

Active Response I

Uncertain times challenge us, our staff and colleagues, our organisations and our communities.

Discussions with the recreation sector, identified that people are grappling with the following issues, and have started to think about some useful options.

- Self- management
- Thinking about people
- Delivering recreation

Take care of yourself

In this environment of constant change with new challenges emerging daily, many people are [now working from home](#). Taking care of yourself and any family/whanau is your first priority. Some things to think about as you adapt to this are:

Prioritise

Deal with what is in front of you [what do you have to do today?] rather than what the future might hold. This includes making sure family/whanau are OK so you can give your attention to work issues.

Stay connected

Find ways to stay in contact with friends and workmates via Zoom or other online platforms; consider virtual coffee catch ups or check-ins, meetings outdoors, and other alternatives. Keep communication lines open and remember the usual protocols for meetings matter more than ever: greetings, check ins, turn taking, summing up and closure.



Figure 1 Animal companions may be the hidden benefits of working at home

Take notice

Think about what you can manage/what's too much and prioritise. Your workload and work situation have changed – you will be changing with it. Part of this is being allowed to let go of 'how things were' before coming to grips with the now.

Create a workspace

Make your workspace as comfortable as possible, even if it's small. Ideally, you'll have good light, some heating, ventilation and a comfortable seat for starters. Remember meals and breaks! If you're unwell for **any** reason, take time off. You'll perform better if you're in good health.

Be Active

Even if your usual activities are cancelled, you can still be active outside: on your street, in the garden, or at the park. Green spaces provide calm, relaxation and mental 'space' as well as offering the chance to be active.

Give

Where possible, be generous with others – give people the benefit of the doubt! Give time and support to your families, friends and neighbours.

Learn

How to stay connected productive and mentally well in an online world. Share tips and tricks.

All Right? Developed post-earthquakes this wellbeing site has a number of excellent resources such as [wellbeing at work](#).

Thinking about people

He aha te mea nui o te ao

What is the most important thing in the world?

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata

It is the people, it is the people, it is the people

Current situation

Physical distancing has significant implications for the recreation sector, recreation providers and their staff – with programme and event cancellations and constraints on people coming together in groups.

The sector is staffed by people on casual or part-time contracts, international staff on working visas and rostered personnel that deliver scheduled programmes. Some large local authorities have the capacity to ‘weather the storm’ but there are many more small community organisations, sole-operators and small businesses which will be devastated by these changes.

Staffing concerns include:

- Work insecurity and redundancy for many including those employed on in casual or activity-specific contracts
- Loss of staff with hard to replace, high technical skills
- Working holiday visa staff who will have to return home if their employment ceases
- Under-staffing due to sickness, family or whanau commitments.

Some options

This is stressful for the staff themselves, but also their colleagues and managers. Some options include:

- Redeploying staff into other areas (eg facility staff could run playground programmes)
- Alternate rostering of people to work from home or the facility to reduce physical proximity and risk of virus transmission.
- Having clear [pandemic response policies](#) about how you will manage and support staff.

Recreating in a changing world

What’s recreation delivery going to look like over the next few weeks or months? Facilities, programmes and events may be postponed or cancelled but recreation opportunities abound.

Think creatively. A changed delivery model for recreation has the following elements:

- Local: activities that happen locally, outside or in appropriate indoor spaces; small numbers, programmed or informal activity (eg) throwing hoops at the park. Set guidelines for what’s OK and observe hygiene protocols.
- Small group gatherings: promote activities or events for small groups – several could stay connected via Apps and participate in the same activity in different venues
- Filling vacant spaces: outdoor places and spaces can be used as venues for previously indoor activities; including playgrounds, parks, courtyards, streets, and anywhere that enables the 1.5 metre gap between people. Technology is a tool for inviting people to participate.
- Connecting vulnerable populations: children at home where parents aren’t always present, older adults, and those who are self-isolating need ways to keep mentally and physically well. Using technology for virtual exercise classes or coaching, online learning, and a range of group activities is an option. Coaching to use technology easily may be required.
- Play – indoors and outdoors!



Figure 2 New Zealand Beaches, Outdoors New Zealand

The government has provided some financial support to businesses, and Recreation Aotearoa has a short [webinar](#) that unpacking the Government's Business Continuity Package.