

Active Advocacy - talking up the value of recreation

We need to talk about recreation. We value how we provide recreation opportunities – but talking about the many benefits of participation in recreation is crucial to our success.

Advocacy links our work into government policy, helps to provide a profile for the industry, and offers insight into the inherent value of recreation and the potential return on investment.

Advocacy: influencing people's perspectives on recreation

Advocacy is a key role of Recreation Aotearoa as they [champion quality recreation for the benefit of NZ](#). Good advocacy promotes the benefits of recreation and provides a voice for those who may not have the opportunity or resources to self-advocate. Recreation providers at all levels can be great advocates for people's opportunities to participate in quality recreation experiences – helping to ensure equity of access and distribution of resources.

Recreation Aotearoa regularly submits on national, regional and local issues. Find out more about advocacy [here](#).

Recreation is embedded in legislation and policy

The rights to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport are reflected in international human rights including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).



Figure 1 Image: Department of Conservation

Policy guides provision and funding at both a national and local level. The recreation sector is guided by NZ legislation including the Sport and Recreation NZ Act (2002) and Local Government Act (2002).

Local Authorities also use local bylaws, District Plans and other policy tools to ensure provision for recreation places, spaces and experiences.

[Insights Report 3: The Living Standards Framework](#) explored where recreation adds value to the Wellbeing Indicators that measure progress against [The Wellbeing Framework](#).

The benefits of recreation

Health and Wellbeing including improved mental and physical health and quality of life

Citizenship and participation reflected in social connectedness, cultural identity and active citizenship

Environment including conservation and management of parks and open spaces, lakes and waterways, and connection with the physical environment.

The following resources outline the benefits of recreation and sport. The Canadian 'benefits hub' allows users to filter benefits according to a range of topic areas.

- [Canadian Benefits Hub](#), allows filtering of benefits
- The [Complete Communities Toolbox](#) provides a range of benefits of parks and recreation facilities and programmes
- [Play England](#) provides some great information about the benefits of play
- [Sport NZ's Value of Sport and Recreation Series](#) includes current economic value data.

Recent advocacy case studies

Submission on the Review of the Walking Access Act (2008)

Since the Act was introduced in 2008 there were significant changes in activities, demographics, tourist numbers, environmental awareness and personal knowledge. These needed to be reflected in the review process.

Key Messages

- More inclusive language in the Act would reflect the many types of physical activity which occur on public trails and walkways including walking, jogging, tramping, mountain-biking, hunting & fishing
- Broaden the extent of the Commission's remit to include all types of public land
- [Policy clarification](#) from Worksafe NZ regarding its position on access across public land to reassure landowners.

Submission on Draft Westland Tai Poutini National Park Management Plan - Department of Conservation

These 10-year plans provide management objectives for national parks.



Figure 2 Image doc.govt.nz

Key messages

- A lack of ambition and specifics regarding recreational outcomes in the [Draft Plan](#), including the importance of Outdoor Education
- The Plan's focus on the flow of international tourists in and around the National Park, specifically the suggested increase in allowed aircraft landings
- Plan should include the National Parks Act and in particular Section 2 "Parks to be maintained in natural state, and public to have right of entry".

Submission on the Draft Government Tourism Strategy

The Strategy proposes a more deliberate and active role for government in tourism, making sure that growth is productive, sustainable and inclusive, noting that tourism is important and the government has a vital role, particularly regarding sustainability. Read the completed [Strategy](#).

Key messages

- Focus on the management of tourism on Public Conservation Land
- Provision of Tourism infrastructure and support for Local Authorities with low rating bases that are most affected by the pressures of tourism
- Support for the 5 Tourism outcomes for Government
- Priorities should be the Conservation levy, DOC's heritage and visitor strategy, the investment framework and DOC's approach to pricing.

Making Submissions

Each advocacy process can require a different approach. Use the following suggestions for getting your voice heard.

- Submissions to [Parliament](#)
- Submissions to [Select Committee](#)
- Feedback on a [bill before Parliament](#)
- Contacting [your MP](#)
- [Local Government processes](#)
- [Plan changes](#)

Principles to practice

Five steps to good advocacy

Awareness	Keep up to date with relevant issues
Communication	Listen to your networks - and keep them informed on issues of concern
Evidence	Access peer reviewed evidence to support your case
Targeted message	Match your message to the audience in terms of style and content
Provide a voice	Advocate for those who are less heard, or invisible in the democratic process (where appropriate)