

STRONG CLUBS STRONG COMMUNITIES



Election Manifesto 2026



Community clubs are part of New Zealand's social infrastructure

Community clubs have been serving New Zealand communities for generations.

Every day, clubs provide places where people can connect, volunteer, participate in sport and recreation, celebrate milestones, support local causes and build strong community relationships.

Unlike commercial businesses, clubs operate for community benefit.

Any surpluses are reinvested into facilities, programmes and services that support members and local communities. However, many clubs are facing increasing pressure from outdated legislation, growing compliance requirements, volunteer shortages and uncertainty around the sustainability of future funding through their operational activities.

The next Government has an opportunity to strengthen community clubs and the communities they serve.



Our five priorities

1 Modernise alcohol licensing settings for community clubs



2 Secure the future of community gaming



3 Protect not-for-profit clubs and their tax status



4 Make volunteer governance sustainable



5 Develop a national community clubs and volunteer strategy



Why clubs matter

Clubs are the backbone of New Zealand hospitality, sport and community and provide a place of belonging for 300,000 people across the country.

They are:

- ▶ Not-for-profit (not for personal gain)
- ▶ Community-based
- ▶ Largely volunteer governed
- ▶ Focused on social outcomes rather than returns
- ▶ Significant contributors to local communities

Clubs provide safe and welcoming environments where people connect, participate and contribute.

They support:

- ▶ Community cohesion
- ▶ Volunteerism
- ▶ Sport and recreation
- ▶ Affordable social opportunities
- ▶ Community fundraising
- ▶ Local employment
- ▶ Mental wellbeing and social connection

In many communities, particularly in regional New Zealand, council-operated facilities have disappeared. Clubs now provide services and opportunities that might otherwise have been lost.

The future of clubs matters because the future of communities matters.



PRIORITY 1

Modernise alcohol licensing settings for community clubs

THE CHALLENGE

Community clubs are fundamentally different from commercial hospitality venues. They are member-based, not-for-profit organisations governed by elected committees and operated for community benefit.

Yet many of the legislative settings governing clubs have remained largely unchanged despite significant changes in how clubs operate and how communities engage with them.

Provisions such as Section 60 of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act were developed under earlier licensing frameworks and no longer reflect the realities of modern community clubs. At the same time, alcohol excise settings do little to recognise or support the role clubs play in promoting responsible consumption in well-managed community environments.

Clubs continue to play an important role in responsible alcohol service, community connection and local wellbeing, but current regulatory and taxation settings do not always reflect that contribution.

WHAT WE ARE CALLING FOR

- ▶ **Reform Section 60**
Expand the definition of authorised visitor to include people attending genuine club functions, events and activities.
- ▶ **Recognise Modern Club Operations**
Ensure future licensing settings recognise the diversity of New Zealand's club sector and preserve the unique identity of clubs regardless of licence type.
- ▶ **Reform Keg Excise Settings**
Introduce a lower excise rate for draught beer sold in club and on-licence premises, recognising the benefits of responsible consumption in supervised environments.
- ▶ **Apply Proportionate Regulation**
Ensure compliance obligations reflect actual risk and evidence of harm.
- ▶ **Preserve the Club Voice**
Recognise that clubs and their members are part of the communities that they operate within in alcohol policy and local licensing decisions.



PRIORITY 2

Secure the future of community gaming



THE CHALLENGE

Community clubs are unique within New Zealand's Class 4 gaming environment.

Many clubs operate gaming machines, while many others rely on gaming-generated community funding to support sport, recreation and community activities.

Despite this, clubs are often treated the same as commercial gaming venues despite operating under very different governance and community-focused models. The Gambling Act itself recognises distinctions between clubs and commercial venue operators.

Increasing compliance requirements, duplicated reporting obligations and growing cost pressures are making participation in the sector increasingly difficult for clubs. At the same time, online gambling is creating new challenges for the long-term sustainability of community gaming.

WHAT WE ARE CALLING FOR

► **Align Reporting Timeframes**

Extend the Gambling Act annual reporting timeframe from three months to six months, aligning it with the Incorporated Societies Act.

► **Reduce Duplication**

Recognise financial statements prepared under applicable XRB standards for Gambling Act reporting purposes, eliminating unnecessary duplication.

► **Recognise Clubs as a Separate Sector**

Treat clubs as a distinct category for gambling levy purposes, recognising their unique operating environment and community benefit.

► **Support Sustainability and Innovation**

Review gaming settings to ensure that Class 4 venues remain sustainable and able to innovate while maintaining strong harm minimisation protections.

► **Class 1, 2 & 3 Settings**

Review the prize and turnover limits for Class 1, 2 and 3 gambling, which have remained largely unchanged since the Gambling Act was introduced.

PRIORITY 3

Protect not-for-profit clubs and their tax status



THE CHALLENGE

Community clubs are not-for-profit organisations that exist to serve members and support their communities.

Any surplus generated is reinvested into facilities, programmes, sporting activities and community initiatives.

Ongoing discussion around taxation of not-for-profit organisations has created uncertainty across the sector.

Clubs need confidence that future taxation policy will recognise the unique role they play in delivering social and community outcomes.

WHAT WE ARE CALLING FOR

- ▶ **Protect Not-for-Profit Clubs**
Maintain appropriate tax settings for genuine community-based clubs.
- ▶ **Recognise Community Benefit**
Ensure tax policy reflects the significant social value clubs create.
- ▶ **Consult Before Change**
Commit to meaningful engagement with the club sector before implementing policy changes.
- ▶ **Provide Long-Term Certainty**
Give clubs confidence to invest in their future through stable policy settings.

PRIORITY 4

Make volunteer governance sustainable



THE CHALLENGE

The overwhelming majority of community clubs depend on volunteers.

Volunteers govern clubs, manage committees, organise events and provide leadership within their communities.

The Incorporated Societies Act 2022 has introduced important governance reforms, but it has also increased compliance expectations for volunteer-led organisations.

At a time when many clubs are already struggling to attract volunteers, increasing complexity risks creating further barriers to participation.

WHAT WE ARE CALLING FOR

- ▶ **Review Implementation Impacts**
Assess how the Incorporated Societies Act is affecting volunteer-led organisations.
- ▶ **Reduce Unnecessary Complexity**
Look for opportunities to simplify compliance requirements where appropriate.
- ▶ **Support Volunteer Leaders**
Improve access to governance education, training and practical resources.
- ▶ **Encourage Participation**
Ensure volunteer capacity is considered when developing future legislation affecting community organisations.

PRIORITY 5

Develop a national community club and volunteer strategy



THE CHALLENGE

Community clubs play an important role in reducing social isolation, supporting local sport, building community connection and creating opportunities for volunteering.

Despite this, there is currently no national strategy focused on supporting the long-term sustainability of community clubs.

As volunteering patterns change and communities evolve, clubs need stronger recognition and engagement from Government.

WHAT WE ARE CALLING FOR

- ▶ **Develop a National Strategy**
Create a long-term strategy focused on the future sustainability of community clubs and volunteering.
- ▶ **Recognise Clubs as Community Infrastructure**
Acknowledge the role clubs play in supporting social connection and community wellbeing.
- ▶ **Support Volunteer Recruitment and Retention**
Work with the sector on practical initiatives that strengthen volunteer participation.
- ▶ **Improve Government Engagement**
Create a formal mechanism for ongoing dialogue between Government and the club sector.

Our commitment

Clubs New Zealand represents more than 300 community clubs across New Zealand.

Our clubs are places where people belong.

They support sport, recreation, volunteering, social connection and community wellbeing in towns and cities throughout New Zealand.

We are committed to working constructively with all political parties and governments to ensure clubs remain strong, sustainable and relevant for future generations.

STRONG CLUBS. STRONG COMMUNITIES.

When clubs thrive, communities thrive.

