

Major Sports Events and Their Ability to Benefit Local Sports Clubs:  
A Case Study of the Auckland Professional Tennis Tournaments

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A thesis submitted to  
Auckland University of Technology  
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

2011

School of Applied Humanities  
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## Table of contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Attestation of authorship.....</b>                             | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Acknowledgements.....</b>                                      | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Abstract .....</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Introduction .....</b>   | <b>9</b>  |
| 1.1 Background .....  | 9         |
| 1.2 Research question and approach.....                           | 12        |
| 1.3 Researcher .....  | 13        |
| 1.4 Thesis structure .....  | 13        |
| <b>Literature Review.....</b>                                     | <b>15</b> |
| 2.1 Tennis participation trends in New Zealand .....              | 15        |
| 2.2 Impact and legacies of sport events.....                      | 18        |
| 2.3 Impact of events on sport development .....                   | 22        |
| 2.4 The impact of elite sport events on sport participation ..... | 24        |
| 2.5 Leveraging events to create an impact.....                    | 27        |
| 2.6 Chapter summary.....  | 31        |
| <b>Methodology and Method .....</b>                               | <b>33</b> |
| 3.1 Action research .....   | 33        |
| 3.2 Interpretative paradigm.....                                  | 36        |
| 3.3 Research quality.....   | 36        |
| 3.4 Case study research .....                                     | 38        |
| 3.5 Role of the researcher .....                                  | 39        |
| 3.6 Analysis approach .....                                       | 39        |
| 3.7 Method .....  | 42        |
| 3.8 Chapter summary.....  | 47        |
| <b>Context .....</b>  | <b>49</b> |
| 4.1 The national sport organisation.....                          | 49        |
| 4.2 Regional centres.....   | 51        |
| 4.3 Clubs.....  | 52        |
| 4.4 The tournaments.....  | 52        |
| 4.5 Chapter summary.....  | 53        |
| <b>Findings from Reconnaissance Phase .....</b>                   | <b>55</b> |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 5.1 Current situation .....   | 55        |
| 5.2 Future possibilities .....  | 62        |
| 5.3 Chapter summary.....  | 64        |
| <b>The Intervention .....</b>   | <b>66</b> |
| 6.1 Club stand in the exhibitors' dome at the tournaments.....  | 66        |
| 6.2 Promotion to provide an incentive for spectators to visit a club.....                                 | 67        |
| 6.3 Information in the tournament programme .....   | 68        |
| 6.4 Mini-cycle – identifying a profile of spectators in terms of their playing of tennis .....            | 68        |
| 6.5 Chapter summary.....  | 69        |
| <b>Evaluation of the Intervention .....</b>   | <b>70</b> |
| 7.1 Findings.....   | 71        |
| 7.2 Discussion.....   | 81        |
| 7.3 Chapter summary.....  | 84        |
| <b>Conclusions .....</b>  | <b>86</b> |
| <b>References .....</b>   | <b>91</b> |
| <br><b>Appendices</b>   |           |
| Appendix A: Participant information sheet.....  | 99        |
| Appendix B: Consent forms.....  | 102       |
| Appendix C: Photographs of club stand in exhibitors' dome at tournaments.                                 | 105       |
| Appendix D: Half page advertisement in the tournament programmes for club stand.....                      | 109       |
| Appendix E: Half page advertisement in tournament programmes for free lesson promotion.....               | 110       |
| Appendix F: Summary sheet of club feedback.....   | 111       |
| Appendix G: Half page advertisement in tournament programmes for the Open Days.....                       | 113       |
| Appendix H: Full page details in ASB Classic tournament programme about tennis in Auckland programme..... | 114       |

## **List of Tables**

|          |  |    |
|----------|--|----|
| Table 1: | Tennis participation and club membership in New Zealand, 2000/2001 and 2007/2008 ..... | 16 |
| Table 2: | Steps in Austrade's Olympic Leveraging Plan.....                                       | 29 |
| Table 3: | Reconnaissance phase: Interview dimensions and questions.....                          | 43 |
| Table 4: | Post intervention interview questions.....   | 45 |
| Table 5: | Suggestions for increasing presence of clubs at tournaments.....                       | 64 |
| Table 6: | Overview of analysis of the intervention.....  | 70 |
| Table 7: | Profile of spectators at the tournaments.....  | 76 |
| Table 8: | Summary of research findings.....  | 80 |

## List of Figures

|           |   |    |
|-----------|---|----|
| Figure 1: | Balanced scorecard approach to evaluating events.....                         | 20 |
| Figure 2: | The attraction process.....   | 23 |
| Figure 3: | The frequency escalator for sport attendance and participation.....           | 26 |
| Figure 4: | Model of social event leverage.....   | 30 |
| Figure 5: | Overview of the theoretical perspective, methodology and research method..... | 33 |
| Figure 6: | Phases of action research.....  | 34 |
| Figure 7: | Stages of the analysis process.....   | 42 |
| Figure 8: | Tennis New Zealand Pathway.....   | 51 |

### **Attestation of authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the people in the tennis organisations who supported and participated in this research project. The collaborative process between the participants and me was a key success factor for the study. Through this collaboration an academic project was undertaken ‘in the real world’ with benefits for a community and academia. The research was approved by the AUT University Ethics Committee, application number 09/45. Phase one was approved on 20 April 2009 and phase two was approved on 30 August 2010.

My supervisor, Dr Geoff Dickson, provided invaluable guidance in this study. I would like to thank Geoff for his patience, insight, challenging discussion and support. Dr Lesley Ferkins’ advice about the methodology and method section is greatly appreciated.

The support from my colleagues in the Faculty of Business was encouraging. My immediate colleagues in MARS (Marketing, Advertising, Retailing and Sales) always showed great interest in my progress both during informal discussion and at department presentations. I would also like to thank the participants on the Faculty of Business Writers’ Retreats, which I attended whilst writing this thesis. These retreats are inspirational as well as offering time-out and practical support for writing. My thanks to the faculty and organisers of the retreats.

Finally heart-felt thanks to my husband, who endured months of not being able to use a dining room table that was covered with articles and other papers. At various stages during this process he listened patiently as I was unable to talk or think about anything else. At all stages of the project he was ‘always there’ with encouragement.

## **Abstract**

Tennis clubs suffer as participation declines. The increasing popularity of the casual 'pay-for-play' concept results in further decrease in membership for complacent sport clubs. Yet strategic documents from government sport agencies in New Zealand continue to emphasise the importance of sport clubs.

A review of sport event literature reveals a gap with regard to how major sport events directly benefit the sport itself, in particular the potential link between second-tier elite events and participation at non-elite level.

This study investigates the question of how local sport clubs can leverage a major sport event for increased participation and/or membership. The research question is explored within the context of two international tennis tournaments held in Auckland, New Zealand in January each year. Specifically the project takes a participatory action research approach with a three-phase collaborative process. During the first and third phases, qualitative research is undertaken with people in the national sport organisation, two regional bodies and sport clubs. In the first reconnaissance phase, participants demonstrate universal agreement about a lack of profile for tennis clubs at the tournaments. They agree this missed opportunity forms the basis for the second phase, the intervention, which comprises three initiatives: a club information stand; a promotional offer of a free tennis lesson at a tennis club for non-club members; and information in the tournament programmes to support these activities. At the third phase of evaluation, participants conclude the intervention is successful. Whilst there is mixed reaction about the outcome of the tennis lesson promotion, the overall perception is that the process used for the study has benefits. Some operational issues are identified as reducing consumer interest in the tennis lesson offered during the promotion. Consumer behaviour theory, however, indicates some drop-off in interest after the tournaments is inevitable.

In conclusion, clubs can benefit from sport events by operating as a co-ordinated group and developing a leveraging plan for a specific event or sport using a process similar to the one adopted in this study. In developing plans, local sport bodies can consider the broad principles behind the intervention in this case study of ensuring a profile for clubs at the sport event and providing a direct link between the event and clubs.



## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

This study investigates how local sport clubs can leverage a major sport event for increased participation and/or membership of their club. The emphasis is on identification of actions that local sport organisations can take to achieve this increase. Previous research tends to focus on whether or not a sport event had impact. This research aims to identify what can be done to create an impact on participation and/or membership within clubs.

Sport participation can range on a continuum from informal participation through to club competitions and then on to the peak of performance (elite and professional sport) (Shilbury, Sotiriadou & Green, 2008). Whilst club membership is required to play competitive sport, at the informal level not all participation is within a club structure. The emphasis of this study is on increasing sport participation within clubs. On the continuum of participation, competitions are held with the aim of identifying a winner from a game, match or series of games or matches. Informal matches can be either outside or within a club. Competition can be highly organised between graded players of clubs. Major national or international sport events are those competitions involving elite and professional players and are likely to be accompanied by media interest.

A key question that is rarely asked (and even more rarely answered) is 'How do major sport events benefit the local sport community?' Shilbury et al. (2008) refer to this issue in the following assertion: "Given the allure of elite sport we do need to better understand how elite sport impacts on participation" (p.222).

The scholarly literature reveals very little about the relationship between elite sport and club participation. Gratton, Shibli and Coleman (2006) suggest a model for evaluating sport events which investigates impact in four areas: economic impact, media and sponsor evaluation, benefits for host communities and sport development. The economic impact of sport events is well covered by an extensive body of literature (Chalip & Leyns, 2002; Daniels & Norman, 2003; Gratton, Dobson & Shilbi, 2000; Gratton et al., 2006; Hall, 1992; Hoddur & Leistriz, 2006; Sandy, Sloane & Rosentraub, 2004; Taks, Giriginov & Boucher, 2006). Media and sponsor evaluation studies tend to focus on increased media profile for the sport (Taks et al., 2006); creating successful events based on audience numbers (Chalip, 2004; Slack,

2004) and sponsorship (Slack, 2004). Benefits for the host community focus on gains for the host cities and in particular the tourism and hospitality industries in those geographic areas (Gibson, 1998; Hinch & Higham, 2004; Ritchie & Adair, 2004; Robertson, 2006; Schwarz & Hunter, 2008; Taks et al., 2006). In comparison to these three areas, the sport development literature is limited. The event-sport development literature is primarily concerned with the provision of facilities in a host area and the impact an event or events have on sporting infrastructure or policy (Costa, 2007; Giriginov, 2008; Shilbury & Deane, 2001).

The relative dearth of event-sport development literature reflects the confused understanding of sport development as a concept. Sport development is multi-faceted. First, sport development includes the process or activity of increasing the number of people playing a particular sport. This can be described as grassroots or mass participation. Secondly, the expression also encompasses the development of players into competent, highly skilled or elite players for international competition (Malcolm, 2008; Shilbury et al., 2008; Sotiriadou, Quick & Shilbury, 2006). This study focuses in the first aspect of sport development.

There is growing recognition of the need to move beyond the measurement of event impacts to the measurement of event legacies. Event impact evaluation merely assesses whether or not the event is successful in terms of its short-term effects. Gratton et al. (2006) suggest that with the increasing complexity and aims of major events, evaluations should evolve to understand the "likely legacies of events long after any medals have been presented" (p.57). Preuss (2007) develops this concept further with a definition of legacy as "irrespective of the time of production and space, legacy is all planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible structures created for and by a sport event that remain longer than the event itself" (p.211).

Commensurate with the improved understanding of the difference between impacts and legacies is an increased understanding of leveraging (O'Brien & Chalip, 2007). Leveraging is an attempt to create a pre-planned impact. The expression 'leveraging' is used in many sectors, each defining the concept differently. The key points that arise from these definitions are that leveraging is intentional, requires some energy or impetus and maximizes the use of some asset for greater benefit. When used in the context of events, the concept remains vague to the point of being contested (Preuss, 2007). Consequently, the definition of the term is often implied

through usage and context rather than specifically stated. An early author, Chalip (2004), describes leveraging very generally as taking action that seeks to “maximize the long-term benefits from events” (p.228). However leveraging is more than simply planning.

In this study, leveraging is used to refer to deliberate action taken to achieve an impact that is pre-planned and co-ordinated, not just evaluated after the event. Leveraging requires some intentional desire to create an impact by utilizing some aspect of the event for longer-term benefit. Whilst the study focuses on the benefit to sport clubs, leveraging can involve any organisation within the traditional sport structure – the club, regional sport organisation or national sport organisation.

There is little literature that specifically covers the extent to which sport events can be leveraged for the benefit of participation in the sport or clubs. The literature also tends to analyse mega events such as the Olympic Games. There are numerous studies researching Olympic Games (Andranovich, Burbank & Heying, 2001; Brown & Massey, 2001; Chalip, 2004; Essex & Chalkley, 1998; Faulkner, Chalip, Brown, Jago, March & Woodside, 2001; Glynn, 2008; Green, 2007; O'Brien, 2005; Poynter & MacRury, 2009; Preuss, 2007; Ritchie, 2000; Toohey, 2010; Waitt, 2003; Webb, 2001). Major events such national tournaments receive less attention in literature.

The potential link between elite, professional events and grassroots participation remains relatively unexplored. Little is known about whether major events positively influence participation. Even less is known about whether marketing initiatives are capable of leveraging a major event for increased participation/membership of local sport clubs and the role that sport clubs can play in undertaking this.

O'Brien and Chalip (2007) propose a framework for evaluating the success of leveraging a sport event for the social benefit of a community. O'Brien and Chalip comment that most literature discusses whether a past event has impact. They suggest that their framework can be used to look to the future and identify how leveraging might be improved at an event to create social change in a community. Increasing participation in sport is widely documented as a social issue for New Zealand (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson, Stewart & Westerbeek, 2009; Nicholson, Hoye & Houlihan, 2011; Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2009). Sport clubs are part of

the community. Therefore, the framework could be applied to identify ways of increasing participation in sport clubs.

## **1.2 Research question and approach**

This research investigates how local clubs can leverage a major event for increased club-level participation. Within the New Zealand context, sport is organised so that sport clubs are independent entities. However, the typical structure is that a regional body supports a group of clubs and can offer advice and guidance about the running and organisation of a club. Promotional activities tend to be guided by regional bodies. For competitive sport, clubs are required to work within the formal framework in their region. When considering how a club can leverage an event, it is important to recognise that this may be done in conjunction with a regional body. Both sport clubs and regional bodies can be regarded as local sport organisations.

A participatory action research process underpins this study. The key features of such an approach are its cyclical nature and the collaborative approach between the researcher and participants. The action research process begins with a reconnaissance stage which identifies a current problem. The researcher then assists the participants to identify, implement and evaluate an intervention to solve the problem.

The principle question of this research asks ‘how can local sport clubs leverage increased participation/membership from a major sport event in their local community’. This question is addressed by investigating the following four sub-questions:

1. What are the leveraging alternatives (actions) available to a local sport organisation seeking to increase participation/membership?;
2. What do local sport organisations consider the most feasible option?;
3. How could this option be implemented?; and
4. What impact did this outcome have on participation/membership?

Within the action research methodology, qualitative research methods are utilised. Data are collected using both individual interviews and focus groups with club personnel. Additional data are collected in interviews with the relevant national sport organisation and two regional sport organisations.

As is common in action research, a mini-cycle is identified to investigate a theme that is not directly part of the research focus, but has relevance to the question.

In this study, the mini-cycle explores the relationship between spectators and participants within a given sport. Document analysis forms an important part of this mini-cycle and also provides valuable data that contributes to the evaluation of the intervention.

This research question is explored within the context of the two international tennis tournaments held in Auckland, New Zealand in January each year. These are the ASB Classic, a second-tier tournament in the WTA tour and the Heineken Open, a tournament in the ATP World Tour 250 series (an event in which the winner receives 250 ranking points). Both tournaments are organised by Tennis Auckland, one of two regional tennis organisations in Auckland, and one of eleven in New Zealand. Tennis Auckland owns the Heineken Open tournament, whilst Tennis New Zealand owns the ASB Classic. Twenty-three clubs affiliated with Tennis Auckland participate in the study.

### **1.3 Researcher**

In any research project it is important for a researcher to declare any experience or involvement that could result in bias within the project (Cresswell, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). This is particularly important for an action research project. The researcher of this project first attended Auckland's professional tennis tournaments in 1972 and has followed them with varying intensity of interest during the intervening years. In recent years the researcher has held a season ticket to the Heineken Open tournament and has purchased daily tickets for the ASB Classic. The researcher is not a frequent tennis participant but follows both the men's and the women's tours closely through live television coverage and the print media. The researcher has never been a member of a tennis club and has never held an administrative position within a tennis club.

### **1.4 Thesis structure**

This thesis is organised into eight chapters and follows the action research process. This chapter provides the background to the thesis and introduction. The second chapter investigates the existing body of knowledge relating to sport events and the ability of stakeholders to leverage positive outcomes from events. The third chapter discusses the methodology and method used for the research. Chapter four provides the context of tennis in Auckland, New Zealand. This is followed by findings from

the reconnaissance phase in chapter five and the identification of the intervention (a way of providing a link between the tournaments and clubs) in chapter six. Evaluation of the intervention is presented in chapter seven. This is then synthesised with the findings from the reconnaissance phase to form conclusions in the final chapter and suggestions for future development.

## **Literature Review**

The purpose of this research is to investigate how local sport clubs can leverage a major sport event for increased participation and/or membership of their club. This chapter provides the conceptual framework and background to concepts encapsulated in the issue of the impact that major sport events can have on clubs.

The chapter begins with a discussion about the declining participation rate for tennis in New Zealand and the impact of ‘pay-for-play’ or casual participation at the expense of club membership.

A review of literature then identifies a number of key concepts related to the impact or legacy of sport events. Models for evaluating impact and legacy are discussed. After considering the overall impact of an elite sport event, the more specific area of sport development is considered. Within sport development, this review then focuses on the impact of elite events on non-elite participation. This relationship is investigated in the context of an attraction, retention and nurturing model developed in Australia. This leads to discussion about the relationship between sport spectators and participants, along with a model of consumer involvement with an event (the escalator concept). A similar pathway of participation developed from an action research study in Canada demonstrates the use of leveraging to increase participation.

Finally, the concept of leveraging an event to create an impact or legacy is examined. The discussion begins with an attempt at defining leveraging. Two plans and models are described that have been used previously to create a pre-planned impact for events.

### **2.1 Tennis participation trends in New Zealand**

The importance of sport clubs in the development and management of sport in New Zealand is recognised. (Hoye et al., 2009; Nicholson et al., 2011). Tennis is no exception despite a significant number of tennis players not being members of tennis clubs. Key adult participation trends in New Zealand tennis are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Tennis participation and club membership in New Zealand, 2000/2001 and 2007/2008.

|   | Years     |           |
|---|-----------|-----------|
|   | 2000/2001 | 2007/2008 |
| Participation <sup>a</sup>                                  | 317,900   | 304,675   |
| Club membership <sup>b</sup>                                | 42,526    | 42,281    |
| Members as % of participants                                | 13.4%     | 13.9%     |
| <sup>a</sup> Source: Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2009 |           |           |
| <sup>b</sup> Source: Tennis New Zealand, 2010               |           |           |

As shown in Table 1, 304,675 adults participated in tennis for the 2007/2008 period. This represents approximately 9.3% of the adult New Zealand population (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2009). Whilst this seems high, the threshold for participation, played at least once in the past year, is relatively low. In the seven years between studies, the number of people participating in tennis has declined by 4% from 317,900 to 304,675. The proportion of tennis participants that are club members remained relatively stable, 13.4% in 2000/1 compared with 13.9% seven years later.

The New Zealand trends occur in other countries. Decline in tennis participation has been reported at some stage in the last decade in United States (Baigent, 2006; Woods, 2007); Canada (Vail, 2007); England (Sport England, 2010) and France (Baigent, 2006). The increasing importance of casual play is reported in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004, 2010). In addition to participation and club membership, Australian Bureau of Statistics also reports a decline in the frequency of playing tennis in the past decade.

The low percentage of club membership is indicative of a high level of informal participation on a casual basis often described as ‘pay-as-you-play’ or ‘pay-for-play’. ‘Pay-for-play’ is a concept whereby a player pays to use sport facilities when they wish to play a particular sport. There is no membership fee. Frequently they are paying a higher rate than if they are a member. However, they have no commitment to use the facilities on a regular basis. They also do not have any obligation to contribute to the upkeep or maintenance of the facilities or to the club. The attraction of this concept is summarised by the New Zealand Sports



Development Inquiry Committee (1985) as being convenience and lack of commitment.

The 'pay-for-play' concept is reported as having started in New Zealand in the 1980s (Nicholson et al., 2011). The New Zealand Sports Development Inquiry Committee (1985) recognised the impact on clubs:

"It may strip clubs of their base of recreational participation. In most sport clubs it is the recreational or ex-players who are the backbone of administration — the fundraisers, the umpires and the supporters of sport. The development of commercially based sport may progressively draw larger numbers of these people away from sport clubs, especially where they have been put off by the interminable fundraising duties and other such pressures common in clubs" (p.98).

A decade later, the New Zealand Hillary Commission (1997), the government agency responsible for sport from 1987 to 2001, confirmed the arrival of 'pay-for-play' and its impact on volunteerism in its 1997 - 2000 Strategic Plan. However, in the same plan the commission maintained:

"Clubs are the lifeblood of sport and active leisure in every New Zealand community. Clubs play a key role in every community, and provide the opportunities for children and adults to participate in almost every form of sport and active leisure" (p.11).

By 2009, Sport and Recreation New Zealand (the successor to the Hillary Commission, usually known as SPARC) had noted that the declining strength of clubs remains an issue. "Future growth will be around pay-for-play entertainment options which will see growth in smart clubs and a continued decline in others" (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2009, p.7).

Decreasing club membership means the responsibility for maintaining the club and its facilities inevitably falls on a smaller number of people. Some clubs respond to this by employing staff to undertake tasks previously done by volunteers (Hoye et al., 2009). Overall membership decline reduces the potential contribution by clubs to the development of a sense of community and social capital (Coalter, 2007; Hoye et al., 2009). The very nature of 'pay-for-play' offers the player an independence from a club network or structure that undermines the development of communities and the social benefits of those communities. For this reason club membership is important.

With the increase in 'pay-for-play', clubs can no longer rely on players to become members. The New Zealand Hillary Commission warned as early as 2000

that "organisations offering sport and active leisure opportunities must not assume they have a captive market. They have to earn people's commitment of interest, time and money with service and attention to fulfilling needs" (New Zealand Hillary Commission, cited in Nicholson et al., 2011, p.240).

A quantitative survey undertaken by Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2009) shows the range of sport and recreation activities with which tennis participants engage. On average adult tennis participants take part in a total of 9.3 sport and recreation activities. The range of activities is very wide. Tennis participants of both genders engage in swimming, walking, jogging/running, equipment-based exercise, gardening and cycling. Men take part in golf, saltwater fishing, outdoor cricket, table tennis and football. Women participate in aerobics, pilates/yoga and tramping. Whilst the threshold for participation is low (participated once in the past 12 months), it is the same for all activities.

More importantly, tennis participants are more active in other fields than the national average. The average number of 9.3 activities for tennis participants compares with 4.6 for the national average (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2009). Clearly, tennis clubs are in competition with other organisations for people's time and commitment.

## **2.2 Impact and legacies of sport events**

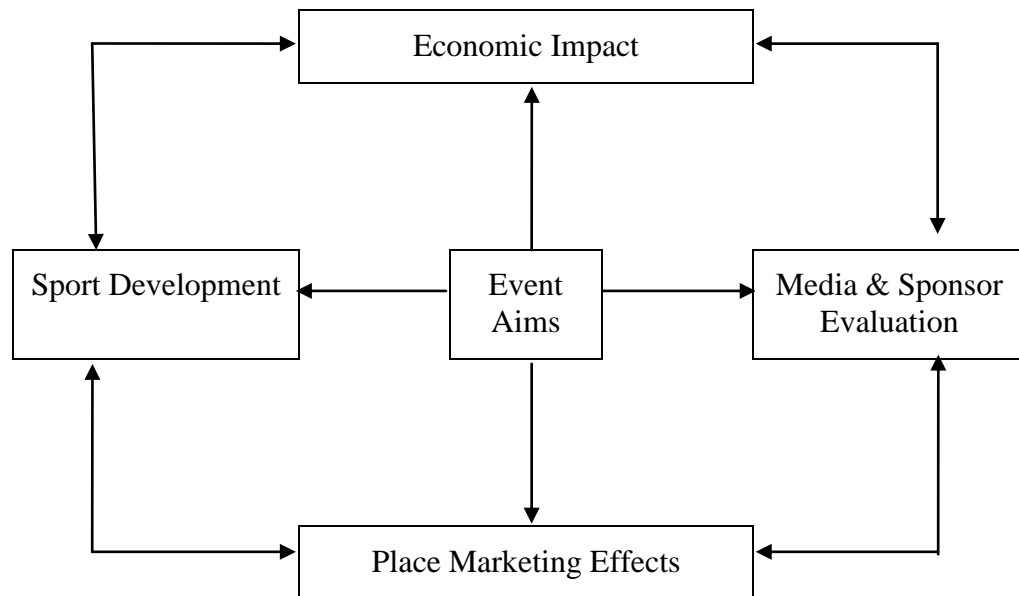
Increased participation in a sport is often assumed to be an impact of a sport event. The impact of an event is the effect that the event has on a community or area of business. More significantly an event may have a legacy, the definition of which is hotly debated (Preuss, 2007; Gratton & Preuss, 2007). A common concept in the definitions of legacy is some substantial outcome with long-term effect (Ritchie, 2000). MacRury and Poynter's (2009) work on Olympic Games acknowledges the difficulty with definition when saying that " 'Legacy' refers to a number of things — more or less precisely. Legacy is a structured and structuring set of objectives and outcomes emerging from the Games events — roads, infrastructure and new (physical) network". They describe infrastructural benefits as 'hard' legacies which differ from 'soft' legacies. Soft legacies arise from "inspirational, moral or affective gains...improvement to the material and spiritual well-being ...new and established personal, social and cultural, global and local networks" (p.315).

Event evaluation studies tend to cover large mega events and small local events. There are numerous studies looking at both the impact and legacy of Olympic Games, which is not surprising given the magnitude of investment in hosting of the Olympics. As the event is held every four years, there is opportunity for case study comparison. Most studies into Olympic events focus on economic and infrastructure (Andranovich et al., 2001; Chalip, 2004; Essex & Chalkley, 1998; Glynn, 2008; O' Brien, 2005; Poynter & MacRury, 2009; Preuss, 2007; Ritchie, 2000). There is significant investigation into large events described as 'mega' or 'hallmark' events. Examples of these are Super Bowl, Formula One Grand Prix, Motorcycle Grand Prix, marathons, football, NASCAR (Erikson & Kushner, 1999; Green, 2001; Fredline, Jago & Deery, 2003; Taks et al., 2006). There is also work on the impact of small-scale localised competitions such as college sport (Gibson, Willming & Holdnack, 2003).

However, little investigation exists on sport that fall in between mega events and small local competitions, such as lower tier tournaments, which are part of an international professional programme. There is also little literature on annual events. Preuss (2007) notes this gap in research and comments that impact differs if an event is staged in the same place a second time. Preuss maintains the difference is due to the event development and the change in environment over time.

A comprehensive approach to evaluation of events is proposed by Gratton et al. (2006). Shown in Figure 1, this approach places the event aims at the centre of evaluation of economic impact, media and sponsorship, the effect on the host city or country (Place Marketing Effects) and sport development.

Figure 1. Balanced scorecard approach to evaluating events.



Gratton, Shibli and Coleman in Horne and Manzenreiter (Eds.), 2006, p54.

Consideration of literature in each area shows an extensive body of work discussing the economic impact for the local region (Daniels & Norman, 2003; Gratton et al., 2000; Gratton et al., 2006; Hall, 1992; Hoddur & Leistritz, 2006; Sandy et al., 2004; Taks et al., 2006). Literature on the media and sponsorship focuses on creating successful events based on audience numbers (Chalip, 2004; Slack, 2004); sponsorship (Slack, 2004) and increased media profile for the sport (Taks et al., 2006). The effect on host cities and in particular the tourism and hospitality industries in those geographic areas is investigated by Gibson(1998); Hinch and Higham(2004); Ritchie and Adair (2004); Robertson (2006); Schwarz and Hunter (2008); Taks et al. (2006).

All areas of evaluation in the model in Figure 1 are extensively covered by literature, except for sport development. When the sport itself is discussed, the focus is usually on infrastructure and policy (Costa, 2007; Giriginov, 2008; Shilbury & Deane, 2001). Creation of new sport facilities is a significant feature of large events such as Olympic Games (Webb, 2001; Glynn, 2008).

Brown and Massey's (2001) comprehensive literature review prior to the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games concludes that sport development is the most neglected area of event evaluation. They identify six major subject areas concerning the impact of major or hallmark events. These areas include economic

impact; tourism; social impact; legacies; urban regeneration and sport participation and development. "The economic studies clearly outnumber the other five areas and sport participation and development in particular" (p.233).

The lack of focus on sport development may be due to the operational nature of many models of evaluation. Hiller's (1998, p.49) linkage model describes events as "part of a chain of relationships": forward relationships with hospitality establishments, backwards relationships with media outlets and finally looking at the outcome on the city. No mention is made of the infrastructure or organisation within the sport itself. None of the models of evaluation suggested by Klap (2006) makes any mention of involvement or participation in the sport or whether clubs and similar bodies benefit from the event. Evaluation focuses solely on the event itself. In Klap's model of input-throughput-output, six outputs are identified for follow-up or evaluation: staff experiences, impacts on equipment and facilities, profits, client experiences, sponsor exposure, plan modification.

Event management literature similarly focuses on the event itself. For most events, the suggested process is cyclical: plan the event, hold it, evaluate it and use the evaluation to plan later events. Thus recommendations for the future are based on the past and consideration of sport development continues to be absent from the process.

Several examples of event evaluation demonstrate the use of models described above. Webb's (2001, p.163) large-scale review of the 2000 Olympic Games includes an evaluation of "The legacy of the 'best games ever'" with little mention of sport in Australia. The legacies discussed relate to the building of venues, the environmental impact, industrial relations, operational issues, transport infrastructure, sponsors and the image of Australia. This may be a result of the nature of respondents in the study. Of the 88 interviews, fewer than five interviews involve people belonging to or representing sport organisations.

It may also be that the goal of Olympic events is commonly focussed on infrastructure. Glynn's (2008) evaluation of Olympic Games summarises the goal and outcome of several Olympic Games. Development of facilities and the absence of sport development are key features of that summary.

Nevertheless, Gratton et al. (2006) suggest that sport development is important and should be included in the aim and evaluation of events.

### **2.3 Impact of events on sport development**

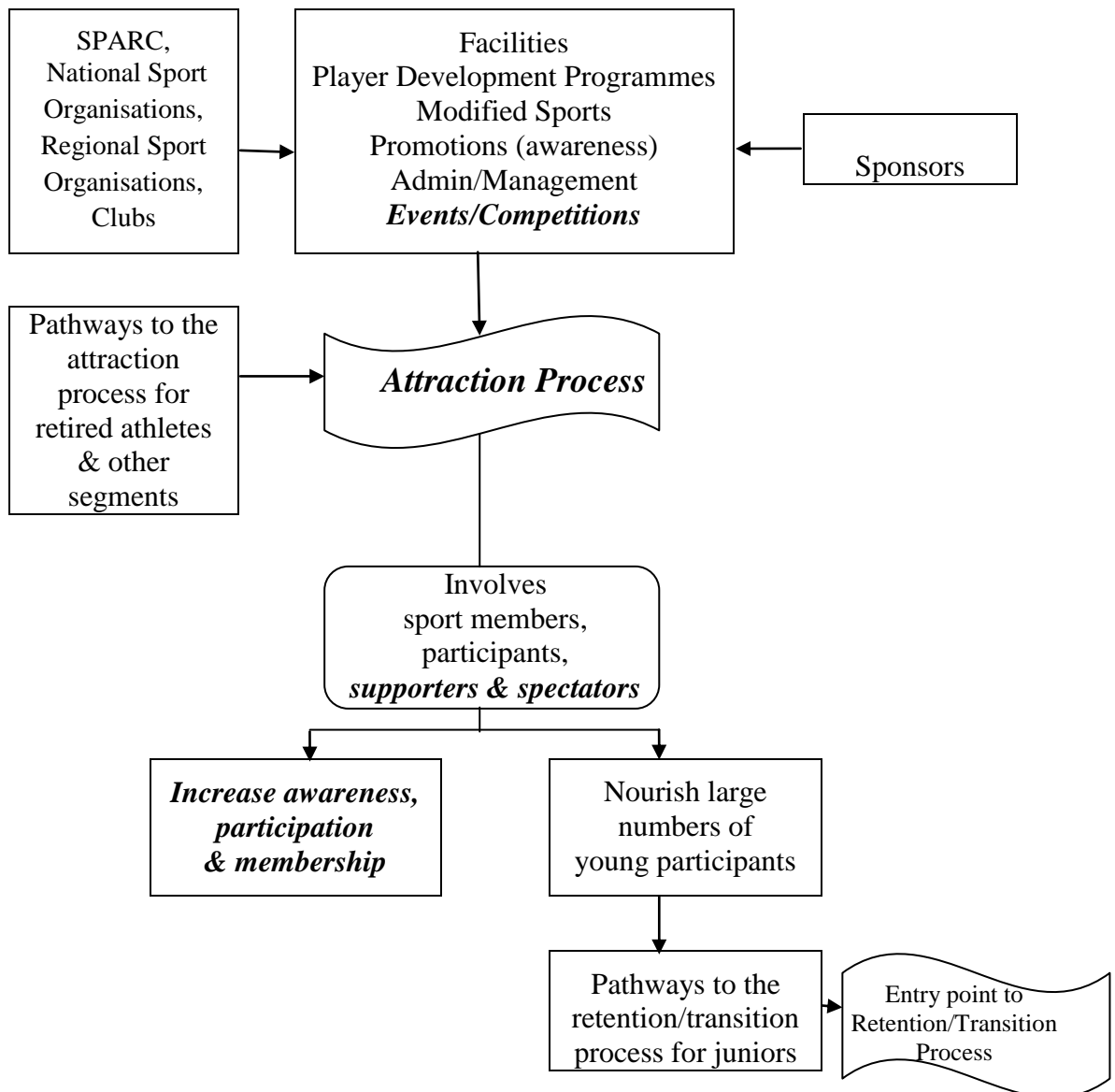
A key concern of sport development is to increase participation, either through new players or increased involvement of existing players. This encompasses both increasing mass participation and developing elite sports people (Malcolm, 2008; Sotiriadou et al., 2006; Sotiriadou, Shilbury and Quick, 2008). The connection between mass participation and elite sport development is debated (Green, 2007; Toohey, 2010).

A sport development pyramid traditionally shows mass participation as the foundation with players moving up the pyramid to excellence and elite performance (Shilbury, Deane and Kellet, 2006; Sotiriadou et al., 2008; Woods, 2007). Shilbury et al. (2006) question the assumption that players progress up the pyramid. It is often hypothesised that watching elite sport can inspire young athletes to imitate performances and aspire to elite participation (Woods, 2007). In this way elite sport events are assumed to have an inspirational role in sport development.

Sotiriadou et al.'s (2008) study of sport development in Australia shows that personnel in national sporting organisations believe that competitions/events are important for development of elite athletes. These organisations believe events are also important for promoting the sport and increasing its profile. Sotiriadou et al. argue that the sport pyramid is too simplistic as it is descriptive and does not demonstrate the complex process of development.

Based on research amongst national sporting organisations, Sotiriadou et al. (2008) document a process of attraction, retention/transition and nurturing players. Each of these stages is a process in itself. The attraction process is depicted in Figure 2 and includes stakeholders and strategies relevant to the attraction stage which has a twofold aim of increasing awareness, participation and membership of general participants and of nourishing large numbers of young participants who may later become elite athletes.

Figure 2. The attraction process.



Adapted from Sotiriadou, Shilbury and Quick, 2008, p260.

In the figure above, stakeholders relevant to this study are highlighted. Events and competitions are a strategy for attracting participants. Spectators and supporters are part of the process that has the aim of increasing awareness, participation and membership. The organisations listed at the top of the figure are those relevant to the New Zealand context.

The link between one stage of the process and the other stages is a key principle of framework. From the attraction stage is a link or entry point to the next stage of retention/transition from the attraction of young participants. There is also a potential link from the nurturing/elite process to the attraction stage. Sotiriadou et al.

(2008) show this as the influence of retired athletes remaining in the sport in some capacity. However they question the claim of national sport organisations that the inspirational exposure and publicity generated by elite sport is also pivotal in boosting participation. Sotiriadou et al. (2008) cite several sport organisations in Australia that make this claim in their annual reports.

#### **2.4 The impact of elite sport events on sport participation**

Whilst national sport organisations in Australia may perceive increased participation to be a benefit from elite events, there is very little conclusive research or literature to demonstrate this effect (Brown & Massey, 2001; Sotiriadou et al., 2006; Sotiriadou et al., 2008). It is generally assumed that overall participation in sport will increase after an elite event (Haynes, 2001; Kolt, 2008).

There have been anecdotal accounts of increases in participation of sport after significant media coverage for events such as the Sydney Olympics. However these are often reported to be short-lived. Such increases are attributed to television viewing (Haynes, 2001). There are a number of difficulties in establishing a direct relationship. The broad definition of participation and the short-lived nature of participation increases are problematic in determining longer-term effects of sport events (Nicholson et al., 2011). Even if sport participation is measured before and after an event, there is difficulty in attributing the change to the event itself. It may be hard to determine the role the event played in causing the change (Brown & Massey, 2001; Gratton et al., 2006).

If an increase in participation can occur when spectators of an event (either live or through media coverage) become inspired to play the sport, it is important to understand the relationship between participants and spectators. If most of the spectators are already playing the sport, there is lower potential for an event to increase participation. The relationship between sport spectators and sport participants is unclear. Shank (2004) and Woods (2007) write separately about consumers and spectators as if they are separate groups of people. Shank maintains that the overlap between participants and spectators must be considered on sport-by-sport basis. Examples of various sport are given in several case studies. For some sport such as golf and basketball, there is considerable overlap between spectators and participants (Milne, Sutton & McDonald, 1996, cited in Shank, 2004, p140). For other sport such as running and NASCAR the two groups are almost mutually



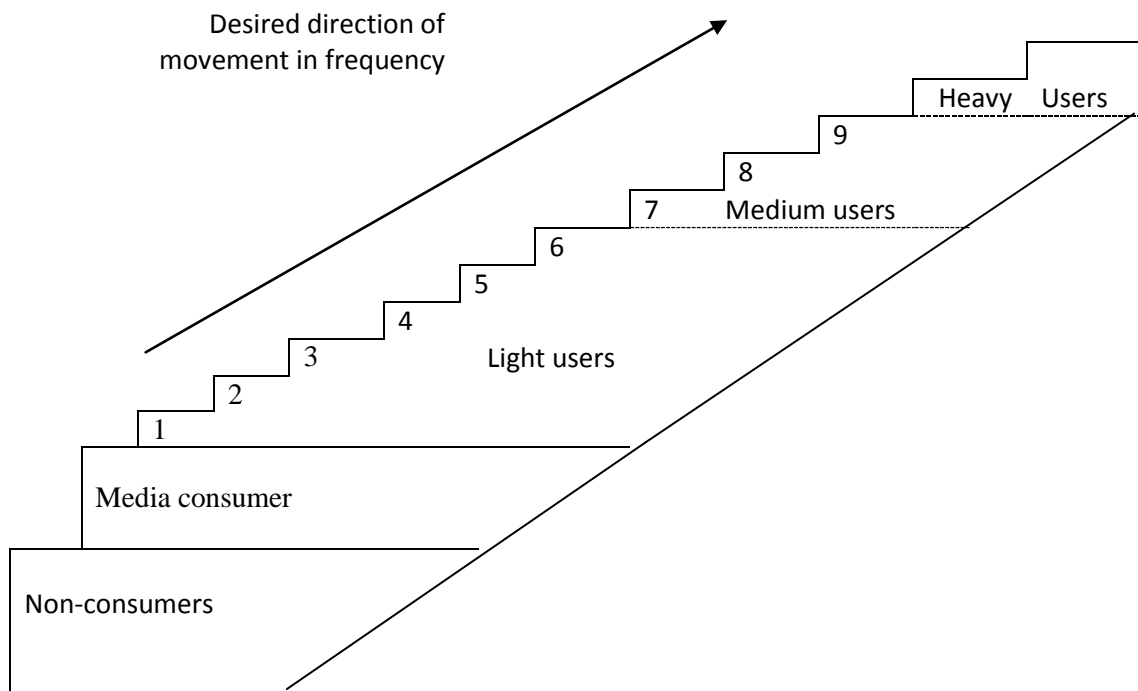
exclusive (Shank, 2004). This is further backed up by a general study from Burnett, Menon and Smart (1993) which concludes that “based on the results of .....studies, sport participants and sport spectators seem to represent two distinct markets that should be examined separately by sport marketers” (pp.21-33). Green (2001) and Woods (2008) on the other hand are certain that it is more common to find spectators involved in some additional way such as playing, coaching, being a referee, administering or some other voluntary capacity.

Tennis may have a high level of overlap between spectators at events and the participant base. A study of spectators at the Roland Garros Tournament (historically known as the ‘French Open’) shows that the majority of spectators at this tournament also played tennis (Baigent, 2006). It is not known whether this would apply to other Grand Slam or smaller tournaments.

The lack of clarity about whether there is distinction between spectators and participators also seems to carry over to consumer models. Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (2007, p.43) describe a “frequency escalator for sport attendance and participation” which is shown in Figure 3. However, their description of the consumer groups is applied only to spectators. In this model the population can be classified into non-consumers, indirect (or media) consumers and consumers. Within the consumer group there is a continuum from light to medium to heavy ‘consumers’. Light attendees attend one or two games, medium attendees attend 10% – 30% of games whilst the heavy users are the season ticket holders.

Mullin et al. (2007) maintain that it is easier to move people ‘up’ the escalator than ‘on’ to it and therefore suggest that more emphasis should be placed on gaining greater commitment from existing event attendees than on gaining new attendees. They also advocate that whilst it is important to move people up the escalator over time, it is also important to limit the possibility of people falling off or moving down the escalator.

Figure 3. The frequency escalator for sport attendance and participation.



Adapted from Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 2007, p 43.

This model has several strengths. An advantage of the concept over traditional segmentation is that it allows for movement between and within consumer groups. For the consumer groups a continuum is used. The traditional segmentation process can force consumers into discrete groups (for example light, medium and high users). A continuum acknowledges these groups but also that the boundary between each is somewhat arbitrary.

A further strength of this model is that its origin is known and supported by identified research from the National Sporting Goods Association Survey, syndicated research in the United States of America. The development of the model by Mullin in 1978 is based on a staircase concept originally developed by Bill Giles.

The model also incorporates both media consumers and people who physically attend events. However, the model seems to imply these groups are distinct and that media consumers differ from spectators at an event. This may not be the case. A spectator is able to watch the event in the media as well as attending in person.

If Mullin's model is applied to participation rather than spectatorship, it may look similar to that developed by Vail (2007) for Sport Canada. The model for

Building Tennis Communities is a continuum or tennis pathway which consists of four levels of participation activity. The levels are 'try the game', for example, having a go at a community or fun event; 'learn the game' by taking some lessons; 'play the game' on a more regular basis and finally 'compete in matches'. Community champions are encouraged to work with tennis and community organisations (partners) to introduce participants to the game and then move them along the tennis pathway. Many of the champions in the study take a creative approach of attaching a tennis programme to an ongoing community event rather than staging a specific tennis event. The time spent on the project by some champions is high. However, Vail reported that, with their passion for tennis, few complained about the time spent.

The purpose of the study is to develop a community strategy for increasing participation. The action research approach is utilised, with qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the number of participants at each stage of the pathway. Tennis Canada report that the next focus is on identifying retention techniques (Vail, 2007). Vail's study uses some of the concepts of the attraction stage of Shilbury et al. (2008) as described in Figure 2, with the next step being a link to a retention process. In their study, Sport Canada identifies an approach for using events as a lever to increase sport participation.

## **2.5 Leveraging events to create an impact**

Whilst an impact can result from an unplanned benefit, the purpose of leveraging is to try to create an impact. The concept is utilised in many sectors. The earliest usage of the term is in relation to the mechanical action of a lever or "the mechanical advantage or power gained by employing a lever" (Oxford University Press, 1989, p.868). Business literature generally tends to use the expression with reference to competitive advantage, power or influence (exerting pressure to accomplish something). In marketing it is "an additional benefit which accrues to an individual or organisation by virtue of their position or relationship" (Baker, 1998, p.147). In finance the term is more specifically defined as "any transaction involving derivatives where the payoff is greater than the amount of principal involved" (Moles & Terry, 1997, p.321).

When used in the context of events, the concept has not been clearly defined and is in fact greatly contested (Preuss, 2007). Consequently in most literature the

definition of the term is often implied through usage and context rather than specifically stated. An early author, Chalip (2004), describes leveraging very generally as taking action that seeks "to maximise the long-term benefits from events" (p.228).

Further confusion arises when the term legacy is used in relation to leveraging activities. The United Kingdom government has attempted to define legacy in relation to the forthcoming Olympic Games in London. They maintain that legacy "is not just what happens after the Games, but what we do before and during them to inspire individuals and organisations to strive for the best, to try new activities, forge new links or develop new skills" (DCMS, 2008, p.8. cited in MacRury and Poynter, 2009, p.316). This definition contains many elements more commonly used in relation to leveraging.

Key elements of these definitions are that leveraging from events is a deliberate action towards achieving an impact that is pre-planned and co-ordinated not just evaluated after the event. Leveraging requires some intentional desire to create an impact by utilising some aspect of the event for longer-term benefit.

Leveraging of events is most commonly discussed in relation to sponsorship (Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou & Dounis, 2009; Slack, 2004; Tripodi & Hirons, 2009). Fullerton and Merz (2008) discuss sponsorship alignments that exist between sport events and sport-related goods such as apparel. They further talk about sponsorship arrangements between events and non-sport products such as automobiles and beverages. Sponsors enter into these arrangements to benefit from the event in return for some investment. Thus a sponsor from outside the sport industry is able to gain benefit or leverage from an event. It surely must be possible for a sport organisation with some connection or interest in the event to apply the mentality of a sponsor and plan to create an impact from the event.

It is difficult to achieve this mentality when models for event evaluation omit sport development or lasting impact (Hiller, 1998; Klap 2006). However until clubs or those organisations responsible for the ongoing provision of sport participation opportunities in the host community are included in pre-event planning or post-event evaluation, sport development impacts and legacies will remain at worst ignored and at best under-developed. Grattan et al. (2006) suggest that with the increasing complexity and aims of major events event evaluations should evolve to understand the "likely legacies of events long after any medals have been presented" (p.57).

O'Brien (2006) reports a plan by the Australian Federal Government to leverage the hosting of the Sydney Olympic Games to provide opportunities for business networking and international trade facilitation. The Sydney Olympics leverage plan for Austrade (formerly known as the Australian Trade Commission) is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Steps in Austrade's Olympic leveraging plan.

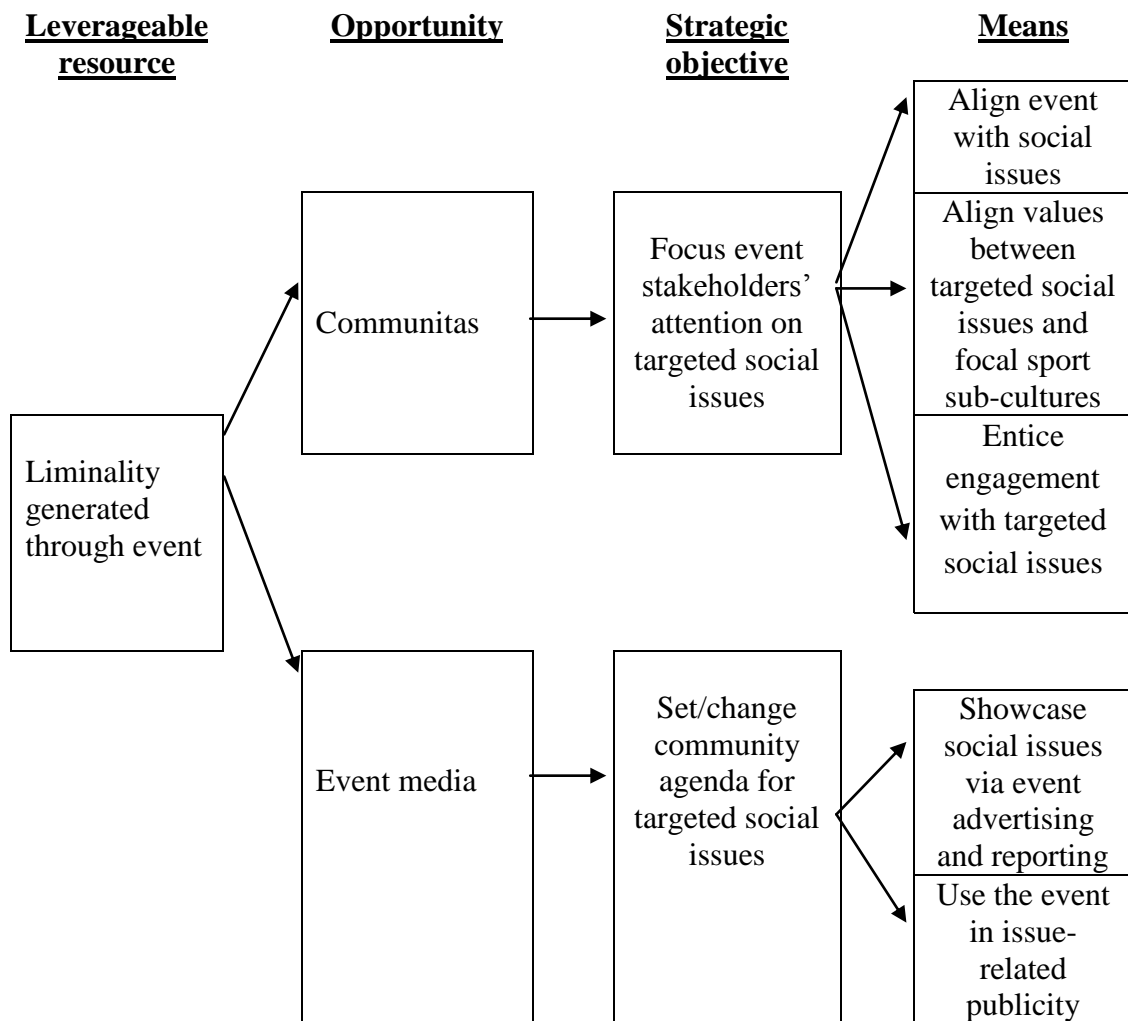
| Step number | Steps of the Event Leveraging Plan   |
|-------------|--|
| 1           | Generate public and private sector support for a networking-based strategic business leveraging initiative   |
| 2           | Develop an initiative to facilitate business networking and relationship development between visiting international business leaders and their Australian counterparts before, during, and after the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games |
| 3           | Make advance identification of, and contact with, international business leaders intending to visit Australia for the Games  |
| 4           | Market the initiative both domestically and internationally  |
| 5           | Implement the initiative   |

O'Brien, 2006, p.247.

An important element of this leveraging plan is the emphasis on networking as a tool for event leverage and relationship development. O'Brien notes that this addresses a concern by Chalip (2004) that there has been little work on "matters that facilitate or impede networking....formation for and through events" (p.20). Ritchie (2000) similarly identifies a methodology involving stakeholder discussion that can be used to develop legacy plans and focuses its application to the Calgary Olympics in 1988 and Salt Lake City Games in 2002.

The Austrade Plan in Table 2 shares similarities with O'Brien and Chalip's (2007) model of social leverage. Key differences between the two approaches are that the steps in Figure 4 are specific actions and secondly, the steps are sequential actions, whereas O'Brien and Chalip give an overview of an explanatory model with no precise indication about how to achieve the objectives.

Figure 4. Model of social event leverage.



Adapted from O'Brien and Chalip, 2007, p.300.

O'Brien and Chalip (2007) are concerned with the social impact of sport events. They take an anthropological perspective discussed by Chalip (2006) who argues that social value emanates from events being fun and celebratory and this can create limonoid experiences, "a sense of the sacred that can emerge from a sport event" (p.229). This then creates a sense of community and energy (communitas). These concepts can be leveraged or used to address a specific social issue either with the community of stakeholders or with the wider world. O'Brien and Chalip emphasise the model is exploratory rather than empirically tested.

With regard to leveraging, Archimedes is often quoted as saying "If you give me a lever long enough and a place to stand, I will change the world" (Korngold, 2005, p.1). The issues that exist for tournaments and sport events are to identify where to stand in the network of relationships amongst sport organisations and also

which aspect of an event can be used as a lever. O'Brien and Chalip's model can be used to link the leverageable aspect of the event to an outcome or objective.

## **2.6 Chapter summary**

This section demonstrates the decline in participation in tennis in New Zealand over the past decade. Casual play or 'pay-for-play' dominates in New Zealand as in other countries. Tennis participants who are members of a sport club are in the minority (only 14% of people who have played tennis in the past year belong to a club). Tennis is in competition with a wide range of other sport and activities as tennis players are also very active in other fields. These characteristics of the tennis environment in New Zealand are also evident elsewhere in the world.

Increased participation in a sport is often assumed to be an impact of a sport event. The assumption that sport events boost participation in host communities is called into question. A review of sport event literature reveals there is considerable literature surrounding large mega events and minimal literature directly related to the impact of an annual national sport event on sport clubs.

There is extensive literature about the economic impact, marketing and sponsorship effects, and host community benefits of large mega events and the Olympic Games. Sport development is the area of event impact consistently absent from literature.

A key concern of sport development is to increase participation, either through new players or increased involvement of existing players. This encompasses both increasing mass participation and developing elite sport people. The attraction stage of a sport development process shows that sport organisations in Australia regard sport events and spectators to be part of the process for increasing mass participation. The connection between mass participation and elite sport development is debated. The attraction process has similarities with Mullin's escalator model of spectators and Vail's pathways for participation.

Sport development is not only absent from impact evaluation, it is also absent from many of the models for event planning and evaluation. It is similarly absent from studies on leveraging.

Organisations have used the concept of leveraging to gain benefits from events. There are many definitions of leveraging in a range of disciplines. The definitions used in sport literature are very general. Key elements of the definitions

are that leveraging from events is a deliberate action towards achieving an impact that is pre-planned and co-ordinated not just evaluated after the event. Leveraging requires some intentional desire to create a impact by utilising some aspect of the event for longer-term benefit.

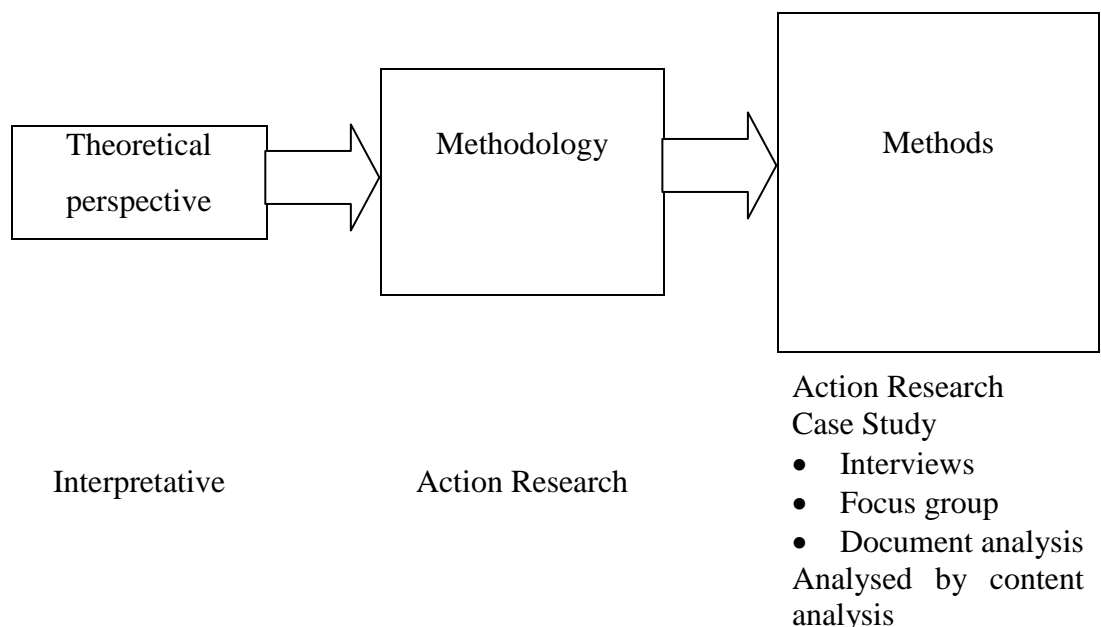
Chalip (2004) and O'Brien (2006) respectively present a model and set of steps that can be used for developing some benefit from an event. O'Brien and Chalip (2007) utilise a number of social concepts and the importance of a sense of community. An important element of O'Brien's plan is the emphasis on networking to develop a leveraging plan. This is particularly important for this study about how major sport events can benefit sport clubs. The steps in O'Brien's plan are not dissimilar to the action research process described in the next chapter. The context of the study is described in the fourth chapter and shows an organisational structure within which successful networking is required for any leveraging effect to be achieved.



## Methodology and Method

This chapter demonstrates the use of participatory action research as both a methodology and a method for undertaking research that can result in change in an organisation or community. Figure 5 shows an overview of the theoretical perspective, methodology and methods, each of which is described in this chapter. The chapter discusses action research as both a methodology and a method and identifies the interpretative paradigm to which action research relates. The key issues involved with this type of research are also discussed. The application of the action research and case study method to this study is explained, including how this led to the development of an invention and how the result of the intervention is analysed. Throughout the chapter, there is discussion about the relevance of the research approach to this topic of how sport events can benefit local sport clubs.

Figure 5. Overview of the theoretical perspective, methodology and research method.



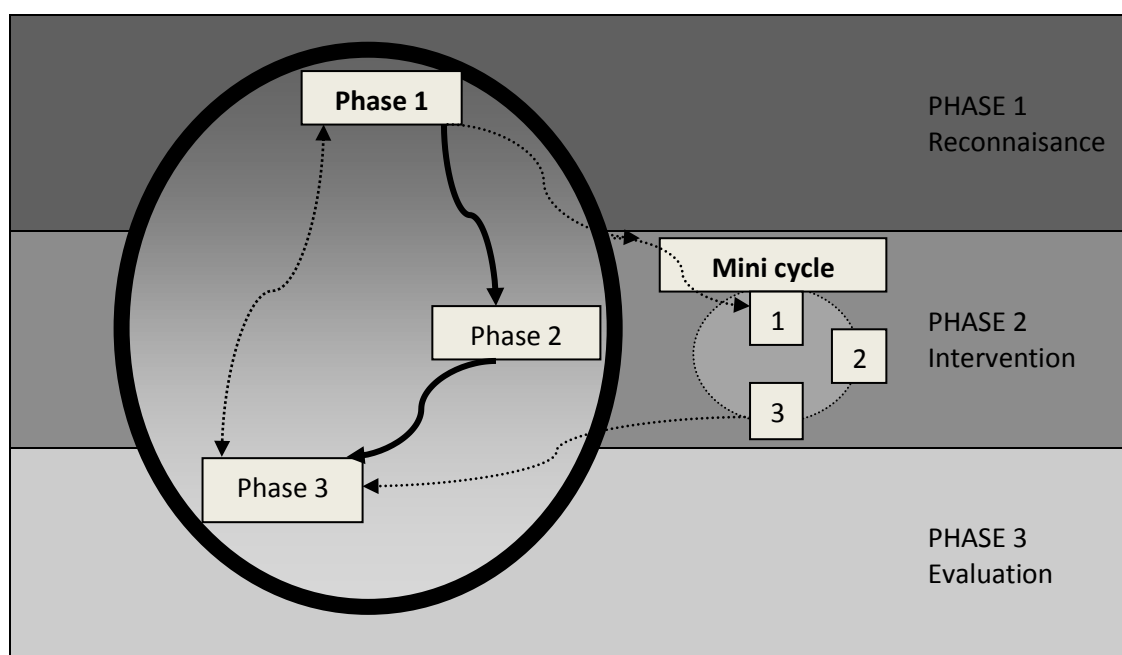
Adapted from Gray, 2004, p. 16.

### 3.1 Action research

Participatory action research is a cyclical, collaborative process (Figure 6). It commences with a reconnaissance phase or evaluation of a current situation. Following problem identification, the researcher assists stakeholders to identify and plan an intervention, that is, a series of actions that will improve a situation or solve a

problem. The intervention is then implemented by the participating group/s; the result or impact of the intervention is assessed or monitored; and reflection on the result can be used to identify future action or a further cycle of research (Costello, 2003; Ferkins, Shilbury & McDonald, 2009; Gray, 2004; Kumar, 2002; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Schwalbach, 2003; Somekh, 2006). Participatory action research is well suited to any situation for which a practical solution is needed (Gray, 2004; Kumar, 2002; Somekh, 2006).

Figure 6. Phases of action research.



Adapted from Cardno, 2003, p.29.

The cycle in Figure 6 incorporates both the concepts of 'action' and 'research' (Kumar, 2005). It utilises the concept of 'research' in Phase One to create knowledge about practice which is then used to inform 'action' in Phase Two with the aim of improving that practice or bringing about some change. Kumar places some emphasis on two key aspects: first the study of an existing situation and secondly the introduction of a new service or intervention. Both the concepts of 'research' and 'action' are needed for this study. The literature review demonstrates a gap in the body of knowledge about how clubs can obtain benefit from sport events, hence the need to create knowledge about practice from studying the existing situation to identify action.

Cardno (2003) defines a methodology as "a set of principles and values that underpin a particular research tradition or approach" (p.11). Whilst action research aligns itself with the qualitative approach, it has its own set of underlying principles. Cardno summarises the key principles into two broad areas: collaboration between the researcher and the respondent; and the importance of critical self-reflection or critique. Other authors such as Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) provide more specific principles. Their principles relate to social process, participation, practicality and collaboration, emancipation (of the subjects) in the research, criticality in interpretation and the reflexive nature of the process. Cardno's broad summary encapsulates the more specific issues raised by authors such as Kemmis and McTaggart.

With its specific set of steps and processes (as noted in Figure 6), action research is also a research method. Various authors describe the steps in slightly different ways. However they all follow a process based on Kurt Lewin's Scheme of Action: planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Cardno, 2003). All authors describe a cyclical or spiral effect whereby the final reflection can lead into a further cycle or spiral of research. Mini-cycles are also possible to investigate an unexpected issue that arises and may not be central, initially, to the main purpose of the research. (Cardno, 2003; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). In this study several issues are raised by the literature review and the reconnaissance phase, the most important of which relates to the intersection between event spectators, tennis participants and tennis club members. Investigation of this relationship is a mini-cycle in this study. The mini-cycle, arising from the reconnaissance phase, is carried out along side the implementation phase and the results are evaluated. A summary of the results is then fed into the final evaluation stage of the main cycle, which draws together information from all phases of the study.

Stakeholder collaboration is a key feature of the action research approach. The researcher works 'with' subjects rather than observing and undertaking research 'on' subjects. The subjects almost become 'co-researchers' as they are involved not only in the research discussions or interviews but also in the interpretation of the findings, the development of an action and the evaluation of that action (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). It is an ideal process for community development (Kumar, 2005). In this case the 'community' has a somewhat complex structure with the three levels of organisation: a national body, regional body and sport clubs. At the start of the

research it was not clear within which level an intervention would be most effective. Through stakeholder collaboration, it was identified as being within the regional body. It was necessary to utilise the organisation's records and data to evaluate the intervention. Undertaking this research without stakeholder collaboration was not only undesirable, but almost impossible.

### **3.2 Interpretative paradigm**

This whole process is most aligned to the interpretative (non-positivist) paradigm. Higgs (1997) sums up the approach as one that uses methodologies to "look at the whole and take account of context of the situation, the timings, the subjective meanings and intentions within the particular situation" (p.7). The overall process of observing, gathering information and identifying patterns or understanding from observation is inherently inductive. Hyde (2000) describes the inductive approach as theory building, as compared with deductive research which he describes as theory testing. This project began in a way that Tolich and Davidson (1999) describe as being typical for interpretative work: "It may begin with a strong personal interest in some topic... Or it may be that there is no formal theory on a particular topic about which you want to understand more" (p.32). Both these criteria apply in this study.

With action research being most aligned to the interpretative paradigm, it is hardly surprising that it often uses qualitative principles. Focus groups or individual interviews are typically used in the exploratory stage to identify an action or intervention. Whilst quantitative measures may be used in the evaluation of the action or intervention, these are still handled from an interpretative point of view. It is not the facts from the quantitative measures that are of predominant importance, but rather the perception or interpretation of the participants and the researcher.

### **3.3 Research quality**

The issue of quality can be addressed using a compilation of criteria drawn from a range of authors in the qualitative field: trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability and transferability (Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Neuman, 1997; Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

The first three of these issues (trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability) are inherently addressed through the action research process of looking at the topic from the perspective of a range of stakeholders and involving these stakeholders in the

feedback cycles and in the interpretation and evaluation of observations and interviews. Credibility and confirmability are criteria of trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Credibility relates to whether a credible interpretation is drawn from the data. Confirmability is how well interpretation is supported by the data. The process of checking interpretation arising from interviews addresses these concerns and is common in qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). A process of triangulation is also often involved in action research, that is, obtaining observations, perceptions and interpretations from a several viewpoints (Cardno, 2003; Neuman, 1999). A clear audit trail of notes from interviews, and the process of feedback and interpretation are important to demonstrate quality processes in the research (Cardno, 2003). These are maintained to demonstrate the connection between the data and interpretation.

Transferability can be difficult to achieve. The context of the research is considered to be of crucial importance in an action research study. Several authors comment about the extent to which this type of study is context-bound (Edwards & Skinner, 2009; Gray, 2004; Greenwood & Levin, 1998). That being the case, applicability to other situations may not be possible or necessary. Action research often has the objective of finding a specific solution in a specific context. However the title of the research (Major sport events and their ability to benefit local sport clubs: A case study of the Auckland professional tennis tournaments) also implies that some transferability to other sport or events is sought.

There is considerable debate about the extent to which findings from qualitative research, action research and case studies can be applied in other settings. This debate is somewhat confused by the use of the more quantitative term 'generalisability' by many authors (Gibbs, 2007; Gray, 2004; Silverman, 2000; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Generalisability refers to "the extent to which the results can be applied to a population as whole" (Gray, 2004, p.399). Badger (cited in Gray, 2004) comments that action research "may only be capable of allowing 'tentative generalisation' " (p.391). Transferability is slightly different, referring to the application of the study findings beyond the context in which the study was undertaken (Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Neuman, 1997; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Edwards and Skinner (2009) use the expression "transcontextual modeling of situations" which they define as "meanings created in one context are examined for their credibility in another situation through conscious reflection on similarities and

differences between contextual features and historical factors" (p.173). Through this process the identification of general principles which can be applied to other settings is considered possible.

In part, the concern about the transferability of action research is based on the possibility that the context may be unique or idiosyncratic (Gray, 2004). The context for this study is neither. As described in the introductory chapter, the structure and management of the sport and event is a typical case for the organisation of New Zealand sport.

### **3.4 Case study research**

With action research being based on a specific context, it is not surprising that it is frequently a case study (Gray, 2004). The method is ideal for answering questions about 'how' or 'why' for contemporary events (Gray, 2004). This enables an in-depth understanding of a particular event. Yin (2009) a seminal author in the use of case studies, identifies four applications of case study research: explanation of relationships that are too complex for a survey; description of the context in which an intervention has occurred; evaluation of an intervention; and exploration of a situation where the outcomes are not clear. All of these applications apply in this study.

This study uses a single-case, embedded approach: one system with multiple units of analysis (Gray, 2004; Yin, 2009). In Yin's (2009) classification, the more concrete units of analysis are the levels of the organisation (national body, regional body and clubs). The less concrete are the relationships between these levels and the project (the sport event). Stake (2005) makes a clear distinction between intrinsic and instrumental case studies. This discussion is similar to that about the transferability of action research. With an intrinsic case study, the interest is in the particular case itself, with no intent or attempt to apply the results in any other setting. With an instrumental case, the purpose is "mainly to provide insight into an issue... The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role" (Stake, 2005, p. 445). Stake (1995) warns that "it is easy to do too much with a case study to make it both intrinsic and instrumental, to make it serve too many audiences" (p. 135). This perspective may not allow for the possibility of an action research case that is predominantly about finding a solution in a particular circumstance and then using some degree of transferability or transcontextual modelling. By definition, an action

research case study is always intrinsic. Using the concepts of transcontextual modelling and transferability, it should also be possible to consider careful application in other similar settings as long as the limitations of doing so are considered.

### **3.5 Role of the researcher**

Literature about all three types of research (qualitative, action research and case studies) places considerable emphasis on the role of the researcher. The facilitating role of the researcher is of central importance (Costello, 2003; Gray, 2004; Kumar, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Somekh, 2006; Stake, 2005).

The collaborative nature of the present study requires a strong emphasis on working relationships. Stake (1999) identifies several possible roles for the researcher in a case study, with the two most applicable to action research being that of interpreter (gatherer of interpretations) and evaluator. Greenwood and Levin (1998) suggest the desirability for the researcher to be a "friendly outsider" (p. 104): providing a balance of critique and support; opening up lines of discussion; assisting an organisation to understand that it has the knowledge to solve problems.

The collaborative nature and high level of involvement of the researcher with the participating organisations opens the possibility for considerable bias in both the data gathering and analysis (Costello, 2003; Gray, 2004; Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Kumar, 2002; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Somekh, 2006; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). It is therefore very important to utilise the measures discussed in section 3.3 to ensure trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability.

For this project the researcher as described in the introductory chapter is a 'very friendly outsider' with a long-term positive relationship with the tournaments. This has a positive impact in terms of gaining trust within the organisations. However, particular diligence in quality control is required, in particular the notion of reviewing data for comments that do not fit themes and conclusions.

### **3.6 Analysis approach**

Wolcott (2009) draws a distinction between analysis and interpretation. He sees analysis as being a more rigid activity compared with the more "freewheeling activity of interpretation" (p.29). The rigidity in analysis comes from the use of

standard processes to observe, measure and communicate the nature of a situation, described by Wolcott as "what is there" (p.29). The output from this activity is largely descriptive.

Interpretation on the other hand attempts to make sense of the 'data' that has been collected and to give it meaning in relation to the problem and objectives. This often uses reflection, consideration of past experience and intuition of the researcher (Wolcott, 2009). It is essential that the less objective interpretation can be distinguished from analysis, which is, separating what was found or said from how it has been interpreted. With the action research process described in section 3.1 and the use of the interpretative paradigm, the possibility of multiple interpretation of the same set of information is possible.

The distinction between analysis and interpretation is not universal amongst authors. A common form of analysis in qualitative research is content analysis. This means that transcripts or notes from interviews are reviewed and comments by the participants are grouped together to identify themes. It is an attempt to provide systematic and objective analysis of text (Gray, 2004). Used in its strictest sense, categories or codes of information are identified and a count is obtained of the frequency each code is used (Denscombe, 2010). When used for data from larger samples such as open-ended questions in a survey, it is a descriptive process. However, as described by Gray the process can involve theoretical codes or categories which provides linkages and patterns. At this point content analysis requires a degree of interpretation.

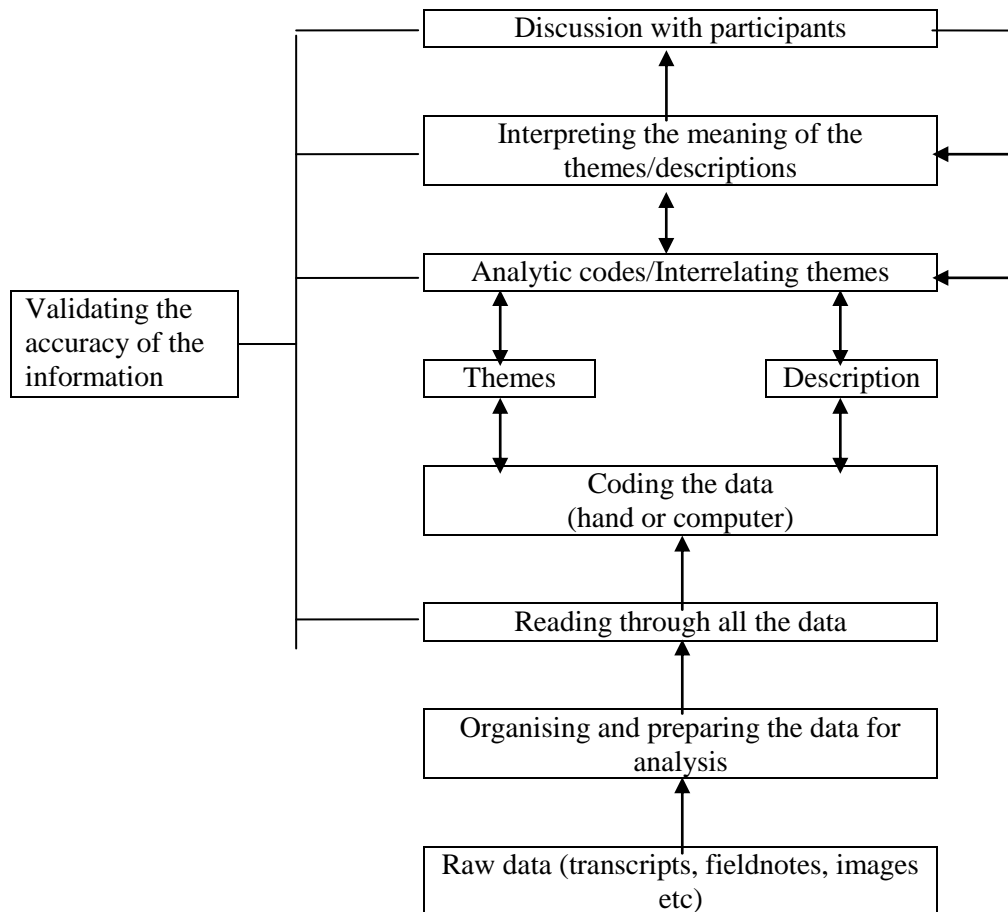
The approach taken by Cresswell (2009) appears to reconcile differing views about whether there is a distinction between analysis and interpretation. As shown in Figure 7, Cresswell distinguishes between codes or themes that are descriptive and those that are thematic. Both of these types of codes are sub-sets of the analytic codes or inter-related themes. Analytic codes are achieved through more complex analysis of identifying concepts or interconnecting themes. These are described by Sandana (2010) as passing the "touch test" (p. 187). Analytic codes cover concepts that are not concrete or able to be 'touched' such as pride in a sport event. This could arise from descriptive codes such as acknowledgement of the number of people attending a sport event, the presence of positive attributions in the media following an event, the TV coverage and ratings for the sport event, the number of overseas



players wishing to participate in an event. The positive comments about these descriptions are thematic codes.

Cresswell's process of creating codes or themes and interpreting them has been adapted for this action research project and is shown in Figure 7. For an action research project, discussion with participants about the results is important and is shown as a final stage in the process. Following this discussion, earlier stages of the analysis may be reviewed and modified. This leads to a further adaption of the process. Authors such as Cresswell tend to show analysis and interpretation as a one-way linear process with codes developed and leading to themes and then on to interpretation. In practice with qualitative research, there is considerable degree of review of earlier stages in the process. During the interpretation stage, it is common to review the list of codes and then review all the data again. This is also important for validation of analysis to make sure that nothing is missed and that the interpretation matches the original data.

Figure 7. Stages of the qualitative analysis process for an action research project.



Adapted from Cresswell, 2009, p. 135.

The coding process can be undertaken by computer programs or manually by a researcher. The computer programs provide output that is somewhat complex to understand. This makes it a little difficult to use such programs for an action research project. It is important the participants in the study can easily understand the data and the way in which it is being interpreted. The use of complex output from computer programs seems to be in conflict with the spirit and philosophy inherent in the action research approach.

### 3.7 Method

The reconnaissance phase in this study begins with discussions at all three levels of the sport: the national body, two regional centres in the geographic area within which the event takes place and clubs from within the 'territory' of those regional organisations. In-depth individual interviews were undertaken with seven employees

and board members from Tennis New Zealand, Tennis Auckland and Tennis Northern. The participants were invited to participate based on their role or position within the organisation. Two focus groups were undertaken at clubs. The clubs were selected by the regional centre in discussion with the researcher. The two clubs have differing characteristics in terms of size, geographic location and philosophy. Both are clubs likely to be interested in considering future development. The interview dimensions and the specific questions for the interviews and focus groups are in Table 3.

Table 3. Reconnaissance phase: Interview dimensions and questions.

| Dimension                           | Questions   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Current situation and past activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) In sport, there is saying that something is good for the game. What does the phrase 'good for the game' mean to you?</li> <li>b) In Auckland there are two professional tennis tournaments in January every year - the ASB Classic and the Heineken Open. It is often suggested that these tournaments are good for the game. Do you agree? In what way?</li> <li>c) What benefits do these tournaments bring to your organisation?</li> <li>d) How important are these tournaments to your organisation?</li> <li>e) In the past has your club taken any initiatives to benefit from the tournaments? In what way?</li> <li>f) There are several organisations in tennis - clubs, regional bodies and Tennis NZ. What role do you think each of the bodies has in ensuring that clubs benefit from the tournaments?</li> </ul> |
| Future possibilities                | How could these two tournaments benefit clubs? What could be done so that clubs could gain an (increased) direct benefit from the tournaments?  |
| Membership and participation        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) How does your club/your organisation currently attract new participation members?</li> <li>b) To what extent are existing players encouraged to play tennis more often?</li> <li>c) Recently a Tennis Open Day was held throughout the Auckland and Northern region. How you feel this went?</li> </ul>   |

The focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed. For the semi-structured interviews near-verbatim notes were taken by the researcher during the discussion. Ongoing contact was maintained with notes from each interview being sent to the relevant participant.

There were subsequent meetings between the researcher and participants with key decision-making roles in Tennis Auckland to discuss a list of issues and develop the intervention. An outline of activity developed at one of the meetings. This outline was presented to a Club Liaison and Support Committee committee meeting for their feedback and comments. Following the meeting, modifications were made to details about the intervention. The researcher and Tennis Auckland personnel then discussed these details further.

At a Club Liaison and Support Committee meeting the concept of the mini-cycle survey first arose. The question of whether tournament spectators played tennis and belonged to tennis clubs was raised. A committee member explained the requirement of one tournament sponsor that an economic impact survey be undertaken and that this survey could include additional questions requested by Tennis Auckland. The committee decided to include questions that identified the tennis playing profile of spectators. With the researcher having previous experience in the market research industry, she was asked to liaise with the research company on behalf of the regional centre. The researcher designed the questions, liaised with the research company and sought final approval from the regional centre. The researcher also helped prepare or review documents for the activity such as promotional entry form.

A number of sources of post-intervention data were available: a profile of event spectators produced by a specialist research company for the event owner as part of a contractual obligation to a funding agency; feedback from participating clubs about the impact of the intervention from a Club Liaison and Support Committee meeting; photographs and material from the tournament programmes. This data were reviewed during five in-depth interviews: three interviews with people involved in the reconnaissance stage and two people who were not familiar with the project. Verbatim transcripts of these interviews were produced. The interview questions are in Table 4.

Table 4. Post intervention interview questions.

| Dimension       | Questions   |
|-----------------|---|
| Overview        | <p>Tennis Auckland had a stand at the two professional tennis tournaments and also information in the tournament programmes.</p> <p>What were your overall thoughts about this activity? (If necessary, explain that this included a map of clubs and information about clubs and Open Days or show photographs of stand and examples of pamphlets, programme).</p>   |
| Evaluation      | <p>(a) What, if anything, do you think this activity has have achieved? What do you think it might achieve?</p> <p>(b) What were the strengths of this activity?</p> <p>(c) If it is to be repeated, what do you think could be done differently?</p> <p>(d) If appropriate, discuss results arising from the activity - what is your view of these results?</p> <p>(e) How well do you feel this activity provided a link between the tournaments and tennis clubs?</p> <p>(f) How well do you think this activity provided a link between the tournaments and the Tennis Open Days?</p> |
| Future activity | <p>(a) Is there anything else you would like to see done to provide a link between the tournaments and tennis clubs?</p> <p>(b) Is there anything else you would like to see done to provide a link between the tournaments and the Tennis Open Days?</p>   |

Following the interviews and focus groups in both the reconnaissance and evaluation stages of the study, the process in Figure 7 (refer p.42) was used to take the data from its raw form to interpretation. The researcher prepared the data for analysis by transcribing the tapes from the focus groups, noting in the margin relevant comments about tone or nature of reply (e.g. whether a response was hesitant or immediate and certain). Where the focus group had engaged in social talk that was not relevant to the topic, it was noted that this had occurred but not recorded verbatim. The researcher observed that this type of social interaction was more prevalent when discussing topics about which the respondents were more hesitant. A copy of all transcripts and interviews records was made so that notes could be made on the copy whilst retaining the original record of the interviews and focus groups are first recorded.

The researcher then read the transcript of focus groups and the near-verbatim records of the individual interviews once through. A list of descriptive codes and themes was identified and the transcripts were re-read, with codes allocated to the copied transcript. Any comments that did not fit the codes were annotated. Following this process, some codes were reviewed or modified to group ideas together or to incorporate ideas that did not fit the initial list of codes. At this stage the speed of response or tone was also considered, especially when using the thematic codes.

Grouping of ideas was undertaken by the researcher and preliminary findings drafted. The meaning of the information was interpreted in relation to objectives and literature. Concepts were identified. A note was kept for the comments that contributed to each concept.

Following discussion of the findings with key participants, the findings were reviewed against the original clean copies of the transcripts. Of particular concern to the researcher was the level of consistency or unanimity of ideas. On the majority of issues there was considerable consistency of opinion. During the final reading of the transcripts, a particular check was made for ideas that disagreed with other responses. The researcher checked the responses carefully to ensure that nothing had been missed. There did appear to be genuine consistency of opinion amongst participants. Any variation in opinion has been discussed in the findings, for example whether the timing of the tournaments is a problem for clubs. (refer section 5.1.2, p.58). The only area in which there was significant disparity of opinion was in relation to perceptions of the club statistics and feedback about one aspect of the intervention. All perspectives have been reported in the findings in some detail (refer section 7.1.2, pp 72 – 75).

In the final stage of analysis, the themes and descriptions were reviewed in the context of the study and related back to objectives of the intervention and the overall study. An audit trail documents was maintained to record the connection between the data and interpretation.

In addition to the audit trail, quality control was also maintained through the checking of transcripts of the discussions by participants. This process addressed the quality issues of trustworthiness, credibility and confirmability: not only were the notes from the interviews checked with the participants, but the interpretation (identification of issues) arising from the interpretation was also checked. Three

levels of the organisation were involved in the research thus providing differing perspectives. In addition, a further meeting was held with the Club Liaison and Support Committee. This committee included representatives from one of the clubs involved in the focus groups as well as representatives of other clubs. This provided additional perspectives on the interpretation of the results.

The whole process of data gathering and management was approved by the AUT Ethics Committee to ensure issues such care of respondents, informed consent, the right to withdraw and the handling of confidentiality were managed appropriately. These documents relevant to these issues are in Appendices A and B.

### **3.8 Chapter summary**

Action research is both a methodology (a set of principles and values that underlies research) as well as a method (a process or set of steps on how to undertake the research). As a three-phase process, it commences with a reconnaissance phase. Following this phase, an intervention is developed and implemented. The result or impact of the intervention is evaluated. Most aspects of the research follow the principles of the interpretative paradigm in gathering observations and then identifying what can be learnt from that understanding.

Qualitative research principles are used to undertake research with subjects who are very much collaborators in the research, sharing the results and assisting with interpretation. This involvement between researcher and participants plays a critical role in the quality control processes used in qualitative research to demonstrate trustworthiness, credibility and confirmability. The checking of data and interpretation with the participants is critical to this process. The role of the researcher as a 'friendly outsider' makes it all the more important that the process of reducing the data to interpreted conclusions utilises fully the quality control processes.

Transferability is a more difficult issue especially for a case study which is both trying to achieve a particular solution and is also make some contribution beyond the context of the original study. With the participating organisations having a typical organisational structure to other sport in New Zealand, some application to other contexts can be carefully considered.

The perceptions of participants are obtained through in-depth interviews and focus groups at the reconnaissance and evaluation phases of the study. The context

of this study is discussed in the next chapter. The results from the reconnaissance phase are in the following chapter. The intervention that arose from this phase then follows and the evaluation of this intervention is discussed in chapter seven.



## **Context**

The previous chapter has detailed the action research process with interviews undertaken with personnel from three levels of tennis organisation. This process identifies an intervention co-ordinated by a regional centre and implemented by clubs. Before discussing the results of the reconnaissance phase in chapter five and the specific intervention in chapter six, this chapter details the context of the study. Specifically the chapter describes the key organisations and their relationships with each other and the tournaments. These organisations all feature in the attraction process shown in Figure 2 (refer p.23).

### **4.1 The national sport organisation**

Consistent with the traditional national-regional-club structure for sport in New Zealand (Hayes, 2006) tennis is governed by a single national organisation, six regional centres and approximately 420 clubs (Tennis New Zealand, 2010). Within this structure are approximately 44 000 individual fee-paying members (Tennis New Zealand, 2010).

Tennis New Zealand is recognised by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) as the organisation responsible for the administration and management of tennis throughout New Zealand. Similarly, Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), the crown entity responsible for sport, recognise it as the National Sport Organisation for tennis.

The vision of Tennis New Zealand in its 2009-2012 Strategic Plan is that "New Zealand is a tennis nation" (Tennis New Zealand, 2010, p.1). The purpose is to "unify, lead and strengthen tennis in New Zealand" (Tennis New Zealand, 2010, p.1). There are four strategic objectives to achieve this vision: game development, peak performance, sustainability and organisational excellence. Game development is the most relevant to this study and is defined as "successful clubs leading the development and growth of the game through attracting and retaining new players within tennis" (Tennis New Zealand, 2010, p.4).

These four objectives in the latest plan remain unchanged from the 2007-2010 Strategic Plan, which made specific reference to tournaments and the need to use them as part of the overall marketing of tennis.

Tennis New Zealand must leverage off the increased profile created by the Grand Slam tournaments, international tournaments held in New Zealand and other events... These events and their players have a huge profile in the media and result in heightened public awareness for tennis. The increased profile of tennis at these key times must be leveraged to promote tennis as a passion brand'. The principles of passion branding will form the foundation of the Tennis New Zealand marketing plan (Tennis New Zealand, 2008, p.11.).

In line with this philosophy Tennis New Zealand instigated the Tennis Open Days, a set date in February when participating clubs hold an Open Day to encourage people to 'have a go' at tennis. The Open Days specifically take place in February to attract people to clubs following the increased profile from the tournaments in New Zealand and the Australian Open Grand Slam tournament.

The Open Days are designed to attract casual players into tennis clubs. In New Zealand there are estimated to be 300 000 casual players of tennis, making it the second most popular adult participation sport (Tennis New Zealand, 2010). These casual players exceed greatly the 44 000 club members. The Tennis New Zealand pathway (Figure 8) positions club members at the hub of tennis in New Zealand. The same pathway recognises the many and varied ways in which casual players and the wider community can be attracted to the game. Two other Tennis New Zealand participation programmes complement the Open Days. Easi Tennis is a programme of six lessons for beginners. Grasshoppers is a programme to introduce primary school children to the game.

The attraction process in Figure 2 (refer p.23) encompasses all of these activities. Easi Tennis and the Grasshoppers programme are examples of Player Development Programmes in the centre top section of the figure. The aim of Easi Tennis is to increase participation. The aim of Grasshoppers is to nourish large numbers of young participants. 'Tennis Open Days' is a promotion, aimed at increasing awareness, participation and membership. At some of the Open Days a modified form of the game is used to create matches of short duration.

The concept of using the international tournaments and Australian Open as a lead-up to the Tennis Open Days is the only way in which events/competitions are specifically used in the attraction process.

Figure 8. Tennis New Zealand Pathway.



Tennis New Zealand, 2010, p7.

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#### 4.2 Regional centres

Six regional centres deliver many of Tennis New Zealand's programmes. They are Northern, Auckland, Waikato-Bays, Central, Canterbury and Southern. Tennis Auckland (covering the geographic area from the Bombay Hills to the Auckland Harbour Bridge) and Tennis Northern (covering the North Shore of Auckland and Northland) are the two most relevant to the international tournaments in the context of this research. The regional centres provide support to the clubs in their geographic area. Each regional centre has a member of staff with specific responsibility for club developments. Club support is a crucial role for Tennis New Zealand and the Regional Centres (Tennis Auckland, 2010; Tennis New Zealand, 2010; Tennis Northern, 2010).

In line with this club focus, one of the Tennis Auckland “action committees” is the Club Liaison and Support Committee. It consists of representatives from approximately six clubs and staff from Tennis Auckland. The committee meets three

- four times a year and discusses events and issues of importance to clubs. Tennis Auckland staff can use the committee 'as a sounding board' for initiatives and clubs can raise concerns and make suggestions to Tennis Auckland for club support.

### **4.3 Clubs**

Clubs are affiliated to Tennis New Zealand through their regional centre. In the Tennis Auckland area, there are 50 clubs and one sub-association with 12 small clubs. Within these clubs there were in total 9,347 members in 2009/10, of which 5,078 were adult. The clubs range in size, with the smaller clubs having fewer than 100 adult members and the largest club having over 600 adult members. The average club membership in 2009/2010 was 185 members (Tennis Auckland, 2010).

Tennis Northern has 46 clubs and one sub-association. Within these clubs are 6,870 members, of which 3,517 are adult members. The average club membership in Tennis Northern is 76 with wide variation between the average adult membership of 126 for the North Shore clubs and of 50 for the rural Northland clubs (Tennis Northern, 2010).

Clubs typically each have clubrooms and tennis courts and organise tennis activities for their members. The more active clubs have a wide range of activities from the competitive inter-club teams to social tennis. Some clubs employ a resident coach. Arrangements with coaches vary from payments undertaken per hour to set payments to cover the work undertaken during a set period. Each club has a website, which is linked to the website of their regional centre and Tennis New Zealand.

Whilst clubs operate all year round, the tennis 'season' is typically over the summer months from September to approximately May. It is during this time that the inter-club matches are run. Clubs are generally not active during the Christmas period from mid-December through to the middle or end of January, at the time when the tournaments run.

### **4.4 The tournaments**

The two international tournaments are known by the names of their principal sponsor: the women's tournament is the ASB Classic and the men's tournament is the Heineken Open. Tennis New Zealand holds the rights to the ASB Classic and Tennis Auckland hold the rights to the Heineken Open. Tennis Auckland organise both tournaments.

The tournaments are part of the men's ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) and WTA (Women's Tennis Association) tours. They occur in early January with the women's tournament in the first week and the men's in the second week. The tournaments form part of the lead-in to the Australian Open grand slam tournament in late January.

The matches in the main draw of each tournament are held at the Tennis Auckland centre at Stanley Street in Parnell, Auckland. The qualifying matches are held at the Tennis Northern courts at Albany on Auckland's North Shore. A large number of volunteers from clubs in both Tennis Auckland and Tennis Northern help man the tournaments providing a wide range of support functions such as ball kids, umpiring, ticket collection, ushering, and support for players.

The tournaments receive significant local media coverage. They feature on Television One by TVNZ, New Zealand's nationally owned public television broadcaster. Full live national coverage of daytime matches is scheduled from late morning until early evening. On occasions, if a match is close to completion around 6pm, the main news broadcast for the channel is delayed to accommodate the completion of a match. Evening matches are broadcast later in the evening. In addition, the tournaments have significant profile on the Television New Zealand website with live updates of play and also key matches available 'on demand' for a period of time after the match is played. Newspaper coverage is also significant with the leading North Island newspaper, the New Zealand Herald, carrying full or half page articles in the lead-up to the tournaments as well as during the tournaments. This is in addition to the standard listing of results. The Sunday papers carry similar coverage as do the larger regional papers.

#### **4.5 Chapter summary**

A single national organisation, six regional centres and approximately 420 clubs govern tennis, consistent with the traditional structure for sport in New Zealand. Tennis New Zealand provides initiatives to support clubs, which the regional centres deliver. The most relevant regional centres for this study are Tennis Auckland and Tennis Northern. Tennis Auckland runs the tournaments with significant support from Tennis Northern.

Clubs within these regions range in size from small clubs with fewer than 100 members to large clubs with a few hundred members. Clubs vary in their approach to

tennis with some being more competitive and some more social. They operate all year round however are not particularly active over the Christmas and early January when the tournaments are run.

The tournaments, known by the names of the principal sponsors as the ASB Classic and Heineken Open, are run by Tennis Auckland. They are part of the international tour of tennis tournaments and are receive significant media coverage on television, websites and newspapers.

It is within this context that the research described in chapter three is undertaken, with the results of the first phase discussed in the next chapter.

## Findings from Reconnaissance Phase

The previous chapter describes the tennis context in which this study takes place. The Methodology and Method Chapter describes focus groups with clubs and interviews with people from each part of the tennis network. The discussions and interviews cover three main areas: perceptions about the current situation and past activity to benefit from the two professional tennis tournaments in Auckland, and possible future action for clubs to benefit from these elite events. The findings for each set of questions in these three main areas are discussed in this chapter.

### 5.1 Current situation

#### 5.1.1 Perceived meaning of 'Good for the game' and how it applies to the tournaments

The opening question was "In sport, there is an expression that something is 'good for the game'. What does this phrase mean to you?" The intention was then to follow with a second question about whether and how the tournaments are 'good for the game'. However as the tournaments were mentioned in pre-interview Participant Information Sheet, most participants knew the topic of the research is tournaments and answered the first question in relation to the tournaments (refer Appendix A).

Most participants had to think about the question and answered hesitantly. The responses related to three main themes: the profile of the tournaments, possible impact on the development of tennis and the financial benefits. The comments about profile were the most easily articulated. The increased profile during the tournaments is considered to be 'good for the game'. The profile was described as arising from the coverage of matches throughout the day on television and the profile in the television news: *"when else does tennis even get into the News?"*. The importance attached to profile was also evident: *"Profile is so important — keeps the profile. Tennis on TV engages people who are not players. It is the only way to preach to the unconverted"*.

The possible impact on the development of tennis is felt to arise from the view that the tournaments show tennis as an *"inclusive rather than exclusive activity"* and this might encourage non-players to play. However, the events are also good for encouraging elite players as well. It is good for up-and-coming New Zealand players to see international 'stars' playing here in New Zealand: *"Brings top players to NZ."*

*With a paucity of top players in New Zealand, this is important. The tournaments are considered to be a sport development opportunity: "Good for showing the younger generation a pathway. Creates aspirations. Should inspire them to want to play. Role models to aspire to".*

Participants consider that there is national benefit in New Zealand tennis gaining an overseas profile: It puts *"New Zealand in front of people — global interest as well as in New Zealand"*. The perception of well-run tournaments reflects positively on tennis in New Zealand to the outside world: *"They (the tournaments) are held in highest regard by the tennis world"*.

The financial benefits are seen as the result of increased profile and media profile which is important for obtaining sponsorship and so is important from a financial perspective. *"If the tournaments are secure financially, this enables investment in the game"*.

Whilst most participants gave their responses hesitantly, two comments from people in managerial or board positions were given immediately and quickly. These two quotes summed up the three themes described hesitantly by other participants. The first quote is *"Something is good for the game when it attracts sponsorship, investment, positive coverage in the media. Encourages potential high performers"*. The second quote is *"Good for the game - something that encourages people to take part. Perceived healthy family environment"*.

In addition to the three main themes of the profile for tennis, development of tennis and to a lesser extent the financial benefit, other aspects of the tournaments were each mentioned by a few participants. There was comment about the social impact of the tournaments, but this was by no means universal or consistent. Some participants feel that the tournaments demonstrate the social side of the game: *"Good for the social networking side of the game - join the game not just for playing tennis but for a social network"*.

One person queried the social nature of the tournaments, however in a different context. They expressed annoyance at the impact the hospitality at the tournaments has on the matches, commenting predominantly about the noise from the hospitality area and that this does not create a good impression. This was the only area of negative comment about the tournaments.

Whilst there may be hesitancy about the meaning of the expression 'good for the game', there is universal and immediate agreement the two tennis tournaments



are 'good for the game'. Respondents feel the tournaments benefit tennis in New Zealand. The general tone of response indicates that there can be no doubt about this benefit. It seems as if it is so obvious that the question does not even need to be asked. In fact one respondent made that specific comment in a light-hearted manner: *"it is so obvious why do you even ask?"*. However even this participant acknowledged that it is hard to put into words specifically how the tournaments benefit tennis.

The pride and affection that respondents feel for the tournaments is evident and strong. There is a very strong sense of "ownership" of the tournaments as belonging to the tennis community in Auckland. It is interesting that all responses about benefits relate to tennis overall and very generally. None of the responses spontaneously mention clubs or even regional centres, apart from the comments about the financial benefit for Tennis Auckland and how this indirectly benefits clubs.

#### **5.1.2 Benefits and importance of tournaments to the tennis organisations**

Participants were asked "What benefits do the tournaments bring to your organisation?". Most participants showed hesitancy when asked this question. This hesitancy was shown by participants from all organisations. All paused before answering and found it quite difficult to be specific. One even said: *"Now that you mention it, there is nothing specific, but they are good for tennis "*.

There were comments that the tournaments create some excitement and that this flows through the whole network of organisations: *"Re-energises the tennis scene following the tournaments. People get excited about playing again after the tournaments"*. Another comment was: *"Generates good positive energy. A catalyst to engage on a practical level"*.

Many respondents repeated their response about the benefit of the tournaments to tennis as a whole. When they did this, respondents were then asked to be more specific about how media profile and well-run tournaments benefit tennis organisations. In reply, respondents generally could not articulate any direct benefit. A few even made a comment such as: *"No one new plays tennis as a result"*.

There is universal agreement that the tournaments are inspiring and may keep existing club players more interested in the game. When asked what would happen if the tournaments did not exist, the consensus is that there would be little or no

immediate effect. Long-term a major source of inspiration would be lost: *"There would be nothing to keep inspiring players annually"*.

The close proximity in time between the Auckland tournaments and the Australian Open Grand Slam event was mentioned as a positive aspect of the calendar. It keeps tennis *"in the forefront of people's minds for a block of time"*.

However there was significant discussion about whether clubs in particular are in a position to take advantage of this. There was significant comment about the tournaments occurring after Christmas when most clubs are not operating. Discussion about this point was widespread and it was generally considered to be a problem. There is almost a sense that it is a problem that cannot be solved. Clubs are not active at this time of year and so cannot take maximum advantage of the benefits of the tournaments.

Two participants commented that this is the way tennis clubs operate at present and expressed irritation with the situation: *"Clubs don't have a mindset to take advantage and so they don't"*. There was further comment that not all tennis players are away or busy at this time of year and that if clubs wish to be more active at the time, it is possible. The idea was put forward that clubs need to change their mindset or something needs *"to move them out of inertia at that time of year"*.

This was a minority comment with the main discussion about benefits of the high profile of tennis during the tournaments. However most participants concluded that the main benefit is general to tennis rather than specific to any organisation especially clubs.

### **5.1.3 Past initiatives**

This led into discussion about past initiatives with the question being asked: "In the past has your club taken any initiatives to benefit from the tournaments? In what way?". The immediate response was to talk about an initiative that commenced the previous year, Tennis Open Days. Every respondent could describe the philosophy of how the two tournaments lead into the Australian Open and following these events are the Tennis Open Days *"on the back of the increased profile"*. All respondents gave a similar description and used almost the same words to describe the philosophy. The philosophy behind the Tennis Open Days is well communicated in the organisations.

Most respondents seemed approving and supportive of the concept; however some questioned the timing of Open Days towards the end of the tennis season rather than at the beginning of it. There was general agreement that the link between the tournaments and the Open Days was tenuous and not specific. One commented: *"You could go to the tournaments and not know that anyone in Auckland played tennis elsewhere"*. Several people commented that there was no real presence for clubs at the events.

A few participants discussed a competition held at a previous Heineken Open tournament for which cards were handed out by the door attendants. The cards had an artistically-displayed photograph of a major player such as Juan-Martin Del Potro (the eventual winner of the tournament that year), Roger Federer or Rafael Nadal. On the reverse were details about the player and their relationship or performance at the Heineken Open. There were two small tear-off tabs: one for \$20 of food and drink at the Heineken Hotel at the tournament grounds and the other for 25% off a tennis lesson. One participant reported their belief that the organisers of the Heineken Hotel were disappointed in the low redemption of the Heineken food and drink tab. The participant was even more disappointed that no one had taken up the offer of the tennis lesson.

With this very low redemption of the offers, participants considered the competition to be unsuccessful. There were several possible suggestions for the lack of success, with the main one being that the door attendants did not distribute the cards as expected. This was evidenced by the box of cards remaining after the tournament. There is doubt that many tournament attendees had received the cards.

The researcher contributed to this discussion with a comment that she and other friends had received a card and spent the time looking at the photo of the player and reading the information about them. She had been unaware that it was a promotional offer and regarded it as a very nice souvenir of the tournament. Participants in the research found this comment interesting and agreed that the offer itself also had flaws.

The overall conclusion of the participants is there were a number of logistical issues with the promotion and rather than one reason for lack of success. Distribution will be hard to achieve when relying on distribution by door attendants. With most of the attendees arriving at the tournaments in a relatively short space of time, it is very hard for door attendants to distribute promotional items amongst all their other

tasks. Attendants must focus on their prime role and distribution of promotional items has to be of secondary importance.

Club discussion about past initiatives mainly concentrated in their efforts to promote the club generally and for the Tennis Open Days. Clubs seem to focus on distribution of flyers and posters in the geographic area considered to be 'their area'. Club participants seem more aware of geographic boundaries than participants from regional centres or national bodies. Many clubs are in a suburb with other clubs reasonably close by (within a short distance if travelling by car). In some respects they are "*competing with each other for new members*". Some club participants had clearly given thought to the concept that clubs need to co-operate with each other and be part of the same organisation. Clubs have different approaches with some offering more competitive tennis and some offering more social tennis. A few saw this as an opportunity for clubs to work together and promote tennis. Most club participants commented that promoting tennis as a whole is important. However at club committee level, members will always be trying to "*do the best for their club*". There was no real resolution to this dilemma.

Most participants expressed a desire to see a stronger link between tournaments and clubs. There was a general feeling that it should be possible to create a stronger presence for clubs at the tournaments and that promotional options should be considered again in the future.

#### **5.1.4 Role of organisations in ensuring clubs benefit from the tournaments**

Participants were asked what role they perceive each organisation (Tennis New Zealand, regional centres and clubs) has in ensuring that clubs benefit from the tournaments. Responses to this question were remarkably similar. One might expect that responses would differ depending on the organisation to which the participant belonged. This is generally not the case.

The only differences in opinion are in relation to the role of Tennis New Zealand. Participants from clubs for the most part could not articulate the role of Tennis New Zealand. In relation to the role of Tennis New Zealand participants from clubs generally looked puzzled. Many began by saying that Tennis New Zealand had no role or that they didn't know what Tennis New Zealand did. After some thought most demonstrated awareness that the Open Days are an initiative started by Tennis New Zealand, but they feel that the implementation is being done by the clubs

themselves. The comment was made: "*They (Tennis New Zealand) had the idea but we actually did it*".

In some ways the club participants were expressing the same view of those from Tennis New Zealand and regional centres that Tennis New Zealand is responsible for strategic direction. However participants from Tennis New Zealand and regional centres did this more immediately and with greater confidence. The strategic plan of Tennis New Zealand was described, especially the sections relating to support of clubs. Tennis New Zealand was described as "*providing the whole framework*".

All participants felt that clubs need to take initiative to gain new members and to maintain their club membership. This is a universal opinion held by the participants from clubs as well as the other tennis organisations. Some clubs seem to be able to do this better than others. Some clubs seem to have greater knowledge and ability within the club to take initiatives and to be proactive. Participants mentioned some examples of initiatives undertaken by individual clubs.

However it was queried as to whether one club acting alone could achieve benefit from the tournaments. A few participants actually tried to think through how this could be done. The process almost inevitably concluded with a comment that attendees at the tournaments come from a wide geographic area. The media coverage is disseminated to a widespread geographic area. Each club is operating in a restricted local area. Therefore to benefit from the tournaments, clubs needed to act as a group or team.

The logical organisation to co-ordinate clubs is the regional centre. This notion also aligns with the general perception that it is the role of the regional centres to provide clubs with support for their activities and to "*coach them*" and encourage them in their activities. There was considerable discussion about the role of regional centres in supporting clubs. This role was described by participants in all levels of the organisation. It was not only mentioned in response to questions about the role of the respective organisations, it was also mentioned at several stages of the interview and was particularly prevalent when talking about what could be done in the future to ensure that clubs benefit from the tournaments.

## 5.2 Future possibilities

Participants were asked “How could these two tournaments benefit clubs? What could be done so that clubs could gain an (increased) direct benefit from the tournaments?” An issue that prompted a great deal of discussion was the lack of knowledge about who actually attended the tournaments. The participants raised similar issues to those in the literature review in section 2.4. Participants raised questions about whether attendees at the tournaments are potential tennis players or club members. The key questions that were asked by participants were: *"do the people who attend the tournaments play tennis? And if so, do they already belong to a club?"* The thinking behind these questions is that if the majority of attendees are existing tennis players who already belong to a club, then any promotion of clubs at the tournaments is *"preaching to the converted"*. Most participants instinctively felt that this was probably not the case. However there was general consensus that it is important to find out more about the attendees. This thought predominated through discussions about possible future activity and was a stumbling block to the further discussion. Participants often made a comment such as *"well it all comes back to whether they already play tennis"*. This was not done in an unhelpful way and did not seem to be an excuse not to take action. It seemed to the researcher that, at all levels of the organisation, people preferred to use factual information for decision-making.

All ideas mentioned during interviews and groups were recorded. Table 5 shows these ideas grouped together into categories of very general suggestions, and then specific suggestions that relate to clubs, promotions or publicity. The general ideas were mentioned by several respondents, however most could only talk about the broad concepts and could not describe how these concepts might be implemented.

There was widespread support for the idea of creating a stronger link from the tournament to Open Day. In spite of some concern about the rationale for the timing of the Open Days, it was generally accepted that for the concept to work a stronger link from the tournament to the Open Days is needed and is possible.

There was general consensus from respondents in all parts of the organisation that some clubs *"handled the Open Days better than others"*. By this, they meant that some clubs are better at creating activity and atmosphere at the club on the Open Days. Some clubs are better at providing information and an introduction to the club

and following up with visitors after the day. The consensus was that there is no point in encouraging visitors to clubs, if clubs do not then create a good impression.

The overall concept of having a greater presence for clubs at the tournaments was widely supported. However, problems were identified with most ideas relating to this theme. None of the ideas were expressed in a way that could be immediately implemented. The specific ideas given in Table 5 could not be implemented. The very general concepts needed to be developed into specific ideas. As mentioned in section 3.7, further discussion between the researcher and regional centre personnel was needed to develop an actionable intervention.

Table 5. Suggestions for increasing presence of clubs at tournaments

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**Suggestions for increasing presence of clubs at tournaments**

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**General ideas that specifically related to clubs:**

Stronger link from tournament to Open Day

Open Days — greater guidance on how to handle these — both in terms of pre-publicity and what to do on the day. Perhaps hearing what other clubs do?

At the tournament greater presence for clubs — e.g. booths on the site, desk in the marquee (some potential problems with this were identified)

Need to put a 'face to the clubs'. Meet club people at tournaments

A lot of club volunteers are at the tournaments but the link to clubs is perhaps not evident. Try to use the volunteers in some way

**Specific ideas that related to clubs:**

Have a club day at tournament

Have a Kids Day at tournament — like the French Open

Have more in the tournament programmes about the clubs and scene in Auckland

More activity on courts from clubs

**Ideas that related to promotions**

Offer a prize for a club — a corporate box for a day at the tournament

Bring your used Heineken Open ticket to a club and get 1/2 hour coaching

Scratch card promotion — repeat the promotion used last year but handle it slightly differently to make sure that cards are distributed

**Ideas that related to event creation and publicity**

Can the players visit some of the clubs?

Create an event — e.g. Tennis in Queen Street or on the top of the Sheraton

**Other ideas**

Use the pre-tournament sessions at North Harbour more

Could some of the players visit clubs before or after the tournament?

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**5.3 Chapter summary**

There is considerable unanimity of opinions in the reconnaissance phase on most issues. There is strong and general agreement that the tournaments are 'good for the game' in terms of the profile achieved for tennis, encouragement of players — both new players and elite players and the financial benefits. The profile of the tournaments is the strongest and most easily articulated benefit.



Of past initiatives, the Tennis Open Day is prominent in participants' memory having been initiated most recently. There is unanimous discussion about the role of the tournaments in forming a lead-up to the Australian Open and then the Tennis Open Day in building the profile achieved for tennis during the month of January. However the link between the tournaments and the Open Days is considered to be tenuous and not specific. Whilst there is some reservation about the timing of the Open Day in relation to the season, it was considered to be worthwhile and needed stronger presence at the tournaments.

The need for clubs to work together in a co-ordinated way emerged as important when participants thought through how clubs can gain greater benefit from the tournaments.

It was universally agreed that it should be possible and is desirable for clubs to benefit from the tournaments. Specific ideas were mooted for increasing the presence of clubs at the tournaments. None were specific enough to be implemented without further thought and development. As described in section 3.7 (refer p.44) there were subsequent meetings between the researcher and key participants with decision-making roles in Tennis Auckland to discuss a list of issues to develop the intervention from the ideas in this chapter. The intervention is described in the next chapter.

## **The Intervention**

This chapter describes the actions that arose from discussions between the researcher and key contacts at the regional body based on the findings from the research interviews and focus groups in the reconnaissance phase discussed in the previous chapter. The Methodology and Method Chapter describes how the reconnaissance findings developed into the intervention. Discussion between the researcher and key personnel at the regional centre were pivotal to the development of the intervention, as was feedback from a Club Liaison and Support Committee.

The three key actions of the intervention are a club stand in exhibitors' dome at the tournaments; a promotional offer of a free tennis lesson at a local tennis club for non-club members; and information in the tournament programmes about the club stand, the promotional offer and Tennis Open Days.

The purpose of these actions was to create a visible presence for clubs at the tournaments; to provide an incentive for spectators to visit a club and to provide a visible linkage between the tournaments and clubs. These actions were designed to provide visible support to the philosophy that the increased profile for tennis created by the tournaments leads into the Tennis Open Days.

A mini-cycle focussed on identifying a profile of tournament spectators in terms of the extent to which they played or had ever played tennis and their interest in playing in the future. The mini-cycle arose from the literature review and reconnaissance interviews during which many questions were raised about the type of people who attend the tournaments, whether they are predominantly already club members and whether there is potential for them to be attracted to tennis and clubs.

### **6.1 Club stand in the exhibitors' dome at the tournaments**

For the first time a purpose-built club stand was erected in the exhibitors' dome. The stand was well situated in the centre of the dome, opposite the food hall. It included maps of Auckland and the North Shore showing the location and address of each tennis club. A large screen featured a presentation with scenes from several tennis clubs. The screen was provided by one of the tournament sponsors. Club members manned the stand at key times during the tournaments to answer questions about tennis in Auckland. Information about the Tennis Open Days was available. Non-

members of a tennis club were able to take part in a competition. Photographs of the stand can be seen in Appendix C. A half page advertisement in the tournament programme encouraged spectators to visit the stand (refer Appendix D).

## **6.2 Promotion to provide an incentive for spectators to visit a club**

A free tennis lesson was offered to non-club members, with the aim of encouraging new and casual players to visit clubs. Registration for the free lesson could be undertaken by completing a form at the club stand in the exhibitors' dome or by visiting the Tennis Auckland website and completing the details online. This offer was promoted in the tournament programme, as well as at the club stand. The offer remained open for four weeks until February 10<sup>th</sup> which was just prior to the Open Day. The offer is shown in Appendix E.

Prior to the tournaments, information about the promotion was sent to all Tennis Auckland clubs. Clubs were invited to participate by delivering the offer of a free lesson. Initially twelve clubs volunteered to take part. Once it became clear that a large number of entries had been received, additional clubs were contacted and asked if they would like to participate. These additional clubs were chosen based on their geographic location and whether they had a coach to deliver tennis lessons.

On signing up for the promotion, all entrants received an email within a few days from Tennis Auckland acknowledging their interest and explaining that a club would contact them. Entrants were recorded on a spreadsheet, sorted into geographic areas and then their details were given to a club in close proximity. If the closest club was not participating in the promotion, entrants were passed on to a neighbouring club. All the contacts in the Tennis Northern area were passed directly to the club contact person in that regional centre to pass on to clubs. With the competition remaining open until just prior to the Open Days, the processing of contacts continued for a month.

The clubs then made contact with entrants, arranged a lesson and undertook some follow-up. Most clubs did this approximately three – four weeks after the tournament. Each club was able to organise communication with entrants and the tennis lesson in their own way. Some organised it in conjunction with the Tennis Open Day to provide activity at the club on that day.

Each club was offered a small token payment by Tennis Auckland to assist towards offering the lessons. The payment was intended as a small token. All clubs made some financial contribution towards providing the tennis lesson, the magnitude of the contribution depended on the relationship with their coach.

Feedback was obtained from the clubs about the handling and outcome of the free lessons: method of contact of entrants; approximate number of contacts; how contact was made with the entrants; how the lesson was organised and how it went; what they saw as the strengths and weaknesses of the promotion and whether they would do it again. The feedback from each club was recorded and the responses were collated into a Summary Sheet of Club Feedback (refer Appendix F).

### **6.3 Information in the tournament programme**

In total there was a page and a half of information in the men's tournament programme and two and a half pages in the women's programme relating to clubs: promotion of the Tennis Open Days; invitation to visit the club stand in the exhibitors' dome; promotion of the offer of a free tennis lesson; and, for the ASB Classic only, a list of clubs in Auckland and North Shore.

Previously there had been no visible connection between the tournaments and Tennis Open Days. The half-page advertisement in the tournament programme 'Come Play! Tennis Open Day' used the same design as for other Open Day promotional material: flyers and public advertising (refer Appendix G). The programme for the women's tournament included a full page of details about tennis in Auckland, including a list of clubs with their address (refer Appendix H).

### **6.4 Mini-cycle – identifying a profile of spectators in terms of their playing of tennis**

As part of a sponsorship package, a major sponsor of the tournaments organised a survey of spectators to identify the economic impact of the tournaments. Tennis Auckland was able to include some additional questions in the survey. These questions were designed to give Tennis Auckland a profile of the tournament spectators in terms of their behaviour and level of interest in tennis and tennis clubs.

The questions included in the survey were:

- Frequency of playing tennis in the last year
- Where tennis is played, with options given to identify playing at club compared with public and private facilities
- Membership of a tennis club
- Level of interest in playing tennis in the next 12 months
- The main reason for not playing tennis in the past year
- First source of information that would be consulted to find out where to play

## **6.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter described three key actions that were designed to increase the profile of clubs at the tournaments: a club stand in exhibitors' dome at the tournaments; a promotional offer of a free tennis lesson at a local tennis club for non-club members; and information in the tournament programmes to support these activities.

A mini-cycle was designed to identify the profile of tournament spectators in terms of their tennis playing and club membership behaviour to identify whether there is potential to increase club membership from the tournaments or whether the spectators are already existing members.

The impact of these actions and results of the mini-cycle survey are discussed in the next chapter.

## Evaluation of the Intervention

In this chapter, the intervention is evaluated using the method of analysis discussed in the Methodology and Method chapter. The regional centre collected numeric data about outcomes of the activity along with feedback from clubs. This information was available to the researcher to analyse. The researcher presented the analysis to a Club Liaison and Support Committee meeting. The analysis was discussed at the meeting and during the qualitative interviews. With the interpretative approach being used in this study, the data itself is not as important as the interpretation placed on it by the stakeholders.

Each component of the intervention is evaluated individually. An overview of the types of analysis is shown in Table 6. These are numeric data, qualitative comments about the intervention and qualitative perceptions about the numeric data.

Table 6. Overview of analysis of intervention

| Component of the intervention                | Numeric data  | Qualitative analysis  |
|--|---|---|
| Club stand at tournament in exhibitors' dome | Number of people entering the competition at the stand (rather than online)   | Opinions expressed in qualitative interviews and at Club Liaison and Support Committee meeting<br><br>Reported reaction of visitors to the club stand described at Club Liaison and Support Committee meeting |
| Promotion (free tennis lesson at a club)     | Number of entries in the promotion<br><br>Number of people attending or receiving a free tennis lesson<br><br>Number of clubs interested in undertaking the promotion again | Club feedback about the intervention<br><br>Discussion of club feedback at the Club Liaison and Support Committee meeting and in qualitative interviews   |
| Tournament programme                         | None available  | Perceptions from qualitative interviews   |
| Mini-cycle – spectator survey                | Frequency distributions for extra questions included in sponsor's survey  | Discussion about the results in the qualitative interviews  |

After discussion of each component of the intervention, the total package of activity is considered. The evaluation is then interpreted in light of the sub-questions for the study and the context of the study. Consumer behavior theory is used to explain the results of the promotion.

For this chapter the people who had entered the competition are referred to as 'entrants'.

## **7.1 Findings**

### **7.1.1 Club stand at the tournaments in the exhibitors' dome**

The club stand was evaluated from opinions expressed in the qualitative interviews and at a Club Liaison and Support Committee meeting; reported reaction of visitors as described at the meeting and the number of people who entered the competition at the stand (rather than online).

All participants in the study report the stand as eye-catching. Some of the comments were: *"It stopped people in their tracks"* and *"It invited curiosity and when they got here, they stayed and looked"*. A few comments were made about the location and design of the stand: *"It was an ideal location – opposite the food and right in the middle of everything."* The white floor covering increased the visibility of the stand because *"no other stand had a white base"*. The high level of interest was reported from all sources: club members who manned the stand at the tournament and attended the club committee meeting; the club feedback to the regional centre and the qualitative interviews. The researcher also noted interest in the stand during several visits to the exhibitors' dome, with people stopping and observing closely as they walked past.

The people manning the stand were not asked to undertake a count of visitors. The provision of information and formation of relationships with visitors were considered more important than achieving a head count. However, people on the stand reported *"waves of people"* visiting between matches.

The number of entries to the promotion arising from the stand is significant. One hundred and four of the total entries (28%) came directly from the stand.

Overall, the stand was universally considered to have been a success. There were no negative comments or suggestions for improvement from any of the discussions or feedback.

### **7.1.2 Promotion to provide an incentive for spectators to visit a club (offer of a free tennis lesson at a club)**

First, the numeric data from the promotion are discussed. This comprises the number of entries in the promotion and the number of people attending or receiving a free tennis lesson. Secondly, club feedback is considered. Thirdly, some suggestions for improving the promotion arose from qualitative interviews and a Club Liaison and Support Committee. Finally, the overall perception of the promotion is evaluated.

The most obvious result of the promotion is the number of entries. Approximately 450 people entered the promotion to receive a free tennis lesson (382 in the catchment area of the regional centre and almost 70 in the neighbouring regional area). Neither the regional centre nor the researcher had a specific expectation of the likely response; however neither expected such a strong result.

The first issue arising from this strong result was insufficient capacity from volunteer clubs to cater for all entrants. Only twelve clubs in the regional area originally volunteered to take part in the scheme. With 382 contacts, it was not possible for these clubs to cater for that number of entrants. Consequently it was necessary to obtain more participating clubs. Further clubs were invited to assist and all invited parties willingly did so. In total the 382 contacts were passed on to 23 clubs. The average number of contacts given to each club was 15, with five clubs receiving 25 - 30 names and five clubs receiving five - six names. These latter clubs are small clubs on the outskirts of the regional area.

An additional logistical issue was the need to keep together groups of entrants. Forty percent of people entering the promotion did so along with someone else, either friend or another family member. Care was taken to keep these contacts together.

Even after contacting additional clubs, 51 of the entrants (13%) needed to travel out of their own area to a neighbouring suburb for the lesson. This was due to the local club not participating in the promotion through lack of resources (for example, a resident coach) or an inability to fit the activity into the club programme.

After receiving the names and organising the tennis lessons, clubs were asked for feedback. A summary of this is in Appendix F. This is the second source of information for evaluating the promotion. Fifteen clubs provided feedback about their experience and the overall outcome of the promotion: method of contacting



entrants; approximate number of contacts; what they saw as the strengths and weaknesses of the promotion and whether they would do it again.

There is huge variation in the way clubs handled all aspects of the promotion. The number of times each club contacted entrants differed considerably. Some clubs made one contact to each of the people on their list. Others made more effort by using multiple methods of contact such as a combination of phone, text and/or email. The method of contact ranged from the less personal method of simply leaving a message to a more personal telephone call or contact. The organisation of the lesson varied as well: some clubs linked it to other activity so that the club looked busy at the time of the tennis lesson, whilst others utilised 'down time' when the club facilities were not being used. Some also decided to hold the lesson at their Tennis Open Day. Some clubs gave one option for the lesson and some gave a range of options.

Overall clubs generally found that approximately a third to half the contacts came to the organised lesson. All clubs had the experience of people saying that they would attend the lesson and then not doing so. Some clubs found this really irritating, whilst others described this as a "*feature of life in New Zealand these days*". There were difficulties with a few of the contact details such as numbers being unavailable or not operational, however this was not quantified.

The majority reported that those attending the lesson had a "*good tennis experience*". Most felt that the lessons had gone well. Entrants ranged from complete beginners to people returning to the game. In some cases a returning player brought along a friend or family member. One or two clubs had a difficult experience with an unusual mix of entrants all together in one lesson. One club in particular had a very difficult experience with a small group of people attending the lesson and a very unusual mix of players. Some found it a bit hard with adults and children mixed together. The promotion was primarily intended for adults.

Most clubs had information available at the lesson about the club, membership options and future events. A few made an effort to invite entrants to a future club event. Some commented that it was hard to provide membership information with only two - three months of the season left. Approximately a third of the clubs gained one or more new members from the promotion. Some were also hopeful that there might be one or two additional people joining the following season.

Club reaction to the promotion is that all agree that theoretically it is “*a good thing to do*”. Approximately half those giving feedback would definitely run it again, three out of 15 would probably take part but demonstrated some uncertainty and three clubs said that they definitely would not take part. Two of these clubs received a very small number of people to contact. Some feel that it was a lot of effort for the result, whilst others feel that it was a relatively easy thing to do. Some clubs compared the level of effort to the token payment made by the regional centre and felt it was insufficient, whereas others recognised that it was intended to be a token only.

Whilst many clubs and respondents are not particularly worried by the actual participation rate being only a third to half those entering the promotion, they put forward possible reasons for this. The most prevalent comment relates to the time delay between a person entering the promotion and being contacted by clubs. This delay is considered to have reduced enthusiasm. The time delay was due in part to the large number of entrants, the need to identify additional clubs and the desire from some clubs to link the lesson to the Tennis Open Days.

The issue of time delay was exacerbated by the very general nature of the offer which meant the entrants did not really know when the lessons were being offered. In addition, the offer of a ‘free’ lesson is felt by some stakeholders to be a very easy offer to take up, with the entrant not needing any level of commitment to enter. However one respondent considers the free nature of the lesson to be very important as it reduces risk for entrants.

After discussion about the time delay in contacting entrants, several suggestions were put forward at a Club Liaison and Support Committee meeting for improving the promotional offer. The suggestions were very general and no specific conclusion was reached about any of the ideas.

During qualitative interviews there was comment about the wide range of approaches used by clubs. Some clubs are felt to have handled the contact better than others and to have put a great deal of effort into the activity. Two alternative views were expressed about this difference. One view was that clubs were able to give a fair reflection of “*what they are really like*” to visitors. The alternative view was that a more consistent approach would be better and it would be beneficial for the regional body to give clubs more guidance and support about how to handle contacts.

Whilst club feedback to the promotion is mixed, the overall perception from the qualitative interviews is universally of a successful promotion. It was designed to provide a connection between clubs and the tournament. It achieved that with a significant number of people either from the tournament or website entering the promotion and being passed on to the clubs. The majority of clubs are happy with the promotion. The low conversion to participation and membership is not considered to be a major drawback for a variety of reasons. The reasons were the additional benefits to the organisation discussed later in this chapter; it is comparable or better than the traditionally low conversion rate for promotions; it is a better response than for the promotion previously held and some weaknesses in the promotion reduced its effectiveness and could be countered if undertaken again.

### **7.1.3 Information in the tournament programme**

There is no numeric information about the effect of the club information in the programmes. The only evaluation is the perceptions of stakeholders. All feedback and interviews indicate that stakeholders are pleased to see information in the programmes. Members of the Club Liaison and Support Committee commented that they are pleased to see promotion of clubs and the Open Days at tournaments. All respondents in qualitative interviews did likewise.

The presentation of information in the tournament programme seems such an obvious thing to do that there was surprise that it had not happened before. It is a relatively low cost activity, with some small cost in development of material. With much of the material the same as that used for the Open Days, the additional cost was minimal. There was some opportunity cost in that it took space that could have been sold to an advertiser. However the provision of information about tennis is generally considered to have enhanced the tournament programme.

### **7.1.4 Mini-cycle - identifying profile of spectators in terms of their playing of tennis**

A question asked at several stages during the reconnaissance phase was whether there is any potential to convert spectators at tournaments to become participants in the game. This question was also raised by the literature review. The mini-cycle investigated this issue by including in an economic impact survey questions about

whether or not spectators played tennis and some questions about tennis playing behaviour.

The results of the survey showed that the spectators for these events are split between existing players (53% for ASB Classic and 63% for the Heineken Open); lapsed players who had not played in the past year (37% ASB Classic and 28% for Heineken Open), with a relatively small number having never played (10% and 9% respectively for the ASB Classic and Heineken Open).

Of the existing players at both tournaments, approximately 50% played at a tennis club as a member. This is a higher ratio than exists for the total population (13% of players are club members as shown in Table 1, refer p.16). However the strength of the 'pay-for-play' concept is still evident in the mini-cycle data.

Amongst the non-players there is interest in playing, with 34% of the ASB Classic spectators and 37% of Heineken Open attendees being either quite or very interested in playing tennis in the next 12 months. Injury or lack of fitness was cited as the main reason for not playing in the past year, followed by other interests and a lack of time or other commitments.

The importance of friends, the local club and internet search are demonstrated in Table 7, which shows the main responses to the question about the first source of information to be consulted to find out about playing tennis. Friends are particularly important for the men's tournament.

Table 7: Profile of spectators at the tournaments

| First source of information to be consulted to find out about tennis | ASB Classic | Heineken Open |
|--|-------------|---------------|
| Talk to a friend who already plays                                   | 26%         | 35%           |
| Ask at a local club  | 33%         | 31%           |
| Internet search  | 30%         | 21%           |

It is important to recognise that the economic impact survey was an internet-based survey. It is also important to note that the question only allowed single response asking only about the first source of information to be consulted. These two factors are likely to have boosted the importance of the internet.

This also needs to be borne in mind when considering the finding that tournament programme received very low mention as the first source of information

to be consulted. No conclusion can be drawn about the effectiveness of placing club information in a tournament programme from this data.

The tennis playing profile of spectators at the tournament demonstrated there is potential for the promotion of clubs at the tournament. Promotion would not simply be “*preaching to the converted*” existing members or to people uninterested in playing tennis. The spectators are split between current players and non-players. Amongst the non-players there is interest in playing.

The concern identified at the reconnaissance phase and literature review about the strength of casual tennis playing is confirmed with only half the players belonging to a club.

### **7.1.5 Combined package of activity**

Previous sections in this chapter discuss each aspect of the intervention individually. This section looks at the perception of the intervention as a complete package of activity.

Overall, stakeholders consider the combined package of activity to be successful. The club stand and promotional offer, supported by information in the tournament programme attracted attention and achieved the objective of providing a link between the tournaments and clubs and Open Days.

There were additional benefits to the organisations that seemed almost as important as the outcome of the activity: different parts of the organisation working together, the improved perception by clubs of the regional body, involvement of a wide group of people. The relatively low cost of the intervention was also regarded positively, as was the presence of an external researcher.

‘*Different parts of the organisation*’ working together referred to the two regional bodies working together and also the clubs working with a regional body. This enabled people within these organisations to get to know each other better. It is considered by one person that the enhanced relationship between the two regional bodies would continue into the future: “*The big thing was the two regions working together.... since then it has gone from strength to strength. A great boast for tennis. The impetus that started with this carried on*”. The improved relationship was also considered to have an external focus: “*With collaboration of two regions we were presenting Auckland as a whole*”.

With the promotion being well executed and well organised, it is felt that this enhanced the view of professionalism of the regional centres. *"The clubs were impressed. We were seen to be using the high profile of the tournaments."* There was one comment that it was better executed than a previous past promotion for which there had been difficulty getting the information distributed. With the distribution of information in the hands of clubs and regional centres, there was greater control over the result.

The organisation of the volunteers for the club stand was undertaken after the standard club volunteer roles at the tournaments had been filled. This enabled a wider group of people to become involved, including club members who had never had a role at the tournaments before. With clubs manning the stand, they felt they were actively involved. *"It was not just something being done for them, they had a role in making it happen."*

As in many not-for-profit organisations, it can be hard to obtain a budget for promotional activity. The cumulative cost of this activity was reported as being relatively low: *"not much money changed hands"*. Some aspects of the intervention were undertaken in conjunction with sponsors such as setting up the club stand. For other aspects such as information in the programme, existing artwork was used with minimal modification.

The presence of an external researcher was important to two participants in the study who consider this to be a critical success factor. One comment was *"It wouldn't have got the push without it (the external researcher)."* The researcher was also likened to *"a catalyst that made it happen"*. The researcher recognises her own contribution to the process but in return believes that the internal project champions were equally important to the project being implemented.

When considering the overall effect of the intervention, two comments raised questions for the future. One concerned the critical issue of *"how do we target casual members who are resistant to club membership?"*. The thinking behind this seemed to be that the intervention is *"a step in the right direction"*. Data from the mini-cycle shows that there is potential to attract more people to clubs from the tournaments. The number of contacts given to clubs was recorded. However there are no specific details about the profile of these contacts. The extent to which the intervention addresses the *"really big question"* of attracting people resistant to club membership still remains.

#### **7.1.6 Summary of findings**

The overall findings from the evaluation of the intervention is summarized in Table 8 (p.80). It shows the evaluation for each of the components and also the additional benefits.

Table 8. Summary of research findings

|  | Qualitative   | Numeric data   |
|--|---|--|
| Tournament programme: clubs, Open Day and promotion    | Considered to have increased awareness – seems logical to participants  | Nothing quantifiable   |
| Stand at tournament                                    | Perception of the people manning the stand – stand generated a lot of interest  | Good number of entries to the promotion came from the stand  |
| Promotion  | <p>Sense of ownership by clubs</p> <p>Level of interest by clubs</p> <p>Even with some low take-up of lesson, considered successful</p> <p>Logistical improvements to promotion</p> | <p>Huge interest and initial response</p> <p>Relatively lower participation in free tennis lessons at clubs</p>  |
| Additional profile questions in economic impact survey | Showed there are potential new members attending the tournament as spectators   | <p>53% of ASB Classic and 63% of Heineken already play tennis</p> <p>50% of players are members of a club</p> <p>Over a third of non-players are interested in playing tennis in the next year</p> |
| <b>Other benefits</b>                                  |   |  |
| Club relationship with regional body                   | Appreciation of clubs for interest and effort by regional body  | Extent to which some clubs would repeat the promotion  |
| Relationship between regional bodies                   | Regions working together – presenting Auckland as a whole   |  |
| Sense of community                                     | <p>Arising from the stronger relationships</p> <p>Overall ‘feel good factor’</p>  |  |



## **7.2 Discussion**

### **7.2.1 Discussion of findings in relation to sub-questions**

The principle question of this research asks ‘how can local sport clubs leverage increased participation/membership from a major sport event in their local community’. The principle question for the research is split into four sub-questions in section 1.2.

The first sub-question is “What are the leveraging alternatives (actions) available to a local sport organisation seeking to increase participation/membership?”. This study identified both a leveraging process and some leveraging actions. The process could be used by any sport club or organisation to identify actions for a specific environment and sport event. The process used in this study was action research, with collaboration between a researcher and organisations to identify actions, implement and evaluate them. The process is not dissimilar to that used by O’Brien (2006) and Ritchie (2000) in their leveraging developments for various Olympics Games and Vail (2007) in her study with Tennis Canada. This type of process has now been used and reported by different researchers in different countries and different events. It therefore seems likely that this process has the quality of transferability discussed in section 3.3 (refer p.37).

One common theme that emerged from all of these studies is the presence of both an external researcher and a project champion within the organisation to guide and inspire participants through the process. O’Brien (2006), Ritchie (2000) and Vail (2007) led the process in their research, just as the researcher did in this study. The researcher in this study found the support of project champions to be important, just as Vail did. O’Brien’s steps also include the type of champion when referring to the contact with “international business leaders” (O’Brien, 2006, p.247).

Leveraging actions were initially not as easy to define. In the initial discussions with sport clubs, only very general ideas emerged. It required further discussion by the researcher and senior personnel in the sport organisations to create specific actions capable of implementation.

Secondly, the study asked “What do local sport organisations consider the most feasible option?”. The most feasible options in this study all have the objective of creating a club presence at the tournaments. The aim is to ensure that people

going to the tournaments are aware that there are many clubs for playing tennis in the local area. The actions are also broad concepts that could be adapted to other events:

- a) A club stand at the tournaments
- b) A promotion which would encourage entrants to visit a club
- c) Use of the tournament programme to provide information about a publicity event (Open Days) that is designed to build on the profile raised by the tournaments; to support the above actions; to demonstrate where to play the sport in the local area.

The third sub-question is “How could this option be implemented?”. The ability of clubs to work together is facilitated by the traditional sport structure in New Zealand, whereby a regional body co-ordinates promotional activity by clubs and implements strategic direction of the national body. Within New Zealand, implementation is most easily co-ordinated by the regional body. The implementation requires that the champion or organising body has access to tournament resources and the ability to organise activity at the tournament. Activity will therefore be easier to organise if the tournament is organised by a complementary part of the sport network such as national or regional body than if it is organised by an outside group.

Fourthly, the study identified “What impact did this outcome have on participation/membership?”. The study did not continue for long enough to identify long-term impact on club membership or long-term participation. Given that the actions generated significant interest in participation, and a lower impact on immediate actual participation, it is likely that the long-term impact on club membership is very low.

An additional key question emerged from both the literature review and from the reconnaissance phase of the research. This question is whether the spectators at the tournament have the potential to be developed into participants. The mini-cycle is important in identifying that there is potential amongst spectators at this tournament for conversion to participation. It is not uncommon for economic impact surveys to be undertaken at sport events. It may be possible in other circumstances to use these surveys to obtain information about the profile of spectators.

### **7.2.2 Discussion of promotion in relation to consumer behavior and promotional theory**

The drop-off between the interest in taking a free tennis lesson and the actual participation in the lessons can be explained by the literature on the effects of environment on consumer behaviour. Cues in the environment can trigger an unconscious response in consumers. People can modify their behaviour based on the immediate social environment, without even being aware that some aspect of the environment is 'priming' them to respond (Bargh, 2002; Bargh and Chartrand, 1999; Bargh, Chen and Burrows, 1996; Smith, Baaren and Wigboldus, 2005). At the tennis tournaments the environment may have unconsciously enthused spectators to enter the promotion. When removed from that environment, the entrant may no longer wish to take a tennis lesson. In a more conscious state, the desire to attend the lesson may no longer exist.

From the reconnaissance phase the 'feel good' factor of the tournaments is mentioned by several stakeholders. From the mini-cycle, a significant number of spectators indicated that they would be interested in playing tennis in the next year. These two factors provide excellent conditions for priming to occur.

Most of the research undertaken on unconscious consumer response to environmental stimuli has been investigated in relation to consumer purchase decisions in a specific environment with specific stimuli, for example the response to music being played in a supermarket and the effect on products purchased (Dijksterhuis, Smith, van Baaren and Wigboldus, 2005). At a sport tournament, it is not clear whether a specific stimulus would cause a primed response or whether it is a combination of stimuli that produce an effect similar to a 'feel good factor'. The concept of 'priming' spectators to respond to some stimulus or stimuli at a tournament can be related to O'Brien and Chalip's model on Figure 4 (refer p.30) and Waite's work (2003) on the Sydney Olympic Games. The 'feel good' factor from an event can be leveraged to produce a sense of community. Waite (2003) related this to the Sydney Olympic Games prompting a sense of community and patriotism in Australians. In this instance it is the combination of stimuli at the event that produced the priming effect.

If priming contributed to participation in the promotion by some entrants, a participant will be less likely to take up the offer of the lesson, if there is a long time

delay before the club contacts them. The longer the delay, the greater the opportunity for the priming effect to be reduced. This would result in an increased likelihood of the entrant either declining the offer or not ‘turning up’ for the arranged lesson. This effect of a time delay in delivery of the lesson is also supported by Time and Outcome Valuation Model in relation to sales promotions (Mowen & Mowen, 1991; Spears, 2001; Spears, Mowen & Chatraborty, 2010) and behavioural learning theory (Rothchild & Gaidis, 1981).

### **7.3 Chapter summary**

The intervention was evaluated using numeric data about outcomes of the activity along with feedback from clubs. This data and feedback was discussed a Club Liaison and Support Committee meeting and during qualitative interviews.

The club stand was universally regarded as successful in representing the clubs well. The promotional offer of a free tennis lesson had a high number of entries, of which between a third and half actually attended a tennis lesson, with a few people joining clubs as a result. There is a mixed reaction to this result from clubs. Overall the stakeholders in the qualitative interviews considered the promotion to be successful, due in part to the additional benefits to the organisation of different parts of the organisation working together. Whilst there is no specific information about the effect of having club information in the club programme, all stakeholders perceived that it was an appropriate action and should logically be beneficial. The mini-cycle demonstrated that there is potential amongst spectators at this tournament for conversion to participation.

The principle question of this research asks ‘how can local sport clubs leverage increased participation/membership from a major sport event in their local community’. The principle question for the research is split into four sub-questions. The first sub-question is “What are the leveraging alternatives (actions) available to a local sport organisation seeking to increase participation/membership?”. This study identified both a leveraging process and some leveraging actions. Secondly, the study asked “What do local sport organisations consider the most feasible option?”. The most feasible options in this study all have the objective of creating a club presence at the tournaments. The third sub-question is “How could this option be implemented?”. The implementation is facilitated by a regional body co-ordinating clubs, the presence of a project champion who has access to tournament resources

and the ability to organise activity at the tournament. Fourthly, the study identified “What impact did this outcome have on participation/membership?”. In this study some impact on participation was achieved, however it is likely that long-term impact on club membership is very low.

Clubs and stakeholders consider that the overall result could be improved by increasing logistical efficiency of the time frame for delivering the tennis lessons. This is borne out to some extent by consumer behavior theory. However this theory also indicates that some drop-off in interest after the tournaments is almost inevitable.

## Conclusions

The principle question of this research asks ‘how can local sport clubs leverage increased participation/membership from a major sport event in their local community’. The four sub-questions are discussed in the previous chapter. In summary, these identified a leveraging process and specific actions, which can increase the profile of clubs at a sport event. Implementation requires that clubs work together as a group. A project champion can facilitate the process and give impetus to the activity. The result of this study showed considerable interest in attending a tennis lesson at a club, however actual participation was lower, and long-term membership of a club arising from the study is likely to be low. However, the majority of stakeholders regard the project to be successful overall.

It is interesting to consider why the project was regarded successful when the long-term impact in terms of membership is likely to be low. There seem to be several reasons for this. All the stakeholders actively involved in planning and implementing the project seem to have enjoyed it. They enjoyed working with each other and enjoyed the process. They felt they were doing something worthwhile that was appreciated by the majority of clubs. Through the study, they actively thought more strategically about the role of the tournaments and the clubs. Three key principles are identified that could be used in the future.

First, for clubs to gain benefit from the tournaments, they need to act as a group. This is partly due to the geographic coverage of tournaments being much wider than for a single club. In this study, the spectators predominantly came from the Auckland area. A single club covers only one suburb. It was necessary for information about clubs in two regional areas to be provided at the tournaments. If an event draws on the whole country for its spectator base, then it would be necessary for club information for the whole country to be accessible. A single club is also unlikely to have sufficient influence or resources to manage a project alone. It is therefore necessary for clubs to be co-ordinated. In New Zealand, the traditional sport structure includes a regional body, which can act in a co-ordinator or adviser to clubs.

Secondly, the co-ordinating body needs to have access to tournament facilities such as the ability to include information in the tournament programme. If part of the activity includes a club stand at an event or the distribution of promotional

material, the co-ordinating body needs to have a good relationship or sufficient influence with the event organiser to achieve this. In the reconnaissance phase, an example of a failed promotion at a previous tennis event was discussed. The cause of failure was widely considered to be the inability of tournament personnel to distribute materials. The co-ordinating body needs to be able to work with event organisers to achieve some impact for clubs at the tournament. This is obviously easier if the tournament is controlled or organised by an entity in the same sport network as the clubs. In this study the tournament is organised by the same regional centre that co-ordinates clubs.

Thirdly, the process used in this study can definitely be used or adapted for other contexts, as it has already been demonstrated by Vail (2007), O'Brien (2006) and Ritchie (2000). Other sport groups can use the same approach to look at events and identify if there is a way of creating a link between clubs and the event. It could be either the formal action research process as used by Vail (2007) or a similar process involving consultation, implementation and evaluation as used by O'Brien (2006) and Ritchie (2000). As identified by these authors, the presence of a project champion within the sport network is not only important, but may be essential. The presence of an external advocate, such as the researcher in an action research project, was beneficial in this case study and may be helpful to provide some impetus or 'call for action'.

Whether or not the specific actions of this case study could be implemented in the context of other sport will depend on the similarity between these tennis tournaments and other events. The club stand was appropriate for a sport such as tennis, which has a number of matches played on one day and no on-court activity for periods of time during the change-over between matches. The grounds are also open for a significant period of time prior to matches. There needs to be appropriate space for a club stand at the tournament venue. The inclusion of information in a tournament programme is likely to be more transferable to other sport as most events have some form of published programme. The ability to work with sponsors thus reducing the direct cost of promotional activity may be transferable to other contexts. It is also common practice for economic impact surveys to be undertaken at events. The possibility of including questions of interest to the sport network can be investigated for other events. Literature to date suggests that the overlap between spectators and players may need to be considered on a sport by sport basis. The use

of an economic impact survey can provide information about the sport playing behaviour of spectators at a specific event.

In addition to these three key principles, there are factors in this case which contributed to the success of the study. In the reconnaissance phase, the external researcher was impressed that every sector in the tennis sport network could articulate the role of the tournaments in the tennis calendar. Every participant could explain the philosophy of the tournaments as forerunners to a Grand Slam event and the resulting increased profile for tennis. The concept of Tennis Open Days was designed to take advantage the profile for tennis at that time of year. The strategic thinking had already taken place prior to the involvement of the researcher. This type of thinking can be used in other sport. It is helpful to question the role that a sport event plays in the annual calendar and whether it can be or is linked to club events.

Having identified a philosophy, it is then important to ensure that it can be seen in practice. In this case study the philosophy was clearly stated right at the outset, however its implementation was not clear. A direct link between the tournaments and the Open Days was not clearly established until included in the tournament programme and promoted at the club stand.

This leads on the importance of planning and evaluation of events in relation to sport development. Apart from the promotion, the actions in this case study are not complex. They are so straightforward that many of the stakeholders are almost embarrassed that the actions had not been undertaken or thought through previously.

The researcher certainly did not expect such a straightforward answer to the question 'how can local sport clubs leverage increased participation/membership from a major sport event in their local community'. Fundamentally, the study found that there needs to be some acknowledgement or presence for sport clubs at sport events so that spectators have information about how to access the sport in that area. An incentive to visit a club can provide an invitation and direct link to clubs.

However, the implementation of this apparently straightforward answer to the principle question may be more complex than it appears. Sport clubs are run by volunteers in the not-for-profit sector. Resources both in terms of people's time and finance are valuable and limited, not only in the clubs but also in other organisations in the sport network. It took an active thought process to think through the issues



involved in this study and the dedication of project champions both within and external to the sport network.

In the Literature Review in section 2.5 (refer pp.28-29) the following comment is made: “Until clubs or those organisations responsible for the ongoing provision of sport participation opportunities in the host community are included in pre-event planning or post-event evaluation, sport development impacts and legacies will remain at worst ignored and at best under-developed”. Consideration of the potential use of events needs to become a much stronger part of both the theory and practice of planning and evaluation, so that the process used in this study becomes an automatic part of event planning. This means actively asking the question ‘how can this event be used for the benefit of sport clubs?’ It may be helpful for sport organisations to consider a checklist of the straightforward actions from this study of providing information in the tournament programme, erecting a club stand (either manned or unmanned) and using a promotion to encourage spectators to visit a club. Gratton et al. (2006) in Figure 1 (refer p.20) illustrate an approach for evaluating events that gives the same weighting to sport development as to other aspects of an event. To date sport literature does not demonstrate this balanced approach.

The mini-cycle in this study answered the question that arose during the reconnaissance phase and shows that there is the potential for greater tennis participation amongst spectators at the two tournaments in this study. However, the findings do not contribute a great deal to understanding the complex relationship between spectators and participants. It is not clear whether there is an escalator or pathway from spectators to participants as shown in Figure 3 (refer p.26).

This study gives some support to O’Brien and Chalip’s (2006) model in Figure 4 (refer p.30) which shows that the ‘feel good’ factor at a tournament is a leverageable resource. Such models need consider consumer behavior concepts relating to the impact of priming from environmental cues. Any decision or action taken at a sport event may be influenced or enhanced by the ‘feel good’ atmosphere of the event. It is almost inevitable that there will be some reduction in motivation when spectators are removed from the atmosphere of the environment.

Finally, areas of further research are identified. Two of these aspects relate specifically to this study and one to the more widespread phenomenon of ‘pay-for-play’. This study identified a promotional action, which succeeded in attracting the interest of spectators in attending a lesson at a tennis club. The high level of interest

did not translate to participation. The evaluation of the promotion showed that stakeholders believe a higher retention rate can be achieved with improved logistical processes such as more speedy contact with entrants and more speedy delivery of the lesson. Consumer behaviour theory indicates that some drop-off in interest is inevitable. A further cycle of research with a similar intervention and improved logistics would indicate the extent to which greater retention of entrants is possible. Tracking the progress of entrants following the tennis lesson over a longer timeframe would also show whether the interest translated into club membership.

Preuss (2007) maintains that the impact of an event held a second time will not be the same as for the first time. Repeating the research in two or more consecutive years would show whether successive interventions could achieve sustained impact.

This study confirms the concern in the literature about the impact of the 'pay-for-play' concept. It confirms that the people playing tennis in this way outnumber club members. It also confirms the concern about the concept within a traditional sport network. It was beyond the scope of this study to understand this concept. During the evaluation phase, one participant expressed concern about the critical issue of "*how do we target casual members who are resistant to club membership?*". The intervention in this study provided a step towards attracting spectators to sport clubs. However, this would only be effective for people sympathetic to playing in a club environment. The bigger issue remains of how clubs tackle the competition from the 'pay-for-play' environment.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Participant Information Sheet

# Participant Information Sheet



**Date Information Sheet Produced: 20 April 2009**

## **Project Title**

*Major sports events and their ability to benefit local sports clubs: a case study of the Auckland professional tennis tournaments.*

## **An Invitation**

You are invited to participate in a research project on how local tennis clubs can benefit from the Auckland professional tennis tournaments with a particular focus on the following issues:

- Perception about the benefit from recent tournaments and the importance of the tournaments to the organisation
- What successes/problems have been evident in past promotional activities
- How clubs currently obtain and retain new members
- How clubs currently promote the hireage of courts and use of facilities
- Perception about activities that could be undertaken that would benefit clubs

This project is being undertaken by Katharine Hoskyn, an MPhil candidate from the Faculty of Applied Humanities. Participation in the project will involve a 30-60 minute interview. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

## **What is the purpose of this research?**

Katharine Hoskyn is undertaking this research for her MPhil thesis at Auckland University of Technology and she hopes to publish the findings at conferences and in academic and professional journals.

## **How was I chosen for this invitation?**

You have been invited to participate in this research as you are involved in the organisation or administration of tennis or your tennis club. Your name came from another participant, from a list of tennis clubs or organisations from the internet or through organisations such as: Tennis Auckland and Tennis Northern.

## **What will happen in this research?**

You will be asked to sign a participation consent form and take part in an interview at a time and place that is convenient to you. The questions will focus on your perceptions and experiences of tennis in relation to the five issues identified above.

The interview may be recorded via audiotape and note-taking. This will be analysed by common themes.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

No discomfort or risk is expected. However participants may feel uncomfortable discussing some aspects of their organisation's activities.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

You don't need to answer any questions or take part in any discussion that you don't wish to and are free to withdraw at any time. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript of discussions so that you can clarify, amend or withdraw comments.

**What are the benefits?**

It is expected that participation in this project will help identify actions that could help tennis clubs gain benefit from the professional tennis to tournaments.

**How will my privacy and that of my club be protected?**

No identifying data will be used in the write-up of the results and your privacy will be fully protected. The final published proceedings will identify participants only by a two-letter code.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There are no monetary costs involved in the participation of this research and it is expected that participation in the research will require no more than 30 minutes – 1 hour.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You are requested to consider and respond to this invitation within the next two weeks.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you agree to participate please return the attached consent form. Please also advise me of the times that you are available for an interview and the place that you would prefer the interview to take place.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

It is anticipated that a summary of the findings will be available within 12 months of completion of the project and copies of this will be made available if requested.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Geoff Dickson, [Geoff.dickson@aut.ac.nz](mailto:Geoff.dickson@aut.ac.nz), (09) 921 9999 ext 7851.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, [madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz](mailto:madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz), (09) 921 9999 ext. 8044.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

**Researcher Contact Details:**

The researcher's contact details are: Katharine Hoskyn, [Katharine.hoskyn@aut.ac.nz](mailto:Katharine.hoskyn@aut.ac.nz). Phone 921-9999 ext. 5349.

## APPENDIX B

### Consent forms

# Consent Form



For use when interviews are involved.

**Project title:** *Major sports events and their ability to benefit local sports clubs: a case study of the Auckland professional tennis tournaments.*

**Project Supervisor:** *Geoff Dickson, PhD*

**Researcher:** *Katharine Hoskyn*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 20 April, 2009
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that the interviews will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.  
I would like to be interviewed at:
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the findings from the research (please tick one):  
Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Date: .....

Participant's contact details:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 20, April 2009**  
**AUTEC Reference number 09/45**

# Consent Form

For use when focus groups are involved.



Project title: **Major sports events and their ability to benefit local sports clubs: a case study of the Auckland professional tennis tournaments. Phase 1.**

Project Supervisor: **Dr Geoff Dickson**

Researcher: **Katharine Hoskyn**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet 20 May 2009.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group is confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the focus group and that it will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which I was part, the relevant information about myself including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will not be used.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name:.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 20 April 2009**  
**AUTEC Reference number 09/45**

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*



## APPENDIX C

Photographs of club stand in exhibitors' dome









## APPENDIX D

Half page advertisement in the tournament programme for club stand

**VISIT THE TENNIS AUCKLAND STAND TODAY!**

**→ Come Play Open Day 2010** **Sunday Feb 14th 2010**



- Find your nearest participating club
- Whether you are new to the game or returning to have another go
- A chance for everyone to come and have fun at their local tennis club

**WE ARE HERE IN THE EXHIBITORS DOME OPPOSITE THE AUSTINS CAFE**

**Register for a FREE 1 hour tennis lesson:**

- Your chance to start learning the game for FREE
- Fill out the form at our stand and we will contact you to book you in for a free tennis lesson at a participating club
- Sign your friend up as well and you can both come along

**→ FREE tennis lesson**



Sony Ericsson WTA TOUR

28

ASB CLASSIC 2010

## APPENDIX E

Half page advertisement in tournament programme for free lesson promotion



### GIVE TENNIS A GO... TRY A **FREE** TENNIS LESSON!

Come and try a FREE 1 hour tennis lesson at one of our participating clubs - Auckland wide.

- No obligation, just have a go
- Bring a friend if you want and we can supply racquets if you need
- Have fun, meet people and learn the game

#### How?

- Come and register at the Tennis Auckland Stand in the Exhibitors Dome
- We will contact you to book your lesson

If you can't get to the stand get the form from our web site - [www.aucklandtennis.co.nz](http://www.aucklandtennis.co.nz)

→ Follow the link/icon

→ **FREE tennis lesson**

Offer only open to non tennis club members



Sony Ericsson  
WTA TOUR

40

ASB CLASSIC 2010



### GIVE TENNIS A GO... TRY A **FREE** TENNIS LESSON!

Come and try a FREE 1 hour tennis lesson at one of our participating clubs - Auckland wide.

- No obligation, just have a go
- Bring a friend if you want and we can supply racquets if you need
- Have fun, meet people and learn the game

#### How?

- Come and register at the Tennis Auckland Stand in the Exhibitors Dome
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→ Follow the link/icon

→ **FREE tennis lesson**

Offer only open to non tennis club members



## APPENDIX F

### Summary Sheet of Club Feedback

#### **Tennis Club profile and promotion at ASB Classic and Heineken Open:**

##### **Some feedback from participating clubs**

A club stand set up at the ASB Classic and the Heineken Open which provided information about tennis clubs in the Tennis Auckland and Tennis Northern areas (specifically their location). A promotion offering a free tennis lesson was available. Information about the stand and the promotion was included in the tournament brochure with details of the Tennis Auckland website from which the offer could also be requested. The offer on the website was open until February 12<sup>th</sup>.

The purpose of this was:

- To provide a connection between the tournaments and clubs
- To give clubs a presence at the tournaments

The initial response:

- 382 people in the Tennis Auckland area put in a request for a free lesson: 105 at the tournaments and the rest online.
- In addition approximately 50 names were passed on to Tennis Northern.
- These names were passed on to 23 clubs: Twelve clubs had originally volunteered to take part; additional clubs were contacted due to the high response.

To date, 15 of the clubs have given details about their experience with the promotion and their opinion about running it again. Of these 15 clubs:

- All had contacted the names given to them. Two clubs were still to run the lesson at the time as at end/March early April.
- The range of methods of contact varied – some used multiple methods (phone, email etc) to contact each person; some left messages or sent a text. Some followed up non-responders and some made only one contact.
- The organisation of the lesson varied –some tried to link it into something that was happening so that the club looked busy or the visitors could ‘get a feel’ for the club. Two clubs utilised time when the club had nothing else on (time that was unpopular for other things). Some clubs offered one option for the lesson and some gave a range of options.
- The people attending were mostly beginners, with some returning to the game.
- The lesson went well for all except one club who had a very difficult mix of people at the lesson.
- Most had some form of literature or encouragement to join the club – some gave special offers. Some will be maintaining contact until or at the start of next season.
- Approximately 5 clubs described the response as ‘good’ – about a third to half the contact names came to the organised lesson. Almost all clubs reported people saying they would go to the lesson and not turn up. There were a few difficulties with contact details.
- Five clubs have one or more new members from the promotion.

**Would they do it again?**

All agreed that theoretically it was a good thing to do.

Seven clubs would definitely run it again and were extremely enthusiastic about the prospect; 3 probably would take part or are not sure; 3 definitely wouldn't take part. Two were not asked about this.

One of the hesitant clubs had quite a good response. Two of keen clubs did not have good response – 'any new member is valuable', 'support any approach to promote tennis – this (response) is typical of NZ today'.

Some felt that it was a lot of effort for the result and some felt that it was a relatively easy thing to do. There were also varying views on the adequacy of the \$30 given by Tennis Auckland (only one strongly suggesting that this was insufficient).

**Suggestions:**

- Do it before Christmas.
- Do it at the start of the season – but not sure where the names would come from
- Give clubs more warning about what they need to do (2 – 3 clubs).
- Contact closer to the tournaments – in February was too late (however two clubs were so busy in Term 1 that they weren't able to offer the lesson until recently) ( a couple of people)
- Stronger if local clubs are involved – some of the names to be contacted actually lived in another area.
- Clubs need to be encouraged to link it into something else or a programme that they are already doing.
- Should the participants be asked to pay something – is making it 'free' a good thing.

At least three of the club contacts had manned the stand at the tournaments – and enjoyed the experience.



## APPENDIX G

Half page advertisement in tournament programme for the Open Days

# Come Play!

## Tennis Open Day

*Fall in love with tennis on Valentine's Weekend!*

Saturday 13, Sunday 14 February, at your local club all around NZ

**It's free!** We promise you time on a court and a great hit. Equipment supplied. Everyone welcome! Check out the website for times and dates at 153 participating clubs [www.tennisnz.com](http://www.tennisnz.com)

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**YOUTHTOWN**





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## APPENDIX H

### Full page details in tournament programme about tennis in Auckland



# AROUND TENNIS AUCKLAND

#### ABOUT IT...

Tennis Auckland is New Zealand's largest tennis region including the Counties Tennis Association sub region and covering Greater Auckland south of the Waitemata harbour with over 10,000 members and 60 affiliated clubs.



Tennis Auckland boasts world class facilities at the ASB Tennis Centre in Parnell (home of the ASB Classic and Heineken Open), the Scarbro Tennis Centre in Glen Innes and the Manukau Tennis Centre in Te Irirangi Dr, Manukau. Collectively these facilities boast eleven indoor and thirty two outdoor courts used for tournaments and inter-club they also can be hired for casual play. Resident professional coaches and Pro Shops and function rooms are available at all of these venues. [www.tennisauckland.co.nz](http://www.tennisauckland.co.nz)

Scarbro Construction have put considerable resources and finances behind tennis as the naming rights sponsor of both the Tennis Centre and the premier tennis interclub in Auckland the Scarbro Caro Bowl. Scarbro are a major player in the construction industry in Auckland and are proud to be supporters of the sport in the region. [www.scarbro.co.nz](http://www.scarbro.co.nz)

#### PLAY IT...

To get the most out of tennis, join one of Auckland's 60 tennis clubs which offer organised tennis and coaching for all ages and abilities.

Tennis Auckland offers and encourages the "Easi Tennis" coaching programme which is specifically for adults new or returning to the game. "Easi Tennis" is a six session programme covering all

basic aspects of tennis designed to get you on court, phone Tennis Auckland for details 3733 623, or try our web site for more information. [www.tennisauckland.co.nz](http://www.tennisauckland.co.nz)

On the 14th of February 2010, many of Auckland's clubs will be having an open day to encourage people to come and try tennis; no matter age or ability. Check out our website in February for participating clubs and give it a go!

#### WATCH IT...

Tennis Auckland is hitting aces when it comes to technology with locally based Planetstream Limited set to be involved with the live webcast from the first round to the final on the net of the ASB Classic and Heineken Open.

This means anyone can watch international tennis this summer choosing various connections, all with excellent visual and audio production combining graphics, scoreboards, multiple camera angles and commentary too.

Planetstream is at the forefront of the internet broadcasting revolution which is all about viewer choice over network programming. Kiwis living abroad will be able to view local content and keep up-to-date with shot-by-shot vision of the ASB Classic.

#### CLUB LOCATIONS AROUND AUCKLAND

- \* BLOCKHOUSE BAY Rathlin St, Blockhouse Bay 627 8735 L
- \* BUCKLANDS BEACH Rogers Park, Eastern Beach 535 4897 L
- \* CAMPBELL PARK 197 Greenlane Rd, Epsom 520 2191 L
- \* CLEVEDON Monument Rd, Clevedon 09 292 8147 L
- \* COCKLE BAY Meadowland Drive, Howick 534 4152 L
- \* DUNHOLME 33 Ridings Rd, Remuera 520 2347
- \* EDEN EPSOM 1 Penrhyn Road, Mt Eden 630 0397 L
- \* GLADSTONE Gladstone Rd, Parnell 373 2257 L
- \* GLENDOWIE Forfar Rd, Glendowie 575 7166 L
- \* GLEN EDEN 42 Glendale Rd, Glen Eden 818 4042 L
- \* HERNE BAY Bayfield Park, West End Rd 376 0681 L
- \* HOWICK Wellington St, Howick 534 9152 L
- \* HUNUA (midweek only) Main Rd, Hunua 09 292 4839 L
- \* JELLCOE PARK Marr Rd, Manurewa 267 2136 L
- \* KARAKA Blackbridge Rd, Karaka 292 7588 L
- \* KOHIMARAMA 30 Melanesia Rd, Kohimarama 528 8239 L
- \* KORU cnr Gossamer Dr/Blyton Lane, Pakuranga 576 9763
- \* LYNFIELD 18 The Avenue, Lynfield 626 3229 L
- \* MACLEANS 5 Oliver Rd, Bucklands Beach 534 5027 L
- \* MANGERE COMBINED Kirkbride Rd, Mangere Central 275 4125 L
- \* MANUREWA Russell Rd, Manurewa 266 4693 L
- \* MARAETAI Whitford-Maraetai Rd, Maraetai 536 6666 L
- \* MISSION BAY 11A Marau Cres, Mission Bay 528 9451 L
- \* MOUNT ALBERT 982 New North Rd, Mt Albert 829 2334 L
- \* MOUNT EDEN 22 Poronui St, Mt Eden 630 4203 L
- \* NEW LYNN Mason Park, Fruitvale Rd, New Lynn 827 6324 L

- \* NGATIRA Clive Road, Mt Eden 630 0353 L
- \* ORAKEI Cnr Kape/Kupe Sts, Orakei 521 0295 L
- \* OTAHUHU Cnr Portage / Atkinson Ave, Otahuhu 276 4363
- \* PAKURANGA 101 Pigeon Mountain Rd, Pakuranga 534 1038 L
- \* PAKAPURA 22 Green St, Pakuranga 298 0839 L
- \* PAPATOETOE 20 Sutton Cres, Papatoetoe 278 4166 L
- \* PARNELL Cnr Titoki / Maunsell Rd, Parnell 373 2733 L
- \* PT CHEVALIER 335 Pt Chevalier Rd, Pt Chevalier 849 5730 L
- \* POMPALLIER 11 Green St, Ponsonby 376 5689 L
- \* REMUERA 17 Dilworth Ave, Remuera 524 8857 L
- \* ROYAL OAK 116 Symonds St, Royal Oak 625 7191 L
- \* ST HELIERS 3 Goldie St, St Heliers 575 7866 L
- \* SUNNYHILLS Oleander Point, Pakuranga 576 4567
- \* SUNNYSIDE York Rd, Papatoetoe 2789019 L
- \* TE ATATU 572C Te Atatu Rd, Te Atatu Peninsula 834 6365 L
- \* TE PAI PARK Te Pai Place, Henderson 837 1185 L
- \* TITIRANGI 1 Ava Ave, Titirangi 817 6394 L
- \* WAIATA Fernleigh Ave, Epsom 625 8878 L
- \* WAIHEKE (juniors only) Onetangi Sports Park, O'Brien Rd, Onetangi 372 9697
- \* WEST END Cnr West End/File Sts, Westmere 376 4433 L
- \* WEST HARBOUR Picasso Drive, West Harbour 416 6886 L
- \* WINSTONE PARK 17 Akarana Ave, Mt Roskill 620 6889 L

COUNTIES CLUBS — Bombay, Hunua, Mangatangi, Pātumahoe, Pokeno, Pukekohe, Pukekohe East, Pukekawa, Runciman, Te Toro, Tuakau, Waikou.

L = lights. \* Denotes clubs with artificial grass/plexipave.  
Players are reminded that correct footwear is required at these clubs.

