approach towards disability sport provision, reliant on sport organisations to deliver opportunities was stalled by a general reluctance to accept any new responsibilities for disability sport. A SPARC-funded review of the Commission’s *No Exceptions Strategy* (Cockburn, 2003) noted a lack of capacity and capability of sport deliverers to accommodate disabled people, a lack of disability understanding and awareness, and limited financial resources to expand delivery to disabled

people. As such, disability sport organisations remained the primary organisations responsible for the management and implementation of *No Exceptions*.

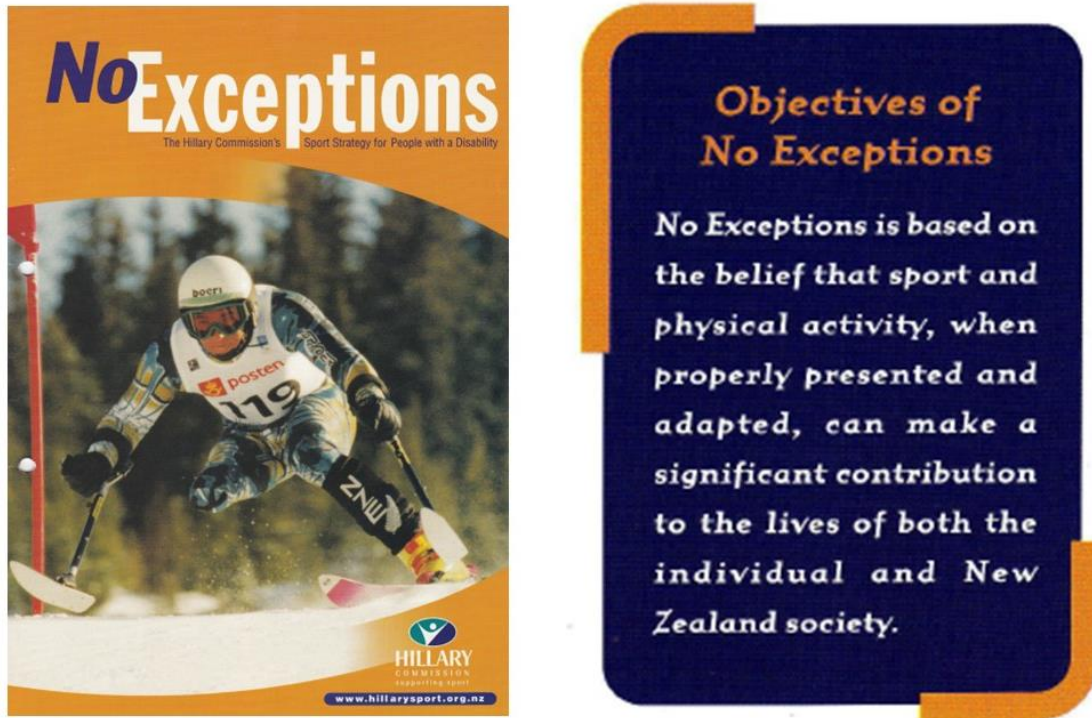


Figure 18 Hillary Commission No Exceptions strategy 1998

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In response to the Cockburn (2003) review, SPARC updated its *No Exceptions Strategy and Implementation Plan 2005-2009* (SPARC, 2005) and anchored it to the NZDS. This revised *No Exceptions Strategy's* outcome – “all people participating in the physical recreation and sport activities of their choice” (SPARC, 2005, p. 2), was indistinguishable from the earlier Hillary Commission strategy, with the exception of extending the role of organisational infrastructures across the sport system enabling them to exert considerable influence in shaping the policy landscape. Six principles aligned to the NZDS embedded the agency of disabled people in the process including the right to access sport opportunities, collaboration and partnerships, leadership and expertise by disabled people, and were admirable and aspirational.

Diffused responsibility and a plethora of partners

Unlike the Hillary Commission's 1998 *No Exceptions* strategy, which placed responsibility for achievement in the hands of the Commission, the revised strategy under the new sport agency SPARC (Figure 19) diffused responsibility across the disability sport sector. The SPARC strategy addressed sector functionality: 1) organisation and sector development; 2) best practice examples, tools and information; and 3) training and education. However, gone was the centrality of the participant, the disabled person, and in their place came a sterile and more clinical strategy as SPARC pushed towards uniformity across the sector reflective of the "economic rationalist model pervading the public sector" (Lawrence, 2008, p. 125).

Acknowledging that SPARC was only one agency, and in line with the diffusion model of governance at the time (Sport New Zealand, 2021d), the strategy signalled that "other agencies will need to take their share of the lead, recognising the significant benefits to be had from getting all New Zealanders participating in the sport and recreation activities of their choice" (SPARC, 2005, p. 4). The efficacy of SPARC implementing the strategy was recognised as less than ideal (Rushton, 2007).

Multiple lead agencies – Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ), Halberg Trust, Special Olympics New Zealand (SONZ), National Sport Organisations (NSOs), Regional Sports Trusts, territorial local authorities, NZ Recreation Association (now Recreation Aotearoa), NZ Olympic Committee and Parafeds – were identified by SPARC as integral to the success of the strategy, yet it was unclear how and where funds and resources were to be mobilised during this period to enable policy enactment. As Piggitt et al. (2009) recognised, "in a policy setting, the construction of truth not only affects identities of those written into (and out of) policy but will determine the distribution of resource such as status, funding, and access to power" (p. 464), as evidenced by the omission of any disability sport references in the 2008 SPARC annual report. The opportunity to reset and rebuild the sport system to effectively include disabled people was an overreach, lost to an excess of priority actions that required significant buy-in from a vast array of partners, for many of whom disability sport was not a priority. Perhaps best described as a 'scattergun' approach, this policy continued to position disability sport as an adjunct to mainstream sport, paying lip-service to ensuring all New Zealanders had the opportunity to participate in sport while SPARC collaborated with other government agencies to improve health, educational outcomes and improvement in the Aotearoa NZ lifestyle (Sport New Zealand, 2021d). Here a clear example of enlightened ableism is evident, where policy

documents guiding sport provision were replete with discourses of equity and inclusion, yet the significant diffusion of responsibility across the sector diluted the power of the rights-focused stance of this legislation (cf. Lyons, 2013).

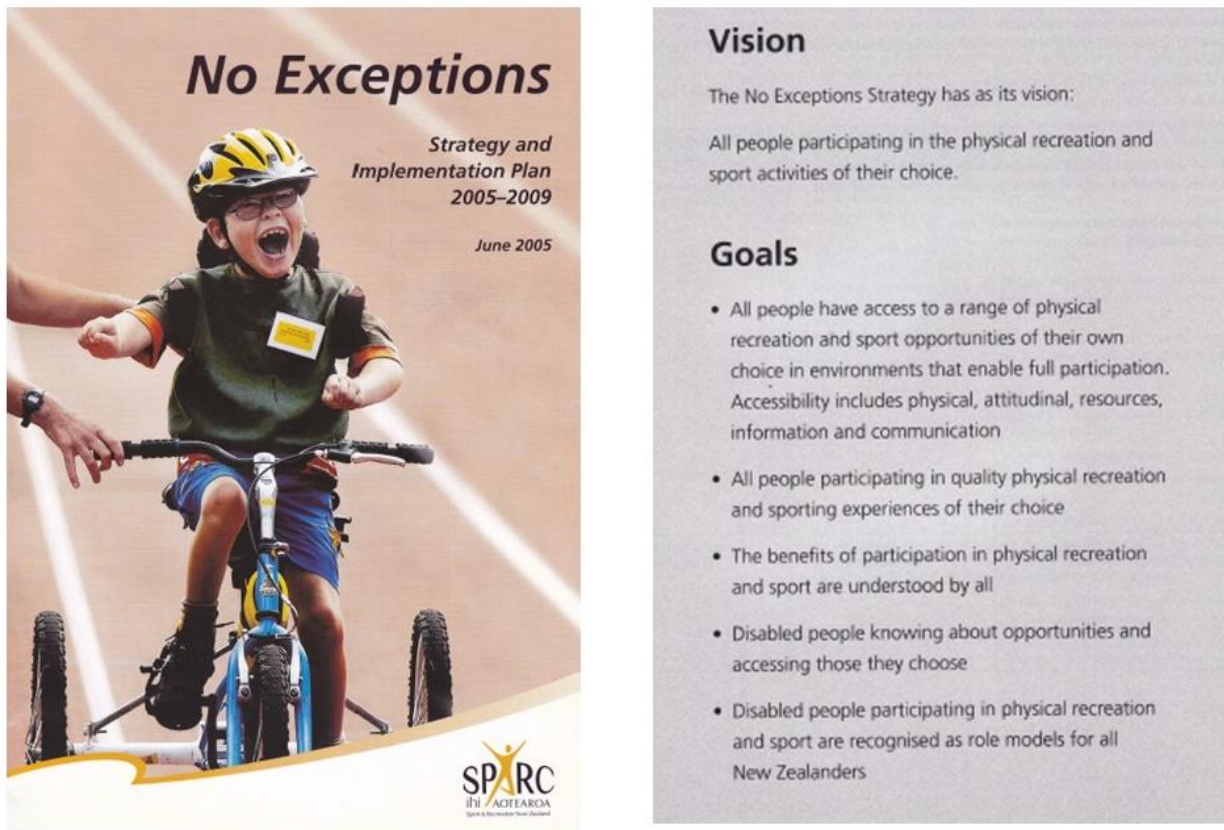


Figure 19 SPARC No Exceptions Strategy 2005

Vision

The No Exceptions Strategy has as its vision:

All people participating in the physical recreation and sport activities of their choice.

Goals

- All people have access to a range of physical recreation and sport opportunities of their own choice in environments that enable full participation. Accessibility includes physical, attitudinal, resources, information and communication
- All people participating in quality physical recreation and sporting experiences of their choice
- The benefits of participation in physical recreation and sport are understood by all
- Disabled people knowing about opportunities and accessing those they choose
- Disabled people participating in physical recreation and sport are recognised as role models for all New Zealanders

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SPARC’s response to its obligations under the NZDS failed to achieve the traction needed to create systemic change and improve disability sport opportunities for YPwI in Aotearoa NZ (Gourley & Dwyer, 2005; Rushton, 2007). A lack of systematic linkages between outcomes for disabled people, investments and programmes, and no explicit relationships between the *No Exceptions* strategy and the NZDS, resulted in failure that was exacerbated by a plethora of partners, many of whom operated from an ableist or assimilation perspective (cf. Kitchin & Crossin, 2018). Surprisingly, despite these shortcomings, *No Exceptions* remained a funded initiative of SPARC and latterly Sport NZ until 2020, albeit through a simplified financial investment model partnering with only three national organisations – PNZ, Halberg and SONZ.

These organisations were identified as delivering opportunities at different ends of the sports pathway (from high performance to YPwl in the community); and the gap between, while seen as the purview of NSOs, was acknowledged as unfilled (O'Neill, 2005). Regional disability sport organisations, despite being repeatedly identified as key partners and central to providing opportunities for YPwl, were excluded from direct financial support until the mid-2000s, when autonomous management of the *No Exceptions* fund was delegated to Halberg. In the absence of any Government strategy or plan Halberg directed funds towards organisations and programmes focused on its target audience – physically disabled young people. A lack of coordination, funding and direction, and the marginalisation of disabled adults and those with learning or sensory impairments led to widespread sector dissatisfaction. No obvious sustainable change from the multitude of strategies and organisations led disability sport organisations to respond directly to community needs. While Sport NZ's focus at this time changed from a diffusion model to a participant-centric approach, acknowledging it was just “one of several key players in the sport ... system around the participant” (Sport New Zealand, 2021d, p. 8) its influence and impact as a key financial player remained significant.

2018 disability sport review and 2019 strategy – déjà vu

As noted earlier, renewed focus and political lobbying by the disability sport sector led to another review¹⁷ (see Cockburn & Atkinson, 2018a) which resulted in disabled people being identified as one of two priority groups (the other group identified was women and girls) within the new Sport NZ strategic direction *Every Body Active* (Sport New Zealand, 2019c). Segregated plans, including a *Disability Plan*, underpin this overarching strategy with the intention of creating “a system that is equitable and where disabled people can be as active as non-disabled people” (p. 1). The similarity of the plan's objectives and the rhetoric used by Sport NZ to herald this plan mirrored that used by the 1998 Hillary Commission's *No Exceptions Plan* – 30 years earlier (see Figure 20).

¹⁷ I was a member of the Reference Group which contributed to this review.

| No Exceptions (Hillary Commission 1998) | No Exceptions (SPARC 2005) | Disability Plan (Sport NZ 2019) |
|--|---|---|
| To create a sporting environment that offers all New Zealanders an equal opportunity to participate, enjoy and excel in sport and active leisure. | All people participating in physical recreation and sport activities of their choice. | No one missing out on the benefits of physical activity regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or where you live. |
| Promote the integration of people with a disability, in particular young people, into sport and active leisure including providing advice and support. | Advocate for recreation and sport for all including creating supportive and accessible recreation and sport programmes that enable participation by disabled people at every level. | Be an advocate for policies and programmes that support disabled tamariki and rangatahi to be actively engaged in play, active recreation and sport. |
| Provide the leadership and resources to work closely with NSOs, RSTs, disability agencies and other organisations. | | Promote the value of participation in play, active recreation and sport, and influence government policy across disability, health, education and social welfare. |
| Develop policies, and provide funding and training. | Support initiatives with tangible resources and upskilling of staff and volunteers. | Invest in partnerships, funds and programmes supporting disabled tamariki and rangatahi as well as training a skilled and confident workforce. |
| Provide accurate, up-to-date information and contacts for people with a disability. | Collect and disseminate sound evidence and knowledge. | Gather and share insights, data and case studies. |
| Promote the participation and achievement of people with a disability. | Recognise the achievements of disabled athletes and promote disabled participants as role models for all New Zealanders. | |

Figure 20 No Exceptions and Disability Plans 1998-2019

While the disability sport sector was initially enthusiastic about the recognition of disability sport as a priority area by Sport NZ the lack of response from mainstream sport organisations was indicative of broader perceived structural obstacles and prioritisation of other government imperatives embedded within the sport system (cf. Lyons, 2013). Despite the commitment in policy, the disparity in funding for disability sport vis-a-vis the articulated concern over low participation rates of disabled New Zealanders remained a point of contention. In 2018 Sport NZ committed \$12.7m to deliver momentum for women and girls initiatives (Sport New Zealand, 2021b) while disability sport received \$682,000 via *No Exceptions* investment (Sport New Zealand, 2018b).

In contrast to the *Women and Girls* strategy where one compliance measure was a quota for women in sport governance roles, Sport NZ has chosen not to establish any minimum disability sport obligations on sport organisations receiving Sport NZ partnership investment. Currently there are no incentives for organisations to challenge the ableist culture where the celebration of physical ability based on non-disabled norms and winning, dominates sport and active recreation, whether on the playing field, in coach education or around the board table. This soft leadership approach is indicative of how disability issues in general remain marginalised

and positioned within Aotearoa NZ society. This disconnect between policy position and statement and how sport organisations see themselves, their practices and their culture in perpetuating ableism and marginalising and disabling ‘others’ necessitates a reconsideration of how disabled peoples’ engagement in sport and active recreation should be addressed.

2022 – the current landscape

Figure 21 below illustrates the current disability sport landscape in Aotearoa NZ. Organisations at the national and regional levels reflect the breadth of disability sport provision; organisations wholly responsible for disability sport provision, organisations supporting and sharing responsibility for delivery, and those providing no opportunities. National sport organisations are wholly responsible for providing pathways in the following: archery, athletics, badminton, bowls, canoe racing, equestrian sports, shooting federation, rowing, snow sports, swimming, table tennis, triathlon, and waka ama. Shared delivery occurs between national and regional disability sport organisations providing the Para sports of boccia and wheelchair rugby. Gaps in provision are evident, particularly in Para sport, for example, football, karate, and volleyball not providing any opportunities for YPwI, despite these sports being on the Paralympic programme. In contrast, non-Para sport opportunities such as basketball, netball, rock climbing, rugby and surfing as mentioned by the YPwI in my research, are delivered albeit in an ad hoc way rather than a structured pathway for participation. This provision of disability sport in Aotearoa NZ is not dissimilar to the Canadian sport system as described in the recently published work by Hammond et al. (2022).

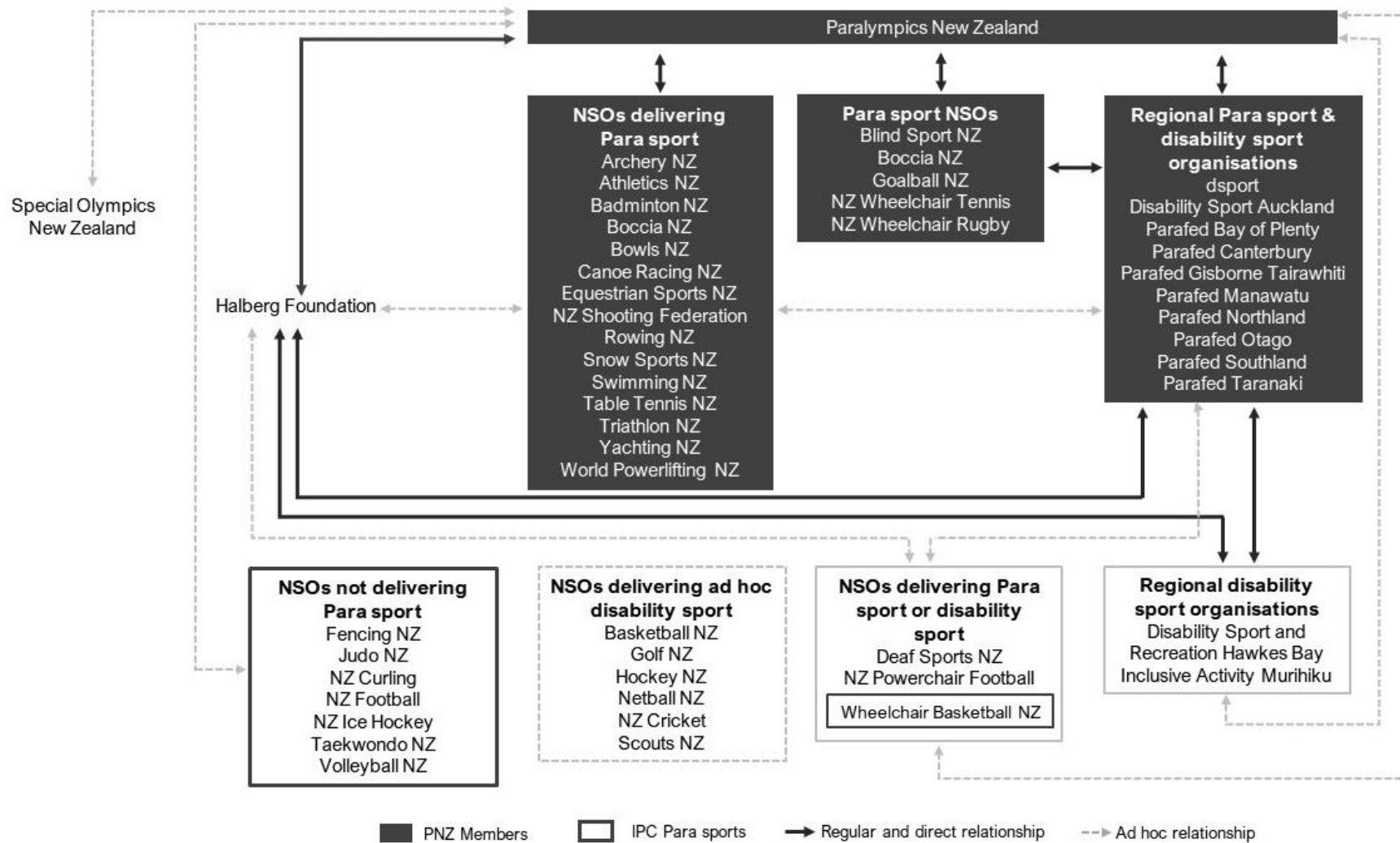


Figure 21 Para sport and disability sport delivery

While Hammond and Jeanes (2018) are silent on the perspectives and voices of YPwI, it would appear the disablism evident in policy and practice in the Aotearoa NZ sport system is not unique. Currently, PNZ is undertaking a mapping of the disability sport sector to assess the historical gaps and deficiencies in Para sport delivery due to limited sector capacity and resourcing. As part of the Sport NZ post Covid-19 initiative *Strengthen and Adapt*, PNZ was invited to reflect upon what they do, how they do it and for whom. This initiative, including additional investment to deliver the outcomes, presents sport organisations with an opportunity to reset and rebuild, strengthen and adapt; to become different and better positioned to deliver in the future (Sport New Zealand, 2021g).

The Aotearoa NZ disability sport sector is not only reliant upon how sport organisations situate disability sport relative to how disability is considered in society, but increasingly in response to government policy and the use of funding to incentivise the provision of opportunities. As outlined earlier, the Hillary Commission's recognition of disabled people did result in the *No Exceptions* strategy but with no funding provided to support disability sport and sport organisations directly delivering initiatives of the strategy, there was little progress. It was not until SPARC's '*Whole of Sport*' funding in the early 2000s requiring NSOs to expand their mandate to include disability sport, that Government support, albeit minimal, was provided to sport organisations delivering in this area. The multiple 'initiatives' across the last 20+ years resulted in an increasingly fragmented and confusing environment with no clear pathway for disabled young people to enter, continue and exit (Gourley & Dwyer, 2005). In recent years Sport NZ's total investment in sport has been approximately \$25m per annum (Sport New Zealand, 2020b) across a range of national and regional organisations. Fourteen regional sport trusts (RSTs), 2 national education organisations, 8 national recreation organisations, 2 disability partners (PNZ and Halberg Foundation), and 65 NSOs are considered investment partners (Sport New Zealand, 2020a). Of this, only \$1.5m has been invested into disability sport, primarily via Halberg and SONZ.

Internationally it has been found that relying on funding as a driver for inclusion and engagement of disabled people in sport has had questionable impact (see Spaaij, Knoppers, & Jeanes, 2020). In Aotearoa NZ the impact is similar, take NZ Football as an example. As a recipient of second largest community sport investment by Sport NZ (2020a), their commitment to disability sport is invisible. The *Whole of Football Plan 2017* (see Figure 22) and the current strategic plan make no reference to disability or disabled players. This is despite stating their goal is to be "the most inclusive sport in New Zealand" (New Zealand

Football, 2020, p. 8). NZ Football’s whole of football plan – like that of Australian Football’s (Jeanes et al., 2019) – generically refers to inclusivity, inferring opportunities for all, while positioning inclusivity in relation to gender. This relative absence of discourse related to disability has real impacts on the provision for YPwl and will be discussed further in Chapter 6.



Figure 22 NZ Football whole of football plan

Reprinted with permission (New Zealand Football, 2017, p. 8)

In contrast, Swimming NZ’s investment from Sport NZ equates to approximately 20 percent of NZ Football’s, but they are clear on where disability and Para sport are situated within their sport. As seen through the appointment of dedicated staff responsible for Para swimming over the last 3 years, Swimming NZ is an organisation now reframing and repositioning disability as a priority. Fifteen years after Swimming NZ reported that “good progress has been made at the highest level of the organisation where SNZ’s vision and purpose is closely aligned to the

No Exceptions Strategy” (Rushton, 2007), the strategic framework is supported by a dedicated strategy (see Figure 23). The Para swimming strategy aims to support and guide clubs to expand disability and Para swimming opportunities. Swimming NZ believes that providing equal opportunities for disabled and Para swimming will be achieved through the education and training of coaches and officials, the provision of pathways and events, and having an integrated high-performance programme.



Figure 23 Swimming NZ Para swimming strategy

Reprinted with permission (Swimming New Zealand, 2019)

However, if opportunities will continue to be delivered by dedicated disability sport organisations, as they have been consistently over the last 50+ years, sport organisations will continue to fail to provide opportunities that are available and accessible to YPwI. The

positioning of disability sport cannot be tied solely to Government policy and the provision of funding. This disparity between NZ Football and Swimming NZ suggests disablism remains a systemic issue with limited opportunities for YPwI to participate – particularly outside of disability sport opportunities.

Discourse and delivery disconnect

Sport and active recreation are grounded in athleticism and physicality but increasingly sport organisations are presenting themselves as more. The discourse of diversity and inclusion is becoming more pervasive, seen as a trickle-down of Government policy into the sport system and sport organisations. While this trend can be interpreted as positive with sport encapsulating wider social issues, it risks being seen as little more than ‘woke’¹⁸ because sport disability discourse and delivery are often disconnected. The concept of enlightened ableism, coined by Lyons (2013) and introduced in Chapter 2, is a term used to describe policies and practices that perpetuate ableism despite claiming the opposite. Understanding how disability sport rhetoric and discourse is expressed as compared to how disability sport is experienced by YPwI is critical when attempting to move beyond ableism. Recent examples of sport organisations policies and practices illustrate how rhetoric is diluted by practice, and where the experiences of YPwI participating in the sport or activity do not reflect the intention of the organisation.

Scouts NZ’s discourse is an example of enlightened ableism in action. Images on the Scouts NZ’s new website reflect the diversity of activities and opportunities within the organisation and the participants they wish to attract. The Kea and Scout promises are demonstrated in NZ Sign Language and the Scouts lead image shows a Scout leader who is a double amputee (Figure 24). Using this imagery, Scouts NZ aims to visually convey to YPwI, and parents, that their organisation welcomes them and has opportunities for them.

¹⁸ The term woke is being used to refer to those who want to be seen as aware of social injustices, i.e., disablism, but remain ignorant of the inaccuracy of their claims and problems this creates.

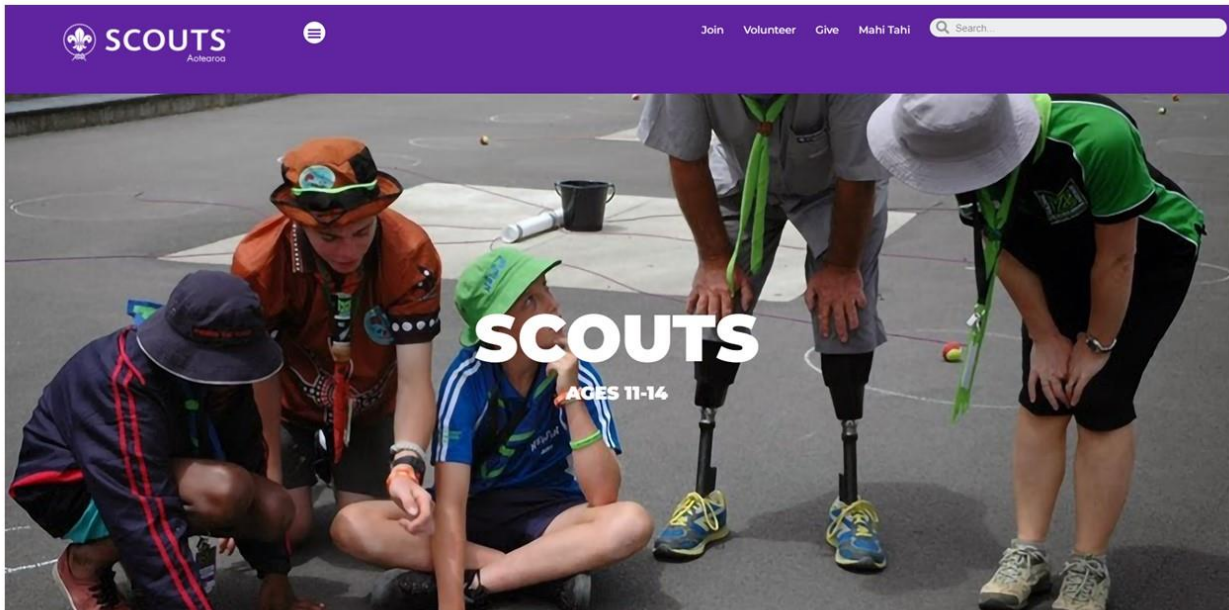


Figure 24 Scouts NZ Scouts webpage

Reprinted with permission (Scouts New Zealand, 2022)

However, while the imagery of Scouts is one of diversity and inclusion, their practices as experienced by YPwl are founded on ableism. The foundation of Scouts is fun and outdoor adventures while gaining skills and self-confidence (Scouts New Zealand, 2022) but the award scheme which rewards Scouts for the successful achievement of tasks and skills with badges is discriminatory and disablist. Badge tasks are grouped and increase in difficulty award from bronze, through silver to the gold. Based on prescriptive minimum standards, many badges, such as the athletics badge (see Figure 25) are not readily achievable by YPwl, whereas the cycling requirements are more readily achievable by a YPwl with a bike who commits to undertaking the tasks, not based on arbitrary standards, over the designated period.

Athletics Requirements

Select four of the following events (at least one to be chosen from each group) and show an improvement in your performance by undertaking two tests at an interval of not less than 6 weeks.

- Running: 100m, 200m, 400m or 1500m.
- Jumping: High, long.
- Throwing: Cricket ball, discs, weight.

Whatever your standard at the first test, the minimum standard required after the three months period must be:

Running

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| • 100 metres | 15 seconds |
| • 200 metres | 34 seconds |
| • 400 metres | 81 seconds |
| • 800 metres | 3 min 9 seconds |
| • 1500 metres | 5 min 56 sec. |

Jumping

- | | |
|--------|------------|
| • High | 112m (sic) |
| • Long | 3.8 metres |

Throwing

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| • Cricket Ball | 46 metres |
| • Discus (small) | 17 metres |
| • Weight (81b 13oz) (sic) | 7.5 metres |

You must show genuine improvement in all four events. The aim is that this would be achieved after practise requiring effort. The examiner may make allowance for adverse weather or track conditions on the day of the event.

Cycling Requirements

1. Use and have satisfactorily cared for a bike for at least six weeks that is properly equipped and in good working order.
2. Be able to make simple adjustments and repairs e.g.: repair a puncture, change a tyre and tube, replace a braked shoe and block, adjust the height of the seat and handlebar to enable a younger person to ride the cycle.
3. Demonstrate that you know and observe the provisions of the "Road Code" relating to cyclists and published by the Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA).
4. Take part in a Scout activity that includes the use of cycles.
5. A Scout who has gained the Cub Scout Cyclist Interest badge shall qualify for the Cycle Personal Challenge by completing only sections 2 and 4.

Figure 25 Personal challenge badge – athletics and cycling

Reprinted with permission (Scouts New Zealand, 2009, p. 33 & 41)

As an example of the consequence of the ableist and discriminatory athletics standard, the National Under 17 boys Para athletics and non-disabled 100m records are compared (New Zealand Secondary School Athletics Association, 2022). Because there are several Para classifications in athletics, I will use the fastest running and fastest wheelchair records. The fastest Para record for an athlete with a lower arm amputation is 15 percent faster than the minimum badge standard. The wheelchair racing athlete, however, is 140 percent slower (see Figure 26). This gap between fastest performances of Para athletes is significant and it is likely that few YPwl will achieve these minimum standards. So while Scouts NZ professes to welcome YPwl, as seen in their use of imagery on their website, the ability for YPwl to participate are constrained by barriers which make their experiences neither fair nor equitable as compared to their non-disabled peers.



Figure 26 NZ Secondary School NZ Para athletics and non-disabled athletics record as compared to the Scouts NZ athletics badge requirements

This example of enlightened ableism represents the complexity of understanding disability as represented through sport. Merely saying YPwI are welcome to a sport, whether through verbal or visual discourse is insufficient. For real change to occur, sport organisations are required to ensure their practices reflect their policies, which in themselves are reflective of how society situates disability.

P/policy in practice

To achieve the social transformation desired by Government and described by DePauw (1997) and other researchers, sport organisations are positioned in a central role as change agents. Sport organisations, as recipients of Government funding, have had an implicit responsibility to help the Government achieve its aims under the NZ Disability Strategy. Historically, cultural change in Aotearoa NZ sport and active recreation has been influenced by Sport NZ and its predecessors, as evidenced by repeated policies and strategies. However, these changes have rarely lead to organisations changing their ableist and discriminatory practices (Spaaij et al., 2020). Within the current funding agreements, sport and recreation organisations are under the illusion that Sport NZ's responsibility to YPwI, as articulated in the *Every Body Active* strategic direction and the *Disability Plan*, is not incumbent upon them to improve opportunities for YPwI. A plethora of policies from Sport NZ, covering multiple marginalised groups rely on sport organisations to prioritise these expectations, and to date these policies have not seen disability addressed by many organisations. If this continues, the consequence may be more forceful compliance, as witnessed with the *Women and Girls* strategy, which required a

minimum number of women on boards as a condition of continued funding (Sport New Zealand, 2018e). Improvements by Sport NZ to provide better leadership in disability sport, without direct intervention, is preferable, but it is disappointing to observe that without external influences, such as Government incentivising via funding, for many organisations a non-ableist change has not been forthcoming. How YPwI experience the rhetoric and discourse of policy is further discussed in Chapter 6.

Much work is still required by both Government agencies and sport organisations themselves to create a sport and recreation system void of disablism where opportunities for all participants are provided in an equitable and anti-ableist context. As of July 2022, Aotearoa NZ disability discrimination is now being addressed through the development of a new accessibility legislative framework and the establishment of a new Government agency – *Whaikaha Ministry for Disabled People* (Sepuloni, 2021). It is hoped this new agency will add weight to the Sport NZ *Disability Plan* by placing renewed focus on inclusion in sport as a key aspect of social and community participation.

COVID-19 and disability sport

The future of disability sport policy cannot be discussed without acknowledging the impact of COVID-19. Aotearoa NZ, albeit isolated from the significant impact faced worldwide by this pandemic, has not been immune. Sport was interrupted and funding streams paused as the country locked down and entered a period unknown since WWII. Government support across all sectors, designed to maintain the economy and minimise the financial impact of COVID-19, included new funding opportunities as part of the 2020 Budget Sport Recovery Package. *Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa* and *Strengthen and Adapt* initiatives are enabling new and targeted investment into disability sport. *Tū Manawa* is providing local and regional funding for programmes or projects delivering play, active recreation, and sport experiences for tamariki¹⁹ and rangatahi. Under the second initiative, *Strengthen and Adapt*, Sport NZ has invited selected organisations to reflect on their current structure and programmes and determine whether this will be resilient and sustainable in the future. Like PNZ, Basketball New Zealand (BBNZ) similarly has identified this opportunity to assess the gap in disability sport provision and transform community basketball delivery (Basketball New Zealand, 2021). These

¹⁹ Sport NZ uses Te Reo Māori to define tamariki - children (5 – 11-year-olds) and rangatahi - youth (12 – 18-year-olds)

commitments, albeit with some external impetus, aim to increase participation by YPwI and disabled people.

Caution however is needed. Despite this raft of policies centralising disability as a priority, Fitzgerald, Stride, and Drury (2020) provide a warning of the challenges that sport organisations will face post-COVID-19 for providing disability sport opportunities. It is timely therefore that Sport NZ now has the desire and resources to show leadership and shape the translation of policy rhetoric into identifiable and lasting change in this post-COVID-19 world. For Sport NZ, history would suggest equity remains an issue and additional support to improve disabled peoples' participation in sport is still required. With the operationalisation and funding of the *Disability Plan* now two-years on, the impact of this initiative on the future of disability sport remains uncertain (cf. Fitzgerald et al., 2020).

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have examined the history of the Aotearoa NZ Government's involvement in disability sport, highlighting a succession of disability sport policies and repeated attempts to increase participation and improve opportunities for YPwI. What becomes evident from this document analysis is that the Government intent to improve the lives of disabled people in sport and active recreation has been distinctly different from non-disabled sport and is best described as enlightened ableism (see Lyons, 2013). Despite a strong commitment to progress opportunities for disabled people, I argue the direct impact of Government policy and government agencies has been inhibited by shifting discourses related to disability, an overreliance on disability sport organisations and an absence of unified policy and provision, policy leadership or targeted funding. Evaluating the effectiveness of policy has been compounded by a lack of up-to-date evidence on sustained participation in sport by disabled people or on the articulations between policy and practice across the sport system. In relation to inclusion, successive policies have touched on this as the ultimate outcome but with most of the sport and active recreation delivered through national and regional networks, disability sport delivery remains a segregated model. While there are no clear or 'one-size-fits all' solutions, collaboration and co-production of solutions with disabled sport organisations and the entire sport system is necessary. If the last 85 years have produced any lessons, it is the need to engage those communities in the planning process to ensure the desired outcomes

are realistic and achievable. This is where further research is needed, particularly on how sport system engagement and commitment can be achieved, especially for disabled young people outside the education and PE context.

There is also a need for further research to consider, aside from the financial resourcing of the sector, what else contributes to enhancing the likelihood of Government initiatives being successful. This will be no simple task: any solution cannot negate the complexity of personal decision-making, the provision of opportunities and sport participation, and the size and distribution of the disabled sport population (see Darcy et al., 2020). Furthermore, the nature of the disability sport landscape creates challenges in and of itself. One truism of disabled people is that they are not a homogeneous group (Martin Ginis et al., 2021; The Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985) and therefore the ways and means of providing effective policy outcomes may lie in the explication of the processes and mechanisms of inclusion that operate across different sporting environments. This may include implementing and evaluating multiple, integrated, segregated and inclusive programmes (Misener & Darcy, 2014) catering to the diversity of interest, need, ability and locality rather than a universal 'one size fits all' solution. Of importance is the development of a nuanced approach, understanding of the 'realities' of inclusion for certain groups, to be able to access sport and active recreation in a regular and sustained manner, necessitating a bottom-up, community-led approach to connect practice to policy (Petrie & Iisahunter, 2011). Such a nuanced approach aligns with the social relational model of disability that recognises the contextuality of disability. Having an impairment alone should not infer disability and as illustrated by the participants in my research in the following chapters, their inclusion in sport and active recreation may require a reconsideration of disability within this context.

I have raised some significant and critical questions regarding the potential contribution of government policies in addressing the inequities experienced by disabled New Zealanders in sport. As sport seeks to respond to the latest policy directive the future of disability sport faces at a critical moment. With the impact of COVID-19, what is at risk is a return full circle to a long hiatus where disabled New Zealanders are again pushed aside, as they were post-WWII, forced to watch and observe others participating in sport. COVID-19 has provided an opportunity to review and reset our future, providing a clear opportunity to ensure that the 'gap' between disability policy and practice in sport is addressed. I am cautiously optimistic that the recent Sport NZ investments will result in positive outcomes and more disabled New Zealanders will participate in sport in the future.

The next logical step to understanding the day-to-day trickle-down of Government policy and initiatives on disability sport is to explore what is and what is not working. In the following chapter I present the experiences of four YPwI who are actively participating in sport and active recreation and how their participation has been achieved.

Chapter 5 YPwl narrating their experiences in sport and active recreation in their own words.

Sports events got cancelled last year because of COVID

... I was so devastated. Andrew

Introduction

In building on the archival analysis in the previous chapter, I present four case studies of YPwl who actively participate in sport and active recreation. All participate in a range of sports and active recreation. While similar themes are presented across the cases, each case provides a unique insight into the YPwl, their family and their participation in sport and active recreation. What is in no doubt, however, is that their participation is meaningful to them. These are their stories of their lived experiences in their authentic voices, with supporting information from their parent(s) and their coaches/leaders.

Quinn – sea scout

[It] makes me feel better that I'm included. I'm not [disabled] or just not included at all ... it kinda makes me feel good that I'm being included

Born with a hereditary condition that causes him to experience balance issues (due to weakness and atrophy in his legs and feet), Quinn, a 13-year-old Pākehā male, was not treated any differently than his brothers, or by his older brothers. Like many NZ families with boys who rough and tumble each other, Quinn's brothers once broke his arm playing rugby with him, symbolic of how his brothers treated him no differently than each other, despite both being quite a bit older than Quinn. When asked why Quinn chose the sports he did, his mother replied, "because his friends did it". According to his mother, he has always loved being active, playing with his older brothers, cousin or friends and has always been competitive and is a risk taker. At the age of 6, he joined Sea Scouts when a friend joined. The friend's father ran the Kea group (for ages 5-8) which his mother describes it as "quite a good fit for him".

His parents have supported his sporting endeavours, taking him to as many things as they could so he could try them and be with his friends. Some sports and activities, such as trampolining and martial arts he tried but did not enjoy. Other more traditional sports, e.g., football and rugby, he could not do due to his need to wear splints until he was eight, and because his balance risked him being injured or injuring someone else. He tried cricket and while ultimately, he found it boring, his first coach did recognise he could hit the ball further than most other players. Quinn had good hand-eye coordination and could score a few fours, so some adjustments were made – “just little things he tweaked” – to accommodate him. His mother noted,

I was very lucky with the coach. He got it the first-time round, he really tried to include Quinn. He was really good, just in the fact "Oh, okay. Well, you can't do that like that." You could see him thinking, "How can I help?" where they have nothing written down how to help kids with disabilities play cricket. So somebody can't run hasn't got great balance, what can I do? And then he was sort of "hang on a second Quinn's not fast at running but Quinn's really good at hitting the ball. So Quinn can have a runner.

But Quinn “got bored of it [cricket], so then I went to sailing [because] the games are just too long”. According to his mother, Quinn is his happiest when he is in or on the water. Not only does he sail with Sea Scouts and is planning on getting his sailing badge, but he also sails with a disability sailing group *Sailability* and competes in able-bodied regattas. Quinn and his father are considering getting a boat so they can go “sailing in like the afternoons and that yeah. I want to do other sailing, but I have to find the time for it I guess” because at the moment, Sea Scouts as his main activity, is keeping him busy. Not only conveniently located “like a minute down the road” from his home, but most of his friends are also involved – most recruited by him and his friend. Shimmell et al. (2013) identified being with friends as a key motivation for participation in sport and active recreation which Quinn illustrated when he acknowledged his friends at Sea Scouts are the core reason for his continued participation because his friends do not attend the same school. Turning up each session to “just see each other”, where “everyone’s nice and everyone helps each other and we’re all just kind to each other and we’ve got really fun activities to do”.

Quinn’s plan is to remain a member of the Scout movement, progressing from Scouts through to Venturers (14-18 years) and Rovers (18-26 years) as a participant, and then become a

leader. Quinn describes one of his strengths as his personality; he says he is funny, but also his passion – he likes “giving everything a go and trying to enjoy it”. If he cannot do an activity in the same way as the other Scouts, he will adapt his approach so he can “always find my own way in everything, like the high ropes I found my own way”. His mother echoes his sentiments: “He’ll keep trying or he finds the Quinn way to do it”. Quinn finding his way exemplifies the findings of Allan, Evans, Latimer-Cheung, and Côté (2020), who noted that disabled people are “expert in their own disability; they can adapt and problem-solve” (p. 554), and do not always need solutions provided for them. While his leader describes Quinn as determined to participate in everything, he is agreeable to changes suggested by the leader or support from his fellow Scouts when he has difficulty due to his impairment. Regardless of how it is described, Quinn’s attitude of challenging himself to achieve (see Shields, 2012) and finding his way is self-driven and recognised by his troop leader who describes it as grit and determination is supported by those around him.

In supporting Quinn, the troop leaders are positive; they listen and “help quite a lot” and “they like keep motivating you to carry on and that” and “they’re also pretty fun”. For his leader, it is

quite rewarding as a leader to see” because “they just have a blast, they enjoy themselves ... just having a great time, really, and [there I am] thinking, wow, you guys are so lucky ... they’re really, really bonding they’ve got all that history in Scouts.

Elaborating on motivation, Quinn explained how the leaders motivate all the Scouts in the same way, not selectively motivating him any differently, such as when “you’re at the back when you are walking, they support you and they [say], “you’re not going to be in trouble for being late and that”. They say that to everyone”. This support for Quinn comes in many forms from his parents and others supporting him try different sports and activities, but it is not unconditional. His troop leader explains, for most part he does not “have any special dispensation really just to be one of the Scouts”. For example, if “he’s on parade and mucks about he’ll just get pulled up just as much as anyone else”. He says that how he is treated the same as other sea Scouts makes him feel good, like “I’m included. I’m not disabled or just not included at all”, similar to the findings of Allan et al. (2018). But for Quinn to be included, some activities and ableist standards do require changing. For example, when asked about any changes sea Scouts have made because of his impairment, Quinn confirmed the requirement for certain uniform items (e.g., leather shoes for the formal uniform) was relaxed for him. Although the enforcement of

this requirement for all others was somewhat lax, he did not stand out from the other Scouts in his troop.

Having the same Scout leader since he joined has been beneficial, he has gained an understanding of Quinn's impairment and how this affects what Quinn can and cannot do. Over the years the leader has taken the initiative to make activities easier for Quinn to be included and have an enjoyable experience. While most of the time he is included without changes, "sometimes they've found a bit of an easier way that they just tell me to go that way". When the Scouts went for a big walk for example, the leader would let Quinn walk for some of the way and then arrange to have him picked up, often coinciding with the delivery of water or lunch, and drop him off further along the walk or allowing Quinn to use a torch during night-time activities.

However, while Quinn's experience with Sea Scouts has been influenced by his troop leader understanding the effects of his impairment because of his own lived experiences with family members with impairment, their long relationship and the troop leader's willingness to provide flexibility in their activities, Sea Scouts remains inaccessible to some disabled young people. Quinn does not expect special dispensation for all requirements but notes there are some improvements that would make Sea Scouts more accessible to YPwl like him, such as changing the structure of how activities are delivered.

Activities you do because some are hard, and some are easy. So maybe just like one week you do like easy activities. And then the next week, you can do hard [activities]. The people can like go to the easy one if they want or they go to the harder one next week.

Darcy et al. (2020) identified the disablism entrenched within sport rules and regulations as a structural/environmental barrier to participation. Quinn's mother also raised this example of disablism, who, from a parent's perspective, questioned why adaptations to rules or regulations were not made to recognise the work YPwl put into attempting to achieve arbitrary goals they physically cannot achieve, especially when "it's not for want of trying". One way to overcome this bias towards physicality would be "letting them adapt how to do it so they can do it. Not saying you've got to do it this way, this is how we do it. Where if they can figure out slightly different way to get to the right, to the same result, just let them do it. And let them enjoy it, especially when they're little" (Mother). According to Quinn's troop leader, Scouts NZ

published a guide four or five years ago that talked about catering for disabled Scouts. This guide was developed in recognition of the current environment not supporting YPwI to participate and is an example of how ableism if left unchallenged, acts as a regulator of participation (see Chapter 6).

Quinn does not let his physical impairment stop him from participating in other activities. His family supports him in his endeavours so long as it does not risk him damaging his feet, for which he has undergone numerous surgeries. He does regularly attend crossfit training at a local gym with a personal trainer who has adapted the programme to accommodate his needs. On a family holiday in Queenstown, the adventure capital of New Zealand, he tried ziplining. Again, his physical impairment did not preclude him from this activity, rather with a few adjustments to his harness, he proceeded to fly head-first, facing skyward, down the zipline. Recently Quinn attended a new 8-day Outward Bound course called *Leaps & Bounds*, where teenagers (13-15 years) share the adventure with a parent/caregiver so they can learn about themselves and each other in a challenging but supportive environment (Outward Bound, 2022) – fulfilling his ‘give it a go’ philosophy.

From his Outward Bound experience, albeit with a ‘watch’ of only disabled young people, Quinn was keen for YPwI to be included with able-bodied attendees, his position being that

you can kind of show them disabled people can do stuff too and they can find their own way around it and they’re not the best at everything. And like maybe beat them at some stuff and that. Yeah.

Quinn’s advice to other YPwI who are not involved in sport is simply “give it a go”. Do not be “too scared to like start a new sport or that or try something new”.

Andrew – footballer

Sometimes I forget I have a disability ... as I love playing sport

Andrew is very active in swimming, badminton, athletics and adaptive surfing. But his favourite sport is football. He is 13 years old and Pākehā and is an avid reader and has read all the *Harry Potter* books and attends a boys-only high school where his mother is a teacher.

I just, I love doing it. I like being active most of the time. It would be hard if I’d like um a broken leg like be out for six weeks in any sport that would be so like mentally challenging without doing any sports.

At a young age Andrew's parents identified he was not reaching developmental stages at the same time as his twin sister. A diagnosis of mild CP enabled his parents to understand these physical differences, but "we didn't let that stop us, or encourage or not encourage Andrew to do things". Their philosophy as a family is they give things a go and "in terms of supporting Andrew, are we pushing Andrew in sport? It's give it a go, see what you think, if you don't like it, you tried it, now you know, you can tick it off your list". In his mother's words, "We're more than happy to run around, push, support, if you want to try it, great, if you want to keep going, fantastic". This philosophy contrasts with Vogts et al. (2010) findings that young people with CP in Aotearoa NZ often experience barriers and an inability to participate in sport or active recreation.

Like many parents in New Zealand, Andrew's parents recognised the importance of water safety and learning to swim at an early age. From the age of five, he was enrolled in swimming lessons and has chosen to not just learn to swim, but to race competitively. He trains one-on-one with his coach and also as part of a swimming squad of 7 or 8 mixed gender swimmers. His sister also competes in swimming and has previously played netball, however according to Andrew, "she's a way better swimmer than a netballer".

At the age of six, his parents asked him if he would like to play rippa rugby²⁰. His response was "yep, I'd love to do that, and I ended up playing rippa rugby. I wasn't the best, but I ended up scoring a few tries". Unfortunately progressing to tackle rugby was less successful as

since I had um CP I was like the slowest in the team. But I was, I was pretty good at tackling. But I didn't quite like tackling because it kinda hurt me and I got winded lots. Sometimes they wouldn't pass to me a lot. To be honest, when I look back on it, I wouldn't quite blame them since I wasn't that fast.

The following year, Andrew chose football rather than continue with rugby after his father asked if he would like to try it. An interest in football was piqued by his maternal grandfather and uncles who played and are football fanatics. Football is now his favourite sport, one he proudly expressed by wearing the team shirt of Borussia Dortmund (BVB) during our first conversation. In contrast to rugby, he feels more comfortable playing football where,

²⁰ Rippa rugby, designed to be fun and exciting, is a safe, non-contact simplified version of rugby played by both girls and boys.

I play three different positions, so left midfielder, left defender and goalkeeper. I usually went on the left since I was quite good at chipping the ball, which means that lobbing it so I could curve it round and lob into like the box where my teammates were.

At the time of our conversation, it was still summer, so he reflected on his previous experiences with football, his team and his coach. When asked whether his team did anything different because of his impairment, Andrew replied

not really since most of the time, and still now, sometimes I forget I have a disability. And as I love playing sport ... as I just said before I usually forget I have a disability, and sometimes get frustrated when people usually faster or stronger than me, since I keep on forgetting I've a disability.

Despite this apparent lack of awareness by his clubmates, Andrew has been fortunate that all his coaches have either lived experiences or previous sporting experiences with disability. This empirical understanding (cf. Townsend et al., 2021) has allowed his participation and competition to develop to a point where his impairment has not been seen as a barrier, rather as just part of who he is (see Shapiro & Martin, 2010). It has also not permitted him to use his impairment as an excuse for not trying his hardest, as relayed in conversation between his mother and his football coach:

I said, "Well, I don't think information has been passed on to you that Andrew has cerebral palsy, mild end of the scale, but [he] still has cerebral palsy, which affects the way and the level to which he will be able to participate in a sport". And he said, "Oh, I see no problem. We'll just see what he's got and see how it all goes".

And he's just been playing him as he would any other player. And with the exception of "I understand the nature of Andrew and his disability, but I'm not going to go any easier on him just because of his disability".

And the flip side to that is he's actually quite even handed about it. He's not push, push, push, push at all cost. But he's then not "It's okay, Andrew, don't worry about it, that'd be fine". He's, he's a really good coach and a really lovely bloke, and he's got a very good balance between those two points.

While Andrew's experiences in sport with CP mean he often takes longer to acquire a skill , having to repeat, repeat, repeat, especially when the skill relies on physical and muscular strength and agility. According to Shikako-Thomas, Majnemer, Law, and Lach (2009) and Shimmell et al. (2013) this delay in skill acquisition is not uncommon among those with CP, but once the skill is acquired, as shown by Andrew, their willingness and commitment to participate is the same as non-disabled participants.

I really like swimming and sometimes if I'm doing like ... four lengths I know sometimes for some people it doesn't seem that long, I get a bit tired in my lungs so I can feel my lungs getting a bit tired like trying to get more air into my lungs ... instead of doing usually three I usually do only two so like, um, one normal one then three like that [Andrew demonstrates his stroke technique] and I usually do it on my right side since it's a bit easier if I breathe on my right side.

It is the same for badminton, which Andrew has recently started playing. Both his parents played badminton, his mother also participated in athletics and his father in swimming, but no longer actively participate themselves, substantiating the recent findings of Furusa, Knight, and Hill (2021) who noted parent's experiences in sport is an important contributor to young people's involvement and preferences in sport. Andrew's badminton club comprises predominantly able-bodied members, most of whom are older than him. He attends training weekly, which is separated into new members who are just learning the game and those who have been playing for some time. He trains with the second group as "two years ago in 2019, I started ... and I started going a bit more and I got really good". At the recent club championships "my team and the boys double came first overall, and I came third in the middle-mixed doubles and boys singles" and "some of them don't know I have a disability." Andrew's experiences with others in sport, how they talk to or act with him due to his impairment, have been positive.

People just usually, just treat me, um, normally, but most of the time they forget I've a disability. Sometimes they don't actually know I have a disability. So we are just playing normally with them.

Well from my view it's not that hard with able-bodied people. It's just like, normal. Just depending on what your skills are.

As with his sister's netball, his parents have managed and coached his football teams when he was younger. Additional support has been provided for Andrew through one-on-one coaching for swimming and badminton. His parents acknowledge they are in a privileged position to provide this additional support as it comes at a financial cost and recognise others may not be so fortunate which supports the work of King et al. (2009) who identified family income and financial situation as a key predictor of YPwl's participation in leisure and recreational activity.

Interestingly, Andrew's father identified the lack of competitive Para sport pathways (see Evans et al., 2018) in Aotearoa NZ as the cause for YPwl being "forced into playing mainstream" with able-bodied teams and leagues. Unlike overseas where competitive opportunities exist for Para sports, such as competitive CP football leagues, Aotearoa NZ has no such pathway. This lack of dedicated opportunity in football is amplified for Andrew when other players are "faster or stronger than me" and when his impairment becomes more obvious, such as when he tires, and his hand comes up towards his chest and "kinda looks like a T-rex". Rather than relishing the opportunity for inclusion, many YPwl want equity, such as the ability to compete against other disabled people, "you know Andrew comments on that quite a bit" (Father), to grow their confidence and skill without the disabling effect of their impairment. This organisational disablism has also been noted by his coach, who lamented that in this era of professional, there is a belief that players at all levels need to be perfect to be selected into a team.

That's really to the detriment of (sic) anybody that is impaired or not or not as skilful. They don't get the same opportunity. Simple as that. So, yeah, that that's the biggest thing I find and, and then then you have the likes of the segregated... . They're always pushed to one side. It's like, well, hang on, there is actually room for them to be in where we should be and stuff like that. So yeah, that's, that's my that's my view. It's, yeah, the everybody seems to get pushed aside a bit.

Like most athletes, Covid-19 wreaked havoc on his sporting opportunities in 2020 and 2021. Cancellations and deferrals of winter sports such as football, and the flow-on effect to other sports, meant many other sports tournaments did not occur. Andrew is now looking forward to 2022 to continue to fulfil his love of sport.

Gaby – swimmer

They've always treated me the same

At 14, Gaby is a Pākehā female with a congenital upper limb condition, excelling in swimming and has her sights firmly set on representing Aotearoa NZ at the Paralympic Games in Paris 2024²¹. She gets up before 5 o'clock in the morning three times a week to go to swimming training as well as going again every afternoon. In the words of her father, Gaby's interest in sport started when she was "an embryo", though Gaby thinks she was "three months old. So I've been swimming for a very long time, ... I enjoy it so much". Living in Australia meant being in the water all the time, either in the family pool daily or at the beach. Family encouragement and support has been central in this sporty family. Not only to Gaby's sporting success, but also her two older siblings who played representative sport at regional level in Australia and Aotearoa NZ, and her younger sister who is multi-talented in a few sports. On her family's return to Aotearoa NZ, Gaby continued learn to swim lessons progressing to swim club. But she describes herself as "not much of a land sport person" and although she played basketball for a time, it was not as good as in Australia and "it's so aggressive and you have to get up in everyone's faces".

Gaby's first memory of swimming was when she was about five. Her coach, when describing how to do breaststroke technique, telling her to "scoop the ice cream, eat the ice cream. Go back for another scoop. Scoop that ice cream, eat that ice cream, go back for another scoop". In treating Gaby as the same as everyone else and ensuring she did the same as everyone else, her coach did not discriminate and was considerate of her impairment. Allan et al. (2020) found coaches can create positive experiences for disabled athletes by examining their own biases and assumptions, and understanding, empathising and collaborating with the athletes to better address the needs of disabled athletes. Gaby was not a young person without a hand, she was just as a learner learning to swim. Ultimately, she did not let that ice cream go. And while Gaby did try other sports, such as basketball and water polo, swimming is just part of who she is, and she has never wanted to stop. While her aspirations are clear, for Gaby swimming is,

I enjoy it. I feel like if you don't enjoy it, then there's not really any point in doing it, but it's the fact that I do enjoy it ... it's something that no I don't have to do, but it's something that I want to do.

²¹ <https://www.1news.co.nz/2022/05/11/15yo-para-swimmer-gaby-smith-gunning-for-paris/>

I just really enjoyed being in the water and the way it is. I don't know if it's, I'm not sure it's just, it's quite calming, I guess. But then it's strange. Even when you're racing, it's just quite calming ... I like the structure of it, that it doesn't change, there's no way that it can ever possibly change.

Moving from the first club she joined on her return to Aotearoa NZ, her current club provides a better programme and as more welcoming to Gaby and her family. They credit her first coach with being the reason why they stayed with the club. Her parents relay the story of the young coach, who after coaching Gaby for the first time, went home and told his mother "I've got a little girl in my class with only one hand. You know, I don't know what to do. I didn't say anything and I'm not doing anything differently for her". With no formal disability education, her coach has taken a pragmatic approach to coaching, which in this instance works for both him and her. This issue of coach education on disability, or lack thereof, has been raised by researchers such as Townsend et al. (2021) who point to the urgent need for this professional development – iterating the concerns raised by ACORD in the 1970s. Gaby has no intention of changing clubs even though there is a club that is closer and more convenient, only a few kilometres away from their home. Next year she will be able to get her driver's licence, but until that time her parents continue to take her to swim training in the early morning and collect her from training after school, no different than their support for her two older and one younger siblings. Her father will often volunteer as a timekeeper or marshal at competitions while her mother watches her races but cannot commit to 4-hour sessions when Gaby's younger sibling is not interested in swimming or has her own sport to play. Her father's volunteering is an example of the importance of parent volunteers to the operation and sustainability of sport. As raised by Trussell (2016), young people do not generally consider a parent's involvement in their sport an obligation or duty nor do they recognise the absence of parents volunteering may detrimentally impact on their ability to participate in their chosen sport.

In her club there are four swim squads ranging from "novies" to gold squad. Most squads are able-bodied swimmers, but there are some Para swimmers as well. From Gaby's perspective she and her fellow Para swimmers are treated no differently with the club, coach and squad mates "just including us and being normal ... just making sure that we're all included in all, feel like a family". Illustrating one of the points of Spencer-Cavaliere et al. (2017) in relation to

inclusive or segregated coaching, Gaby's coach noted, that the club's perspective expectations of her are the same as that of other swimmers.

She was just a swimmer. There was obviously things you needed to talk to her about in terms of hand position, body position, all that kind of stuff. But for the most part, she was just another swimmer.

She's worked her way through the squads as we go through, just as anybody else was, she's not had any special treatment. She's been with her peers and her ability wise all the way through.

Pragmatically and with a sense of irony, Gaby shared that once others recognise "there's nothing they can change about it [her hand]", because she was born like this, that "they're just going to treat it like I'm any able-bodied person". She is adamant she does not want others to think, because of her impairment, she wants extra attention because she is "special".

Echoing the sentiment of other YPwl in my research, Gaby explained a few of her "best friends are from swimming". This statement supports the findings of Martin and Smith (2002) who acknowledged the value participating in sport and active recreation has on creating friendships for YPwl's. To Gaby they are like a second family, "they've always treated me the same, I guess I've never really had an incident at the club ever being treated differently than anybody else". While coaches may have treated her differently in the past, offering to let her swim fewer sets or slightly easier times than her squad mates, the same as they would for able-bodied swimmers if they were injured or unwell, Gaby explains how she now uses this as motivation to keep up with them and to build her confidence and skill.

I would be the one to be like "nah I'm doing four. Don't tell me that". Because I think I'd be too scared of like the other kids being like, "oh, why does she only have to do three?".

So I was like, "No, I'm doing four I'm doing four". So I just did things then. But I guess that also gave me the confidence knowing after I'd done, "oh, I actually can do four I don't just have to do three every time now" so that it just builds confidence, knowing that I could do it.

Gaby's current coaches' experiences in swimming and Para swimming have supported her, but according to her father, her initial coaches "were a little bit naive". Although her current coach has no formal Para swimming qualification (see Townsend et al., 2021), they have been

involved in informal professional development such national swimming camps where they have been able to observe and work with both Para and able-bodied swimmers and coaches. Her coach believes that for Aotearoa NZ swimming, the bar is quite high with Paralympians, such as Dame Sophie Pascoe and her coach, having forged the pathway for young Para swimmers following in her wake. Gaby's parents recognise this would not have been the case had they stayed in Australia where at that time, "Para swimming wasn't on the radar".

Determination is twofold for Gaby: firstly she sees herself as a swimmer and wants to be treated as a swimmer, not dissimilar to Powis (2020) who identifies as a visually impaired cricketer, not making her impairment an excuse for non-achievement. Secondly, she initially had no Para swimming peers to train with or compete against, so segregation was not an option. Now there is a cohort of young Para swimmers who are building a reputation for talent, so in addition to her usual squad sessions, the swim club has established a separate Para performance squad that provides additional training to usual squad sessions. This squad training allows the coach and Para swimmers to focus on individualised needs such as specific techniques, something that the usual training squad does not really allow for, even for able-bodied swimmers. Although her coach does not believe they have done anything special,

the last 12 to 18 months has been a bit different, as we've started to jump onto that pathway. We'll use that word. But as we've kind of jumped on to that pathway, things have changed a bit ... a big part a big part of it is they are [the Para swimmers] together.

Furthermore, Gaby's coach believes that having more than one Para swimmer has created an environment where they are

able to see the success of one and the success of [an]other saying "oh well if they can do that, I can do it" kind of scenario, too. "If they can move up a squad, I can move up a squad. If they can do this hard training, I can do this hard training". So I think being incredibly lucky ... that we have this for them here together at the same time.

Early in 2021 Gaby was promoted into the silver squad and has recently competed at both the national age group and open championships, posting a few PBs and reaping the reward of this additional dedicated training opportunity. Selection criteria for the Swimming NZ national age group programme includes Para swimmers. Gaby was of six Para swimmers selected to be part of a 7-day camp and a 5-day competition tour to help young swimmers develop their

training and racing skills. Simply put by Gaby, “swimming, it's kind of like, you know exactly what you need to be doing exactly at the right time. There's only one thing that you have to be doing, and it's going fast and making your skills right”. Getting her skills right led Gaby to represent Aotearoa NZ at the recent World Para Swimming Championships in Portugal.

While Gaby, her parents and her coach have seen a change within the sport of swimming over the last few years, with the increasing recognition of swimmer Dame Sophie Pascoe and the appointment of a Para Swimming Development Coordinator by Swimming NZ, the impetus for greater involvement of Para swimmers began in the early 2000s. During my time as Executive Director of Swimming NZ not only were disabled and Para swim teaching qualifications and coaching modules developed (these have subsequently been replaced with an Australian-based qualification structure), but also competitive opportunities for Para swimmers to compete alongside able-bodied swimmers were created. More recently appointed Para Swimming Development Coordinator is Paralympian and World Champion, Cameron Leslie. This appointment has provided clubs with dedicated support and guidance and reignited the expansion of Para swimming opportunities into more national competitions. A recently published Para swimming strategy outlines the organisation's goals for Para swimming but, except for a learn to swim teaching qualification, there is no dedicated Para swim coaching qualification available to support coaches wanting to coach Para swimmers.

High expectations from Gaby's coach, based on their own personal experiences as athletes in individual and team sports, are reflected in their coaching style. They expect their swimmers to put their “best foot forward and give everything a good nudge and to understand and appreciate the value of the team, rather than the individual”. Fortunately, Gaby's own motivation, focus and commitment are high, she wants to represent Aotearoa NZ at the Paris Paralympics 2024. Like all swimmer's, Gaby's coach is for now focused on keeping her grounded, working on technique, and identifying the interim goals that will help her journey towards Paralympic success.

Ella – skier

I've never really been good at anything in my life. But for once I feel like I can with skiing.

For Ella, who also loves rock climbing, pilates and French baking, the physical limitations imposed by her CP had restricted her from participating in sport (see Vogts et al., 2010), until she found skiing while on a family holiday in the South Island when she was about 10 years old.

My Dad was like “Let’s try skiing”, so we went up to Cardrona and we booked me a half an hour of ski lesson. And there I found an amazing coach. He is a coach for the New Zealand Paralympics now.

And when I started, I just loved it a lot. It was an amazing feeling learning something that I can do and be good at ... I was so happy that I want it more.

I was like "maybe this could be a thing for me maybe, we could look into it". So Mum um contacted Ruapehu and said, "Hey could we get um lessons at Turoa?". And basically through that um I start going more and more. And then I found my love and passion for skiing.

Living in the North Island means Ella’s choice of sport is not only seasonal but can also be a logistical problem. The North Island mountain ski resorts on Mt Ruapehu are at least a 3-hour drive from most urban areas and are known for inconsistent snow and inclement weather conditions. Fortunately for Ella, her parents are “outdoor people, we actually do a lot of hunting and tramping. Our weekends are spent doing that type of thing ...we’ve always tried to make things happen for her, so she feels, you know, part of the family”. Her parents are fully committed to supporting her – practically, financially and emotionally (see King et al., 2003), and despite not knowing about adaptive skiing before they found it, her mother described how Ella enjoyed it and it became “her one thing, her purpose ... we want her to have something that’s hers”. The following season they decided they would all try skiing as it was a sport the entire family could do together. According to her mother,

before we knew it, she started to outgrow our sort of goals. And she started to enjoy it so much that she didn't want to go away from skiing. And every time we come back from the mountain straight away, she was like "when are we going again?". Like it was just, it was like, she

just fell in love with it. And then it was kind of like, how can we get her more time, so we just would keep going up.

Starting initially with 1-hour lessons, Ella progressed to “three hours and then we started doing four and then five and now I’m doing six hours. My goal is to try get in 70 hours of skiing this season”. Starting with outrigger skis to assist her balance, Ella suggests novice skiers start without them if they can, as she says, “you are going to be relying on your arms and when you go to use the poles, you’re gonna, your balance is gonna be unstable because your poles don’t have the balance you need, ideally you’d drop the outriggers earlier and get your legs and gain the balance you need”. Now using poles, Ella is skiing double black diamond runs on her home mountain ski resort – Turoa – with her father and older brother. But skiing is expensive, not only the lift passes but her parents have invested in specialised equipment, including finding a boot fitter to customise her ski boots to ensure they fitted correctly. The family is fortunate to be able to fund most of the expenses themselves, but supplementary financial support has come from grants from organisations who recognise the importance of sport and active recreation for YPwI.

Skiing is also time consuming, often requiring Ella to take time off school. Unlike many other sports that are based close to home, Ella and her mother will spend a few weeks a season away from home skiing in the South Island at one of Queenstown’s two main ski resorts - Cardrona or The Remarkables – meeting and skiing with other Para skiers including Paralympian Adam Hall, and participating in the annual Adaptive Snow Sports Festival run by Snow Sports New Zealand (2022a). On Turoa, when Ella skis there once a week for a one-on-one lesson, she is usually the only Para skier there and her progress has

exceeded all of our expectations. I mean, in that season she’s skiing black runs on Turoa, which has things we’ve never thought was possible and what happened with her disability, you didn’t see it. And every time she was out there skiing, she got stronger. I just sort of had to question what was happening then. She was just so happy on the snow.

Ella’s effervescent personality exudes enthusiasm and courage when she challenges others

to be free just for yourself. Don’t um, don’t worry about what other people think because of you, that’s going to limit you. At the end of the day, we all, the same people and, disability or not, ... people should be able to accept us the way we are.

How parents conceptualise disability has an important impact on a YPw's participation in sport and active recreation (see Kristèn et al., 2003). When Ella was born, her parents "made a deal that [they] weren't going to let the disability affect her", and were intent on not compensating for her disability. While her brother is a good motorbike rider, chess player and hunter, Ella has tried horse riding, but outgrew it, swimming, and singing as she is musical. However, at her first school no sports or activities were recommended or suggested. Disablism, in the form of segregation and/or a lack of information, are barriers to participation by young people with CP (Shikako-Thomas et al., 2009). Fortunately, Ella now attends an all-girls school where her experiences have changed for the better, "we don't see her disability and half the time her teachers don't see her disability". Illustrating one of the positive outcomes of participation, as recognised by Shapiro and Martin (2010), her teachers at her new school are totally supportive of her. She has been named as part of the school ski team.

Everyone at school knows Ella's dream of her skiing, all the teachers know it, ... they're all sort of in awe of her and they're all quite supportive of it They're all like, "Wow, this is amazing, you can do this", they're really all sort of supportive. Every one of her teachers knows about her dream and ... they will talk to me about her at parent interview and I go "God, this is amazing what she's wanting to do. She wants to be a Paralympic skier for New Zealand" and they're all like, "she's gonna do it. She's gonna do it", ... they believe in her.

But what is it about skiing that has captured Ella's imagination and passion? Probably best articulated by her instructor as

skiing, regardless of what equipment you're in, to some degree, you're independent. And that's the thing about skiing that typically doesn't necessarily happen in other sports is you're still maybe in other sports still being assisted. Well, as soon as you're on skis you're independent, you know. You have a lot of people who have mobility issues, don't have mobility issues when they're on skis because they're sliding, which is awesome.

Unlike most sports, skiing in Aotearoa NZ is delivered through commercial ski resorts and with seasonal staff, historically international 'seasonals', who travel between northern and southern hemisphere ski seasons. At most large ski resorts, skiers access lessons on the mountain through the commercial ski schools rather than through clubs. With Covid-19, seasonal ski

staff have been restricted from entering Aotearoa NZ due to international border closures, so the 2020 and 2021 seasons have been limited for all learners, including those skiers wanting dedicated one-on-one lessons, such as Ella. For Ella her ski lessons have been provided by many different instructors, but she does have her preferred 'go-to' instructors at each ski resort. Her mother credits her first instructor who was "so fundamental in her early days in Turoa ... he just was the right person that put all the time and the energy into Ella and the rapport was just fantastic".

All instructors are trained and hold either general or adaptive ski qualifications from Aotearoa NZ or overseas. Aotearoa NZ's adaptive snow sports started in the late 1970s with the establishment of a disabled skiing association that has subsequently been successfully incorporated into Snow Sports NZ. The system is designed to facilitate opportunities from learning to ski to high performance, and as her instructor has stated, the way instructors are educated and trained (see Townsend et al., 2021) mean any instructor should be able to instruct any skier.

There's no ...secret way that we do things or anything like that. It's literally just skiing. I think adaptive snow sports is, it's such a vague term. The majority of people who come up to Turoa don't require any additional equipment. They don't need specialist instruction, anything like that.

For now, Ella is committed to continuing to ski, both on Turoa and the South Island ski resorts, working on building her physical strength in her legs and on her technique. A fundamental change for Ella moving from an instructor to a coach will bring a new perspective to her skiing, which is required if she is to achieve her aspirations. In following her dream, her mother is adamant,

she has this dream of the Paralympics, but at the end of the day, who knows if it'll happen or not. Yet, we haven't lost anything going along this pathway because skiing is going to be her sport, right. At the end of this she's going to come out of it a pretty good skier regardless of whether she's going to be a Paralympic skier. Her baking, that's given her a career purpose, you know, she's going to end up where there's a mountain so she can bake, and she can ski. Because that is Ella, that's her, she's sort of found herself through it.

There is no doubt these four YPwl are benefitting from their participation in sport and active recreation. All four have been fortunate to have experiences that have been fun, but also predominantly positive and empowering. Despite the effect their impairment plays on their physical ability to participate in their chosen sport or activity, these YPwl have been privileged by their parents and coaches/leaders supporting their participation. These supporters have ensured barriers to participation have been lowered or removed. Further research representing a cohort of YPwl not so well supported would enhance better understanding of their participation and experiences, which may differ from those included in my research, and provide further value to both disability sport research and practice.

Chapter summary

Quinn, Andrew, Gaby and Ella exude positivity about their sport and recreation participation and experiences. Opportunities to participate in sport and active recreation presented to these YPwl have been welcomed and the challenges relished. Participation in sport and active recreation, has brought these YPwl a sense of belonging (see Bundon & Hurd Clarke, 2015), a second family, and an identity (for example Powis, 2020; Shapiro & Martin, 2010) as an athlete/participant not a disabled person. These YPwl and their families have described how participation in sport and active recreation brings positive outcomes, while acknowledging these experiences may require more support than non-disabled participants. Their stories provide a valuable and enlightening contrast to the much-researched barriers and constraints to participation (see Smith & Sparkes, 2020). As DePauw (1997) championed, we all need to become “active change agents for the social transformation of sport” (p. 429). Through positive and super supportive parents (see King et al., 2003) and coach/leader understanding and education (see Townsend et al., 2021) these YPwl are direct beneficiaries of social transformation.

In the following chapter I highlight some of the current ableist and disablist discourse in sport provision which perpetuates the barriers and constraints to successful participation by YPwl.

Chapter 6 Ableism and disablism in sport provision: a critical commentary

You can show them disabled people can do stuff too. It kinda makes me feel good that I'm being included. Quinn

Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented the narratives of Quinn, Andrew, Gaby and Ella, tracing the various ways in which they engage in their respective sports. These are just four of the over 140,000 young people who identify as disabled in Aotearoa NZ (Murray, 2019). They rely on the sport system to provide them with opportunities to participate, compete and excel. In Chapter 4 I outlined how the Aotearoa NZ disability sport policy landscape provides a background for the provision of disability sport today. In so doing, I clearly located the disability sport sector and its numerous organisations responsible for enacting government policy related to disability inclusion. Critical to the day-to-day enactment and success of such policies are coaches/leaders, managers and volunteers who are responsible for helping YPwI realise their aspirations in sport and active recreation. However, in taking both the policies framing the sector and the experiences of the YPwI as my focus, it is necessary to expose the various mechanisms that work to inhibit progress in the provision of sport and active recreation opportunities for disabled people in Aotearoa NZ. As such, I locate my analysis within a framework of ableism and disablism, illustrating the discourses that remain dominant in sport and active recreation.

In this sense, I understand discourse as the language, imagery and objects of sport as reflected in the provision and practice of disability sport; ableism as the underlying and unconscious bias towards non-disabled participants; and disablism as blatant discrimination against disabled people and YPwI based on a perception of their inability to actively engage and participate in sport and active recreation. To provide empirical entry points into my analysis I draw on examples from the sports and activities that the four YPwI participate in, highlighting the differences in how sport organisations currently position disability sport, providing a critical commentary on the current state of disability sport in Aotearoa NZ.

Why bother when the research says YPwl are not participating

For the last 85 years, the low participation rates of disabled people in sport and active recreation have been a consistent catalyst for Government intervention. Strategies and policies designed to improve access to opportunities for disabled people have been implemented yet the size of the disabled population participating in sport and active recreation in Aotearoa NZ has never been established. Anecdotally, the YPwl in my research know of many other YPwl participating. Andrew's good friend who has CP also plays football and at a recent badminton camp there were several other Para badminton players. Quinn knows "there's a few others" in sea Scouts. In swimming, Gaby trains and competes against other Para swimmers. At the first National Age Group Championships with Para swimming events there "weren't as many people at NAGs as they were at Opens" which she put this down to "seeing how it would go rather than everybody fully jumping into it straight away". Undoubtedly the timing of the event amid Covid-19 uncertainty was also a factor. And on the ski slopes Ella has seen sit skiers, amputees, and skiers with CP like her, and says 'if you go like skiing the chances of you seeing them are pretty like out of a 100, 75".

A consequence of the lack of reliable information is the inability to identify in a meaningful way the impact of policy. One of the challenges for the provision of disability sport is this apparent lack of critical mass of YPwl wanting to participate in sport and active recreation. Not unique to Aotearoa NZ (see Darcy et al., 2020), also allude to this in Australia, this issue does present logistical problems for participants and sport organisations alike. However, because the official census of disabled people does not include sport participation and because sport surveys in the past have not included disabled people, the full extent of participation is unknown. In 1981, the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP), it was estimated 1 in 10 New Zealanders identified as disabled. Nearly forty years on, this number is now 1 in 4 (Statistics NZ, 2013) across the population. For young people (0-15 years) this number drops to 1 in 5. Of this cohort, young people with physical impairments only, account for less than 15 percent. There is no official record of the number of all disabled people (including YPwl) participating in organised sport, but it is estimated to be less than 7,000. Over 70 percent of these participants are members of SONZ, while the remainder are members of PNZ-affiliated organisations. While the lack of reliable data continues, and in line with the evidence from Australia (Darcy et al., 2020), the disability sport population can be best described as niche.

The only census-style information on disabled people's participation comes from archival records during the Sports Development Inquiry in 1985 that, in the ACORD submission to the Committee, provided background information on national disability organisations' membership. Nationally, the 1990 *Life in New Zealand Survey* (Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 1991) established a benchmark for 'mainstream' physical activity and leisure patterns in Aotearoa NZ. Now known as *Active NZ*, these surveys are used to track participation rates and direct policy. Although these surveys do not provide a census of participants, they do provide a 'snapshot' of participation patterns and the changing landscape of participation (Sport New Zealand, 2019b). Questions relating to disability were first included in the 1998/99 survey (SPARC, 2003) and less than 0.5 percent of respondents identified as disabled. Despite this small size, nearly a third of respondents who were active, participated in at least one club-based sport or activity. However, 37 percent of disabled young people (5-17 years) were inactive. Unlike later surveys, these longitudinal surveys were very detailed, included interviews with participants, and tracked participation across the year to include summer and winter sport participation. Reminiscent of the 1930s Auckland Primary Schools Sports Association report presented in Parliament, survey findings support the generally accepted position that disabled people, and disabled young people, participate less in sport and active recreation than non-disabled people.

However, participation surveys were neither regular nor consistent. In the 2013/14 *Active NZ* survey, only adults were surveyed, of whom approximately 6 percent listed poor health/injury or disability as their reason for not participating more in their chosen sport or activity and 9 percent cited this as the reason for not trying new sports (Sport New Zealand, 2015). Comparable information for young people's participation was not included again until more recent surveys. *Active NZ* surveys (2017 and 2021) identified 12 and 34 percent of respondents as disabled young people. Nearly half of these trained or practiced with coaches/leaders, i.e., in organised sport through clubs, and a quarter participated in competitions or tournaments. Significantly down on the 1998/99 survey results, only 7 and 15 percent respectively had not participated in any form of sport or active recreation in the previous 7 days (Sport New Zealand, 2019a, 2021a). This apparent change in non-participation was certainly influenced by the change in survey structure (recording participation across 7 days as opposed to 4 weeks) and the increase in the number of respondents identifying as disabled.

At a surface level these surveys create the impression that more YPwI are now participating in sport and active recreation. The four YPwI who contributed to this research are participating in at least ten different sports and/or activities between them. Currently, Quinn goes to “Scouts ...um yeah I like sailing and yeah”, Andrew plays “football um badminton ... I'm getting into surfing and athletics. And yeah, that's all the sports I do”. Gaby is busy swimming and Ella is into “skiing ...rock climbing [and] pilates”. In addition, most also participate in a variety of opportunities delivered by their respective regional disability sport organisation.

I caution, however, that while these surveys add to the understanding of disability sport provision in Aotearoa NZ, there are limitations. These surveys imply Sport NZ has given agency to the voices of YPwI, but a more detailed review of the surveys indicates a misalignment between policy and practice and acts to propagate continued misunderstanding of YPwI. Although respondents could identify as disabled in the 2017 and 2021 *Active NZ* surveys, the 2019 survey did not offer this choice. Furthermore, these surveys also neglected to offer YPwI the choice of disability sport in questions related to participation. Survey design forced the ‘othering’ of YPwI by not providing any choice to represent their participation in disability sport except under the ‘Other’ category. By capturing disability sport under a general category, these surveys are exclusionary and discriminatory (Pearce, 2017). The lack of legitimacy given to disability sport participation by YPwI runs counter to Sport NZ disability rhetoric and is an example of enlightened ableism. As evident from my research (see Figure 27), disability sport is important to YPwI. My research nomination questionnaire included questions on sport and active recreation participation. Nearly twenty different sports were participated in by YPwI. Disability sport ranked 3rd, behind swimming and athletics. Disability sport provides an valuable opportunity for YPwI to participate in sport and active recreation and should not be discounted by government agencies such as Sport NZ as inconsequential to the participation of YPwI. Furthermore, 92 percent of nomination responses indicated other family and whānau members participated in sport and active recreation, with fifty-four percent believing “definitely yes” that their involvement was influential in their YPwI’s involvement and 31 percent “probably yes”, further supporting the findings of Furusa et al. (2021). This relationship between family and whānau involvement in sport and active recreation and YPwI’s participation is worthy of further research to identify how this critical link can be used to further enhance opportunities and quality experiences for YPwI.

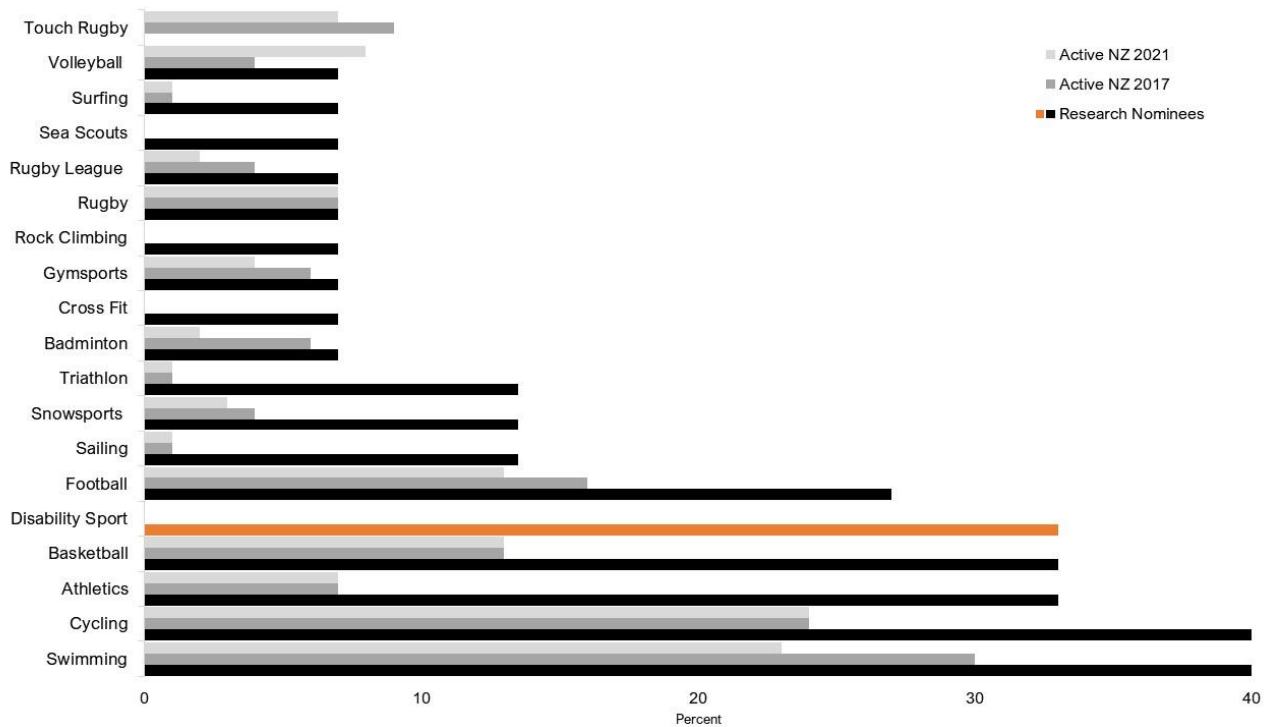


Figure 27 YPwI sport participation compared to the Active NZ surveys

It is incumbent on Sport NZ to redress this omission of disability sport so that future surveys ensure YPwI are presented equitably, including disability sport being given the same recognition and legitimacy as mainstream sport does for non-disabled participants.

It is unsurprising that the establishment of, and continued need for, dedicated disability sports organisations is in direct response to policies that positioned disabled people as ‘other’, creating a landscape of social exclusion and disablism evident in early Aotearoa NZ sport policy and practice (cf. Thomas, 2004a). Since the first disability sport organisation was established in the 1960s, over fifty national and regional disability sport organisations have delivered opportunities to disabled people in Aotearoa NZ. While some have flourished, within the last year alone, two regional disability sport organisations have been resurrected after decades-long hiatus, indicative of the ongoing gap in provision of disability sport. According to Gaby, being involved with a regional disability sport organisation is “to be honest, ... probably the best thing that's happened to most of us” because they are always helping and providing extra opportunities for YPwI to be accepted within an anti-ableist sporting environment. This constant need for dedicated organisations delivering disability sport is another reflection of the failure of mainstream sport to accommodate the needs of YPwI and disabled people within

their current structures. As evidenced by the YPwl, the role regional disability sport organisations play in their sport and active recreation experiences has been instrumental. Andrew's father cannot remember how they got involved, but believes his son is lucky to be involved. As pan-sport organisations he believes they provide a valuable role in enabling YPwl to experience different sports and activities, being knowledgeable about disability and aware of the entry points into mainstream sport and active recreation opportunities.

The lack of detail on the number of disabled people involved in sport creates a dilemma for determining the impact of any Government policy. As Sport NZ (and its antecedent organisations) have recognised, there have been failings in trying to establish a baseline of participation numbers, and this has led to a reliance on repeated assumptions about the effectiveness of initiatives without any critical analysis. It is unlikely that Government policies and initiatives for including disabled people in sport have translated to significantly more YPwl becoming more active more of the time (Cockburn & Atkinson, 2018a; Cockburn & Wither, 1997; Gourley & Dwyer, 2005). Despite progressive discourses and ideals, aka enlightened ableism, a lack of resourcing, sport buy-in and follow-up have limited the potential for create systemic change. Instead, it appears that policy and resourcing have consistently failed to achieve the desired outcomes of increasing the participation of disabled New Zealanders in sport (Rushton, 2007). This inability of Sport NZ to respond more directly to the needs of the disability sport sector reflects the continued lack of 'visibility' of disabled people informing policy, largely due to the influence of enlightened ableism. It suggests the need for a more nuanced support and provision of disability sport for YPwl, including listening to the voices of YPwl if disability sport provision is to meet the changing needs of future participants.

Social transformation or enlightened ableism

Since DePauw (1997) challenged and championed social transformation in sport, and despite the growth in policy and research, little traction appears to have been made towards effective change and sustainable outcomes in disability sport delivery. As is evident from the historical account presented in Chapter 4, broader changes in disability policy and the increasing politicisation of disability have impacted the context in which disability sport in Aotearoa NZ has developed (cf. Thomas & Smith, 2009). In particular, the analysis suggests that the history of disability and the disability policy process has been shaped by several key factors, including government agendas, engagement of the disability sport sector and the various ways that

disability is positioned in policy affecting sector responses. A significant change was the shift in how Government considered disability in the mid-to-late 1980s. During this period Government policy moved from contextualising disability as a medical, individualised perspective towards a social model perspective. The result of this reconceptualization recognised the inequities embedded in sport provision for 'others', such as disabled people, women, and ethnic minorities, and began to address perceived social barriers rather than continuing to place responsibility on the individual to be active.

This shift in the foundational discourse underpinning social policy has had major implications for contemporary sports policy (e.g., *Every Body Active*) and disability (e.g., *Disability Plan*). Even before the Aotearoa NZ Government became a signatory to the UNCRPD, government rhetoric and discourse had changed to better recognise the disabling aspects of society for people with impairments. For government sport agencies leaving behind the neoliberal healthism agendas that perpetuated individualistic sport policy (e.g., teaching disabled young people how to play sport safely) and moving towards more socially inclusive initiatives (e.g., advocating for well-designed, inclusive and fit-for-purpose facilities), it was imperative to reconstruct the subjective position of disabled people, previously seen as 'other'. While progressive discourses of inclusion and equity permeate recent social policy, enlightened ableism still prevails. The impact of policies has been affected significantly by a system comprised of various organisations responsible for disability sport provision, and a lack of clarity about the distribution of budgets, funding and resources to these organisations (cf. Lyons, 2013). This will be discussed in more detail later. Equally, as Carroll, Witten, and Duff (2021) noted, the disparity in provision for disabled people, including YPwI, is more than a sport issue, it "is also a matter of social justice" (p. 9). Overcoming the ableist dominance in Aotearoa NZ sport is still a 'work in progress' and remains pertinent today (see Carroll et al., 2021; Kanagasabai et al, 2019).

In drawing on the concept of ableism to frame my analysis, it is perhaps necessary to expand our understanding of the concept as it plays out in sports policy and practice, in order to capture its various forms. In Chapter 4 I highlighted the effect of 'enlightened ableism' in government sport and active recreation policies and initiatives. I have argued that understanding how enlightened ableism circulates in sport policy discourse is crucial to understanding how ableism acts a regulator of inclusive policy and its enactment in sport, yet is often unnoticed (see McBean et al., 2022). The concerted drive towards an anti-ableist sporting culture in Aotearoa NZ can be traced back to the first *No Exceptions* strategy that

aimed to develop “an environment where all national and community organisations support the involvement of people with a disability” (Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 1998, p. 3). A decade later, when reviewing the SPARC *No Exceptions* strategy, Elder-Knight (2008) found boards and management of sport and recreation organisations had little appreciation of the philosophies underpinning the strategy. Outside of those directly involved in disability sport, organisations lack the understanding of how enabling attitudes and creating equitable and barrier-free environments facilitate the participation of disabled people.

Quinn’s example of the prescriptive badge standards by Scouts NZ (see Chapter 4) is not unique. Enlightened ableism is evident throughout the sport system, including organisations providing advice and guidance on disability sport provision. Sport NZ recently published the *MoveWell* teacher resource (Sport New Zealand, 2021f), designed to enhance knowledge, skills and attitudes towards participation, by modifying activities while “[f]ocusing on the children’s needs, skills, and abilities is particularly relevant when considering disability” (Sport New Zealand, 2021f, p. 8). One intention of this resource was to address situations where disabled young people are precluded from participation by trusting activity modification to achieve inclusion. Instead of addressing the barriers integral to the social model of disability as a social construct imposed on people with impairments, the resource emphasises the ‘particular’ needs of disabled children, reminiscent of the medical model of disability. Furthermore, instead of empowering participation by YPwI, this resource reinforces stereotypes of disabled people – that all disabled young people require special attention and use wheelchairs. The illustrations in the resource (Figure 28) show the young people with impairments sitting on the side-lines not being included, i.e., being disabled, reflecting the ableist and patronising ways disabled young people are positioned in sport and active recreation.

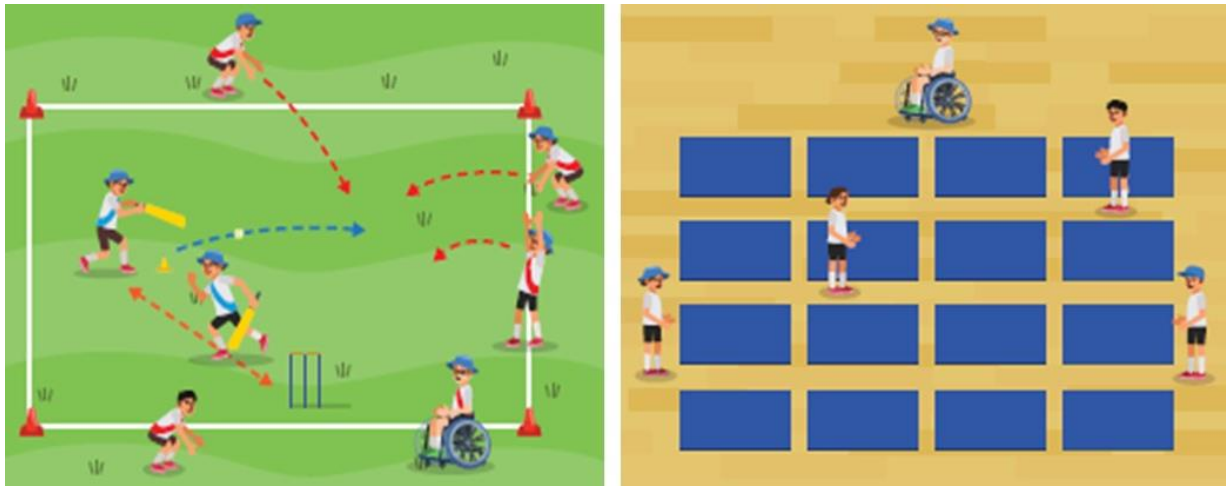


Figure 28 MoveWell game illustrations

Reprinted with permission (Sport New Zealand, 2021f)

Ever since Winnick (1987) proposed an integration continuum for sport participation, the guiding principles for making sport and active recreation available to disabled people have been grounded in sport and activity adaptation. Adapting and modifying sport and active recreation use techniques such as STEP – space, task, equipment, people (Fitzgerald et al., 2020; Youth Sport Trust, 1996). Programmes that promote adaptation and modification as a means for including disabled young people, often centralise participants’ ‘dis’-abilities by emphasising the adaptation rather than the skill acquisition. Furthermore, as argued by Petrie et al. (2018) such approaches do little to challenge those delivering the sport or activity “to move beyond superficial modifications and question what it means to be inclusive” (p. 347). Over the last two decades, the influence of sport and activity adaptation to facilitate YPwI’s participation in sport and active recreation has dominated disability sport awareness and education. The Hillary Commission developed two resources “to accommodate the effect of the disability so that the handicap is minimised” (Hillary Commission, 1997, p. 5): the *Kiwi Can: a guide for including children with disabilities in KiwiDex and KiwiSport fundamental skills activities* (Hillary Commission, 1997); and *Coaching Athletes with a Disability* (Hillary Commission, 2001), an adaption of the 1991 British Sports Association for the Disabled *Guidelines for Coaching People with Disabilities* (Burrows, 1991).

This ableist proposition that YPwI are unable to participate without assistance is refuted by Quinn who is resolute that “I just find my own way to do it” and other YPwI “can find their own way around it”; that they are capable. Building on this ableist position, the Halberg Foundation inclusion training²², first introduced in the mid-2000s, and modelled on the Australian Sports Commission’s Disability Education Programme was also grounded in sport and activity adaptation. At the time, this training was seen by SPARC as holding the potential to make a significant positive impact (Rushton, 2007) on sport and active recreation opportunities for YPwI. The merits of continued investment by Sport NZ in these programmes have regularly been questioned by organisations delivering disability sport at the local level who see no systemic system-wide change in provision because of this programme. I contend that the dominant emphasis on activity adaptation in disability sport discourse is yet to address the unmet demands for opportunities and is central to the explanation of why enlightened ableism is evident in the Aotearoa NZ sport system.

A lack of understanding of how dominant ableism is in sport and active recreation, how it is expressed by organisations and the unintended consequences for YPwI, leads to the final example, the Aktive²³ (2019) *Understanding Disability Toolkit*. The Aktive guidelines aim to help organisations understand, engage and empower disabled participants in sport and active recreation. Like most practical resources, the guidelines are premised on activity adaptation and what to take into consideration to make an opportunity inclusive. The guidelines list nearly 60 accessible and inclusive physical considerations “that you may need to make your physical activities more accessible and inclusive” (Aktive, 2019, p. 13). Most considerations listed in the guidelines are standard for the delivery of any sport or active recreation opportunity. But in contrast, the inference is that these considerations are unique to disability sport, and without addressing them opportunities will be neither accessible nor inclusive. But as Spaaij et al. (2020) caution, ableism and discrimination will continue if inclusion is positioned as extra or optional work. Consistent with the Sport NZ teacher resource, the Aktive guidelines are designed to encourage organisations to provide sport and active recreation, but both do little more than reinforce the perceived difficulties of providing opportunities for YPwI, and in so doing create additional barriers to participation. These examples of how ableism is expressed

²² Originally called No Exceptions Training (NET). Rights to this programme were purchased by SPARC in the mid-2000’s with the Halberg Foundation contracted to deliver to schools and sport and active recreation clubs nationally.

²³ Aktive provides “leadership to the Auckland region that encourages, enables and inspires Aucklanders to lead more active lives through play, sport and active recreation” and is a partner of Sport NZ (Aktive, 2022).

by sport organisations are indicative of the lack of understanding of YPwI and other disabled people.

The disablist positioning disability sport

As stated earlier, the shifting landscape of disability sport in Aotearoa NZ will continue to fail YPwI if those who oversee sport and active recreation chose not to acknowledge and address the influence of ableism and give agency to the voices of disabled people. As the trickle-down of Government policy into the sport system and sport organisations becomes more evident, the discourse of diversity and inclusion is becoming more pervasive around how sport organisations situate disability sport relative to changes in society. At present, evidence of real change in sport organisations away from their ableist and discriminatory practices is rare (Spaaij et al., 2020). Understanding how disability sport rhetoric and discourse is expressed, compared to how disability sport is experienced by YPwI (the social relational model of disability in action) is critical when attempting to move beyond ableism.

Few of the YPwI in my research directly discussed sport organisations outside the context of classification. Quinn, however, thought the new Government investment into disability sport was “pretty good, because some new Para sport might open up. And everyone can give them a go”, because from his perspective “I’d feel pretty sad that other people would ... not be able to do it [participate in sport and active recreation]”. Sadly for Quinn, disability has not always been considered an explicit element of sport organisations strategies and policies in Aotearoa NZ or elsewhere (see Jeanes et al., 2019), resulting in disabled people being ‘othered’ and missing out on opportunities to participate. Slowly this is changing in Aotearoa NZ as organisations can no longer feign ignorance of the expectations of government, Sport NZ, disabled people and the public at large. But reliance on policies alone to effect change will not negate the influence of ableism (Kitchin & Crossin, 2018). While leadership may support and encourage participation by disabled people, practices at the club level by officials, coaches and volunteers continue to discriminate. If sport organisations do not recognise how providing opportunities for YPwI fits within their current structure and systems or it is seen as deviating from the normalised expectations, they are unlikely to engage in further disability sport discourse (Jeanes et al., 2019). This overt ableism, grounded in athleticism, performance and winning (see Fitzgerald, 2018) works against sport organisations responding to external changes.

The intent of policies to raise the visibility and awareness of opportunities has been twofold. Firstly for YPwl and their parents, it is important to know what is available, so they have choice. Secondly, awareness-raising in non-disabled people is necessary to see YPwl participating in sport and active recreation. As Quinn noted, the importance of this latter purpose is that

you can kind of show them disabled people can do stuff too and they can find their own way around it and they're [non-disabled] not the best at everything. And like maybe beat them at some stuff and that. Yeah.

While Quinn saw showing non-disabled people the ability of YPwl to participate as important, Ella spoke on the impact of seeing first-hand other disabled people participating. "I thought "wow, um, he has a more severe disability than me but he's an amazing skier" ... that does influence me". Gaby's father is also a proponent of seeing others participate. He would encourage YPwl to experience any opportunity in person, to observe how other YPwl and disabled people are accepted within the sport or activity. As a parent, he sees this as a way to overcome concerns or anxiety often experienced by young people experiencing sport competition for the first time as "it's pretty scary for a lot of them, for [any] kid to try something completely different, let alone a [YPwl]".

Promotion and awareness of disability has been a key pillar of policy. From the late 1970s ACORD (Lavender, 1979) and the subsequent *No Exceptions* policies (see SPARC, 2005) accepted that enhancing visibility and awareness was a means to overcoming barriers to participation. Yet even with this push from policy, sport organisations have been slow to act. Athletics NZ's vision, for example, is "*All New Zealander's engaged in athletics*". This vision includes YPwl, Para athletes, disabled athletes and Paralympians, but this is not explicitly stated by Athletics NZ. This implicit interpretation of 'all New Zealanders', creates misunderstanding of how Athletics NZ positions disability. YPwl and/or their parents do not see if and where they belong, and those involved in delivering athletics are not provided any signposts as to what is expected of them. As Gaby identified, YPwl often feel there are no opportunities for them to participate in mainstream sport because sport organisations do not communicate and promote what they are delivering.

I want to find a better word than advertising, but letting the community know ... that there is the option for Para [athletes]. Because I feel like a lot of Para athletes, and people that are involved in Para sport kind of feel like "oh, maybe I won't join that [sport] because they don't have any opportunities for me, and they don't have anything that is going to help me be the best I can be because they don't have anything to [do

with] Para". But in fact, they might but they just haven't said anything about it. (Gaby)

A visit to the Athletics NZ website or a review of their *Get Set Go* and *Run, Jump, Throw* programmes, would lead a YPwl, their parents, volunteers, coaches and officials, to presume there are few opportunities for YPwl outside of high-performance athletics. This is unfortunate as while athletics has a proud tradition of Para athletes, as evidenced by Paralympians Eve Rimmer (Paralympian #13), Graham Condon (#4), and Patricia Hill (#35), inducted into the *Legends* hall of fame, athletics is a sport that disabled young people can readily participate in if given the opportunity. At a time when ableism is still inherent within sport, this omission of explicit reference to disability sport is a form of disablism. Being explicit about disability is crucial if the dominance of ableism is to be exposed across all sectors of society, including sport and active recreation.

There is an increasing expectation for all organisations, including sport organisations, to be agile, adaptable and inclusive (Margherita, Sharifi, & Caforio, 2021). To achieve the goal of improving opportunities for YPwl, sport organisations will need to become more responsive to an ever-increasing and rapidly changing sport system and the growing demands of YPwl. Responsiveness needs to be more than rhetoric; it requires a greater commitment to change practices, rather than just relying upon policies. In contrast to Athletics NZ, other sport organisations are now situating disability sport explicitly. Two examples are Swimming NZ and Badminton NZ. Visitors to these organisations' websites (see Figure 29) are presented with an impression of disability sport as an integral part of the sport. Navigation directs to detailed information on disability and Para sport, including classification, and upcoming events. In addition, the organisations invite enquiry and provide contact details for a dedicated staff member.

As discussed previously, disability sport provision by sport organisations in direct response to government policy has been ineffectual. Delivering opportunities for YPwl because of policies has gained little traction, but as evidenced by the four YPwl in my research, there are opportunities available. In addition, the benefits of disability sport have not been encapsulated into sport and active recreation by sport organisations. Responses by parents to the nomination questionnaire not only identified the expected benefits of participation to improvements in sport and activity skills (93 percent) and general physical ability (80 percent),

but also found their YPwl had new sport and activity goals (80 percent), a sense of belonging (73 percent) and an increase in confidence (73 percent).

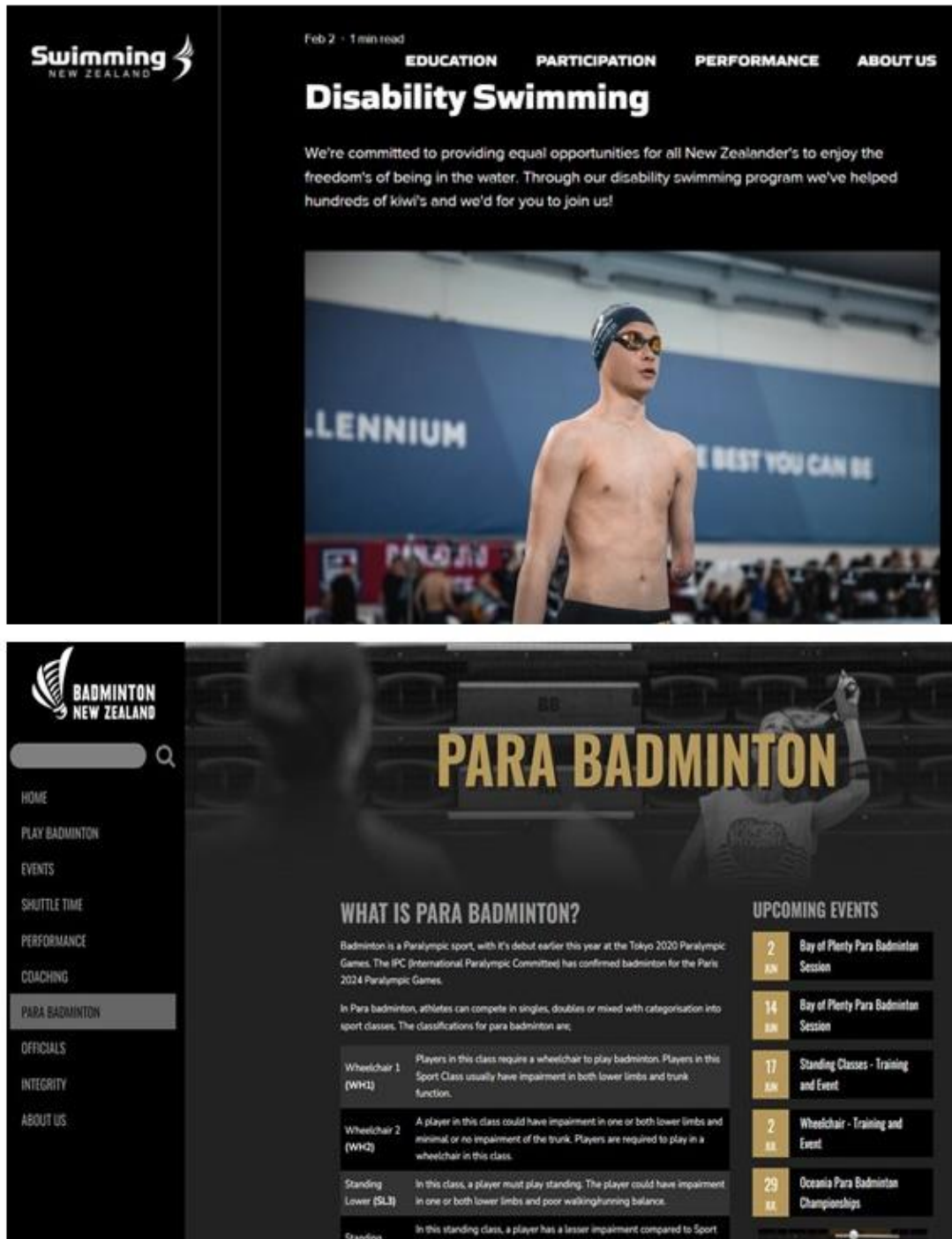


Figure 29 Swimming NZ disability swimming and Badminton NZ Para badminton webpages
Reprinted with permission (Badminton New Zealand, 2022; Swimming New Zealand, 2022)

Advertising, as described by Gaby, is about communication as well as raising awareness and has been a vital component of all previous disability sport plans (see Figures 19 & 20). Promoting disability and Para sport opportunities is a relatively straightforward way to enhance participation by YPwI. For sport organisations, gone are the days of designing and printing thousands of brochures and promotional materials and manually distributing them to potential participants and interested parties. Today, digital methods, such as websites and social media, provide platforms for information to be widely available to a broad audience. Potential participants can search and find information as and when they wish to, using their own devices. While there are limitations to digital media, including the risks of disinformation, the internet has provided a cost-effective platform previously unavailable for mass marketing, especially for sport and disability sport organisations. While digital media have advanced the marketing of disability sport, the rhetoric and discourse around disability sport has trailed behind.

Again, as Gaby said, “Para athletes [need to] know that there is something out there for them”. A lack of disability sport and Para sport information at the local level, where YPwI and disabled people seek to join sport and active recreation, is problematic and as noted by Spaaij et al. (2020) suggests a resistance to change. Local opportunities present the usual entry points for participation, and it is apparent that for organisations delivering at this level, more support and guidance from within the sport system is required to enhance YPwI’s participation. While ambiguity between national rhetoric around how disability sport and YPwI are situated, and while local disablist delivery practices continue, sport organisations should not be surprised when they are challenged, and their commitment to disability sport is described as enlightened ableism.

In contrast to swimming and badminton, run by a network of clubs with volunteers, snow sports rely primarily on commercial ski resorts. Although ski clubs do exist, as the primary providers of opportunities in Aotearoa NZ, resorts in partnership with Snow Sports NZ act as the entry point for most YPwI and disabled people interested in snow sports., Resorts actively promote adaptive programmes and services and provide a support structure on the ski fields. Snow Sports NZ itself has also repositioned the marketing of the sport away from the archetypical middle-aged non-disabled male of the past to celebrating the successes of skiers, including Para skiers (see Figure 30). Situating disability explicitly as equal to non-disabled skiing acts as an exemplar of how sport organisations can, through the hard work and determination of agents of change within the organisation and through partnerships, effect wider change across the sport system.



Figure 30 Snow Sports NZ website home pages.

Reprinted with permission. Paralympics New Zealand (L) and Thomas Reid (R)

The discourse of disability across these sports – whether individual or team sport – reveals the differing positions and opportunities for YPwI. Swimming NZ has explicitly positioned Para swimming as integral to their success, and Badminton NZ and Snow Sports NZ acknowledge and promote disability sport opportunities. All these organisations are on a journey towards making opportunities for YPwI integral within their sport.

While not discrediting the work the organisations described above have undertaken to promote their commitment to disability sport at the national level, the same cannot be said for their regions and clubs. Regardless of how disability sport is promoted, (and this problem is not unique to Aotearoa NZ), national organisations risk disconnecting their discourse from local practice (see Peers, Konoval, & Marsh Naturkach, 2020). As cautioned by Darcy et al. (2020) a ‘top-down’ approach may perpetuate discrimination and contribute to an “unchallenged, ableist culture that privileges those without disabilities and ignores those with disabilities” (p. 218). Furthermore, to fully address discrimination and ableism within sport, sport organisations will need to reflect on their ideologies and how this is reflected in

practices at the local level (Spaaij et al., 2020). For NZ Football to achieve its goal of being the most inclusive sport in Aotearoa NZ, consideration of how opportunities for YPwl can be met needs urgent attention. If YPwl are not considered as part of their whole football community and NZ Football and clubs have no intention of including YPwls, it is incumbent upon NZ Football to rethink this goal. Alternatively, this may be merely an ableist oversight, which NZ Football wishes to redress, improving the structure of football. For a YPwl to be competitive and have a pathway through to international level, Andrew's father believes they need the ability to compete against other players with impairments to develop their confidence and skill. In lieu of any NZ Football initiatives, Andrew will miss out on his aspirations unless he and his good friend, who also has CP, "organise that for New Zealand. He wants him and his mate to set up CP football. And he wants a national level" (Father). As such, a review of competition structures, coaching education, and opportunities for dedicated blind and CP football, as well as reframing other marginalised participants, such as YPwl, is vital. If ableism and discrimination in sport and active recreation remains unchallenged, improving the provision of opportunities will be overlooked and YPwl and other disabled people will remain unaware of the possibilities and the opportunities to participate in sport and active recreation.

Where society has traditionally situated disabled people as separate and different to non-disabled, from my experience in sport and active recreation over three decades, and supported by the four YPwl in my research, there are no differences in aspirations and desires between YPwl and non-disabled young people. As alluded to above, the messages, signs and symbols representing disabled people are a powerful signal of which bodies, attributes and abilities are welcome in different sporting spaces (Fitzgerald, 2018; Howe, 2008). Across Aotearoa NZ, awareness, understanding and visibility of disability are improving. This improvement is a result of hard work from throughout the disability community, not just sport and active recreation. As such, the promotion of sports and activities for disabled people is crucial for their participation. Ella's suggestion for other YPwl is "be free, just for yourself. Don't like um, don't worry about what other people think because ... that's going to limit you". Sport NZ is itself guilty of not raising the visibility of YPwl. A current revival of the *PushPlay* campaign does not include YPwl. As a key strategy to get more young people and adults reinvigorated and participating in sport and active recreation post Covid-19, Sport NZ has failed to capitalise on this opportunity to present YPwl equally with other low participation groups. This oversight further reinforces the disconnect between policy rhetoric and practice.

Systemic failure of education and professional development strategies

While the rhetoric of previous Government policies has been progressive – such as identifying the need for training and development for volunteers, coaches and administrators – the lack of follow-through, combined with sector apathy has inhibited change (Cockburn & Atkinson, 2018a). Although Gaby commented that coaches in her swim club are starting to better understand Para swimming, prior to her joining they had no experience or education in Para swimming. They are now “starting to get into it and learning, learning a lot of new things along the way”. Gaby’s observation is indicative of the ongoing lack of disability education and training, and why Sport New Zealand (2019b) has again committed to “providing training to support the development of a skilled and confident workforce that enables play, active recreation and sport for tamariki and rangatahi with a range of impairments” (p. 9). With one exception, none of the coaches/leaders in my research received any disability-specific education and training, nor could they recall discussing disability as part of any sport or coach education programme. Without knowledge instilled through education, coaches/leaders are forced to rely on prior lived experiences of disability, if they have any such experiences. Quinn’s leader is the father of children who are “deaf and wear cochlear implants. So I suppose I’m used to just making sure they’re okay, ... so hopefully, my empathy is good” and Andrew’s coach, who has a physical impairment himself and a sister with an intellectual impairment, “knew limitations back then, I always lived with them as a kid; I wasn’t allowed to do this or allowed do that”.

It can be presumed that through these personal experiences, coaches’/leaders’ familiarity with and understanding of disability make considerable impact on YPwl’s experiences in sport and active recreation. Without education or lived experiences of disabilities, understanding what is needed to provide quality opportunities for YPwl will be more difficult (see Allan et al., 2020). From the four coaches/leaders, there was willingness to find ways to engage and include the YPwl without being seen as patronising or condescending. For example, through game structure and strategy, Andrew’s coach identifies player strengths, and works on individual player skills. He explained that it

took me a little bit of time, and probably a little bit of time even coming to games. I really had to think of where I'd put him in the field [...] exposing him enough to play the game and being involved but not exhausting him.

I thought I can actually use him in the game as a very valuable player for the team, which the boys [the opposition] don't realise. He can do a job for us without even having the ball. I actually play him up as a striker.

I say to him, "I want you on the very last man of the field. Their last back I want you standing right next to him, I don't care if he's half a field up or is in the goal, whatever, stand right next to him", because I use him as a pressure player.

When their backs [the opposition] get the ball, they don't know that Andrew's not fast or has an impairment, all they see is a kid coming at them, so they panic. They'll just kick the ball on.

However, the sport system cannot rely upon personal lived experiences alone to increase opportunities and provide quality experiences for YPwI. To have quality experiences, education and training that supports coaches/leaders understanding different participant needs and techniques is required. The reliance on sport organisations to self-initiate training has been embedded in policy. If based on history and the experiences of the coaches/leaders in my research, this is a misguided and ineffectual means to effect change at a system-wide level.

In Aotearoa NZ, the need for disability education was first identified by ACORD (Lavender, 1979) and has been consistently reiterated, since those delivering sport and active recreation need to "understand the requirements of a disabled sports person" (Pickering, 1985, p. 5). This lack of understanding is exemplified by Andrew's experiences in swimming, in contrast to his football experiences, where he sometimes trains with a squad of non-disabled swimmers, often from lower squads. As a 14-year-old it is deemed acceptable that he trains and sometimes competes with swimmers much younger than him "like 10- and 11-year-olds, even possibly, like one or two, 9-year-olds", based solely on his skill level. Although stoic and feeling "good overall" because he is still learning, Andrew does "feel a bit embarrassed only because I'm a bit older". As Townsend et al. (2015) highlighted, the coaching practices of those involved in disability sport have traditionally been based on beliefs and values grounded in the functionality and ability of the body, without necessarily fully understanding the wider consequences of their actions on the lives of YPwI (see Allan et al., 2020).

The importance of coaching to the entire sport system was lost when Coaching New Zealand²⁴ was absorbed into the Hillary Commission in the late 1990s (Sport New Zealand, 2021d). It was not until the *No Exceptions* strategy review (Cockburn, 2003), that the upskilling of sport and recreation personnel (staff, volunteers, coaches and administrators) in disability was again identified as a significant gap. At the time there was no integrated national sport education system, and regional and local coaches/officials/volunteers lacked access to education and training opportunities (NZPA, 2003). The revised 2004 *No Exceptions* strategy included upskilling staff and volunteers to understand disability, but the implementation of the strategy relied on national sports organisations to “integrate disability information into all mainstream coach education and development” (SPARC, 2004, p. 7) including the revision and updating of coaching and technical resources. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, SPARC’s failure to effectively resource and support this strategy (Rushton, 2007) was instrumental in the dearth of any integrated national disability awareness training. In place of a national programme, the Halberg Foundation became, and continues to be, the primary deliverer of generic *Inclusive Training* (previously called *NET – No Exceptions Training*). This programme provides practical advice for club coaches/leaders/volunteers and centralises activity adaptation. The gap in awareness and understanding of disability has remained unfilled and such programmes do little to achieve sport system change, as shown by Andrew’s recent swimming experiences. Focusing on activity diverges from stakeholder feedback (including PNZ and Parafeds) that indicated “inclusion needs to be planted in peoples (sic) minds and that it not being something separate” (SPARC, 2008, p. 1).

Despite a well-established research agenda internationally on disability sport coach development (DePauw & Gavron, 2005; Taylor, Werthner, & Culver, 2014), there has been no accompanying research in Aotearoa NZ. Effective inclusion in sport and active recreation will remain an enigma if the constantly shifting policy landscape places demands on organisations and professionals to ‘be inclusive’ with limited support. Anecdotally, in Aotearoa NZ, the provision of training courses and qualifications remains sparse. That which is available is often separated and segregated from training for the ‘usual’ participants, continuing to position YPwl as “other” (see Thomas, 2004b). Swimming NZ, for example, offers two swim teaching

²⁴ Coaching New Zealand operated from 1985 to 2001 providing coach education. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) was established by the Aotearoa NZ Government in 2004 to ensure qualifications are credible and robust. Vocational sport and active recreation, including coaching, qualifications and standards are overseen by NZQA and are delivered primarily by educational institutions. Sport-specific coaching, delivered by sport organisations, is not overseen by NZQA.

qualifications²⁵, the standard qualification and a dedicated qualification for those interested in teaching disabled swimmers. This dedicated qualification focuses on the teacher's skills and competencies is separate from the standard teaching qualification and is voluntary. Swim teachers who choose only to complete the standard qualification receive no disability training. Similarly, the NZ Snowsports Instructors Alliance's (NZSIA) qualification framework provides additional dedicated adaptive qualifications for Level One or Two qualified instructors. These adaptive qualifications are an extension of the standard certifications providing more technical knowledge required to

cover the recommended teaching progressions up to the appropriate level for: mono-ski, bi-ski, 4-track, 3-track, snowboard, visual impairments and intellectual impairments; lifting, loading and handling, etiquette, attitude and disability awareness. (NZ Snowsports Instructors Alliance, n.d.)

These examples from swimming and snow sports show there is an appetite from within some sport organisations to provide disability education and training, but the options remain grounded in an ableist 'them and us' approach. So ironically while Swimming NZ prioritises disability and Para swimming elsewhere (see Figures 23 & 29), this is not reflected in their coach and swim teacher education. To situate disability as equal to non-disabled sport, Swimming NZ and NZSIA would need to disestablish the segregated courses and include disability as integral to all education and training qualifications. Accentuating this point, Ella's coach believes YPwI

just maybe need, you know, someone who's nice and patient, you know, there's nothing like super special about adaptive snow sports, it is literally just skiing.

Reliance on a segregated model to improve awareness and understanding constrains the reach of education and limits the number of sport organisation personnel (coaches/leaders, administrators and officials) exposed to disability sport. This is not to say all education should be generic. There is a need for technical education, such as the equipment-based information in the NZSIA example above, to help coaches/leaders enhance the experiences of, and support for, YPwI to achieve their 100 percent. But this does not negate the necessity for wider

²⁵ Swimming NZ is the licensee for the AUSTSWIM qualifications -Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety, and the Teacher of Aquatics - Access and Inclusion. For clarification, this qualification is for swim teaching, not swim coaching.

education and awareness building. If policies and initiatives continue to focus only on adapting activities, reminiscent of ableism, sport and recreation organisations are destined to perpetuate segregation as the answer to YPwI's participation.

Furthermore, not only is there a need for those delivering sport and active recreation to be educated and skilled to enhance YPwI's experiences but also to understand and challenge the impact of structures on YPwI's participation, such as the dominance of the competitive discourse (Walters et al., 2010), reflective of an age-based competition structure (Darcy et al., 2020). Currently, NZ Football does not include YPwI as part of its discourse; diversity and inclusion is targeted to women and girls (see Figure 22). Andrew's coach explained that he sees this education, based on a beginner, intermediate and more advanced skills progression, as dominating how coaches coach. Football education is premised on the coach's skills and experiences and athletes advancing together. He believes this model does not educate coaches on coaching players who do not follow this progressive pathway or achieve the same level of skill acquisition at the same time as their teammates. No guidance is offered to coaches on how YPwI can participate in football, and the model fails to fully achieve the physical literacy²⁶ approach as promulgated by Sport NZ (2018c), which promotes understanding of an individual's motivation, competence and confidence, regardless of age. The extent to which disability sport policies can 'filter down' and influence opportunities is dependent largely on a well-trained workforce (Townsend et al., 2021). But delivering sport and active recreation for YPwI still relies on pragmatic problem solving (see Taylor et al., 2014). In lieu of formal professional development opportunities, sport organisations are relying on informal opportunities to upskill, such as attendance at camps as it "gives you an opportunity to observe and be observed in your coaching" (Gaby's coach).

In addition, to improve YPwI's opportunities for participation, disability awareness, education and training should also be extended to administrators, officials and non-technical volunteers. Reviews of research, and of education and professional development in sport management (for example Pitts & Shapiro, 2017; Shapiro & Pitts, 2014) found cursory consideration of disability sport at best. It is unsurprising then, that many working and volunteering in sport and active recreation feel unprepared for YPwI. Quinn's troop leader believes being a parent himself "helped a little bit, um I mean, I think that most adults would have come across children

²⁶ Physical literacy is a holistic approach that promotes understanding of an individual's motivation, competence and confidence, their needs, and how these impact upon their participation (Kiuppis, 2018).

with extra needs”. For Scouts, “I suppose our leader induction process is quite important”. Through this process leaders can “pick up people who aren’t used to or haven’t got the capability to sort of deal with lots of different types of children really” and provides them with an opportunity to say, “thank you, but no, thank you”. This lack of awareness and understanding may explain the variation in opportunities across different sport organisations. For sport organisations to retain the status quo is problematic. Without addressing the needs for disability awareness, education and training across organisations, actions and behaviours will only continue to perpetuate overt ableism within sport and active recreation (Spaaij et al., 2020). There is a need for a more sophisticated education and professional development than the Halberg Foundation’s *Inclusive Training* programme.

While the rhetoric of previous Government policies has been progressive – such as identifying the need for training and development for those delivering sport and active recreation – the lack of follow-through and sector apathy have inhibited change (Cockburn & Atkinson, 2018a). Indicative of systemic failure and the ongoing lack of disability education and training, Sport NZ (2019b) has again committed to “providing training to support the development of a skilled and confident workforce that enables play, active recreation and sport for tamariki and rangatahi with a range of impairments” (p. 9). Over two years on, there is still no evidence of Sport NZ enacting the provision of training at any level of the sport system (see Sport New Zealand, 2021c). With no indication of how Sport NZ’s commitment to education and professional development is to be achieved, it is reasonable to assume that without a defined strategy and action plan to identify the role and responsibilities of national sport organisations and short of additional and significant investment, Sport NZ is likely to repeat SPARC’s failure.

Funding co-dependency

It might be argued that the concept of inclusion itself has been ‘diluted’ (see Lyons, 2013), whereby organisations are provided with a policy-informed language to speak about inclusion yet are heavily reliant on government intervention and resourcing to make inclusion a reality. Not unexpectedly, the YPwI made no comment on funding except for Quinn, who mentioned

it’s kinda hard finding like free trials in Auckland, and that to give things a go. Well, like Para try, or adaptive, give it a go. Parafed sometimes does some of that stuff.

Some parents also pointed out that funding opportunities were fundamental to increasing participation because

there's a lot of kids that aren't so lucky that it wouldn't make any difference how good they are unless, [someone covers the] day to day cost of either driving to swimming backwards and forwards, you know, a lot of parents can't afford that. (Gaby's father)

Unlike funding for mainstream sport, disability sport has been either overlooked or funded by a welfare model endemic within Aotearoa NZ Government social policy. The reliance on 'ad hoc' funding for programme and service delivery and workforce development has made it difficult to initiate and embed disability provision over a prolonged period. While the funding administered by ACORD in the 1970s (NZ Council for Recreation and Sport, 1984) from a combination of Government Vote funds and Lottery profits (Ministry of Recreation and Sport, 1983), or the CCS grant in 1982/83 to employ two "recreation co-ordinators for the disabled" (Lavender, ca. 1985) was not extended non-disabled sport at the time, a pattern of resource co-dependency has occurred. This co-dependency between Sport NZ and disability sport organisations has created a multifaceted yet unstable terrain for policy-making and is an indication of how government intention steers "policy sub-systems through the strategic control over resources" (Houlihan, 2005, p. 180).

From my sustained immersion in disability sport, the sector's reliance on funding directly impacts its ability to achieve policy outcomes; that is, providing more opportunities for disabled New Zealanders to participate in sport and active recreation. As such, the articulation between neoliberal discourses and inclusive policy rhetoric provides relatively little direction for practitioners to enact change. Committed to redressing sector resourcing and acknowledging a wider sector interest in disability sport provision, in 2020 Sport NZ commenced the rollout of a 3-year \$7 million investment into disability sport (Robertson, 2021), focusing on regional and national disability sports organisations with the aim of helping to improve capacity and capability at the community level. The addition of the Sport NZ *Disability Inclusion Fund* (Sport New Zealand, 2021c) has further expanded support to more organisations with the intention of getting more disabled young people engaged in sport, active recreation and play. This commitment while welcomed by disability sport organisations pales in comparison to mainstream sport and active recreation, which receives significantly more funding – \$24+ million per annum over the same period (Sport New Zealand, 2020a).

Initiatives such as this recent investment into disability sport go some way to acknowledging the inequities faced by those with impairments when participating in sport and active recreation (Robertson & Sepuloni, 2019), but it will require significant investment to overcome the decades of under-resourcing and under-achieving. In Aotearoa NZ, despite Government investment underwriting national sport organisations, local community sport and active recreation delivery is reliant upon external funders, such as community and gaming (i.e. gambling) trusts (see KPMG, 2020; Te Tari Taiwhenua Internal Affairs, 2021, 2022). Many of these trusts were established to generate funding specifically for social and community initiatives not supported by Government. Legally required to distribute profits back into the community (Gambling Act, 2003), sport received over 53 percent of trust grants (\$144m) in 2021. In contrast, disability sport organisations collectively received a mere \$1.04m (Te Tari Taiwhenua Internal Affairs, 2022). Although this funding can be used to reduce the financial cost of participation, it is contestable, both with the funders and within sport organisations, as to how funding is prioritised. Membership levies, commercial partnerships, sponsorship and recent Government investment into the disability sport sector do not providing a sufficient financial base to avoid funding from community and gaming trusts. This reliance on gambling to continue to support community initiatives is becoming increasingly untenable (Espiner, 2022), raising questions around the sustainability of disability sport if it is reliant on gaming. As Quinn identified, free opportunities are not always forthcoming so any change in funding may have a detrimental effect on YPwI whose families are not as financially privileged as those of the four YPwI in my research.

In addition to funding, other issues raised in the 2005 SPARC *No Exceptions* consultation process were again raised in 2018, indicating that little progress has been achieved in the intervening years (see Figure 20). In their most recent review of disability sport, Cockburn and Atkinson (2018a) highlighted that key barriers to participation for disabled people are a lack of visible competition pathways, affordability of opportunities, and the availability of coaches, all similarly raised by the participants in my research. While the findings from the 2018 review laid the foundation for yet further Government intervention in the disability sport sector – the Sport NZ *Disability Plan* and subsequent investment – whether the resulting outcomes will be transformational or not remain to be seen. The most recent Sport NZ funding initiative is part of a wider cross-government plan, designed to provide targeted support for: 1) professional development; 2) accessible fit-for-purpose facilities, such as playgrounds and parks; and 3) enhancing the capacity of Sport NZ and partner organisations to have a concerted focus on inclusion. The expectation is that this will result in increased provision and more opportunities

by for YPwl and disabled New Zealanders to participate. However, incentivising sport organisations to deliver opportunities may not be sufficient to entice them to make the immediate and necessary (i.e., non-ableist) changes needed to initiate systemic change within the sport system. Only time will tell whether the new strategy and associated investment can achieve the desired outcomes, where the preceding strategies have failed.

Chapter summary

As evidenced by the four YPwl in my research, YPwl are participating in sport and active recreation in Aotearoa NZ, but often in spite of, rather than because of, conscious decisions by sport organisations to provide disability sport opportunities. In 2003 Legg et al. (2003) posed the question “within sport we would never accept segregation by ethnicity or gender. Why then do we accept it based on disability?” (p. 4). Two decades on, this question as to why organisations continue to discriminate against disabled people remains at the forefront of critical disability sport discourse (Saxton, 2018). The issue for disabled young people is that they have a reduced range of choice and opportunities to participate. Disability sport is often the only option for many, and for some it is ideal. Not being able to access mainstream or other opportunities, and a heavy reliance on Government funding to support disability sport, is a denial of human rights.

Increased understanding of the need for disability sport is becoming more evident in the Aotearoa NZ sport system, albeit framed as enlightened ableism. Sport organisations would benefit from guidance on how to go further to better situate disability sport and YPwl within their organisations and remove the discrimination of disablism. The case studies in my research have provided insight into each of the four YPwl’s involvement in sport and active recreation, what it means to them, and their future aspirations. In addition, conversations with their parents and coaches/leaders highlighted the impact ableism continues to impose on YPwl’s participation, reflective of the landscape in which disability sport has evolved in Aotearoa NZ. Building on Smith and Sparkes’ (2020) contention that research is needed on how to lower barriers to enable disabled people to participate fully in sport and active recreation, in the following chapter I present a framework co-constructed from the issues and themes raised in my conversations with the YPwl, their parent(s) and coach/leaders. The framework captures factors that can work towards redefining how disability sport and active

recreation can be provided by reframing and repositioning disabled people in order to achieve equitable opportunities for YPwl.

Chapter 7 A framework for an anti-ableist sport system in Aotearoa NZ

At the end of the day we [are] all the same people and disability or not, we should be able to [participate]. Ella

Introduction

The purpose of my research is to help improve the provision of sport and active recreation opportunities and quality experiences for YPwl. Importantly, in extending the work of other researchers in this field, I identify several factors that are considered integral to improving the opportunities and experiences of YPwl in Aotearoa NZ. Chapter 6 provides a more holistic view of the factors that align with critical issues described by Misener and Darcy (2014) as “central to the management of disability sport” (p. 6). Taking the lead from the four YPwl, examples from their sports and activities provide insights into how individuals and sport organisations can better understand YPwl and manage disability sport to achieve a more inclusive Aotearoa NZ sport system. Their narratives and experiences show that Quinn, Andrew, Gaby and Ella expressed common themes, such as love participating in sport and active recreation, the friendships they make, and the opportunity to give their 100 percent. As outlined earlier, I am cautiously optimistic that recent changes across the sector – driven by Sport NZ investing in locally-led initiatives to address exclusionary barriers for young people – will result in positive outcomes leading to more disabled New Zealanders participating in sport and active recreation in the future. But to achieve this requires sport system-wide transformation. To attain an anti-ableist sport system that provides opportunities for all young people including YPwl, I present a framework that encapsulates the tenets created from the case studies, the historical document analysis and underpinned by the principles of the social relational model of disability.

Individually, no one model provides sufficient understanding of the factors that contribute to the participation of YPwl in sport and active recreation in Aotearoa NZ. Inclusion models developed from Winnick’s (1984) sport continuum model offer useful descriptors of the typologies of sport and activities – from mainstream sport through to segregated disability sport opportunities – based on activity adaptation and modification. Barriers and constraints

to participation are addressed through participant-centric leisure constraints models that categorise constraints inhibiting disability sport participation as intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural (Darcy et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2005). In contrast, the conceptual model proposed by King et al. (2003), aimed to address the knowledge gap about what contributes to the successful participation of YPwl. Most models, created from a participant perspective, have failed to translate well for deliverers of sport and active recreation opportunities. In general, these models overlook the intricacies and nuances of sport and active recreation delivery, delivered by volunteers in a club-based structure with little disability experience and limited resources. Although sport organisations are encouraged to understand and acknowledge barriers to participation, they often have limited ability to ameliorate their effects. In my years managing sport, I have observed that organisations' abilities to overcome participants' personal barriers and constraints are limited. Often it is these factors that dictate the 'how', 'when' and 'where' sport and active recreation for young people is provided. While sport organisations can do little to relieve busyness or tiredness, through better understanding of YPwls they can make participation more appealing for them.

While I did not set out to assess these inclusion models, during my research, the need for a framework that is pragmatic and provides sport organisations with practical guidelines became evident. In this chapter, I present an interpretive framework that draws on the voices of the YPwl and shifts from the constraints-based models to one that is intended to provide applications that could help sport organisations to provide quality, equitable experiences for YPwl.

Co-constructed common themes

Throughout my research I have been cognisant of the importance of centralising the voices of the four YPwl. Their experiences in sport and active recreation have provided a frame of reference for the following findings. Like other disability sport research, my research is similarly premised on improving sport and active recreation opportunities for YPwl, and disabled people generally. In differentiating my research from others, my interpretation of these themes are underpinned by the personal perspective (as expressed by the YPwl and enriched by their parents and coaches/leaders), to a framework based on the principles of the social relational model of disability and is designed to help inform and guide disability sport delivery from an organisational and operational perspective.

Common themes

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Don't judge me against able-bodied standards, especially when I physically can't undertake that activity or task, but if I could slightly change how it's done, I could achieve the same outcome.</p> | <p>I may want to try different sports and activities, so please don't assume I'll be happy just being limited to one option.</p> <p>I also want these to be good quality experiences, which are safe and fair.</p> | <p>Tell me and my family and whanāu about your programmes, opportunities, resources lots of different ways so I can make an informed choice.</p> |
| <p>I want to feel wanted and welcome, like everyone else. Like part of the family.</p> | <p>Talking about fair, I think rules and regulations to provide equitable opportunities for me can be changed to be more accommodating and inclusive.</p> | <p>Don't assume I "just know" about them because you promoted them on your social media – I may not be following you.</p> |
| <p>Be aware of the use of words and images of young people with impairments, or the lack of them, sends a strong message that my wants and dreams aren't being considered by others.</p> | <p>I believe disability awareness at all levels of the organisation is important and should not just be about changing techniques and skills. It should be included in training for administrators, coaches/leaders, and volunteers.</p> | <p>Use role models who I can relate to, such as Paralympians, and support role modelling of young people with impairments.</p> |
| <p>Recognise I'll give my 100%, even if it's different from someone else's 100%.</p> | <p>My family and whanāu are important in my decision-making around sport and active recreation choices</p> | <p>I may never become a Paralympian but I like to celebrate my successes in participation as I may inspire another young person with an impairment to get involved.</p> |
| <p>Promote challenges, skills and outcomes which are achievable but don't use disability as an excuse why I can't give it a try.</p> | <p>My involvement with Parafed has been important in my sport and active recreation experiences, they have opened doors to different experiences I haven't got elsewhere</p> | <p>Having access to adaptive equipment or financial support to help out my family and whanāu is important to me as I know sometimes I need more help than a non-disabled young person.</p> |

Figure 31 Framework themes constructed from YPwl guided conversations.

In order to transition from the YPwl's personal narratives outlined in Chapter 5 to understanding and meaning for the sport system, the analysis and coding as outlined in Chapter 2 was vital. Based on my own personal experience in sport and disability sport management and by using inductive analysis of the case studies, fifteen common themes were co-constructed (Figure 31). Each theme represents topics and issues important to the YPwl and signals areas for consideration by sport organisations and government agencies. Cognisant of previous research findings lacking practical application and little practical application, the following anti-ableist framework is presented as an amalgam of this cross-case analysis, substantiated through the elaboration of these common themes, with a practitioner's perspective in mind while expanding on the research of others.

The anti-ableist framework

Anti-ableism, as defined by Silva (2022),

aims to expose and invalidate the ideological assumptions legitimizing the multiple inequities, deprivation, and discrimination endured by disabled people by relocating the disability 'problem' from the individual into its ideological foundations. (p. 159)

As discussed throughout this research, and by other researchers such as Silva and Howe (2019) and Kaundinya and Schroth (2022), the specific articulation of ableism as inherent within sport and active recreation is a recent trend. The perception of 'normal' ability is engrained and entrenched in an idealised form of athleticism, and as such disablism and discrimination are the resulting impacts of ableism in sport. For sport and active recreation, anti-ableism is more than simply considering the needs of disabled participants as different and accommodating them, by adapting or modifying rules and activities, within the existing structure and provision of sport. In simple terms, anti-ableism is about turning the lens on the production of able-bodied norms, values and preferences as accepted and taken-for-granted. This embodiment of 'able' requires deconstruction and a reconceptualisation so that all participants' needs are considered, and opportunities provided, regardless of their physical attributes.

In many parts of sport, fluidity of ability and differences in participant athleticism already occur, for example novices versus experts or children versus adults. Expectations of performance

are scaled to recognise differences in ability and capability, yet this is not equally extended to disabled participants. Ironically, sport like society, does accommodate 'normal' diversity, just not disability diversity. Providing an anti-ableist sport system addresses this inequity while also presenting an opportunity to enhance and improve the quality of experiences for all participants. As shown in the narratives of the YPwl, the value of their engagement in sport not only empowers them but adds to the diversity and richness of experiences for other participants.

The implementation of an anti-ableist framework provides a guide for those wanting to create and enhance opportunities for YPwl to participate in sport and active recreation. My research suggests that for an anti-ableist sport system to exist, ableism and disablism need to be considered across three levels. First, from an individual perspective; understanding YPwl. Second, in relation to sport organisations, there is a need for quality experiences where YPwl have the opportunity to excel, including raising the visibility of YPwl in forms of celebrating and championing successful participation of YPwl. Finally, there is the system; acknowledging and valuing disability and repositioning YPwl within sport policy at all levels of sport, and ensuring policy and practice align. All are intertwined and integral to the Aotearoa NZ sporting system.

The framework as presented in Figure 32, aligns with the social ecological model. The social ecological model describes the complex relationships within a setting between the person and the ecological environment which Bronfenbrenner (1977) described as "a nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next" (p. 514). This nested model referred to the microsystem - the interrelationship between individuals; the mesosystem – individuals in different settings; the exosystem – the formal and informal relationships between individuals and external settings; and the macrosystem of culture. The underlying premise of the model was to provide an approach which would assist in understanding human behaviours and relationships. Rowe, Shilbury, Ferkins, and Hinckson (2013) more recently described the social ecological model as an "holistic approach [that] allows entire community environments to be adapted to support the intended behaviour change" (p. 369). In situating my framework from the individual perspective (i.e., microsystem) to the system level, (i.e., macrosystem), often described more simply as bottom-up rather than top-down, I present disability sport as multifaceted and overlapping. Each level - individual, organisation and system - are inextricably intertwined. In illustrating the framework in this way, it highlights that sector change cannot occur in isolation at one level but is reliant on change occurring across all levels. Moreover, it

reflects the need to reconsider how system change occurs, as evidenced by the failure of previous policy initiatives reliant only a macrosystem (top-down) approach (see Chapter 4).

The anti-ableist framework signals how simply system-wide change can occur. We - researchers, administrators, coaches/leaders, officials, volunteers or parents of a non-disabled participant – as active change agents can work individually and collaboratively to take small steps towards being anti-ableist. Furthermore, by making change at the individual level we create the catalyst for further and more wider reaching changes in the organisation and system levels. If many of us choose to make an informed and conscious decision to reframe disability and reposition YPwl within sport, opportunities for YPwl will be immediately improved and ultimately this will lead to system-wide change.



Figure 32 Anti-ableism framework.

From an individual perspective

At an individual level (e.g., coach, official, volunteer or parent of a non-disabled participant), being anti-ableist means treating a YPwI first and foremost as a young person, a human being. They have dreams and aspirations that while shaped and influenced by their impairment, do not mean they should be disabled. As the narratives of Quinn, Andrew, Gaby and Ella attest, having an impairment does not always preclude these young people from participating in sport and active recreation. Disability is contextual, related to the situation at the time. However, disabling barriers are not always directly evident in certain contexts, and individual YPwI are always navigating their impairment effects, both physically and psycho-socially, reflective of the nuances of the social relational model of disability. YPwIs' discourse around 'normal' is suggestive of some difference even when, such as Andrew describes,

people just usually just treat me, um, normally. But most of the time they forget I've a disability. Sometimes they don't actually know I have a disability, so we are just playing normally with them.

Treating young people with an impairment the same as others begins with understanding who they are, why they chose to participate and how this is achieved. This understanding establishes a foundation from which better opportunities can be provided, i.e., recognising the effects of impairment and reflecting on the environment to remove disabling barriers.

See me as a young person who wants to be active

Not all participants in sport and active recreation are the same, and neither are all YPwI. To present YPwI as homogenous and always 'dis'abled is disingenuous because not all disabled people's lived experiences are similar (see Carroll et al., 2021). For the YPwI in my research, most related their experiences in sport and active recreation as positive and enabling; not disabling. Gaby's swimming club has "always treated me the same. I guess I've never really had an incident at the club ever being treated differently than anybody else". But when she was younger, she experienced other people asking her about her impairment, such as "Oh, what's wrong with your hand?". Realising they were just curious, she is adamant "there's nothing they can change about it so they're just going to treat it like I'm any able-bodied person". While this self-confidence gives her agency and empowers an expectation of herself and others, Campbell and Campbell (2009) would argue that by wanting to emulate the norm, Gaby is internalising ableism. This subtlety and nuance of ableism, as played out in sport, can often be elusive, misdirecting and seemingly empowering where the hiding or disavowing of

the impairment is done to avoid the risk of discrimination inherent in the overtly ableist sport culture (Campbell & Campbell, 2009). The experience of being treated the same is not confined to the YPwl in my research: for many Paralympians, this has also been instrumental in achieving their goals (see McBean, 2019; Sport New Zealand, 2021e), but is suggestive of the assimilative nature of sport where those for whom adjustments are minimal or not required are able to navigate sport in ways that are not seen as disabling are welcome.

In contrast to internalising ableism, Andrew commented, that when playing football, “in the heat of the moment, or like the game is just usually so fun. I just forget about it [his impairment]”. His inattention to his impairment aligns with other research findings, such as Connors and Stalker (2007), that for some YPwl, having an impairment is not seen as a significant issue by them. To presume YPwl such as Andrew are always ‘disabled’, often the default position of society and sport organisations, is not only ableist but as highlighted by Lyons (2013) is also disablist because it this presumption discriminates on the notion of athleticism. These YPwl do not see themselves differently from their peers when their impairments were acknowledged and managed by others in a positive way (see Allan et al., 2020). This is not to say researchers or sport managers want YPwl to forget their impairment. Impairment is recognised as part of their identity, but they should not be constrained by their impairments. As evidenced by the responses to my research nomination questionnaire, sixty percent of parents indicated participation in sport and active recreation gave their YPwl an identity outside of their impairment. How ableism is internalised yet seen as empowering, and how YPwl navigate their impairment as an individual with an impairment while also wanting to be treated like everyone else are important insights into disability and impairment effects that warrant further investigation and research.

It's about your attitude, not my impairment

Being treated the same is not necessarily about doing the same activities and tasks in an identical way; it is about the attitudes of others not differentiating them as disabled in ways that promote negative associations. Like most young people, the reason for the YPwl in my research not wanting to stand out from their non-disabled peers is that “it's too embarrassing” (Quinn). Embarrassing not from the perspective of their impairment, but as a young person trying to fit in with their peers and not wanting to be positioned differently, as ‘other’, by their impairment, particularly when it is obvious and visible.

Not singling [us] out just because we're Para swimmers ... Like not being "Oh, they're the Para swimmers. Like they're gonna get special attention because they're Para swimmers". But kind of just including us and being normal, ... just making sure that we're all included, feel like a family. (Gaby)

According to Gaby's coach, at training she does not use her impairment "as an excuse by any stretch the imagination. Certainly, Gaby gets frustrated by it at times, but doesn't use it as an excuse". Gaby just wants to be accepted as a swimmer, a member of her squad and a member of her club, not as someone different. Being accepted as themselves creates a sense of belonging for YPwI (Lord & Patterson, 2008; McKenzie et al., 2021; Turnnidge, Vierimaa, & Cote, 2012). This sense of belonging, feeling accepted and welcomed, and being treated the same, is integral to quality participation in sport and active recreation, not just for YPwI (cf. Evans, Graupensperger, & Arbour-Nicitopoulos, 2020). Sometimes, however, treating YPwI the same has evolved from ignorance rather than intent, which is not in and of itself wrong, but is not ideal for systemic change. Gaby's father relayed the story about her learn to swim instructor, as told to him by the instructor's mother. The instructor did not have any training or experience with disability so when Gaby joined his lesson he "didn't know what to say. So [he] didn't say anything and [didn't do] anything differently for her". Despite this paradox of ignorance, according to Gaby's parents, it was because of being treated the same that she chose to join this swimming club. She has never had an incident at the club as, "I've always been treated the same really. It's never been anything different" (Gaby). In the context of my research, the case study participants have illustrated that treating YPwI the same as others is neither ignoring the impact of impairments, nor positioning all YPwI as identical, requiring the same support and resources as non-disabled participants (i.e., assimilation) as discussed by Sorensen and Kahrs (2006). Instead, supporting the findings of Darcy et al. (2020), it is about accepting YPwI as individuals whose impairment and needs may differ from others and are central to quality experiences.

From a coach/leader perspective, treating YPwI 'the same' means setting expectations and values regarding behaviour, positive engagement and 'attitudes' similar to those expected and observed in non-disabled sporting environments. For example, unacceptable behaviour on the premise of impairment is not condoned (see Watson et al., 2011), and coaches/leaders will call out poor behaviour such as not following instructions or misbehaving. Quinn's troop leader

holds him to the same standards as other Scouts such as when “he's on parade and [if he] mucks about he'll just get pulled up just as much as anyone else”, or when a coach expects same behaviour of all players. Andrew's coach explained how at one training, after reprimanding him for not listening to instructions, he called him over to discuss what had happened.

I said, "Mate you were unhappy with me on training, were you?".

He said, "No",

I said, "I guarantee you thought I was picking on you".

And he said, "Yeah, I did feel that".

I said, "No, mate, because you were doing something that even if any of the other boys did, I would have blasted them. So you're exactly the same, you're the team, you're exactly the same. You're no different than anybody else, I don't see you any different. But you were doing something that was getting on my goat and if anybody else was doing the same thing, they would have got blasted. I'll treat you like everybody else. I'm sorry it sounded like I was picking on you. But I wasn't".

And he's like, "I understand" (Andrew's coach)

Enforcing consistent boundaries and expectations, especially around behaviour, establishes a psycho-social environment that draws on ideas and concepts from 'normal sport', that is both empowering for some and at the same time ableist. One of the paradoxes of ableism is where the concepts of fairness and equity are not recognised as having a significant impact on how YPwI participate in sport or active recreation.

The consistent message from the four YPwI is that others' attitude towards them, their impairment and their ability is an important contributing factor in the opportunities they experience. Their belief in themselves, supported by their desire and passion to participate creates a positive position from which sport organisations and disability sport delivery can proceed.

Appreciate why I want to be involved

Despite the challenges and barriers society places before YPwI, which can and do preclude them from participating in sport and active recreation, my research suggests the cliché that sport 'is in our DNA' applies equally to these four YPwI, as it does to non-disabled participants in Aotearoa NZ. Their love of, and enjoyment from, being active and engaged in sport and

active recreation is central to their participation, and for the most part, they are just being active young people. For Andrew, it is simple, “I just I love doing it, I like being active most of the time”, while Ella “just loved it a lot. It was like an amazing feeling learning something that I can do and be good at”. Ella’s love for skiing is obvious and her mother noted “every time we come back from the mountain straight away, she was like “when are we going again?”, something she had not experienced from Ella outside of her passion for baking.

In line with other research (e.g., Allan et al., 2018; Carter et al., 2014; Jaarsma et al., 2014), it is apparent that fun, and enjoyment are key motivators for continued participation in sport and active recreation. Eighty percent of parents who completed my research nomination questionnaire recognised one of the benefits of participation in sport and active recreation was that their YPwI was happier. This finding is supported by the YPwI themselves, such as Gaby who mentioned her participation in swimming is “just because I enjoy it. I feel like if you don't enjoy it, then there's not really any point in doing it, but it's the fact that I do enjoy it”, or for Quinn, the more reticent of the YPwI, “yeah, the activities, they're always fun”. Fun and enjoyment come not only from the physical engagement in the sport or activity itself, but also from being with their team/squad/troop and their friends.

Friends and friendships

Supporting previous research (for example Kristèn et al., 2003; Martin, 2013), the YPwI articulated how sport and active recreation participation is conducive to making friends and friendships with others, both with and without impairments and reflecting feelings of inspiration, enthusiasm and satisfaction (see Shapiro & Martin, 2010). For example, swimming provided Gaby an opportunity, outside of the family, to make friends and have a wider network of people to engage with; she described them as “basically like, a second family”. At the same time as creating new friends, friendships can sometimes be the catalyst for participation in sport and active recreation (cf. Lumsdaine & Thurston, 2017). It was a friend who introduced Ella to rock climbing because they thought she would be able to climb, and it “ended up being so much fun”. In much the same way Quinn’s involvement in Scouts was through a friend whose father ran a Kea troop²⁷, “because his friends did it, ... he wanted to do it” (Mother). Quinn and his friend are now planning on advancing from Scouts to Venturers²⁸ when they reach the eligible age.

²⁷ Kea clubs cater for 5 to 8-year-olds, providing the entry level for the New Zealand Scout movement.

²⁸ Scouts are 9 to 13-year-olds and Venturers caters to 14 to 18-year-olds who create and run their own programmes.

The four YPwl's motivations for participation are clear: they like participating in sport and active recreation because they love the sport/activity and enjoy being with friends. Without such motivations, the parents feared their YPwl would not enjoy any sports or active recreation activities and would end up not being active throughout their lives. But the motivation to be with friends is not one-way as explained by Quinn when he described how he recruited "them all into Sea Scouts pretty much. Well kind of in my year two me and my friend told them all about it and then they all joined". Likewise for Ella, whose skiing enjoyment and skills have increased to a stage that she is able to ski independently and confidently so is now "going to teach" her friends to ski. This reversal of roles from recruit to recruiter positions YPwl as equal to non-disabled young people in a system that is founded on ableist principles.

It's not just about participation, some of us want to compete too

Loving a sport and/or activity and being with friends does not mean that sport in particular, is always about participation. For some, competition is the motivation, such as Gaby, whose competitive goals are very clear.

What is it that drives me? I guess, overall, the overall goal is what most swimmers are like the Paralympics and Olympics, so Paralympics to me, 2024 Paris.

Gaby's attitude contrasts with the commonly-held ableist position that the involvement of YPwl is purely participatory, i.e., YPwl are incapable of being competitive or when they do compete it is not credible (see Anderson, 2009). As shown by the research of Allan et al. (2018), not only is the feeling of being equal and valued important, but the opportunity to be competitive is influential in quality experiences for Para sport participation. As stated by Gaby, and evident from Paralympians Cameron Leslie and Dame Sophie Pascoe's' achievements, the drive to achieve as young Para swimmers was their competitive drive and aspirations, and these are reliant on the development of cohesive Para sport talent identification and development pathways, which in turn are reliant on a sport system where access is not a primary barrier for YPwl. Presuming YPwl only wish to participate and not compete is ableist. It is unfortunate that this position of treating disabled people differently has distorted and misdirected sport organisations' understanding for the need to provide a range of opportunities for YPwl. The presumption that all YPwl cannot compete separately, alongside or with non-disabled young people is embedded in sport by the medical model of disability. Where sport organisations have provided opportunities, such as the member organisations of PNZ providing Para sport

pathways from grassroots through to high performance, Paralympic Games successes have occurred (McBean et al., 2022). To better understand Gaby's motivations and provide insight for sport organisations balancing these often-competing demands, further research exploring how YPwl position competition and the high-performance pathway vis-à-vis participation would be beneficial.

Find out how I got into and stay involved in sport and active recreation

Family and whānau experiences in sport and active recreation are instrumental in getting YPwl involved and in sustaining their involvement and providing the support for young people in relation to participation (Martin, 2013). As described in the narratives in Chapter 5, a YPwl's family grounding in sport and active recreation is fundamental to their initial and continued participation. Parental support is also recognised by some of the YPwl; for example, Quinn, who did say one of his strengths was his sense of humour, acknowledged the support from his mother for making him dinner, and his father who joined him at Outward Bound. Aligning with previous research findings (see Kristèn et al., 2003; Tonkin, Ogilvie, Greenwood, Law, & Anaby, 2014), the active families in my research created the catalyst for encouraging and supporting, role modelling and facilitating participation. Past and present parent and whānau involvement in sport and active recreation (see Bonavolontà et al., 2021), the recognition of the value of sport and active recreation, and prioritisation of participation were influential in YPwl's involvement "because it's um our interests, that's where we've sort of directed him" (Andrew's father). Their family had

a bit of a grounding in getting him interested in sports and doing stuff and attempting and just giving stuff a go. Because that's what we do. We give things a go, and even if we have to, and I'm speaking more from my perspective, even if I have to drag my arse to do stuff and try these things out, I'll give it a go. So we've, the pair of us, have always been active in some way, shape, or form and not necessarily a structured sport ... because Andrew has a passion for it, we support his interests and his passions. (Mother)

Although Bauman et al. (2012), argued that parental activity was not a determining factor in young people's engagement in physical activity, the assertion that parent and whānau involvement is important is a clear and consistent message through my research. For example, support included the usual transporting of YPwl to/from opportunities but also parent and

whānau volunteering at opportunities or on committees to ensure the infrastructure of delivery is sustainable.

However, my research is also suggestive of a particular issue of class and/or privilege in that for these YPwI, access was not a prominent issue in terms of finance, information, knowledge, power, motivation and support. These findings are not dissimilar to the AusPlay data, that shows over 70 percent of children involved in sport have at least one active parent (May, 2021) and builds on the findings of Sallis, Prochaska, and Taylor (2000), who established that parental physical activity has a positive association with non-disabled young peoples' physical activity. Having active parents such as Andrew's is not unique. Describing themselves as 'outdoors' people, Ella's family spend weekends doing a lot of hunting and tramping. When they decided to support her, they all chose to learn to ski. With varying levels of skiing capability, her mother, father and brother are all able to support and experience skiing with Ella. As a very basic learner, Ella's mother is content with just carrying her backpack and following her around the slopes, whereas her father and brother can ski with her, advancing their skills to ski with Ella competently and confidently on black runs. Without this commitment from her family to all learn to ski, Ella's skiing opportunities would be significantly limited. However, not all sports can accommodate a full family experience which does come at a cost – both financial and time commitment – and not all YPwI are in this enviable position.

Summarising the individual perspective

From an individual perspective, understanding how YPwI want to be seen, why they want to participate in sport and active recreation and the structures that support this participation is no different from non-disabled participants. However, by centralising the young person and their impairment and better appreciating the barriers and constraints to participation, an anti-ableist sport system where all participants would be treated equally, with respect and dignity, and their voices would be heard, can be created. Key considerations for centralising YPwI include:

- Acknowledging ableism is about the attitudes of others. To overcome the discrimination and bias inherent within ableism is to not differentiate YPwI as disabled while understanding impairment may have an effect on their participation.

- Treating YPwI the same is about creating equitable experiences that do not ignore the impact of impairments but appreciate the need for variations to the support and resources offered to non-disabled participants.
- Appreciating YPwI love being active and engaged in sport and active recreation, with their friends and creating new friends and friendships, just like non-disabled participants.
- Presuming YPwI only wish to participate and not compete is demeaning and ableist.
- Encouraging and supporting parents and whānau as catalysts for YPwI's participation to be key drivers to access and opportunities.

Organisations: Infrastructure, policy and practice

Outlined in this section are some general principles that can act as a guide, readily implementable by any sport organisation at any level of the sport system in Aotearoa NZ, be it a club, regional or national organisation. These principles build on the research of Thomas and Dyllal (1999) where participants are treated with respect and advocate for an anti-ableist sport organisation approach where YPwI are extended the courtesy of dignity, and given the same agency as non-disabled participants. Throughout this research, I have refrained from presenting inclusion, as practiced by sport and activity adaptation only, as the panacea to improving disabled peoples' opportunities. I advocate for creating improved consideration, awareness and understanding of disability by those throughout all levels of sport organisations.

As previously raised, while the influence of ableism and the need for change often goes unrecognised, sometimes there is just an aversion to change. Organisation structures, systems and practices play a significant role in what opportunities are available to YPwI, and the experiences they have. As Nixon (2007) noted,

[p]eople with disabilities who are capable of competing with or against able-bodied athletes may be prevented from doing so simply because they are disabled, because people in control of a sport will not make or allow appropriate accommodations of its structure, equipment, or facilities or because these people cannot or are unwilling to accept new or different conceptions of athleticism in their sport. (p. 420)

While organisational size (see Wicker & Breuer, 2014), human resources (including volunteer engagement), financial and planning capacity have an impact on the provision of opportunities in the sport system, so too do casual and ad hoc relationships between a network of

stakeholders, particularly in volunteer-based organisations (see Kitchin et al., 2019; Misener & Doherty, 2009). Similarly, legislation, which will be reviewed in more detail later in this chapter, also influences the sport system, framing the boundaries Government agencies such as Sport NZ operate within.

Create equitable experiences

Like legislation that provides a framework for society behaviour, rules bind the concept of equity for YPwl within sport. Although designed to promote 'fairness', rules and regulations are a production of ableist values that are prevalent in sport. But according to Evans et al. (2018), equitable experiences can be created by paying attention to how opportunities are designed and delivered to reduce the influence of a YPwl's impairment. Judging YPwl against ableist standards and not creating quality or equitable experiences is concerning. As alluded to earlier, treating YPwl the same as others should not be confused with capability and skill expectations in how impairment influences physical ability. Providing quality experiences not only requires adjusting expectations of the system – organisations, coaches/leaders, officials, volunteers and other parents – but also adjusting how the sport or active recreation is delivered. As outlined in more detail later in this chapter, the adoption of Para swimming rules is an example of how the sport of swimming has reframed the delivery of opportunities in recognition of impairment effects.

In Aotearoa NZ, the reliance on mainstreaming or Para sport has resulted in some sports providing no opportunities for disabled young people who cannot or chose not to participate in mainstream opportunities. Internationally, for example, Blind Football (for vision impaired players) is a Para sport on the Paralympic Games programme and in Australia and many other countries, cerebral palsy (CP) football is available. But neither version of the game is currently delivered in Aotearoa NZ, apart from ad hoc one-off 'have-a-go' opportunities. As discussed in Chapter 4, the relative absence of discourse related to disability in some sports, such as football, has real impacts on the equitable provision for YPwl. For Andrew, NZ Football's lack of consideration of, and provision for, CP football limits his opportunities for participation and inhibits his progression in a sport he is passionate about – "there's no pathway for ... competitive cerebral palsy football leagues" (Father).

This lack of consideration by NZ Football is disappointing for Andrew as NZ Football and other sport organisations readily accommodate other non-homogenous participants; be it by age, gender, skill or interest level, yet YPwl and disabled people are not extended the same courtesy. Some sport organisations go further than not providing opportunities, where opportunities for them to participate exist these organisations actively discriminate against YPwl, i.e. disablism. Quinn has experienced discrimination where the normative ideals have been inflexible and disabling; he was refused the opportunity to participate because he wore AFOs (ankle foot orthoses). He was welcome if he removed his AFOs, but not with them. To participate it was necessary for Quinn to wear AFOs. Fortunately for Quinn this experience did not dissuade him or his parents from finding alternative sports and activities. The rigidity of this sport organisation in not making changes to allow Quinn to participate is a blatant example of disablism, which regrettably is still a common occurrence in Aotearoa NZ. Fortunately for other YPwl, they have experienced the opposite where sport organisations have actively supported their needs to enable them to participate. For example, Ella's ski instructor arranged for an assistant to ski behind her to protect her from other skiers skiing near her or skiing into her. Having additional support made Ella feel safe, enabling her to focus on her skiing and skill acquisition rather than being distracted by the thought that other skiers might collide with her.

Ella's experience is illustrative of how facilitating equitable experiences across the sport system requires a different structure but is not necessarily difficult or onerous. In so doing, it is necessary to examine the various ways in which 'inclusion' is practiced across the system. As Nixon (2007), argued some time ago, integration is not inclusion. Providing opportunities that are identical to those available to non-disabled participants as integration will not suffice. In contrast, inclusion, as promoted by Kiuppis (2018), relates to freedom of choice, where YPwl are able to choose sports and/or activities at appropriate participation levels and have quality experiences. The dominant approaches to disability sport provision in Aotearoa NZ are through segregated opportunities via disability sport organisations and in mainstream integrated opportunities from sport organisations. Inconsistent provision of and access to these opportunities across the country – such as variations between urban and rural and sport-to-sport provision – limits choice and reflects a sport system that is not inclusive. As an example of the lack of choice, Quinn, when talking about the activities he does, described some activities as hard while others were easy. But he indicated there is a need to make them "more accessible for people". Asked to clarify what he meant by more accessible, Quinn said "like to have a different page, which is easier, but only certain people can do it". The desired 'different page' he was referring to is the Scouts NZ manual that outlines the requirements of

the award scheme (see Figure 25). Published five years after the 2004 *Special Needs Awareness* resource (The Scout Association of New Zealand, 2004), which provided generic disability awareness information, practical information and tips on how to adapt activities, the badge scheme, as described in the manual, and that as already noted in Chapter 4, can be viewed as an ableist model of standards.

The prescriptive nature of badge requirements results in some Scouts trying “really hard to get it when other people can get it really easily” (Quinn) and although flexibility is permitted for Scouts with disabilities, a caveat stipulates that flexibility should “not be used to avoid parts of the scheme” (Scouts New Zealand, 2009, p. 2). While Quinn is passionate about Sea Scouts and his experiences are fun, there are times he has been unable to complete badges because for him the standards are physically unachievable. Walking long distances, especially when it includes going up and down hills, is difficult for Quinn. His impairment could have led to him being precluded from participating if required to walk the full expedition distance. Quinn’s Scout leader, however, identified and implemented a solution, i.e., enacting flexibility, whereby Quinn was able to catch a ride in one of the support vehicles for part of the walk, so he was able to start and finish with his troop, albeit missing some of the middle section. No structured rules or regulations directed this solution, but an understanding of Quinn, his impairment, his strengths and the overarching goals of the activity resulted in his successful participation. The conditions within his Scout troop enabled the leader to find a ‘fit’, what Evans et al. (2018) describe as coach/leader knowledge, skill, learning and autonomy support to provide activities that are appropriately designed, which in Quinn’s case were responsive to Quinn’s needs and relayed the value placed on his participation.

In contrast to Quinn’s walking expedition, Gaby experienced inequity when prohibited from participating in skipping. Gaby was expected to skip with the same skipping rope as everyone else with no consideration as to how she could do so with only one hand. A seemingly predictable outcome, that by not providing suitable equipment Gaby would be unable to participate, was overlooked by those providing the opportunity. These examples are illustrative of the ways in which entrenched beliefs about ‘normative’ child and physical development influence the delivery of certain opportunities. For some YPwl to fully participate may require changes in how the sport or activity is designed and delivered. This can be achieved, without impacting upon achievement of the outcomes, to enable young people to participate and/or compete. A reorientation of focus from the structure of opportunities to the purpose and outcome of opportunities will assist in the improved provision of quality experiences for YPwl.

As discussed in more detail later in this chapter, the principles of universal design for learning (UDL) would help coaches/leaders among others, in identifying and mitigating barriers to participation, as shown by Quinn's leader.

Impairment is not an excuse

Fredricks and Eccles (2005) found parents' perception of a child's ability is the primary social predictor of sport participation. How parents position sport and active recreation participation is fundamental to their YPwI's introduction to and experiences in sport and active recreation. The parents in my research consciously decided that while disability and impairment is often used as an excuse to preclude their YPwI from participating in sport and active recreation, they would not do so themselves. Their determination and support (see Bonavolontà et al., 2021; Furusa et al., 2021) enabled these four YPwI to experience a range of opportunities, opposite to the overprotective 'cotton woolling' described by Darcy et al. (2020) and the gatekeeping identified by Fitzgerald (2018). Describing how they intentionally and willingly chose not to limit what their YPwI could do, both Ella's and Andrew's mothers explained their philosophies for supporting their YPwI.

After she [Ella] was born, my husband and I both made a deal that we weren't going to let the disability affect [how we parented]. There was two things we did One was we try not to compensate for her disability. That was in our parenting with her, like not take a softer approach We don't see her disability and half the time ... you see beyond that. She's who she is. So one, we don't compensate for it. But also, my husband and I made a deal very early on that if she wanted to do something, we weren't going to let that disability stop us. We would find a way.

In terms of supporting Andrew in sport, it's give it a go, see what you think, if you don't like it, you tried it. Now, you know, you can tick it off your list, and that seems to kind of been carried on to all sorts of different aspects of his life.

Actively encouraging, supporting and facilitating participation, these parents focused on enabling their YPwI 'give it a go', and not allowing external influences to impact upon and disable their participation. Ironically, for some parents, this philosophy has created the unintentional consequence of their YPwI wanting to do many different sports or activities, that

is neither logistically practical nor viable. While these parents “can laugh about it, logistically it can be a problem” (Andrew’s mother). They are cognisant of how important exposing their YPwI to different opportunities is because the physical competencies required to participate in a particular sport or activity may not match their YPwI’s abilities. In addition, exposing YPwI to different opportunities facilitates choice, which is fundamental to the achievement of equity.

From an organisational perspective reframing YPwI as a legitimate and valued part of a sport’s community is integral to their participation. Treating YPwI the same as other participants reflects an understanding of how they have the same aspirations and motivations as non-disabled participants, albeit with different abilities. Within this framework, this includes ensuring that the delivery of opportunities for YPwI aligns with strategies and plans so as to avoid the many of the pitfalls of enlightened ableism. To create sustainable change, the culture of sport as a whole needs redressing, and everyone involved in sport and active recreation has a responsibility, as active agents of social change (DePauw, 1997), to help remove barriers to participation.

Realise it may cost more for YPwI to be involved

Integral to the role of a parent with a child involved in sport or active recreation is covering the financial costs of participation. For some this may be a burden and is one of the more regularly cited barriers and constraints to participation by YPwI (for example Darcy et al., 2020). For the parents in my research, this issue was also raised. Andrew’s parents highlighted the differences in managing the demands, including the affordability and financial implications, associated with his participation as compared to his non-disabled sister.

I'd say that we possibly end up arranging for more coaching for Andrew because of his disability, ... specialist coaching for him, rather than [his sister], who's in a swim club [and] has a general coach and swim squad swimmer.

There's financial costs to get Andrew involved in sport, more than [his sister] able-bodied right, mainstream sport and we accept that we are quite happy to wear that cost. (Father)

It's not a negative comment at all. It's just Andrew wants to do this. Okay. Let's give this a go. (Mother)

Though having said that, we are in a financial position where we can do that, whereas [if we were not in this position,] we wouldn't be able to do it. So yeah, I think it is quite an important point that Andrew wants to do these sports and to give him the options and the ability to do it um yeah, there's a financial cost. (Father)

Andrew is fortunate that his parents are willing and able to financially support²⁹ his participation, but as identified by these parents, many others are not so fortunate. But for these parents, supporting their YPwl not only makes sense in terms of finding a sport they could pursue, but it is also about creating equity amongst siblings. Support is not limited to only the YPwl's participation. Gaby's mother explained how when they lived in Australia she supported Gaby's non-disabled older sister in a similar way she does now for Gaby. This support included driving Gaby's sister to practice at six o'clock in the morning for one sport and then again after school for another sport, as well travelling intra- and inter-state for sports competitions. This experience is not dissimilar to Ella's brother, whose parents enabled his recreational pursuits. Not only does he play rugby, chess and do adventure running, but he is also a very good motorbike rider and is completing his Duke of Edinburg Gold Award, culminating in an expedition to Fiordland. Supporting him in his sport and recreation meant purchasing a motorbike and financing his expedition costs, opportunities they considered necessitated equal commitment to that provided for Ella's skiing.

It is timely to reiterate that the four YPwl in my research are not representative of all disabled young people. These four may be viewed as relatively privileged, coming from traditional nuclear families who are financially stable and have the ability to support their YPwl. However, giving agency to these experiences should not be seen as silencing the voices of other disabled young people who may not be as fortunate; rather they provide insight into a landscape of disablement that requires further exploration. Building on the work of King et al.

²⁹ In Aotearoa NZ, outside of education services, funding for disability was administered by the Ministry of Health for congenital and health impairments (until July 2022 when this was transferred to Whaikaha Ministry for Disabled People) and ACC. ACC is a Crown entity managing the no-faults universal insurance scheme aimed to get people back into their everyday lives after an accident. Significant disparity exists between the level of funding available from these two Government agencies. Institutional discrimination in funding means Ministry of Health clients receive less funding and support than ACC clients. For YPwl, the majority of whom who have congenital impairments, this is reflected in the increased reliance on parents and whānau to cover the additional costs of living with an impairment. Between 2012/13 and 2016/17 less than 1% of ACC claims were made for young people with tetraplegia, quadriplegia, incomplete spinal cord injury or amputation (ACC, 2017), indicating young people are actively disabled by Government policy and practice.

(2003) the influence of how family and whānau structure facilitates or creates barriers for YPwI participating in sport and active recreation warrants renewed research.

Enable YPwI to give their 100 percent

The four YPwI in my research were prepared to give their 100 percent to a sport and/or activity. They felt they were treated the same as everyone else and did not want sport organisations compensating for disability. But as this analogy from Andrew's mother signals, "you can't judge a fish against a monkey about how well they can both climb a tree, because the fish can't [climb]". Recognising the differences between YPwI and non-disabled young people means the basic techniques and principles are transferrable, but a coach for example cannot "teach a swimmer that has a disability, able-bodied swimming". Adjustments to how sport or active recreation is undertaken is required. My research findings substantiate those of Martin (2013) who recognised that understanding determination, commitment and effort are relative to the impairment is central to a quality and equitable experience. Inherent within the transformation from an ableist sport system to one that recognises YPwI, is education.

The need for education

Education needs to be aimed at addressing the gap in the understanding of disablism and its impact upon sport and active recreation provision. As highlighted by ACORD (Lavender, 1979) and reemphasised by Townsend et al. (2021), the omission of disability in coach education has created a sport system where coaches are insufficiently skilled to effectively remove the barriers of ableism and work towards meaningful participation of YPwI. Building on research that notes how quality experiences support YPwIs' desire to participate the best they can (Canadian Disability Participation Project, 2018), my research illustrates how equitable and quality experiences for YPwI will change as their skills and confidence evolve. The static and unchanging provision of opportunities will not guarantee continuous and sustainable quality experiences.

Education will lead to changing perceptions among those involved in the delivery of sport and active recreation to better appreciate the range of impairments and abilities of YPwI and how this impacts upon participation (Nixon, 2007). To reiterate, understanding is not just about the physical skills and tasks required to participate in the sport or activity, but also about knowing what participating means for YPwIs. From Ella's perspective, she would like to see sports

offer a programme for people like me who want to get into soccer or netball. They could offer a programme where they get trained by special adaptive coaches and yeah ... train them and when the time comes, they [YPwI] can go try out for the team they want and not have to worry about "Oh, am I going to be good enough because of my disability?"

Without lived experiences of disability, understanding what is needed to provide quality opportunities for YPwI is more difficult, therefore education is paramount (see Allan et al., 2020). As evidenced in my research, coaches'/leaders' familiarity with and understanding of disability from personal experiences has made considerable impact on the YPwI's sport and active recreation experiences. Their willingness to finding ways to engage and include the YPwI without changes being seen as patronising or condescending was self-initiated. However, the sport system cannot rely upon personal lived experiences alone to increase opportunities for YPwI. Legitimacy must be afforded to YPwIs participation, recognising and acknowledging their right to participate in sport and active recreation is no different than non-disabled young people. From Gaby's perspective, she sees change is happening; swimming coaches are starting to get into Para swimming and are

knowing like, "Oh, this is this is going to help, and this is going to", and being able to help everybody else as well as themselves and sharing the knowledge with other people.

To have quality experiences, education and training that embraces and supports coaches/leaders understanding of different engagement and participation methods, including flexible techniques would be beneficial. For Sherlock-Shangraw (2013) universal design for learning (UDL) is a mechanism to reduce barriers created by ableist thinking. Evolved from the architectural concept of universal design in which design aimed to remove barriers and make spaces more accessible, UDL is a similarly systematic model moving away from ad hoc and one-off solutions to pro-active, considered and meaningful solutions that meet the needs of all (Gilbert, 2019; Van Munster, Lieberman, & Grenier, 2019). Like the architectural goal of universal design to make spaces and places better for every user, the outcome of UDL in sport and active recreation is quality experiences for every participant. Within the disability sport context, the identification and elimination of barriers to participation, through better valuing

and understanding of YPwl, their abilities and their needs, will lead to more YPwl being successfully included in opportunities and having quality experiences.

Through the integration of the UDL principles into the education and development of sport deliverers – coaches/leaders, officials, administrators and volunteers – organisations will be better equipped to know YPwl and what they are bringing to the sport and/or activity including how to accommodate the variability of young peoples’ skills and abilities, including YPwl (Odio, Pate, & Aicher, 2022). As one means for achieving systemic change, UDL addresses the importance for those delivering sport to understand impairment and how that impacts upon participation. In Aotearoa NZ, UDL is gaining momentum, particularly in the education sector (Ministry of Education, 2022), but as identified, it could be easily transferred to the sport system. In Andrew’s experience, if a YPwl is “not doing like the job that well in the position”, they are brought off the field. He believes coaches can benefit from “a parent just say[ing] like my son or my daughter has this impairment, ... if you think this is right do a bit of a different training, a tiny bit of a change in training for them”.

Expectations of equivalency, proficiency and acquisition of skill need to be tempered (see Vargas, Beyer, & Flores, 2018), if only to allow the additional time needed for the YPwl to gain these skills. In Andrew’s case he needs to

repeat, repeat, repeat. It has to be more often for children with cerebral palsy, because their muscle mass, their muscle structure is completely different to that of an able-bodied person. So I think with that in mind ... it then takes that child longer. And not necessarily heaps of time longer than that, but it will take them longer to achieve the skill or that ability with that sport. (Mother)

Not discounting the value this training has for individual YPwl participating in local opportunities, such as that described by Andrew above, wider education is essential if ableism and disablism are to be addressed. As alluded to earlier, education and training based on activity adaptation alone will not achieve this. There is still need for a more formalised and structured approach to achieve sport system change. Based on history, the continued reliance on sport organisations to self-initiate disability sport education and training is misguided if the experiences of those in my research are typical. Where disability education and training are unavailable, one method for enhancing knowledge and understanding across the sport system is collaboration between organisations. Collaboration will be examined in more detail later in this chapter.

Activity design and preconceptions

Displaying one of the key principles of UDL, separating the means from the goal and refining his training and game planning to remove barriers to participation, Andrew's football coach works with individual players to build a team without "singling out" those less experienced or less confident players. All players are encouraged to play their best and contribute to the team's success. In Andrew's case, his strengths and abilities were identified, along with how these would be integrated into training and game strategy. Not being constrained by preconceived notions, Andrew's coach worked on creating a quality experience for him and his teammates, without overtly identifying Andrew as disabled or creating an environment where his impairment is used as an excuse for non-inclusion. Matching the skills and ability of players with the requirements of positions illustrates an understanding of not only team synergy but also impairment effects on participation.

Based on his own lived experiences with disability, Andrew's coach believes every player in every position has a different role to play to make the team work effectively because, to paraphrase him, you do not need or want a team of superstars, you need a team of differently skilled players who can work together to achieve the collective goal. Designing training and team structure around a positive and proactive mindset has been empowering for Andrew who plays in three different positions – left midfielder, left defender and goalkeeper.

I usually went on the left, since I was quite good at chipping the ball, which means that lobbing it, so I could curve it round and lob into like, the box, where my teammates were.

This example is illustrative of how rethinking impairment and disability, moving away from the preconceived notions of inability to reconceptualising ability, has created an environment where Andrew is able to give his 100 percent. At the time of our conversation, he had already scored three goals so far that season.

The commitment and dedication these YPwl give to their sport and activities is unquestionable but requiring YPwl to use the same techniques as non-disabled participants, such as Gaby experience with skipping, for example, is not always possible and unlikely to enable the YPwl to achieve their 100 percent. Although I am critical of activity adaptation and modification as a means to achieve systemic change, I recognise the importance of acknowledging the effect of impairment on participation and making appropriate accommodations to enable individual YPwl to participate to their best ability. For sport, the provision of alternate solutions that are

deemed fair often require unique solutions that are equitable and balanced. In contrast, finding the 'fit' in active recreation is easier, with fewer rules and regulations to constrain participation. For parents, enabling their YPwI to give their 100 percent does come with caveats. It is not about mere participation that is patronising and demeaning, for example getting a medal or certificate for just participating. From Andrew's mother's perspective, "it doesn't mean that he gets first place every time. It doesn't mean that he gets a gold medal".

Honest and equitable consideration of YPwI is imperative. As alluded to above, not all YPwI want to just participate; some have competitive aspirations. Accepting the overarching ableist sport structure currently operating in Aotearoa NZ, YPwI continue to be defined by their impairments, and disabled by a presumption of inability, rather than ability, if they are even included in the discourse. Changing the way YPwI are viewed and included, without bias and critique, opens the potential for enhanced opportunities for YPwI. Being cognisant of a YPwI's impairment is legitimate, but this should not dictate the provision of only separate and segregated opportunities. Adjustments to how sport or active recreation is undertaken will be required if equitable and quality opportunities for YPwI are to be provided. For sport organisations, historically, the ability to achieve a balance between quality participation and competition has been fraught with difficulty.

Classification minimises impairment effects

In aiming to achieve fairness within competitive sport, which is confined by rules, a universal classification system was developed. At the elite level of competitive sport, the adoption of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) classification system and associated rule changes in Para sports for sport competitions have achieved, to some extent, equity in sport (Patatas, De Bosscher, Derom, & De Rycke, 2020). Noting that classification has been highly critiqued since its inception, the system was designed to provide for fairer competition, minimising the influence that impairment effects have on athletic performance, and is applied internationally to Para sports (see Howe & Silva, 2018). For Para sports³⁰, athletes are grouped "by the degree of activity limitation resulting from the impairment, [and] to a certain extent, is similar to grouping athletes by age, gender or weight" (International Paralympic Committee, 2022).

³⁰ Para sports included – alpine skiing, archery, athletics, badminton, biathlon, boccia, canoeing, cross-country skiing, cycling, equestrian, 5-a-side football, goalball, ice hockey, judo, powerlifting, rowing, shooting, sitting volleyball, snowboard, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo, triathlon, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair curling, wheelchair fencing, wheelchair rugby and wheelchair tennis.

The classification system, however, does not directly translate to active recreation and is not always implementable in mainstream sport. Some sports, such as swimming, recognise the impact of impairments and have modified rules to take into consideration athletes' impairments. The World Para Swimming rules³¹ are a modified version of the World Aquatics³² rules, designed to remove any disadvantage Para swimmers experience by being unable to achieve the standards of the World Aquatics rules. For swimmers like Gaby, an upper limb amputee, having modified rules for competition provides a degree of leniency towards technique. However, for her "it didn't really change anything" as she personally strives and challenges herself to achieve the harder techniques essential to achieve the non-disabled rules. But when Gaby was 10, at her first competition, she was disqualified for 'incorrect' technique, due to her impairment. Similarly, Andrew, like Gaby, was also disqualified from his first swimming competition.

I do breaststroke, um, I've got this ... laminated piece of paper, in my swimming bag ... saying how um since I um got disqualified at my first zonals I didn't get the ribbon sadly. We got um Swimming NZ to sort something out saying that I can bring my heel out of the water only if ... I was getting a bit tired.

In both instances, a lack of understanding by the officials of both sport for young people and sport for YPwI lead to an inequitable experience. As well as not being mindful of Gaby's and Andrew's impairments, these experiences demonstrate that the interpretation and implementation of the appropriate rules in competition is neither guaranteed nor automatic.

Although Swimming NZ now recognises both the World Aquatics swimming and World Para swimming rules, these first experiences cannot be described as optimal (see Evans et al., 2018). Both Gaby and Andrew were excluded from receiving due recognition of their performances because of discriminatory practices measured against non-disabled standards. Without clear guidelines and frameworks, such as which rules to apply, YPwI will continue to be marginalised and 'othered'. As such, policies, rules and regulations need to be more accommodating and those writing and enacting them must adjust their disablist lens or ableism will continue to prevail.

³¹ The sport of swimming for athletes with an impairment is governed by the IPC, and co-ordinated by the World Para Swimming Technical Committee, using rules modified from World Aquatics rules.

³² World Aquatics (formerly Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA)) is the international sports federation that controls the development of swimming, diving, artistic swimming, and water polo. It does not control Para swimming. The International Paralympic Committee currently oversees Para swimming.

Enhancing visibility, using role models and raising awareness of opportunities

Internationally, initiatives such as *Rising Phoenix*³³, the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games concept of unity through diversity and the recent IPC #WeThe15 campaign³⁴, are promoting disability and disabled athletes, influencing how they are viewed and gaining wider audiences. When Gaby's parents watched *Rising Phoenix* they thought there "seems to be a real movement, which is awesome", but believe "even more would be great to get in at that. At the real youngster level". According to the IPC, 1.2 billion people worldwide are disabled, making them the largest marginalised group. Using sport to highlight the need for social change, #WeThe15 is a human rights movement. These initiatives recognise that enhancing the visibility of disabled athletes and awareness of opportunities for disabled people is creating a positive impact not just on YPwl, but on society as a whole. Nationally, as was done in the late 1970s-early 1980s, sport organisations can take a lead from these international initiatives, using several ways to enhance the visibility of disability sport and raising awareness of opportunities for YPwl in sport and active recreation.

Language matters

Throughout my research I have presented disability sport as often overlooked in the sport system. Confusion, especially for parents seeking opportunities for their YPwl, creates additional barriers to participation, especially if an opportunity is seen as tokenistic. This oversight has resulted in disabled people, such as Gaby, commenting on not knowing what opportunities are available, reflecting similar concerns raised in Australia (Darcy et al., 2020) and in the United Kingdom (Ives et al., 2019). Responsibility for this lack of knowledge by YPwl about sport and active recreation opportunities lies with sport organisations. Assuming YPwl and/or parents will intuitively know about opportunities with little or no marketing or promotion characterises the sport system as disablist when the omission is either intentional, or naïve – neither of which are acceptable in an anti-ableist sport system.

Compounding disablist and illustrative of the pervasiveness of enlightened ableism, Karlsson, Kilger, Bäckström, and Redelius (2022) recently called attention to how some sport organisations promote themselves as competent and providing training suited for 'all' children and where 'all' participants can be happy. However in most instances, the interpretation and

³³ *Rising Phoenix* is a Netflix documentary that presents the stories of nine Paralympians and their journey to the third biggest sporting event in the world. See <https://www.risingphoenix.education>

³⁴ WeThe15 campaign, launched at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, aims to break down barriers. See <https://www.wethe15.org>

meaning of 'all' is undisclosed. Omitting mention of disability sport or YPwls' participation or encapsulating it within a generic 'diversity and inclusion' banner, or using terms unfamiliar to the disability sport community, such as 'sport for all' or 'no limits', discriminates further. Exacerbating this is the use of language, nuances and acronyms indecipherable to sport outsiders and the uninitiated. The word 'adaptive', for example, is used in snow sports but in few other disability sports in Aotearoa NZ. Ella's mother was unaware of the 'adaptive' world, so never thought to search for this term when looking for opportunities for Ella. She acknowledges they "were fortunate to have found it". This highlights the risk of sport organisations using unique and niche language when promoting disability sport opportunities: "people [won't] know what there is, to sign up and try" (Ella's mother). For sport organisations entering disability sport, they would be wise to upskill on the lexicon and vernacular of disability sport to ensure their efforts to provide opportunities for YPwl are not undermined by attempts to create new and trendy descriptors unrecognisable by the potential audience; i.e., YPwl and/or their parents.

The importance of role models

In sport and active recreation, role models can be used as a way of communicating what a sport or activity means to YPwl, which is not articulated elsewhere. According to Mastro, Ahrens, and Statton (2012), a role model is someone who inspires others to achieve beyond expectations. Promoting the positives of sport and active recreation is readily seen in sports stars being proclaimed as role models (Mutter & Pawlowski, 2014). In general, role modelling is good and within sport and active recreation, organisations have a responsibility to ensure representation of all participants involved in their sport or activity; athletes/participants, officials, administrators and volunteers. The representation and framing of disability, and in particular how role models with different impairments are used, is crucial for YPwls' sense of belonging in sport and active recreation. The famous quote by civil rights activist Marian Wright Edelman, "you can't be what you can't see" applies equally to YPwl as it did to the disadvantaged young Americans she was referring to, as Ella voiced

He's been to the Paralympics, and he won it. I think part of it is I want to show everyone that I can do it even though I have got this disability. I can do it.

A quintessential illustration of Wright Edelman's point was how Ella responded to meeting Paralympian Adam Hall, which demonstrates, as acknowledged by Lumsdaine and Thurston (2017), that the value of role models for YPwl cannot be understated.

However, sport organisations are warned that misusing role models risks exhibiting enlightened ableism or worse. The inappropriate use of images of disabled people overcoming their impairment objectifies and devalues their experiences and has been described by comedian and disability advocate Stella Young as ‘inspiration porn’ (Grue, 2016). Furthermore, as highlighted in the *#WeThe15* campaign, claiming disabled role models are inspirational can be vexing as being described as ‘inspirational’ is often found by disabled people to be non-inclusive, patronising and demeaning (Carty, Mont, Restrepo, & Salazar, 2021). Therefore, enhancing the visibility of disability and YPwI to create an attitudinal shift demands a fine balance between raising awareness and accidentally reinforcing ableist notions.

The importance of role models is also recognised by the parents and coaches/leaders alike for providing a sense of legitimacy to disability sport, extending not just to YPwI but to also the wider and larger sporting community. Openings exist for enhancing the visibility of disability by using role models. Relatable and identifiable role models for YPwI; i.e., athletes with impairments, have been acknowledged in policy. For example, in the *No Exceptions* strategy (SPARC, 2005) role models were seen as a way of encouraging a non-disabling sport system to be more inclusive, and for increasing participation in sport and active recreation. As shown by Ella’s comment above, spending time with role models is meaningful, impactful and was an important milestone for Ella. This experience was not only huge for Ella but also engendered greater understanding by her parents of what skiing meant to her and other skiers with impairments. In Ella’s case it provides an embodied sense of freedom; “it’s the freedom that they have on the snow”.

In Aotearoa NZ we have world-renowned Paralympians who are recognised as role models for disabled and non-disabled athletes.

I guess, Sophie Pascoe, is probably our biggest ambassador, and everybody knows her I guess, if she wasn't there, there'd probably would be a lot of people that are like, "oh, what's Para swimming?" But the fact that she's so big, and so influential on basically all of New Zealand, that everybody knows about it. (Gaby)

When a Paralympian participates in a regular club event and is involved at the local level they are seen as paving the way for YPwI to be neither marginalised nor treated differently because of impairment. For Gaby the opportunity to swim with a Paralympian on a semi-regular basis was empowering, especially when she was younger, gave her confidence to continue

swimming and competing, especially when she had "beaten a Paralympian". Gaby's experience is illustrative of the power of storytelling which Bundon and Smith (2017) describe as not only creating a sense of belonging but also an opportunity for the inspired to become the inspiring, motivating other YPwl to become involved in disability sport.

Yet too often non-disabled male role models from traditional mainstream sports are used. The Halberg Foundation is well placed to champion and celebrate Para athletes as role models but has relied heavily upon non-disabled role models and ambassadors. For example, in Figure 31 the image of two non-disabled former All Blacks dominates the banner while the other images of YPwl minimise their impairments to the point they are no longer visible. Ella and Gaby have shown, however, that there are abundant role models, heroes and mentors in disability sport in Aotearoa NZ, so it is worth raising critical questions about the extent to which YPwl are represented across the system and why sport organisations resort to using non-disabled role models (Mastro et al., 2012).



Figure 33 Halberg Games Central 2022 promotional banner

Reprinted with Permission (Halberg Foundation, 2022b)

Role modelling is multi-dimensional and should not be considered as being solely focused on high-performing athletes or celebrities. Celebrating the successes of YPwl in team or club settings is possibly more important for YPwl, giving them a chance to see themselves as participants. An example of the power of type of role modelling is seen with Ella when her voice was heard at an adaptive skiing event where she was invited to speak.

We had a group of sit skiers and spina bifida skiers and cerebral palsy skiers like me. And they chose me, they chose about 2 sit skiers, [Paralympian] Adam Hall, he's got Spina Bifida, and me to talk. It was amazing being able to talk and share my ski journey with people.

Giving agency to the voice of YPwI not only empowers them but enables role modelling at a level not always achieved by using elite high performing athletes. It was obvious, while watching Ella describe this experience, how formative this opportunity was for her; an experience where she not only had the opportunity to share her journey thus far, but also to share the stage with an adult and Paralympian. Role modelling of YPwI actively engaged in sport and active recreation helps provide a goal for many YPwI who may not see the Paralympic Games as desirable or achievable. Showcasing YPwI and using them as role models does not have to be solely the responsibility of sport organisations, although they are the best places to do so. Using role models can also be a collaborative approach, leveraging other opportunities for YPwI to share their experiences in sport and active recreation.

In Aotearoa NZ we are fortunate to have regular television shows that willingly promote disability and sport and active recreation awareness. *Attitude*³⁵ and *What Now*³⁶ have created platforms for celebrating YPwI, revealing disability sport and Para sport excellence to a wide audience base. A few years ago, Gaby was profiled by *What Now*. Her mother described with pride how good the segment was and how important she believed it was, “they probably did help some of the children you know, say it was all right, to have a go” because it was to encourage other YPwI to try a sport or activity. A desire to help other YPwI participate in sport and active recreation is the motivation for Ella to show that even if you have an impairment, you can still participate.

I'm trying to help as many people as I can, spread the word round that if you are like me and feel like you haven't got a sport ..., you can always try skiing. There is always so much support there with all the coaches and the people [volunteers].

³⁵ *Attitude* is another free-to-air show created by Attitude Pictures. Since 2005, Attitude has been the largest producer of disability-focused content in the world (Attitude, 2022). The Attitude Trust have also hosted the annual Attitude Awards since 2008 where the achievements of the disability community are celebrated (Attitude Trust, 2022).

³⁶ *What Now* is a weekly free-to-air live children's television programme for primary school-aged children. The show has been running for 40 years and is something of a New Zealand institution. Producers of the programme use the fun and games genre of the show to promote social issues and partner with government agencies where appropriate, including Sport NZ.

As alluded to earlier, perceptions of inability have the effect of preventing YPwl from accessing opportunities (Nixon, 2007). It is crucial for Ella to show those non-disabled people delivering sport and active recreation opportunities that although she has an impairment, “I’m not like all precious that I will crack”. Therefore, the appropriate use of role models is effective in not only promoting sports and activities to YPwl, but can be seen as an active change agent that DePauw (1997) was seeking, challenging the ableist and disablist perceptions and attitudes of non-disabled people. In Aotearoa NZ, the annual *Halberg Awards*³⁷, celebrate elite Para sport performance alongside non-disabled high-performance athletes, as well as showcasing, during the ceremony, YPwl involved with Halberg Foundation initiatives. But as Ella’s mother observed

they had a child with cerebral palsy speak, but he wasn't a child that struggles with speech. He wasn't a child that's (sic) disability was, you could see. It was kind of like, they had the mild version ... our one criticism, let's bring someone in that actually, you can see the disability.

This criticism of the Awards reflects the patronising way Paralympians, Para athletes and YPwl are often represented as “(hyper)visible without overtly disrupting ... dominant able-bodied norm[s]” (Pullen et al., 2019, p. 732). It also suggests the Halberg Foundation is failing to truly centralise disability and impairment and embrace the power of role models in a meaningful and anti-ableist way. This is ironic given the Foundation was established to enhance equal opportunities for disabled people to participate in sport and active recreation (McBean et al., 2022). The representation and framing of disability in sport and active recreation is a particularly important factor in enabling the participation of YPwl. This issue raised by Ella’s mother of which impairments are deemed acceptable and which are not merits further research. This topic was not discussed with the YPwl in my research, but if it had been, it could have provided an interesting insight into how YPwl perceive ableist bias towards or disablism against different impairments.

Raising the visibility of opportunities

In addition to using role models as discussed above, enhancing the visibility and awareness of opportunities for YPwl not only acts to motivate YPwl, as raised by Larocca, Fraser-Thomas,

³⁷ Since 1963 the Sportsman of the Year awards have been organised by the Halberg Foundation. Now known as the *Halberg Awards*, this annual televised event, which celebrates sporting excellence, is a key fundraiser for the Halberg Foundation. The first disabled sportsperson award was presented to Paralympian Sophie Pascoe in 2011, six years after the 2005 No Exceptions policy listed the Halberg Foundation as one of the lead agencies for recognising disabled sportspeople as role models.

and Bassett-Gunter (2020), but can also signal a move away from the ableist discourse in sport and active recreation. Echoing Gaby's comments from Chapter 6 about advertising opportunities, the parents in my research also believe sport organisations have a responsibility for promulgating information directly to potential participants, including collaborating with disability sport and other organisations not involved directly in sport or active recreation, such as child development providers. Connecting with parents of YPwI "because they're the ones that are going to be working with the family [...and who can say] "look there's options with sport" ... make that information available to parents, I think it's important" (Ella's mother).

Not discounting the value of personal networks and direct communication, visibility and awareness of opportunities in 2022 is dominated by digital platforms. In order to attract participants, sport organisations use digital media to communicate what opportunities they deliver. The ability of digital communication, such as websites (see Figure 30) and social media channels, to reach a wide audience is huge. Bundon and Hurd Clarke (2015) emphasised the positive impact social media has in creating a sense of belonging and community for disabled people who may otherwise feel isolated and alone, i.e., the social impact of sport is far wider than just the physical participation in a sport or activity. While the reliance on printed marketing collateral has been the main vehicle for sport organisations in raising awareness, low-cost options now exist through social media including participant-generated content. Using multiple avenues for raising awareness can enhance opportunities for YPwI to observe and watch other YPwI and disabled athletes.

For many, sport and active recreation is seen as leading the way for more equitable and positive awareness of disability by the general public. While Bruce (2014) has argued the Aotearoa NZ media representation centres around nationalism (also see Pullen et al., 2019) and not impairment, the 2022 media coverage increasingly showed the Paralympians in action with their impairment effect apparent. For example, media reporting of the Aotearoa NZ Paralympic and Olympic performances at the Beijing Paralympic and Olympic Games indicates how this shift is occurring (see Figure 34). Building on the rise in public interest in the Paralympic Games disability and the fact that impairments are increasingly visible in print, visual and digital media coverage, evidence suggests the prestige of the Paralympic movement and the values promoted impact positively not only on disabled young participants but are increasingly acknowledged as influencing on society as a whole (Bruce, 2014; Pullen et al., 2019). By using sport, such as the platform provided by the Paralympic Games, disability

and social issues can be leveraged simultaneously with celebrating athletic performances (Kolotouchkina, Llorente-Barroso, García-Guardia, & Pavón, 2021; Saxton, 2018).



Figure 34 Beijing 2022 media coverage

Reprinted with permission Stuff 2022³⁸

The visibility of YPwl, Paralympians, Para athletes and disabled athletes should not be considered the responsibility of the media alone. The sport system itself has an obligation to increase the visibility and awareness of disability sport, some examples of which I have discussed in detail above. The challenge for sport organisations, therefore, is navigating through the ableist and disablist sport system designed to preclude the provision of equitable disability sport opportunities.

³⁸ Unfortunately due to copyright restrictions on the images accompanying these media articles, the images cannot be provided in this figure. Links to the articles can be found in the Figure Copyright Permissions table.

Summarising organisational infrastructure, policy and practice

In an anti-ableist system, sport organisations have a responsibility to review their rules and regulations to ensure these are enacted in ways that provide equitable access, and positive experiences and outcomes for YPwI at all levels. Paying attention to design and delivery that reduces any impairment effect will overcome many of the barriers and constraints experienced by YPwI. Sport organisations are encouraged to be cognisant of the following:

- Using impairment as an excuse to preclude YPwI from trying a sport and/or activity is a form of disablism. Exposing YPwI to different opportunities facilitates choice is fundamental to achieving an inclusive sport system.
- Adjusting how sport or active recreation delivery enables YPwI to give their 100 percent includes centralising ability rather than inability and is an acknowledgement of how impairment effects impact upon participation.
- Relying on the personal lived experiences of those delivering sport and active recreation to implement different engagement and participation methods will not in and of itself increase opportunities for YPwI.
- Adopting a UDL approach to structuring and delivering sport and active recreation opportunities for all young people would 'force' a less ableist approach.
- Developing and enacting policies, rules and regulations without a disablist lens will assist the development of an anti-ableist sport and active recreation culture.
- Understanding the lexicon and vernacular of disability and disability sport will help sport organisations effectively communicate their commitment to providing opportunities for YPwI.
- Using role models is powerful for YPwI, but there is a fine balance between raising awareness and accidentally reinforcing ableist notions.
- Giving agency to the voice of YPwI empowers them, creates a sense of belonging and communicates the repositioning and value of their participation within sport organisations.

Creating a system that works for all

No doubt exists that the Aotearoa NZ sport and active recreation system was founded on ableism and that ableism remains influential today. Quinn's concern, that he would be "pretty sad" if YPwI were not able to participate in sport and active recreation provides the context for the final level of this anti-ableist framework. This level is the sport system itself. As sport

is reflective of society, it can be argued that sport is a battle ground for many social debates around disability. In Aotearoa NZ discrimination based on disability is generally illegal under the Human Right Act 1993, but within sport, discrimination is legal. It is not a breach of the Act to preclude participation if a “person’s disability is such that there would be a risk of harm to that person or to others” (Human Rights Act, 1993, s. 49(3)) or that to provide these opportunities would be more onerous than providing the same services to others (i.e., non-disabled participants). Furthermore, Sport NZ is only required to encourage participation of disabled people (Sport and Recreation New Zealand Act, 2002). Within such a discriminatory and non-prescriptive legal framework, these Acts convey outdated, subjective and ableist principles that appear to conflict with both the NZDS and the Government’s obligations to the rights of disabled people as defined by under the United Nations CRPD.

Article 30 of the United Nations CRPD clearly establishes the rights of disabled people to participate in sport and recreation on an equal basis with others (United Nations, 2006) as does the UN Convention on the rights of children (United Nations, 1989). Situating YPwl central to the application of these conventions should be integral in the provision of sport and active recreation, but as presented in earlier chapters, in Aotearoa NZ there is still work to be done. Without a change to the sport system, disability sport and participation of YPwl will remain entrenched in an ableist system grounded in sport settings that privilege non-disabled participants (Hammond et al., 2022). While progression towards a more inclusive sport system has begun there is a long way to go, and change is long overdue. The difficulty for Sport NZ therefore is managing these conflicting obligations. To support the establishment of a cohesive and anti-ableist sport system where YPwl are valued equally with non-disabled young people, doing what is right will need to take precedence over doing what is legal. The complexity of addressing human rights in sport has been the topic of research, but human rights and disability sport is an emerging field (see Lee et al., 2022). Relinquishing the principles of fairness and respect inherent within sport (King, 2017), by not extending these to YPwl means that discrimination against YPwl and disabled people will continue. But through the provision of opportunities that match those offered to non-disabled young people, experiences such as Andrew not being able to play CP football will be consigned to history. To achieve changes in the sport system, two areas should set the focus of the ongoing work in Aotearoa NZ, these being how partnerships can be built across the sport system, and active consultation with those with lived experiences of disability, and the rhetoric and practice of policy and policy enactment.

Networks and partnerships with other organisations

As alluded to in Chapter 6, a lack of participants, i.e., a critical mass, creates a dearth of opportunities, particularly for YPwI as Darcy et al. (2020) highlighted. In Aotearoa NZ, with a population one-fifth of Australia's, the issue of critical mass, especially outside the larger urban areas, is significant. Outside of the captured mass within the education system, sport and active recreation is delivered by a vast network of clubs, regional associations and national organisations with varying roles and responsibilities. Again similar to Australia (Jeanes et al., 2018), the provision of opportunities for YPwI in Aotearoa NZ is not solely the domain of non-disabled sport organisations.

As highlighted in Chapter 4, dedicated disability sport organisations are well established and have been meeting the needs of interested disabled participants for over half a century. Regional disability sport organisations (RDSOs) have been central to the delivery of specific disability sports and act as a pathway for boccia, powerchair football, wheelchair basketball, and wheelchair rugby, as well as providing local opportunities for participation in sports such as athletics and swimming. With little critical mass and at times a dysfunctional national infrastructure, RDSOs, albeit with minimal geographical coverage outside of major urban areas, have been credited by both the YPwI and their parents as instrumental in exposing them to sport and active recreation opportunities they may not have otherwise considered. For example, Andrew's interests in other sports besides football and swimming came from being exposed to opportunities through RDSOs.

Parafed are giving him the options, you know, ... he's done rock climbing through Parafed. [T]hey give him the options to try different things. And then if he enjoys them, he'll pursue them after that... It's ah really good, I see that as a really good entry way for certainly people who are probably more disabled than Andrew. (Father)

The importance of dedicated disability sport organisations thus cannot be overstated. From these relationships, collaboration, resources and sharing of expertise can result in enhanced organisational and sector capability and improved opportunities for participation by YPwI.

Unwarranted criticism of the disability sport sector in Aotearoa NZ (for example Cockburn & Atkinson, 2018a), has been founded on the belief that the plethora of organisations creates a disparate and complex sector, ignoring the fact that the reason for these organisations existing has been the ongoing neglect of disability sport by mainstream sport organisations. While the

emergence of organisations working together is to address issues that cross sectors, such as health, education and sport (Sam & Schoenberg, 2020), disability sport organisations emerged in response to the ableist system that was neglecting the needs of disabled people (McBean et al., 2022). The benefit of having dedicated disability sport organisations deliver a range of sports and activities is that disability sport organisations are far more connected and tend to have significantly more relationships across the sport system and other sectors than non-disabled sport organisations (Wicker & Breuer, 2014).

In Aotearoa NZ, disability sport provision is more than just dedicated disability sport organisations. The Para sport and disability sport network (see Figure 35) is a conglomerate of different organisations delivering opportunities for YPwI, with varying levels of prioritisation and sophistication. This network of organisations offers a range of opportunities and services, from which YPwI and other disabled people have a choice as to how, where and when they participate in sport and active recreation. Opportunities include sport-specific Para sport pathways to international levels through club, regional and national sports organisations; disability sport and Para sports at regional and national levels; and ad hoc opportunities delivered by advocacy organisations. Acknowledged but excluded from this network are commercial providers and events, and school sport opportunities. Reliant upon the education system, school sport opportunities both within the curriculum and extra-curricular do overlap with the sport system, in terms of connectivity, influence and reach to participants, and the central role volunteers play in the provision of opportunities, but this added layer of delivery is outside the scope of my research.

The Sport NZ *Disability Plan* calls for collective action and poses questions for the disability sport sector, including “Who are your partners in this work?” and “What networks, links or systems can you connect with in our community?” and “What strengths do your partners have and how can you use them?” (Sport New Zealand, 2019b, p. 10). These questions build upon the observation by the Australian Sports Commission (2010), supported by my research, that indicates how national sport organisations often lack an understanding of how and where disability sport is delivered at the local level. Collaborating makes sense both for enhancing the provision of opportunities and financially for sport organisations. Cooperating and collaborating with other organisations not only facilitates improved knowledge and understanding but also adds value across the organisations. Sharing knowledge has an impact on an organisation’s ability to be innovative and deliver opportunities (Delshab, Winand, Sadeghi Boroujerdi, Hoeber, & Mahmoudian, 2022). In sport, Wicker and Breuer (2014), found

collaborating with disability sport organisations can harness the disability expertise lacking in sport organisations and can help sport organisations to enhance opportunities for YPwI without affecting opportunities for non-disabled participants. Building collaborative relationships not only enhances this network but creates connections for securing expertise, skills and knowledge, and helps grow the critical mass for participation. Using this network can also provide a conduit for the promotion and marketing of opportunities directly to YPwI. Working with other organisations providing disability sport can be advantageous, particularly in terms of direct relationships with YPwI.

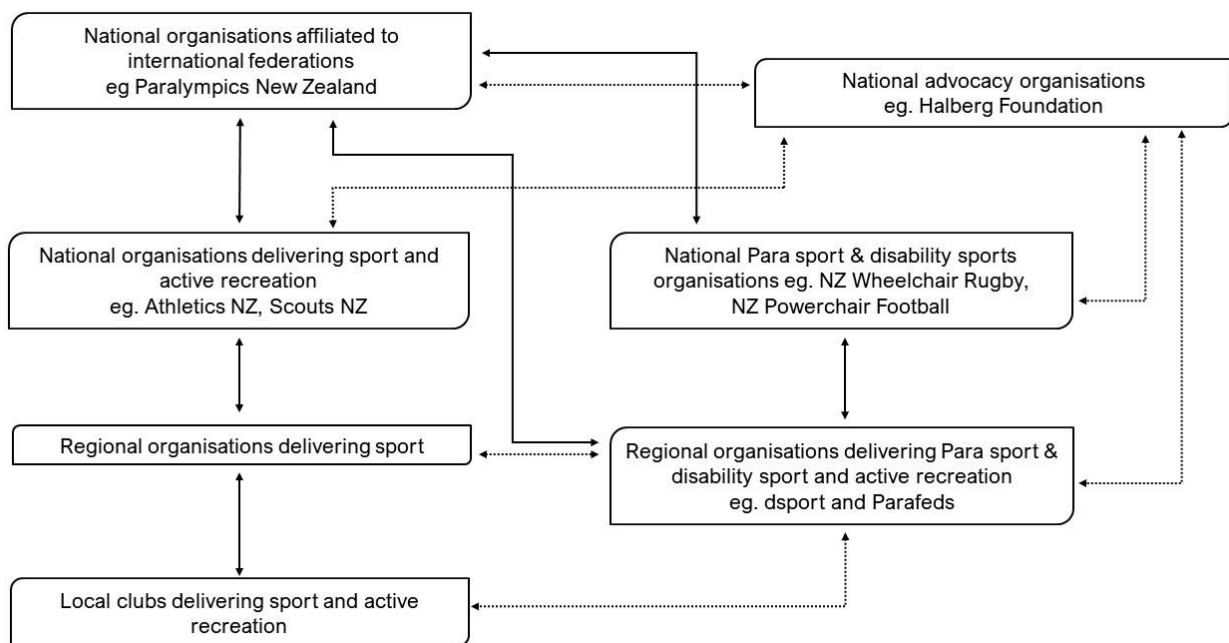


Figure 35 Aotearoa NZ Para sport and disability sport network

Removing the barriers/concerns

Some sport organisations are reluctant to implement disability sport, even when collaborative options are available. This reluctance has been interpreted as sport organisations not wanting to compromise opportunities for non-disabled participants by researchers such as Jeanes et al. (2018) and Kitchin and Howe (2014), as sport organisations not wanting to compromise opportunities for non-disabled participants. This compromise is often contextualised around resource allocation; i.e., funding. Affordability for both sport organisations and participants creates a barrier to participation. Based on current sector provision, it is apparent funding for

non-disabled participation is prioritised over YPwI, especially if additional funding is not forthcoming (see Chapter 6). From my professional experience as a sports administrator, the parents of any child involved in sport are impacted by the financial costs of participation and the allocation of funding can be highly contentious. However, enhancing opportunities for YPwI will not happen if the sport system commitment and support to lowering barriers to participation remain solely conditional on funding (see King et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2005). For parents of YPwI, while their support of the YPwI is no different than that for their non-disabled siblings, the financial implications of participation due to the high costs of sport-specific equipment, as well as any additional day-to-day impairment-related costs, as alluded to by Ives et al. (2019) can be substantial. The willingness to pay was accepted by the parents in my research, but they are in an enviable position of being able to afford extra financial obligations to support their YPwI's participation. Some lament that this is not possible for all, such as Gaby's father who noted

there's a lot of people out there in New Zealand that don't have a lot of money. It's a very expensive sport ... Gaby's lucky. But there's a lot of kids that aren't so lucky ... it wouldn't make any difference how good they are unless [...] parents can afford [it].

The nature of disability sport is its need for adaptability and flexibility, and this increases the financial burdens for organisations, parents and individuals. To achieve quality experiences sport organisations not only have to accommodate the different needs of YPwI, but also recognise that these needs are likely to change over their sport and activity lifetime (Canadian Disability Participation Project, 2018). Similar to the accepted changing needs of non-disabled young people as they progress through their participation pathway, the changes in YPwI should also be considered as inherent in their participation in quality experiences and fundamental to the provision of equitable non-ableist disability sport opportunities.

It is acknowledged that some disability sports and activities require specialised or modified equipment that is generally sport/activity-specific. Often customised for the sport and/or user, this equipment is expensive and out of the financial reach of most disabled athletes. For example, wheelchair rugby is a contact sport, and sports chairs are custom made to fit the needs of an individual player. In contrast, wheelchair basketball chairs are adjustable and transferable between players, but like rugby chairs, they are an additional requirement to the equipment needed by non-disabled players. In Aotearoa NZ, a rugby wheelchair costs around

\$11,000³⁹, while a basketball wheelchair is less than \$5,000. Both are significantly more expensive than the minimum equipment required for the non-disabled equivalent of these sports.

Internationally, financial incentives from sport organisations for YPwl's participation are not common, as organisations often have limited capability to provide them (Darcy et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2005). However in Aotearoa NZ, through collaboration, opportunities do exist where YPwl and other disabled people do not always have to personally incur the financial costs of participation. To compensate, RDSOs around the country have assumed the responsibility for the purchase of disability sports equipment, held in repositories for members' use, at no or low cost. Some sport organisations have done similar. The Snow Sports NZ's (SSNZ) Adaptive Snow Sports programme (2022a) is an example of how one sport organisation has incentivised participation at minimal cost to the organisation. This programme provides members with a range of services and incentives by working collaboratively with the NZ Snowsports Instructors Alliance (NZSIA) and ski resort operators across Aotearoa NZ. For a small annual fee, members receive discounted ski passes, on-snow volunteer support and adaptive instruction provided by their partners, while having access to SSNZ's adaptive equipment. The volunteer programme was established to assist skiers like Ella, who when she started skiing, had the support of a volunteer to create a safe learning environment that meant Ella was able to focus on her skiing, thinking "Ah, I'm not going to get hit". The importance of providing this service is acknowledged by SSNZ (2022b) who recognise that "[w]ithout the support of volunteers our on-mountain programmes would not be able to provide this service [adaptive snow sports]".

Like most disability sport-specific equipment, adaptive ski equipment is also expensive and often financially inaccessible for many YPwl. Adaptive ski equipment has been developed specifically for disabled people, such as outrigger skis – used to provide balance and to assist with turning and control, or sit skis for skiers with impairments such as paraplegia, tetraplegia or spina bifida. Fortunately, the snow sports industry has a well-established equipment rental culture, where boots, skis, snowboards and helmets are available for hire at the ski resorts. Expanding this provision to include adaptive equipment was a natural extension for this sport and provides equitable entry-level access to snow sports (see Figure 36). Furthermore, apart from equipment purchase, the cost of this collaboration is borne by the partners, not SSNZ.

³⁹ In my role as dsport Manager, I fundraise and purchase specialised equipment for use by members.

These examples from RDSOs and SSNZ are illustrative of how through collaboration, removing one barrier – access to equipment – can increase opportunities for YPwI to participate.



Figure 36 Ski boot fitting for a lower-leg amputee

Policy inclusive of YPwI

As shown in McBean et al. (2022), the Aotearoa NZ sport policy landscape, like that in Australia (Hammond & Jeanes, 2018), Canada (Hammond et al., 2022), the United States (Hums et al., 2003) and the United Kingdom (Kitchin & Howe, 2014), has been framed by government ideologies and priorities with social outcomes conditional on funding. Over the period 1930-2020, Government intervention in disability sport was premised on the belief that improving the lives of disabled New Zealanders was accepted by all as valuable. However, as shown in SPARC's failed response to its obligations under the NZDS (see Chapter 4), the traction needed to create systemic change and improve disability sport opportunities for YPwI is reliant not on government agencies but sport organisations to deliver sport and active recreation opportunities. The success of this delegated responsibility outside of disability

sport organisations, as presented in Chapters 4 and 6, has been conditional on funding and incentivisation.

Change through a Government-directed 'top-down' only approach, as shown in other research, for example Darcy et al. (2020), may be counterproductive and act only to perpetuate discrimination and ableism. If the root of resistance is ableism and the disablism of resource allocation, the Government and Sport NZ will need to address how, in lieu of policies, other interventions can be used to influence disability sport provision. At a system level, the success of disability sport relies not so much on policies, but on the delivery of opportunities and initiatives intertwined with interdependent and networked organisations. To fully address discrimination and ableism in sport, sport organisations will need to reflect on their ideologies and how these are reflected in practices at the local level (Spaaij et al., 2020). Where practice is leading policies, addressing and updating discourse, principles and ideologies to match practice will be the external expression of how disability and disability sport has been repositioned within a sport organisation.

The Swimming NZ example shows the move towards including disability sport begins with recognition of the need to provide opportunities for YPwI and not wait for policy changes. While the journey for them has been turbulent over the last two decades, they are now in the position where policy, participation and high performance are aligned for Para swimmers at a national level. The next stage for Swimming NZ is to work with regional and local clubs to minimise the risk of disconnecting national policy discourse from local practice (see Peers et al., 2020). In Chapter 4 I outlined how policy slippage, and a lack of enactment have occurred due to a lack of implementation of supporting infrastructure such as effective education for those delivering sport and active recreation opportunities. Developing on a bottom-up approach, i.e., clubs responding to demand from YPwI and delivering opportunities, as well as top-down policy will support YPwI to become actively engaged and participate in sport and active recreation. I am hopeful the sport system in Aotearoa NZ does not want to be seen as adept at presenting the impression of inclusion while not increasing opportunities for YPwI participation, as witnessed in Canada by Hammond et al. (2022). The challenge now for policy makers and those involved in sport governance is how to sincerely provide quality experiences and opportunities that are equitable, while being cognisant of history which us that reminds policy alone is unlikely to improve opportunities for participation.

As outlined in Chapter 1, sport participation rates for disabled young people are lower than non-disabled young people, indicating young people are being disabled by the sport system. In addition, over the last decade, increasing pressure on young athletes to compete and perform at higher levels has been recognised in non-disabled sport (see Walters et al., 2010). To overcome this, Sport NZ believes sport organisations need to think differently. Underpinned by ideas about providing quality sport experiences for all young people, regardless of ability, needs and motivations, Sport NZ introduced *Balance is Better* in 2020 (Sport New Zealand, 2022). The principle of *Balance is Better* includes safe, fair and inclusive opportunities for participation; quality experiences regardless of ability; a collective attitudinal change; skill development for all, and a focus on retaining participants. Sport NZ is committed to embedding the *Balance is Better* philosophy by leveraging funding (see Sam & Jackson, 2004), and improving coach and parent education. Unfortunately, like other non-disability specific policies of Sport NZ, disability is invisible in this policy, perhaps inferred within the provision of a safe, fair and inclusive environment, which is the right of all New Zealanders. This criticism of *Balance is Better* is based on its ableist inference that all young people are participating in sport and active recreation, but the experience needs improving. Because *Balance is Better* does not address the barriers that discriminate against disabled young people entering sport and active recreation, which are fundamental to creating a sport system that is fair and inclusive, this policy is a further example of enlightened ableism. Currently, Sport NZ exhibits little understanding of the nuances of YPwI and disability sport and despite initiatives such as the *Disability Plan*, falls short of becoming an effective agent of change (McBean et al., 2022).

Summarising systems that work for all

Understanding, flexibility and accessibility are fundamental for YPwIs' participation in sport and active recreation. To support the establishment of a cohesive and anti-ableist sport system where YPwI have parity with non-disabled young people, doing what is right needs to take precedence over what might be legal. Relying on a 'top-down' only approach has been counterproductive and has only achieved further discrimination and enlightened ableism. To achieve a sport system that does work for all, the following are important:

- Contextualising the provision of disability sport around affordability and resource allocation is a function of disablism. Enhancing opportunities for YPwI will not come to fruition if the commitment and support to lowering barriers to participation remains solely conditional on funding.

- Understating the importance of dedicated disability sport organisations in Aotearoa NZ negates their value in building system-wide relationships through collaboration, resource and expertise sharing that has been the backbone of disability sport opportunities and will be fundamental to improving future opportunities for and experiences by YPwI.
- Recognising and supporting the delivery of opportunities and initiatives through an intertwined and interdependent network of organisations. Cooperating and collaborating with organisations not only facilitate improved knowledge and understanding across the sport system but also add value across organisations.
- Updating and amending discriminatory and ableist frameworks – legislation, rules and regulations – to enshrine the rights of disabled people, integral to the equitable provision of sport and active recreation.
- Developing a two-pronged approach to system improvement: bottom-up approaches, i.e., clubs seeking input from the voices of YPwI and delivering opportunities, and top-down policies, to support YPwI actively participating in sport and active recreation.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have demonstrated across multiple levels – individual, organisation and system – that change is needed. Ableism, discrimination and bias is inherent within the sport system that prioritises ‘normal’ athleticism over the right to participate. Presumptions of ability at a macro level define the framework within which sport and active recreation is delivered, yet at the micro level, for YPwI to participate the effect of impairment has an individual and personal impact, illustrative of the social relational model of disability. Using impairment to preclude YPwI from participating inhibits choice, a fundamental principle of the inclusive sport system Sport NZ so desires. Without adjusting the delivery of sport and active recreation from one framed around activity modification and adaptation to one addressing system-wide evolution, opportunities for YPwI will remain constrained by disablism. Integral to the equitable provision of sport and active recreation is replacing this discriminatory and ableist system to one that endorses, values and supports the rights of disabled people in sport and active recreation. To achieve this transformation a dual approach recognising the importance of using bottom-up local-level approaches at the same time as implementing top-down policies should lower barriers to participation and enhance opportunities for YPwI.

As shown in my research, the ability of YPwI to participate in their chosen sport and active recreation has been attributed to those delivering opportunities recognising the dominance of ableism and taking actions to remove disablism from sport and active recreation. As Enright and O'Sullivan (2012) describe, YPwI are the primary stakeholders in their participation and are not only best placed to provide guidance on issues that impact upon their participation; they present a perspective often overlooked by others. Sport organisations should not be afraid to ask them about their needs and seek their input and advice. Central to the (re)production of ableism are sets of normative assumptions about young peoples' development, motivations and abilities in sport and active recreation. In centralising the voices of YPwI there is clear opportunity to challenge ableism in its nuances, in every-day and taken-for-granted ways. Policy makers, sport organisations, coaches/leaders cannot presume to know who YPwI are, why they participate and what they want or need without giving agency to their voices. Furthermore, viewing disability sport as a legitimate part of sport, helps reorient the enlightened rhetoric that frames disability sport provision for YPwI towards discourse that might be truly emancipatory or empowering, in line with those fundamental rights as articulated in the United Nations CRPD.

The themes and principles identified through my research and the framework I present for improving disability sport provision in Aotearoa NZ enable the social relational model of disability to be actualised within all sport and active recreation contexts. As evidenced across this research, impairment and disability are important considerations in the provision of opportunities. Sport organisations need to consider impairment in terms of the individual supports needed, while reflecting and acting on the disabling aspects of sport and active recreation provision, such as policy, access, knowledge, and practice. YPwIs' experiences should not be constrained by the binary disabled/non-disabled discourse inherent within inclusion models. Examples from the sport organisations in Aotearoa NZ that the YPwI involved in my research have experienced are presented as examples of good practice as well as indications of what to avoid. Without a change in culture away from ableism, YPwI's participation in quality sport and active recreation opportunities will remain unachievable. To commence the journey towards quality engagement, the sport system in Aotearoa NZ needs to become sincere, honest and explicit about impairment, and not fall into the trap of enlightened ableism as it uncovers and moves away from ableism.

Chapter 8 Where to from here - conclusions and implications

I don't think there's ever been a part of me that's wanted to stop swimming. So no one's ever had to tell me to keep going with it I don't get pushed, but I get supported.

Gaby

Introduction

I opened my thesis with two 'bookend' political positions on disability sport covering the last 85 years (1937-2022). As I noted in Chapter 1, the catalyst for my research was the apparent lack of provision of disability sport opportunities system-wide. Localised opportunities exist, primarily delivered by disability sport organisations, but these are not sufficient to describe the Aotearoa NZ sport system as inclusive. Some mainstream sports are providing YPwI with pathways to success, albeit through a segregated model, but the general dearth of provision in an ableist sport and active recreation environment is compounded by barriers and constraints that limit choice for YPwI. Opportunities do exist, as heard through the voices of Quinn, Andrew, Gaby and Ella, the YPwI who willingly shared their experiences in sport and active recreation. Through their individual case studies the importance of participation has been evident in their positive and meaningful experiences in sport and active recreation.

However, as reflected in disability sport research internationally, the inherent and dominant influence of ableism within sport and active recreation appears to be the primary culprit in the lack of opportunities for YPwI. While research has considered the participation of YPwI, little agency has been afforded to their voices, reflecting the continued discrimination and marginalisation they experience. In Aotearoa NZ in particular, very little research on disability sport has been undertaken, but the few studies that have considered YPwI, none have examined the factors that contribute to their participation from a sport system-wide perspective. By doing so, my research bridges this gap in knowledge equipping sport organisations with a better understanding of how to provide quality experiences for disabled young people.

As evidenced in Chapter 4, despite repeated attempts by Government to increase YPwls' participation in sport and active recreation, top-down policies alone have been ineffectual. Analysis of Government disability sport policy has highlighted how distinctly different this policy has been from non-disabled sport policy. While acknowledging the barriers and constraints to participation, these policies, aimed at improving the low participation rates of YPwl, have been historically under resourced and lacked sector leadership, leading to an expansion of dedicated community-led disability sport organisations. An absence of unification between policy and practice has achieved little more than enlightened ableism, where disability inclusion rhetoric and discourse diverge from the experiences of YPwl participating in sport and active recreation. With the aim of achieving an inclusive sport system, policies have been ineffective in addressing the ableism and disablism inherent within the opportunities delivered through sport organisations and their networks.

Fortunately for some YPwl, such as Quinn, Andrew, Gaby and Ella, their experiences in sport and active recreation have been predominantly positive. In Chapter 5, their narratives explain how they have been welcomed into sport and active recreation and how they have relished these opportunities. Their parents described how participation in sport and active recreation has brought positive outcomes, while acknowledging these experiences have often required more support than that needed for non-disabled siblings. These stories provide a valuable and enlightening contrast to the much-researched barriers and constraints to participation and highlight the importance of supportive parents who can fund opportunities and coaches'/leaders' understanding of impairment to enable these YPwl to be the beneficiaries of social transformation.

The emergence of enlightened ableism has not removed the discrimination of disablism even when premised on resituating disability sport and YPwl within sport organisations. Ableism continues to impose constraints on YPwl's participation, reflective of the landscape in which disability sport has evolved. Building on international research, my research on the Aotearoa NZ sport system reiterates the need to lower barriers to enable disabled people to participate fully in sport and active recreation. To achieve an anti-ableist sport system, I present a framework co-constructed from the issues and themes raised in my conversations with the four YPwl, their parent(s) and coaches/leaders. The framework captures factors that have worked; redefining, reframing and repositioning disabled people and disability sport order to achieve equitable opportunities for YPwl. This work needs to occur across multiple levels – individual, organisation and system – if sustainable change is to become a reality. Adjusting

the delivery of sport and active recreation from the micro level focus to the macro level will facilitate transformation, replacing a discriminatory and ableist system to one that endorses, values and supports the rights of disabled people in sport and active recreation.

The framework is presented as a means for improving disability sport provision in Aotearoa NZ where YPwls' experiences are not constrained by the binary disabled/non-disabled discourse inherent within inclusion models. By actualising the social relational model of disability in sport and active recreation contexts, my research indicates what is important for participation of YPwl at an individual, organisational and system level. Importantly, this framework is tentative and interpretive, constructed to be further refined and developed in different contexts, but the central ideas establish impairment as important while reflecting and acting on the disabling aspects of sport and active recreation provision, e.g., policy, access, knowledge, and practice. In addition, examples from the sport organisations in Aotearoa NZ that the YPwl who contributed to my research have been involved with have been presented as good practice and as indications of what to avoid. The Aotearoa NZ sport system needs to become sincere, honest and explicit about impairment as it uncovers, understands and moves away from ableism.

Contribution to academic knowledge and theory

Ableism, disablism, disability and impairment are all integral constructs which require critique and analysis. In presenting my research as illustrative of the principles of the social relational model of disability and centralising the voice of YPwl, it is differentiated from previous disability sport research. By utilising my experiences as a practitioner in disability sport, the voices of the YPwl, their parents and coaches/leaders, and the historical and document analysis, I have been able to present a pragmatic anti-ableist framework. The gaps in disability sport opportunities are also reflected in the dearth of academic knowledge and theory surrounding the nuances of disability sport participation, particularly by YPwl. Furthermore, the creation of an anti-ableist framework challenges the understanding of the norms of sport provision and the need for a responsive and flexible sport system. The challenges ahead for government agencies and sport organisations as well as future researchers is to enhance this anti-ableist framework with new knowledge to help create a sport system which reconstructs the embodiment of 'able' and provides equitable opportunities for YPwl.

Implications for Aotearoa NZ

My research shows that there is need for a concerted and collective effort to dismantle ableism and disablism and rebuild an anti-ableist sport system in Aotearoa NZ. However, to provide a single unified mechanism to achieve a system-wide disruption is outside the scope of this research. In October 2019, when I enrolled for my research, little did I know that within months, the world as I knew it would change. Covid-19 impacted on my research on how sport and active recreation is now delivered in Aotearoa NZ, and the opportunities Quinn, Andrew, Gaby and Ella experienced pre-Covid, which this research draws on, may not be indicative of this post-Covid era. While Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled Persons (established in July 2022) is expected to be a catalyst for social change, Covid-19 has had an immediate effect on the sport system. Many sport organisations are now reviewing how they can best deliver opportunities with an eye to a future where diversity and inclusion, flexibility and sustainability will become the norm.

Only time will tell how the Covid-19 disruption will last and how fundamental it will be in long-term sport system change. Similarly, how influential Whaikaha will be on the sport system will take time to assess. But in lieu of these initiating changes, the framework created from my research and summarised in Figure 37 will provide a guide for individuals, sport organisations and Sport NZ that can be implemented immediately to effect change within their spheres of influence.

My research, as presented in the framework, connects the theoretical learnings about disability, ableism and disablism with the experiences of YPwI. The juxtaposition of the two has highlighted the need for change in the sport system, which should begin with centralising the participants, and hearing their voices and expectations. For too long, disabled people, and in particular YPwI, have been silenced by a sport system designed to discriminate against them. As shown by the examples of the four YPwI participating, centralising YPwI will neither cause catastrophic failure of mainstream sport, nor deprive non-disabled participants from experiencing sport and active recreation. On the contrary, by creating a sport system that includes YPwI in parity with non-disabled young people, the entire system will improve and enhance the experiences of all participants.

| Level | Key considerations |
|---------------------|---|
| Individual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge ableism is about the attitudes of others. Discrimination and bias differentiates YPwI as disabled; misunderstanding impairment does have an effect. • Create equitable experiences that do not ignore the impact of impairments but appreciate the need for variations to the support and resources offered to non-disabled participants. • Understand and appreciate the motivation for YPwI's participation is because they love being active and engaged in sport and active recreation, being with their friends and creating new friends and friendships, just like non-disabled participants. • Encourage and support YPwI trying a sport and/or activity. Opportunities for YPwI need to include the full spectrum from social participation through to competition, as choice is fundamental to an inclusive sport system. |
| Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities that centralise ability not inability and acknowledge how impairment effects impact upon participation. • Adopt an approach, such as UDL, to the structure and delivery of sport and active recreation opportunities for all young people that will create a less ableist bias. • Develop and enact policies, rules and regulations that will not disablise YPwI but will assist and enhance their participation in sport and active recreation. • To effectively communicate commitment to and opportunities for YPwI, understand and use the lexicon and vernacular of disability and disability sport. • Use disabled role models to inspire aspirations and celebrate success, but recognise there is a fine balance between raising awareness and accidentally reinforcing ableist notions. • Give agency to the voice of YPwI. It empowers them, creates a sense of belonging and communicates the value of their participation. |
| System | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability, resource allocation and funding should not be the sole determinants of opportunities for YPwI to participate. • Disability sport opportunities and initiatives rely on an intertwined and interdependent network of organisations, which should be supported and enhanced. • To improve knowledge and understanding and add value across the sport system, organisations (including disability sport organisations) are encouraged to cooperate and collaborate. • Legislation, rules and regulations require amending and updating to enshrine the equitable rights of disabled people. • To support YPwI actively participating in sport and active recreation, implement a dual approach to system improvement; bottom-up and top-down. |

Figure 37 Anti-ableist framework summary

Fortunately for YPwl, many involved in delivering disability sport opportunities have already recognised that sticking strictly to 'business as usual' processes and procedures will not facilitate improved disability sport opportunities. The journey towards improving opportunities for YPwl has begun, and although there is still some way to go before the entire Aotearoa NZ sport system relinquishes the myriad of actions, beliefs and words that accumulate across such cultures, I am therefore quietly optimistic that disability sport in Aotearoa NZ is now positioned for parity, where YPwl will have the choice of which sport and/or activity to pursue.

Reflections and the politics of disability research

Reflecting as a non-disabled practitioner, I have been conscious of the politics of disability while undertaking this research on disability sport. While my experiences in disability sport have involved intersections between the personal and the professional, my most recent role working with dsport, its members and YPwl, has been a privilege, providing me with a decade of experience that I value and cherish. This opportunity to work locally with YPwl to improve their access to sport and active recreation opportunities and witness how participation influences their quality of life has been formative in my growth as a person and a sport management professional and was the catalyst for my research. Recently I was humbled when a dsport youth group parent described me as whānau. They described how my experience working with YPwl is my lived experience, different from theirs as a parent, different from their YPwl's, but still valid, as no two people's experiences are the same, we all come with different backgrounds, perspectives, and roles and responsibilities. This description revealed how they saw me as part of their disability community, giving legitimacy to my role as a sport manager, an advocate, an academic and as an active agent of change (DePauw, 1997).

As alluded to in Chapter 1, in order to undertake this research with integrity and credibility, I had to reflect upon my positioning within the research. I reconciled I was a researcher, insider and a partner but there was always an ongoing battle to balance me as a researcher and me as a practitioner. I acknowledge that my experiences influenced my research, but they also provided invaluable insight which enabled me to better understand how the YPwl could enhance and enrich my findings. Based on my previous experiences, giving agency to YPwl throughout this research journey was non-negotiable and has been conveyed through the voices of Quinn, Andrew, Gaby and Ella. In giving these YPwl a presence through case studies, I have expanded previous research predominantly focused on barriers and constraints.

Engaging these four YPwI as collaborators was sufficient for cross-case analysis and the construction of generalised findings (see Yin, 2018), based on their lived experiences in sport and active recreation. In centralising their voices a clear opportunity to challenge ableism in its nuances, and every-day and taken-for-granted ways was possible. Central to the social relational model of disability is the principle that having an impairment alone should not infer disability, as illustrated by these YPwIs' inclusion in sport and active recreation, and the normative assumptions that their development, motivations and abilities in sport and active recreation differ from non-disabled participants were debunked by giving agency to their voices.

The narratives of Quinn, Andrew, Gaby and Ella, corroborated and enriched by their parents and coaches/leaders conversations, show the need for approaches underpinned by the principles of accessibility, flexibility and understanding, connecting practice to policy. Critically, these YPwI have not been passive recipients of this research (see Fitzgerald & Kirk, 2008; Stone & Priestley, 1996); they have been collaborators. Aligning closely with the social relational model of disability, these principles assist in recognising the diversity and contextual nature of disability. Through their experiences and my critical analysis of the historical and current policy context, the disablism in the Aotearoa NZ sport system has been exposed. The sport system is now challenged to reconsider how disability and YPwI will be positioned within sport organisations in the future, and how the opportunities for them will be improved. No 'one-size-fits all' solution is possible, but through reframing and repositioning disability and YPwIs and collaboration and co-production of opportunities, provision within the entire sport system can be enhanced. It is now incumbent on all involved in the delivery of sport and active recreation to see this transformation achieved.

Future directions

In Aotearoa NZ disability sport research is an emerging field. As researchers and practitioners, we have a responsibility to ensure the voices of YPwI are heard, listened to and enacted as they are the recipients of disability sport policy and practice. Further research is needed on how sport system engagement and commitment can be achieved including what else contributes to enhancing the likelihood of Government initiatives being successful. This will be no simple task as no single solution can negate the complexity of personal decision-making, the provision of opportunities and sport participation. This need for research on the sport and

active recreation needs of disabled people to better understand why they are missing out on opportunities is not new, but there is now a need for research to go further than the identification of barriers and constraints. A focus on participation to investigate the rationale for and effects of enlightened ableism both in policy and provision of disability sport through a human rights lens is warranted.

Understanding how sport and recreation organisations' discourse and practice have evolved and are contoured by various, and sometimes nuanced forms of ableism might assist in understanding how a new, non-ableist sport system can be achieved. More research on YPwl, the relationship between family and whānau involvement in sport and active recreation and how this critical link influences their experiences and aspirations in sport and active recreation, and how their family and whānau structures facilitate or create barriers for YPwl is also required. In addition, to better understand YPwl's motivations and provide insight for sport organisations balancing these often-competing demands, further research exploring how YPwl position competition and the high-performance pathway vis-à-vis participation would be beneficial. Like the trends being observed in non-disabled sport away from traditional sports towards innovative versions of these sports and new sports and activities, the sports and activities the YPwl in my research are participating in indicate disability sport demand is similarly changing.

The application of my findings based on four YPwl may be seen by some as a limitation, particularly because they are representative of just one cohort of the disability sport community in Aotearoa NZ. While I acknowledge these YPwl have been fortunate in the support offered by their parents to pursue their sport and active recreation, I have remained mindful that not all disabled young people are so fortunate. Not reflective of this one cohort, my framework is applicable to any organisation delivering to YPwl who participate, and/or disabled young people interested in participating in sport and active recreation. However, the 1979 ACORD recommendation that further research "should be carried out as to the extent of participation by disabled people in sporting activities and administration and how this can be increased" (Pickering, 1985, p. 15), including determining why disabled people are still missing, out remains valid. To date, no detailed research has been undertaken in Aotearoa NZ and as presented in this research, determining the impact of policies is difficult without a base from which to measure progress.

Equally important is how ableism is internalised yet seen as empowering. How YPwI navigate their impairment while also wanting to be treated like everyone else provides important insights into disability and impairment effects, which warrant further investigation. Likewise, throughout this research I have referred to the young people as young people with impairments (YPwI), not disabled young people, yet these YPwI described themselves as disabled, indicative of how society views impairment, disability and identity as singular. However, within the context of the social relational model of disability and in acknowledgement of where and how participation in sport and active recreation occurs, these YPwI are not disabled, and they speak of being the same as others and wanting to be like everyone else. To delve further into the language around disability in sport and active recreation and how it has an enabling or disabling impact on YPwI would add valuable insight to the field. Furthermore, determining how different impairments are viewed and deemed acceptable or otherwise within the sport system merits further research as it could provide interesting insights into the level to which YPwI perceive ableist bias towards or disablism against different impairments.

Conclusion

I began my research journey with the intention of identifying the factors that contributed to the participation of YPwI in sport and active recreation. I believed that changing opportunities for YPwI was straightforward, and at the local level this is true, but at the macro system-wide level there is more complexity to be overcome. The dominance of ableism and the acceptance of disablism is systemic and requires multi-level attention. Understanding disability, impairment and impairment effects on participation requires greater education of policy makers, sport administrators and officials, coaches/leaders and parents of non-disabled participants. The desire from Government to effect social change through the NZDS and the Sport NZ *Disability Plan* has not been sufficient to effectively entice sport organisations to improve how sport and active recreation is delivered to YPwI. In concluding this research, I acknowledge that there is more action needed at all levels of the sport system to improve the opportunities for YPwI in sport and active recreation, but this framework provides a good starting point.

I will leave the final words to Ella, who advises YPwI to

be free just for yourself. Don't like um, don't worry about what other people think because that's going to limit you People should be able to accept us the way we are.

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<https://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/paralympics/300533430/new-zealands-corey-peters-wins-gold-at-2022-winter-paralympics-in-beijing>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/paralympics/300539840/winter-paralympics-kiwi-alpine-skier-adam-hall-wins-another-medal-with-slalom-bronze>

Appendices

Appendix 1 Nomination questionnaire



Welcome to "We're not on the sideline, we are in the team"

My name is Catriona McBean and I'm a PhD candidate at the University of Waikato and I work for dsport in Wellington.

The purpose of my research is to identify what positive factors influence young people with physical impairments' participation in sport and active recreation in New Zealand. What gets them involved and what keeps them involved.

The scope of this study means I only have the capacity for 4 or 5 young people with a physical impairment to participate. Not only do I want to hear directly from them about their experiences in sport and active recreation, I also want to hear from their family/whānau and coach/group leader who support them.

I have created this questionnaire to allow as many people as possible to share their ideas and provide me with a broad understanding of who is participating, the sport and active recreation they are involved in and some insights into what makes it easy or hard to participate.

From all these responses I will also identify the 4 or 5 young people and their support networks (family/whānau, coaches etc) to follow up with to gather deeper insights. My aim is to include young people who are of different ages and gender, have different impairments, come from different areas and participate in different sports and active recreation.

The questionnaire is in 2 sections. The first about the young people with a physical impairment. The second about their family/whānau.

Thank you for your interest and support in my research by taking the time to answer this questionnaire.

Catriona McBean
PhD Candidate
Te Huataki Wairoa - School of Health
University of Waikato
cm289@students.waikato.ac.nz

This research has received ethical approval from the University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Committee on 6 May 2020 (HREC(Health)2020#25). By completing this questionnaire, you agree to your data being used for this research. The information you provide in the questionnaire will remain strictly confidential.

Please indicate whether your young person has agreed to their nomination at this time.

- I confirm I have discussed this study with the Young Person in our household and they have agreed to be nominated for inclusion in this study.
- I confirm I have not discussed this study with the Young Person in our household. I will talk to them about being included once they have been selected. I agree the final decision regarding involvement in this study will be theirs.

SECTION ONE - About the Young Person

The following questions relate specifically to the young person with a physical impairment in your family/whānau.

If you have more than one young person in your family/whānau with a physical impairment, you are welcome to complete additional questionnaires. Please remember to answer each question in relation to the same young person, i.e., 1 questionnaire per young person.

Age of young person (years)

- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14

Gender of young person

- Female
- Male
- Other

What ethnicities does the young person identify with?

- European
- Māori
- Cook Islands Māori
- Fijian
- Samoan
- Tongan
- Other Pacific Peoples
- Chinese
- Indian
- Southeast Asian
- Other Asian
- North American
- Latin American
- Middle Eastern
- African
- Other

What is the primary physical Impairment of the person?

- ABS - Amniotic Band Syndrome
- Achondroplasia/Dwarfism
- Amputee
- CP - Cerebral Palsy
- Hearing Impaired (including Cochlear Implant)
- Hemiplegia (not CP related)
- Paraplegic
- Tetraplegic
- Vision Impaired
- Other

Does the young person have any specific communication requirements?

- Does not have any specific requirements
- AAC - Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- Braille
- Non-verbal, interpreter required
- Sign
- Talking books
- Other

Does the young person usually use a mobility device?

- Cane
- Crutches
- Prosthetic Limb
- Other
- Walking Frame
- Wheelchair – Electric
- Wheelchair - Manual

What organised sports or active recreation (club or group-based) do they regularly participate in?
Select any many as appropriate.

- Archery
- Athletics
- Badminton
- Basketball
- Canoe/Kayaking
- Cricket
- Cycling (club not recreationally)
- Dance (e.g., ballet, hip hop, jazz)
- Dedicated disability sport programme (e.g., Parafed)
- Equestrian sports (e.g., pony club)
- Football
- Futsal
- Girl Guides
- Golf
- Gymsports
- Martial Arts (e.g., Aikido, Ju Jitsu, Judo, Karate, Tae kwon do)
- Netball
- Rugby League
- Rugby Union
- Scouts
- Sea Scouts
- Snowsports
- Softball
- Surf Life Saving
- Swimming (not learn to swim lessons)
- Table Tennis
- Tennis
- Touch Rugby
- Triathlon
- Volleyball
- Waka Ama
- Other

What is their primary sport or active recreation?

How often do they participate in their primary sport or active recreation?

- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Less often

How long have they been involved in their primary sport or active recreation?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2-5 years
- 5+ years

What benefits have you seen from the young person's participation in sport and active recreation?
Select as many as appropriate.

- Improvement in their sport or active recreation skill
- Improvement in their general physical ability
- Made new friends
- Makes them happier
- They have a sense of belonging to a team or group
- They have an identity outside of their impairment
- Increase in confidence
- They now take an active interest in sport or active recreation outside of their team/group
- They have set themselves new sport or active recreation goals
- They have set themselves new goals outside of sport or active recreation
- Positive change in how they are treated by others
- Willingness to try new things
- Improvement in their general behaviour
- Improvement in school
- Health improvements
- Positive change in family/whānau dynamic
- Networking opportunities for family/whānau
- Opened up new opportunities for entire family/whānau
- Other

What are some of the challenges you have had to overcome to enable them to participate in sport or active recreation?

- Our own bias and perceptions about their ability
- Time/scheduling of other commitments, e.g., family/whānau, work, school
- Financial implications of participation, e.g., purchase of equipment
- Transport
- Lack of choice/opportunity of sport or active recreation where we live
- Perceptions of others about their ability and right to participate
- Supporting the young person to overcome their fears and uncertainties
- Finding a club/group who would openly welcome them
- Managing their medical condition to enable participation
- Continuity of participation in split-care arrangement
- Other

SECTION TWO - Family/whānau

The following questions are about your family/whānau and their involvement in sport and active recreation.

By answering these questions, you will help me ensure I select young people from different backgrounds and enable my research to be more representative of New Zealanders with physical impairments.

Where do you live?

- Large city
- Large town (e.g., Whanganui)
- Rural area
- Regional city (e.g., Tauranga, Nelson)
- Small town

Please describe your family who you usually live with?

- Married/Partner and 1 young person
- Married/Partner with 2 or more young people
- Single and 1 young person
- Single with 2 or more young people
- Separated/Split care arrangement and 1 young person
- Separated/Split care arrangement with 2 or more young people
- Multi-generational family/whānau and 1 young person
- Multi-generational family/whānau with 2 or more young people
- Other

Do any of your other family/whānau members also regularly participate in sport and active recreation?

- Yes
- No

Do you believe your family's involvement in sport and active recreation has influenced your young person's decision to participate in sport and active recreation?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Might or might not
- Probably not
- Definitely not

If you have a chance to give a sport or active recreation provider one piece of advice to help make their activity more accessible and engaging for young people with physical impairments, what would that advice be?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. To help me contact you about your possible involvement in my research, please provide your contact details. These details will not be shared with anyone outside of this research project.

| Name | Contact Phone Number | Email address |
|------|----------------------|---------------|
|------|----------------------|---------------|

Thank you for completing the "We're not on the sideline, we're in the team" questionnaire

If you indicated an interest in your young person being involved in this study, I will get in touch with you within a few weeks.

From the answers provided, I will invite 4-5 young people with physical impairments to participate in my research. Their involvement will include interviews with them, their family/whānau and representatives from their sport, team or group. I will also invite them to be part of a forum where we will discuss the ideas and themes from these conversations. Working together we'll see what is the same and what is different.

If your young person did not meet the criteria of participating outside of school or a dedicated disability sport programme, thank you for your responses these will provide useful information for my research.

Feel free to email me if you would like to know more about my research.

Catriona McBean
PhD Candidate
Te Huataki Wairoa - School of Health
University of Waikato

Appendix 2 Conversation questions

Young People with Impairment (YPwI)

After introduction about me and my research

Tell me about YOUR experiences.

Happy for parent to be with you, but I want to hear your voice, from your experiences. I'll be talking to your parents at another time to hear about their experiences.

| | Main | Follow Up | Prompt |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Introductory/warm-up questions | Can you tell me a bit about yourself? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you get up to over summer? • How has the start of school gone? |
| | Tell me about the sports you play? If you play a number of sports, I'd like to know about them too. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you play? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you play with? • What's your team name? • I don't know [city] very well, can you describe it for me? • Is it close to home? • What grade do you play in? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you get into [sport] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you choose [sport]? • What position do you play? • Do your brother/sister or friends also play? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your strengths? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you bring to the team/group that others don't? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the other players/team strengths? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do these compliment your strengths? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are you team/group goals for this year? | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|
| Core Questions | What is it that makes you want to go to <i>[sport]</i> each week/session? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me what you like? • What don't you like? • Do you think that's because of your impairment? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it about your team that means you like turning up each session? • Do they offer you assistance because of your impairment? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me more about what they do? • How does this differ from other experiences you have had? In life? In other sports? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the earlier question about your team, what about your coach, what is it about them that means you like turning up? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you give me some examples of what they do? • Do they do that just for you or does the entire team get that? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about your parents/sibling's whanau ...what is it that they do to make you/help you get to <i>[sport]</i>? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think this is how they treat everyone or is this treatment just for you? |
| | What was first sport you played? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? • What did they do? • Positive/negative? • Tell me more about those positive things? |
| | If you think back to your first experiences in <i>[sport]</i> does anything or anyone stand out? | | |
| | Do you think your <i>[sport]</i> club/team made any special efforts/adjustments to help you join in? e.g., Do you play with different rules? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you say they were? • Who do you think led this: you, your parents or <i>[sport]</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did that make you feel? • Do you think that was key to you becoming involved in <i>[sport]</i>? • Do they still make those efforts/adjustments? Why? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think <i>[sport]</i> made/makes including people disability a priority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes/No • Why? |

| | | | |
|----------------|--|---|---|
| | Do you see many other young people with impairments in your <i>[sport]</i> ? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about other sports? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you say that? • Have you talked to them and asked them what got them involved? • What about things that stop them from getting involved? • Why/How do you think their experiences are different to yours? |
| | If you could change anything in your <i>[sport]</i> today, what would it be? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? • What would it mean to you if changed? • How would it make your experience better? • How would it make <i>[sport]</i> better for other YPwI? |
| Closing | Do you have any suggestions for people or organisations who want to provide opportunities for young people with impairments? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe for me your ideal <i>[sport]</i> experience? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? |

I will use a pseudonym in my research. Can you help me decide on what we can do – numbers, initials, names etc.

Do you want to think about one for you and get back to me?

Parents

| | Main | Follow Up | Prompt |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Introductory/warm-up questions | Can you tell me a bit about your family and [YPwI] ? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does an interest in sport run in your family? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do or did you play sport? Do any of your other children play sport? If yes, what sport. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How old was [YPwI] when they expressed an interest in sport? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was this because you actively encouraged it What about other family members, were they supportive? Did [YPwI] indicate why they chose that sport? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were your thoughts when they asked to play sport? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greatest fears Expectations Did you foresee any issues (+ & -) impacting on [YPwI's] participation? |
| Core Questions | How did you see your role assisting/organising this request to play sport/active recreation? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you do to help [YPwI] in their sport? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive them to training/competitions? Coach/manage, fundraise, sit on committee? Do you do the same for your other children? Do you do anything special for [YPwI] because of their impairment? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did you need to provide any directions or instructions to the coach/leader on how [YPwI] could be involved in the sport? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What directions did you provide? Did you pursue extra coaching/training for [YPwI]? If yes, why Have you had to take similar actions for any of your other children? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you needed to continue to work with the coach/leader to ensure [YPwI's] participation ...as a result of their impairment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What actions have been taken and why |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you give me an example of when [YPwI] surprised you in their sport? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why were you surprised? What was your expectation? |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Closing | What has [YPwI] shared with you about their sport experiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you felt these are + or -? • How have you responded to these comments? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were they the same types of comments as your other children have expressed? • How have you responded to these, particularly the + comments? • Have these been passed onto the coach/leader? • What was the outcome/response to these? • What changes have you see in [YPwI] through their involvement in sport/active recreation? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you compare [YPwI's] and your experiences in sport vs disability sport? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key differences, if any? |
| | Can you give me an example of your experiences with parents of able-bodied teammates about [YPwI's] involvement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's their take/perception of [YPwI's] participation? • Do they discuss their observations with you? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have they mentioned any positive outcomes for their children? • Have they made any suggestions to improve opportunities for YPwI? |
| | Thinking about the structure of sport, what recommendations would you make to improve YPwI's involvement in sport/active recreation? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should all kids be treated/considered equal? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any examples from [YPwI] sport of this occurring? • Do you think this was organic or intentional/conscious decision |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think the base assumption of children's sport of age, not stage/skill/competency is applicable to all sports? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think changing structures such as age/gender grades would be beneficial? • How would this impact upon improving participation of YPwI? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From [YPwI] sports and your experience, do you think some sports are easier to achieve inclusion in than others? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, which ones? • Why | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a parent's perspective, what would be the easiest thing for a sport to do to enhance YPwI experiences? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What outcomes do you think you would see from this change? • Why do you think sport doesn't already do this? | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any examples/experiences from other sectors which you'd recommend for sport? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why and what outcome was achieved | |

Coach/Leader

| | Main | Follow Up | Prompt |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Introductory/warm-up questions | Can you tell me a bit about yourself | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you be involved in <i>[sport]</i>? • How long have you been coaching/leading? • How long have you been coaching/leading this level/grade? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you get into <i>[sport]</i> coaching/leading | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you choose <i>[sport]</i> coaching/leading? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any coaching/leading qualifications? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did you get them? • Why did you feel it necessary to become qualified? • Have you had any training in Para or disability sport? |
| | Tell me about your coaching/leading style | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your strengths? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you bring to the team/group that others don't? • What do you see as your role is as a coach/leader? • Have you coached/lead a disabled person before? |
| Core Questions | How did you see your role assisting/organising sport/active recreation? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you do to help <i>[the players/young people]</i> to achieve their <i>[sport]</i> goals? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical & skill development • Personal development • Anything else? |
| | Do you think <i>[sport]</i> NSO made/makes including people disability a priority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes/No | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? • Can you provide me examples of how this priority is explained/promoted to you, athletes, parents etc. <p>[If you have examples, you can send me that would be excellent]</p> |
| | Do you think your <i>[sport]</i> club/team/group made any special efforts/adjustments to help <i>[YPw]</i> join in? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you say they were? • Who do you think led this you. the <i>[YPw]</i>, their parents or <i>[sport]</i>? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you accommodate that as a coach/leader? • What impact did it have on the team/group? • How did the other players/young people respond? • Do you think that was key to <i>[YPw]</i> becoming involved in <i>[sport]</i>? • Do you still make those efforts/adjustments? Why? |

| | | | |
|----------------|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you give me an example of when [YPwI] surprised you in their sport? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why were you surprised? • What was your expectation? |
| | <p>What has [YPwI] shared with you about their [sport] experiences</p> <p>What have other players/young people shared about their experiences with a teammate who is YPwI?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you felt these are + or -? • How have you responded to these comments? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were they the same types of comments as your other players/young people have expressed? • How have you responded to these, particularly the + comments? • What was the outcome/response to these? • What changes have you see in [YPwI] through their involvement in [sport]? • Are these the same types of changes you see in other players/young people |
| | Can you give me an example of your experiences with parents of able-bodied teammates about [YPwI's] involvement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they discuss their observations with you? • What's their take/perception of [YPwI's] participation? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have they mentioned any positive outcomes for their children? • Have they made any suggestions to improve opportunities for YPwI? |
| Closing | Thinking about the structure of sport, what recommendations would you make to improve YPwI's involvement in sport/active recreation? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should all players/young people be treated/considered equal? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any examples from [YPwI] sport of this occurring? • Do you think this was organic or intentional/conscious decision |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think the base assumption of children's sport of age, not stage/skill/competency is applicable to all sports? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think changing structures such as age/gender grades would be beneficial? • How would this impact upon improving participation of YPwI? |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From [YPwI] sports and your experience, do you think some sports are easier to achieve inclusion in than others? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, which ones? • Why |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a coaches/leader's perspective, what would be the easiest thing for a sport to do to enhance YPwI experiences? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What outcomes do you think you would see from this change? • Why do you think sport doesn't already do this? |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you have any examples/experiences from other sectors which you'd recommend for sport? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why and what outcome was achieved |
|--|--|--|---|

Appendix 3 Example of in vivo coding

| Category 1 | Category 2 | Coding | Y – YPwl, P – Parent, C – Coach |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|
| YPwl | Friends | Y - friends P - fun and enjoyment | P - things to do with friends P - enjoyment C - as friends they are close P - happiest |
| | Commitment & dedication | P - it's your ability your 100 percent P - loves giving everything a go Y - I forget I have a disability | P - YPwl self-awareness, can do can't do Y - love being active P - disability no excuse C - YPwl not making excuses |
| | Support from family | Y - what parents should do to help P - sports played by parents and siblings | P - take to as many things as I could P - we support his interests |
| Coaching | Education & disability understanding | C - coaching certification C - personal disability experience C - I never really thought about accessibility | P - coaches own disability C - never associated with disabled people |
| | Adjustments | Y - coaching adjustments C - game strategy | P - coach and leader adapt programme C - everybody has a job to do C - coaching and training adjustments C - help each of your teammates |
| Clubs and NSOs | Acceptance | P - acceptance in sport Y - changes clubs can make to help disabled athletes fit in | P - don't put up extra barriers C - positive inclusive environment P - people are a bit naive sometimes |
| | Role models & role modelling | P - being inspired by other disabled athletes P - paving the way for others C - a little bit to do the marketing | C - role models |



Participant Information and Consent Form

Who am I

My name is Catriona McBean and I'm a PhD student at the University of Waikato. I also work in disability sport at dsport in Wellington and I'm on the board of Paralympics New Zealand.



What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of my study is to work out what are the successful and positive things that help disabled young people participate in sport and active recreation. I am hoping this information will help increase opportunities for young people with physical impairments so they too can participate in sport and active recreation in the future.

Q&As

I'm guessing you probably have some questions about what this means for you, so I have covered a few questions and answers off below to help you decide if you want to be involved.

What will I be asked?

- You will be asked about your experiences in sport and active recreation.
- I want to hear all about your experiences directly from you.
- You don't need to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering.
- At another time, I will also be talking with your parent/caregiver and coach/group leader to hear their experiences.

How long will it take?

- I know you may have a little or a lot to tell me. It doesn't matter how long it takes.
- But I think it would be good if we could start with 30 minutes together so I can share with you what I'm doing and then you can tell me your stories. If we take longer, that's OK.

Do I need to give my personal information to me?

- No, not from you. I gathered this information from your parent/caregiver when you were nominated.

Will I have to share private information?

- When we talk, I don't need to know anything you are uncomfortable sharing with me. If you don't want to answer a question, that's OK.

Will my taking part be private?

- Yes, we call this confidential information. You won't be named in my study so no one will know the information is from you.
- To help me when I write up my study, I'll ask you to select a name I can use rather than your real name. This is called a pseudonym and it means we protect your identity. Only you and I will know this is you.
- Because I have to keep your information private, I will do all I can to make this happen, like keeping your files on my computer protected from other people.

Can I change my mind?

- Yes, you can change your mind at any time.
- You don't have to provide any reason for changing your mind and I won't ask you to explain why.
- You just need to get your parent/caregiver/whānau to email me asking to be removed from the study.

What if I'm not happy with the interview?

If you're not happy with how our interview went, please let your parent/caregiver/whānau know. They should contact me first or my supervisor Associate Professor Kirsten Petrie, kpetrie@waikato.ac.nz.

If I have more questions or want to tell me more information, how can I contact you?

You can get your parent/caregiver/whānau to contact me.

Catriona McBean, PhD candidate in Te Huataki Waiora - School of Health cm289@students.waikato.ac.nz.

What will happen to the study?

Like you at school, I will have to hand in my study to be marked. I think it will take me another 1.5 years to finish my study so it will be some time before I do this. Once I finish, I may be using the study to teach other people about disability sport and how to make it better for the future.

- The purpose and details of the research have been explained to me. I understand that all procedures have been approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee. Yes No
- I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form. Yes No
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation. Yes No
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part. Yes No
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing. Yes No
- If I do withdraw, I agree to advise the researcher in writing (e.g., email). Yes No
- I understand that all the information I have provided and approved prior to my withdrawal may be included as part of this research. Yes No
- I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence. Yes No
- I agree to participate in this project. Yes No

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|
| Your name | _____ | Parent/Caregiver's name | _____ |
| Your signature | _____ | Parent/Caregiver's signature | _____ |
| Date | _____ | Date | _____ |
| Signature of researcher | _____ | | |