



Presidents Report 2010

The 2009/2010 Waka Ama year has been a busy one. For Nga Kaihoe o Aotearoa and the Waka Ama Community in general there has been a lot happening and many accomplishments.

Finances:

This year we successfully paid off all our debts, some of which have been outstanding since the 2006 World Sprints. This was no small feat especially at a time when there is so much financial hardship we were able to turn a huge debt into a healthy balance. We set ourselves the goal of clearing the outstanding debt, and committed from the outset that we would NOT increase paddler affiliations fees to do it.

We are really happy to say that this was done through smart money management, good use of savings, sponsorship opportunities, cost cutting, strong NZ dollar, and much hard work. This has taken 2 years and much thanks must go to Mr. Alex Ryder who took the accounts by the horns so to speak.

Having a clean slate means a weight lifted and enables us, for the first time in years to paddle ahead with much more certainty and to work on the goals and objectives that have been set in our strategic plan.

The challenge now is to ensure we make the correct decisions moving forward to ensure we never get into the same situation again.

World Sprints

This year close to 300 people travelled to Noumea and represented Aotearoa / New Zealand, These were paddlers, coaches, managers, officials and supporters. We had the biggest contingent of the 16 Counties/regions represented.

This time round we all stayed together as one group which provided the opportunity to share and bond with each other as a contingent. Whilst it presented some challenges, these were outweighed by the positive energy generated as a group.

Highlights for me included:

- Watching so many teams and individuals medal and achieve so well.
- Kapa Haka practices and performance for the hotel staff and invited guests on the Thursday Evening
- Shared Breakfast together on Sunday morning
- The awesome atmosphere and positive attitude of the entire contingent.

We will continue to work with the IVF to ensure that the standard of the event is upheld. We have come to expect the Worlds Sprints to be as well organised as events we host here in New Zealand. And once again key individuals stepped up to fill gaps in the organisation or the event.

This World Sprints was our most successful overseas campaign to date and the comparison from Sacramento's medal tally 2 years ago shows where improvements have been made.

MEDAL TALLY Noumea 2010 compared to Sacramento 2008	SACRAMENTO 2008	NOUMEA 2010	SACRAMENTO 2008	NOUMEA 2010	SACRAMENTO 2008	NOUMEA 2010	SACRAMENTO 2008	NOUMEA 2010
	GOLD	GOLD	SILVER	SILVER	BRONZE	BRONZE	TOTAL MEDALS	TOTAL MEDALS
JUNIOR 16 WOMEN	1	3	3	0	4	2	8	5
JUNIOR 19 WOMEN	3	0	1	3	2	4	6	7
OPEN WOMEN	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2
MASTER WOMEN	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	5
SNR MASTER WOMEN	2	1	0	2	1	1	3	4
GOLDEN MASTER WOMEN	1	3	3	1	0	1	4	5
ADAPTIVE WOMEN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS WOMEN	8	9	8	8	8	11	24	28
JUNIOR 16 MEN	0	0	1	1	1	3	2	4
JUNIOR 19 MEN	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
OPEN MEN	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
MASTER MEN	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	4
SNR MASTER MEN	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
GOLDEN MASTER MEN	0	1*	0	0	1	1	1	2
ADAPTIVE MEN	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
TOTALS MEN	1	2	2	2	3	10	6	14
Total Men & Women	9	11	10	10	11	21	30	42

There is no doubt that our teams and paddlers would not have done as well as they did had it not been for the dedication of coaches and managers building up to and at the worlds. There were many dedicated individuals that made huge sacrifices both emotionally and financially so that our paddlers and the Waka Ama community could achieve excellence. A Big thanks to all!

As we look towards Canada 2012 there are many aspects of the previous 3 world sprints campaigns that can be built on and improved to ensure we continue to achieve even greater success.

Nationals:

Unfortunately the National Sprint Championships was not without incident this year. Lanes in general and an unfortunate boat propeller caused some major issues, as well as trying to squeeze too many races into a finite amount of hours and daylight. Some interesting statistics below show how the races have increased every year.

2007 – 309 races

2008 – 339 races

2009 – 357 races

2010 – 371 races

Growth is of course one of those “good” problems, we want to grow but we must manage the growth so that it doesn't impact negatively on the experience for all involved.

We are addressing these issues:

With regard to the lanes we have worked hard to acquire the sponsorship needed to address the issue. We are working with Karapiro Rowing who are creating permanent lanes for us that can be laid easily and without implication for other lake users. We are having our 500m course professionally surveyed by the same people who have surveyed the Rowing New Zealand lanes for the Rowing World Championship and the plans for the lanes will see 9 lanes with 17 buoys perfectly marking each lane. These lanes will be able to be laid for other events, not just nationals. So we can make greater use of Lake Karapiro for other Waka Ama events in the future, Regional regatta, Primary or intermediate School regatta, corporate events etc ...

You should all by now be aware of the changes that will be taking effect at nationals in 2011. These changes are designed to cater for the growth that our sport is experiencing and proactively manage future growth anticipated.

Strategic plan: we are one year into a three year plan and there has been much achieved. We have employed a part time administrator through Sport Waitakere - Chrissie Cobb. Chrissie has had 100% success rate with funding applications so far and has taken on some of the book keeping tasks to free Alex up.

This year we sent every Secondary School in the Country (420) and every Waka Ama Club posters of Waka Ama and had an overwhelming number of positive responses.

Our National Secondary School Championship continues to grow every year and next year (2011) will see the 10th year of this awesome event. Having been involved in this event since its inception I have seen the event grow from a 1.5 day event that had 500 students from 40 Secondary Schools involved, to now have 1400 students from almost 90 Secondary Schools around the country. Laurie and his team at Te Waiariki Porea Trust have done a great job of managing the event in recent years and Lake Tikitapu provides ones of the most stunning backgrounds of any Waka Ama race in the world.

We have spent much time building and cementing relationships with organisations like Mighty River Power, New Zealand Rowing, Waipa District Council, Regional Sports Trusts, SPARC, TPK, Iwi, the International Va'a federation, funding agencies etc
We are tapping into the knowledge of others Sports, and creating partnerships that have mutual benefits and will without a doubt have a positive impact on our regions, clubs and paddlers.

Relationship building is of course not limited to outside organisations, we must always ensure that communication pathways are clear and open between regions, clubs and paddlers, for as a National Sporting organisation our biggest partners are of course our own members.
In the last couple of months I have managed to attend regional Hui of 3 regions with plans to attend the other 3 regions meetings in coming months. This has been a great opportunity to engage closer with regions and see what the issues that regions are facing and coping with first hand.

As our sport of Waka Ama is experiencing growth and change and it is certainly an exciting time. There is much to be done on many levels. Nationally, over the next 2 years we hope to get the sport to a level of organisation that can provide better opportunities for coaches and coach development as well as paddler development.

Over the next 3 months we will be rolling out a series of Steering Clinics and provide for the first time a national approach to growing the base of club Steerers.

Every day brings a new opportunity and every week and new and exciting experience. The highlight of the past 2 weeks has been creating a close working relationship with the NZ Canoe Federation to work together to send George Thomas to Poznan - Poland to compete at the World Canoe Championships. There are 67 countries taking part in the World Championships and this is the first time that Va'a will make its debut as an adaptive/Para category. We wish George all the best for his trip and the competition.

Thank you to the Executive and the Council for their continued support and hard work. As we move forward into a year, where we have committed to fulfill some of the biggest tasks in our strategic plan, we should never forget where we have come from, all those individuals who got us here and how far together we have come.

I am excited about the future and all the opportunities we have.



Lara Collins
President
Nga Kaihoe o Aotearoa