

Orienteering in New Zealand

Invitation to participate in setting our Strategic Direction – 2026-2030

Update From Club Forum

This document has been updated from the original document dated 05/09/2025, and incorporates feedback from the Club Forum held in October.

ONZ would value more feedback and input to this, and encourage clubs to discuss this and submit feedback as per process outlined below.

Those who attended the club forum are encouraged to lead discussions with orienteers, friends, and club mates.

Scope

The **scope of the plan** is to set out the **direction for the sport of orienteering** overall, and for **ONZ**. The plan will focus on areas the national body will be able to prioritise and focus on in the coming years, using the resources, capabilities, and influence available to it. Some of the areas identified may have implications for clubs, so we encourage as much feedback and debate as possible around this, to ensure that what goes in the plan, reflects the interests of the wider orienteering community and sport as a whole.

How can feedback be given?

Written feedback

We invite written feedback which can be sent by email to gm@orienteering.org.nz

We would specifically like feedback on the following components:

- Future Perfect – what is your aspiration and vision for the sport in 2030?
- Culture and values – do these reflect the culture of orienteering which is healthy for the sport going forwards?
- Strategic Framework – do the strategic pillars and high level objectives under each make sense?

In each of the above areas, please feedback:

- 1) What you agree with,
- 2) What you disagree with,
- 3) What you believe is missing

Please note

- All feedback is important and will be discussed. As mentioned in the Club Forum, not everyone's ideas may be incorporated, as some views are diverse and/or at a granular level that could be better captured within the annual planning process in due course. The

Strategic Plan must capture the **most important areas of priority** – not every area of possibility.

- This is a draft document designed to prompt feedback. We hope and expect changes to be made to this as a result of feedback.
- The strategic plan is intentionally high level, and the annual business plan which falls out of the strategic plan, identifies more of the “how”. Over the years specific initiatives and activities supporting each strategic objective will shift and change as things progress.
- You will recognise some parts of the plan as similar to the current one, including the Vision, and ONZ responsibilities sections – whilst we are open to feedback on these, our current thinking is these are still relevant as written.
- We also include a PESTLE and SWOT analysis in the appendices – people are welcome to add to or comment on these, but they are tools used to help inform the plan, but not be literally in the final plan we come up with.

OUR VISION

To enrich lives through the fun, adventure, challenge, achievement, and community that orienteering provides

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORIENTEERING NEW ZEALAND

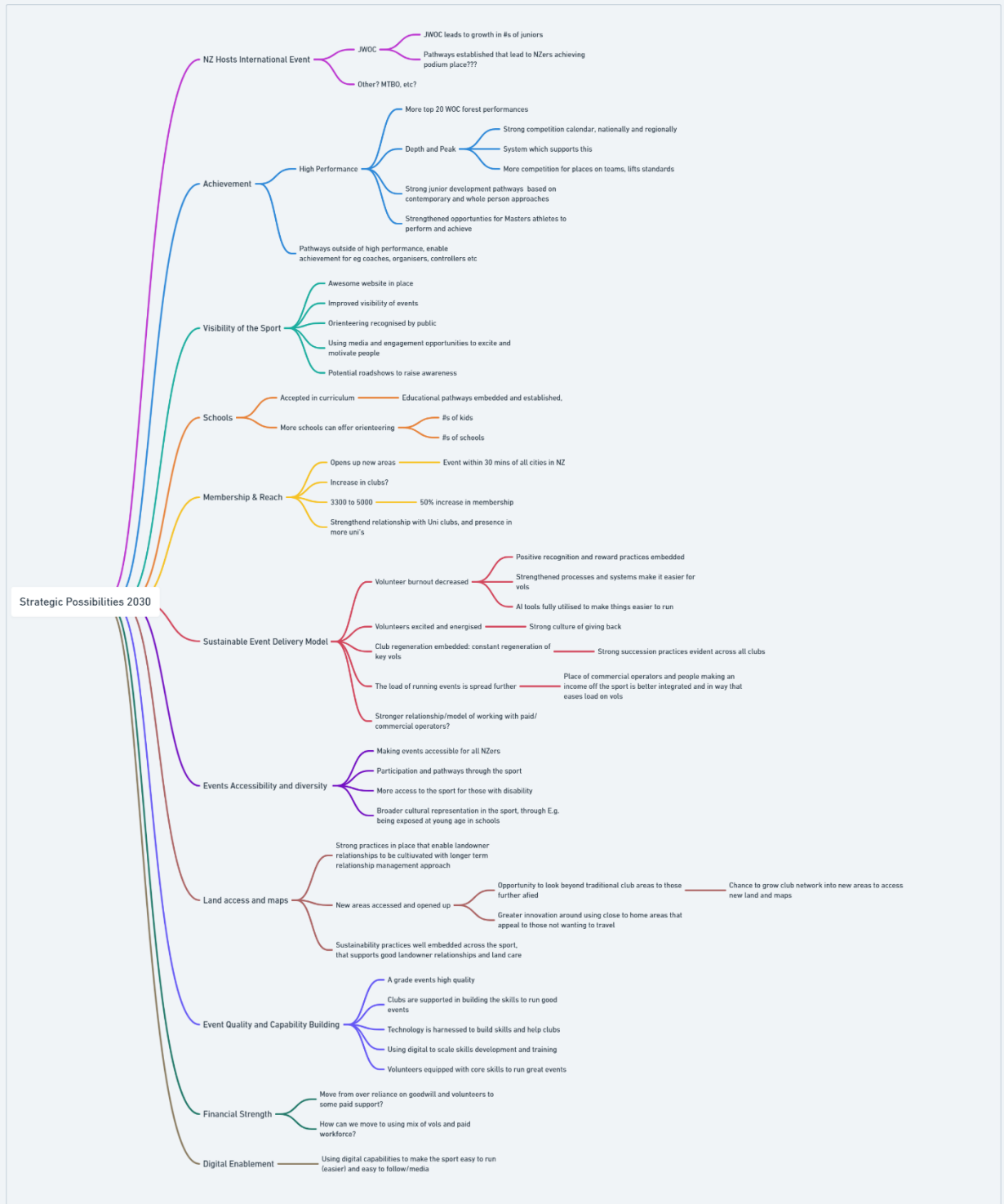
Our **mission** is to see orienteering enjoyed as a “sport for life” by New Zealanders of all ages and abilities, through enabling clubs to thrive, events to flourish, and where people can find their own sense of adventure, aspiration, community, and fun

We do this by:

- Promoting the sport at a national level which strengthens the brand of orienteering in New Zealand
- Building club capability through the provision of resources, knowledge, training, and advice
- Setting, promoting, and embedding the rules and quality standards which underpin the sport and form the foundation for fair and high quality orienteering events and competition
- Being advocates for the sport in NZ, ensuring orienteering’s interests are represented with external bodies and groups
- Developing systems and processes that make it easy for people to manage, administer, and participate in orienteering
- Coordinating the allocation and promotion of major events in the national Calendar, and international events happening on New Zealand soil
- Overseeing an effective High Performance programme that creates the conditions where athletes can be their best, and where age appropriate development opportunities are available to athletes.
- Selecting, coaching, managing and supporting New Zealand teams on the world stage
- Facilitating development pathways and training resources which enable athlete performance at Junior, Elite, and Age Grade levels, and which build coach capability, and technical expertise
- Forging relationships and connections with key stakeholders which strengthen orienteering in New Zealand
- Leading and facilitating progress with clubs on strategic issues of national importance
- Being socially responsible, and promoting good practices important for our communities, including environmental sustainability, inclusiveness, a greater awareness of Kaupapa Maori principles and relationship with Iwi
- Demonstrate responsibility in upholding the whenua and respect for the lands we orienteer on, and practices to strengthen relationship with landowners
- Championing the safety and wellbeing of participants involved at all levels of the sport
- Providing effective governance based on listening to and representing member interests, staying abreast of trends and issues impacting the sport, and through good leadership, decision making, and financial management.

FUTURE PERFECT – WHAT ARE OUR ASPIRATIONS FOR THE SPORT BY 2030?

In 2030, orienteering in NZ is thriving—what does the sport look like, what are our aspirations and “Future Perfect”?





OUR MISSION

Our **mission** is to see orienteering enjoyed as a “sport for life” by New Zealanders of all ages and abilities, through enabling clubs to thrive, events to flourish, athletes to perform, and where people can find their own sense of adventure, aspiration, community, and fun

OUR VALUES

Kotahitanga/Community, Manaakitanga/Encouragement, Hauora/Wellbeing, Kaitiakitanga

OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



Feedback from Forum on Strategic Framework

- Is Play the right word?

1. SPORT GROWTH AND PARTICIPATION

Success Statement

Orienteering continues to grow in popularity, with more recognition of it as a sport of choice for people wanting a fun and accessible outdoor recreation option

Areas of Focus

- 1.1. Schools strategy** – increase numbers of schools, in more areas, with more juniors exposed to the sport through school years
- 1.2. Awareness and promotion** – increase awareness of the sport to the broader public, and reach more people
- 1.3. Grow participation** – work with clubs to encourage diversity, deliver events people want, and make it easy for people to participate
- 1.4. Grow club network and membership** – identify opportunities and enable new clubs to form that increase areas where orienteering is available

Feedback from Club Forum

- Consider adding in focus on University to capture this cohort, and lessen loss of young people from sport post school
- Consider adding in here (or Business Plan at more granular level), focus on user experience, better understanding user perspectives to drive improvements in sport
- Consider adding in alternate growth mechanisms beyond clubs, and evolving event delivery model to better integrate with commercial/paid delivery

2. CLUB AND COMMUNITY CAPABILITY

Success Statement

We have a thriving community of capable clubs and passionate volunteers delivering awesome events

Areas of Focus

- 2.1. Technical standards and capability building** – reinforce and maintain technical standards and practices, and boost numbers of people with core capabilities; mappers, controllers, technology
- 2.2. Easy access to knowledge and resources** – continue to invest in and develop tools and resources clubs can access that make it easier to develop and grow the sport
- 2.3. Supporting clubs hosting major events** – establish stronger methods of club support, in major event delivery
- 2.4. Strengthen volunteer model** – work with clubs to establish stronger practices to encourage volunteer renewal and mitigate volunteer burnout

Feedback from Club Forum

- Consider changing success statement, with broader definition beyond club only delivery – eg “Thriving community of capable event delivery partners and clubs....”

- Consider adding orienteering offers paid opportunities for individuals and businesses – emphasis on evolving an ecosystem where opportunities to contribute, be rewarded, innovate etc goes beyond clubs – emphasise partnerships etc

3. PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT

Success Statement

Orienteering offers opportunities for people to perform and achieve in different facets of the sport including; pathways for; high performing athletes, juniors, and coaches

Areas of Focus

- 3.1. High Performance Programme** – provides the pathways for athletes to be their best, provide best chances for performance on national, regional, and world stage
- 3.2. Junior Development** – enables age appropriate approaches to development and performance which balances wellbeing and achievement
- 3.3. Coach Development** – develop framework, training, and practices that enable great coaching to happen across the community

4. PLACES TO PLAY

Success Statement

We continue to grow, nurture, and protect the places where orienteering can happen, recognising that after people, this is the most important asset the sport has

Areas of Focus

- 4.1. Landowner relationships** – developing stronger practices that show long term commitment and respect of relationships with landowners, including iwi
- 4.2. Mapping capabilities** – ensuring clubs have access to the mapping capabilities which enable them to develop needed maps for their area
- 4.3. Innovating event formats** – ensuring we adapt to participant preferences around style and location of events
- 4.4. Upholding the whenua** – ensuring we have strong sustainability practices, and demonstrate respect and guardianship practices around the land we play on

Feedback from Club Forum

- Consider extending relationship scope beyond landowners, to broader stakeholders who have an influence on the sport – Forestry, DOC, Fed Farmers etc. Deepen relationships and partnerships

5. STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Success Statement

Orienteering offers opportunities for people to perform and achieve in different facets of the sport including; pathways for; high performing athletes, juniors, and coaches

Areas of Focus

- 5.1. Positive leadership and governance** – Provide positive, transparent, and effective leadership that grows the sport, protects member interests, builds capability, and upholds the values of the sport
- 5.2. Sport advocacy and relationship development** – ensure the sport is properly represented with key external agencies and stakeholders, for the betterment of orienteering in NZ
- 5.3. Strong processes** – Continue to Improve processes, policies, and guideline documents that make it easy for people undertaking national orienteering work
- 5.4. Financial health** – strengthen and secure orienteering's financial future
- 5.5. Digital enablement** – invest further in digital technologies which improve efficiencies, better utilisation of data, user experience, and scaling of capabilities

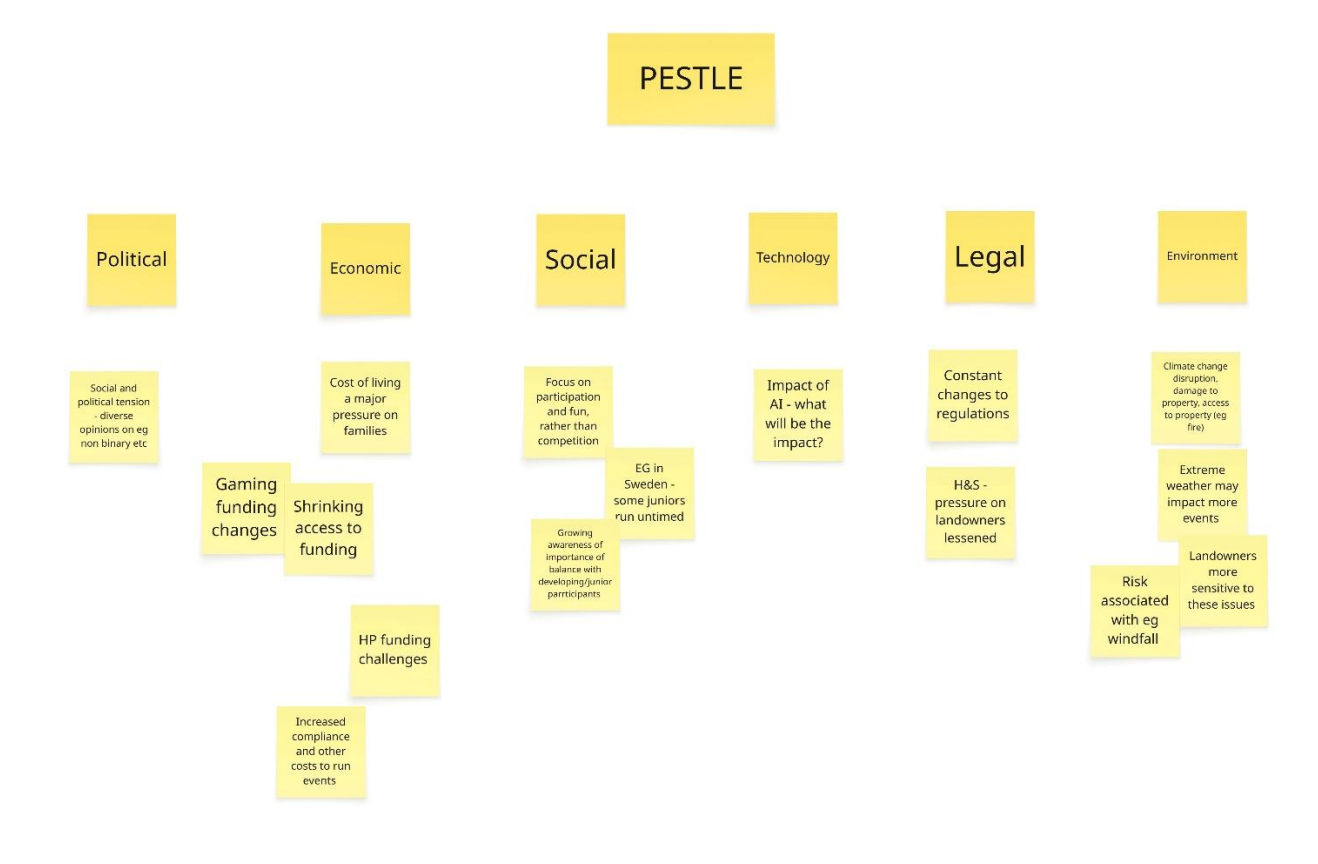
APPENDICES

PESTLE

A PESTLE is used to identify external influences and trends we should be mindful of, impacting our sport and organisation. The following is not definitive, but offers some insight to factors we see impacting the sport.

Category	Key Trends & Insights
Political	• Social and political tension (e.g. non-binary, gender inclusion debates) • Gaming funding model under review (impacting sport grants) • Inclusion mandates tied to funding (e.g. Sport NZ, local authorities)
Economic	• Cost of living is a major constraint on family participation • Shrinking access to traditional funding (grants, gaming, etc.) • HP (High Performance) funding challenges • Increased compliance costs to run events • Ongoing digital cost creep (software, hosting, payment systems)
Social	• Shift toward participation and enjoyment vs. early competition (aligned with Balance is Better) – growing awareness of importance in having balance of fun and development/performance focus, with junior and developing athletes • International trends (e.g. Sweden running untimed events to lessen the competitive focus, and more on personal achievement) • More demand for family-friendly and flexible participation options • Growing importance of schools in the sport • More people want “pay to participate” as opposed to being members of a club • Growing awareness of equity, accessibility, and youth mental health • Challenge engaging younger generations used to instant, digital experiences
Technology	• Rapid AI evolution—future impacts on operations unknown • Growth of mobile-first tools like MapRun and digital punch systems • Expectation of modern event registration and results delivery • Use of CRM-style data systems for member tracking and analysis • Online learning tools and remote coach accreditation systems gaining traction
Legal	• Constant regulatory updates (e.g. changes in health & safety, inclusion, tax rules) • Landowners’ responsibilities under H&S law now slightly eased • Clubs expected to have documented event safety plans

	- Increasing scrutiny on how participant data is stored and used (Privacy Act compliance) - Ambiguity around GST, honoraria and volunteer payments for clubs
Environmental	- Climate change disrupting events (fires, floods, storms) - Landowner sensitivity increasing (access less guaranteed). Goodwill relationships at risk due to pressure from other sports. • More events at risk due to extreme weather. Landowners also sensitive to these risks, and threaten landowner relationships. - Environmental impact assessments and DOC/council requirements tightening - Risk and liability concerns around windfall damage, terrain use, and biodiversity zones



SWOT

The SWOT is used to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats impacting the sport and ONZ organisation. In general weaknesses and threats can be turned into opportunities, and important ones may feature in the objectives in the strategic plan.

Strengths • Dedicated and talented people in the orienteering community • Clubs are financially strong • Inclusive, community-driven culture • Diverse terrains and wide event format options; strong technical standards ('system' of rules and practices) enabling quality events • University clubs help bridge school-to-club transitions and promote the sport • ONZ does a lot with limited resource • National events structure and junior development programmes • Global sport, aligned to common set of rules, specifications • Offers pathways for people to achieve and learn, beyond competing, E.g.; coaches, controllers, mappers, technology, event organisation, club leadership and admin etc • Orienteering is a great sport with amazing benefits: ➤ Life-long participation model; health and wellbeing benefits ➤ Sport for life – all ages ➤ Gender balanced ➤ Strong family focus, built into rules and event organisation (eg start times for parents etc) ➤ Offers sense of achievement for everyone ➤ Enhances skills beyond orienteering, for young people and adults alike; problem solving, resilience, decision making ➤ Mental and physical benefits and challenge ➤ Mix of individual/solo and interactive opportunities ➤ Continuous improvement ethos ➤ Enjoyable Positive environment and post race chat opportunities	Weaknesses • Limited ONZ resources (financial and operational) • Weak processes in some clubs; inconsistent knowledge-sharing systems • Low public awareness / brand visibility of orienteering • Limited participation from Māori/Pasifika • Accessibility barriers: need for travel/time/cost; reliance on parents for youth participation; demographic split (some groups cost/time poor) • Event delivery scalability constrained by club capacity • Underinvestment in digital infrastructure and innovation • Mixed club capability across the country • Travel demand, esp out of town, creates tension with cost of living and environmental issues • Can be a hard sport to break into and get to know people • Not a strong team environment, apart from in Rogaines • Limited social/cultural diversity • Doesn't cater well to those with adaptive needs • Limited media coverage and awareness (although has improved significantly in last few years)
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Opportunities	Threats
• Innovate with local/urban and close-to-home event formats; more local events • Strengthen school engagement and curriculum alignment (incl. yrs 11–13) • Leverage JWOC and other elite events for profile; explore TV exposure (e.g., Sweden) • Collaborate across clubs and with associated sports (adventure racing, navsport); consider commercial delivery partnerships • Improve diversity and inclusion; target younger audiences; influencer-style marketing to reach broader demographics • Look offshore for ideas and best practice to develop and grow the sport • Use digital tools and data to modernize operations, training, and marketing, make events better and enhance user experience • Continue to raise profile of orienteering amongst public • Look offshore for ideas on growing and developing the sport • Exploit rogaining further, to appeal to people who prefer team/social aspect • Increasing focus on schools, and exposing more people to orienteering at a young age may widen the demographic and diversity representation across the sport • More emphasis on close to home/urban events – take advantage of trend of people wanting to do things closer to home • Innovate close to home maps and events using what is available, rather than looking for perfect terrain • Strengthen relationship with non affiliated clubs, esp University • Increase numbers of university clubs, and/or links between universities and local clubs to target school leavers and keep people in the sport longer post school • Increase growth in the sport through more clubs, that expand into different areas, and which spread the load of running events	• Decline in course setting standards and quality of events, threatens user experience • Pressure on, and risk of reducing pool of volunteers, especially with increase in people who just want to “pay to participate”, and not be members • Climate change impacts (extreme weather) disrupting mapping and events • Increasing cost-of-living pressures • Decline in club membership/public service ethos across sport • Rising competition from other sports and recreational activities • Volunteer burnout and lack of succession planning • Loss of land access due to regulation and landowner sensitivities • Aging technical workforce (mappers, controllers, timing/IT) • Growing scale, size and complexity of events puts pressure on clubs • Competition with other sports

• Carbon farming creates opportunities for areas that wont be disrupted by felling • Exploit increasing numbers attending events (eg in Akl), but matched with alternate delivery models that are more scalable and don't add more pressure to the same people and clubs already busy running events • Better exploit and sell orienteering as an activity for older people, with mental and physical benefits, and look at how it could be introduced to eg retirement homes etc	
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