



Case Study: Waitara Boating Club and Sailability Taranaki



After personally experiencing the transition in sailing as a non-disabled person to one with significant vision impairment, Dave Allerton has led the Taranaki Region and the Waitara Boating Club on a path of inclusion to open the sport to people of all abilities.

Taranaki's first inclusive 'try sailing' day was promoted for disabled people and organized with assistance from YNZ's Regional Support Officer Wayne Holdt and the Halberg Disability Sport Foundation's Regional Disability Sport Coordinators. Over 80 local people turned up to 'have a go' at the Waitara Boating Club, using borrowed Hansa dinghies from Sailability Auckland.

Soon after, the NZ Hansa Class Association lent their two class boats to be kept at the Waitara Boating Club for the season, as the Sailability Taranaki Trust was being established for the purpose of fundraising for adaptive sailing equipment and promoting the sport for disabled people in the region. Within a year, Sailability Taranaki had successfully fundraised for four of their own boats to be used at the Waitara Boating Club programmes and events.

The Sailability Taranaki Trust and Waitara Boating Club developed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the membership requirements of disabled sailors at the club, sharing of safety boats, storage of the equipment etc. Half of the trustees are members of the Waitara Boating Club, and the operational aspects of the trust were due to be run in alignment with or by the Club. For example, disabled members using the Sailability owned boats participate in the routine club racing and 'Learn to Sail' courses.

Now, not only are the club's sailing programmes and events open to people of all abilities, but representation of disabled sailors is encouraged in off the water club activity too. In 2014, A sailor that came into the sport through one of the early 'try sailing' days of Sailability Taranaki is the Waitara Boating Club Secretary, and at the 2014 Waitara regatta, four of the fifty competing boats were sailed by physically disabled people.

Community groups such as 'LIONS' have been engaged to provide extra volunteer support and fundraising opportunities, and community funding has been accessed to purchase equipment.