

SUCCESS STORY

Brian Scott (BS) is coach of local kayak club, the fastest-growing sport in Wanganui. The club operates under a multi-sport umbrella club – triathlon is the other code and historically has been the dominant partner. Following recent structural change, a reflection of its growth, Kayaking now has equal representation at Board level.

BS and Aaron Cox have been the coaches and drivers of the change. Seven years ago the kayak club had virtually no members and “no gear and no boats” – it now has 65 members, a refreshed strategic plan with new aspirational goals (“because we’ve achieved the things we previously thought were impossible”) and is proud to have two paddlers competing at Junior World Champs in Canada. BS is now thinking about Wanganui as a potential centre of excellence for water-based sports (rowing, waka ama and) and how a local boat-builder (with expertise in fibreglass) might add value to the cluster.

BS suggested the reasons for the club's success were:

- SW identified kayaking as a regional priority sport in 2009
- BS came to understand that SW is not a funder but a knowledgeable adviser with a “can do” attitude – willing and available to help.
- SW provided guidance in writing a development plan and then assisted the club to tackle clearly articulated objectives
- The club secured funding from Wanganui District Council (\$20,000 for toilets, showers and changing sheds) and from Powerco Trust (\$25k for eleven boats, paddles & buoyancy gear) and, in doing so, discovered it could achieve the things in the plan, that the dreams were achievable.
- The enthusiasm of BS and AC as front-line coaches has morphed into them “coaching coaches” so club has been able to respond to growth
- The high visibility of kayaking on the river in the middle of town has helped attract new paddlers
- The club was the winner of Wanganui Club of the Year in 2012

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