

## Welcome back, this quarter we have lots to share with you:

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## MESSAGE FROM THE OLYMPIANS' COMMISSION CHAIR

Kia ora koutou,

As I write, we are in level two and enjoying a return to a more normal type of life. I hope that you are all staying safe and well during these extraordinary times.

When I wrote in December that 2020 was going to be a big one, no one could have anticipated the year would unfold as it has.

The year started out on a positive note with the 20-strong New Zealand team coming home from the Lausanne Winter Youth Olympic Games 2020 Games with one gold (Katya Blong, mixed nation ice hockey) and three bronze medals (Ethan De Rose, mixed nation speed skating, Axel Ruski-Jones, mixed nation ice hockey and Luca Harrington, halfpipe).

Then, on March 11 the World Health Organisation declared Covid-19 to be a pandemic. Two weeks later New Zealand was in full lockdown and the huge impact on our normal lives began to be felt.



On 24 March the IOC and Japan formally postponed the Tokyo Olympic Games, which had been scheduled to begin in late July, until 2021. This unprecedented decision brought both a sense of relief and some much-awaited certainty for New Zealand's 1,000 or so long list Olympic hopefuls. This was, in my view, absolutely the right call. It does however create an enormously complex environment for all stakeholders to navigate as plans need to be remade in the face of ongoing uncertainty around the ongoing impact of Covid-19 in NZ and globally.

With the postponement of the Games and the uncertainty over how long gathering and travel restrictions will be in place in NZ, we've had to rethink the Olympian functions that would have been held later this year. We are considering options for bringing NZ's Olympic family together in other ways this year and will keep you posted as plans progress.

Another important milestone comes on August 14th, which will mark the centenary of the first wearing of the Fern at the Olympic Games, with New Zealand sending an independent team to Antwerp 1920. The NZOC is planning some activities to celebrate this milestone, so keep an eye out for more information. Another thing to watch out for is a new range of Olympic team supporter merchandise which will be available soon with some exciting new branding.

Thank you to those of you who have sent in feedback on our newsletters. As a result of your feedback you'll be seeing some changes from this issue. To help you get to know us better, an Olympians' Commission team photo and our names will appear at the bottom of each newsletter. Newsletters will now also be posted to the NZ Olympians Facebook page and on our webpage.

Noho ora mai. Stay safe and well.

**Chantal Brunner OLY (#692)**

**Chair, NZ Olympians Commission**

## **SQUAW VALLEY 1960 WINTER OLYMPIC ANNIVERSARY**

**60 Years On...We celebrate the NZ Team who went to the 1960 Squaw Winter Olympic Games**

**Winter Olympic Games:** Squaw Valley, USA

**Opening Ceremony:** February 18, 1960 (opened by Vice-President Richard Nixon)

**Closing Ceremony:** February 28, 1960

**Events:** 27 in 8 sports

**NZ Team:**

Sam Chaffey #127 – Alpine Skiing – Downhill, Giant Slalom, Slalom

Bill Hunt #60 – Alpine Skiing – Downhill, Giant Slalom, Slalom (NZ Flagbearer)

Cecilia Womersley #129 – Alpine Skiing – Downhill, Giant Slalom, Slalom

Tish Prain #128 – Alpine Skiing – Downhill, Giant Slalom, Slalom



When Squaw Valley won the right to host the 1960 Olympic Winter Games, the future ski resort was little more than a hotel. There were concerns from Europeans that the alpine skiing courses were not up to a top international standard and that the cross-country course was at too high an altitude.

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The athletes could walk to most of their events from the village, which gave the Games a close-knit relaxed atmosphere before the days of massive Olympic security.

Biathlon was introduced as a sport for the first time and women's speed skating made its Olympic debut.

The Opening and Closing Ceremonies were produced by none other than Walt Disney. American television broadcast the Games for the first time and was involved in the invention of a technology



## TOKYO 2020 POSTPONEMENT IMPACTS

The impact on the international sporting calendar has been huge. From club, national, regional and World Championship competitions, the postponement of the Olympic Games and the wider Covid-19 crisis has seen events postponed and reshuffled over the next three years.

The Commonwealth Youth Games have been postponed to 2023. The Youth Olympic Games dates maybe also be impacted by the postponement of Tokyo, with possible tweaks to the Commonwealth Games programme in 2022 expected.

High Performance Sport NZ has confirmed their on-going support of all 'carded' athletes with the continuation of their PEGs (Performance Enhancement Grant) and living grants into 2021, helping manage stress in these times of uncertainty. They have engaged with the NZOC Athletes' Commission to help inform their plans.



Sport NZ is developing recovery packages for many National Sporting Organisations along with further guidelines for our sporting community and lifestyles. A \$25 million dollar rescue package will support community sport. In parallel to this, the government and Sport NZ have agreed to disperse a \$265m support package to help all levels of New Zealand sport "recover, rebuild and modernise". Never before have we seen this level of investment in sport from the Government and we believe this will significantly help the continuation and growth of sport in New Zealand.

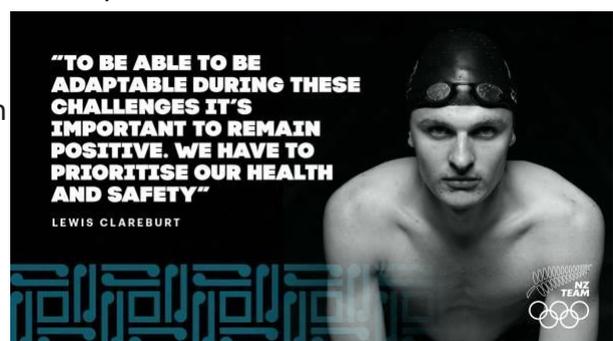
The NZOC is waiting for the competition schedule to be confirmed by the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee. If there is any conflict to the dates/times of event tickets based on any changes to the competition schedule, NZOC's partner New Zealand Olympic Travel will contact ticket holders.

Our two year relationship with the owner of the premises we have secured for the ANZ New Zealand House has paid off, with the landlord re-programming planned activity in 2021 to ensure we have the equivalent dates next year to host the ANZ New Zealand House and co-existing hospitality programme. This is great news and planning is well underway to deliver a programme of activity to celebrate The New Zealand Team and ensure we have a base for all New Zealanders and supporters while at the Games.

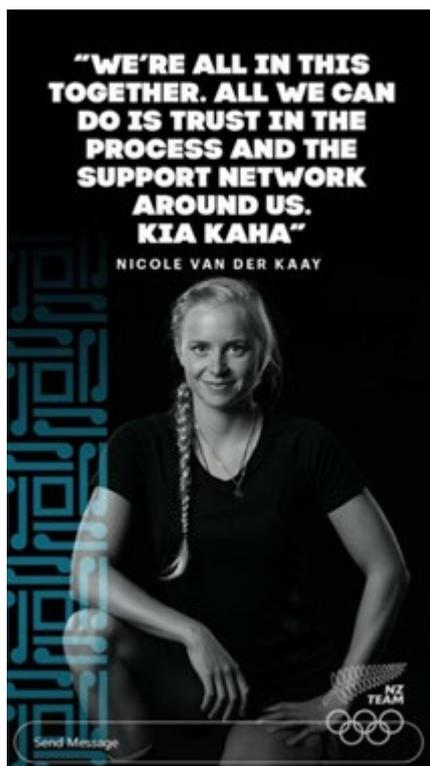
## NZOC Athletes Voice - Postponement of Tokyo 2020

The NZOC Athletes' Commission played a vital role in communicating athlete views to the NZOC and the sporting sector as decisions were made around Tokyo 2020.

Due to the severity and the dynamic nature at which COVID19 was impacting the world the Commission met virtually to discuss our position on a potential postponement on the evening of March 23rd. At that stage the commission was all in favour of a postponement. Our view was based on the safety of athletes who are at the heart of the Olympic movement.



In taking this stance we joined HPSNZ and Paralympics NZ to offer a sector wide statement the following day in New Zealand.



Later that evening IOC Member Sarah Walker was able to share our position with the IOC Athletes Commission and the President Tomas Bach. The same day Team Canada and Australia took similar positions in favour of The Games being shifted until 2021.

The next morning we (NZOC combined with the NZOC AC) surveyed the entire Tokyo 2020 long list asking what their position was on a potential postponement in order to make sure our view was representative of the diverse athletes we represent. With an overwhelming response we confirmed the vast majority of athletes wanted the Games postponed until 2021. It's important to recognise that there was a small percentage of athletes who wanted the games to go ahead in July 2020 and we respect those views.

It is also important to acknowledge that whilst athletes may have wanted the games to be postponed, there is still a level of grief for many over the postponement. August 2020 was a finish line for many in the NZ Team. Many athletes had plans -

whether it was starting a family, doing some travel, playing another code, retirement or even building on a successful first Olympics. New plans are starting to be formed but the health and safety of our athletes and support staff must be front of mind in decisions.

Now the finish line has shifted and I am confident along with the rest of the Athletes Commission our athletes will respond to the new challenge. Kiwis are resilient. We're made of tough stuff and we will rise to the challenge in 2021.

For the NZOC Athletes Commission it is critical we continue to represent the needs and opinions of our diverse NZ Team. Athletes hold a voice and we can be a mechanism for that voice to be heard.

Nga Mihi,  
**Sarah Cowley Ross**  
**NZOC Athletes' Commission Chair**

## [NZ OLYMPIC AMBASSADORS ONLINE](#)

During the Covid-19 lockdown, the NZOC Olympic Education Ambassadors delivered online sessions.

"Our Ambassadors normally visit around 40-thousand Kiwi school kids in person each year," said Olympic Education Manager, Rob Page.

"The visits are hugely beneficial for the children and the schools love them, so we're working with

our athletes to move the presentations online and make them available to children's parents through our Facebook page.”

The presentations are available on the [NZOlympics Facebook page](#) or [YouTube channel](#). The Olympic Ambassador Programme is funded through the Sir Owen Glenn Olympic Legacy.



## [AIRBNB OLYMPIAN EXPERIENCES](#)

Share your passion, connect with fans and earn money!



The International Olympic Committee has a partnership with Airbnb to benefit Olympians and help them share their experiences and promote their businesses and skills. See [HERE](#) activities hosted by experts.

You may wish to share your sport with aspiring athletes, host a live viewing party to watch the games with fans or open up a room at your home to sports enthusiasts - there is a way for you to share your passion with this partnership.

For further information register [HERE](#), or alternatively contact [cathleen@olympic.org.nz](mailto:cathleen@olympic.org.nz)

## NZOC ATHLETES' COMMISSION CHAIR

After 12 years of tremendous service to the Athlete's Commission (the last four as Chair) we say farewell to Nathan Twaddle.

Nathan has been an outstanding servant to Kiwi athletes in leading the commission for the last six years. An Olympic bronze medalist in Beijing, Nathan's passion for advocating for athletes saw him constantly trying to get athletes at the front of mind as decisions were made at the Board table.



Reflecting on his term Nathan says 12 years ago we were talking about similar issues as we are today however there is definitely more momentum across the sector to hear from athletes in decision making. In recent years Nathan has been a strong advocate for national sporting organisation's to figure out a mechanism for athletes voices to be heard. We are now seeing more athlete advisory groups across New Zealand sports.



The AC acknowledge the countless hours Nathan has attended NZOC Board meetings, AC meetings, Education Commission meetings and been such a staunch leader for the betterment of athletes in NZ.

Whilst it is farewell to Nathan who hopes to remain involved somehow in the NZ Team we welcome the in-coming Chair Sarah Cowley-Ross who has hit the ground running.

For more information on the Athletes Commission please click [HERE](#)

## NZ OLYMPIC WSLA PROGRAMME

The New Zealand Olympic Women's Sport Leadership Academy is designed to help New Zealand's female Olympians make a positive transition from sport performance to sport leadership and connect to an international network of women leaders in sport.

The programme provides a unique learning environment that supports the women to further develop their confidence and leadership competencies held over 18 months and 3 workshops. The WSLA participants work in small groups outside of the formal sessions to further enhance their leadership and learning on Special Project Areas. The projects are substantive and of direct relevance to the sector, and particularly issues relating to women in sport.

The inaugural programme started in 2017 and 18 female Olympians graduated from the programme in September 2018.

Recently, the second intake of 19 female Olympians presented their special project findings during the lockdown period on May 1st. NZOC were very pleased with the level of engagement given the challenges of delivery the presentations online.

The five topics researched and presented were:



1. Inclusive Cultures: Challenging unconscious gender bias in sport
2. Next Gen Leaders: Young women's views of leadership and strategies
3. Safe Sport: Celebrating functionality and performance overweight
4. Sport and Social Change: Harnessing sport to enhance the wellbeing of adolescent girls
5. The Changing Visual Landscape in Social Media: Females portrayed in the media

The NZOC extends its thanks to Sir Owen Glenn for investment to support the programme, and also to the Hon. Grant Robertson for his continued support and engagement with the women on the programme. The second intake will graduate in the coming months.

## CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC DAY on June 23<sup>rd</sup>

June 23<sup>rd</sup> marks International Olympic Day. Due to Covid-19 the NZOC doesn't have any physical events planned but we encourage you to get active and reflect on what the Olympic Games means to you.



# OLYMPIC DAY

## IOC ATHLETE'S ENTOURAGE COMMISSION (AEC)

An athlete's entourage is all the people who work with and support an athlete. This includes family, coaches, managers, agents, physical trainers, medical staff, scientists, sports organisations, sponsors, lawyers, technical officials and any person promoting the athlete's sporting career.

An athlete's entourage is critical to that athlete's success. Recognising this fact, the IOC Athletes' Entourage Commission was established to be a repository of expertise and knowledge regarding all matters related to athletes' entourage, and to act as a facilitator between all stakeholders. The makeup of the AEC comprises representatives of all the various entourage groups. For more information about the AEC generally, please visit <https://www.olympic.org/athletes-entourage-commission>

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Olympians' Commission Chair Chantal Brunner has been a member of the AEC since 2018 and was in Lausanne in January to attend the recent AEC meeting.

Discussions covered a broad range of subject matter and included ideas on how to increase the awareness of entourage matters at a country / NOC level. Despite the impact entourage members have on athletes, there is still too little awareness of, and support for, entourage members in many countries, which in turn affects their ability to positively contribute to an athlete's success.

Safeguarding of athletes remains a key focus. The AEC received updates on the steps being taken to prevent harassment and abuse in sport, the tools being used to fight corruption in sport and a detailed report on the complex and often divisive subject of inclusion and non-discrimination of athletes based on gender identity and gender characteristics.



For more information about what was discussed, please see [HERE](#)

Following its meeting, the AEC met with the IOC Athletes Commission to share information, facilitate better awareness of each group's respective initiatives and encourage the cross-pollination of ideas. A number of ideas and recommendations were made.

The day concluded with the celebration of the IOC's Coaches Lifetime Achievement Awards where athletic coach Malcolm Arnold and gymnastics coach Ulla Koch were recognized for their coaching achievements. Read more [HERE](#)

If you would like to discuss any of the above, or share any thoughts on how the IOC could improve the tools / resources / support it provides to entourage members, please feel free to contact Chantal directly at [chantal.brunner@olympian.org](mailto:chantal.brunner@olympian.org).

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## PROFILE: NIN ROBERTS - OLYMPIAN #946

*Ko wai au  
Ko Tairahia te Maunga  
Ko ohine mataroa te Awa  
Ko Mataatua te waka  
Ko ngati tawhaki raua ko mahurehure nga hapu  
Ko Tuhoe te iwi  
Ko Niniwa Roberts taku ignoa*



Having started the sport of hockey at the age of 5, never ever did I believe that I would end up representing my country over 145 times and as part of that attending both the 2004 Athens and 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Sport has provided many opportunities for me, life-long friends, building resilience, developing leadership skills and the opportunity to engage with people from all walks of life. Most of all it has provided me many opportunities to utilise all of these skills in various ways to help give back not only in my current occupation, but more importantly through my various roles with the NZOC.

My international career spanned from 2001 – 2008 and during that time I attend 2 Olympics games, 1 Commonwealth games and a World cup. What impressed me during Game time was how much work went on behind the scenes of a campaign, how incredible the support staff were at those games and how I wouldn't mind being part of that in the future, this was the start of something pretty special.

I have been very fortunate post my competitive career to be able to continue my connection to the NZOC. The first opportunity I got was the chance to be an Olympic Ambassador, visiting schools and inspiring Kiwi kids. Telling my story to the next generation was both fun and daunting, but it allowed me to meet so many amazing people.

Following this was my chance to give back and be in an athlete support role at Games time. To date I have been part of the Glasgow and Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and Rio Olympic Games. Being part of the high-performance environment again and seeing people realise their potential and dream is very inspiring. I love being part of this team.

Another highlight for me was being in the first cohort of female leaders for the WISLA programme. This programme has been instrumental in defining my leadership skills, and helped to drive my career up another level. This has also supported the work that I now do with the Olympians' Commission.

Working with the Commission has provided me the opportunity to make a difference at the front end, engaging with Olympians (past and present) around our Olympic functions, the chance to connect everyone and celebrate their experience and talk about what the future of the Olympic movement is. The team that I work with here are incredible and each of us are very passionate about making a difference for our fellow Olympians.

When I am not involved with the NZOC I work as the Partnership and Brand Manager for Royal New Zealand Plunket Trust, this diverse role challenges me every day to try and make a difference for the lives of the next generation of kiwi kids. Along with my husband, we are still actively involved in hockey, I love giving back to my club and supporting my kids through their journey in sport. In my downtime, we enjoying taking our kids out on runs/walks through the Belmont Hills in Wellington

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## OBITUARIES

### *Remembering the New Zealand Olympians that have left us*

#### James Hill Olympian #95

Outstanding single sculler James Hill (known as Jim) was New Zealand's only representative at the inaugural World Championships held in Lucerne, Switzerland in 1962.

Selected for two Commonwealth Games and two Olympic Games for New Zealand, James won a gold, silver and bronze at the Commonwealth Games. Unfortunately, he narrowly missed medals at the Rome 1960 and Melbourne 1956 Olympic Games, where he placed 4th and 5th.

James continued to support rowing in various administration roles and was awarded a Life Member of the New Zealand Rowing Association and later served as Rowing NZ President 2004 - 2005.

#### Eric Verdonk - Olympian #578

Eric Verdonk carried on the grand tradition of New Zealand single scullers. First representing the NZ Team at the Edinburgh 1986 Commonwealth Games where he competed in both the single sculls (bronze medal) and double sculls (4th). Selected for the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games Eric won bronze. Another Olympic campaign in Barcelona 1992 saw him narrowly miss out on another medal, finishing 4th.

It wasn't until 1986, when he was 27, that he took up single sculling seriously. He was relatively light for a top single sculler (85kg), but his superb technique nullified any disadvantage.

## **New Zealand Olympian's Commission**



**Left (Back Row):** Martin Brill #411, James Nation #935, Niniwa Roberts #946, Lorne DePape #984, Tim Slyfield #845  
**Front Row:** Chantal Brunner #692 (Chair), Dave Schaper #739, Alexis Pritchard #1196

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