

# TARANAKI

like no other

## The value of rugby to Taranaki

Report produced by Venture Taranaki in association  
with the Taranaki Rugby Football Union



### The value of Rugby to Taranaki - summary

Through Saturday schoolboy rugby, senior club competition, the 'Amber and Blacks', 'Ferdie the Bull' and representation at Super 14 and All Black level, Taranaki is synonymous with rugby in New Zealand.

Rugby has helped shape the region's unique identity since the Union's inception over 120 years ago and remains integral to communities right around the Mountain.

Taranaki continues to compete with larger provinces, punching above its weight, and giving the region a sense

of purpose and achievement. The fact that Taranaki was able to secure three Rugby World Cup 2011 matches reflects this strength.

More than five per cent of the Taranaki population participate in the game - one of the highest levels of involvement anywhere in New Zealand. Recognising the value this brings to the region, Venture Taranaki, in association with the Taranaki Rugby Football Union have commissioned this study to identify the contribution of rugby to Taranaki.

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# The value of rugby to Taranaki

Rugby impacts on Taranaki in two major ways. Economic activity is driven from participation, administration, infrastructure, supporters and volunteers. Social benefits are delivered through community spirit, regional pride, positive health impacts, and reducing anti-social behaviour.

## Economic benefits

In 2008, total output (revenue) in the region from the Taranaki Rugby Football Union, school and club rugby was \$11.9 million. This generated \$7.4 million in total GDP and the equivalent of 135 full-time jobs.

If other quantifiable impacts, such as the value of volunteerism, the three Rugby World Cup 2011 games, the operations of Stadium Taranaki and the many smaller regional facilities, and inter-school rugby, are taken into account then this figure is considerably higher.

Taranaki's fervent support for rugby has contributed to the attraction of major events to the region. An earlier study found that a 2004 Super 12 game contributed almost \$400,000 to regional GDP. The test match between the All Blacks and Manu Samoa in 2008 attracted many people from outside the region, suggesting an impact of around \$1.2 million on regional GDP.

The proven ability of the region to stage these major events has in turn contributed to Taranaki's successful bid to host three Rugby World Cup 2011 matches. The economic impact from three games and hosting a team could add \$5.2 million to the region's GDP. Participating in the tournament will also result in a legacy of improved facilities and significant regional marketing opportunities.

These additional impacts generate profile for the region, building pride and making Taranaki a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

## Social benefits

There are other ways that rugby benefits the region that are not as easily measured, but are just as important.

Generally, studies have shown that participation in team sports benefits communities through:

- increased community visibility - Taranaki being 'on the map'.
- regional pride, status and reputation
- collective morale - the 'feel good' factor
- enhanced community image and attractiveness to visit or live
- stimulation of other development
- social cohesion, improved healthy lifestyles, less crime and appreciation of team-work.

Rugby is the only major sport where the entire Taranaki region is represented in a national, fully televised competition. It embodies the spirit and nature of Taranaki, which often performs beyond expectations. Taranaki rugby generates a sense of community and pride in the region which in turn supports rugby financially and through time and participation.

## Future impacts

The value of sport goes beyond economics, culture and identity. Through developing a range of broad-use skills the sport is preparing leaders for the future.

The existence of a professional sports team in the region raises regional profile and is consistent with the efforts of the region to develop a distinctive culture 'like no other' that will attract people to live, work and visit.

Rugby is going through a period of change across the board. At a local level a number of other activities now compete with rugby and globally the future of professional rugby competitions is unclear. The region needs to position itself to protect the current value of rugby but also to ensure it can take advantage of opportunities that may arise from this uncertainty.



Investigating the quantitative and qualitative value of rugby to Taranaki provides a basis for a business case for stakeholders, investors and the region to continue their support of rugby. It explains why and how ensuring a high performing, successful rugby team should be aligned with regional development objectives.

Community leaders and investors must consider whether rugby is being used to its best effect in the region.

Taranaki's three Rugby World Cup 2011 matches create an opportunity for the region to leverage sporting and regional development opportunities.

The broad range of significant benefits from rugby suggests a role for public support as well as an opportunity for corporate sponsors to achieve community based outcomes from their contributions.

This research, the first of its kind in the sport of rugby, sets the foundations for Taranaki rugby to add significant value and going to regional and economic development and the region's culture and identity.



**Figure 1. Qualitative economic impacts of rugby**

Figure 1 emphasises the qualitative contributions of rugby, such as social cohesion, pride and visibility. These also form an important part of this equation.



**Figure 2. Quantitative economic impacts of rugby**

Figure 2, which summarises linkages between rugby and regional development, has traditionally predominantly focused on economic impacts e.g. the economic spin-offs from the presence of the premier team, rugby events, venue construction and so on.

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