



SURF LIFE SAVING®
NEW ZEALAND

Date: 12 March 2023

To: Club Chairpersons and SLSNZ Membership

From: Lewis McClintock – National Sport Manager

Subject: 'Nationals' Competition Venue Consultation – Outcomes and Decisions

Consultation Level: RED

Tēnā koutou,

Firstly thank you to all the clubs that participated in the two stage process regarding the TSB New Zealand Surf Lifesaving Championships ('National's') Competition Venues Consultation. Your views and comments have contributed to and allowed us to better understand the collective voice of our movement when it comes to one of our pinnacle national events.

Background

In October 2022, SLSNZ presented a two-stage consultation to all club chairs, proposing the TSB New Zealand Surf Lifesaving Championships ('National's') change from an annual rotation between four locations to being allocated to one location on a multi-year basis before changing to another location. Following Stage I feedback, clubs were then asked to identify their support or not for a more refined proposal, that being to host TSB Nationals at Gisborne in 2024, 2025 & 2026.

The full stage I proposal can be read here: www.surflifesaving.org.nz/media/996789/national-venue-consultation-paper-2022-final.pdf

The full stage II proposal can be read here: www.surflifesaving.org.nz/media/997249/national-venue-consultation-paper-stage-2-final.pdf

Stage II Results

As per **Appendix A**, of the 74 clubs surveyed, 47 (64%) provided a response. 33 clubs (70%) did NOT support the proposal, while 12 clubs (26%) supported the proposal and 2 clubs (4%) abstained.

Feedback from both rounds of consultation was clear:

- Clubs and the membership understood the need for us to streamline delivery, reduce the complexity and logistical challenges of delivering our pinnacle event.
- Clubs and the membership supported the formation of a Nationals Volunteer Event Working Group to focus on further engaging with the membership to develop the concept of what a "great experience" means from our pinnacle event.
- The majority of clubs **DO NOT SUPPORT** the hosting of 'Nationals' at Gisborne for 3 consecutive years (2024, 2025 & 2026). Clubs and membership preferred the continuation of the 'Nationals' event rotation schedule that was entered into in 2018.

Next Steps

Based on club feedback SLSNZ will not pursue holding 'Nationals' at a single venue for multiple years. Our aspiration is still based around delivering a great experience for Athletes, Coaches, Officials, Event Volunteers and our Key Partners. We believe we can still do this by leveraging off the event rotation

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below and introducing additional key supporting elements. It is therefore SLSNZ's intention to hold 'Nationals' at the following locations and dates:

- **2024 – Mount Maunganui**, March 7– 10 (preferred date) or March 13 – 17 (Note: Due to Nationals not falling under the TCC Legacy Event Category for the event application process, we will only be in a position to confirm the final 2024 date in mid-April 2023).
- **2025 – Midway**, March 6 - 9
- **2026 – Ohope**, March 5 - 8
- **2027 – New Brighton**, March 11 - 14

Please note: The process to confirm these locations and dates this far in advance requires significant planning and engagement with key stakeholders, in particular councils and clubs and so cannot be 100% guaranteed. However initial discussions have been able to provide a degree of certainty. The last decade has shown all of our events and potential venues are subject to instability and uncertainty – COVID-19, earthquakes, extreme weather, road conditions/access, water quality, beach debris, accommodation availability etc.

Key Supporting Elements

It's imperative that collectively we work towards creating a 'great experience' the process to achieving this will include the following key supporting elements:

1. A '**Nationals Event Working Group**' will be appointed via an open expression of interest process that will contain three appointed positions (Nationals Event Manager, Nationals Event Referee and Nationals Event Safety Officer) plus six volunteer Subject Matter Expert (SME) positions.
2. A clearly defined **Scope** and **Terms of Reference** will also accompany the Nationals Event Working Group, this will be targeted at delivering the step change required to achieve a 'great experience' i.e. this group needs to have the tools and capacity to make change.
3. The Nationals Event Working Group will be **appointed for a period of 3 years**, this is to support the implementation of change, monitor progress and provide a direct feedback link into the membership.

This proposal above keeps within the 'Nationals' event rotation plan that was presented and endorsed back in May 2018. It also allows a vehicle for change and direct feedback, additionally some of the possible changes may open the door for us to accommodate other venues from 2028 onwards.

Once again thank you for the feedback we hope this memo will give our membership some certainty and clarity moving forward and allow clubs to plan and build towards the future.

Ngā mihi nui,



Lewis McClintock

National Sport Manager

Surf Life Saving New Zealand

Lewis.mcclintock@surflifesaving.org.nz

APPENDIX A - Stage II Consultation - Club Responses

Red indicates the club that did not attend Nationals in 2019 or 2020

Club	No Response	Abstain	Support	Do not support
Bayleys Beach	1			
Bethells Beach			1	
Brighton	1			
Buller	1			
East End				1
Far North	1			
Fitzroy	1			
Foxton	1			
Hot Water Beach	1			
Kaka Point				1
Karekare	1			
Kariaotahi	1			
Kotoku	1			
Levin-Waitarere	1			
Lyll Bay				1
Mairangi Bay				1
Maketu		1		
Mangawhai Heads	1			
Maranui				1
Midway			1	
Mount Maunganui				1
Muriwai			1	
Nelson	1			
New Brighton				1
New Plymouth Old Boys			1	
Ngati Porou			1	
North Beach				1
Ocean Beach Kiwi	1			
Omaha Beach				1
Omanu	1			
Onemana				1
Opotiki				1
Opunake	1			
Oreti				1
Orewa	1			
Otaki	1			
Pacific			1	
Paekakariki				1
Palmerston North				1
Papamoa				1
Pauanui	1			
Piha				1
Pukehina				1
Raglan				1
Rarangi	1			
Red Beach				1
Riversdale				1
Ruakaka				1

South Brighton	1			
Spencer Park				1
St Clair			1	
St Kilda				1
Sumner				1
Sunset Beach	1			
Tairua	1			
Taylor's Mistake				1
Titahi Bay	1			
Tolaga Bay	1			
United North Piha				1
Waihi Beach				1
Waikanae	1			
Waikuku Beach	1			
Waimairi				1
Waimarama			1	
Wainui			1	
Waipu Cove			1	
Wanganui				1
Warrington				1
Westshore			1	
Whakatane				1
Whangamata				1
Whangarei Heads		1		
Whiritoa			1	
Worser Bay				1
All Clubs (74)	27 (36%)	2 (3%)	12 (16%)	33 (45%)
Clubs that responded (47)		2 (4%)	16 (26%)	33 (70%)

APPENDIX B - Stage II Consultation - Club Comments

Club	Comment
Lyall Bay	We previously requested an updated accommodation capacity assessment for future venues. Recent emergency housing policies now make accommodation impossible to book for these events. Can you send through the updated assessment please? We have had members unable to access accommodation at some venues and declined to attend. Some clubs know the venue before the official announcement and all that is left is half a tent site with the government having booked half the motels. That is part of the experience How many real beds are available is Gisborne?
Mount Maunganui	As you can see our club does not support the proposed idea for the TSB Nationals to be held in Gisborne for the 3 years outlined above. The Mount club would like to see the National event rotate annually as it has done previously. We would like to see Ohope Beach (Whakatane Surf Club) be given the opportunity to hold the Nationals as they were supposed to before Covid intervened. It is important that Nationals rotates annually so that the competitors get to experience different beaches and conditions and get to experience travel to and compete in a variety of regions. By moving the nationals on an annual basis, you also spread the economic impact of circa 1500 competitors plus coaches, managers, officials and family and friends coming to a region for nearly a week. Mount Maunganui Lifeguard Service feel that the 'experience' for the competitors and the membership is more down to the highly skilled officials, development of coaches and participation rather than investing in a specific location. We feel that SLSNZ should put its efforts into the people that run this and other events so that it will be a quality experience for all regardless of the location.
Papamoa	In the view of PSLSC's Surf Sports Committee the Stage 2 proposal does not provide any further information on the benefits of the proposal but dismisses that a significant group (the largest) of clubs that did respond did not agree with it. It correctly states that there was a lack of detail given around tangible outcomes for clubs and membership from the proposal and some scepticism that "a great experience" could be delivered. Based on this it would make more sense to form the volunteer working group for Nationals prior to any decision being made to investigate what makes "a great experience" and act on that feedback. Especially as the proposal identifies that SLSNZ is struggling to engage the membership and the Club satisfaction survey highlighted a loss in confidence from the membership on the SLSNZ's direction of surf sports. Given that the Oceans festival just finished enjoys the benefits of being held in the same venue year on year and SLSNZ would presumably have had the ability to enact its multiyear hosting model - there is no evidence that the athletes, supporters or volunteers receive a greater experience because of this. The proposal possibly reduces complexity for SLSNZ, but does not automatically provide the benefits to members identified: Given the ever-changing nature of surf conditions what worked for one year with regards to Arenas, Water Safety and Scheduling of events is unlikely to be the same the next. Given the nature of the event staffed in the main by volunteers; turnover of officials, volunteers, staff and participants would likely mean any cohesion or continuity is limited.
St Kilda	St Kilda surf lifesaving club wants to reiterate its stance on the current national's venue proposal. The club is against the proposed plan for the following reasons: The financial burden that the proposal would place on the club is too great, even when considering subsidies for south island clubs. This is exemplified by the Otago regions attendance at Oceans, the cost and logistics associated with attending the event, even where the location is known well in advance, are too great for all but the most keen or affluent club members even when pooling resources as a region. Part of the "national's experience" is visiting a variety of beaches in different areas of the country, the proposal hinders this, reducing the appeal of travel and limiting the experience. Surf sport already suffers from lagging competitor numbers, by making nationals difficult to travel to (both cost and logistically) multiple years

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	in a row and by limiting the "uniqueness" of the experience year on year, it is St Kilda's belief that the present proposal will only reinforce the current trends. If Surf Lifesaving NZ wish to improve the nationals experience and combat the negative trend in competitor numbers, investments should be made in personnel, planning and infrastructure within the existing roundabout model.
Waimairi	We are still comfortable for a 2 year continuation, as long as there is still a South Island option every 5-6 years
Whakatane	While Whakatane supported the concept of multi years at one beach we do not support the process that has Midway Beach as the designated beach. No consultation has occurred with the other viable options and they have not been given the chance to be considered.
Whangamata	Up until recently, our answer may have been different, however with weather patterns as they are, communities struggling, and roading infrastructure under intense pressure to regions such as Gisborne, we feel a long-term approach to any region may not currently be an astute decision or in the best interest for Nationals. If we happen (worst-case scenario) to repeat this summer's events, Nationals would once again be likely to be cancelled which would, in turn, be hugely detrimental to the retention of athletes/lifeguards. Our thoughts would be in the future to have 2 years max at one place, however, next year take a cautiously optimistic approach, hosting it for a single year, preferably at a venue most likely to stand up to unknown weather patterns. We accept Christchurch max every 4 years, however, would be happy to extend this further, given the lower percentage of athletes participating at Southern Regionals. We also feel some consideration should be given as to whether our national events should be brought forward.