



16 February 2018

Mr Mijail Linares  
fyi-request-7143-f1811d98@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Linares

**Official Information Act 1982 request – Investment in elite sports**

Thank you for your email received by Sport NZ on 18 January 2018 requesting a response to the following questions under the Official Information Act 1982:

1. Why does the current New Zealand Government invest significantly more in [High Performance Sport New Zealand] than any other area of the [Sport NZ Group]?
2. Why does the current New Zealand Government invest in High Performance Sport in the first place?
3. What was the evidence used to support the answer to question 2 (please mention specific sources)?

In response to the queries raised we have provided some context to the sport / physical activity environment in New Zealand.

***Why does the current New Zealand Government invest in High Performance Sport in the first place?***

The New Zealand Government invests in high performance sport, for the following reasons:

- Its positive contribution to New Zealand's national identity and pride;
- To inspire New Zealanders to take up a sport or increase their physical activity and the associated social and health benefits as a result; and
- The economic benefits to New Zealand.



### *Positive contribution to national identity and pride.*

For New Zealanders' there is a strong link between our national identity, participation in sport, and success on the world stage. A 2008 Ministry for Culture and Heritage survey found New Zealanders' identity is often derived from sport and sport was the fourth most important factor contributing to New Zealand's culture. Of those surveyed individuals aged between 18 and 24 considered sport the most important factor contributing to culture.

Young New Zealanders are influenced by elite sports personalities in their decisions about which sport or active recreation they participate in.

### *Inspiring New Zealanders – social cohesion and health outcomes*

The New Zealand Government, in line with other Governments around the world, supports High Performance Sport to inspire its citizens. This is particularly relevant for younger people, who are inspired by mega sporting events or our elite athletes to take up sport or some form of physical activity. Increase physical activity improves physical and mental wellbeing, and social cohesion.

### *Economic benefit*

Success on the world stage by New Zealand athletes and teams promotes the New Zealand brand with our trading partners and the global tourism market. This exposure through high performance sport makes a valuable economic contribution to New Zealand's economy. For example, the Rugby World Cup has been estimated to have increased the national economy in the short term of \$1.730b.

### **Why does the current New Zealand Government invest significantly more in [High Performance Sport New Zealand] than any other area of the [Sport NZ Group]?**

Community Sport is supported through a number of different funding and support mechanisms, including but not limited to New Zealand Lotteries Grants Board, Class 4 Gambling, a range of community trusts and Local councils. In total, it is estimated that there is \$2.5b per year that benefits community sport and recreation in New Zealand. The Government through Sport NZ is a small contributor (\$43m per year approximately) in the community sport system. Community Sport also receives funding for specific initiatives other Government agencies such as the Ministry of Education (Kiwisport).



In contrast, the New Zealand Government is the predominant investor in high performance sport. Other funding sources for high performance sport are limited to, in general, private or corporate funders.

The Government's investment has led to significant improvements in results over time across a range of targeted Sports. New Zealand has gone from winning five medals at the Athens 2004 Olympics to winning 13 medals at the London 2012 Olympics and winning 18 medals in the Rio Olympics. New Zealand is considered to have one of the best performing high performance systems in the world.

As requested in query three a list of sources is provided in appendix one.

If you would like to discuss this response further please contact Dr Alice Hume, Manager Policy by email at [policy@sportnz.org.nz](mailto:policy@sportnz.org.nz).

Please note that if you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Miskimmin', is positioned above the printed name.

**Peter Miskimmin**  
**Chief Executive**



## APPENDIX ONE: Specific sources

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