

**Developing Inclusive Leadership in Sport Boards Through
Emotional and Cultural Intelligence Lenses: An Action Research
Study**

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Abstract

In the context of nonprofit sport governance, global interest has drawn attention to persistent challenges associated with insufficient diversity and inclusion practices, which often lead to tokenism, bias, and discrimination (Mayo et al., 2016). Although the terms diversity and inclusion are frequently used interchangeably, they represent distinct concepts. A diverse representative structure alone does not bridge differences; additional leadership practices are necessary to promote inclusiveness, equity, and openness. Inclusive leadership is an approach that addresses these differences by integrating the key elements of belonging and uniqueness to enable genuine inclusion.

This study, situated within a New Zealand nonprofit sporting organisation, was motivated by progress made by New Zealand Cricket in advancing board gender diversity, alongside scholarly calls for greater attention to ‘leadership’ in governance (Ferkins et al., 2018; O’Boyle et al., 2020; 2023). Adopting a developmental action research methodology, the study explores the role of emotions and culture in shaping inclusive governance practices. It draws on four key frameworks: Emotional Intelligence (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017), Cultural Intelligence (Middleton, 2014), the Theoretical Model of Inclusive Leadership (Randel et al., 2018), and O’Boyle et al.’s (2020, 2023) leadership model for nonprofit sport governance. A mixed-methods approach integrated Q-sort inspired tools, interviews, and collaborative discussions to address the question: *How can inclusive leadership in sport boards be developed through an emotional and cultural intelligence lens?*

Findings demonstrate that inclusive leadership in sport governance is a dynamic, relational process rather than a fixed destination. Three interventions illustrate this process: embedding inclusive practices in board recruitment and appointment processes; fostering chair and board development through dialogic engagement; and raising awareness of inclusive leadership within the organisation. Together, these interventions demonstrated how intentional practices, quality relationships, and reflective dialogue shaped inclusive leadership practices over time.

Based on these findings, this thesis contributes theoretical and practical insights to the field of sport leadership and governance by presenting a conceptual framework for developing inclusive leadership in sport governance through emotional and cultural intelligence. The framework illustrates how inclusive leadership can be developed and sustained by intentionally integrating emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence, and inclusive practices across individual, collective, and systemic levels. When activated through these practices, these

dimensions generate outcomes such as the emergence of collective emotional and cultural intelligence, and the establishment of shared norms.

In summary, this research contributes to addressing the gap between recognition and implementation of inclusive leadership practices in sport governance. While boards acknowledge the need for diversity and inclusion, translating this into practice remains challenging due to limited theoretical guidance and the complexity of leadership contexts. This study advances understanding by highlighting the importance of micro-level approaches that integrate emotional and cultural intelligence, enabling social, relational, and collectivist practices that embed inclusion within governance processes. By deploying an action research approach, this study supports scholars and practitioners to understand *how to* embed inclusive leadership practices aligned with emotional and cultural intelligence, and the impact of doing so in achieving inclusion and sustaining diversity within sport boards.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Throughout this thesis, multiple abbreviations and acronyms are used. Each term is spelled out in full upon first mention in each chapter, after which the abbreviation or acronym is applied. A complete list is presented below in alphabetical order:

CCQ	Collective Cultural Intelligence
CEI	Collective Emotional Intelligence
CQ	Cultural Intelligence
DICG	Diversity and Inclusion in Cricket Governance
EI	Emotional Intelligence
DA	District Association
MA	Major Association
NZC	New Zealand Cricket
OD	Organisational Development
Sport NZ	Sport New Zealand
WiCG	Women in Cricket Governance

Attestation of Authorship and Declaration of AI and AI-Assisted Technologies

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 used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), 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.

I declare that artificial intelligence tools were used to assist with ethically approved tasks such as summarising literature, qualitative data management, organising themes, improving grammar and structure, and generating visualisations for this research. All AI-generated content has been verified, and the analysis and conclusions remain my original work. AI assistance has been used in accordance with AUT guidelines and with supervisor approval.

Kelly McCallum

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Ethics Approval

Because this research involved human participants, ethical approval was required from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). Approval was received on 26 October 2022: Approval number 22/278. As per action research approaches, there were subsequent amendments throughout as the study unfolded.

Chapter 1 Introduction

“The tags were still on.”

A year ago, my 15-year-old daughter said this when she received her cricket uniform for a representative game. Her smile and contented voice reflected a profound sense of belonging and acceptance, of being valued as she is. She was given a new uniform, not a hand-me-down from the boys’ extras, not two sizes too big, but one ordered specifically for her team. A girls’ team. It was a feeling beyond pride; it was a feeling of equality and inclusion in a space that has historically been dominated by men. She was seen, and she was valued. I felt her emotion deeply, because I too have experienced moments like this in my own sporting career.

In this thesis, the tags on new uniforms symbolise much more than a piece of cardboard displaying a brand, size and price. They represent New Zealand Cricket’s (NZC) inclusive leadership journey, the evolving values and vision of the organisation, and the deliberate decisions made at board level to position cricket as a game for all, and a game for life. This thesis does not claim to provide a definitive answer to what inclusion feels like or how it should be defined or developed, nor is that its purpose. Rather, it reflects a journey of awareness that contributes to the understanding of how inclusion can be developed, experienced and felt. This study explores how inclusive leadership in sport boards can be developed through an emotional and cultural intelligence lens. And, as a consequence, how inclusive leadership at the National Board level can create emotionally significant experiences of belonging and uniqueness, and how these practices influence organisational culture and decision making at the highest level.

1.1 Identifying the Need for Research

Why Focus on Inclusion in Sport Governance

Efforts to foster diversity practices within sport governance, particularly regarding gender, have attracted significant global attention over the past decade (Adriaanse, 2016; Burton, 2015, Hoeber, 2007; Hoeber & Shaw, 2019; Molloy et al., 2023). This increased focus has attracted considerable research attention, with studies suggesting a positive relationship between increased diversity, organisational mission achievement, and positive organisational outcomes (Lee & Cunningham, 2019; McLeod, 2025; Siciliano, 1996). In New Zealand, this focus has advanced through heightened awareness and the implementation of diversity initiatives within nonprofit sporting organisations. For example, from a gender perspective, in 2016 NZC released

the *Women in Cricket Report*, which revealed a concerning decline in female representation on governance boards. Women occupied only 6% of governance roles, a sharp decrease from 38% in 1993. In response, NZC acknowledged the need for institutional change, and the National Board unanimously adopted key governance recommendations, introducing initiatives aimed at supporting and securing the future stability of women's participation in cricket (NZC, 2021). Furthermore, in October 2018, the New Zealand Prime Minister and Minister for Sport and Recreation reinforced the importance of diversity and inclusion by announcing a new strategy to increase female representation on nonprofit sport organisation boards. The government, in partnership with Sport New Zealand (Sport NZ), committed \$10 million over three years to fund and resource diversity and inclusion initiatives, initially prioritising women. Numerous initiatives in New Zealand have since supported this commitment (Sport NZ, 2018). For example, Sport NZ introduced a National Policy for Gender Equity in Governance, requiring all nonprofit sport boards to comprise at least 40% self-identified females and 40% self-identified males by December 2021 (Sport NZ, 2018). In 2022, Sport NZ commissioned an evaluation of this policy's impact, which found that 65 out of 66 Sport NZ-affiliated organisations achieved gender balance on their boards, with 40% or more self-identified women (Sport NZ, n.d.-c).

Globally, research indicates that diversity initiatives in sport governance have often focused narrowly on gender as the primary demographic characteristic (Adriaanse, 2017; Mayo et al., 2016; McLeod et al., 2025). Other diversity dimensions such as ethnicity and indigeneity have received considerably less attention within the sport governance literature (Bradbury et al., 2025; McLeod et al., 2021b, 2025). Recently in New Zealand, there has been progressive movement toward appreciating and embedding the Māori culture of 'Aotearoa' (New Zealand) in sport governance. For example, in 2019 Tennis New Zealand introduced its Tikanga Rua (biculturalism) programme to create a pathway for honouring the Treaty of Waitangi, a foundational agreement between Māori and the Crown, and to promote greater diversity and inclusion in tennis (Tennis NZ, 2023). Subsequent board level initiatives included developing a Mana Māori governance policy which reflects a commitment to uphold and recognise Māori perspectives (Tennis NZ, 2023). This policy articulated the board's intent to engage with Māori in a meaningful and sustained manner, reinforcing an inclusive approach across the organisation (Tennis NZ, 2023).

Although sport organisation boards are seeking to increase representation across dimensions such as gender, ethnicity, LGBTIQ+ affinity, age, culture, disability, background, and experience, diversity alone is unlikely to be sustainable without meaningful inclusion frameworks (Buse et al., 2016). While diversity and inclusion are often used interchangeably, they are theoretically

distinct and refer to different constructs (Mor Barak, 2019; Roberson, 2006). Cunningham (2015) defines diversity as “the presence of socially meaningful differences among members of a dyad or group” (p. 6) and inclusion as “the degree to which individuals are free to express themselves and have a sense of workplace connectedness and belonging” (p. 7). Ospina and Foldy (2010) argue that a diverse representative structure alone is insufficient to bridge differences and that additional leadership practices are required to foster inclusiveness, fairness, and openness. The literature on inclusive leadership has grown substantially in recent years, positioning itself at the intersection of diversity management and leadership studies (Korkmas et al., 2022). Furthermore, sport governance has also attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent years (Shilbury & Ferkins, 2020). Researchers argue that, due to the complexity of non-profit sport organisations—including passionate stakeholders (Shilbury et al., 2021; Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020) and systemic issues such as corruption (Kihl et al., 2017)—strong leadership within sport governance is pivotal (McLeod et al., 2021). Therefore, the sport governance context warrants specific attention in inclusive leadership research because board members are responsible for governing organisations that serve multiple stakeholder groups, often within volunteer-based structures. However, research on inclusive leadership practices within sport governance remains limited.

Furthermore, while sport organisation boards appear to recognise the need for diversity and inclusive practices, implementation remains challenging. Theoretical knowledge on embedding effective inclusion within sport governance is limited, and the leadership context is complex. Existing literature indicates that inclusion initiatives have primarily focused on policies and strategies at the institutional level rather than at the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels (Cunningham, 2015; Parker, 2019). Evidence suggests that for diversity to be sustainable, governance practices must also incorporate inclusion at the micro level (Adriaanse, 2019). Current research points to the importance of social, relational, and collectivist approaches to leadership at this level (Adriaanse, 2019; McLeod et al., 2021a, 2021b).

Why Emotional and Cultural Intelligence

Developing inclusive and sustainable practices within sport governance structures requires more than a simple integration of practices - it requires a system that captures the complexity of leadership and includes addressing thoughts embodying the dynamics of intra and interpersonal interactions. If linking thoughts, emotions, and culture address barriers to inclusion (Gerbert et al., 2017), then the constructs of emotional intelligence (EI) and cultural intelligence (CQ) could potentially be the lens through which diversity is sustainable. EI is about self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman, 2019). Developing

inclusive leaders with EI skills specifically in an intrapersonal and interpersonal capacity may help to promote healthy environments (Jada et al., 2014; Warrier, 2021).

Moreover, the concept of CQ applied to a leadership context has been gaining increasing interest amongst 'Western' scholars (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015; Clark & Polesello, 2017; Middleton, 2014; Thomas, 2006). CQ is defined as the capacity to relate, communicate, and work effectively within environments that are characterised by high cultural complexity (Andreson & Bergdolt, 2017; Ang & Van Dyne, 2015; Middleton, 2014). Whilst the CQ literature is evolving, the main body of research tends to focus around CQ as an individual construct and not part of organisational leadership processes (Andreson & Bergdolt, 2017; Moon, 2010). However, Clark and Polesello (2017) argue that both EI and CQ applied together can influence positive organisational change with respect to diversity and inclusion challenges. By applying both EI (ability to work with people) and CQ (ability to work with people that are different than you), this study helps to advance the sport governance literature by exploring how the two constructs work in tandem to develop inclusive environments.

1.2 Rationale for Research

Considering these documented barriers, this study is theoretically framed around the role of emotions and culture in shaping knowledge acquisition and meaning making regarding inclusive leadership practices. It draws on four leading Western-derived models: Goleman and Boyatzis's (2017) EI framework, Middleton's (2014) CQ model, the Theoretical Model of Inclusive Leadership by Randel et al. (2018), and O'Boyle et al.'s (2019, 2023) working model of leadership in a nonprofit sport governance context. This research aims to contribute to a multi-level understanding of how EI and CQ can influence inclusive leadership behaviours and practices within New Zealand sport governance, an area that remains understudied. Furthermore, the study seeks to identify specific interventions and practices to enhance inclusion in sport boards. In doing so, it is well positioned to advance knowledge on sport governance leadership in New Zealand and to inform a new generation of inclusive thinking for sport leadership nationally and globally.

1.3 Research Question and Sub Questions

Understanding the factors that inhibit or enable inclusive environments in sport boards, and the role EI and CQ play in developing inclusive leadership practices, will provide an empirical basis for nonprofit sporting organisations to strengthen their leadership approaches and create

environments where diversity is sustainable. Therefore, this PhD project aims to address the following major research question, supported by four sub-questions, as set out below:

How can inclusive leadership in sport boards be developed through an emotional and cultural intelligence lens?

- What does inclusive leadership practices mean in the context of sport boards?
- What factors inhibit or enable an inclusive environment in sport boards?
- What role could EI and CQ play in developing inclusive leadership practices?
- What actions can be taken to develop inclusive practices in sport boards?
- What changes have occurred as a result of such actions?

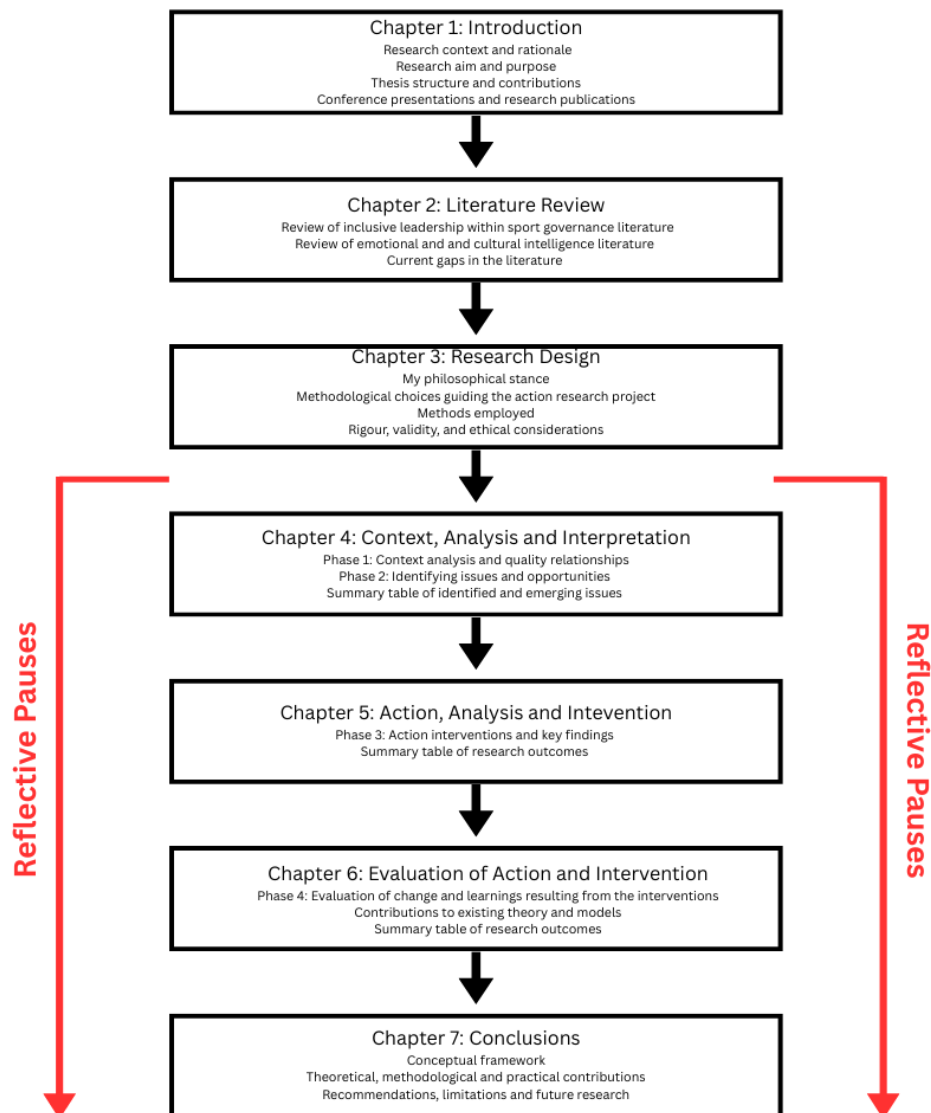
1.4 Thesis Structure and Contributions

This thesis follows Auckland University of Technology's Format One: Traditional Research Structure (Auckland University of Technology, 2024) and is presented in eight chapters. Chapter 1 outlines the research context and rationale, presents the research questions, and details the thesis structure (Figure 1.1) along with the research outputs (Table 1.1). Chapter 2 reviews the literature underpinning the exploration of inclusive leadership within sport governance, considering both board-level and system-level perspectives through the lenses of EI and CQ. Chapter 3 details the research design, including my philosophical stance and the action research approach applied through a mixed methods study. Chapter 4, the first of the findings and discussion chapters (4-6) moves into the field by examining the research context, interpreting and identifying issues and opportunities that informed the design of subsequent interventions discussed in later chapters. This chapter, also phase 1 and 2 of the action research process, introduces reflective pauses—intentional moments where I provide personal insights and interpretations relevant to the process of meaning making. Chapter 5, phase 3 of the action research process presents the action and intervention steps, analyses key findings, and discusses theoretical dimensions and how the interventions are influenced by and contribute to existing theoretical frameworks. Chapter 6, the final phase (4) of the action research process (and field work), evaluates the changes and learnings resulting from the interventions. Chapter 7 integrates the theoretical and practical outcomes from all three interventions, presenting a conceptual framework for inclusive leadership in sport boards. It concludes with practical recommendations for future leadership development, acknowledges the limitations of the project, and outlines directions for further research.

Contributions

This thesis makes theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions to the field of sport governance, as outlined in Chapter 7. Theoretically, it advances understanding of inclusive leadership by positioning EI and CQ as foundational lenses for embedding inclusive practices within sport boards, offering a conceptual framework that addresses gaps in the current literature. Methodologically, the research extends the application of a developmental action research project in sport governance and incorporates a mixed methods approach to capture board members' subjective viewpoints. Practically, the thesis presents a framework for developing inclusive leadership in sport boards, supported by evidence-based interventions and actionable strategies for chairs and board members.

Figure 1.1
Structure of Thesis



1.5 Conference Presentations, Scholarships and Research Publications

Table 1.1

Conference Presentations, Scholarships and Research Publications

Conference Presentations
Snedden, M., Pukutapu-Lyndon, D., McCallum, K., Ferkins, L., Orams, M. (2024). AUT Research Panel: Changing Practice in Sport (and Beyond). AUT Research Week. Auckland, NEW ZEALAND McCallum, K., Ferkins, L., & Jelleyman, C. (2024). Developing inclusive leadership practices in sport boards. SMAANZ Conference; Geelong, AUSTRALIA. McCallum, K., Ferkins, L., Jelleyman, C., & Snedden, M. (2024). Developing Inclusive Leadership Practices in Governing Boards: An Action Research Study in Collaboration with New Zealand Cricket. ALARA and PAR Congress; Auckland, NEW ZEALAND McCallum, K., Ferkins, L., Jelleyman, C., & Snedden, M. (2025). Developing Inclusive Leadership Practices in Governing Boards: An Action Research Study in Collaboration with New Zealand Cricket. SMAANZ Conference; Auckland, NEW ZEALAND.
Scholarships
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences Doctoral Fee Scholarship- awarded June 2023 New Zealand Cricket and Sport NZ stipend- awarded March 2023
Research Publications
Molloy, T., McCallum, K., Ferkins, L., & Jelleyman, C. (2023). Diverse and inclusive tennis governance: Threading inclusive leadership practices into director selection. <i>ITF Coaching & Sport Science Review</i>, 31(90), 17-23. https://doi.org/10.52383/itfcoaching.v31i90.461 Molloy, T., McCallum, K., Jelleyman, C., Ferkins, L. Chapter 2: Contemporary Approaches to Leadership and Governance in Sport – The Social Construction of Leadership. Submitted to Handbook of Sport Leadership, November 2025.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews predominantly Western-based literature that underpins the exploration of inclusive leadership practices within sport governance, considering both board-level and system-level perspectives, through the lenses of emotional intelligence (EI) and cultural intelligence (CQ). Recent advancements in organisational research highlight that simply increasing diversity within organisations does not guarantee the realisation of its potential benefits, such as enhanced creativity and innovation (Ashikali, 2020; Cook & Glass, 2014; Randel et al., 2018; Rixom et al., 2023; Roberson, 2006). Historically, diversity scholarship has focused on the problems associated with a lack of diversity, including bias, tokenism, and discrimination (Fredette et al., 2016; Shore et al., 2011, 2018). However, the field has evolved to recognise the complexities and processes required to unlock the value of diversity, particularly through inclusive leadership practices (Ashikali, 2020; Jackson & Joshi, 2011; Randel et al., 2018; Shore et al., 2011).

Building on these developments, this review synthesises key theoretical perspectives that inform the study's approach to inclusive leadership in sport governance. This chapter explores the historical evolution of diversity and inclusion; inclusive leadership; EI and CQ; developing notions of collective intelligences; dialogic practices; reflective learning; and sport governance. Central to this discussion is the interplay between EI, CQ, and inclusive leadership within governance contexts, and their implications for New Zealand nonprofit sport organisations. The chapter concludes by presenting the research question, which addresses the need to deepen understanding of inclusive leadership practices in sport boards, and summarises the theoretical perspectives that shaped the study's design.

2.2 Evolution of Diversity and Inclusion

The concepts of diversity and inclusion have evolved significantly over time, reflecting broader shifts in societal values, cultural norms, and legislative frameworks (Jaiswal, 2024). Diversity refers to demographic differences among people, encompassing both recognised attributes such as gender, age, and race, and unrecognised attributes such as culture and education (Mor Barak et al., 2025; Roberson, 2006). Inclusion refers to an individual's perception that they belong within the group or organisation's formal and informal systems, and that their unique contribution to these systems is valued and appreciated (Mor Barak et al., 2025; Shore et al., 2011). Understanding how diversity and inclusion became formalised in organisational

development through pivotal legislative milestones is essential for grasping their contemporary significance.

In 1948, when U.S. President Truman issued an executive order to prevent discrimination based on race, colour, religion, and ethnicity within the armed forces, the formalised concept of diversity gained traction within Western literature (Pierro, 2004). Although the anti-discrimination movement had little support in the early stages of the order, it soon reached critical mass acceptance as the power of mass media through television became an agent of change (Pierro, 2004). This led to affirmative action and equal employment law ordered by U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965 to rectify and prevent future discrimination in the American workforce and educational institutions (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998; Pierro, 2004). This order prohibited government employers from making workplace decisions based on age, sex (added in 1967), ethnicity, colour, and religion (Katz & Miller, 2018). As affirmative action became a growing trend, including within the American military and navy, it diffused through to British defence forces and workplaces in 1968 (Iles & Auluck, 1988). Affirmative action toward diversity and inclusion soon started to spread across Western cultures (Iles & Auluck, 1988).

Although inclusion is often positioned as the latter part of the diversity–inclusion dyad, the term itself has existed for centuries. Its origins trace back to the 1600s Latin meaning “act of making a part of” (Merriam-Webster, 2023). Inclusion has also been a traditional virtue in Chinese culture for centuries, expressed through the phrase “all rivers run into the sea” (Fang et al., 2019, p. 180). In Western contexts, inclusion was initially popularised through educational discourse in early 20th-century England when welfare pioneers advocated for non-segregated schooling systems (Hodkinson, 2011; O’Brien, 2010). As the affirmative action movement gained momentum in 1965, so too did the need for a humanistic approach that challenged intolerance to difference within organisational workplaces to influence positive change (Booth, 2000). Due to uncertainty about how to address these unfamiliar workplace issues, the pre-existing field of organisational development (OD) re-emerged, and interest in diversity and inclusion within organisations began to grow as an academic focus.

2.3 Organisational Development

The foundations of diversity and inclusion are interwoven with the theoretical concepts of OD. Odor (2018) defines OD as “various interventions strategies employed by organisations with the objective of increasing the capability of individuals and teams” (p. 62). OD as both theory and practice evolved through the defining contributions of Kurt Lewin in the 1930s (Katz & Miller,

2018; Yavuz, 2020). His three major contributions included the theory of change, the promotion of democratic values, and the use of action research to resolve social conflict through research (Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Katz & Miller, 2018; Lewin, 1946). One of Lewin's most influential contributions to the diversity and inclusion movement was the creation of T-groups (training groups) formed through action research (Iles & Auluck, 1988; Katz & Miller, 2017). These programs enabled participants to learn about themselves, others, and group processes through experiential group activities (Iles & Auluck, 1988). Whilst these groups were focused primarily on an intergroup level, Lewin (1946) viewed their learnings as having a much broader influence on wider systems, a perspective that today would be considered systemic and centred on value alignment. This systemic view is reflected in Lewin's (1946) statement on cultural standards: "ideologies and stereotypes which govern intergroup relations should not be viewed as individual character traits but as anchored in cultural standards, and their stability and change depend largely on happenings in groups as groups" (p. 40).

However, OD scholarship reportedly lost momentum in the 1980s due to the growing demand for large-scale, system-based interventions that could not be sustained by traditional democratic small-group approaches (Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Greiner & Cummings, 2004). OD practitioners shifted their focus from small-group behavioural interventions to system-wide approaches emphasising culture, power, and politics (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Greiner & Cummings, 2004; Pasmore & Fagans, 1992; Sashkin & Burke, 1988). Burnes and Cooke (2012) summarises these changes through four main developments: adopting an open-systems perspective, emphasising organisational culture, shifting from group behaviour to organisational learning, and moving from group change to organisational transformation. One significant outcome of this move toward organisational learning was the re-emergence of Argyris and Schön's work on double-loop learning.

The concept of double-loop learning, first conceptualised by Argyris and Schön in 1974 and later widely cited in organisational learning theories (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Auqui-Caceres & Furlan, 2023; Senge, 2006) became central to understanding this shift toward reflective and systemic learning. Double-loop learning is defined as "a process where mismatches are corrected by first examining and altering the governing variables before adjusting actions" (Argyris & Schön, 1974, p. 68). For genuine organisational learning to occur, this approach goes beyond surface-level fixes by identifying the origin and underlying assumptions of a problem, reflecting on why the issue exists before implementing meaningful change (Argyris, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1997). In contrast, single-loop learning focuses on correcting immediate problems, such as underrepresentation, without questioning why they persist or addressing the assumptions that

shaped previous actions. Argyris and Schön (1997) argue that this often results in recurring issues that become increasingly entrenched and potentially harmful when they resurface.

Underlying assumptions are what Senge (2006) refers to as mental models, defined as ‘pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action’ (p. 8). At the core of this discipline is the ability to unlearn unconscious assumptions through reflective practice (Piggot-Irvine & Biggs, 2020; Senge, 2006). Schön (1991) distinguished between reflection-in-action (testing assumptions during practice) and reflection-on-action (evaluating decisions after the event). Reflective practice that challenges mental models is crucial for leadership at higher levels, such as boards, as illustrated by Senge (2006): “The most crucial mental models in any organisation are those shared by key decision makers. Those models, if unexamined, limit an organisation’s range of actions to what is familiar and comfortable” (p. 176). This significant insight and emphasis on reflection provides an important backdrop for this study. Within OD, double-loop learning requires deep reflection on the social structures that underpin system development and the meanings attached to them (Argyris, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1997). Argyris and Schön’s (1974) Theory of Action distinguishes between ‘espoused theories’ — the principles individuals claim to follow — and ‘theories-in-use’, which can be inferred from actual behaviour. While Argyris (2010) notes that a person’s espoused theory may align with their theory-in-use, this is not guaranteed and often reflects the familiar directive, “Do as I say, not as I do” (p. 45), or as Reason and McArdle (2006) emphasise, the need to “walk our talk” (p. 5).

Furthermore, the social structures shaping system development are influenced by what Mor Barak et al. (2022) describe as inclusion decoupling, referring to the gap between adopting policies intended to treat employees fairly, value their uniqueness, and involve them in organisational processes and decision-making, and the actual implementation of behaviours that fulfil these commitments. They argue that inclusive leaders are effective in both articulating policy intentions and translating them into practice, thereby minimising policy–practice decoupling and strengthening the climate for inclusion (Mor Barak et al., 2022). The distinction between espoused theories and theories-in-use provides a useful foundation for understanding why inclusion initiatives and practices sometimes fail to translate into behaviour.

As OD practitioners sought broader situational dynamics across organisations and stakeholders, diversity and inclusion practices began to separate from OD and affiliate more closely with human resources. Many continued to view diversity and inclusion as a legacy of affirmative action and as unrelated to core business processes, framing it instead as an HR issue (Katz &

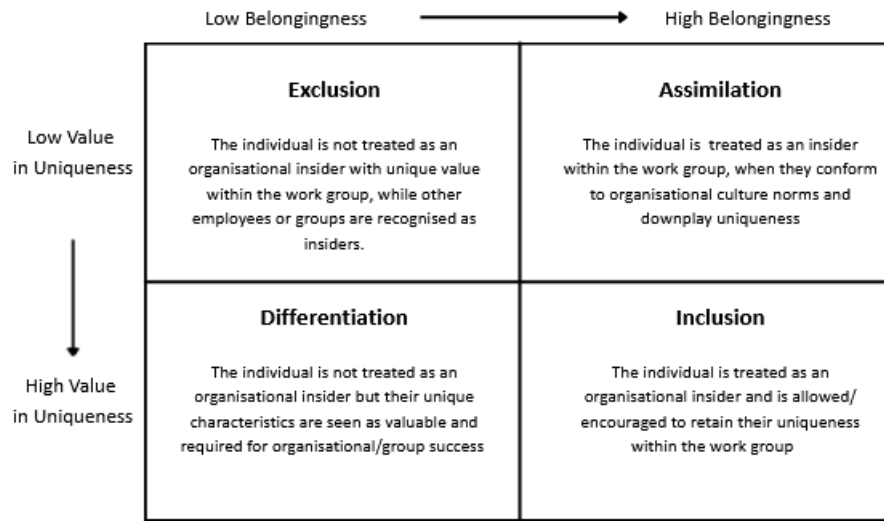
Miller, 2016, 2018). However, research on inclusion within a leadership context has grown in recent years due to its application of humanistic values and its alignment with the foundational principles of OD (Katz & Miller, 2018; Nishii, 2013; Randel et al., 2018).

2.4 Inclusion

Although diversity has been the subject of considerable organisational research for several decades, inclusion has emerged as a more recent area of scholarly inquiry (Randel, 2023; Roberson, 2019). Interest in inclusion continues to grow (Randel, 2023); however, its conceptualisation and application still remain fragmented across contexts. As discussed previously, the education field has a long-standing history of conceptualising and applying inclusion (Hodkinson, 2011; O'Brien, 2010). However, research indicates that only 11% of companies truly understand inclusion, can define it, or recognise its impact in the workplace (Mondal, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2023). The difficulty of differentiating inclusion from diversity is likely one reason for the delayed development of a consistent understanding of the concept. Although the terms diversity and inclusion are often used interchangeably, Lovett et al. (2020) emphasise that they are distinct: "Diversity is what you have, inclusion is what you do" (p. 5). Shore et al. (2011) define inclusion as "the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness" (p. 1265). Managing diversity and inclusion effectively is critical for organisational success (Shore et al., 2018). Although previous research has attempted to explicitly discuss or measure inclusion (e.g., Carmeli et al., 2010; Nishii & Mayer, 2009), there remains limited work on conceptualising inclusion or establishing a clear theoretical foundation, largely due to its complexity as a construct (Mor Barak et al., 2025; Randel et al., 2018).

Shore et al. (2011) proposed an inclusion model illustrating how belongingness and uniqueness shape experiences within workgroups. At one end of the spectrum, the low-belongingness/low-uniqueness combination is labelled exclusion, meaning an individual's unique contributions are not valued and they feel a lack of belonging (Shore et al., 2011). At the other end, when an individual's knowledge and perspectives are highly valued, they experience a strong sense of inclusion (Shore et al., 2011). Their model (Figure 2.1) is theoretically grounded in social identity theory and optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991, 2003; Randel, 2025; Shore et al., 2011).

Figure 2.1
Shore et al. (2011) Inclusion Framework



Note. Adapted from “Inclusion and Diversity in Work Groups: A Review and Model for Future Research,” L.M. Shore et al., 2011, *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1262-1289. Copyright by SAGE Publishing.

Social identity theory posits that feelings of inclusion increase when organisational members perceive commonality among group members (Brimhall & Mor Barak, 2018; Shore et al., 2011; Tajfel, 1982). However, commonality alone does not guarantee inclusion. Optimal distinctiveness theory suggests individuals strive for a balance between belongingness and recognition of their unique characteristics (Brewer, 1991; Brimhall & Mor Barak, 2018; Shore et al., 2011). Uniqueness, defined as “the need to maintain a distinctive and differentiated sense of self,” is activated when group members are perceived as too similar, making the individual interchangeable (Shore et al., 2011, p. 1264). Optimal distinctiveness theory has been linked to the emergence of collective cohesion through leadership that fosters shared identity and purpose while supporting distinct perspectives (Mehmood et al., 2024; Shore & Chung., 2024). This interplay between belongingness and uniqueness highlights the critical role of leadership in shaping inclusive environments, positioning inclusive leadership as an effective approach to address these limited theoretical foundations.

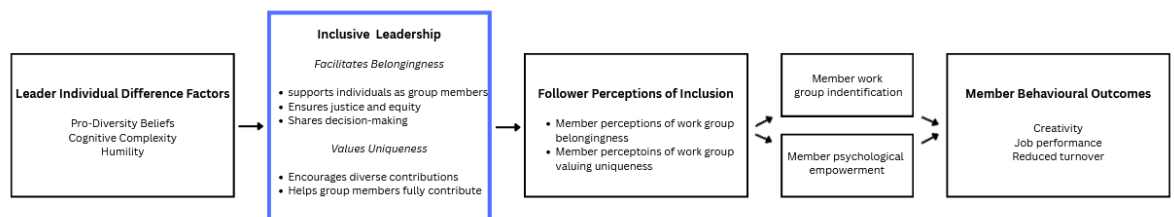
2.4.1 Inclusive Leadership

Despite recent theoretical developments examining various contemporary leadership approaches within organisations (Ferkins et al., 2018b; Jackson & Parry, 2018; Jones et al., 2018; Svensson et al., 2021; Swanson & Peachey, 2022), research on the emergence of inclusive leadership remains limited. Randel et al. (2018) introduced a framework (Figure 2.2) illustrating how leaders can foster inclusive behaviours by directly influencing team members and creating

a context in which individuals experience a sense of inclusion. Building on Shore et al.'s (2011) theoretical inclusion model, the authors provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the dual elements of belongingness and uniqueness within a workgroup contribute to an inclusive environment.

Figure 2.2

Randel et al.'s (2018) Theoretical Model of Inclusive Leadership



Note. Adapted from “Inclusive leadership: Realizing positive outcomes through belongingness and being valued for uniqueness,” A.E. Randel et al., 2018, *Human Resource Management Review*, 28(2), 190-203. Copyright by Elsevier Inc.

To facilitate belongingness and uniqueness, leaders are expected to: (a) support group members by creating a comfortable environment, (b) ensure equity and justice to demonstrate respect for individuals, and (c) promote shared decision-making (Mor Barak et al., 1998; Mor Barak & Daya, 2013; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Nishii, 2013; Shore & Chung, 2024, Shore et al., 2011). Leaders who encourage diverse contributions and enable members to fully participate signal that uniqueness is valued, thereby fostering perceptions of inclusion among colleagues (Randel et al., 2018). Additionally, forming positive, individualised relationships with group members and creating opportunities for check-ins and dialogue further strengthens an inclusive climate (Randel et al., 2018). These perceptions have been shown to promote positive behavioural outcomes such as creativity, improved job performance, and reduced staff turnover (Randel et al., 2018).

However, precisely how leaders enact these behaviours to achieve successful inclusion among diverse groups remains unclear (Nishii & Mayer, 2009; Randel et al., 2016). This ambiguity is unsurprising given the variation in defining what inclusive leadership is or is not (Chung et al., 2020; Shore & Chung, 2024). For example, Randel et al. (2018) argue that inclusive leadership has minimal overlap with existing leadership approaches, as other conceptualisations fail to incorporate the key elements of uniqueness and belongingness. In contrast, Ashikali et al. (2020) adopt an innovative perspective by focusing on leadership behaviours that target team processes rather than the traditional leader and follower relationship. Their findings indicate that greater

team diversity does not automatically create an inclusive climate; rather, inclusive leadership is critical for fostering environments where individuals feel valued for their contributions. They further propose that inclusiveness is a group-level phenomenon, best understood through social processes and exchanges among members (Ashikali et al., 2020). Nishii and Leroy (2022) support this view, emphasising that inclusive leadership involves a dynamic and relational process that promotes collective-level interactions. Similarly, Li and Tang (2022) posit that at the collective group level, an inclusive climate facilitates feelings of psychological safety among team members. Team psychological safety, a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking, has been widely linked to inclusive leadership literature as a key construct of inclusion (Bradley et al., 2012; Edmondson, 2014, Edmonson & Bransby, 2023; Li & Tang, 2022). Although these approaches require a longer time frame, exploring inclusiveness through team processes offers a promising avenue for understanding inclusive practices promoted by leaders. This study builds on these insights by examining such group processes and complexities within the New Zealand Cricket (NZC) National Board, contributing to both sport governance and the advancement of inclusive leadership theory and practice.

2.4.2 Inclusive Practices

The interactions and processes between governing leaders and how they affect inclusion within governance are particularly understudied in the literature. In terms of practices, diversity management research is primarily limited to the "Big 2" of inclusive practices: gender and race/ethnicity (Hoeber & Shaw, 2019; Mayo et al., 2016; van Knippenberg et al., 2013). For this reason, this review will turn to the general management and gender/race literature to assist in clarifying the concept of inclusive practices within leadership, teams, and governance.

As mentioned previously, practices that optimise belongingness and uniqueness are instrumental in creating a context that generates a sense of inclusion (Brewer, 1991; Brimall & Mor Borak, 2018; Randell, 2018; Shore et al., 2011). This is supported by a study by Bourke and Dillon (2016) who suggest that belonging and uniqueness are key factors in creating a culture of inclusion. Their survey collected scores from over 1500 participants in three major Australian businesses and found that value and belonging are integral steps in the participants' perceptions of being included. They suggest that the first step to developing inclusion is employees feeling that fairness and respect permeates the organisation and is underpinned by equity and non-discrimination (Bourke & Dillon 2016). The next step, value and belonging, emphasises the individual employee's feeling of uniqueness and their ability to be involved in the decision-making process and feelings of connectedness (Bourke & Dillon, 2016). Interestingly, Bourke and

Dillon's (2016) work on inclusive leadership identified CQ as a critical trait of inclusive leaders. The concept of CQ and how it relates to inclusive practices will be discussed later in the review.

2.4.3 Effectiveness of Inclusive Practices

Brewis (2019) suggests that inclusive practices need to reflect the question "What are we meant to do to be inclusive?" (p. 94). Although inclusive practices are a popular intervention strategy amongst organisations, the relative scarcity of empirical evidence supporting their effectiveness leaves questions as to which practices positively influence organisational outcomes (Chang et al., 2019). Moreover, despite progression in our understanding of inclusion, global societal conflicts are contributing to increased polarisation between groups, cultures, religions, and races (Katz & Miller, 2018). Many inclusive frameworks have opened doors for organisational change; however, early change is not necessarily sustained (Brewis, 2019; Chung et al., 2020; Nishii, 2013).

Schoen and Rost (2021) argue that top management may implement diversity initiatives for a different reason: to 'window dress' the organisation and promote a positive image to stakeholders. Their research was one of the few studies to test the effectiveness of diversity practices and to analyse the rationale between diversity management and gender and ethnicity positions. Significantly, their results revealed that diversity training does not have an impact on increased diversity in management positions (Schoen & Rost, 2021). Although the study by Schoen and Rost (2021) may be significant in understanding which practices help to increase numbers in diversity, it fails to address the lack of sustainability of diversity numbers. If inclusion is about social processes and dynamic relationships (Brewis, 2019; Katz & Miller, 2018; Nishii and Leroy, 2022), then inclusive practices need to assist in these interactions to ensure a successful system.

The paucity of empirical evidence on what constitutes effective practices to foster inclusion often coincides with organisations adopting inclusive initiatives based on popularity or trend. This tendency can result in unstructured, one-off commitments rather than sustained efforts. Janssens and Steyaert (2020) propose what they term "interrelated practice-arrangement bundles" (p. 26) as a means of integrating multiple inclusive practices to create sustainability. These bundles involve three approaches: mixing (combining individuals from different backgrounds), inverting (reversing minority roles within a given context), and affirming (repeating and reinforcing new, different, and contrasting positions) (Janssens & Steyaert, 2020). Rather than searching for isolated dimensions or one-off features of an inclusion climate,

interrelated practice-arrangement bundles can support sustainable group inclusion (Janssens & Steyaert, 2020; Nicolini, 2012).

The complexities of inclusive practices highlighted within the literature are relevant to this study, which first explores the meaning of inclusion and how inclusive practices can influence leadership processes in governance. As discussed later in Chapter 4, inclusive practices such as the NZC National Board's trip to Waitangi were influential moments in the Board's inclusive journey and an important aspect of this project's outcomes regarding what creates an inclusive environment in sport governance. However, as this study demonstrates, inclusive practices alone are insufficient; inclusive leadership must incorporate a variety of interrelated elements, including multiple intelligences.

2.5 Multiple Intelligences

In 1983, Howard Gardner, frustrated by the dominant reliance on a single intelligence test (IQ) as the ideal measure of intelligence, particularly within education, proposed an alternative theory based on an individual's ability to harness multiple intelligences. Gardner's (1983) Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) led to three key conclusions: (1) everyone possesses the full range of intelligences; (2) each individual has a unique combination of intelligences shaped by experience; and (3) strength in one intelligence does not necessarily equate to acting intelligently. Reflecting on his own assertion that "the explosion of new knowledge is so great that no one can keep up" (Gardner, 2008, p. 29), Gardner (2008) revised his original work to incorporate new developments and practices that challenge traditional views of intelligence. His updated interpretations outlined three meanings of intelligence, each reflecting a distinctive psychological approach (Gardner, 2008):

1. Intelligence as a species characteristic – a general characterisation of human capabilities
2. Intelligence as individual difference – examination of individual differences on a trait of interest
3. Intelligence as fit execution of an assignment – the manner in which a task is executed

While the first two meanings emphasise uniqueness and differing profiles of intelligence, the third meaning offers the greatest relevance to inclusion processes. As Gardner (2007) explains: "We talk about whether a decision was wise or ill advised, whether the manner in which the decision was reached was clever or foolish, and whether a leadership transition was handled intelligently or ineptly" (p. 33). Gardner (2008) finds this third meaning most intriguing, noting

that it is also the least explored. He argued that decisions made among people require a multiple intelligence approach, and that the value system of the decision maker determines whether decisions are performed intelligently even when outcomes are contested (Gardner, 2008).

Building on Gardner's (2008) insights, contemporary literature extends the notion of multiple intelligences beyond education into organisational and leadership contexts. Promoting inclusive practices within leadership structures requires more than simply integrating initiatives; it demands a systemic approach that addresses underlying thoughts and the dynamics of intra- and interpersonal interactions. If thoughts and emotions influence barriers to inclusion (Gerbert et al., 2017), then the concept of multiple intelligences may provide a useful lens for sustaining diversity. The theory of multiple intelligences suggests that individuals possess diverse abilities (Gardner & Hatch, 1989; Oyewunmi, 2018), making it pertinent to argue that inclusive practices should be interwoven with these intelligences. Over the past decade, researchers have explored the integration of leadership, neuroscience, and multiple intelligences to understand how these fields interact and contribute to organisational effectiveness (Barrett, 2017; Boyatzis et al., 2021; Pope, 2019; Ringleb & Rock, 2008). When leaders recognise how social, cultural, and emotional processes interact with self, others, and systems, they are better positioned to drive positive organisational outcomes (Goleman, 1996, 2019; Pope, 2019).

In recent years, developments in EI and CQ have expanded understanding of intelligences within leadership processes. These advances have paved the way for leadership practices that emphasise intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cultural behaviours, alongside the importance of collective learning to drive organisational effectiveness (Pope, 2019; Ringleb & Rock, 2008). Developing research on Collective Emotional Intelligence (CEI) and Collective Cultural Intelligence (CCQ) highlights the shared capacity of groups to manage emotions and cultural diversity collaboratively (Bücker & Korzilius, 2024; Curseu et al., 2015; Liao & Thomas, 2025), which is particularly relevant in governance contexts where decision-making and inclusion occur at a collective level. These collective concepts will be discussed further in this chapter.

2.6 Emotional Intelligence

A leader's ability to develop emotional capacity within intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships relies on specific leadership behaviours that correspond to self, others, and systems (Creed et al., 2014; Grey et al., 2018). The importance of creating institutional processes that nurture and promote a positive culture is critical, as such processes foster emotional bonds based on meaningful experiences (Creed et al., 2014; Grey et al., 2018). In contrast, the absence

of a supportive environment and culture can activate self-conscious emotions that negatively influence social behaviour (Creed et al., 2014; Grey et al., 2018; Treeby et al., 2016; Verbeke et al., 2004).

Over the past few decades, research has examined the role of relationships and leadership achievement through the lens of EI and how EI supports effective leadership (Pearman, 2011; Schneider, 2013). Although scholars have not reached consensus on a universal definition of EI, the definition by Salovey and Mayer (1990) remains widely cited: “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (p. 189). The concept of EI has shifted leadership development from a cognitive approach (knowing effective leadership) to a behavioural context (how a leader acts), and more recently to an emotional dimension (how a leader feels) (Goleman, 1996, 2019; Gutiérrez-Cobo et al., 2017).

While various theorists have contributed to the development of EI, Daniel Goleman popularised the concept through his books and research. For more than two decades, Goleman has argued for the importance of non-cognitive skills in leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 2019). He connected EI to competency-based research and assessment and translated theory into practice through a framework of four overarching domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Boyatzis et al., 2002; Goleman, 2001).

1. Self-awareness: The ability to deeply understand one’s emotions and recognize strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives. Individuals with high self-awareness understand how their emotions affect themselves, others, and job performance. *Corresponding competency: emotional self-awareness.*

2. Self-management: The ability to regulate emotions so they facilitate rather than hinder situations. Individuals who self-manage effectively can control and redirect impulsive actions, even in challenging environments. *Corresponding competencies: emotional balance, adaptability, achievement orientation, positive outlook.*

3. Social awareness: The ability to create, manage, and build rapport within relationships. Individuals with strong social awareness demonstrate empathy and organisational awareness and often excel in leading change and building teams. *Corresponding competencies: empathy, organisational awareness.*

4. Relationship management: The ability to integrate one’s own emotions with those of others and the context to manage social interactions successfully. *Corresponding competencies:*

influence, inspirational leadership, conflict management, teamwork, coaching and mentoring (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017).

2.6.1 Emotional Intelligence and Inclusive Practices

Historically, emotion and cognition were viewed as incompatible aspects of the human psyche; however, linking emotions to underlying cognitive processes is now recognised as a core concept (Gutiérrez-Cobo et al., 2017). Within diversity management and inclusive practices, Gebert et al. (2017) argue that traditional diversity training often neglects participants' cognitive attitudes and tolerance levels toward diversity. To address this gap, they propose a tolerance training model that positions tolerance as a strategy for integrating minorities and overcoming discrimination in both dogmatic and non-dogmatic contexts. This model emphasises self-reflection and self-monitoring through questioning, listening, and responding in interpersonal interactions, integrating EI and CQ as core components.

Similarly, Schoen and Rost (2021) stress the importance of incorporating emotional dimensions into diversity training to avoid perceptions of tokenism or "window dressing." Their study on gender and ethnicity diversity practices found that organisations implementing a greater number of diversity initiatives were more likely to have women in management roles and adopt equity-oriented policies (Schoen & Rost, 2021). However, when diversity efforts lacked depth, failing to address attitudes and tolerance, minority ethnic groups experienced little benefit (Schoen & Rost, 2021; Gebert et al., 2017).

The growing recognition of emotions in leadership, supported by empirical evidence linking EI to performance outcomes (Pearman, 2011; Schneider, 2013), positions EI as a critical element of organisational leadership (Oyewunmi, 2018). For instance, Oyewunmi (2018) found EI essential for managing diversity and fostering relationships in healthcare management in South Nigeria. These findings align with Kamps and Engelbrecht (2010), who reported a positive association between EI and valuing individual differences.

Despite widespread advocacy for EI in leadership, its role in enabling or constraining learning during organisational change remains underexplored (Kaur & Hirudayaraj, 2021). Historically, diversity and inclusion initiatives have often been tokenistic, focusing narrowly on age, sex, and race, with limited evidence of effectiveness (Locke, 2005). Clark and Polesello (2017) critique this prescriptive approach, describing tokenism as a "hot button" issue that restricts leadership innovation. Their review suggests EI can act as a navigational tool for managing emotions in

diverse teams, particularly when combined with CQ. They advocate for a multi-perspective approach that integrates EI for understanding emotional dynamics and CQ for interpreting cultural dynamics. Such a shift could strengthen inclusive practices and support meaningful organisational change.

2.6.2 Critique of Emotional Intelligence

Despite these positive associations, controversy persists within the literature. While some scholars argue that EI can be developed through diversity management training (e.g., Goleman, 2019; Oyewunmi, 2018; Schoen & Rost, 2021), others remain highly critical of EI as a strategy for leadership development, including inclusive practices (e.g., Fambrough & Hart, 2008; Locke, 2005). Locke (2005), for instance, contends that EI is not a distinct form of intelligence but rather a skill- “being intelligent about emotions, that is, recognising their nature and proper function, their relationship to reason, and the need for introspection” (p. 9). He argues that EI represents intelligence applied to the construct of emotion, similar to countless other constructs where knowledge becomes a skill once mastered. Although Locke (2005) is perhaps EI’s staunchest critic (McCleskey, 2014), other scholars have also raised concerns and identified misconceptions about EI (Davis & Nicols, 2016; Laborde et al., 2016; Miyamoto & Ma, 2011).

Furthermore, EI is not a universally accepted term, and perceptions of EI are not always positive (Davis & Nicols, 2016; Laborde et al., 2016; Miyamoto & Ma, 2011). Culture, behaviour, and age are three key factors that contribute to misconceptions about EI. First, EI is largely considered a Western concept. Whether EI and its underlying theoretical mechanisms are equally applicable in non-Western cultures remains contested (Laborde et al., 2016; Miyamoto & Ma, 2011). For example, Eastern cultures tend to dampen positive emotions due to cultural beliefs and upbringing (Miyamoto & Ma, 2011). Miyamoto and Ma (2011) found that cultural scripts influence emotional regulation, with Easterners seeking to regulate emotions hedonically by dampening positive emotions more than Westerners.

Second, there is a dark side to EI. Some researchers have linked high levels of EI to narcissism and aggression, suggesting that elevated self-esteem can lead to manipulative behaviours and antisocial outcomes (Baumeister & Bushman, 2003; Petrides et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2015). For instance, individuals with heightened sensitivity to emotional information may exploit this skill to manipulate interpersonal relationships for personal gain, such as securing a job offer or financial reward.

Finally, age appears to influence the development of EI. Studies incorporating EI measures have found a positive correlation between age and higher levels of EI (Kafetsios, 2004; Lindebaum, 2009; Mayer et al., 1999; Palmer et al., 2005). Emotional functioning tends to improve during middle and late adulthood, as individuals accumulate a broad range of emotional experiences over time (Carstenson et al., 2003; Mayer et al., 1999; Van Rooy et al., 2005; Wechtler et al., 2015). Despite these critiques, EI has gained popularity in recent years due to extensive evidence demonstrating its incremental validity beyond cognitive and affective abilities, particularly in leadership contexts (Dee et al., 2018; Miao et al., 2021; Petrides et al., 2007).

2.7 Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence is a relatively recent concept that has attracted growing scholarly interest (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015; Clark & Polesello, 2017; Middleton, 2014; Thomas, 2006). CQ refers to an individual's capability to relate, communicate, and work effectively across cultures (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015; Middleton, 2014). While this definition often assumes that culture equates to differences between countries, Middleton (2014) argues that CQ extends beyond geographical boundaries to include cultural divides related to generations, gender, and other forms of diversity. Paiuc (2021) supports this view, noting that culture goes beyond ethnic differences and includes individual particularities linked to personality. He further observes that factors such as globalisation and online work environments create new cultural landscapes that influence interactions across contexts (Paiuc, 2021).

Similar to EI, CQ encompasses cognitive, behavioural, and motivational dimensions, applying cultural knowledge to these domains (Earley, 2003; Nosratabadi et al., 2020). However, unlike EI's direct association with emotion, CQ provides the knowledge and insight necessary to foster high-quality relationships and enhance social effectiveness across diverse cultural contexts and work environments (Nosratabadi et al., 2020). Research suggests a potential relationship between EI and CQ (Darvishmotevali et al., 2018; Richard-Eaglin, 2021; Rockstuhl et al., 2011), where the integration of both constructs may create a synergistic effect that supports cohesive and inclusive leadership. Findings from this study provide insights into how these two intelligences interacted in practice and contributed to inclusive leadership within the organisational context.

2.7.1 Cultural Intelligence and Inclusive Practices

Cultural intelligence shares with inclusion the goal of fostering positive outcomes by creating a sense of belonging and uniqueness while identifying, valuing, and appreciating cultural

differences (Alexandra et al., 2021; Earley, 2003; Shore et al., 2018). Although this relationship appears to be an obvious partnership for achieving positive outcomes, detailed conceptual and empirical work exploring the connection between these constructs remains limited (Alexandra et al., 2021; Bennett, 2015). Furthermore, inclusive practices that explicitly embed CQ are even more scarce (Alexandra et al., 2021).

Julia Middleton, founder of the social enterprise Common Purpose, argues that leaders addressing complex problems in a globalised world must develop both CQ and inclusion skills. She identifies two aspects of self that contribute to CQ: core and flex (Middleton, 2014). Core refers to the behaviours, values, and beliefs that define an individual and remain stable, whereas flex represents a fluid process that adapts to circumstances. Middleton (2014) suggests that the interface between core and flex creates a space where individuals can connect without compromising their core identity (see Figure 2.3). Middleton's (2014) core/flex framework offers a potential OD tool for enhancing CQ and inclusive practices.

Figure 2.3

An Individual's Core/Flex and the Interface When Two People Connect



Note. Adapted from *Cultural intelligence: The competitive edge for leaders crossing boundaries* by J. Middleton, 2014, (2nd ed.), ProQuest. Copyright 2014 by Julia Middleton.

Alexandra et al. (2021) examined the relationship between perceived inclusion and CQ, finding that an individual's CQ predicts their perceived inclusion within workgroups. Perceived inclusion refers to how individuals experience a sense of belonging while maintaining the aspects that make them unique within a group (Alexandra et al., 2021; Shore et al., 2011). Notably, the strongest relationships between CQ and perceived inclusion were linked to practices that develop metacognitive CQ, awareness and understanding of one's own and others' cultural differences, and motivational CQ, which reflects perseverance when working across cultural differences (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015). Similarly, Solomon and Stein (2017) found that metacognitive and motivational dimensions of CQ significantly influence the relationship between CQ and leadership empowerment. Although their study did not explicitly reference

inclusion, Randel et al. (2018) argue that empowering leadership is conceptually related to inclusive leadership. They suggest that incorporating inclusive practices that encourage contributions from all group members, thereby enhancing the meaningfulness of their work, strengthens this approach. These developmental practices and the emphasis on skill are highly relevant to this study, as they align with action-oriented approaches and the implementation of practical strategies, well suited for an action research study within the sport governance context.

2.7.2 Critique of Cultural Intelligence

Despite extensive empirical literature on Ang and Van Dyne's (2015) multidimensional CQ model, some scholars critique the emphasis on metacognition, arguing that greater contextual understanding is needed when implementing leadership practices (Blasco et al., 2012; Thomas, 2006). Blasco et al. (2012) contend that metacognition acts as the glue binding motivation, behaviour, and cognition rather than functioning as a separate dimension. They propose that the term "cultural intelligence" should instead be labelled "metacognitive intelligence," describing how skilled individuals are at critically monitoring and managing their reactions to unfamiliar experiences (Blasco et al., 2012, p. 236). This perspective parallels Locke's (2005) argument that EI should be considered a skill rather than a concept.

Secondly, just as there is a dark side to emotional intelligence (EI), there is also a dark side to cultural intelligence (CQ) (Lorenz et al., 2020). Individuals with heightened sensitivity to cultural information may exploit this capability to manipulate interpersonal relationships for personal gain or use it as a tool for extending transnational capital and reinforcing dominant assumptions about culture and communication (Dutta & Dutta, 2013). This critique is supported by Lorenz et al. (2020), who argue that CQ is not inherently positive and may be used strategically to justify self-serving or opportunistic behaviour. Such behaviour may influence how individuals interpret situations and make judgments across cultural contexts. The authors suggest that incorporating ethical perspectives into CQ assessment and development may help minimise these negative consequences (Lorenz et al., 2020). Dutta and Dutta's (2013) postcolonial critique of CQ highlights how culture and diversity management initiatives informed by CQ often draw upon Eurocentric assumptions grounded in individualism. These assumptions influence both how culture is conceptualised and how communication interventions are designed and implemented. Dutta and Dutta (2011, 2013) argue that transnational capitalist interventions instead require a culture-centred approach, positioning CQ as a site of dialogue, alternative meaning-making, and listening within participatory processes.

Furthermore, Paiuc (2021) argues that many CQ models (Lewis, 2018; Meyer, 2016; Nisbett, 2004) are grounded in cultural geography and need to be adapted to avoid limitations based on ethnicity. He suggests that these models should reflect the new “geographical” reality through incorporating factors such as globalisation, the circular economy, and digitalisation, which are increasingly blurring national boundaries (Paiuc, 2021, p. 85). In light of these critiques, the next section introduces developing collective intelligences, CEI and CCQ, which broaden the discussion from individual capabilities to group-level dynamics within governance contexts.

2.8 Collective Intelligence

As discussed earlier, EI and CQ have traditionally been examined at the individual level. Until recently, most research on intelligence focused on individual performance on specific tasks rather than on group-level capabilities (Shankar & Tewari, 2021; Woolley et al., 2015). Woolley et al. (2015) advanced this understanding by refining the concept of collective intelligence and defining it as “the ability of a group to perform a wide variety of tasks” (p. 420). Their work demonstrates that, similar to general intelligence in individuals, groups exhibit a measurable collective intelligence factor that predicts performance across diverse tasks (Woolley et al., 2015).

In organisational contexts, collective intelligence is evident in problem solving, strategic decision-making, and information processing; however, few studies have explored how collective intelligence influences these constructs (Glynn, 1996; Shankar & Tewari, 2021; Szuba, 2001). Recent developments in research on teamwork, group performance, and the rise of artificial intelligence have accelerated interest in collective intelligence, particularly within organisations (Galesic et al., 2023; Ha & Tang, 2022; Woolley et al., 2015). These advancements provide a conceptual bridge to developing forms of collective intelligences such as CEI and CCQ, which extend the principles of collective intelligence to emotional and cultural domains within sport governance systems explored in this study.

2.8.1 Collective Emotional Intelligence

While EI primarily addresses individual capabilities, emerging scholarship emphasises the significance of CEI in shaping inclusive climates (Bücker & Korzilius, 2024; Iskhakova & Ott, 2020; Janssens & Steyaert, 2020). Early research on group emotions predominantly used the terms ‘team EI’ or ‘group EI’, often interchangeably and without clear distinction (Druskat & Wolff, 2001; Kaur et al., 2016). Although the term ‘collective’ appear in discussions of group emotional

capabilities, for example Jordan and Troth (2021) note that “a team’s overall level of EI and the ‘collective’ ability of members to deal with their own emotions during a problem-solving exercise lead to higher performance” (p. 211), the explicit construct of CEI was formalised by Curşeu et al. (2015) as a distinct group-level competence.

Two principal perspectives currently frame CEI: one views it as the aggregation of individual EI competencies within a group (Jordan & Troth, 2021), while the other emphasises the relational dimension, how EI is enacted through interactions among members (Curşeu et al., 2015; Shankar & Tewari, 2021). Given this study’s focus on inclusive practices within sport governance boards, the relational perspective underpins the conceptual approach, adopting Curşeu et al.’s (2015) definition of CEI as “a group-level competence that emerges from the integration of individual competencies through interpersonal interactions” (p. 217).

This concept is particularly relevant to sport boards and group dynamics, as recent research indicates that CEI influences team culture and performance (Jamshed & Majeed, 2019), team processes and effectiveness (Lee & Wong, 2019), the management of task conflict (Gheorghe et al., 2020), and decision-making processes (Ahumada-Tello et al., 2022; Shankar & Tewari, 2021). It is possible that a leader’s EI may influence the development of CEI within a group, which could be particularly relevant in a board context. This potential has been suggested in earlier work, with Goleman (1998) noting:

Another solution lies in raising the collective level of emotional intelligence. This might include delegating someone as a ‘process leader’ who can track whether the group’s work exemplifies collaboration, mutual respect, openness to diverse perspectives, listening, empathy, and the other hallmarks that raise a group IQ (p. 225).

2.8.2 Collective Cultural Intelligence

Collective cultural intelligence is similar to CEI in that it has been referred to under different names, such as group cultural intelligence (Khani et al., 2011) or team cultural intelligence (Adair et al., 2013). Liao and Thomas (2025) were the first to introduce CCQ as a novel explicit construct, addressing limitations in the literature devoted to understanding the dynamic nature of teams in multicultural contexts. They define CCQ as “a shared understanding of what the team collectively knows and how to navigate the cultural milieu inherent to its members and context” (p. 426). In their conceptual paper, the authors make three key contributions to the field of CCQ. First, they examine how teams adapt over time to cultural dynamics, diverse perspectives, and

group complexities to enhance performance. Second, they conceptualise CCQ as an emergent state that arises from individual CQ and interactions among team members. Third, they advance understanding of the broad range of emergent processes and states that contribute to team performance in managing cultural diversity (Liao & Thomas, 2025).

Whilst not explicitly stated as “collective,” Middleton (2014) also refers to the necessity for groups to develop their CQ. She introduces the concept of a turbulent network, contrasting it with a support network, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

Generally, and not surprisingly, human beings much prefer support networks. We all seek out people like ourselves... Pick pretty much any organisation of human beings, anywhere, and you will see the same tendency to ‘like people like you’, and form networks that exclude, however subtly, people who are different... I believe that this temptation simply to increase one’s homogeneous networks needs to be resisted. In order to address complex problems and bring people together to solve them, leaders have to go further afield, and further away from what (and who) they know. They will need to build turbulent networks that will challenge and discomfit them (Middleton, 2014, pp. 28–29).

Middleton (2014) further argues that CQ extends beyond geographical boundaries to include cultural divides related to generations, gender, and other forms of diversity. Seeking out turbulent networks created through cultural experiences, for example NZC’s Waitangi experience or workshops designed to increase women in governance, are examples that will be discussed later in Chapter 4 as contributing to the group’s CQ within this study.

2.9 Leadership and Sport Governance

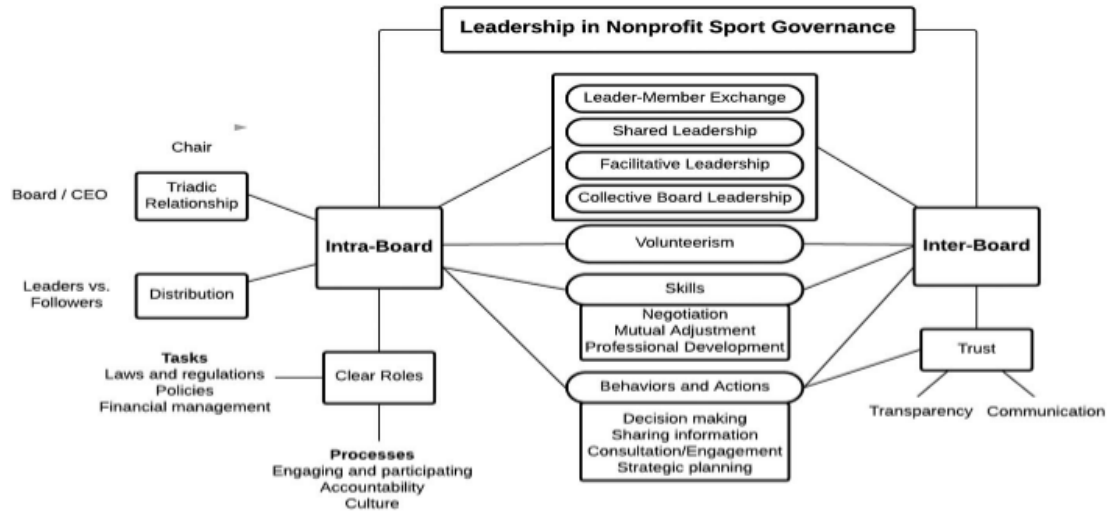
Similar to how diversity and inclusion evolved separately through affirmative action and educational foundations, leadership developed primarily within psychology, while governance established its roots in accounting, economics, and commercial law (Erakovic & Jackson, 2012; Ferkins et al., 2018a; LeBlanc, 2004). The interface between governance and leadership is an emerging area in sport governance, drawing on concepts such as relational, shared and collective leadership, which are increasingly evident in both industry (NZC 2020; SportNZ, n.d-b) and academia (Ferkins et al., 2015a, 2015b, 2018a; Jones et al., 2018; O’Boyle et al., 2019; Shilbury et al., 2020).

O'Boyle et al. (2019) developed a preliminary working model for leadership in nonprofit sport governance, posing the question of which leadership skills are essential for board members in both intra-board and inter-board contexts. This model was informed by prior sport governance and leadership literature and drew on several leadership theories: leader–member exchange (LMX) (Hoye, 2003, 2004, 2006; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007), shared leadership (Ferkins et al., 2005; Shilbury et al., 2020;), facilitative leadership (O'Boyle et al., 2015; O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2016, 2018), and collective leadership (Ferkins et al., 2018a, 2025; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015).

Findings from O'Boyle et al. (2019) revealed a triadic relationship between the chair, CEO, and board, where board members perceived their leadership as less prominent compared to that of the chair and CEO. This was reinforced by evidence of an unequal distribution of leadership skills within the triadic relationship and a lack of professional development opportunities for board members. O'Boyle et al. (2023) subsequently refined and advanced this model (Figure 2.4), offering new insights into how intra-board leadership may serve as a microcosm for inter-board leadership.

Figure 2.4

O'Boyle et al. (2023) Refined and Advanced Model of Leadership in Nonprofit Sport Governance



Note. Adapted from “Leadership In and Out of the Sport Boardroom: New Empirical Insights,” by I. O’Boyle, D. Shilbury, and L. Ferkins, 2023, *European sport management quarterly*, 23(1), 188-206. Copyright 2020 European Association for Sport Management. Reprinted with permission.

The limited empirical research on inclusive leadership within sport governance (Molloy et al., 2024a; O’Boyle et al., 2023) meant that this study needed to draw on complementary leadership approaches that closely align with inclusive leadership principles. Addressing the influence of leadership in sport governance requires attention to group processes and dynamics. A process-oriented perspective shifts the focus from individual traits to the relational influence between leaders and followers (Jackson & Parry, 2018; Parent & Hoye, 2018), emphasising that leadership develops through multiple interactions (Jackson & Parry, 2018; Jones et al., 2018; Parent, 2018). Of particular relevance is the perspective advanced by O’Boyle et al. (2023), which highlights how leadership behaviours and actions shape decision-making processes at the inter-board level. These behaviours and actions, or their absence, function as either facilitators or inhibitors of collective leadership (O’Boyle et al., 2023). Building on this need to incorporate complementary approaches, the next section examines collective leadership, which shares core principles with inclusive leadership such as relational influence, distributed responsibility, and collaborative decision making, and considers its relevance to sport governance.

2.9.1 Collective Leadership

Several leadership approaches have been compared to inclusive leadership (Randel et al., 2018), yet one approach that offers valuable insight and promotes similar behaviours is collective leadership. This developing conceptual approach has been applied to explore complex challenges within interpersonal connections among board members (Ferkins et al., 2018;

O’Boyle et al., 2023; Shilbury et al., 2020). Ospina (2016) defines collective leadership as “the source of leadership one level up from the individuals, the relationship, at the system of the relationships—the collective” (p. 281). Collective leadership reflects the intrinsic value of followers and their equal contributions to empowerment, decision making, and performance (Jones et al., 2018; Paunova, 2015; Spiller, 2020).

Shilbury et al. (2020) suggest that a new generation of Western sport governance leadership thinking has evolved beyond individual influence toward a collective approach. This shift implies that the views and interpretations of the collective are central to fostering belonging (Brewer, 1991; Dee et al., 2018; Grint, 2005). Shilbury et al. (2020) examined interactions and socially constructed perspectives of leadership within sport governance, conceptualising how collective leadership and collaborative governance combine to create a unity of purpose. Their conclusion posed a question highly relevant to this study: “How can these boards enable and enact collective leadership?” (p. 229).

Collective leadership does not come without its challenges. There are primarily two viewpoints regarding collective leadership. The first positions leadership as rooted in the collective rather than the individual, while the second distinguishes collective leadership from individual leadership and suggests that the two can coexist (Foldy & Ospina, 2021; Gibeau et al., 2020; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Edwin Locke (as cited in Pearce et al., 2008) critiques the latter perspective, arguing that it can result in a “vision or strategy that is so watered down, in order to please everyone, that it is meaningless” (p. 625). Furthermore, Foldy and Ospina (2021) argue that there is relatively little research examining how collective leadership enables individuals in subordinated positions to accumulate the influence necessary to challenge existing power structures. This is particularly relevant to the present study, which explores the system within NZC and the leadership practices operating both within and between governing boards.

Given the shared relational principle of belonging in both collective and inclusive leadership, and the focus of this study on the collective intelligences CEI and CCQ, collective leadership represents a natural fit within the theoretical context of sport boards. Although collective leadership literature in sport governance is becoming an increasingly prominent area of research (Ferkins et al., 2018a, 2025; O’Boyle et al., 2023; Shilbury et al., 2020), from an Indigenous perspective—and particularly in the context of this study situated in New Zealand—the principle of belonging in collective leadership is neither new nor emerging. Rather, it has a deep history and contemporary forms that continue to flourish in Indigenous communities such as Māori in New Zealand (Spiller et al., 2025). Within a Māori worldview, belonging is expressed through

whanaungatanga, which refers to relationships that extend beyond kinship to include those who become kin through shared experiences (Mead, 2003).

One of the traditional practices that operationalises within this principle is *whakawhanaungatanga* (relationship building), which creates space for developing positive and collaborative relationships through dialogue and supports the co-construction of aspirations and meaning that are revisited throughout the leadership process (Mead, 2003). Komene et al. (2024) describe *whakawhanaungatanga* as “the foundation for building a relationship and trust, it can be considered a rule for friendly engagement” (p. 10). The significance of dialogue in leadership, particularly in relational contexts, is widely recognised across cultures. From a Western perspective, “dialogue is at the root of all effective group action” (Schein, 1993, p. 29), and from a Māori perspective, “ko te kai a te Rangatira, ko te kōrero (the food of chiefs is dialogue)” (NZR, 2023, p. 1).

Dialogue has long been embedded as a collective and relational dimension of sustainable organisational leadership and learning (Bohm, 1996; Reitz, 2017; Tortorella et al., 2020). David Bohm (1996), regarded as a Western pioneer of dialogue theory, argued that dialogue fosters shared meaning within a collective, stating that ‘the collective thought is more powerful than the individual thought’ (p. 15). A dialogic moment involves suspending assumptions, with all participants actively listening and engaging with one another (Bohm, 1996). This process resonates with the principle of *whanaungatanga* (belonging) and reflects the relational orientation underpinning both collective and inclusive leadership, making it highly relevant to the theoretical foundation and focus of this study. Furthermore, action research, this study’s methodological approach, is inherently grounded in dialogue, as it enables collaborative meaning-making and reflection throughout iterative cycles of inquiry and change. Chapter 4 outlines how *whakawhanaungatanga* and dialogic principles informed the design and implementation of this study’s methodology.

2.10 EI, CQ, Inclusive Practices and Sport Governance

Inclusive leadership practices facilitated through an EI and CQ lens can be highly influential at the governance level, given that governance shapes organisational leadership (Shilbury et al., 2020). However, little is known, even in the broader governance context, about the mechanisms through which emotions and culture affect board processes, highlighting the need for further research (Brundin & Nordqvist, 2008; Hassan-Marques et al., 2024). To date, there are few sport leadership models that apply EI and CQ as frameworks for developing inclusive leadership

practices within boards of nonprofit sporting organisations (Molloy et al., 2023). Dee et al. (2018) emphasise the need for sport leadership scholars and practitioners to apply EI skills, particularly those that focus on relationships and self-awareness. Furthermore, existing studies on CQ in sport primarily examine coaching contexts (Borges et al., 2023) and sport psychology (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009), rather than CQ capabilities at the board level. This gap underscores the novelty and significance of this study in exploring how a collective approach to inclusive leadership through the emergence of CEI and CCQ can address cultural diversity and complexity within nonprofit sport governance structures and create and sustain inclusive sport board environments.

As highlighted earlier in this review, creating a context where members experience inclusion depends on how leaders enact inclusive behaviours directly with team members (O'Boyle et al., 2023; Randel et al., 2018). Within sport governance, leadership is understood as a collective achievement, generated through multiple interactions rather than residing in an individual (Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016; Ferkins et al., 2018; Jackson & Parry, 2018; Kihl et al., 2010; Ospina & Foldy, 2010). This perspective has shaped the evolution of sport governance leadership research toward non-traditional approaches that explore the interplay between formal and informal leadership structures (Ferkins et al., 2018b). Findings from this study provide insights into how EI and CQ, applied through inclusive leadership practices, supported these collective dynamics and contributed to more relational and intentional governance processes.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter synthesised literature on the historical evolution of diversity and inclusion and its integration into OD. It examined how EI and CQ intersect with inclusive leadership practices within sport governance and highlighted the limited research applying these lenses to board-level leadership in nonprofit sport organisations. The review emphasised that inclusive governance is not an individual endeavour, but a collective achievement shaped by relational behaviours and multiple intelligences. These insights underscore the importance of dialogic processes and psychological safety in fostering belongingness and uniqueness, key elements of inclusion.

In critiquing the governance literature, a notable gap is the absence of a sound empirical understanding of how inclusive leadership is developed within sport boards through the lenses of EI and CQ. While existing models address aspects of this inquiry, none provide a comprehensive framework that responds to the research question. Furthermore, the literature

oscillates between intra- and interpersonal dynamics without clearly delineating the attributes that underpin inclusive leadership at a sport board level. This highlights the need for research that addresses this gap and supports the development of inclusive sport board environments where diversity is embedded and sustained.

The gaps identified in the literature informed the design of this study, which adopts an action research approach to explore *how* inclusive leadership practices can be embedded within the governance context of New Zealand Cricket. In doing so, the study seeks to address one major research question supported by four sub questions, as set out below:

How can inclusive leadership in sport boards be developed through an emotional and cultural intelligence lens?

- What does inclusive leadership practices mean in the context of sport boards?
- What factors inhibit or enable an inclusive environment in sport boards?
- What role could EI and CQ play in developing inclusive leadership practices?
- What actions can be taken to develop inclusive practices in sport boards?
- What changes have occurred as a result of such actions?

The following chapters outline the research process, present the findings, and discuss the major outcomes and their implications for theory and practice.

Chapter 3 Research Design

3.1 Introduction

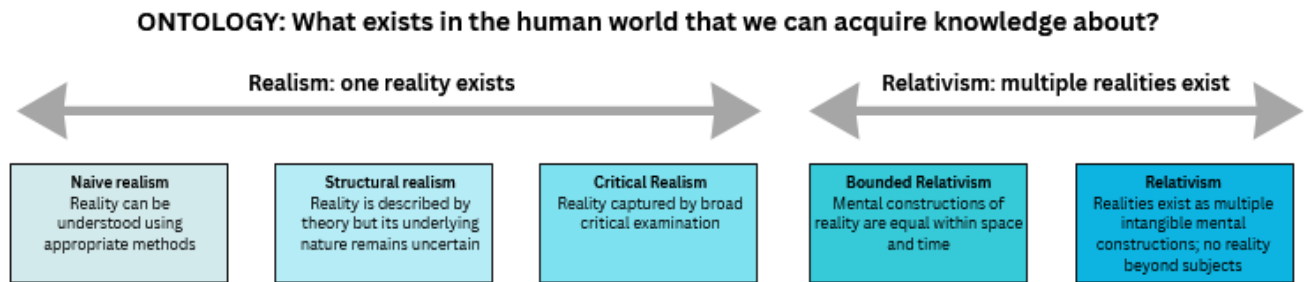
The central research question, ‘How can inclusive leadership in sport boards be developed through an emotional and cultural intelligence lens?’ reflects the philosophical stance adopted for this study. The focus on what works to address this question led to a pragmatic, action-oriented purpose: to explore what can be learned about developing inclusive leadership practices in sport boards by drawing from the past, the present, and potential futures. Implicit in this question is the assumption that solutions would hold multiple meanings for different people and that more than one method would be needed to uncover context-specific insights. Another important assumption is that meaning would be co-constructed with participants rather than imposed upon them, enabling a deeper understanding than data generation alone could provide.

In this chapter, I present the philosophical stance underpinning my action research approach with an applied mixed methods study. I begin by outlining my ontological and epistemological perspectives, providing justification for my position. I then discuss the research paradigms that frame the overall approach and inform the design. Following this, I explain the methodological choices guiding this action research project. Finally, I outline the specific methods employed in the study, along with the measures taken to ensure rigour, validity, and adherence to ethical considerations.

3.2 Ontology

Ontology involves the nature of reality and shapes how researchers view and study the phenomenon under investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Ontological assumptions orient the significance of the research problem and guide the formulation of research questions (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Moon and Blackman (2014) describe a continuum of traditional ontological positions ranging from realism, where one reality exists, to relativism, where multiple realities exist. Figure 3.1 illustrates these positions and the progression from naïve realism to bounded relativism, representing a shift from the belief in a single true reality to the view that multiple constructed realities exist within subjects.

Figure 3.1
Continuum of Traditional Ontological Positions



Note. Adapted from “A Guide to Understanding Social Science Research For Natural Sciences,” by K. Moon and D. Blackman, 2014, *Conservation Biology*, 28(5), 1167-1177. 10.1111/cobi.12326. Copyright 2014 Society for Conservation Biology.

Traditional stances often emphasise shifts in beliefs but lack what Pratt (2016, p. 17) calls the “creativity of action” — the transactional processes and interactions that create reality. Pragmatism focuses on these processes rather than locating itself within a fixed ontological position on the realism–relativism continuum. As Pratt (2016) argues, pragmatism is better understood as a reflexive and generative orientation to action, derived from the way reflection functions within ongoing action. Consequently, pragmatism is not represented as a discrete position in Figure 3.1; rather, it provides a lens through which I, as the researcher, engage with and respond to multiple realities in practice.

Accordingly, I adopt a pragmatic ontology, which holds that what has practical and functional value is ultimately important and valid (Ivankova, 2015; Johnson & Christensen, 2024). This commitment shaped the design of this study and informed the choice of a mixed-methods approach, placing the research question at the centre of inquiry (Ivankova, 2015; Johnson & Gray, 2010; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). My position reflects a worldview where knowledge is socially constructed, contextually grounded, and generated through purposeful action — consistent with Dewey’s (1925) philosophy and the principles of action research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Critics argue that pragmatism offers “no steer for development researchers seeking guidance on ontology” (Heeks et al., 2025, p. 3) and tends to prescribe incremental rather than structural change (Heeks et al., 2025; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Kadlec, 2006). I contend that this flexibility and iterative orientation is not a limitation but a transformational strength. Pragmatism fosters creativity of action (Pratt, 2016) by emphasising communication and shared meaning-making to generate practical solutions to social problems (Shannon-Baker, 2016). Reality, in this

view, is contingent on practical consequences, and what matters is what works to address the research question.

At the outset of my PhD, I was asked why I did not adopt a critical realist lens given the context of inclusive leadership in governance. Critical realism offers a layered view of reality but ultimately assumes a single, mind-independent truth (Bhaskar, 1978). These layers assert a stratified approach with three domains: the real (generative mechanisms), the actual (events that occur whether observed or not), and the empirical (experiences and observations) (Molloy, 2023; O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014). In contrast, pragmatism assumes that reality is contingent on practical consequences and prioritises what works in context, providing flexibility and methodological pluralism to address complex, socially constructed phenomena such as inclusion. Because this study sought to answer 'what can work' to enable inclusive leadership in practice, it required recognition of multiple socially constructed realities rather than a single layered reality. Furthermore, critical realism has been critiqued for discounting rival sociological theories (Zhang, 2022), which could have constrained the breadth of perspectives needed to answer the research question comprehensively. Adopting a pragmatic stance allowed integration of multiple paradigms while maintaining philosophical congruence through the principle of 'paradigm crossing' (Van der Roest et al., 2015), ensuring consistency and alignment with the study's action-oriented purpose.

3.3 Epistemology

The epistemological orientation of this study is social constructionism. This perspective holds that knowledge of the world is constructed through processes, social interactions, and multiple forms of knowing (Burr, 2015; Hersted et al., 2019; Rees et al., 2020). Crotty (1998) depicts a continuum of epistemological positions ranging from objectivism, where reality exists independently of the human mind, to subjectivism, where knowledge depends entirely on individual perception. Social constructionism falls between these positions, acknowledging that while reality is not wholly independent of human interpretation, knowledge is co-constructed through social and cultural processes. The study follows the epistemological assumption that its purpose is not only to describe, understand, and explain how knowledge is derived, but also to contribute to changing it (Coghlan, 2019). Central to this philosophical underpinning is an emphasis on the role of emotions and culture in acquiring knowledge and making meaning within the research. Applying an emotional intelligence (EI) and cultural intelligence (CQ) lens aligns with a social constructionist view, as I believe knowledge must be co-created to ensure relevance, inclusivity, and shared understanding among participants.

3.4 Research Paradigms

To plan and conduct research effectively, it is essential to consider the underlying research paradigm. Kuhn (1970) introduced the concept of paradigms as shared sets of beliefs and agreements within scientific communities about how problems should be understood and addressed, emphasising paradigms as exemplars of problem-solving. Guba and Lincoln (1982, 1994) extended this definition to reflect a broader worldview, stating that a paradigm is “the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways” (p. 105). This interpretation positions paradigms as frameworks that define the researcher, the participants, and the range of possible relationships to the world.

Building on this, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2008) introduced the notion of paradigm pluralism, which allows researchers to draw from multiple paradigms when appropriate. Van der Roest et al. (2015) describe this as “paradigm crossing” (p. 78), positioning researchers to recognise and navigate multiple paradigms across qualitative and quantitative domains. Such exploration is uncommon in sport management and governance research, where dominant theories of corporate governance have historically been driven by quantitative, positivistic approaches (Ferkins, 2007; Van der Roest et al., 2015), reflecting the field’s origins and organisational complexity.

In this study, the underlying paradigm is the constructivist–interpretive paradigm, which emphasises the processes through which meanings are negotiated, sustained, created, and modified (Andrews, 2021; Schwandt, 2003). The constructivist lens enabled me to recognise how knowledge and truth are co-constructed through interaction and dialogue with the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Schwandt, 2003), while the interpretive lens guided me in listening to participants’ personal viewpoints and understanding the knowledge that developed from their own interpretations of the key concepts in the study (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In practice, this involved engaging deeply with participants’ interpretations of the research question through qualitative methods and collaboratively developing new understandings via iterative discussion and reflection. The constructivist-interpretive stance provided an appropriate foundation for an action research approach, given its emphasis on collaborative leadership processes, organisational development (OD), and co-construction of meaning.

The quantitative strand of the present study aligns with a post-positivist paradigm, which values objectivity while recognising that complete neutrality is unattainable and some bias is inevitable (Kayes et al., 2011). Post-positivism addresses real-world problems and acknowledges the socially constructed nature of knowledge (Henderson, 2011). Given the conceptual underdevelopment and limited empirical testing in sport governance (Colebatch, 2014; Dowling et al., 2018; Grix, 2010), this paradigm is particularly relevant. It emphasises and advocates triangulation and mixed methods approaches to strengthen validity. Applying this lens supports the co-construction of meaning in collective leadership interactions, responding to calls for empirically driven research and contributing to governance literature within and beyond sport (Ferkins et al., 2025; O’Boyle et al., 2019, 2023; Puyvelde et al., 2018; Shilbury et al., 2020). This “paradigm crossing” (Van der Roest et al., 2015, p. 78) approach enabled methodological pluralism while maintaining consistency with a pragmatic orientation. These paradigms provided the philosophical foundation for selecting action research as the overarching methodology. The collaborative and iterative nature of action research aligns with the constructivist–interpretive lens, while its flexibility accommodates the post-positivist strand through mixed methods integration. The next section explains how action research was applied in this study Table 3.1. outlines the philosophical stance underpinning this mixed-methods action research study.

Table 3.1
My Philosophical Stance Overview

Ontology Pragmatism <i>What works best for the research question?</i>			
Epistemology Social Constructionism Knowledge is constructed through processes, social interactions, and multiple forms of knowing	Paradigms Paradigm Crossing Drawing from multiple paradigms (qualitative and quantitative) when appropriate		Methodology Action Research <i>integrating</i> Mixed Methods Integrating mixed-methods and action research to design rigorous, evidence-based plans for implementation and evaluation of impact
	Constructivist-Interpretive Focuses on co-constructing meaning through dialogue and interpretation of participants’ experiences.	Post-Positivist Values objectivity but accepts that bias and context influence knowledge.	

3.5 Methodology

Establishing the epistemological foundations (how we view ourselves) and ontological foundations (how we come to know), alongside the research question that guides the study, is essential for underpinning and informing future practice (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Hoeber, 2023; McNiff, 2013). This leads to further consideration: *how* we do things, which relates to methodology. Methodology encompasses the theoretical framework, methods, and other design elements required to conduct the research (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Building on these philosophical and methodological foundations, this study adopted action research as a broad methodological approach (McNiff & Whitehead, 2012), applying mixed methods to address the research question and inform practice.

3.5.1 Action Research

Action research is concerned with taking action and creating meaningful change (Coghlan, 2019; Schein, 2010). It is a participatory and democratic process that involves both evidence gathering and improvement (Piggot-Irvine & Biggs, 2020; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Coghlan and Brannick (2005) describe action research as “an approach to research which aims at both taking action and creating knowledge or theory about that action” (p. xii). Action research is inherently collaborative, underpinned by multiple features within its cycles (Piggot-Irvine & Biggs, 2020). This approach complements the varied contexts and multiple leadership interactions within the sport board environment.

An important origin of action research lies in Lewin’s work during the 1940s, alongside his contributions to OD discussed in Chapter 2. Lewin (1946) advocated for research grounded in collaboration between the researcher and the research ‘subject,’ with dialogue central to mutual inquiry and action (Coghlan & Jacobs, 2005; Ferkins, 2007). He also supported mixed methods, promoting both quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore group dynamics, stating: “It will be necessary to install fact-finding procedures, social eyes and ears, right into social action bodies” (Lewin, 1946, p. 38). While most literature positions action research as either a methodology or a paradigm, this study adopted it as a methodology, applying a mixed methods approach. As a methodology, action research emphasises the importance of processes in the co-construction of knowledge (Gergen, 2014). Cardno (2003) supports action research because it enables participants to engage deeply with their own theories of action while working collaboratively to create meaningful change. Similarly, Reason and Bradbury (2008) argue that action research should be judged by its own criteria and is particularly suited to advancing practical, propositional, and experiential knowledge. The research design of the present project

is primarily action research -driven, complemented by features of mixed methods. The decision to privilege action research reflects the paradigm-crossing nature of the study, combining creativity with an overall structured process to achieve sustainable outcomes driven by action.

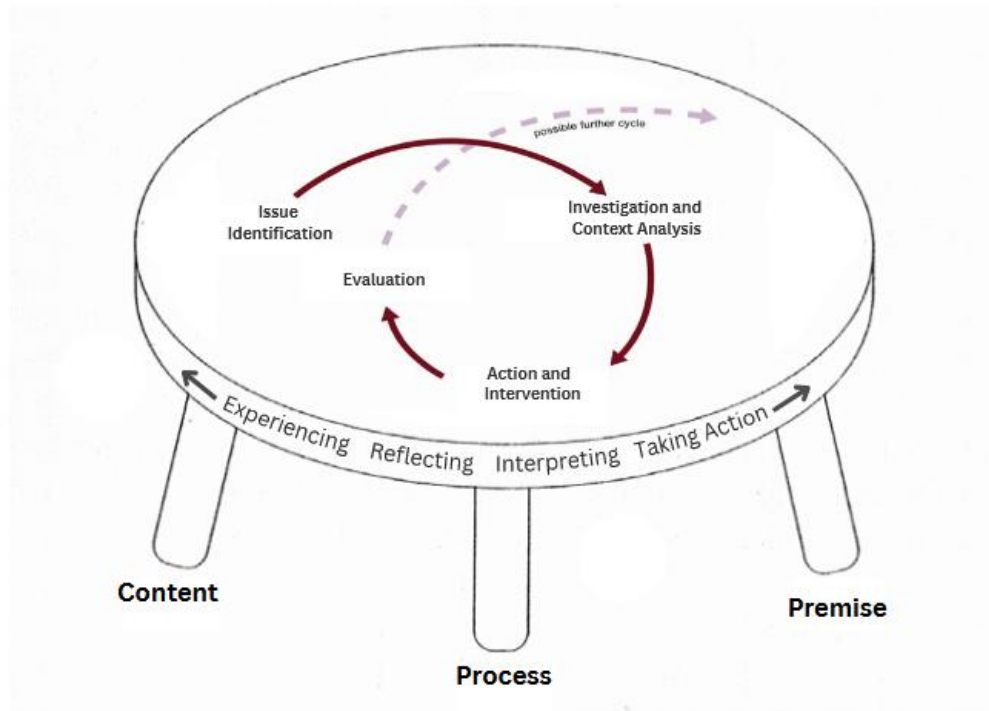
The action research approach follows a collaborative, cyclic and reflective process (Cardno, 2003). In any action research project, multiple cycles often operate concurrently. Within this PhD process, two cycles were operating together to create a meta-learning context—learning about learning (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). The first cycle was the core action research cycle, consisting of four phases: issue identification, investigation and context analysis, action and intervention, and evaluation (Cardno, 2003; Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Ferkins, 2007). The second cycle was a reflective cycle, in which the researcher examined the core process and inquired into each phase through three forms of critical reflection: content, process, and premise (Coghlan, 2019; Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Mezirow, 1991). These three forms of reflection (Coghlan, 2019; Mezirow, 1991) are described below:

- Content Reflection: Thinking about the issues and interpreting what I believe is happening.
- Process Reflection: Considering the strategies and procedures being used, and how actions are carried out.
- Premise Reflection: Critiquing my own underlying assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives.

Reflection distinguishes action research from general problem solving and is central to developing actionable knowledge (Argyris, 2003; Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). Kakabadse et al. (2017) argue that reflection must occur both in action (during decision-making) and on action (after decisions) to ensure real-time learning. These reflective practices allow researchers to reshape actions and achieve goals (Argyris, 1991; Schön, 1987).

Furthermore, Coghlan and Brannick (2005) argue that within each phase, a mini cycle of experiencing, reflecting, interpreting, and taking action is required to ensure rigour in the process. This complexity is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2
The Action Research Process



Note. Adapted from Cardno (2003), Coghlan (2019), and Mezirow (1991).

Despite its long history, action research has rarely been applied in sport governance contexts. However, it is considered effective because of the underlying commitment between researchers and participants to achieve positive change and develop solutions to problems (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015b; Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Heron & Reason, 2006). Adopting a social constructionist approach to action research shifts the focus from outcomes to processes within groups (Hersted et al., 2019). This perspective is highly relevant to inclusive leadership and the focus of this research, which seeks to explore leadership within governance contexts (Ferkins et al., 2018a; Parent & Hoyer, 2018).

Action research does present potential challenges. Cardno (2018) identifies two important issues for researchers. First, although action research appears simple - investigate and improve - the complexity of context creates different interpretations and reinterpretations throughout the process, generating multiple meanings at any given time. Cardno (2018) argues that researchers must address this complexity with a pragmatic approach to maintain integrity. My pragmatic ontological stance helps counteract this challenge by continually asking: *What is relevant to the*

research question? Second, Cardno (2018) suggests that action research is sometimes considered messy and even weak because of previous studies lacking rigour. To counter this concern, this study integrated a range of methods from other approaches (quantitative and qualitative) to create systematic and critical processes that ensure validity and rigour. The final section of this chapter outlines how these standards will be achieved.

The emphasis on inquiry and reflection within action research aligns with the lens of this study being EI and CQ. Goleman (2004) supports the importance of reflection and inquiry, linking effective leadership to the ability to reflect on emotions to facilitate decision-making. Given the relational nature of inclusive practices, EI, CQ and sport leadership, this research adopts a collaborative, developmental action research approach based on Cardno's (2003) developmental model and adapted by Ferkins et al. (2010). Figure 3.4, further explained within the Study Framework section and inserted in the section below, presents the adapted action research cyclic process guiding this study.

3.5.2 Application of Mixed Methods

To successfully address the proposed research topic, alignment between the research question, methodology, and methods is essential (Giddings & Grant, 2006). Brydon-Miller et al. (2020) emphasises that action research should "include a recognition of the reality and legitimacy of multiple forms of knowing and an openness to exploring research methods to reflect a diversity of perspectives" (p. 109). Consistent with this principle, the present study adopts an applied mixed methods approach within an action research framework. This integration enables a comprehensive exploration of the research question by combining methods that capture both measurable outcomes and nuanced understandings of board participants' perspectives on inclusive governance and the development of inclusive leadership through EI and CQ.

Known as the third methodological movement, mixed methods combine questions from both quantitative and qualitative traditions to add breadth and depth in addressing complex research questions (Bakhsh et al., 2024; Johnson et al., 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). While definitions vary, this study adopted Tashakkori and Creswell's (2007) widely cited description: "Research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry" (p. 4).

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2008) emphasise the role of inference in mixed methods research, describing it as the integration of conclusions drawn from qualitative and quantitative data. Inference is considered the cornerstone of mixed methods (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). Quantitative methods are theory-driven, informed by existing knowledge of the phenomenon under study, and involve the collection and analysis of numerical data expressed as numbers or scores (Ivankova, 2015; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). In contrast, qualitative methods are context-driven and aim to explore meanings, experiences, and perspectives related to the phenomenon under investigation, using narrative data (Hoeber, 2023; Ivankova, 2015; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). Mixed methods combine both strands within the same study, integrating numerical and narrative forms to provide a more comprehensive understanding (Byrnes, 2022; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). In this study, inferences were considered interpretations drawn from each strand, and meta-inferences represent the final integrated interpretation across strands.

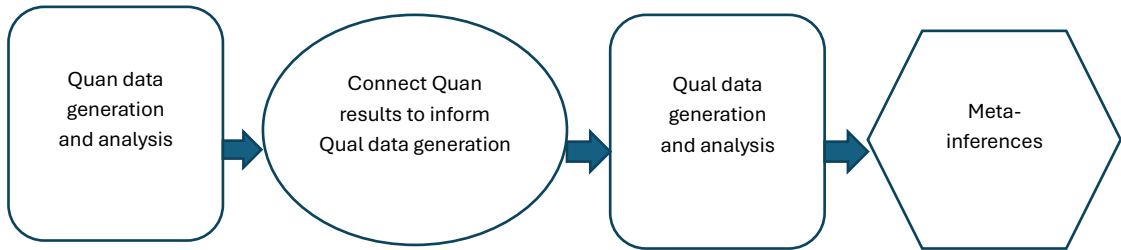
Although meta-inferences are a defining feature of mixed methods research, in this study they played a focused role during specific phases rather than throughout the entire action research process. The primary emphasis was on generating and analysing qualitative themes to inform inclusive governance practices. Meta-inferences were applied primarily in Phases 2 and 4 during the Q Sort process (pre and post sort), where quantitative inferences from Q Sort rankings were integrated with qualitative themes and interpretations. This integration provided higher-level insights into shared perspectives on inclusion and diversity, complementing the broader qualitative findings.

While several integration strategies exist to compare and synthesise quantitative and qualitative results, this study adopted a sequential quantitative-to-qualitative design in which inferences from the quantitative phase informed the development of qualitative methods, including the semi-structured interview questions. Themes generated through qualitative analysis were subsequently integrated with quantitative findings to produce meta-inferences that addressed the research questions comprehensively. Consistent with an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, priority was given to the qualitative strand, which was used to elaborate, explain, and confirm the quantitative findings in Phase 2 and 4 of the action research process (Ivankova, 2015; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2006). Although both quantitative and qualitative data informed all research questions, qualitative findings were considered more heavily in the interpretation because the primary purpose of the study was to understand how inclusive leadership practices were developed through the action research process. As such, quantitative findings provided evidence of change, while qualitative findings provided the principal basis for

interpreting how and why those changes occurred. Meta-inferences were developed in Phases 2 and 4 and are discussed further in Chapter 5. This process is illustrated in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3

Sequential Quantitative to Qualitative Mixed Methods Design Used in Phase 2 and 4



Note. Adapted from “Mixed Methods Applications in Action Research: From Methods to Community Action” by N. V. Ivankova, 2015, SAGE Publications. Copyright 2015 by SAGE.

Although a mixed methods has become increasingly influential across social, behavioural, and health sciences (Ivankova, 2015; van der Roest et al., 2015), its application within sport management — and particularly sport governance — remains limited (Bakhsh et al., 2024; Gerke et al., 2023). Similarly, while research on inclusive leadership has grown steadily, most studies rely on either quantitative or qualitative designs, with few employing mixed methods (Chung et al., 2020; Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2022; Shore et al., 2021). This gap underscores the need for an approach that captures both measurable outcomes and the nuanced, context-driven experiences underpinning inclusive leadership in governance settings.

3.5.3 Integration of Action Research and Mixed Methods

The increased recognition of combining mixed methods and action research as a methodological approach emerged in the mid-2000s, recognising the parallels between the two in triangulating multiple data sources to build rigorous, cohesive conclusions (Creswell, 2016; James et al., 2008; Richardson & Reid, 2006). In this study, integrating mixed methods with action research provided a pragmatic foundation for addressing the research question and determining what works. Ivankova (2015) supports this integration, noting its potential to “produce scientifically sound and effective plans for action and evaluation of the action results” (p. 52). Furthermore, embedding mixed methods within an action research framework encourages a dialectical and reflective stance consistent with the cyclical nature of action research (Cardno, 2003; Coghlan, 2019).

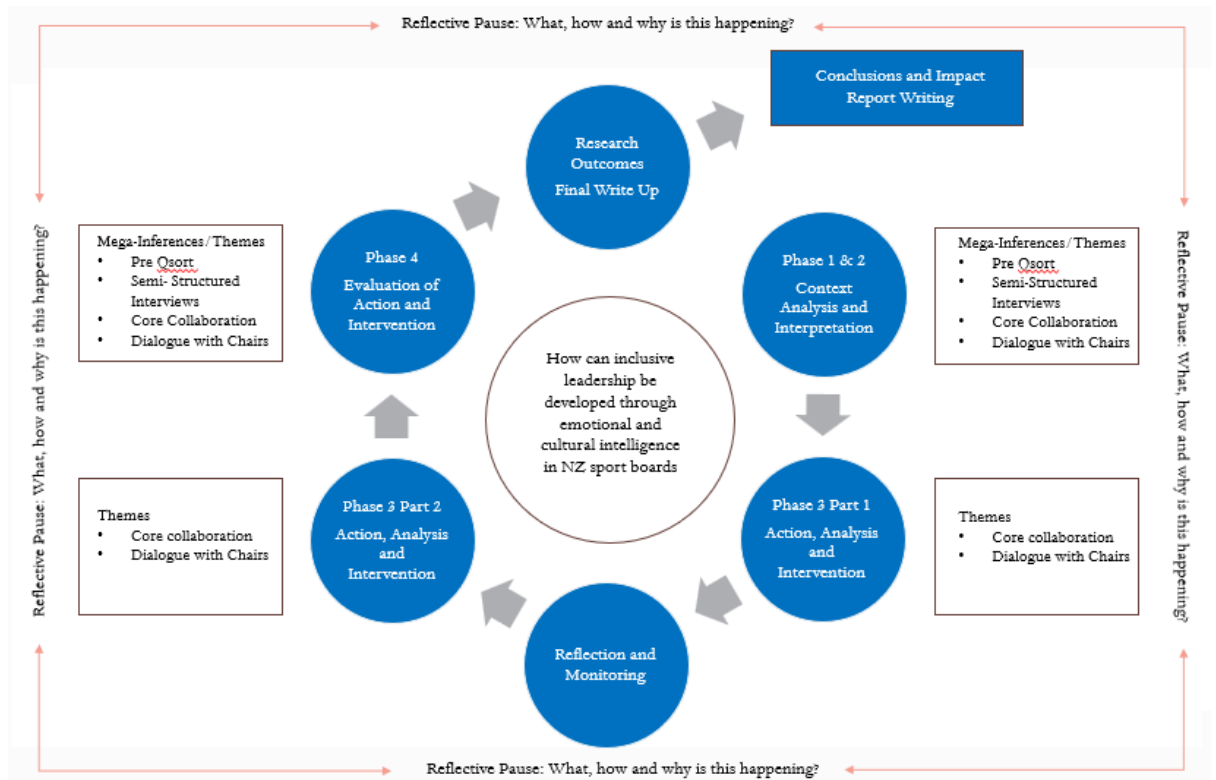
The purpose of this study, in applying a mixed methods with an action research approach, was to explore how inclusive leadership practices could be developed through the lenses of EI and CQ. This approach aimed to enable board members to critically examine their own assumptions and biases about what constitutes an inclusive board environment, potentially influencing their

broader perspectives on inclusion. Incorporating mixed methods procedures into the action research cycle — such as pre- and post-Q sort activities — provided a more systematic approach and enhanced the transferability of intervention outcomes, thereby promoting sustainable change and impact (Ivankova, 2015; Johnson et al., 2007). Integrating mixed methods also addresses the challenge of contextual complexity inherent in action research, where multiple interpretations and reinterpretations developed throughout the process, generating diverse meanings at any given time (Cardno, 2003).

3.5.4 Study Framework

Designing and conceptualising an action research project using mixed methods requires a systematic approach that honours the principles of both traditions. As noted above, the framework developed for this study (Figure 3.4 below) draws on action research models (Cardno, 2003; Ferkins, 2007; Ferkins et al. 2010; Ivankova, 2015) and mixed methods principles (Ivankova, 2015), ensuring alignment with both approaches to maintain scientific rigour and produce valid, well-justified empirical findings (Creswell, 2024; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016; Ivankova & Wingo, 2018). While a systematic approach was essential, flexibility within the reflexive process was equally important. Embedded in the framework were ‘reflexive pauses’ — moments to critically examine the ‘so what’ by considering what had been learned and what should happen next. These pauses were consistent throughout the study and are evident across all chapters of this thesis. This flexibility enabled the reshaping of actions and the achievement of goals as new insights developed during iterative cycles of reflection and collaborative action — an inherent feature of action research (Argyris, 1991; Lewin, 1946; Piggot-Irvine et al., 2021; Schön, 1987).

Figure 3.4
The Project's Action Research Framework



Note. Adapted from Cardno (2003), Ferkins (2007), Ferkins et al. (2010) and Ivankova (2015).

Phase 1 & 2: Context Analysis and Interpretation

Phase 1 served as a context analysis stage, focused on gathering background information about the organisation and reviewing relevant literature and New Zealand Cricket (NZC) documents. This phase was also critical for establishing trust and building quality relationships through processes such as *whakawhanaungatanga* (relationship building practices) and authentic collaboration. Creating a safe environment where participants felt empowered to share their perspectives was central to the project's inclusion purpose and aligned with the lenses of EI and CQ. Early collaborative meetings with stakeholders deepened my understanding of current issues surrounding inclusion and diversity in New Zealand sport governance. This groundwork laid the foundation for authentic engagement with the research questions and identification of developing issues.

Phase 2 represented what Morse and Cheek (2014) describe as a 'point of interface'— a stage where qualitative and quantitative data are analysed together to generate integrated insights. At this point, the first sequential Quan–Qual design was applied using the Q sort method. Guided by the literature and the Q sort activity, I facilitated a group discussion with board participants

to explore their views on what constitutes an inclusive environment in sport boards. I further refined the types of data and inferences required, and how these could be gathered, through semi-structured interviews. These interviews emphasised incorporating diverse perspectives into the dataset. Phases 1 and 2 are detailed in Chapter 4, the first of three findings and discussion chapters which captured the action research fieldwork process.

Phase 3 Action, Analysis and Intervention

In drawing on phase 1 and 2, this phase focussed on developing interventions to support the board and wider organisation in fostering inclusive leadership practices and designing recruitment and appointment processes tailored to inclusivity. It unpacked the key results from the Q sort and core collaboration group meetings. The findings were examined in the context of the theoretical models deployed, offering a deeper understanding of inclusive leadership in sport boards. Interventions were also analysed through the lenses of EI and CQ, providing insights into how these frameworks can strengthen inclusive leadership practices. As detailed in Chapter 5, I distinguish between actions taken (participant-led steps) and the research interventions (more researcher-led) – albeit - both were collaboratively enacted. A critical aspect of Phase 3 was the purposeful monitoring and reflection undertaken by both the researcher and participants to inform subsequent actions.

Phase 4 Evaluation of Action and Intervention

This phase focused on the replication of the Q sort activity (post-Q sort) and a final evaluation group discussion, mirroring the comparative process used in Phase 1, alongside an evaluation session with the core collaboration group. The phase followed Cardno's (2013) action research design while applying a mixed methods sequential Quan–Qual approach. Developmental action research is intended to foster growth at multiple levels — the personal, collegial, and organisational (Cardno, 2003). In line with these principles, the effectiveness of change was examined across these levels. This process is illustrated in Chapter 6. The evaluation phase aimed to assess the impact of change on developing inclusive leadership practices in sport boards, analysed through the lenses of EI and CQ.

3.6 Undertaking the Fieldwork

This study was motivated by progress already made by New Zealand Cricket (NZC), the national governing body, in advancing board gender diversity, alongside scholarly calls for greater attention to leadership in governance (Ferkins et al., 2018a; O'Boyle et al., 2019) and the need to better understand inclusive practices in this context (Brewis, 2019; Katz & Miller, 2018; Randel

et al., 2018). Accordingly, the research aimed to explore how inclusive leadership in sport boards can be developed through an emotional and cultural intelligence lens. Sport New Zealand (Sport NZ) also partnered in the project, intending to apply findings across the wider sporting sector.

AUT and NZC share a longstanding relationship, with previous collaborations strengthening the theory–practice connection. Building on this foundation, the present study sought to shift NZC’s focus from ‘diversity’ toward a more comprehensive emphasis on ‘inclusion.’ Early in the project, an online meeting was convened with representatives from Sport NZ, AUT, and NZC to discuss strategies for championing inclusion and diversity within sport governance in New Zealand. This meeting informed participant selection, and following further discussion, NZC Chair Martin Snedden and I agreed that the NZC National Board Directors were the most appropriate group of participants.

Furthermore, to guide data generation and action implementation across the four phases of the study, a core collaboration group was established comprising representatives from NZC, Sport NZ, and Auckland University of Technology/Sport Performance Research Institute New Zealand researchers. This group brought extensive experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within their respective organisations, helping to clarify key directions for the project.

3.6.1 Participants and Sampling

This study employed purposeful sampling, a widely used approach in qualitative research that identifies and selects information-rich cases to enable in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 1990, 2015; Stake, 2000). Purposeful sampling assumes that the investigator seeks to discover, understand, and gain insight, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Patton (2015) emphasises that such cases provide deeper insights into the research purpose and context, thereby enhancing the explanatory power of qualitative research.

Three participant groups were identified:

- NZC National Board Members: Directors of the NZC National Board were invited to participate in the Q sort activity and interviews.
- Core Collaboration Group: Representatives from NZC and Sport NZ with prior involvement in diversity and inclusion initiatives within their organisations were invited to contribute to the action research cycles.

- Diversity and Inclusion in Cricket Governance (DICG): comprised Major Association (MA) board directors who represented the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) voice within their respective boards. Additionally, one independent member participated in the group, bringing prior experience in diversity and inclusion initiatives within the sporting industry.

Participants for this study will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. This is because of the need to explain the concept of *whakawhanaungatanga* (relationship building practices) and how this occurred in real-time.

An Expression of Interest was distributed via email to all NZC National Board members (Appendix A1) and core collaboration group members (Appendix A2). Emails were sent through internal NZC and Sport NZ systems to ensure confidentiality and direct delivery to participants' official addresses. Prior arrangements were made with administrators in both organisations to facilitate this process. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained (Appendix B) from all participants in accordance with ethical approval granted by AUT. Cultural considerations and confidentiality were prioritised throughout the recruitment and data generation process. Overall, 29 participants took part in this study, as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Participant numbers

Participant Groups	Number	Description
NZC National Board Members	11	10 National Board Directors plus the CEO
Core Collaboration Group	8	3 Representatives from NZC, 2 from Sport NZ, 2 supervisors and myself
DICG group	10	9 MA Board Director Representatives plus one Independent

3.6.2 Data Generation

Coghlan (2019) emphasises that in action research, data gathering is not merely a technical exercise but constitutes interventions in their own right. Researchers must recognise that it is not simply about collecting readily available data; rather, it involves deliberately arranging situations for data generation (Coghlan, 2019; Goldkuhl, 2019). In Phase 1, I used data collection as a tool to build background knowledge about the organisation through literature and document reviews. This supported the broader data generation process, which was central to

the project's intent. Adopting a data generation perspective highlighted that every action was an intervention with the potential to generate data relevant to the research.

Data generation for this study involved multiple methods integrated within the action research framework. Supplementary documents were also used to support this process, including relevant research literature, grey papers such as strategic plans and annual reports, and online resources. Primary data generation methods comprised the development of pre and post sorting information for Q sorts, follow-up group discussions, two phases of semi-structured interviews, quarterly online core collaboration meetings, DICG meetings, and reflections drawn from ongoing dialogue with the chair.

Interviews were conducted during Phase 1 and Phase 2 to explore perspectives and inform intervention design, and again in Phase 4 following the Q sort activity to evaluate change and learning. Collaborative meetings served as iterative reflection points and contributed to the final evaluation embedded throughout the action research cycles. Dialogue with the chair occurred at unstructured moments throughout the project, providing additional insights into leadership perspectives. Table 3.3 outlines the number and time periods for the multiple methods employed, while Figure 3.7 provides additional detail in the timeline.

Table 3.3*Data Generation Methods, Number and Timelines for the Project*

Participant Groups	Method	Number	Action Research Phase	Time Period
NZC National Board Members	Pre and Post Q sort	2	1, 2 and 4	Pre Q sort: February 2023 Newly appointed Directors: May-June 2024 Post Q sort: October 2024
	Q sort Follow- up Group Discussions	2	1, 2 and 4	February 2023 October 2024
	Individual Semi Structured Interviews	Initial: 8 Final: 11	1, 2 and 4	Initial: February 2023- March 2023 Newly appointed Directors: May-June 2024 Final: October 2024- November 2024
Core Collaboration Group	Online Meetings	6	1-3	December 2022- May 2024
	Final Evaluation Meeting	1	4	October 2024
DICG	Face to Face Steering Group Meeting	2 days	2, 3	May 2023
	Online Meetings	3		September 2023
Chair Dialogue interactions	Audio Reflections	34	1-4	6 September 2023 7 August 2024 16 October 2024
	Memoing	50+ inserts		February 2023- January 2025

Q Sort Tool

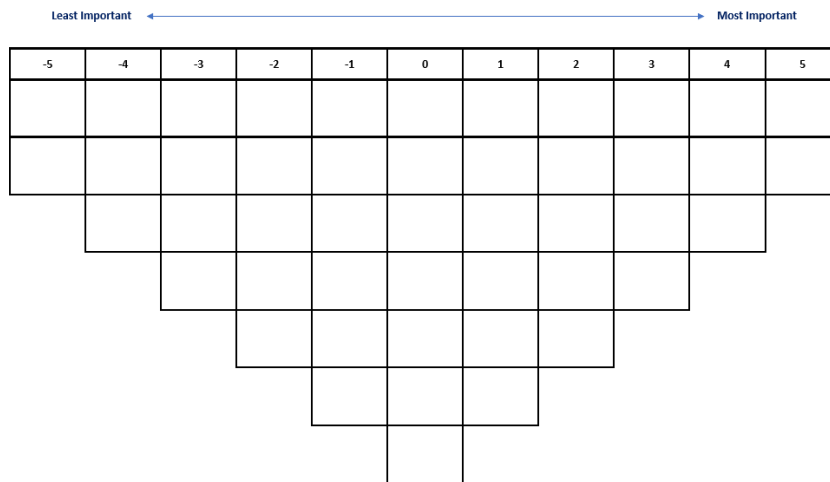
This study utilised a Q sort tool adapted from Q methodology, which is a distinct research approach with its own ontological and epistemological foundations. However, Q sort was not employed as a standalone methodology. Instead, it was used as a developmental and evaluative tool embedded within the overarching action research design. This decision aligns with literature that positions Q sort as a flexible technique for unpacking complex perspectives while remaining

compatible with the principles of Q methodology (Howard & Dhillon, 2022; Ramlo, 2025). Janson and Koh (2025) note that Q methodology is particularly effective in exploring the “in-between spaces of leadership” (p.181), which resonates with the social constructionist perspective underpinning this research.

Q methodology traditionally combines a sorting technique with factor analysis to systematically explore subjectivity (Durose et al., 2023; Stephenson, 1953). It seeks to quantify and interpret individual viewpoints through both quantitative and qualitative procedures (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Wester et al., 2021). Typically, Q studies involve participants ranking statements (Q sorts), followed by intercorrelation and factor analysis, and then qualitative post sort interviews to deepen interpretation (Grimshaw et al., 2017). This process is valued for its ability to reveal dominant discourses and minority voices in complex social contexts (Brown, 2009; Churruca et al., 2021).

In this project, Q sort was applied at two key stages, serving as conceptual bookends to the research process. First, presorting information for the Q sorts was sourced from academic literature and the core collaborative group for the project, complementing the context analysis undertaken in Phase 1. Phase 2 involved the Q sort activity, which included the development of a concourse comprising 47 statements, each providing a position for participants to rank from least to most important. These statements were designed to cover the conceptual ground of the research context and represented a sample drawn from academic literature, grey papers, and discussions generated during Phase 1 and answering the statement ‘Inclusive environments in sport boards require...’. The number of statements in a traditional Q sort typically ranges between 40 and 80 to ensure sufficient communicability within the sample (Ramlo, 2025). This process informed the design of interventions within the action research framework (see Figure 3.5 for an example of the concourse). Later, in Phase 4, Q sort was employed as an evaluation tool to reflect on change and learning. Further details on Q sort implementation and its integration with other methods are provided in Chapters 4 and 5.

Inclusive environments in sport boards require...



Semi-Structured Interviews

Immediately following each Q sort activity (pre and post), a one-hour group discussion was conducted to allow participants to collectively reflect on the sorting process and share initial insights. In the two weeks that followed each Q sort, a series of one-on-one semi-structured interviews were carried out with each participant. The post-interview questions are outlined in Appendix C. An empathetic and flexible style of questioning and listening was adopted to create an inclusive environment where participants felt empowered and safe to openly express their views (Britt et al., 2003). Imposing direction or judgement during interviews is considered unethical and can lead to distrust and deception (Britt et al., 2003; Gratton & Jones, 2014). Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they offered flexibility while maintaining a guiding framework for discussion (Gratton & Jones, 2014; Smith, 2010). Unlike structured interviews — which are often considered more objective and require less training (Isaac & Michael, 1995; Wilmoth, 1982) — semi-structured interviews enabled deeper dialogue around broad questions, allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives (Mojtahed et al., 2014).

Core Collaboration Meetings

Quarterly core collaboration meetings were conducted throughout the study. These meetings, semi-structured by design, captured diverse perspectives on the research questions and identified themes (Gratton & Jones, 2014; Smith, 2010). The core collaborative group played a generative role in shaping the research process and supported triangulation to ensure that findings from Q sort analysis and interviews were robust. Triangulation was employed as “a

primary strategy used in qualitative research that depicts the phenomena [as] viewed and explored from multiple perspectives” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 556). This approach broadened interpretations within the collaborative group and strengthened confidence in the conclusions of the study.

Additional Reflections

Alongside the primary data collection methods, reflective practices were integrated throughout the study. These included audio reflections recorded after informal dialogues and collaborative activities, as well as memoing following face-to-face and email conversations with participants (especially the chairperson). These reflections provided an opportunity to capture evolving interpretations and the co-construction of meaning as the research progressed. These reflective practices contributed to the rigour of the study by creating an audit trail of interpretive decisions and supporting reflexivity, which enhanced credibility and trustworthiness (Beck, 1993). While this section introduces the role of reflection within the methodology, its application and influence on findings will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

3.6.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved consolidating, organising, and synthesising information provided by participants to identify key patterns and insights (Smith, 2008). In mixed methods research, two common challenges are the time required and the complexity of determining the order, priority, and integration of quantitative and qualitative data, which can be cumbersome due to their differing characteristics (Smith, 2008). To address these challenges, the analysis in this study was organised into two distinct parts, reflecting the mixed methods approach adopted. Table 3.4 outlines the two-part process.

Table 3.4*Two-Part Process Used for Data Analysis*

Method	Data Generation	Data Analysis
Quantitative	Q sort	• Q sort factor analysis (KADE): correlation, factor analysis, and the computation of factor scores
Qualitative	Group Discussion, Pre/Post sort Interviews, Core Collaboration Meetings, Dialogue with Chairs	• Reflexive Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) • NVIVO9 and manual coding • Memoing

Findings were developed through an iterative process of organising, describing, and interpreting participant perspectives across multiple data sources, as outlined in Table 3.4 (Ivankova, 2015). Consistent with Braun and Clarke's (2022) reflexive thematic analysis, initial patterns and meaning-making identified within individual datasets were considered preliminary findings or topic summaries rather than fully developed themes. This distinction acknowledges that action research is a complex and emergent process in which context continually shapes interpretation and reinterpretation, generating multiple meanings over time (Cardno, 2018). These preliminary findings were then examined across action research cycles through content, process, and premise reflection (Coghlan, 2019; Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Mezirow, 1991) to identify broader patterns of shared meaning and develop themes that addressed the research question.

Q sort KADE analysis

To analyse the Q sort data, I used the Ken-Q Analysis Desktop Edition (KADE) application because of its intuitive interface and strong visualisation features, which make it particularly suitable for researchers with a qualitative background (Banasick, 2019). Unlike other Q methodology software, KADE provides interactive graphics that help interpret complex statistical outputs, and it is freely accessible. Before commencing the analysis, I consulted an associate professor in New Zealand who is an expert in Q methodology. She is a former editor of *Operant Subjectivity: The International Journal of Q Methodology* and has published extensively on Q methodology. Her guidance was instrumental in navigating the analytical steps and interpreting the results in relation to the research questions.

The analysis began by importing three sets of data into KADE:

1. Participants' rankings of the 47 statements from least to most important.
2. The concourse pattern, which defines how statements are distributed across the ranking grid (e.g., two positions under +5, three under +4, etc.).
3. Descriptions of each statement, ensuring clarity during interpretation.

Once the data was verified, KADE calculated correlations between participants' sorts using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, which is standard in Q methodology. From these correlations, I extracted factors using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) rather than the traditional Centroid method. PCA was chosen because it provides a clear, statistically accepted solution and uses scree plots and eigenvalues to determine factor retention. This was particularly important given my novice status in quantitative interpretation, as PCA offers one best mathematical solution, reducing ambiguity (Byrnes, 2022; Ramlo, 2025). After extraction, I applied Varimax rotation, which simplifies the factor structure and makes interpretation clearer by separating factors into distinct viewpoints (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

The output from KADE included factor arrays, which represent shared viewpoints among participants. These arrays were not interpreted in isolation; they were integrated with qualitative insights from post sort interviews and group discussions. KADE's visualisations were invaluable in supporting interpretation, as they helped identify patterns and relationships that might otherwise be difficult to detect.

Finally, the interpretation process involved comparing statistical outputs with participants' explanations of their rankings, creating a richer understanding of the factors. This integration of KADE analysis with thematic insights reflects the mixed-methods approach underpinning the study and aligns with action research principles by connecting data analysis to practical interventions.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

To deepen understanding, I analysed post sort interviews, group discussions, and core collaboration meetings using Braun and Clarke's (2022) Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) framework. RTA captured the values embedded within the qualitative methods and connected them to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Its reflexive approach enabled me to critically consider "what I did, how and why I did it", and the influences and impacts of the

research process (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 5). The non-linear flexibility of RTA aligned well with the emergent and iterative nature of action research, allowing the process to move forward or revisit earlier stages as needed (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Brydon-Miller et al., 2020).

The Q sort process incorporated RTA to ensure that both quantitative and qualitative insights were combined to form pre- and post sort meta-inferences. Additionally, I applied RTA to post-Q sort group discussions and core collaboration meetings to identify themes that informed intervention design and guided ongoing dialogue with the chairs. Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phase process for RTA incorporating the Qsort are outlined below (see Appendix D for coding visuals).

Phase 1: Dataset Familiarisation

I began by immersing myself in the dataset. I read and re-read the transcripts and listened to the audio recordings multiple times to critically engage with the content and identify meaning. During this process, I made detailed handwritten notes and inserted sticky notes as a reflective coding mechanism to highlight identified ideas and patterns. This phase focused on recurring patterns of meaning relevant to the research questions and remained open to concepts emerging from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Phase 2: Data Coding

I then coded the entire dataset systematically using NVivo 9, a qualitative data analysis software package that supported the organisation, retrieval, and comparison of codes across multiple data sources. The unit of analysis was participants' viewpoints and the meanings they attributed to inclusive leadership in response to the overarching statement, "Inclusive leadership in sport boards requires...". Coding involved identifying recurring patterns of meaning relevant to the research questions rather than simply counting the frequency of words or phrases.

The coding process was informed by both deductive and inductive approaches. Initially, a set of parent nodes was developed a priori from the categories used to construct the 47 concourse statements employed in the Q-sort process. These categories—*chair*, *board environment*, and *board processes*—were derived from the relevant scholarly literature, organisational documents (e.g., strategic plans and annual reports), and other sector-specific sources used in developing the statement set. Although this project was guided by multiple frameworks, these parent nodes provided an initial organising framework for the data.

As coding progressed, additional sub-nodes were generated inductively to capture nuances, relationships, and concepts emerging from participants' accounts. These sub-nodes reflected the theoretical models and frameworks key concepts that informed the study, including inclusive leadership (belonging and uniqueness), emotional intelligence (self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship management), cultural intelligence (core and flex) and sport governance (collective leadership). While these frameworks informed interpretation of the data, the parent node structure of chair, board environment, and board processes remained the primary organising framework during coding. In situations where data segments appeared relevant to multiple nodes, passages were coded to more than one node to preserve the complexity of participants' experiences and to allow connections across conceptual categories to be explored during later stages of analysis.

Phase 3: Initial Theme Generation

The initial theme generation phase is the process whereby themes begin to take form through “clustering together potentially connected codes” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 79). Braun and Clarke (2022) argue that a theme should “capture a wide range of data that are united by and evidence a shared idea” (p. 77). Guided by this approach, I sorted the codes into potential themes, exploring relationships between them and distinguishing overarching themes from sub-themes. In doing so, I considered how the coded data related to the research questions and the conceptual frameworks informing the project.

To support this process, I used mind-mapping techniques to visualise connections and better understand the complex interrelationships between ideas (Fernandez, 2017). The preliminary themes were reviewed iteratively against the coded extracts, the broader dataset, and the theoretical frameworks informing the project to ensure they represented meaningful patterns rather than isolated observations. Word clouds were used as a supplementary visualisation tool to present emerging themes and codes to the Core Collaboration Group in a graphical format and to support discussion and reflection.

Phase 4: Theme Development and Review

Theme review occurred at two levels. First, I examined all data extracts within each theme to ensure they formed a coherent pattern. Second, I re-read the entire dataset to confirm that the themes accurately reflected the data and that no relevant information had been overlooked (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Patton, 1990).

Phase 5: Refining, Defining, and Naming Themes

Once the themes were validated, I refined and defined them to ensure relevance to the research questions. Each theme was then named, and the analysis was prepared for the final stage.

Phase 6: Writing and Final Analysis

The final phase involved writing the analysis. I constructed a coherent narrative that conveyed the complexity of the data while demonstrating the validity and significance of the findings. Data extracts were incorporated throughout to illustrate themes and provide evidence of prevalence, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2022).

NVIVO

NVivo 9 is a qualitative data analysis software that supports researchers in organising and analysing data from multiple sources (Edlund, 2011). I used NVivo 9 as an organisational tool to manage the complexity of multiple data sets and methods. It enabled me to consolidate all coding in one place and structure the data into themes, creating a manageable framework for analysis. While NVivo provided efficiency and transparency, I began with initial hand coding to maintain analytic rigour, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2022).

Within NVivo, I uploaded the interview and meeting transcripts and organised the data into nodes, which represent key themes developing from the analysis. Nodes acted as containers for related quotes and ideas, enabling systematic coding and retrieval of data (Allsop et al., 2022) (see Appendix D).

I applied NVivo in two areas of the project:

1. Semi-structured interviews – After transcription, I coded relevant excerpts to thematic nodes, supporting interpretation of factor arrays and strengthening integration with quantitative insights.
2. Core collaboration meetings – Notes and transcripts from these sessions were coded into nodes, enabling comparison across multiple data sources, including interviews and memos. Additionally, word clouds (Appendix D) were generated from the collaboration meeting data to visualise word frequency patterns and stimulate further discussion.

This approach facilitated rigorous management of qualitative data and enhanced the depth of interpretation within the mixed-methods design.

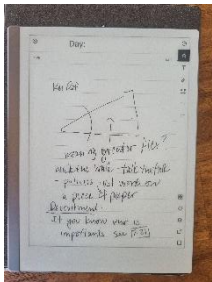
Memoing

Memoing was an influential meaning-making activity throughout the study. I recorded reflections and thoughts while interpreting the data, which supported deeper engagement with developing concepts and categories. Memoing is widely recognised as a valuable tool for researchers, as it assists in understanding patterns and maintaining the integrity of participants' disclosures through critical reflection (Martin & Barnard, 2013). In this study, reflexive memoing was employed during both data generation and analysis to document decisions, track identified concepts, and ensure transparency in the research process (Martin & Barnard, 2013). This practice supported critical reflection and helped ensure that interpretations remained grounded

in participants’ perspectives. My memoing process was distributed across two modes: handwritten journals and a digital notebook (see

Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6
My Memoing Process

Handwritten Journals	Digital Notebook
	

To improve analytical clarity, findings are presented according to patterns of shared meaning and conceptual coherence (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Initial patterns and meanings generated within individual data sources were treated as preliminary findings or topic summaries and examined through iterative cycles of action and reflection (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Cardno, 2018; Coghlan, 2019). Themes developed through qualitative analysis were subsequently integrated with quantitative findings to generate meta-inferences that provided a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the research questions (Ivankova, 2015).

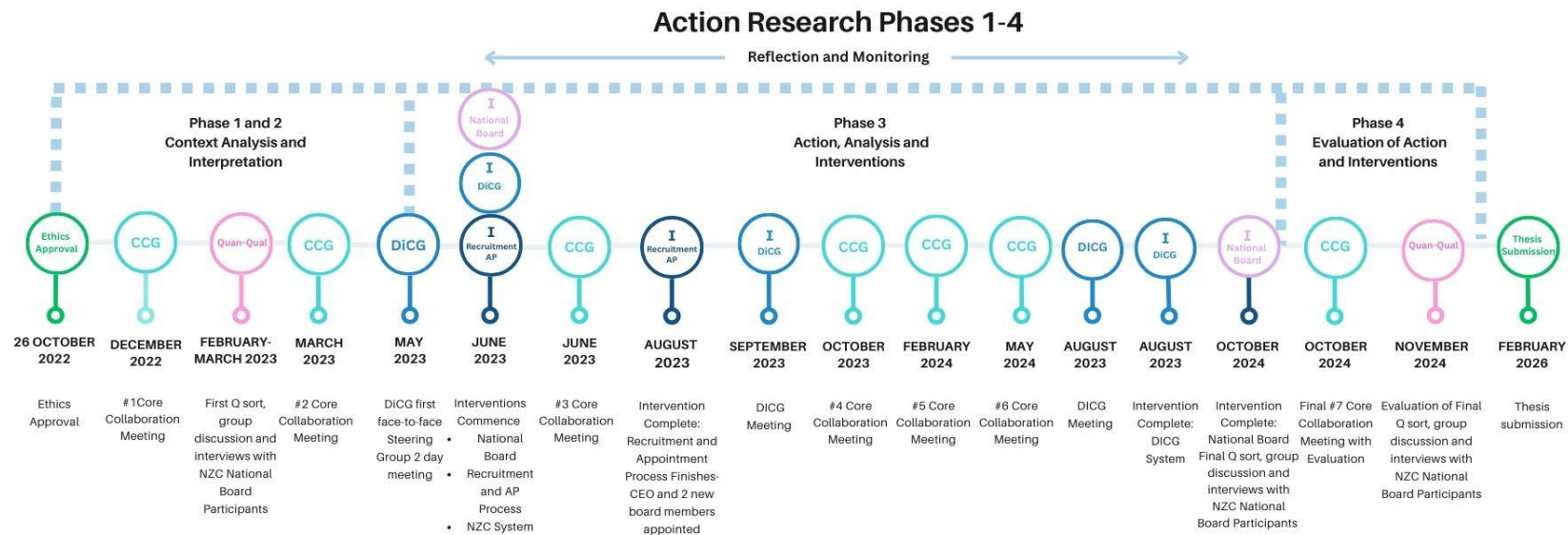
Through this process, overarching themes represent broader patterns of shared meaning, while themes reflect important dimensions within those patterns. Key themes were identified as themes of particular significance to the research question and are used descriptively throughout this thesis. They should not be interpreted as a separate analytical category. Subthemes, illustrative findings, and examples provide more specific insights into how these themes were expressed within the research context. Factors derived from the Q-sort analysis represent distinct participant viewpoints and should not be interpreted as overarching themes. This analytical structure was applied retrospectively to organise findings generated across multiple action research cycles and data sources into a coherent account of how understanding developed throughout the inquiry. The progression from preliminary findings to themes, meta-

inferences, and research outcomes is illustrated in the summary tables presented at the end of Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

3.6.4 Project Timeline

Action research requires a flexible plan, which Coghlan (2019) describes as “going with the story as it evolves” (p. 113). However, effective time management and the establishment of a timeline are critical considerations, as they influence the scope of the research, the quality of the data, and the overall success of the project (Crawford, 2022). To maintain flexibility while ensuring progress, broad timeframe parameters were set at the outset of the fieldwork phase and adjusted as the project unfolded. Figure 3.7 provides detailed information on the final timeline.

Figure 3.7
My Action Research Project Timeline



3.7 Rigour and Validity

Rigour in this action research study was strengthened by paying detailed attention to the quality of the data and accurately representing participants' experiences. Trustworthiness was addressed through methodological rigour and reflexivity, guided by Beck's (1993) criteria: credibility, auditability, and fittingness.

- Credibility

Credibility refers to how faithfully the findings represent participants' perspectives (Beck, 1993). To ensure credibility, triangulation was employed by integrating Q sort data with interview findings and involving the core collaboration group to discuss the developing themes. This approach broadened interpretations and strengthened confidence in the conclusions (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

- Auditability

Auditability was achieved through systematic documentation of methodological decisions and analytic processes (Beck, 1993). Detailed records were maintained to provide a transparent trail of how interpretations were developed. This included the use of reflexive memoing, as mentioned above, which captured decisions, developing concepts, and reflections throughout the study, ensuring that the analytic process could be traced and verified (Martin & Barnard, 2013).

- Fittingness

Fittingness relates to the extent to which findings can be applied to other contexts (Beck, 1993). The focus of this study on inclusion, EI, and CQ aligns with contemporary leadership challenges in sport governance. action research, underpinned by whakawhanaungatanga (relationship building processes) and Treaty of Waitangi principles (partnership, participation, and protection).

- Ensured culturally responsive engagement and participant empowerment, enhancing the relevance and applicability of findings.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity was central to this study and reflected in participant information sheets (Appendices A1 & A2) and throughout the four action research phases. Research ethics approval was gained from *AUT Ethics* Committee (AUTEC) on 26th October 2022, application number 22/278, and included several subsequent amendments (refer Appendices E1, E2 & E3).

Confidentiality was maintained by anonymising names in reports and allowing participants to review transcripts and summaries. In the case of Martin and Diana, complete anonymity was not possible because of their formal governance roles and their direct involvement in the action research cycles. Their positions meant that their contributions were identifiable within the organisational context. This limitation was explained during the consent process (see Appendix B2), and both participants agreed that their names and roles could be used. Ethics approval was granted on this basis and the consent forms document this agreement (Appendix A1 and A2). While full anonymity for all participants could not be guaranteed in a collaborative action research setting, participants were informed of this limitation and consented accordingly. Privacy, tino rangatiratanga (self-determination), and the minimisation of social risk were prioritised, with opportunities for participants to withdraw or amend their contributions before publication.

Particular attention was given to the principles of Treaty of Waitangi in planning consultation and research processes. Acknowledging the Treaty of Waitangi was essential for creating culturally safe spaces and supporting Māori participation and self-determination. The Health Research Council Guidelines for Researchers on Health Research Involving Māori (HRC, 2010) informed the approach, ensuring that consultation and engagement processes were respectful, inclusive, and aligned with Māori values and aspirations.

3.9 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter began by outlining the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the study. A pragmatic ontology and social constructionist epistemology were adopted to support a worldview where knowledge is co-constructed and contextually grounded. The research design was framed by a constructivist–interpretive paradigm for the qualitative strand and a post-positivist lens for the quantitative strand, enabling methodological pluralism through paradigm crossing.

The chapter then justified the use of an action research methodology integrated with mixed methods to address the research question: how inclusive leadership practices can be developed in sport boards through EI and CQ. This approach was particularly relevant to the NZC National Board context, where inclusion and diversity have become strategic priorities. The action research model provided a collaborative and reflexive process for engaging board members in examining

assumptions, identifying barriers, and co-creating solutions to strengthen inclusive governance. Following this, the chapter detailed the data generation methods, including Q sort activities, semi-structured interviews, core collaboration meetings, and reflexive practices such as memoing. The approach to data analysis was explained, highlighting Q sort factor analysis and Braun and Clarke's (2022) Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

Finally, strategies for ensuring rigour and validity were discussed, drawing on Beck's (1993) criteria of credibility, auditability, and fittingness, alongside ethical considerations and the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. These measures ensured that findings were trustworthy and culturally responsive, enhancing their relevance for inclusive leadership development in NZC and the wider sport governance sector. The next chapter provides a detailed overview of Phases 1 and 2, which encompass the context analysis and interpretation for the study, and identifies the issues that informed the research interventions.

Chapter 4 Phase 1 and 2 Context Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Introduction

New Zealand Cricket (NZC) is widely regarded as a leading national sporting organisation in New Zealand in terms of inclusive leadership within governance processes. This reputation was reinforced in August 2023 when New Zealand Rugby (NZR) commissioned an independent review of its constitution, governance structures, and processes to examine rugby's central role in the national sporting landscape and to address their relatively poor diversity and inclusion culture (NZR, 2023). A key component of this review involved benchmarking against exemplary governance models. During the consultation phase, the reviewers identified NZC as “arguably the most directly relevant example of how a sport blossomed after the removal of barriers to governance effectiveness like those affecting NZR” (NZR, 2023, p. 89).

In relation to inclusion, Lovett et al. (2020) highlight NZC's sustained journey toward inclusive leadership, noting the organisation's significant cultural realignment over time. This chapter explores the critical events and experiences that shaped NZC's inclusive governance culture. It begins by tracing the origins of this ‘inclusion story,’ starting with the implementation of the 1995 Hood Report, which catalysed a leadership shift, new strategic priorities, and key initiatives that collectively advanced inclusion within NZC.

As Coghlan (2019) asserts, “action research begins with what we do know and seeks to find out what we do not know” (p. 167). Accordingly, this chapter presents the insights generated through Phases 1 and 2 of the research process, as outlined in Chapter 3. It explores the issues and opportunities that informed the design of subsequent interventions in Phase 3. The narrative aligns with the initial two phases of the action research process (McTaggart, 1998) and incorporates reflective pauses—intentional moments where I offer personal insights and interpretations relevant to the unfolding story. This approach integrates the researcher's perspective into the evolving narrative, enabling deeper sense-making and meaning construction (Coghlan, 2019). The chapter begins by examining Phase 1, which served as a context analysis stage to develop a deep understanding of the organisational context. This involved secondary data collection through academic literature and

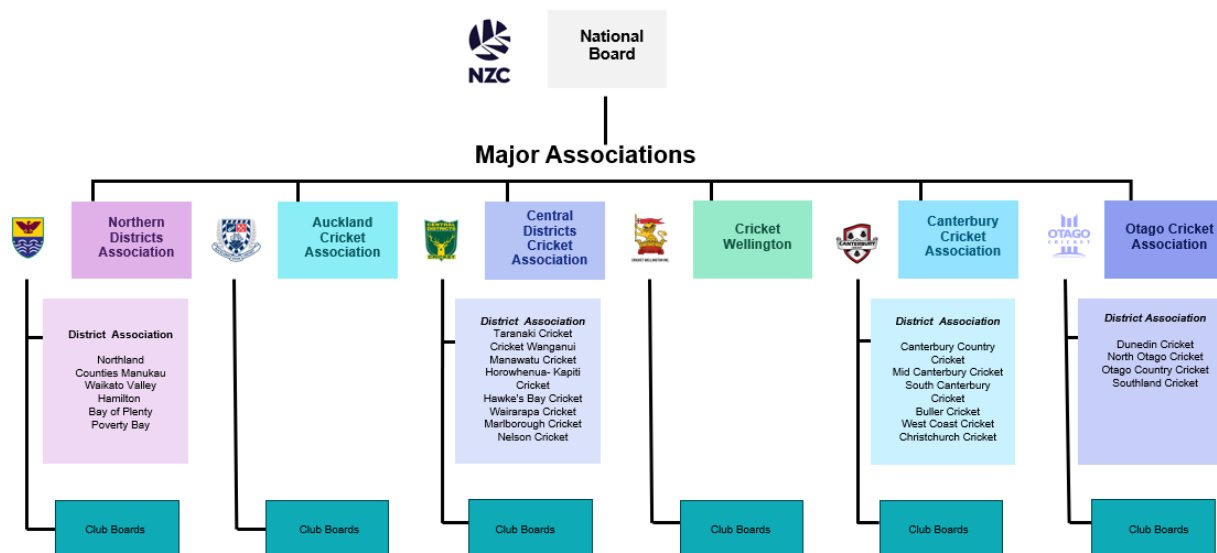
document reviews, alongside data generation through building quality relationships and engaging in early collaborative activities. This phase was pivotal in creating the story that shaped NZC's inclusive governance culture to date and in fostering authentic relationships. Guided by practices such as *whakawhanaungatanga* (relationship building), Phase 1 created a safe environment for participants to share their perspectives. Building on this foundation, Phase 2 represented a critical point of interface where qualitative and quantitative strands converged. The sequential Quan–Qual design, incorporating the Q sort activity alongside interviews and group discussions, facilitated exploration of board members' perceptions of inclusion and diversity in sport governance and connected these insights to the lenses of emotional intelligence (EI) and cultural intelligence (CQ). Together, these phases provided the groundwork for integrated insights and informed the direction of subsequent analysis. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of Phases 1 and 2, summarising key outcomes and insights that shaped the action phase. A final summary table (Table 4.8) presents the identified and developing issues.

4.2 Phase 1: Context Analysis

4.2.1 The NZC Inclusion Story to Date

New Zealand Cricket, formerly known as the New Zealand Cricket Council (established in 1894), is responsible for overseeing and promoting cricket across all levels of the game. Its headquarters are split between Auckland and Christchurch, with the Chief Executive Officer based in the Auckland office. NZC's governance structure comprises six Major Associations (MA): Auckland, Northern Districts, Central Districts, Wellington, Canterbury, and Otago, alongside 24 District Associations (DAs) (see Figure 4.1). In addition to its oversight of community participation and grassroots development, NZC manages and markets the international schedules for New Zealand's men's team (the Black Caps) and women's team (the White Ferns). The organisation also collaborates regularly with the International Cricket Council (ICC) and other key international stakeholders. As an incorporated society, NZC has built a strong platform for growth through broadcast and commercial partnerships, supported by ongoing revenue opportunities. At the time of this project, NZC reported a net surplus of \$10.7 million for the financial year ending 31 July 2023, marking a record year for the organisation (NZC, 2023a). Year on year, its revenue is close to \$100 million and it is recognised among New Zealand's largest, most prominent national sport organisations.

Figure 4.1
New Zealand Cricket Governing Structure



New Zealand Cricket is governed by a board whose composition and appointment processes are outlined in its constitution. According to Rule 8.1, “The Board shall consist of up to nine (9) Directors elected pursuant to Rule 8.2 or appointed pursuant to Rule 8.5... Directors shall be elected by the Members at an Annual General Meeting from candidates recommended by an Appointments Panel in accordance with Rule 8.4” (NZC, 2023b, p. 16). The Appointments Panel, as specified in Schedule 2 (Rule 8.4), comprises one current board member who is not seeking re-election or another nominee of the board, three MA chairpersons, and one representative nominated by Sport New Zealand (Sport NZ) (NZC, 2023b). Directors retire by rotation, with at least two stepping down each year, and they remain eligible for nomination and re-election. The chairperson is elected annually by the board immediately following the Annual General Meeting and serves until the first board meeting after the next AGM, unless replaced earlier by board decision (NZC, 2023b).

Midway through this project, NZC experienced significant leadership changes. David White stepped down as Chief Executive Officer after 11 years, and Scott Weenink assumed the role in August 2023. Additionally, Diana Puketapu-Lyndon succeeded Martin Snedden as chairperson, becoming the first woman and first Māori to hold this position in NZC’s history. The board members who participated in this research, including core collaboration group contributors, represented diverse professional backgrounds such as business management, law, finance, sport leadership, and international

sporting achievement. Their geographical locations spanned both the North and South Islands of New Zealand.

Although the NZC board had a strong and widely recognised commitment to inclusivity at the time this PhD project commenced, this was not always the case. Achieving this position required several pivotal initiatives. Among these, the Hood Report was a critical catalyst, shaping strategic priorities and policies that laid the foundation for NZC's inclusive governance approach.

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

How did the NZC board reach this level of inclusive leadership? It appears to be leading the way among New Zealand sport organisations, particularly with recent initiatives such as implementing equal pay for male and female semi-professional and professional cricketers. The board itself reflects strong diversity and fosters an environment where members feel safe and empowered to contribute their voice.

How does a board achieve this position? Over the years, several key factors appear to have contributed to this shift in perspective. These include initiatives such as Women in Cricket Governance (WiCG), Diversity and Inclusion in Cricket Governance (DICG), the One Cricket strategy, and evolving visions and definitions of leadership and governance.

Why is this important?

When I presented my confirmation of candidature (research proposal) to reviewers and observers, one question stood out: *"Why NZC? They are already known to be one of the most inclusive boards in the New Zealand sport sector."* For a moment, I paused, and the only response that came to mind was, *"Why not?"* I realised I had an opportunity to work with an organisation that is widely regarded as being at the forefront of inclusive leadership. My curiosity was not about whether NZC was inclusive, but rather how it reached this point. This project became an exploration of the social processes and interactions that shaped the NZC board's inclusive environment, as well as the next steps to deepen and sustain inclusion. In essence, the research asks: What have we learned from NZC's journey, and where can this take us? Furthermore, what lessons can other boards draw from NZC's experience?

Potential Action

- It is important that I unpack the events that took place over the past few decades to see common patterns within the story.
- Is there a particular person or process that enabled inclusive leadership to be created or embedded?

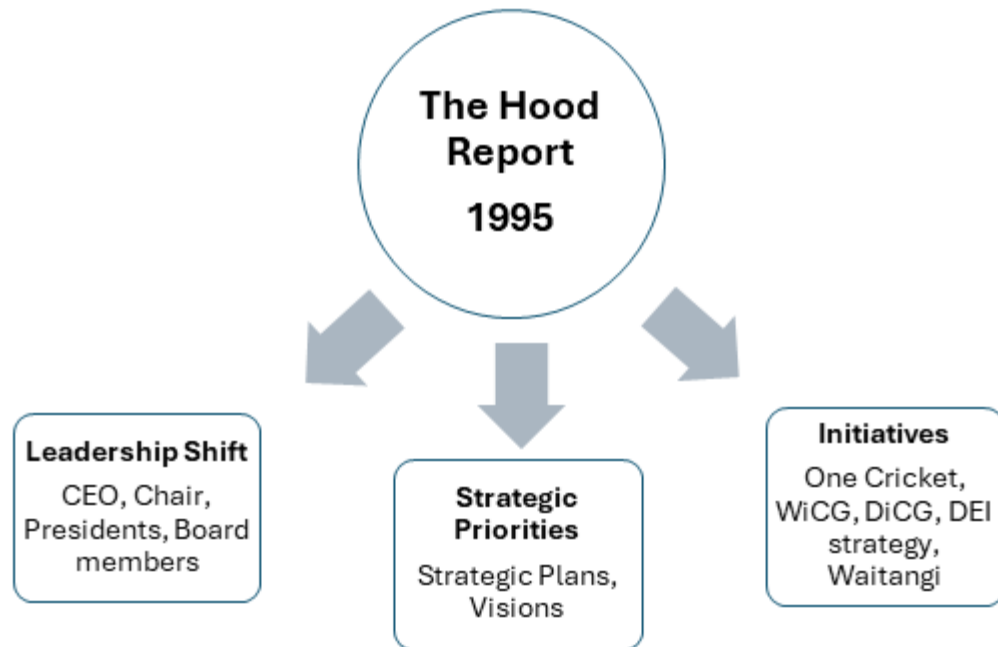
The Hood Report: A blueprint for the future

In the early 1990s, NZC faced significant credibility challenges, marked by highly publicised internal tensions between players and management, disappointing on field performances, and poor off field behaviour (NZC Review Committee, 1995). Compounding these issues, the small number of staff at NZC struggled with unclear role boundaries between the Chief Executive and the National Board chair, as well as a perceived inability to address the organisation's mounting problems effectively (NZC Review Committee, 1995). As a result, NZC entered its centenary season (1994 to 1995) amid leadership instability and management difficulties (Bradbury & Boyle, 2015). Criticism of its leadership, particularly its governance and board structure, intensified, creating strong demand for reform in the governance of the game (Bradbury & O'Boyle, 2015; NZC Review Committee, 1995).

In response, a workshop with key stakeholders was convened in 1995 to address these issues. The outcome authorised the board to implement transformative changes and appointed John Hood, then a senior executive at Fletcher Challenge Ltd, a multinational corporation, to lead an independent review committee (Askle, 2014). Following extensive consultation, the committee produced a pivotal report titled *A Path to Superior Performance*, widely known as the Hood Report (Askle, 2014; NZC Review Committee, 1995). Unbeknownst to the committee at the time, this report would fundamentally reshape NZC's leadership landscape and become a critical catalyst for the inclusive governance approach evident today. Figure 4.2 highlights three key factors identified through this project as central to driving that shift toward inclusive leadership.

Figure 4.2

The Hood Report Inclusive Leadership Influencing Factors



Note. Adapted from *A path to superior performance: The 'Hood Report' an independent report submitted to New Zealand Cricket*, by New Zealand Cricket Committee, August 1995, New Zealand Cricket. Copyright 1995 New Zealand Cricket. Reprinted with permission.

The significance of the Hood Report's impact is exemplified in Bradbury and O'Boyle's (2015) reflection:

NZC has been heralded as leading the nonprofit sporting world in governance practices and their now esteemed position is largely the result of the widespread consultation and adoption of the resulting report's recommendations (see NZC Review Committee, 1995) of an independent review committee headed by Sir John Hood (p. 352)

Snedden (2012) also explains the impact of John Hood and his review process:

John was a masterful strategist. He drove what became, and still is the most searching look at leadership in sport in New Zealand...It was a brave move by NZC, but as a result, the governance structure of NZC is the envy of other major sports in New Zealand as it is within the cricket world (p.29)

Upon completion of the consultation, the Hood Report recommended and framed four objectives for NZC to achieve (NZR, 2023, p.89):

- Well respected and credible governance and management of the game
- A strong and respected international competitor
- A strong domestic game; the leading New Zealand summer sport
- Strong and increasing levels of public and family interest and support.

The Hood Report and its recommendations had a profound impact on NZC's governance processes, leadership, and strategic direction. The report identified several governance concerns, including inappropriate governance structures and processes, an excessive number of board members and subcommittees, suboptimal board composition, unevenly distributed voting power, and a lack of clarity in management roles and responsibilities, which contributed to low staff morale and poor teamwork (Bradbury & O'Boyle, 2015; NZC Review Committee, 1995). The report argued that NZC required a sound and credible board that was truly independent of cricket's stakeholders in order to achieve its objectives (Snedden, 2012). NZC was not satisfied with a mediocre response and determined that a comprehensive restructure of leadership and processes, both internally and externally, was necessary.

A key recommendation from the report advocated for the implementation of an independent board structure with "the appropriate mix of business management, media and marketing, strategic, cricket playing and cricket administrative experience" who were not "representatives of particular provinces or other sectional interests" (Bradbury & O'Boyle, 2015, p. 4). This modernised independent process was intended to guide the organisation toward a more professional and future-focused approach. The NZC review stated, "it is clear to us that new governance structures are needed. In particular, it is no longer possible to run sports industries with the amateur and parochially influenced governance structures that may have served them well in the past" (NZC Review Committee, 1995, p. 3). Furthermore, the immediate transition from a representative board to an independent board created leadership that was free from potential biases.

A professionally skilled and managed board and administration is necessary to lead NZ Cricket into the next century. This body must have independence in its day-to-day activities. It must be able to pursue strategies that will best position Cricket relative to other sports in

ways that will maximise income and public interest, and must be able to allocate expenditures on facilities, player incomes, promotion/ development and provincial/grassroots structures in the most productive way possible. To do this, it must be free of parochial pressures in its decision-making and resource allocation, but also be mindful of the need to develop and enhance the game throughout NZ. (NZC Review Committee, 1995, p. 4)

Leadership Shift: Opera tenor and key players

The Hood Report also influenced the leadership for years to come. Table 4.1 outlines the CEO, president and chairperson that succeeded the Hood Report over the next three decades.

Table 4.1*New Zealand Cricket Leadership Roles (Chairperson, President and CEO) 1995-Present*

Year	Chairperson	President	CEO
1995-1999	Sir John Anderson	Ron Brierley	Chris Doig
2000	Sir John Anderson	David Hoskin	Chris Doig
2001	Sir John Anderson	David Hoskin	Chris Doig /Martin Snedden
2002	Sir John Anderson	David Hoskin	Martin Snedden
2003-2006	Sir John Anderson	John Reid	Martin Snedden
2007	Sir John Anderson	Don Neely	Martin Snedden / Justin Vaughan
2008	Sir John Anderson / Allan Isaac	Sir John Anderson	Justin Vaughan
2009	Allan Isaac	Don Neely / Denis Currie	Justin Vaughan
2010-2011	Chris Moller	Denis Currie	Justin Vaughan
2012	Chris Moller	Denis Currie / Stephen Boock	David White
2013	Chris Moller / Stuart Heal (Oct 2013)	Stephen Brock Boock	David White
2014-2015	Stuart Heal	Stephen Brock Boock	David White
2016	Greg Barclay	Stephen Brock Boock / Debbie Hockley	David White
2017-2019	Greg Barclay	Debbie Hockley	David White
2020	Martin Snedden	Debbie Hockley	David White
2021	Martin Snedden	Debbie Hockley	David White
2022	Martin Snedden	Debbie Hockley / Lesley Murdoch	David White
2023	Martin Snedden / Diana Puketapu-Lyndon	Lesley Murdoch	David White / Scott Weenink
2024	Diana Puketapu-Lyndon	Lesley Murdoch	Scott Weenink

Note. Data collected by author on the 13th of January 2024.

Directly after the review was released, NZC appointed Chris Doig as the new Chief Executive Officer, Sir John Anderson as chair, and a completely new board. Doig, a professional opera tenor, was considered a liberal and open-minded leader and a left field appointment given his background combined arts and business (Currie, 2011). Currie (2011) describes Doig's open minded manner: "His unique passion and enthusiasm for the role became legendary. His wonderful communication skills with all stakeholders were renowned. Through his own dynamic leadership, the highly regarded Cricket Academy and High Performance Centre was soon established at Lincoln University" (para. 2). Doig embraced the Hood Report recommendations and immediately focused on increasing staff numbers and revenue streams through enhanced sponsorship. By 1998, NZC had doubled its staff to 25 and increased revenue turnover from \$7 million to \$20 million (Astle, 2014). Doig quickly formed an excellent working relationship with the newly appointed chair, Sir John Anderson. Institute of Directors Vice President Alan Isaac reflects on their relationship in his tribute to Sir John Anderson: "When he was chair of New Zealand Cricket he saw the CEO as the face of the organisation, and he was happy to be in the background. He wasn't a person who led from the front, he led from the back" (IOD, 2018, para.6). Sir John Anderson served as NZC chair for 12 years as well as New Zealand's representative on the International Cricket Council Executive Board. In 2001, Doig stepped down as CEO and Martin Snedden was appointed.

As mentioned previously, Chris Doig and Sir John Anderson played a significant leadership role in implementing the Hood Report's recommendations. While subsequent leaders (see Table 4.1) uniquely contributed to the progress of the inclusive movement over the decades, there are a couple of current members whose leadership presence today appears to have made a particularly notable impact. Lesley Murdoch and Martin Snedden's leadership has influenced key events and experiences that have been pivotal in NZC's inclusive leadership journey.

Lesley Murdoch

Lesley Murdoch is the current NZC appointed President. She was a member of the Hood Committee established in 1995, served as an NZC Board member from 1996 to 1998, and was made a Life Member of NZC in 2019. In 1987, she was appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire for her services as an international representative in cricket and hockey, and in 2016 she was appointed Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to sport (NZC, 2016a). As a prominent journalist and commentator, Murdoch made history in 2016 as the first woman to receive the New Zealand Sports Journalism Association's Lifetime Award for Outstanding Contribution to Sports

(NZC, 2016a). Her relentless dedication to promoting awareness and advancing women's sport appears to have paved the way for gender equity within NZC, a commitment evident even in her early governance experiences (McConnell, 1995).

As the following excerpt illustrates, in 1995 Murdoch advocated for protecting the women's vote and introduced gender neutral terminology such as 'chairperson' in place of 'chairman' (McConnell, 1995, p. 64):

Murdoch was a member of the Hood Report review committee, who suggested protecting a separate women's vote for three years until integration of men's and women's cricket is complete.

In the revised constitution presented to the meeting this was treated as being up to 1997's annual meeting, but Murdoch argued, in vain, that it should be 1998. Speakers felt that going to 1997 matched the three seasons 1995-96, 1996-97, 1997-98 and the intent of the Hood Report. Given its stance on women's future voting role, the committee quickly agreed to call the elected leader of the new board a chairperson.

NZC president Sir Ron Brierley said he found the description "absolutely ghastly". "I will not recognise that title and will continue to refer to the person concerned as the chairman. It will be the forerunner of people being called batsperson and fieldsperson and the title will not be recognised by other countries," he said. However, the change passed without dissent.

Murdoch credits her mother for the influence she has had on her, explaining that she "came from a family of administrators" and acknowledging her mother, Gwitha Shankland, for doing "a lot more for her sports than she had" (Stuff, 2016, para 8). She noted that her mother had kept "women's cricket running for many years" (Stuff, 2016, para. 8). Murdoch's leadership actions and commitment to advancing inclusion within NZC, beginning with her involvement in the Hood Report, continuing as a board member, and now as President, appear to have had a significant impact on the inclusive leadership movement evident today.

Martin Snedden

Martin Snedden stepped down from the NZC Board in November 2024 after 24 years of leadership service. A former New Zealand cricketer with a background in law, Snedden has held various leadership and steering group roles within NZC (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Martin Snedden's New Zealand Cricket Governance/Leadership Roles

Year(s)	Role
1980 – 1990	NZC National Team Player
1990 – 1992	Board Director
1995	The Hood Report Committee Member
1999 – 2001	Board Director
2001 – 2007	CEO
2013 – 2014	Board Director and New Zealand Representative on ICC Board
2017 – 2020	Board Director and NZC's One Cricket Project Leader
2018 – 2023	Board Director and WiCG Steering Group Member
2020 – 2023	Chair and New Zealand Representative on ICC Board
2023 – 2024	Board Director and New Zealand Representative on ICC Board

Note. Adapted from <https://www.iod.org.nz/all-events/bay-of-plenty-branch-event/sport-sector-governance-challenges-in-2025-making-sure-we-dont-drop-the-ball#>. Copyright n.d. by Institute of Directors. <https://www.nzc.nz/news-items/archive/martin-snedden-elected-new-nzc-chair/> Copyright 2020 Boock, R. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/sport/cricket-snedden-its-time-to-focus-on-the-game/OR6POGM6N2J3UJBSLGMQ4MZVO4/> Copyright 2001 New Zealand Herald.

As an early contributor to the Hood Report and as a committee and board member, Snedden later assumed one of the most influential positions within cricket as Chief Executive of the national body. Snedden (2012) reflects on this moment in his book *A Stadium of Four Million*:

My opportunity to become CEO of NZC came directly from Chris Doig who in 1995, after the Hood Report, had become NZC's first true CEO. Having done a wonderful job of, first, breaking cricket's mold both in New Zealand and internationally, Chris had then started the rebuild job but, by, 2001, had come to the view that fresh blood was needed. I had rejoined the NZC board in 1999 and had seen, firsthand, what an effective job Chris had done. Once he announced that he was stepping down he then embarked on a process of stalking me until I agreed to put my name forward to replace him. He told me that it was an easy job and that I'd have enough time to play golf every Wednesday afternoon. At the end of the

NZC recruitment process in May 2001, I was appointed and, for the next six years, never once got to play golf in Christchurch. (p. 30)

During Snedden's tenure as NZC Chief Executive, the Black Caps achieved top five rankings, but his time in the role was also turbulent, marked by terrorist incidents, tour cancellations, and complex player contract negotiations (Longley, 2012). In 2007, Snedden stepped down as NZC Chief Executive to take on the role of Chief Executive for Rugby New Zealand Limited 2011 and further pursue his ambitions in sport management. After holding various roles in rugby, Duco Events (event management), and tourism, he returned to NZC in 2017 to support the One Cricket project committee, which also ran in conjunction with the WiCG initiative. In 2020, Snedden was appointed NZC Chair, and in 2023 he made the decision to stand down to allow Deputy Chair Diana Puketapu Lyndon to assume the role and to conclude his tenure as a board member and ICC representative.

While numerous leaders have played significant roles in achieving the milestones outlined in this project, Murdoch and Snedden have been actively engaged since the inception of the Hood Report initiative. As current President and board member respectively, both continue to play pivotal roles in supporting the inclusive movement within NZC.

Reflective Pause

Sparked curiosity

The ability to 'read the room' is a common phrase that was identified during conversations in this project when discussing leadership and group dynamics. This concept relates directly to one of the themes identified in our core collaboration meetings: inhibitors and awareness of the environment. This theme aligns with Goleman and Boyatzis (2017) EI dimension of social awareness (see Figure 4.3) Social awareness refers to the ability to recognise the emotions and states of others and respond appropriately (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). Could this be the spark that ignites the creation of an inclusive environment?

Listening to Martin Snedden publicly announce NZC's new Chief Executive and highlight Scott Weenink's high EI and his "ability to read the room" (Johannsen, 2023, para.9) prompted me to explore social awareness as a critical factor in fostering an inclusive climate within sport boards.

Weenink's appointment followed a process that explicitly prioritised EI and inclusive leadership as essential skills for the role.

Based on what I have researched so far, my hunch is that the answer lies in leadership's ability to recognise and act on the importance of relationships. In a special issue dedicated to the life and career of Professor Ken Parry, Jackson et al. (2019) note that Ken consistently believed "the responsibilities of leadership to connect business value with social impact are not presently the everyday concerns of those who lead. Too often the external goods (profits, salaries, bonuses, cars, privilege and entitlement) dominate the values of those who lead" (p. 357). Furthermore, focusing on the "ship" in leadership implies an emphasis on relationships, which is closely linked to EI through the dimensions of social awareness and relational management.

Figure 4.3

Goleman and Boyatzis (2017) Emotional Intelligence Model



Why is this important?

The majority of the words and phrases used to describe past NZC Chief Executives and chairs seem to align with two key relationship dimensions of EI: social awareness and relationship management.

Examples:

Chris Doig (1995-2001)

"His unique passion and enthusiasm for the role became legendary. His wonderful communication skills with all stakeholders were renowned" (Currie, 2011, para. 4).

"He had a generous nature and was a wonderful conversationalist. He met people easily and fitted in with any type of company," he said (Mathewson, 2011, para. 11).

Martin Snedden (CEO 2001-2007, Chair 2020-2023)

“He will bring to the table massive credibility, he can open a lot of doors and he’s also a good leader and manager of people” (NZInc., n.d., para.3).

“It shows the mana of the man,” she says. “The class that Martin brings, wanting to impart his knowledge to others” (McFadden, 2023, para. 33).

Ricki Swanell’s online interview with Martin, she asks the question “Do things change for a board in a crisis situation like this (referring to Covid lockdown)?” Snedden replies

“Relationships really come to the fore here and we are finding this all over sport in New Zealand at the moment is probably the quality of relationships is exponentially going in a really positive direction because people are communicating all the time” (Women in Sport Aotearoa, 2020, 2:35)

Justin Vaughan (CEO 2007-2012)

“As a leader he is inclusive and empathetic. Justin’s communication skills are highly regarded and his ability to translate complex concepts into readily understood language is one of his key attributes” (Blake Leader, 2007, para. 2)

David White (CEO 2012-2023)

“Under David, cricket in New Zealand has become far more inclusive, especially in regard to women and girls, our tangata whenua, and our Pasifika communities. He had a strong relationship with the NZCPA, culminating in the creation of a landmark joint Master Agreement for professional men's and women's players” (NZC, 2023c, para. 15)

Scott Weenik (CEO 2023-present)

Snedden also made a point of mentioning Weenink’s EI and “ability to read a room and adapt to those sorts of environments” (Johannsen, 2023, para. 9).

Sir John Anderson (Chair 1995-2008)

“His leadership style was inclusive, and he was able to motivate people and get the best out of them. When he was chair of New Zealand Cricket he saw the CEO as the face of the organisation,

and he was happy to be in the background. He wasn't a person who led from the front, he led from the back" (IOD, 2018, para. 7).

Alan Isaac (CNZM) (Chair 2008-2010)

His friends think of him quite differently. He is good with people, prefers the satisfaction of a job well done to the cheers of the crowd and is phenomenal with facts and numbers" (Millmow, 2012, para. 1) .

Chris Moller (Chair 2010-2013)

"And he was also, for the subsequent five years of RWC 2011 preparations, our behind the scenes 'go to guy' someone who would act as a vital sounding board and advocate (Snedden, 2012, p.18)

Diana Pukeputu (Chair 2023- present)

"She's good at relationships, a good listener who reflects on the views of others; she's caring and team orientated" (McFadden, 2023, para. 35)

Potential action

- EI practices (for National board members, or beyond?) that are focused on social awareness and relationship management - reading the room, weaving the conversation, limiting inhibitors in the room

Strategic Priorities: a contemporary shift

The Hood Report significantly shaped NZC's strategic priorities, with substantial evidence across the organisation's strategic plans indicating its instrumental role in influencing future visions and directions. Furthermore, the evolution of NZC's strategic plans purposes over the past two decades provides insight into how the concept of inclusion became embedded within the organisation.

At the outset of this PhD project, the 2022/2023 strategic plan's purpose was expressed as *Cricket: A game for all New Zealanders – A game for life, Kirikiti: He kēmu mō Aotearoa; He kēmu mataora*.

The stated values were:

- Respect – whakaute
- Tenacity – whakapau kaha

- Optimism – ngākau rorotu
- Inclusivity – mākohā
- Fun – pārekareka

Over the course of the project, the purpose evolved to adopt an even more inclusive perspective by omitting the reference to ‘New Zealanders’, emphasising instead *a game for all*. While the current strategic plan’s purpose and values reflect a strong commitment to inclusivity, NZC’s vision has undergone a significant change process influenced by leadership initiatives and strategic priorities. Table 4.3 outlines this journey.

Table 4.3

New Zealand Cricket Strategic Plan’s Visions 2003- Present

Strategic Plan Term	Vision
2003-2007	Pushing the Boundaries
2007-2011	Pushing Beyond Boundaries
2012-2015	More People Playing, More People Watching
2016-2020	A Game for All New Zealanders, A Game for Life
2023-present	New Zealand’s Favourite Game

Note. Data collected by author on the 10th of September 2024.

The past and current visions exemplify the evolution of inclusive approaches, and the language within NZC’s strategic plans demonstrates a shift toward a more contemporary inclusive leadership approach with a particular focus on systemic change beginning at the top. The 2012 to 2015 strategic plan emphasised the importance of leading by example by introducing governance as a strategic priority: “Good governance. We will transform NZC structures and processes to drive performance” (NZC, n.d., p. 20).

In 2021, NZC introduced what appeared to be a transformational plan for 2021 to 2024, reflecting on its journey to live up to its vision: A game for all New Zealanders, a game for life. The plan outlined key foundational projects that had accelerated transformational change to that point (NZC, 2020d). In 2022, during a Te Tiriti panel event at Auckland University of Technology, Martin Snedden, then

NZC Chair, highlighted the significance of this vision shift, stating: “A single moment in the life of our organisation is where we changed our vision and adopted a phrase ‘a game for all New Zealanders’” (Snedden, personal communication, 2022). The following section will discuss the transformational change initiatives that are relevant to this project.

Inclusive leadership initiatives: Small levers gaining momentum

Key foundational initiatives were introduced to accelerate NZC’s transformation as part of its inclusive leadership journey. These change projects aimed to shift mindsets and encourage systemic behavioural change, serving as early learnings to guide future progress (NZC, 2020d). Despite numerous challenges encountered during these initiatives, there is evidence that NZC leadership consistently viewed such challenges as opportunities to create sustainable systemic change (NZC, 2020d). This section outlines three key foundational projects that have contributed significantly to NZC’s inclusive leadership journey: WiCG, DICG, One Cricket and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategy.

Women in Cricket Governance (WiCG)

In 2015, NZC administration expressed serious concern that participation and engagement by women and girls in the game and within the organisation had reached an all-time low. This prompted NZC to commission Sarah Beaman to undertake a report aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between women and cricket within the system. Beaman drew on academic literature and employed multiple methods, including surveys, semi-structured interviews, and group discussions with a diverse range of stakeholders in the cricket context, such as fans, administrators, and individuals working for national and international cricket organisations.

While the collection of interviews and data provided a real-time snapshot of the current situation, Beaman emphasised that past events were instrumental in shaping present-day challenges.

I found it ironic that the 1992 amalgamation of the New Zealand Women’s Cricket Council with New Zealand Cricket was considered trailblazing: a model for the rest of the world. But the buzz quickly faded: women’s cricket, which had been run by women for women for 58 years, was soon run mostly by men; the partnership became a takeover. Female participation — as leaders, volunteers, and players — declined. People I interviewed spoke of a ‘lost generation’. They said cricket for females became relegated to an obligation and a

cost centre with no apparent return on investment and that females are not recognised for what they can contribute, (NZC, 2016b p.12).

In the early 1990s, a wide-scale government led sporting reform was initiated by the Hillary Commission for Sport and Recreation in New Zealand. This reform aimed to address growing demands for more coherent structures within national sport organisations (Romanos, 1995; Sam & Jackson, 2004). National sporting bodies were pressured to amalgamate or risk losing government funding (Sam & Jackson, 2004). In cricket, this translated into a growing movement to merge the women's game with the men's structure, reflecting broader efforts to streamline governance and secure funding.

At this time, the profile of women's cricket was in decline, largely due to limited access to international matches caused by a low financial base, inadequate resources for recruitment and coaching, and persistent perceptions that cricket was a 'man's game' and unsuitable for 'feminine women' (Hyman, 2018). The amalgamation of the New Zealand Women's Cricket Council (NZWCC), which had governed women's cricket for nearly 60 years, with New Zealand Cricket (NZC) was seen as an opportunity to secure greater resources and funding, raise the profile of the women's game, and ensure its long-term sustainability (Hyman, 2018). However, this proved not to be the case.

The 2016 Women and Cricket Report revealed that women held only 6% of governance roles compared to 38% in 1993 (NZC, 2016b). Furthermore, only 10% of players were female, and 90% of those players were under the age of 12. The report painted a grim picture of female representation within the system and highlighted decades of neglect and lack of investment in the women's game. Stuart Heal, NZC Chair at the time, described this disregard as "a comprehensive appraisal of the relationship and a frank assessment of our shortcomings. A confronting reality" (NZC, 2016b). The report made 17 recommendations, with governance related recommendations presented in Table 4.4 (see Appendix F for the full list).

Table 4.4*2016 Women and Cricket Report Governance Recommendations*

Area	Recommendations
Governance and Leadership	A. Significantly and quickly increase the proportion of females in cricket governance.
	B. Ensure all national and regional cricket associations have leadership role(s) accountable for driving improved cricket outcomes for females.
	C. Positively influence the media awareness and portrayal of females' success and legacy in cricket.
	D. Gradually increase female presence in coaching and umpiring positions.
	E. Target the engagement or re-engagement of females who know and love cricket in ways that fit their life stage and availability.

Note. Data collected by author on the 13th of January 2024.

The governance recommendations highlighted aspects that had been lost since the amalgamation in 1993. The proposal was clear: institutional change was necessary, and it needed to begin with leadership and increasing the representation of women in governance.

New Zealand Cricket, led at that time by Chief Executive David White, responded quickly to the detailed report and its recommendations. The national board unanimously accepted all governance recommendations and introduced a series of initiatives designed to support and ensure the future stability of women in cricket (NZC, 2020). These initiatives marked the creation of the “Women and Girls in Cricket” strategic framework, guided by NZC’s vision of *“A game for all New Zealanders, a game for life.”*

Since women in governance was a priority within this framework, the WiCG group was established. The WiCG steering group, chaired by national board director Liz Dawson and comprising several national, MA, and DA directors, began laying the foundation for governance change. Its priority was to design a WiCG project that would identify and attract female governance talent, supported by educational resources and tools to prepare women for future governance roles and create sustainable action (NZC, 2020). The WiCG project consisted of three phases:

- Phase 1 (2017–2018): Focused on increasing the number of female directors and improving governance understanding and quality across all directors.
 - One Cricket initiative established after Phase 1 to run parallel with WiCG to encompass a wider range of diverse groups and aspects of the game, including women and youth
- Phase 2 (2019–2020): Concentrated on enhancing overall governance quality by decentralising project control from NZC to MAs, enabling them to plan and lead.
- Phase 3 (from March 2022 onwards): Broadened the focus to diversity and inclusion while continuing to raise the standard of governance practice.

Phase 1

The first initiative of Phase 1 (April 2017 to December 2018) was to establish a steering group to drive and implement the Phase 1 agendas. The steering group included Sarah Beaman, author of the *Women and Cricket, Cricket and Women* report, along with several NZC, MA, and DA directors. A critical driver in Phase 1 was ensuring that all current board members completed the Governance 101 programme. P5 articulated the aim of the WiCG priority in her statement:

The aim of this project is to increase the number of females in cricket governance roles throughout Major Associations and their constituent groups. This will require a transformation across cricket's governance model and culture to support and enable diversity. It is likely to require constitutional and operational change, as well as transformation of people and culture. The project will address both the supply side (i.e., capable females that are board ready) and demand side (organisations with the understanding, capability and processes to embrace diversity on boards and committees).

The outcomes of Phase 1 were detailed in the WiCG project report *Capturing the Story to Date* (2020), which included:

- By the end of 2018, the number of female directors within the NZC network had increased from 11 to 35.
- Resources such as the *Aspiring Director's Toolkit* and *Internship Building Toolkit* were created and disseminated across associations and directors.

- NZC established a database of women interested in cricket governance for MAs and DAs to access when seeking female board or committee applicants.
- A communications plan was implemented with key messaging and actions to support the success of the Women and Governance project.
- Knowledge-building and networking opportunities for female directors were introduced, including the first female induction day held in April 2017.
- Stakeholder awareness and support for NZC's strategic direction increased steadily. Initial NZC and MA partnership investment agreements were maintained, and a quota requiring a minimum of two female directors for MA and member boards was introduced.

At the conclusion of Phase 1, the WiCG initiative maintained its focus on women in governance during Phase 2 and later evolved into the DICG project. Meanwhile, the broader One Cricket strategy, which will be discussed later in this chapter, was launched after Phase 1 under Martin Snedden's leadership to encompass a wider range of diverse groups and aspects of the game, including women and youth.

Phase 2

Phase 2 of the WiCG project built on the momentum created by Phase 1 initiatives. Two new directives were introduced (NZC, 2020):

Quotas

- Female representation on all NZC, MA and DA boards was to be 40% by Dec 2021 (influenced by the strategic priorities formed through collaboration between SportNZ and the government creating a 2018 Government strategy for Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation and Sport New Zealand's requiring quota of 40% self-identified females and 40% self-identified males on sport boards by December 2021)

Creating a sustainable environment

- Improve the overall quality of governance within NZC, MA and DA Boards, by creating and developing governance environments which "welcome, embrace and enable female directors to enjoy their involvement and to contribute to the best of their abilities, thereby improving female director recruitment and retention opportunities" (NZC, 2020, p.3)

By the end of 2019, the quota was achieved with 67 female directors, including two MA chairs. By the end of 2021, NZC and MA boards had exceeded the 40% female representation target, while most DA boards were close to the quota with 35% female representation. At a time when other sport boards were struggling to meet the Government and Sport NZ mandate due by the end of 2021, NZC was proud to demonstrate that its targets had been achieved ahead of schedule.

Arguably, tokenism was less of an issue given NZC's proactive approach in previous years. Furthermore, NZC's focus on diversity was expanding beyond gender to include other minority groups, and interest in inclusion was beginning to take shape. Leadership was starting to recognise the clear distinction between diversity and inclusion. This is evident in Beaman's summary of Phase 2 (NZC, 2021):

Those efforts have broadened the networks in cricket, changed conversations, and shifted leadership thinking and priorities. When people talk about diversity and inclusion, diversity is described as 'being invited to the party', and inclusion is 'being asked to dance'. Are all the women 'invited' to these Board tables being 'asked to dance'? Potentially not in all cases. But with more women at the party at some stage men will naturally move on from just dancing with each other (p.5).

Reflective Pause

Sparked curiosity

New Zealand Cricket's decision to introduce a quota requiring the inclusion of two female directors for every NZC, MA, and DA board did not come without resistance (NZC, 2021). In NZC's journey, it is important to note the distinction between gender targets and gender quotas, as the shift from initiating a gender target to enforcing a gender quota was instrumental in advancing inclusion. Adriaanse (2017) explains this difference:

Quotas are not negotiable and often need to be achieved within a specified timeframe. Non-compliance results in sanctions or penalties for the organisation. Gender targets, on the other hand, are more voluntary in nature, reflecting aspirational goals that the organisation hopes to achieve. They cannot be legally enforced and usually do not carry sanctions if not achieved (p. 9).

While resistance existed, there were also strong champions for change within NZC's leadership. Martin Snedden was one of those champions, as reflected in his remarks during an AUT Diversity and Inclusion workshop in June 2023: *"We were getting small movements in the women in leadership space, so we had to take a sledgehammer to it and bring in the quotas."* (Snedden, personal communication, June 2023).

Furthermore, the gender target is reflected in Beaman's (NZC, 2021) statement that "with more women at the party at some stage men will naturally move on from just dancing with each other" (p. 5). This dancing metaphor suggests that increasing the presence of women through gender targets within sport governance environments may create greater opportunities for interaction across difference. However, it also raises an important question regarding the relationship between diversity and inclusion, and indeed the central research question of this project. Will increasing representation create the conditions for inclusion, or does representation alone not necessarily guarantee that individuals will experience belongingness and uniqueness? Beaman's metaphor highlights why NZC initially focused on increasing female representation on boards through gender targets, recognising diversity as an important starting point in the broader pursuit of inclusion.

Why is this important?

For evolutionary change to take root, two elements are critical: champions of change and collective leadership (Parker, 2019). Champions of change provide the initial momentum for transformation, while collective leadership ensures these changes are embedded and sustained through shared responsibility and inclusive decision-making. Parker's (2019) study on NZC underscores that leadership, particularly the role of champions for change, was pivotal during this phase of transformation. Certain positions, such as the CEO and influential board members, played a crucial role in driving and supporting positive change.

One prominent champion for change was Liz Dawson, chair of the WiCG Steering Group and, at the time, the only female member on the NZC Board (NZC, 2020). Dawson was instrumental in advancing gender balance within NZC, largely due to her direct approach and commitment to holding the system accountable (SportNZ, n.d.). Nicole Dunn, current NZC Head of Projects, reflects this in her comment: "The biggest advice I took from Liz is don't be afraid to put a target down and

hold people accountable. Stop being fluffy about it” (Sport NZ, n.d., para. 8). Dawson’s advocacy was formally recognised when she was named Governance NZ’s Gender Advocacy Champion at the Women-in-Governance Awards in Auckland in 2018.

Importantly, Dawson’s efforts were supported by key male board members, notably Sir Richard Hadlee, described as “a staunch advocate of progressing the women’s game” (NZC, 2017, para. 11), and Geoff Allott, who also served on the WiCG Steering Group. This collaboration illustrates that champions of change, when combined with collective and inclusive leadership, create an environment where diverse voices are heard and meaningful, sustainable change can occur (Ferkins et al., 2018a; Randel, 2025; Shore & Chung, 2021).

Potential Action

The evolving definition of inclusive leadership within this project, ‘Leadership practices that are focused on facilitating group members feeling part of the group (belongingness) and retaining their sense of individuality (uniqueness) while contributing to group processes and outcomes’ captures the essence of champions of change, inclusive leadership, and collective leadership environments.

Moving forward, I need to:

- Unpack further the inclusive, EI and CQ dimensions of the champions of change within this project.
- Explore how these champions function collectively to embed and sustain inclusive practices.

Phase 3

The success and evolutionary change achieved in Phase 2 regarding women in governance prompted a critical reflection on what should come next for WiCG. Diversity and inclusion had become a significant trend within the sporting sector, which led NZC to shift its emphasis from diversity to inclusion while continuing to support gender and ethnicity initiatives. This shift is reflected in the Women in Cricket Report 2021. “Phase 3 (from April 2022) will place a wider focus, beyond gender, on diversity and inclusion” (p. 32). Therefore, the title “Women in Cricket Governance” was changed to “Diversity and Inclusion in Cricket Governance,” (DICG) with a

renewed purpose: to ensure the future success of cricket in New Zealand through high-quality governance that represents modern society, its needs, and its voices.

Diversity and Inclusion in Cricket Governance (DICG)

Phase 3 introduced a new steering group consisting of three National Board members (including the chair), one representative from each MA board, two independent members, and one NZC staff member. The initial meeting of the newly formed DICG group produced a draft plan to guide the new purpose, which focused on inclusion and engaging in a wide range of communities within modern society, such as LGBTQIA+ and ethnic groups. NZC recognised the need to shift emphasis from diversity, while maintaining previous efforts, to inclusion in order to ensure that the evolutionary change process remained sustainable (NZC, 2021). The DICG project was considered a key driver of this shift and an essential mechanism for collaborating with the organisation rather than imposing change on the system.

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

Importantly, the efforts to address the underrepresentation of women and girls in the game have been based on recognising an opportunity, rather than simply fixing a problem. There is no perceived destination in this process; only a commitment to continue to improve, develop, and grow (NZC, 2021, p.3).

This statement, co-authored by Snedden and White in the Women and Girls Report 2021, clearly illustrates the leadership application of a double loop learning approach (

Figure 4.4) to organisational development (OD).

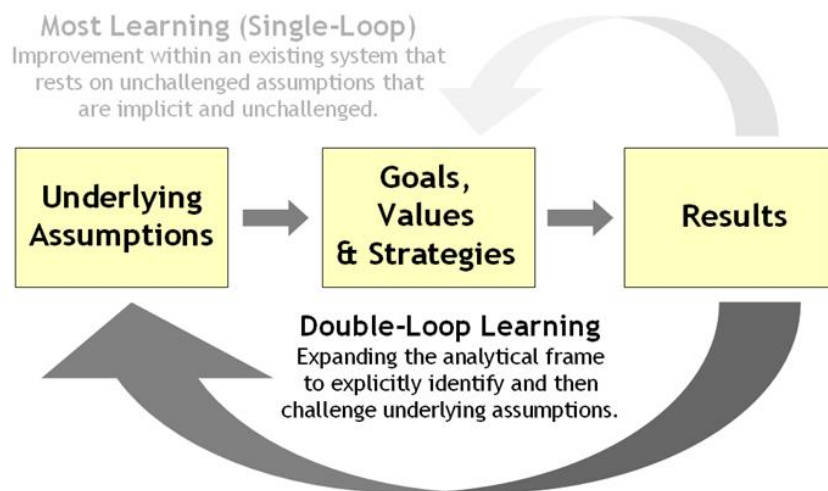
As discussed in Chapter 2, genuine organisational learning requires more than surface-level solutions. A double-loop learning perspective moves beyond quick fixes by examining the underlying assumptions and root causes of a problem. This approach involves critically reflecting

on why an issue exists before implementing meaningful change (Argyris, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1997). In contrast, single-loop learning focuses on correcting the immediate problem, such as underrepresentation, without questioning the reasons for its persistence or the assumptions that informed previous actions. Argyris and Schön (1978) caution that such an approach often leads to recurring challenges that become increasingly entrenched and potentially harmful when they resurface.

Reflecting on this, I see how NZC's framing of underrepresentation as an opportunity rather than a problem signals a deeper commitment to learning and transformation. It aligns strongly with inclusive leadership principles, where progress is viewed as an ongoing journey rather than a fixed destination.

Figure 4.4

Argyris and Schön (1978) Double Loop Learning Model



Note. Adapted from *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective* by C. Argyris & D. A. Schön, 1978, Addison-Wesley. Copyright 1997 by Addison-Wesley.

It may be valuable to unpack the NZC National Board's reflection processes and examine practices that support collective reflection, such as self-assessment and structured review. From my perspective, this is significant because the leadership team, particularly the chair and CEO,

already demonstrate a mindset that embraces deeper interpretation rather than surface-level problem solving. This suggests the board is well positioned to engage in reflective practices that go beyond simply identifying issues, instead exploring underlying assumptions and fostering meaningful organisational learning.

This approach resonates with Shore et al.'s (2011) conceptualisation of inclusion as the simultaneous experience of belongingness and uniqueness within a group. By encouraging reflective processes, the board can create an environment where diverse perspectives are valued and integrated into decision-making. Similarly, Randel et al. (2018) emphasise that inclusive leadership involves actively leveraging these differences to enhance group functioning. In this sense, reflective practice is not just a governance process or tool, it is a key practice for embedding inclusive leadership principles into the foundation of organisational culture.

Potential action

- Further unpack the leadership reflection practices
- Use EI and CQ dimensions to unpack problems via double loop learning.

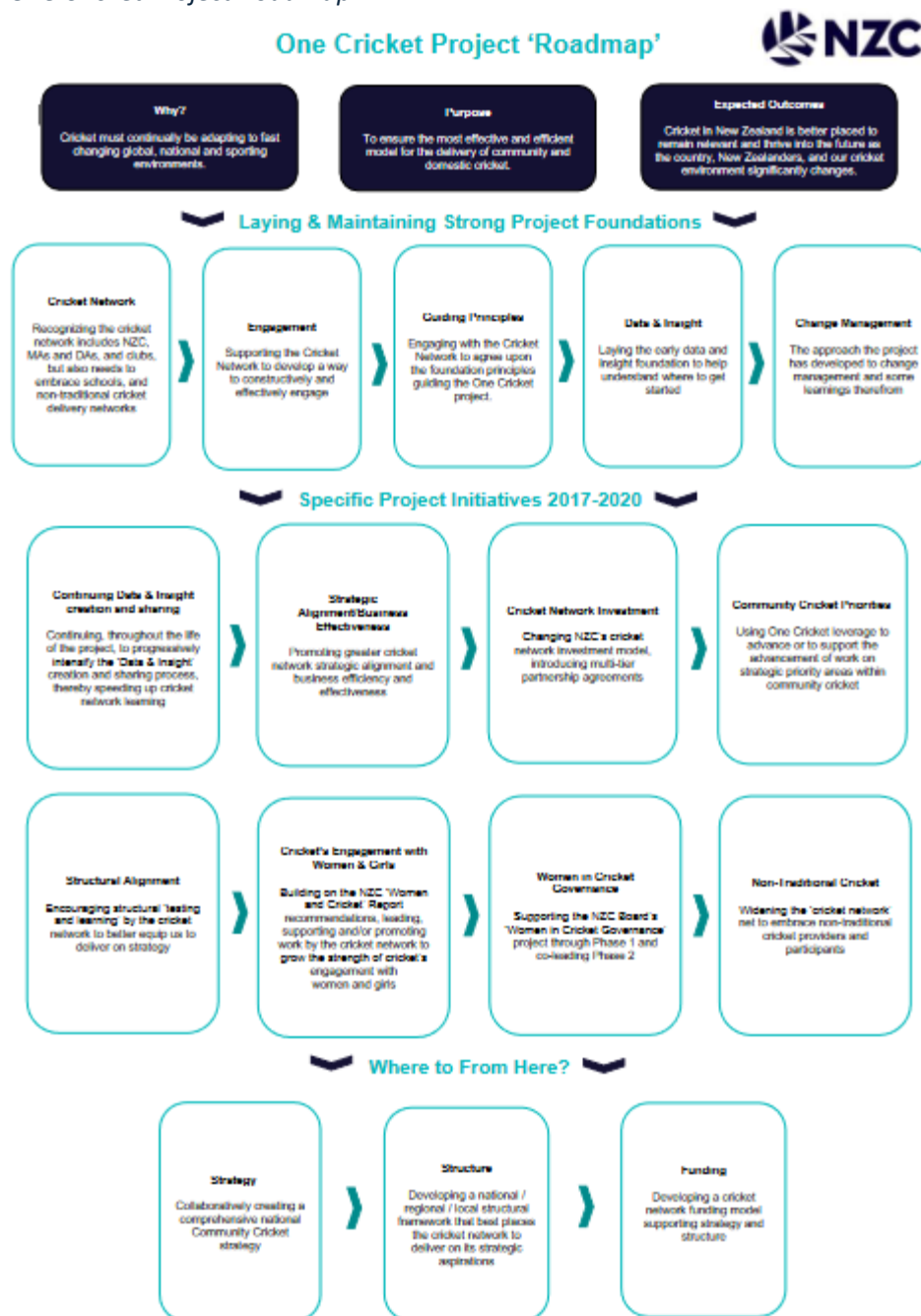
One Cricket

The One Cricket project was implemented in 2017 in response to a recommendation in the 2016 Women in Cricket Report for NZC to “establish an investment model across cricket that drives accountability and a focus on meeting whole of cricket customers’ needs” (NZC, 2016b, p. 31). In addition, within a rapidly changing global landscape, NZC recognised the need to adapt and reshape to meet the demands of the current and future environment. Its response was to pursue a purpose of “ensuring the most effective and efficient model for the delivery of community and domestic cricket” (NZC, 2020c, p.2). The expected outcome of the project was to “remain relevant and thrive into the future as New Zealand and New Zealanders, as our cricket environment, rapidly and significantly changes” (NZC, 2020c, p.2).

Martin Snedden, a board director at the time, was appointed to lead and support the project in collaboration with other significant leaders across the cricket network. He stepped down from the

project upon becoming NZC chair in 2020. The One Cricket project deliberately shifted the focus from performance based outcomes to participant centred priorities, aligning with the vision 'A game for all New Zealanders, A game for life'. The One Cricket Roadmap (Figure 4.5) outlines the key foundations and initiatives of the project.

Figure 4.5
One Cricket Project Roadmap



Note. One Cricket roadmap outlines the key foundations and initiative of the project. Adapted from *One Cricket: The Story to Date* (NZC, 2020c).

By implementing One Cricket, NZC initiated a purposeful transformation in its organisational outcomes. The traditional focus on high performance shifted to encompass a broader spectrum of

diverse groups and aspects of the game, including women and youth. Leadership awareness within MAs and DAs became a key priority, aiming to create an approach that balanced “leadership from the front” with “support from the back” (NZC, 2020c, p.5). Relationships between stakeholders were also prioritised to ensure the cricket network developed pathways for constructive and effective communication across the system. Notably, this initiative signalled the importance of EI, as highlighted in the NZC (2020c): “Good progress has been made to date but this is an area which always will require high levels of EQ and vigilance to get it right” (p. 6). The One Cricket project leveraged leadership and inclusion awareness to advance and support strategic priority areas. A key focus was NZC’s engagement with women and girls, particularly through the Women in Cricket Governance initiative.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy: Beyond Boundaries

In June 2022, the NZC National Board and Senior Leadership Team visited Waitangi to deepen their understanding of Te Ao Māori and the historical issues that have negatively affected Māori communities. This cultural experience marked a significant moment in NZC’s journey toward inclusive leadership. Following the visit, the Māori Cricket Committee, *Te Whakamaanu*, was established, and the *Te Ara Putanga* strategy was developed (personal communication, May 15, 2023). The Diversity and Inclusion strategy at the time, encompassed and empowered initiatives such as *Te Ara Putanga*, reflected NZC’s commitment to strategic inclusive leadership and its values for 2023 and beyond. This approach signalled a deliberate move towards embedding cultural responsiveness within governance practices, ensuring that inclusion was not only a principle but a lived experience within the organisation. The impact of this cultural experience and its influence on inclusive leadership will be discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6.

Completing the Challenge

The final statement of the 1995 Hood Report declared: “The time for change is now: the challenge is to provide fully professional governance and management of the national and elite levels of cricket while supporting appropriate governance structures below that level” (New Zealand Cricket Review Committee, 1995, p. Summary 1). As discussed in this chapter, NZC has fulfilled and progressed beyond the governance recommendations outlined in the Hood Report. However, some strategic and governance challenges remain within the system.

In June 2021, NZC conducted a qualitative review of the WiCG project. As anticipated, the findings revealed a significant shift in mindset regarding women in governance. Yet, at the DA board level, diversity and inclusion still appeared to be more of a compliance exercise than a genuine commitment to governance change (NZC, 2021). The report emphasised the need for MAs to play a stronger role in advancing the D&I movement and supporting DAs to engage meaningfully in the process. Similarly, Bond's (2022) research on perceptions of inclusion in NZC governance highlighted a disconnect at the DA level in understanding and implementing what inclusion looks like in a board setting. Her study concluded that "although NZC has put clear inclusion policies in place, there is still a theme of hierarchical disconnect, and old habits regarding entrenched behaviours remaining" (p. 53).

While the first part of this chapter presented a comprehensive narrative outlining initiatives that have collectively shaped a more inclusive leadership approach within the board and the organisation, the second part of this chapter will explore the remaining challenges and opportunities that will guide actions implemented in Phase 3. This transition marks a critical point in NZC's governance journey, where the focus shifts from addressing gender representation to embedding broader diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies that sustain long-term cultural change.

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

For an organisation that demonstrates strong inclusion at the top, it is interesting to consider how governance layers beneath the National Board—such as DAs and club levels—are adopting inclusive leadership practices. My curiosity stems from Mor Borak et al.'s (2022) research on inclusive leadership and policy–practice decoupling. The authors suggest that "inclusive leaders succeed at minimizing policy–practice coupling as perceived by all group members, not just historically high-status members" (p. 1). They also conclude that a CEO with strong inclusive leadership practices will both espouse and enact inclusion policies within the organisation (Mor Borak et al., 2022). In other words, strong inclusive leadership models the alignment between what is said and what is done and leaders that "walk the talk."

As noted earlier, the NZC National Board has a credible reputation for being inclusive. However, Bond's (2022) research suggests this is not entirely evident at the DA level. Furthermore, as highlighted in Table 4.1, NZC's leadership roles (chairperson, president, and CEO) over the past three decades have been predominantly occupied by men, indicating that there is still considerable progress to be made towards gender equity. While the purpose of this action research project was to develop and strengthen inclusive leadership practices within sport boards, rather than critically evaluate NZC as an organisation, these observations highlight opportunities for further inquiry. Future research would benefit from adopting a more critical systems perspective to examine the extent to which inclusion policies, strategies, and governance practices are consistently enacted across all levels of the organisation.

Why is this important?

The espoused behaviours and role modelling described in Mor Borak et al.'s (2022) CEO research could be instrumental in shaping how chairs at MA, DA, and club levels demonstrate inclusive leadership. Where does this theme of hierarchical disconnect begin? (Bond, 2022). Where does 'walk the talk' stop? Is there strong alignment between the National Board and MA chairs, but less so between MAs and District Associations (DA)? What do these practices look like at each level?

Potential Action

- Review systemic change within the organisation.
- Examine how inclusion policies and initiatives are communicated at lower levels of leadership.
- Assess whether chairs of boards (MA, DA, club) are espousing inclusive leadership practices.
- Strengthen communication beyond the immediate circle and increase CQ practices.

4.2.2 Quality of Relationships

The potential for connectedness is always present in human beings, when fostered, it can promote reciprocal relations and commitments in groups and organisations that in turn, generate the collaboration required to achieve collective goals (Opina & Foldy, 2010, p. 292)

The compelling notion of action research is that human systems can only be understood and changed when the research actively involves and engages members of the system in the inquiry process itself (Coghlan & Shani, 2018; Schein, 2010). Quality relationships are fostered when the relational aspects of the research are enacted and sustained throughout the process. Contemporary OD emphasises the need to create spaces that enable conversations grounded in multiple perspectives, generating new narratives that inform action (Coghlan & Shani, 2018). However, establishing such spaces for dialogue requires an element of trust before authentic collaboration can occur.

A critical aspect of this action research process was allowing sufficient time and space to build relationships from the outset of Phase 1. Creating a safe environment where participants felt empowered to share their thoughts and voice their opinions was central to the project's inclusion purpose and aligned with the lenses of EI and CQ. To ensure relationships remained connected and engaged throughout the project, collaborative practices were initiated through a preparatory step that involved two processes: *whakawhanaungatanga* (relationship building) and the development of authentic collaboration.

Whakawhanaungatanga (relationship building)

Researchers are influenced by their environment, which in turn shapes their processes. I have lived in Te Tai Tokerau (Northland, New Zealand) for the past 26 years, where Māori culture represents approximately a quarter of the population (Foundation North, 2018). Although I am non-Māori, many day-to-day practices within Te Tai Tokerau are influenced by Māori traditions and embedded into everyday interactions. As discussed in Chapter 3, *whakawhanaungatanga*, was a practice that created space for developing positive and collaborative relationships with the participants of the study and supported the co-construction of meaning that are revisited throughout the process (Mead, 2003).

An example of this practice occurred during an industry event led by the researcher and her supervisor for students and sector representatives as part of a Sport Leadership master's course. The theme was 'Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Leadership', and Martin Snedden, then CEO of New Zealand Cricket (NZC), was invited as a panellist. Although the supervisor had an established relationship with Martin, this event provided my first opportunity to engage in dialogue, with

Martin, about inclusion and the importance of inclusive leadership in sport boards. Over coffee and food, the informal and safe environment enabled open discussion about ideas and possibilities for advancing inclusion. This practice of whakawhanaungatanga continued throughout the project through phone calls and one-on-one online meetings. Similarly, when Diana Puketapu succeeded Martin Snedden as NZC chair at the end of 2023, the space for whakawhanaungatanga was created during a climb up Paranui Maunga (Mount Aubrey). This setting provided an opportunity to co-construct aspirations and meaning for the project while reflecting on challenges and opportunities for inclusion within NZC. These conversations influenced future actions, addressed current issues, and unpacked past outcomes. Although not formally structured, the dialogue often centred on reflective questions such as “what, why, and how,” which are integral to action research methodology.

The dynamics of whakawhanaungatanga were critical in determining participation in the research and negotiating access to stakeholders (Edwards et al., 2005). Through connection and engagement with individuals in the context, relationships were formed and sustained by building trust and striving for equality of influence (Coghlan, 2019). This process was instrumental in establishing an open and transparent foundation for collaboration throughout the project.

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

Claiming to practice processes such as whakawhanaungatanga, which are not part of my own culture, has always been a complex and challenging thought process for me. As a non-Māori, the closest phrase I can relate to is ‘building relationships’. However, I feel this phrase does not capture the depth of connection that whakawhanaungatanga creates. I will never claim to fully understand the process, but I do feel aligned with its underpinning values of trust built through sharing experiences and co-constructing aspirations.

Perhaps this deliberation stems from how I have been socially constructed through my own journey of studying EI and the environment in which I live. Barrett (2019), as discussed earlier in the section on EI, is an active researcher in emotional concepts. She suggests that these concepts are inherited through language and shaped by our experiences with others. Barrett (2019) explains that “emotion concepts might function as a tool for cultural coordination helping individuals physiologically regulate one another. Interventions designed to teach emotion

language and concepts may therefore lead to shifts in emotional meaning-making, facilitating communication and acculturation” (p. 72).

Living in Northland, New Zealand, may also contribute to why I feel more connected to the process of whakawhanaungatanga. Northland is known as the birthplace of New Zealand, with a Māori population greater than in most other regions, and their language and traditions remain strong (Te Ara, n.d.). Māori practices such as karakia (traditional incantations and prayers), pōwhiri (welcoming ceremonies), and hongi (traditional greeting meaning “sharing of breath”) are common in many of my workplaces.

Why Is This Important?

Firstly, some of my collaborators identify as Māori. To ensure they feel safe within the relationship, it is important for me as a researcher to give particular consideration to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi when planning consultation and research processes (Hudson & Russell, 2009). Relationships between myself and participants need to be built on an understanding of their whakapapa (where they come from). Whakapapa ensures the development and maintenance of meaningful relationships and monitors how these relationships progress over time (Hudson & Russell, 2009) The relationship needs to be open and transparent, and the participants need to feel safe.

Secondly, I feel more comfortable with what whakawhanaungatanga represents than with the Western notion of ‘building relationships’. From a Western perspective, building relationships has often been treated as a task or a step to tick off. For example, when I previously taught Personal Training papers, it was common practice to dedicate the first five minutes with a new client to ‘building relationships’. From what I knew then and what I know now, building relationships is not restricted to time or a checklist; it is a moment when the connection feels authentic and meaningful. From a non-Māori lens, I can only assume that this feeling is more closely aligned with the process of whakawhanaungatanga than with the Western interpretation of relationship building.

Potential Action

It is important that I follow what feels authentic when connecting with new people throughout the project. In doing so, I aim to create a comfortable, genuine, and safe environment for collaboration.

Authentic Collaboration

As discussed previously, action research is an emerging inquiry process (Coghlan & Shani, 2018), which underscores the importance of the quality of relationships. Coghlan and Shani (2018) emphasise that:

The quality of relationships between members of the system and researchers is paramount and evolves during the action research process. Hence the relationships need to be designed for and managed through shared goals, collaborative action, trust building, developing a common language, shared reflection and so on. (p. 520)

The essence of a quality relationship in action research is mutual responsibility, which can be achieved through authentic collaboration (Piggot-Irvine & Biggs, 2020). Once whakawhanaungatanga was established, authentic collaboration followed between myself and the identified stakeholders. Authentic collaboration refers to a deep commitment and openness to engage in a relationship that prioritises respect for diverse perspectives and ultimately fosters trust (Piggot- Irvine, 2012; Piggot & Biggs, 2020). Cardno (1998) outlined a range of collaborative categories explored within the action research context, as shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5
Categories of Collaboration

One	Information	Extensively informing people of what is happening and accepting feedback
Two	Consultation	Engaging with feedback, response or advice formally or informally from others
Three	Discussion	Re-presenting information and creating forums for discussion, questioning and debate so there are multiple views to increase understanding
Four	Involvement	Inviting people to be involved in planning, decision-making and evaluating

Five	Participation	Fully engaging others in every part of data gathering, planning, implementation, and evaluation

While the outlined categories demonstrate how relationships range from superficial to intensive interaction, Piggot-Irvine (2012) argues that these categories do not capture the deepening interaction that can occur during the action research process. To address this, McMorland and Piggot-Irvine (2000) adapted Cardno's (1998) collaborative categories to reflect the interactive challenges researchers encounter when developing collaborative relationships within action research (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6*McMorland and Piggot-Irvine (2000) Adapted Collaborative Categories*

Level 1 	Introduction (seeking and enjoying exploring commonality, excluding discussion of difference, collaborating in a superficial and task-specific way, and with little demonstration or examination of defensive values or strategies)
Level 2 	Recognition of potential of self and others (with rising awareness of differential between self and others, waning enthusiasm for exploring commonality, and increasing willingness to entertain multilateral perspectives on reality, but action is usually limited despite personal perceptions of the value of self-contribution, and if doubt arises the response action is likely to be defensive and self-protective);
Level 3 	Gaining an inquiry perspective (increasing empathy for the perception of others, and coming to genuine acceptance of the validity of another's way of being/thinking, seeing the world through others' eyes);
Level 4 	Transition to collaboration (suspending one's own known perceptions and opening up to unknown other perceptions while allowing for exploration of creativity, true inquiry and genuine collaborative action)
Level 5 	Trust and co-generation (achieving new levels of awareness of both our own and others' perspectives, emerging as courage is expressed and inquiry leads to action – a process distinguished by spontaneity, synergy and creativity, and leading to openness, trust and learning).

Note. Collaborative categories to reflect the interactive challenges researchers have with collaborative relationships when undertaking action research

These levels of interactive collaboration were evident in the core collaboration group. This will be discussed further in this chapter.

Ethical Relationship Building

Within the context analysis phase of the project and throughout the collaboration process, it was imperative that relationships were ethical and that ethical relationship building remained a

continuous process. Levitan (2019) argues that ethical relationship building in action research involves a constant weaving and understanding of power, positionality, and relational dynamics. This process engages and develops implicit mental frameworks that enable equitable and interactive interpretations of action and reflection between participants (Levitan, 2019). Establishing ethical relationships was a significant step in creating trust and confidence among members and the researcher, allowing exploration of the project's purpose.

For example, in the early stages of the research, an online meeting was held with members of Sport New Zealand, AUT, and NZC to discuss how to champion inclusion and diversity within sport governance in New Zealand. Participants included a Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa representative; two NZC National Board Directors; Martin Snedden, chair of the NZC National Board; and both my PhD supervisors. This informal collaborative session was guided by the question: 'What is current in DEI within your organisation?' I used PowerPoint slides to frame discussion points such as 'What do we know?' and 'What do we want to know?' and concluded with 'Is inclusion embedded within your governance systems?' The conversation flowed as members shared their perspectives on inclusion in governance. At one point, a member asked, *"How do we define inclusion?"* I responded with a definition derived from Shore et al.'s (2018) inclusive leadership theory, which emphasises belonging and uniqueness. The member reacted with surprise and delight, saying, *"I wasn't expecting an answer; it was more of a philosophical question."* This moment was a crucial trust-building point in the project, as my response demonstrated contextual knowledge and the value of prior context analysis work on the topic.

The Relationships

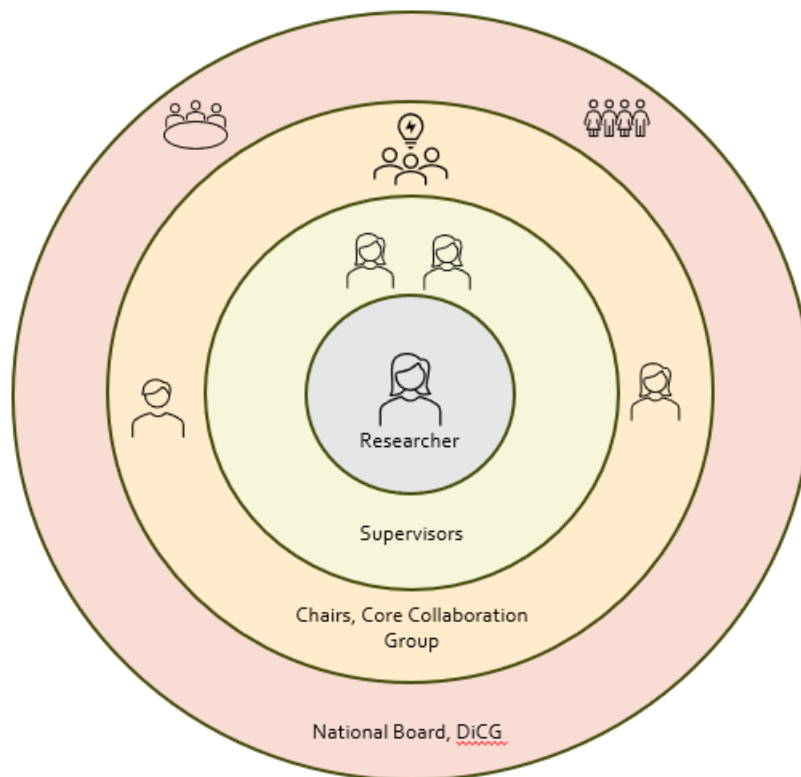
Action research is a complex and non-linear process that requires a multidimensional approach. One crucial element that consistently emerges and evolves throughout the project is the fostering of collaborative relationships with all those involved. The key relationships in Phases 1 and 2 were as follows:

1. Researcher and supervisors
2. Researcher and chairs
3. Researcher and core collaboration group
4. Researcher and National Board
5. Researcher and DICG group

Figure 4.6 illustrates the varying levels of relationship connections throughout Phases 1 and 2. The proximity of each circle to the researcher represents the strength of the connection and the amount of time dedicated to the project.

Figure 4.6

Levels of Relationship Connections in Phase 1 and 2



Note. The closer the circle is to the researcher, the stronger the connection and time dedicated to the project.

Researcher and Supervisors Relationship

Eisner (1991) describes a supervisor as the enlightened eye, possessing the ability to see things that others may overlook. From a relational perspective, I view the academic supervisor–researcher relationship as one of collaborative inquiry, where both parties derive benefits (Phillips, 2014). My academic supervisors, Professor Lesley Ferkins (S1) and Dr. Charlotte Jelleyman (S2), were instrumental in guiding the framing and refinement of my research questions, determining the approach to the project, and co-constructing the critical analytical skills required to integrate theory and action. We already had a strong relational foundation through previous roles lecturing together, and our trust and confidence were built on a clear understanding of each other’s expectations and

knowledge exchange. Most importantly, they initiated and encouraged connections with key relationships that became central to this project.

We held bi-monthly meetings structured around an agenda that included progress updates, discussion topics, and developing insights. These meetings were recorded, enabling me to reflect on key conversations and project developments. While the meetings fulfilled methodological, procedural, and ethical requirements, it was the relational component of trust and confidence that truly enabled me to unpack developing insights. For example, during a meeting on 14 December 2023, I introduced the term ‘inclusive leadership with boundaries’, which I had recently developed through my review of the literature. Both supervisors immediately engaged with the concept and expressed curiosity, creating a significant moment of confidence for me. Their interest signalled that the idea held potential impact for the project, motivating me to explore it further. This confidence carried into subsequent interactions, including a hike with Diana, the NZC chair, where I introduced the concept. For the next hour, we unpacked the term through her stories and experiences, revealing how she had applied the concept in practice without explicitly naming it.

Researcher and Chairs’ (Martin and Diana) Relationship

For the first half of the project, Martin and I had numerous online and phone meetings to discuss the what, how, and why of the project. In the beginning, our relationship was quite formal, and I felt both nervous and excited during those initial sessions. Before meeting with Martin, I often checked in with my supervisors to ensure I was on the right track and that my approach was appropriate. However, after a couple of meetings, it became clear that Martin was just as interested and passionate about the project as I was. His questions and curiosity gave me the confidence to share the hunches that my supervisors and the core collaboration group had previously discussed. Martin became a key contributor in enabling the emergence of generative thinking and solutions (Coghlan, 2019).

Eight months into the project, in November 2023, Martin stepped down as NZC chair and Diana was appointed. As Diana was already part of the National Board, I had formed a preliminary relationship with her, and our shared place of residence strengthened that connection. The relationship deepened when we practiced whakawhanaungatanga while hiking up the local mountain. These hikes lasted, on average, two hours, and over time we discussed the project, developing insights, personal experiences, and topics that arose naturally from our conversations.

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

My decision not to record the hikes with Diana became an interesting point of reflection. Why did I feel the urge to avoid recording our conversations and instead reflect on them after the hike had finished? My instinct was confirmed during our second hike when Diana commented: *“I never bring my headphones with me up this mountain, I like to be able to hear all the sounds around me”* (personal communication). I felt that recording would detract from the essence of the natural environment that shaped our conversations.

Bishop’s (1995) thesis, *Collaborative Research Stories: Whakawhanaungatanga*, highlights that within research, part of the whakawhanaungatanga process involves “interviews as chat” (p. 236). This approach positions researchers as somatically involved in the process, physically, ethically, morally, and spiritually, not merely as technicians concerned with methodology. Bishop further explains that interviews as chat can be understood through the concept of cultural consciousness or cultural knowing. This involves recognising the context within which the project exists and alerting participants to the conditions under which participation can occur.

Why Is This Important?

I wanted to create a connection with Diana that was grounded in authenticity. Introducing a recording device into this environment would have shifted the emphasis from connection to data collection, making the interaction less meaningful. Furthermore, this project explores inclusive leadership through the lenses of EI and CQ. Collaborating with individuals who differ from me, particularly in cultural terms, is central to the project’s purpose, and the methodology must reflect this. This awareness aligns with the relational dimensions of EI (social awareness and relationship management) and is instrumental in authentic relationship building, as outlined in McMorland and Piggot’s (2000) Levels 4 and 5 of the collaborative relationship framework.

Potential Action

- Continue exploring the concept of cultural knowing and its application to CQ.
- Consider whether this begins with cultural competency.
- Reflect on whether creating different environments for National Board members (such as Waitangi) enhances cultural competency, which in turn fosters cultural knowing.

Researcher and Core Collaboration Group

Bradbury et al. (2019) state that a significant point for quality in action research is partnership and participation, and this can only be achieved through multiple ways of knowing. As mentioned in Chapter 3, one of the key methods I implemented in this project was a core collaboration group designed to drive action and evaluate change. Gratton and Jones (2010) argue that core collaboration groups in sport research allow for richer information to be gathered than interviews. Drawing upon the group's insights, feelings, experiences, and reflections enabled the core collaboration group to achieve a depth of understanding that may not have been feasible using other methods.

The core collaboration group included seven members: two supervisors, three NZC board members, two Sport NZ members, and myself. As the meetings progressed, the group began to function more as an advisory body, guiding me and offering ideas about what would be critical to unpack further in the project. Their extensive experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion within their organisations helped clarify some of the key avenues the project was pursuing. During the context analysis phase, the core collaboration meetings were structured around three leading discussion points:

- Where are we at (in terms of the project)?
- What themes and issues have arisen in your organisation since our last meeting?
- Discussion of key themes identified from the literature, conversations, and data generation since the last meeting.

Although there was limited interaction between meetings, apart from sending the agenda out a week early so the group could reflect on what they would bring to the discussion, the core collaboration group served as an excellent collaborative method to guide and critically reflect on identified themes in Phases 1 and 2.

The whakawhanaungatanga process began before the first meeting. In November 2022, the International Working Group hosted the World Conference on Women and Sport in New Zealand. It was at this conference that I met a couple of the core collaboration group members through

informal conversations and strengthened relationships that were already established with others. This event created the space to start co-constructing aspirations for the project and exploring commonalities and differences among us (McMorland & Piggot-Irvine, 2000; Mead, 2003). The early meetings within the context analysis phase reflected the initial stages of McMorland and Piggot-Irvine's (2000) authentic collaborative relationship-building process, which involves recognising the potential in group members and beginning to inquire more deeply into identified themes.

An example of this inquiry process occurred during the first meeting when I asked, *"Does anyone want to contribute further from what was stimulated from that discussion?"* The responses began with phrases such as *"I do, one thing that jumped out at me hearing the rest of the discussion,"* followed by another participant saying, *"Just building on that,"* and a third adding, *"And so adding to that."* From this exchange, it was clear that members of the core collaboration group were already practicing empathetic listening, as demonstrated by their ability to scaffold their responses from previous contributions. This co-generation of responses within a collaborative group environment aligns with what McMorland and Piggot-Irvine (2000) describe as the final level of authentic collaboration.

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

Creating a collaborative environment within the group did not seem difficult. All of the members had already been involved in DEI initiatives within their own organisations, so their ability to be inclusive, collaborate, and share ideas was well developed. As a researcher, leading these meetings felt relatively easy, and my main challenge was keeping discussions aligned with the agenda. Conversations flowed naturally, and every member contributed during each meeting. However, engagement outside the scheduled meeting times was more challenging. The group members were busy, and I was mindful of the time commitment outlined in the information sheet. This may explain why the group evolved into more of an advisory role, with meetings taking on a theme of 'what's new and let's discuss.' It could also reflect the limitations of online meetings compared to face-to-face interactions.

Why Is This Important?

Having a collaborative group functioning at a higher level of authentic collaboration enables deeper reflection and exploration of topics. As discussed earlier in this chapter, organisational

learning occurs when double-loop learning and reflection are applied. This level of collaboration expands the analytical frame to explicitly identify and challenge underlying assumptions (Argyris & Schön, 1997). However, this depth of collaboration would not have been possible without whakawhanaungatanga in the early stages. Whakawhanaungatanga created a safe, non-defensive environment that allowed group members to freely express their opinions and ideas.

Potential Action

- How does whakawhanaungatanga influence the EI dimension of relationship management?

Researcher and National Board

During Phases 1 and 2 of the project, I connected with all board members only once during the initial facilitation session. This took place at the National Board meeting on 24 February 2023, followed by two weeks of individual interviews. However, because of my close relationship with Martin, the board member in the core collaboration group, and the board member associated with the DICG group, my connection with the board remained present throughout the project. Piggot-Irvine et al. (2021) found that “a key element in relationship management was the employment of strong collaborative processes” (p. 6). My relationships with Martin and the two board members enabled a filtering of information to the rest of the board, ensuring they were continuously informed about the project. This filtering process aligns with Piggot-Irvine et al.’s (2021) research on how collective and collaborative leadership is enacted within action research to create meaningful change.

Researcher and DICG

The relationships I developed with members of the DICG followed a similar pattern to those with the National Board. I had a strong and authentic relationship with Martin, a core collaboration group member, and a couple of National Board members who were also part of the DICG group. This connection enabled me to be invited to join several online WiCG sessions, which helped me build an understanding of the group’s purpose and observe its shift from a women-in-cricket focus to a broader diversity perspective.

However, the initial face-to-face meeting with the DICG was quite different from my first meeting with the National Board, and the difference was whakawhanaungatanga. The initial meeting with the National Board began with the group arriving and the activity commencing almost immediately.

In contrast, the DICG meeting started with a half-hour coffee and morning tea socialising session. This informal time allowed me to engage in whakawhanaungatanga with members I had not met before. As Komene et al. (2024) state, “Whakawhanaungatanga is the foundation for building a relationship and trust, it can be considered a rule for friendly engagement” (p. 1555). The relationships created during this informal session set the foundation and enhanced the quality of collaborative relationships that continued throughout the research.

4.3 Phase 2: Issue Identification

The context analysis work I undertook in reviewing the literature, examining NZC documents, and building quality relationships laid the foundation to authentically address the research questions and sub-questions. Coghlan (2019) characterises authenticity in action research as a four-part engagement: being attentive to the data, being intelligent in inquiry, judging what is appropriate, and taking action based on that judgment. As issues began to unfold during Phases 1 and 2, it became clear that there were two key contexts in which meaningful change could be created and the research questions addressed: the National Board and the NZC system.

4.3.1 The National Board

The context work I undertook in reviewing NZC documents and building authentic relationships with the chair and a core collaboration group director laid the foundation for a productive facilitation session at the National Board meeting on 24 February 2023. The chair wanted the board to be fully immersed in the research, so he organised the formal board meeting and agenda to run the day before to ensure all board members were focused on the session. The agenda for the session was set out in four steps: first, to introduce the project; second, to conduct the Q sort; third, to follow up with discussion relating to the outcome of the Q sort method; and lastly, the individual interviews.

After much internal deliberation, I decided to change the agenda by shifting the introduction to the research segment to the end. I asked Martin if he would be comfortable with this change, and he quickly responded, *“I trust you and your understanding of what would fit best.”*

Step 1: Conducting the Q sort

The first step sought a response to the statement, 'Inclusive environments in sport boards require...' through the Q sort activity. I laid out all the Q sort materials on the table, and once all the board members were seated, I gave instructions for the activity, checked their understanding, and then they completed the task in silence, apart from a few laughs and side comments, for about 30 minutes. During the activity, the participants appeared eager and engaged, which gave me a sense of confidence.

Step 2: Follow-up Discussion

During the discussion step, I took individual photos of each Q sort, audio recorded the conversation and used a whiteboard to conceptually map the key points from the discussion. To start the follow-up discussion, I asked the question, *"What did you think of this process?"* referring to the Q sort activity. It was clear from the group that there were mixed reactions regarding how challenging or easy the activity was. Diana commented, *"I actually didn't find it that hard, I found it easy. That end was easy and that [one] was easy and then it was just putting the middle together"*. In contrast, P3 explained that she had to think deeply about what she felt was most important in creating an inclusive environment before ranking the statements: *"What I found really challenging is that I had to think about the role of a chair, and that's the first thing, and if you get that right then the rest don't matter"*.

An interesting reflection came from Martin, who said, *"I was trying to work out to what extent the chair contributes to the thing [in reference to inclusive environments]. Because I'm the chair. The chair stuff, the good stuff, was over to the right"*. 'Over to the right' meant that he placed high importance on the relationship between the chair and inclusive environments. This comment was followed by laughter from the group.

I then asked, *"What were the areas that people found in their most important column?"* This single question drove the discussion for the rest of the session, which lasted an hour. Participants' answers sparked further dialogue and moments of unpacking why certain areas were most important to each individual. A recurring theme was the 'chicken and the egg' dilemma. For example, P1 stated, *"I think the chair's ability to create a safe environment is most important"*, to which Diana responded, *"I had the outcome of that as a psychologically safe environment... so the outcome is more important. It's quite hard to decouple that, because how do you create it? How do you end up with*

that without it being created?” Martin then reflected that for a safe environment to occur, a chair must *“recognise a shared and collective leadership environment where people feel safe about contributing”*. This chicken and egg theme continued throughout the discussion as participants reflected on the three key areas—process, environment, and chair—and how each was dependent on the others.

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

There were some noticeable inclusive practices occurring within Step Two that I noted after the session. Table 4.7 reflects these inclusive practices with associated literature:

Table 4.7

New Zealand Cricket National Board Inclusive Practices and Corresponding Literature

Observed Inclusive Practices	Corresponding Literature
Healthy ‘banter’ and laughter	“This kind occurrence demonstrates the potential bonding and inclusive influence of group humour and laughter.” (Ponton et al., 2018, p.94)
When each person spoke, they brought the previous discussion points into their own discussion showing that they had intently listened to each other and what they had to say	“Inclusion is described as being accepted (belongingness) as well as acknowledging individual talents and allowing individuals' voices to be heard and appreciated (uniqueness) (Randel et al., 2018, p. 192)
When there was a disagreement, there was healthy debate and the different view was accepted as a different perspective	“the leader who is inclusive is motivated by developing good relationships with followers to create an environment in which employees can share their perspectives (Shore & Chung, 2021, p. 5)
I felt comfortable with the group and felt safe to contribute when I did.	“Leaders impact follower inclusion by purposefully enabling psychological safety, psychological empowerment, and workgroup identification. (Nishii & Leroy, 2022, p. 690)

Why Is This Important?

The group discussed the importance of creating a safe environment within the boardroom, so members felt comfortable voicing their thoughts and opinions. As discussed in Chapter 2, psychological safety is essential to enable people to take risks and be vulnerable. Edmondson (2018) definition for psychological safety addresses this notion in “Psychological safety describes a belief that neither the formal nor informal consequences of interpersonal risks, like asking for help or admitting a failure, will be punitive. In psychologically safe environments, people believe that if they make a mistake or ask for help, others will not react badly” (p. 15). During this discussion, P3 described the Waitangi trip as “*pivotal*” in the board’s journey, noting that it created vulnerability because of the discomfort experienced by many members. P1 then shared his story about feeling very uncomfortable during the initial stages of the Waitangi trip, explaining that this experience shifted his cultural lens and now directly influences his use of Māori practices such as karakia (giving a blessing) in his other board roles. This part of the discussion was a powerful example of how the board environment enabled vulnerable conversations that led to meaningful change.

There were multiple moments where members’ insights and opinions were woven into subsequent decisions and discussions. It was often clear that speakers were listening intently to one another, acknowledging previous contributions. For instance, Martin reflected on P8’s earlier point: “*I’ll go back to participant [P8]’s point, which I think is right...*”, and Diana began her response with: “*I agree with [P3]...*”. These examples illustrate what Purdy and Manning (2015) describe as mindful listening—listening with intent and care.

Gudykunst (2004) expands on this concept, asserting that listening is a purposive activity requiring mindfulness to identify what is meaningful and important to others, not just ourselves. He warns that if we focus only on what is relevant to us, we fail to receive the message being sent. Mindful listening involves entering the “private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it” (p. 184). It requires openness, avoiding presuppositions about meaning, and a willingness to understand. Gudykunst (2004) notes that mindful listening takes time and practice, as it does not come naturally in many Western contexts.

Potential Action

- Creating safe board environments - intent/mindful listening and vulnerable discussions

This chicken and egg discussion was followed by a conversation about board composition and the importance of recruitment and appointment processes. The skill of open-mindedness identified as a common theme. P3 stated, *“Maybe the recruitment process is not about understanding what your view is at that time, it’s understanding are you open-minded and able to listen?”* P1 responded by sharing feedback he had received during an interview for a previous board role, where the interviewer noted that he came across as open-minded and did not appear to have any predetermined views. This part of the discussion was significant in shaping future actions and informing potential implementations for the research.

Step 3: Follow up Individual Interviews

As outlined in Chapter 3, in the two weeks following each Q sort, nine individual semi-structured interviews of approximately 30 minutes were conducted with each participant. Eight interviews were held online, and one was conducted face to face with Diana, as she lived in close proximity to me. Each participant received a copy of their completed Q sort activity to refer to during the interview.

Identified and Developing Issues for the New Zealand Cricket Board

In framing the research questions and issues with the National Board members, which would lead to actions designed to develop inclusive board leadership environments, I acknowledged the following conditions: the National Board appeared to already be operating at a high level of inclusivity based on the context analysis and data collected from Phases 1 and 2, as well as descriptions in the literature of what an inclusive board demonstrates. For the purposes of this research, the key issues identified within the NZC Board discussions were:

- Continuing to walk the talk,
- Expanding their comfort zone with experiences like Waitangi
- Recruitments process *“open mindedness”*- P3
- The importance of EQ and developing CQ

4.3.2 New Zealand Cricket System

The second key context that developed from Phases 1 and 2 to ensure meaningful inclusive leadership change within the NZC system was the involvement of the DICG group. My supervisor and I were invited to the first DICG meeting (formerly known as WiCG) on 15 and 16 May 2023 to introduce and explain the project to the DICG representative members. The meeting attendees included four NZC Board Directors, six MA Board Directors, four NZC staff members, and three invited independent guests. I was allocated an hour on the first day, which I structured into three steps: a modified Q sort activity, an overview of the project and developing themes, and a group discussion. My supervisor and I were also invited to attend the second day, which focused on reflecting on day one and planning for the group's future direction.

Step 1: Overview of the project and developing themes

The first step of the allocated hour was to present the project to the group and discuss the themes that were already developing from the data generation. I presented the findings in PowerPoint form and paused at intervals to ask the group if they had any comments or questions. It was clear that the group was interested and engaged in the overview of the project, as many members raised questions and shared comments throughout the presentation.

Step 2: Project discussion

The key discussion that emerged after the overview was drawn from the slide on the theoretical motivation for this study and the definition of inclusion. The group was particularly drawn to the words 'belonging' and 'uniqueness' in the stated definition of inclusion: *"How leaders demonstrate inclusive behaviours (e.g., sense of belonging and uniqueness) to create a successful outcome of inclusion among diverse groups is yet to be established"* (Nishii & Mayer, 2009; Randel et al., 2016). P3 referred to this discussion in her summary themes from the day: *"What does the concept of 'belonging' mean for the NZC network—connection between belonging and uniqueness, how do we ensure both?"* (see Appendix G).

Furthermore, the context of the whole system was highlighted as the group discussed the importance of influencing diversity and inclusion across the system, beyond the National Board, and into affiliated regions and clubs. They considered that this group should combine efforts to achieve that goal. This important revelation later led to a DICG draft Action Plan (sent by P3 on 7 August

2023) with the objective of ‘widening the NZC, MA and DA governance activity to focus on diversity and inclusion in line with NZC’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy’ (see Appendix H).

Step 3: Q sort activity

The third step included a modified version of the Q sort used with the National Board. The purpose of the modified activity was not to generate a second set of Q-sort data for comparison, but rather to familiarise the DICG members with the concepts underpinning the project and provide a shared theoretical foundation for subsequent discussions and actions. For this reason, I selected 18 of the original 47 statements to represent a generalisation of three areas: environment, chair, and processes. The original question, ‘Inclusive environments in sport boards require...,’ still guided the activity. I laid out all the Q sort materials on the table in front of the DICG members and repeated the same instructions I had given to the National Board. Similar to the National Board, the DICG members were eager and focused on completing the activity.

After the activity, there was a brief discussion about what stood out for each member, and once again, the topic of the recruitment process emerged. P3 reflected this in the summary notes (see Appendix G): *“Recruitment process, how do we weave D&I into our recruitment process? NZC working with Kelly (AUT) to ‘action learn’ in the next board appointments process”*. Furthermore, in the Phase 3 steering action plan for DICG (Appendix H), two objectives were dedicated to this theme:

- Determine practical ways in which we incorporate D&I into governance activities, such as recruitment processes for governors and senior management positions, and board skills matrices that reflect diversity thinking.
- Chair training around inclusive leadership and what successful board recruitment and succession planning looks like.

Identified Issues for the New Zealand Cricket System

- Keeping the pedal on gender whilst leveraging other diversity and inclusion actions
- MA and DA awareness of the inclusive movements
- Board/governance appointment processes and the appointment panel awareness

Reflective Pause
Sparked Curiosity

One of the key themes that consistently developed across all three areas was the ability to ‘walk the talk’ and demonstrate espoused actions. This notion aligns with Argyris and Schön’s (1978) *Theory of Action*, discussed in Chapter 3, which distinguishes between espoused theories, those an individual claims to follow, and theories-in-use, which can be inferred from actual behaviour. It was evident that this group genuinely ‘walked the talk’ (theory-in-use). Through my observations, their mental models of what an inclusive leadership environment should look like were reflected in their actual practices. This sparked my curiosity: how do we influence espoused actions so they consistently translate into ‘walk the talk’ behaviours? Is this achieved through the quality of relationships and dialogue?

Why Is This Important?

Relationships are central to both EI and CQ. High EI requires strong social awareness, and developing social awareness involves expanding one’s comfort zone to see the world through different perspectives. Doing so enhances understanding of people within the board environment and ultimately strengthens CQ.

This process connects back to dialogue, double-loop learning (discussed earlier in this chapter), and critical reflection. The significance of this reflection lies in exploring whether inclusive leadership is fundamentally about widening the lens of board members so their espoused beliefs align more closely with their theories-in-use—that is, their behaviours and actions. In CQ terms, this represents an expansion of ‘flex’ (Middleton, 2014).

To achieve this, informal conversations—those that occur outside the formal agenda—must be present within the board environment, whether during breaks or outside scheduled meetings. These moments create space for authentic dialogue that challenges assumptions and deepens understanding.

Potential Action

- Exploring informal conversations (the meaning and influence of them) and how they relate to organisational and double loop learning; and
- Linking the insights to Middleton (2014) CQ model of core and flex.

4.4 Evaluation of Phases 1 and 2

Coghlan and Shani (2018) describe evaluation as a means of appraising some aspect of a change situation, noting that such evaluation is key to learning. The outcomes of Phases 1 and 2, drawn from Coghlan and Shani's (2018) framework of context, quality of relationships, quality of action research processes, and outcomes, were generated through new knowledge created during the inquiry process of context analysis and issue identification. This inquiry process involved a meta-cycle of learning informed by Mezirow's (1991) three forms of reflection: content reflection, which focused on thinking about the issues and sensemaking; process reflection, which considered planning and evaluation; and premise reflection, which critiqued underlying assumptions and perspectives. Premise reflection is further developed and unpacked in subsequent chapters, supported by theoretical integration and critical analysis.

Challenge and Opportunities: How Did it Go, What Was Learnt?

Challenge 1: Role changes

One of the main challenges during Phases 1 and 2 was the turnover of CEOs, chairs, and directors. Although this was expected, these changes affected communication between me and the participants. The project experienced minimal impact from the change in CEO and Directors, largely because of a reduced emphasis on the level of connection required, as outlined earlier in this chapter (Figure 4.6). However, Martin played a pivotal role in driving the project, and during the early stages of Phases 1 and 2, communication was frequent and the relationship was strong. Over time, Martin's workload and focus on succession planning with the incoming chair may have affected the depth of collaboration between us. I came to understand that Martin's communication patterns were dependent on workflow, which is reflected in his comment: *"Kelly, sorry I have gone to ground. The workload has been enormous but now starting to ease."* (personal communication, September 6, 2023). Initially, I felt defensive during these quiet communication periods; however, as the project progressed, I began using these times to focus on other aspects of the research, such as writing, until Martin was ready to re-engage. This shift in perspective is reflected in my reply: *"Totally fine. My close friends often say that they will hear from me when I come up for air 😊. It has been a blessing that the action has been quiet as I have had my head down writing Chapter 4 (context of NZC)."* (personal communication, September 6, 2023).

Challenge 2: Collaboration with National Board

A follow-up group discussion with the National Board participants on the findings from the initial Q sort activity would have strengthened the robustness of this phase. While half of the National Board members were involved in either the DICG or Core Collaboration participant groups, a few members were not directly exposed to the interpretations and conclusions of the initial Q sort and post-interviews, which I communicated individually. However, the findings were indirectly shared through informal conversations led by Martin and other participants who were familiar with the concluding themes. I was confident that the remaining board members were adequately updated through these discussions among members. A key learning for me was the importance of ensuring that future follow-up discussions remain an integral part of the project moving forward.

Opportunity 1: New Zealand Cricket is an example of ‘what it should look like’

In August 2023, New Zealand Rugby released a Governance Review Report outlining key recommendations to transform the sport’s leadership structure and create generational change. The report highlighted lessons from other sports, placing NZC in the spotlight: “New Zealand Cricket is arguably the most directly relevant example of how a sport blossomed after the removal of barriers to governance effectiveness like those affecting NZR” (New Zealand Rugby, 2023, p. 89). I realised that I was joining an already well-established movement toward effective governance and board practices. The engagement and enthusiasm of the participants toward this project were infectious, and I was told that insights discussed during the core collaboration meetings continued to feature in future conversations and meetings with National Board members.

Opportunity 2: Chairs leading by example

The project benefited from having two chairs (Martin and Diana) who were already strong advocates of inclusive leadership and EI and CQ. This enabled me to establish trust and rapport early in the process, making it easier to collect data and generate insights. When the new CEO and Directors joined, they were equally enthusiastic about participating, which further facilitated data generation. My focus on relationships and collaboration contributed to a flexible and open flow of information gathering, reflection, and discussion among participants.

At the conclusion of Phases 1 and 2, my key learnings included:

- Understanding the story behind NZC’s journey toward inclusive leadership. This was reflected in Martin’s comment: “*Kelly needs to recognise how we got to our starting point*”. The

unpacking of actions following the Hood Report occurred later in the project, but I would have benefited from knowing this story earlier during the context analysis phase.

- The value of relationship building before the project officially began. Prior to commencement, my supervisors and I had numerous informal conversations with key contacts in the sport leadership context. These early interactions helped build trust and rapport with the organisations and key drivers of inclusive change.
- The benefits of using a mixed methods approach. The Q sort activity was particularly effective, generating meaningful discussion after completion. Its quantitative nature felt familiar and safe for some board members, while the post sort interviews provided a qualitative space for others to share insights comfortably. The popularity of the Q sort was evident when I was asked to use it with the DICG group.
- Challenges in applying EI and CQ as lenses. Participants were often unclear about the definitions and how these concepts related to each other. They tended to focus on inclusive leadership as the main theme, with EI and CQ as secondary considerations. To address this, I used Goleman and Boyatzis' (2017) EI dimensions as a sorting mechanism for themes and Middleton's (2014) CQ model to guide discussions about comfort zones and expanding perspectives.
- Complexity in defining inclusive leadership. Explaining the concept proved difficult due to its nuanced nature. To ensure transparency, I began with a definition informed by theory and tracked how it evolved throughout the project under the influence of participant engagement.

Reflecting and Summarising Content: So What, Now What?

The intent to develop inclusive leadership through an emotional and cultural lens manifested differently across the recruitment and appointment process, the DICG, and the National Board, as each context was at a different stage of development. For the CEO and Director appointment process, the focus was on ensuring that an inclusive lens was embedded within the selection matrix and interview planning. For the DICG, the emphasis shifted from a gender lens focused on women to developing a broader purpose that reflects modern society, its needs, and voices, ensuring the future success of cricket in New Zealand. For the National Board, the priority was to build inclusive leadership practices beyond what was already embedded in its governance processes. Guided by theory, NZC's story, and collaborative discussions, I recognised these as real issues within the organisation and began linking practical application to theoretical concepts.

Table 4.8 provides a summary of the research outcomes for Phases 1 and 2, incorporating the organisational context and issue identification for each area. It also highlights identified issues within the three contexts and the theoretical concepts that will influence actions and interventions moving forward. The next chapter offers an analysis and reflection on the actions and interventions implemented across all three areas, detailing the approaches taken by each domain to address specific issues related to integrating inclusive leadership practices within sport boards through an EI and CQ lens.

4.5 Summary Table of Phase 1 and 2 Context Analysis and Interpretation

Table 4.8

Phase 1 and 2 Summary Table of the Issue Identification and Developing Issues

Context Analysis		
New Zealand Cricket is an organisation that has championed the ‘diversity’ half of ‘diversity and inclusion’ within its boards. The process of telling the story is a foundational component of the project which then lays the groundwork for reflections and insights to add meaning and sense making to the project (Coghlan, 2019). Phase 1 includes an investigation of NZC’s inclusive background story as part of the context analysis. The story began with unpacking the Hood Report and the significant impact it had on three key factors: governance/CEO leadership shifts, strategic priorities, and systemic inclusive initiatives. Collaborative relationships were created through a pre-step involving two processes: whakawhanuanga and building authentic collaboration. Whakawhanaungatanga was instrumental in setting up an open and transparent foundation for key relationships within the project. Authentic collaboration served as a deep commitment and openness to engage in the key relationships through outcomes of respect for diversity of perceptions and trust.		
Interpretation and Issue Identification		
National Board		System
Recruitment/Appointment Process	Chair/Board Members	DICG
• New CEO appointment needs updated position description (updated from 2011) • MA board chairs formally inputting into the description of what director skills and experience would be targeted within the 2022 process • Other stakeholder engagement informal input into such skills • MAs are three out of five places on the appointments panel	• Considered one of NZ’s leading sport organisations in terms of effective sport governance and leadership • Influential inclusive experiences already having impact (e.g., Waitangi trip) • Inclusive practices already in place - informal self-assessments, board time consultations working with the board members	• In November 2022, WICG changed its name to DICG to evolve its focus from gender equity within cricket governance to a broader focus on diversity and inclusion whilst still maintaining the gender equity momentum achieved during Phases 1 and 2 • Current DICG steering group has responsibilities to be ‘leadership’

• AP to assemble two months before to actively plan collectively • NZC members having final say in director appointments	• Strong inclusive leadership already within the board composition	champions of change in the diversity and inclusion context
Identified and Developing Issues		
• Changing the language in the recruitment documentation to reflect a culture of genuine inclusivity • The AP interviews need to reflect inclusivity with the process • The AP composition needs to be adjusted to fit the cultural and gender fit • AP needs to be upskilled in the concept of 'inclusive leadership' and inclusive practices within the interview.	• Setting up a formal plan to integrate influential inclusive leadership experiences (i.e., Waitangi, what's next?) • Continue to extend the comfort zone and lens of current board member focus on espoused theory and CQ • Informal conversations with chair driven by theory and themes; discussed through an EI lens	• Maintain momentum for women in governance (numbers and inclusion) across the cricket network, understanding that: • Widening the NZC, MA and DA governance activity to focus on diversity and inclusion, in line with NZC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy. • Development of a National Governance Training Strategy with D&I as a key pillar and incorporating chair training around inclusive leadership and what successful Board recruitment and succession planning looks like.
Theoretical Concepts		
Theoretical work pertaining to sport board recruitment and appointment processes (Molloy, 2023; Molloy et al., 2019, 2024a, 2024b)	Theoretical work pertaining to inclusive leadership practices through a lens of EI and CQ (Goleman, 2020; Middleton, 2014; Randell et al., 2018; Shore & Chung, 2021)	Theoretical work pertaining to systematic change through collective leadership (Ferkins et al., 2018a)

Chapter 5 Phase 3 Action, Analysis and Intervention

5.1 Introduction

The context analysis work undertaken in reviewing the literature, examining New Zealand Cricket (NZC) documents, and building quality relationships laid the foundation to authentically address the research questions and sub questions. According to Coghlan (2019), authenticity in action research involves four interrelated processes: being attentive to the data, being intelligent in inquiry, judging what is appropriate, and taking action based on that judgment. To understand inclusive leadership practices in the context of sport boards, it was essential to identify what contributes to an inclusive environment and what it feels like to be part of an inclusive board. NZC as an organisation was already leading inclusive initiatives, such as creating a culture that supports women, due to its proactive approach in embracing the key recommendations from the 2016 Women and Cricket report as outlined in Chapter 4 (Lovett et al., 2020). The NZC National Board participants also felt that they were part of an inclusive board, as illustrated by P1 who stated, *“Our cricket board, if I look at other boards I’m on, I’ve never been in a more inclusive environment”*. P1’s comment regarding his perception of what constitutes an inclusive environment, particularly in comparison to other boards on which he has served, is important because it raises questions about how inclusion is understood and experienced within sport governance contexts. Exploring how participants defined and experienced inclusion in practice therefore became a central focus of the inquiry.

As a researcher, it was essential for me to understand and explore the experience of inclusion with participants who had encountered it themselves. The Q sort process provided a coherent framework for examining the different elements of subjectivity within an inclusive sport board while also offering detailed insights through statistical analysis (Ramlo, 2025). In addition, the group discussions, core collaboration, DICG meetings, and dialogue with the chairs contributed qualitative depth that helped uncover key themes to address the overarching research question: ‘How can inclusive leadership in sport boards be developed through an emotional and cultural intelligence lens?’. Furthermore, the social constructionist lens illuminated shared understandings and meanings, revealing what it truly means to feel included within the context of sport governance (Ramlo, 2025; Watts & Stenner, 2012).

As discussed in Chapter 4, conducting the Q sort activity was the first stage of data generation and served as a starting point for creating meta-inferences that offered higher-level insights into shared perspectives on inclusion and diversity. This process aimed to unpack and interpret meaning from participants' viewpoints through the leading statement: *Inclusive leadership environments in sport boards require...* The second stage involved discussing these themes further as a group and individually to determine whether they inhibited or enabled inclusion within the environment. Following individual interviews, core collaboration meetings provided a deeper level of analysis, weaving in participants' sport contexts and board experiences to apply critique and understanding.

As issues were identified during Phases 1 and 2, it became evident that two primary contexts offered opportunities for meaningful change and for addressing the research questions: the National Board and the NZC system. Within the National Board, recruitment processes were identified as a crucial starting point for fostering an inclusive environment. Engaging in dialogue with the chair also facilitated the identification and understanding of the inhibitors and enablers of inclusive leadership. In addition, the DICG served as an effective mechanism within the NZC system to enhance awareness and comprehension of the significance of inclusive leadership in sport boards.

This chapter presents and examines the key results from the quan-qual sequential design, the core collaboration and DICG meetings, and the dialogue with the chairs. The findings are considered for their theoretical implications, offering a deeper understanding of inclusive leadership in sport boards. The interventions are analysed through the frameworks of emotional intelligence (EI) and cultural intelligence (CQ), providing insights into how these frameworks can strengthen the effectiveness of inclusive leadership practices. Woven throughout are reflective pauses in which I critically consider the significance of what I have learned and what should happen next. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the theoretical implications of the findings, how the interventions contribute to existing theories, and an extended summary table (Table 5.6) presented at the end of Chapter 4.

5.2 Action and Analysis

The purpose of this section is to explain how the participant-led actions from the first sequential Quan–Qual design, including the Q sort results, the core collaboration group and DICG meetings, and dialogue with the chairs, informed the interventions. The terms 'action' and 'intervention' were deliberately selected to distinguish between participant-led steps, which are actions, and

researcher-led steps, which are interventions. Ferkins (2007) suggests that explicitly differentiating these terms helps clarify researcher and participant roles, enhances transparency, and ultimately strengthens research validity. This distinction also provides clarity in the design of actions and interventions, outlining key implementation steps and identifying significant aspects of monitoring the process (Ferkins, 2007).

The following analysis outlines the statistical results from the Ken Q Analysis Desktop Edition (KADE) while integrating insights from the post sort group discussion, individual interviews, core collaboration group meetings, and my personal reflections.

Demographic summary

The demographic summary in Table 5.1 outlines the National Board participant group, including participant number, name, gender, ethnicity, and NZC board term at the time of the Q sort. It is important to note that one of the initial participants, P7, completed her term and retired from the board in November 2023. P7 is included in the preliminary Q sort results, while two subsequently appointed board members, P10 and P11, joined in November 2023 and will be discussed in the evaluation chapter. Furthermore, ethnicity was not included as a demographic item on the participant consent form. Therefore, ‘*unknown*’ has been reported in the following table where ethnicity was not publicly available. This approach was intentionally adopted to avoid assigning ethnicity based on observation, which may result in researcher bias and participant misclassification. Self-reported ethnicity is considered the preferred approach in research where ethnicity is collected (Lu et al., 2022; Shargi et al., 2024). However, the absence of ethnicity data may represent a limitation of this study, as it restricts consideration of the potential transferability of findings across different ethnic groups.

Table 5.1

Demographic Summary of New Zealand Cricket National Board Participants

Role	Participant #	Gender	Ethnicity	Board term (at the time of the first Q sort)
Initial Q sort participants 24 February 2023				
Board member	1	Male	unknown	2 years
Board member	2	Male	unknown	4 years

Board member	3	Female	unknown	3 years
Deputy Chairperson	4	Female	Māori	6 years
Board member	5	Female	unknown	1 year
Chairperson	6	Male	European Descent	14 years
Board member	7*	Female	Māori	3 years
Board member	8	Male	unknown	2 years
President	9	Female	unknown	President 1 year, board member 3 years
Appointed Directors mid project				
Board member	10	Male	unknown	Newly appointed
Board member	11	Female	unknown	Newly appointed

Note. P7 did not complete the second Q sort or interviews.

As noted in Chapter 3, the NZ based Q methodology expert was a pivotal mentor during my early engagement with Q methodology. Her empathetic and insightful guidance helped me understand the purpose and application of Q methods. One of her most powerful contributions was the use of the house party metaphor, which provided a vivid visual for interpreting the results. This metaphor is illustrated in her description below (name withheld, personal communication, August 7, 2023):

You want to start to create a narrative and so you are looking for the common grounds that people stand on basically. And one of the metaphors I use for this is, you imagine a party in someone's house, and there are people out in the back garden, and there are people in the kitchen, and it's not so much what those people are like, but it's about the environment, the floor on which they're standing. What brings them to the garden versus the kitchen? And so you're trying to picture the garden space for these people as well as why they're not in the kitchen.

The purpose of this section is to create a narrative and provide a clear explanation of the results that contributed to the interpretation of the factors. The complete statistical output report and data sheet from KADE are available in Appendix J1. These include the correlation matrix, factor loadings

for each Q sort, and the two factor arrays with their corresponding consensus and distinguishing statements. Rankings of relevant statements are shown for each participant discussed.

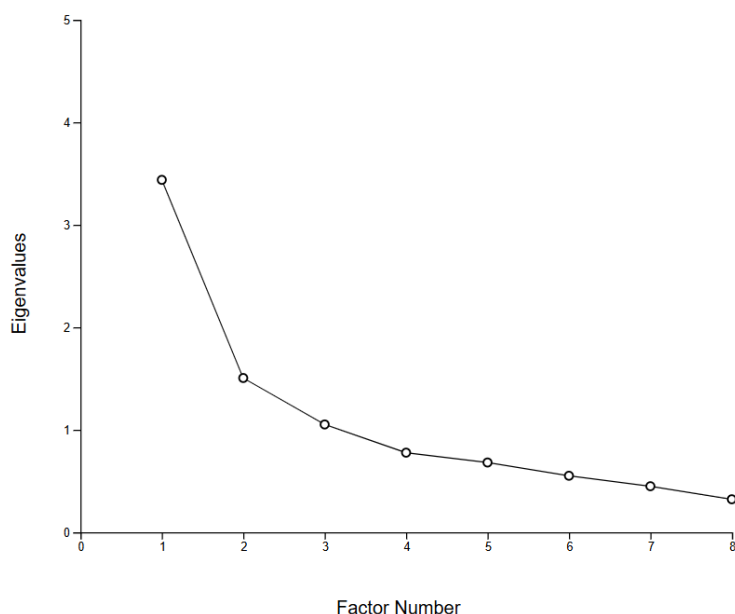
Factor extraction

The factor extraction began with a correlation analysis of the nine participants' Q sorts, comparing how each item was placed on the grid. This produced a correlation matrix using principal component analysis (PCA), which identified participants who sorted items similarly, indicating high positive correlation, and those who sorted dissimilarly, indicating negative correlation. The statements were then ranked in order of their factor scores for each factor in sequence (Stevenson, 1953). Seven factors were initially extracted, accounting for 95% of the total variance.

The next step involved reviewing the eigenvalues and conducting a scree test to determine how many factors to retain in the final solution (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Watts and Stenner (2012) recommend retaining only factors with an eigenvalue of 1.00 or above; however, the number of factors ultimately depends on which ones best guide decision making. The scree test was designed for PCA extraction to identify the point at which the slope of the line changes (Watts & Stenner, 2012). As a novice researcher in Q methodology, I followed the recommendations of McKeown and Thomas (2013) by extracting factors that represented the research project's problems, purposes, and theoretical foundations, while keeping in mind Stephenson's (1953) advice that every researcher should begin a new analysis "with a fresh and puzzled attitude, believing nothing and expecting little" (p. 152).

The next step involved a Varimax rotation, which initially resulted in a three-factor solution based on eigenvalues greater than 1.00. This was illustrated in the scree test shown in Figure 5.1, where the slope changes significantly after factor three.

Figure 5.1
Scree Plot of Eigenvalues



The two-factor solution was determined using a combination of objective measures. First, the PCA revealed that Factors 1 and 2 accounted for 55% of the variance. Consequently, I adjusted from a three-factor to a two-factor solution, as more participants loaded onto either Factor 1 or Factor 2. Brown (1980) states that “five or six persons loaded significantly on a factor are normally sufficient to produce highly reliable factor scores, and it is in terms of the relationships among the factor scores that general statements about an attitude are made” (p. 67). Second, threshold calculations were applied, and Q sorts with a factor loading above 0.29 were considered closely approximate to the viewpoint of each factor (Watts & Stenner, p. 130). Details of these threshold calculations are provided in the Appendix J1.

Although Factors 1 and 2 represented clear opposing viewpoints, Watts and Stenner (2012) suggest “rotating deliberately by hand to focus on a particular Q sort belonging to someone with significant influence within an institution can reveal perspectives that hold sway regardless of other participants’ views” (p. 123). This was relevant in the context of this project, as Martin was the chair of the National Board. Factor 2 was therefore split into two poles, labelled 2a and 2b, because Martin was the only participant with a strong negative loading on Factor 2, while the remaining participants showed varying levels of agreement. Splitting the factor into two poles allowed positive and negative loadings to be examined more clearly, providing a sharper perspective on the differences.

This approach highlighted how Factor 2a captured one side of the debate, such as those who rejected Factor 1, while Factor 2b represented the opposite perspective, isolating Martin’s viewpoint to tease out subtle differences between consensus and divergence within the group. Reimagining the Q methodology expert’s metaphor, five participants were in the kitchen, two were in the garden, and two were positioned on the steps between the spaces, suggesting viewpoints that bridged both environments while leaning toward one. This is illustrated in Figure 5.2 (Panel A).

Figure 5.2

AI Assisted Image of Q sort Results Metaphor of ‘House Party’

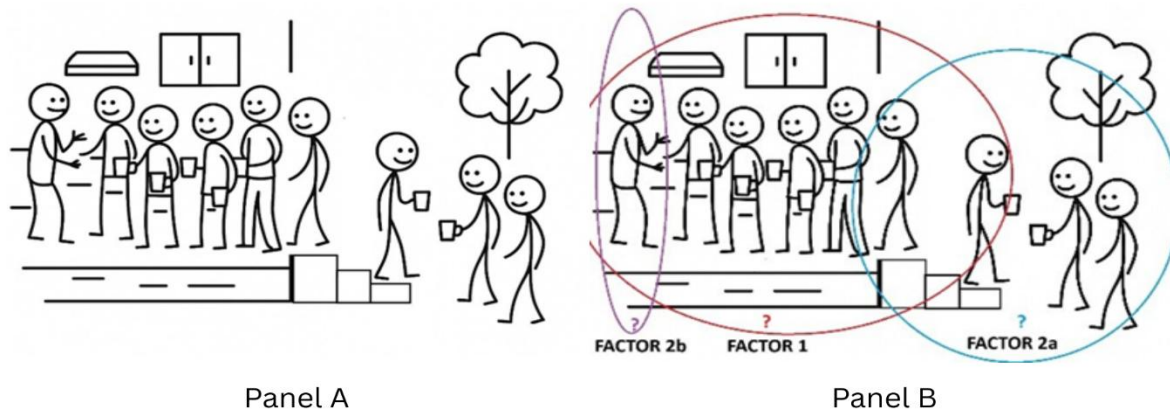


Figure 5.2 (Panel B) illustrates Factors 1, 2a, and 2b, with Factor 2b represented by Martin, the chair. Panel B shows that Factor 2b aligns closely with Factor 1 while remaining significantly distant from Factor 2a. It was important to consider the areas of consensus as well shared by Factors 1, 2a, and 2b in order to stay aligned with the central inquiry of this project, which explores why New Zealand Cricket is regarded as a leader in inclusiveness within sport governance in New Zealand.

To ensure the factors were represented by significant participants, I calculated the factor loadings using Brown’s (1980) equation (Equation 5.1):

Equation 5.1

Brown’s (1980) Equation for Factor Loading

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{Significant Factor Loading} &= 1.96 \times (1 \div \sqrt{47}) \\
&= 1.96 \times (1 \div 6.8557) \\
&= 0.2859 \text{ rounded up to } 0.29 \\
\text{Significant Factor Loading} &= 0.29
\end{aligned}$$

Automatic flagging showed that all nine participants loaded heavily on either Factor 1, with six participants, or Factor 2, with three participants. Q sorts with a significant loading on a factor contribute to the viewpoint represented by that factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The KADE program offers flexibility by allowing researchers to adjust flags to better interpret distinguishing or significantly different items between viewpoints (McKeown & Thomas, 2013).

P5 and P7 were unflagged because their loadings were close across both factors. The Q methodology expert explained, *“Because they [P5 and P7] are strong across all of them, I might be tempted to unflag that person. It does not mean they go away. Their views are still going to be captured, and their interview might also reinforce some of your interpretation. But to keep things crisp, we keep them out of the analysis”* (name withheld, personal communication, August 7, 2023).

The next step in preparing for interpretation was to measure the communality between Q sorts. Communality represents the percentage of variance in a participant’s responses that is associated with the factors, indicating what they have in common with other participants (Van Excel & Degraaf, 2008). Watts and Stenner (2012) describe it as “a useful indicator of how communal a particular Q sort is, that is, how much it holds in common with all the other Q sorts in the study group” (p. 104).

Given that this participant group was small and relatively homogeneous, it was important to identify any differing perspectives that could contribute to the overall interpretation. To calculate the communality (H^2) of each Q sort, I applied Brown’s (1980) formula, as illustrated in the example provided in Equation 5.2.

Equation 5.2

Brown’s (1980) Communality Formula (H^2)

$$\begin{aligned}
H^2 (\text{Q sort4}) &= (\text{loading on Factor 1})^2 + (\text{loading on Factor 2})^2 \\
&= 0.75 + 0.005 - 0.005
\end{aligned}$$

$$= 0.75$$

**denotes Q sort 1 exception to the rule*

For example, the calculation for Q sort 2 shows that 62% of the variance in that Q sort was accounted for by the factors. A high communality indicates a strong degree of similarity between a participant's responses and those of other participants (Brown, 1980; Byrnes, 2022). Conversely, a low communality typically reflects a closer association with a specific factor. P1 produced a score of 1.35, which is considered atypical. Although uncommon, Brown (1980) explains how this type of Q sort can occur as an outlier:

As a warning... particularly with small numbers of variables (Q sorts), communalities in excess of 1.00, while theoretically absurd, are technically possible. This occurs when one variable, because of its singularly high correlation with many others, produces a column total, t , which very nearly accounts for all of the grand total, T , such that $t > \sqrt{r}$. This usually only happens when $t = 1.00$ or more and most other variable columns sum to near zero, and this becomes less likely the more variables which are included in the study (p.213).

Due to participant P1's strong alignment with Factor 2a, with a loading of 0.823, this factor accounted for the majority of the variance, resulting in a communality score of 135%. This outcome is consistent with Brown (1980), who explains that such occurrences are more likely when the number of variables is small. It is important to note that this is a statistical artifact, caused by the nearly equal but opposite loadings of Factor 2a and Factor 2b, which must be squared. These squared values inflate the communality score and do not indicate a misinterpretation of the factors themselves. Table 5.2 outlines the rotated factor loadings and communality scores for the Q sorts.

Table 5.2
Rotated Factor Loadings for Q sorts

Participant	Factor 1	Factor 2a	Factor 2b	H ²	H ² % (Communality)
1	-0.025	0.823	-0.823	1.346	135*
2	0.735	0.211	-0.211	0.621	62
3	0.757	0.117	-0.117	0.607	61
4	0.865	0.070	-0.070	0.749	75
5*	0.547	0.477	-0.477	0.763	76
6**	0.697	-0.435	0.435	0.860	86

7*	0.532	0.592	-0.592	0.977	98
8	0.095	0.499	-0.499	0.508	51
9	0.478	0.143	-0.143	0.270	27
Eigenvalue	3.44	1.51	1.51	-	-
% explained variance	38	17	17	-	-
Composite Reliability	0.941	0.889	0.8		
Defining Sorts	4	2	1		
*denotes Q sorts not included in the statistical analysis					
**denotes individual Q sort in 2b					

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

Deciding which participants to flag was an interesting process. The Q Methodology expert suggested unflagging P5 and P7 because “they are strong across all factors... their views will still be captured in what other people have to say” (name withheld, personal communication, August 7, 2023). In Q analysis, it is crucial to unpack distinguishing statements between factors, so participants with higher factor loadings highlight differences more effectively. For example, P5, with a factor one loading of 55% and a factor two loading of 48%, shared relatively even views across both factors. Overall, this group was homogeneous (see communality scores in Table 5.2), meaning they shared similar viewpoints, so subtle differences between participants with higher factor loadings were key. Moreover, unflagging participants who shared similar viewpoints between factors added clarity to the analysis (name withheld, personal communication, August 7, 2023). Although I excluded them from the statistical analysis, I decided to include them in the qualitative analysis, believing their ability to share viewpoints across both factors would be integral in unpacking findings through an EI and CQ lens. Notably, these participants may already possess a strong sense of social awareness within the EI dimension, enabling them to recognise the importance of both factors in creating an inclusive leadership environment in sport boards. The post sort interview was crucial for further unpacking these insights.

Furthermore, Martin, the chair, was the only participant to have a negative factor loading on factor two. My curiosity lay in wanting to know more about factor two and why Martin’s viewpoints were the polar opposite. By singling him out into his own factor, I could see that his Q sort would help not only with the interpretation of both factor one and factor two but also with understanding his specific viewpoint on what constitutes an inclusive environment in sport

boards. As discussed previously in Chapter 4, Martin's leadership as a CEO, chair, board member, and core member of DICG initiatives was a core component of how NZC developed the inclusive movement over the decades.

Why is this important?

Having two participants with similar perspectives across both factors may be crucial in unpacking the link between Factor 1 and Factor 2. Both are female and have led significant diversity and inclusion initiatives. Martin, the chair, was the only participant with a negative loading on factor two; however, Diana, the deputy chair, was not far from Martin's position. Her factor loading on Factor 1 was 0.86 and on Factor 2 was 0.07. In the participant correlations, her strongest correlation with any participant was with Martin at 49%. From a surface-level analysis of board composition, the NZC National Board appears to comprise a dominant group strongly aligned with Factor 1 but still connected to Factor 2, alongside a smaller group showing the reverse pattern—primarily aligned with Factor 2 but linked to Factor 1. The leadership, represented by Martin and closely followed by Diana, aligns most strongly with factor one, with their perspectives positioned in clear contrast to those represented by Factor 2.

The next step involved creating a factor array for each factor to represent the viewpoints. Although this information can be accessed through the individual ranking of Z scores, I chose to interpret the factors using visual representations of the arrays. Prior to this project, my research was primarily qualitative, so the visual factor arrays provided a helpful way to interpret the data and offered what Watts and Stenner (2012) describe as a "pleasing methodological symmetry" (p.141).

This process involved two stages. First, I created a primary visual representation of the three factor arrays for Factors 1, 2a, and 2b, separating participant Martin (P6) from the group because he was the only participant who negatively associated with Factor 2. This separation supported the interpretation of Factor 2. The three factor arrays and their corresponding factor scores are provided in the Appendix J2. Second, I created a secondary set of visuals with Martin (P6) included in the Factor 1 group due to his strong positive association with Factor 1 viewpoints. Watts and Stenner (2012) suggest that bipolar factors are best viewed as two distinct yet related viewpoints to aid interpretation. Similarly, Ramlo (2025) recommends focusing on a two-factor solution only when it provides the clearest understanding of shared perspectives.

This confined visualisation of Factors 1 and 2 allowed me to clearly identify distinguishing and consensus statements at both ends of the spectrum while unpacking the key viewpoints within each factor. Consensus statements, which reflect shared perspectives among participants, are highlighted in blue, while distinguishing statements with $p < 0.01$ are shown in purple.

The following subsections provide an in-depth discussion of each identified factor, drawing on data generated from NVivo and Braun and Clarke's (2022) reflexive thematic analysis approach. This analysis incorporated insights from the post Q sort group discussions and the subsequent 30 individual follow-up interviews. Each subsection includes participant quotations to support and contextualise the interpretations made for each factor.

Factor Arrays

The following section presents the visual representation of Factor 1 and 2 derived from the Q sort analysis. These two factor arrays illustrate the shared viewpoints among participants and highlight the distinguishing and consensus statements that underpin each factor. The visuals provide a structured way to interpret how participants collectively prioritised elements in the leading statement '*Inclusive environments in sport boards require...*'. Each factor is accompanied by a table (Table 5.3 and Table 5.5) showing the top-ranked statements and their corresponding Z-scores, enabling a deeper understanding of the perspectives that shaped these viewpoints.

In the tables and participant quotations, the numbers in brackets refer to the original statement number from the Q sort concourse, followed by the ranking position (-5 to +5) assigned by each participant. For example, (40, +5) indicates that statement number 40 'a psychological safe environment' was placed in the +5 (most important) column on the Q sort grid, representing the participant's strongest agreement. Similarly, Z-scores in the tables reflect the statistical weight of each statement within the factor, showing its relative importance across all participants associated with that factor. A full list of all statements used in the Q sort concourse is provided in Appendix J1 for reference.

5.2.1 Factor 1: Inclusion Grows from a Safe and Supportive Environment

As discussed previously, Factor 1 often referred to as the 'in the kitchen' viewpoint in the Q Methodology expert's metaphor represents participants who prioritised creating a safe and

supportive environment. The factor array (Figure 5.3) and Z score and Q sort values (Table 5.3) for this group looked as follows:

Figure 5.3

Factor Array for Factor 1

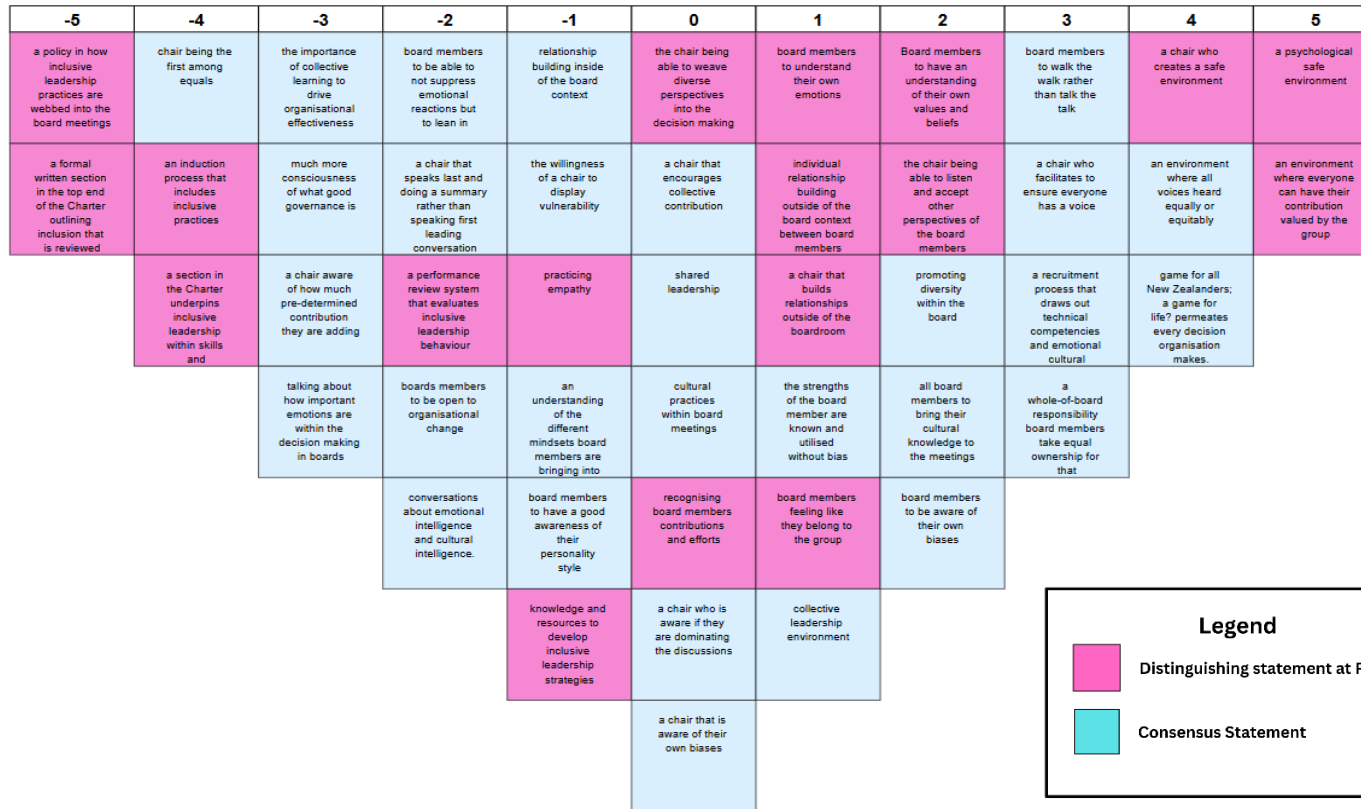


Table 5.3*Top 10 Factor Z-scores, Q sort Values, and Contributors' Raw Sort Values*

State ment #	Statement	Z-score	Q Sort Value	P4	P3	P2	P6	P9
40	a psychological safe environment	2.162	5	5	5	3	4	5
17	an environment where everyone can have their contribution valued by the group	1.76	5	4	4	4	4	-1
5	a chair who creates a safe environment	1.667	4	3	4	4	3	4
11	an environment where all voices heard equally or equitably	1.414	4	5	2	4	-1	0
14	game for all New Zealanders; a game for life? permeates every decision organisation makes.	1.237	4	4	1	5	-3	5
29	board members to walk the walk rather than talk the talk	1.045	3	3	3	5	-2	-3
26	a chair who facilitates to ensure everyone has a voice	0.988	3	2	3	2	1	2
30	a recruitment process that draws out technical competencies and emotional cultural	0.987	3	4	1	0	0	4
1	a whole-of-board responsibility board members take equal ownership for that	0.892	3	2	5	0	-1	3
32	Board members to have an understanding of their own values and beliefs	0.872	2	3	1	2	0	1

Note: Distinguishing statement $P < 0.01$ Consensus statement

Factor 1 accounts for 35% of the variance and has an eigenvalue of 3.4, with Q sorts from five participants significantly associated with this factor. These participants included three females (Diana (P4), P3, and P9) and two males (Martin (P6) and P2). At the time of the initial Q sort, all five participants had at least three years of experience on the NZC board, with Martin having served the longest at fourteen years.

Factor 1 emphasises the importance of a safe and supportive board environment where all members' contributions are valued, thereby enhancing inclusion within sport boards. Participants

associated with Factor 1 strongly emphasised the importance of an inclusive environment requiring psychological safety. The statement *a psychologically safe environment* (statement 40) was considered the most strongly associated item, receiving a rating of +3 to +5 across all Factor 1 participants. The significance of feeling safe is exemplified in P2 Q sort interview (40, +3):

I think that's an action thing. If you feel valued, if you feel safe, if you feel like your opinion is going to be heard, then you'll offer it and that's the heart of being inclusive. Everybody being able to table and voice an opinion, right? And feeling that there's nobody's opinion that counts any less than anybody else's.

Furthermore, the statement *a chair who creates a safe environment* (statement 5) was ranked between +3 and +4 by all five Factor 1 participants, indicating that this group strongly believes the chair's role in fostering a safe environment is crucial for inclusion.

P2 (5, +4) emphasised this point, stating:

I'm a strong believer that the chair sets the tone. If the chair is a person who does set a safe environment, who is inclusive and encourages this to be a focal point, then that will happen. If the chair doesn't or shuts it down, then you've got a problem.

A common link between feeling safe and using one's voice was evident across all five participants. P9 (40, +5) explained, *"It's about making people feel safe, that they can articulate their thoughts without any undue [pressure]"*. Diana (40, +5) and P3 (40, +5) extended this perspective, noting that board members who feel safe are more likely to voice their opinions, which in turn creates open discussion and dialogue within the group.

Diana (40, +5): *I feel like a psychologically safe environment is created in a way that I am not thinking 'I'm going to have to ask my question in front of all of management, and I'm having fear in maybe looking like a dick'. I can ask it with the board. And what does everyone think and can we discuss it? So it kind of enables, and gives you confidence? Because everyone can have an open discussion.*

P3 (40, +5): *I've often been in environments where people have said to me afterwards, I wish I'd said that. And I said, well, why didn't you say at the time' and they said, "I didn't feel*

comfortable". So, if you don't create that safe environment you just lose so much of that free open discussion.

Interestingly, the post Q sort group discussion revealed differing views on the importance of a psychologically safe environment. Among the five participants associated with Factor 1, the three who placed the statement *a psychological safe environment* (statement 40) at +5 were all female. The following dialogue illustrates moments when male participants became aware of why female board members feel so strongly about creating a safe environment:

P1 (40, -1) *So it's funny, when I when I looked at some of the softer elements while I went through this, I thought part of it is with the journey your board's been on, if you're a new board of young, inexperienced board members, all the softer stuff, I think is really important. But for our board, we're all seasoned directors, so the psychological aspect wasn't important to me. So, I think it's an age and stage thing. I don't need to go into a boardroom and feel safe personally, because I feel safe anyway.*

Diana (40, +5) *But that's quite different to me. I've been in many board environments, and it has not been created that way.*

P1 (40, -1): *So, it's important to you?*

Diana (40, +5) *It's important for me to ensure that the entire board is safe, because I know what it's like to be in situations where it's not. It'll be really interesting to see if that's different amongst us because of our different experiences, for me being female, being young when I first got onto boards, and being Māori, those things, everyone puts you in a little box over here.*

P1 (40, -1) *I get that*

Diana (40, +5) *So that's why it [psychological safe environment] is the most important thing for me and for inclusivity.*

This dialogue highlights how participants' social construction within board roles, particularly from a gender perspective, influences their views on creating an inclusive environment. Diana reflected on board experiences where she perceived to feel unsafe due to a box-ticking approach, which she still considers significant in fostering inclusivity. In contrast, P1 acknowledged the importance of a safe environment for new boards but did not view it as essential for overall inclusivity. This section

identifies a potential barrier for sport boards seeking to develop inclusive leadership practices. Specifically, it emphasises the importance of creating an environment where every board member feels empowered to voice their opinions. It also underscores the need to understand board members' past experiences to appreciate why they are passionate about fostering such an environment.

The Waitangi experience, as outlined in Chapter 4, was pivotal in revealing how board members' perspectives on inclusion and psychological safety were influenced by their prior experiences and social contexts. The post sort discussion highlighted that some male board members felt vulnerable and outside their comfort zone.

P3: If I reflect on, and this is for a personal journey, as well as a board journey, I think the trip to Waitangi, for me was pivotal, and our journey as a board. But for me personally as well, I think part of that is probably due to the vulnerability and the fact that we all had to 100% be uncomfortable and understand what that felt like and do that together.

P8: Yes, understanding what you need to know. And I agree, the first time we went to Waitangi, I sat down next to P2 [male] at the table, and he's doing his Pepeha shaking, he was sweating, it was so uncomfortable. But he was also so keen to get it right. Because he really believed in it. And he wanted to show that respect. And traditional governance skills he is outstanding, so I think that vulnerability and discomfort made him feel unsafe, well hopefully he felt safe with us.

Diana: It was uncomfortable for him. And it's not being uncomfortable being comfortable, because that's what many of us around the table have had to do. Particularly women. There's a certain level of uncomfortableness that we have to operate in. And for him, it was new to experience this.

Core Collaboration Group

The online meetings of the core collaboration group were instrumental in unpacking the key factors interpreted from the Quan–Qual sequential design. The eight participants contributed a diverse range of perspectives shaped by their varied experiences and backgrounds within the context. A total of seven online meetings were held between December 2022 and May 2024. Table 5.4 presents the demographic summary of the core collaboration group. To maintain clarity, participants are

referred to by “P” and a number, as Martin, P3, and P5 appear in both the Q sort analysis and the core collaboration group results.

Table 5.4

Demographic Summary of New Zealand Cricket Core Collaboration Group Participants

Core collaboration group participants	Sport Sector Role	Gender	Ethnicity?
Martin Snedden	NZC Chairperson	Male	European Descent
P3	NZC Board member	Female	unknown
P5	NZC Board member	Female	unknown
P13	Lead Planning and Governance Consultant Sport NZ	Female	unknown
P14	People and Culture Lead SportNZ	Female	unknown
S1	PhD supervisor	Female	European Descent
S2	PhD supervisor	Female	European Descent
Kelly McCallum	PhD researcher	Female	European Descent

As discussed in Chapter 4, the core collaboration group began to evolve into an expert advisory group, providing guidance and deeper probing into the key factors interpreted from the data. This is exemplified in the following dialogue between me and the group in meeting #2:

Me: *And so far, safe environment in a board has popped up in my interpretation. So how do we create psychological safe environments? How do we create safe environments, so everyone has a voice? That seems to be repeating over and over again, both in the quantitative and the qualitative.*

P3: *I don't know whether you analyse the data in relation to male or female, but there was a slight difference in the weighting for safeness for females versus males. We did have some discussion about that. I think that would be quite interesting to explore*

Furthermore, the core collaboration group played a crucial role in deconstructing concepts such as psychological safety and facilitating in-depth discussions that established connections between

related elements, including vulnerability, trust, and having a voice. An example of this process is illustrated below from meeting #4:

S1: *I'm really feeling like we're honing in on safety as a key pillar of inclusion. I've always lent toward the word inclusive, as friendly and interested, but I've never really honed into the notion of safety, cultural safety, or gendered safety in the way that I think I now do because of this project.*

P3: *That's interesting. I was talking to a high-performance coach and the weekend, and he was telling me safety is one of the number one thing around the team environment to get trust. So how does a coach create that safety? Because you can't perform at your best if you don't feel safe. And so it goes right across what we do at one layer goes into many layers.*

P14: *I think there's an interesting piece in there around vulnerability as well. You can take people to quite a vulnerable space, which also allows for that openness and sharing.*

As the layers of discussion unfolded, it became clear that we needed to continue unpacking the concept of psychological safety by returning to the foundational steps that enable a sport board to create a safe environment. The Waitangi experience was again referenced as a pivotal moment that generated vulnerability while raising questions about the extent to which individuals felt safe within the group to expose that vulnerability. This is illustrated in the dialogue from meeting two:

P14: *This trip to Waitangi sounds like it was a real turning point. But that's quite a deliberate thing to have done. It's an experience that probably led to some aha moments and building empathy and understanding. But it created the opportunity for vulnerability,*

S2: *Assuming you have the safety first*

P3: *I think if you did it without the safety, it would be pretty dreadful. How do you make sure you've got one before you do the other?*

Martin: *Just thinking further back in the chain. All directors turned up at Waitangi feeling they were in a safe enough environment in order to enable themselves to allow themselves to be vulnerable. But then tracing back a little bit from there is to say, 'how did it come about that we felt like we were in a safe environment by that stage?'*

As the exploration of psychological safety continued during the core collaborative meeting discussions, it quickly became apparent that the starting point needed to be identified. P13 (meeting #4) articulated this clearly: *"Right from the beginning, right from the advertisement for board members all the way through the recruitment process, if it all feels safe and inclusive, then you would get a range of diverse people applying and the best people appointed for the role."* This reinforced the importance of embedding inclusivity from the outset, particularly during the recruitment process. The recruitment process emerged as a significant consensus statement for Factor 1 and represented a critical link to the strong process orientation identified in Factor 2. This first intervention will be examined in detail following the discussion of Factor 2.

5.2.2 Factor 2: Leading with Process: How Inclusion Begins in Sport

Governance

Whilst Factor 1 prioritised a safe and supportive environment as crucial to creating an inclusive board culture, the participants loading on Factor 2 held the view that achieving this begins with strong governance processes. Factor 2, the 'in the garden' viewpoint, reflects participants who emphasised processes as the foundation for inclusion. The factor array for this group (Figure 5.4) and Z score and Q sort values (Table 5.5) looked as follows:

Figure 5.4
Factor Array for Factor 2

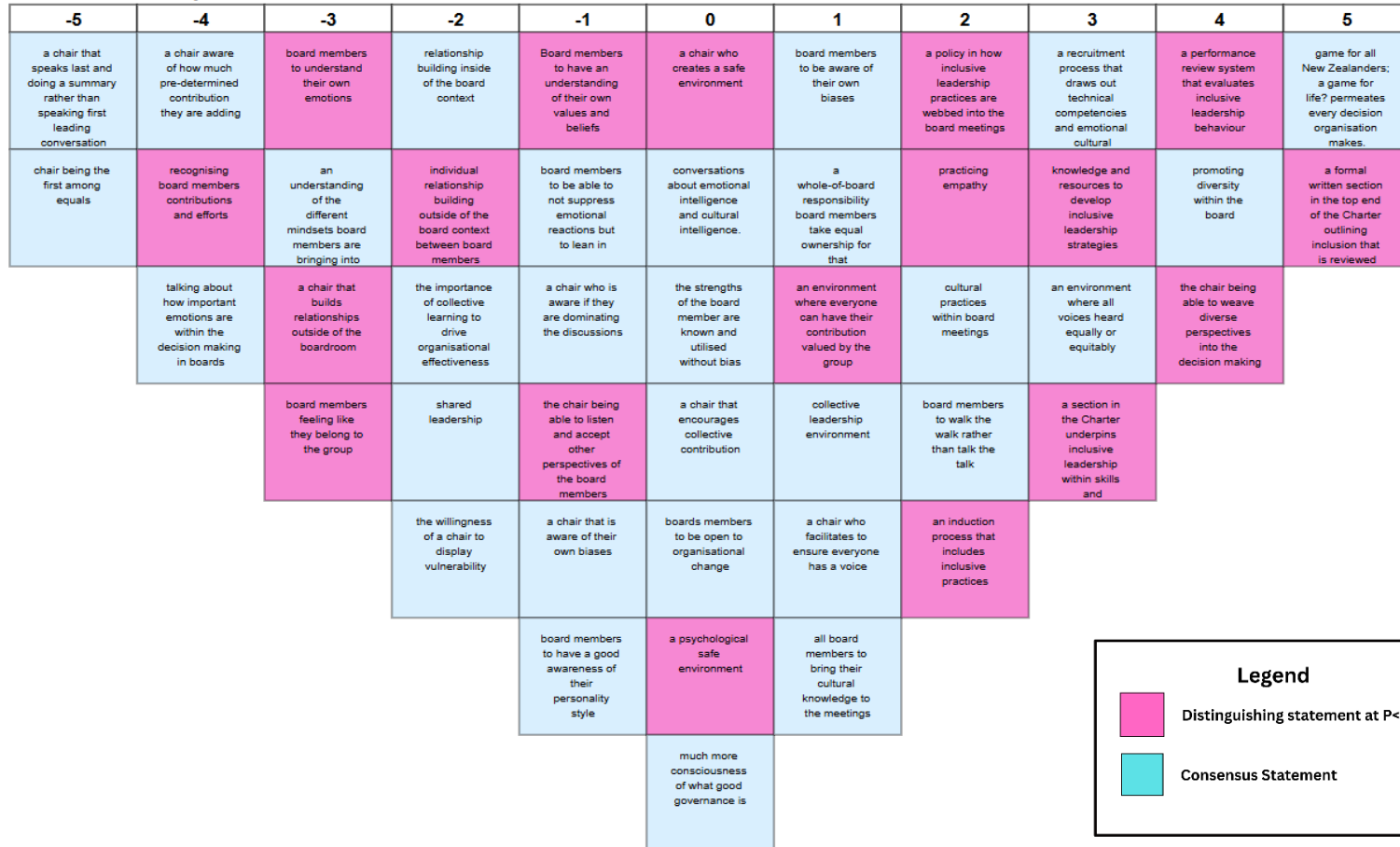


Table 5.5*Top 10 Factor Z-scores, Q sort Values, and Contributors' Raw Sort Values*

Num	Statement	Z-score	Q Sort Value	P1	P8
14	game for all New Zealanders; a game for life? permeates every decision organisation makes.	2.018	5	5	3
9	a formal written section in the top end of the Charter outlining inclusion that is reviewed regularly	1.578	5	4	2
47	a performance review system that evaluates inclusive leadership behaviour	1.578	4	4	2
46	promoting diversity within the board	1.41	4	3	4
24	the chair being able to weave diverse perspectives into the decision making	1.397	4	4	0
30	a recruitment process that draws out technical competencies and emotional cultural	1.291	3	5	-5
22	knowledge and resources to develop inclusive leadership strategies	1.228	3	3	2
11	an environment where all voices heard equally or equitably	1.152	3	2	5
4	a section in the Charter underpins inclusive leadership within skills and competencies framework	1.138	3	3	1
38	a policy in how inclusive leadership practices are webbed into the board meetings	0.97	2	2	3

Note: Distinguishing statement $P < 0.01$ Consensus statement

Factor 2 accounts for 17% of the variance and has an eigenvalue of 1.5, with Q sorts from two participants significantly associated with this factor. Both were male board members, P1 and P8, and at the time of the initial Q sort each had two years of experience each on the NZC board. It is noteworthy that only P5 had less experience than P1 and P8, and P5 was one of the two participants unflagged due to close loadings across both factors.

Factor 2 emphasises that the most influential elements for creating an inclusive environment are board processes such as a charter, performance reviews, and governance policies. Statements 9 (a formal written section in the charter outlining inclusion and reviewed regularly) and 47 (a performance review system that evaluates inclusive leadership behaviour) reflect participants' views that inclusive leadership should first be embedded within processes, which would then shape the environment. P1 ranked process-related items highest and stressed the importance of getting processes right before anything else, stating: *"I've been on boards for 40*

years or more. And I've seen such a dramatic change in regulatory requirements and board member and management teams can get themselves in real trouble because due process is not followed". His extensive governance experience has led him to conclude that processes are paramount for organisational safety and stability. He further asserted: "As I've got older, I've seen companies not get destroyed, but getting close to it through lack of good process. That's why I put that as so important". His perspective demonstrates that processes are essential for a successful inclusive environment and significantly influence his views on the board context.

Additionally, participant P8 considers processes to be of moderate importance, perceiving them as a supportive initial mechanism rather than the primary driver of an inclusive environment. He remarks, *"I think, in the early days (of a board journey), I think those processes would be quite helpful. Until you can get that to that [inclusive] environment"*. He views processes as potentially useful checks to ensure the continuation of inclusive leadership behaviours, stating, *"I think in terms of processes, it comes back to that theme around actions speak louder than words and processes are useful checks along the journey"*.

Martin was the only individual loading significantly and negatively on Factor 2 which indicated he had an opposite viewpoint to those positively loading participants P1 and P8. His distinctive viewpoint is evident in the statement *"I value much more living the thing rather than, you know, rather than what's written on a piece of paper that quite often doesn't get looked at much"*. Similarly, Diana did not load significantly on Factor 2 and was the most closely aligned with Martin's viewpoint on the importance of creating an inclusive environment first, before process, as reflected in her statement *"I like to have a process and I like to follow a process. But I also think in this particular topic, process only gets you so far. If the intent and the genuiness [sic] and the environmental factors are not there, process is going to be a failure"*.

The post sort interview discussion provided significant insights into the participants' thought processes regarding how they distinguished and prioritised the 'process' statements in relation to the 'environment' statements. This is exemplified in the following conversation:

P3: *I found that the easiest part, processes just went to the left [least important]*

Martin: *I think as you said it before, processes all to the left, the other end of the spectrum all to the right*

P5: *I'm a bit more processy, [sic] so some of those (process statements) went higher up. Not all of them did but some of them did because how do you actually make this environment?*

P3: *Because, when you think about our journey [NZC's inclusive journey] when we put together that move to have more inclusive boards and actually put a process around that, we would not be where we are now. It's really chicken and egg situation?*

Core Collaboration Group

In the core collaboration group meeting #1, it was clear that processes were also a significant factor in creating inclusive leadership environments as P13 states;

The benefit of wrapping inclusive leadership around useful, good governance systems policies and processes and predominantly I would be going to the Charter. So what does it say in the Charter than underpins inclusive leadership and how does that web its way through board meetings, discussion before and after, interactions with chief executive particularly induction, recruitment and induction into the board.

Collaboration group meeting #2 further examined the role of processes in creating inclusive environments, particularly how inclusive leadership practices such as policies can be adapted and transferred to other boards while maintaining their effectiveness within each unique context. P14 exemplifies this perspective:

I think the piece that often gets lost is how do we make this right for who we are and the community we serve? I see quite a lot of 'who's doing DEI well, and I'll just take their policy and put our name on it'. It's the piece of the learning and those little gold nuggets of magic from people who have done this and we ask, 'who have done this'? But then still, what is this process and what is the thing that we need to get right for our world?

5.2.3 Additional Themes outside Factor 1 and 2

The chair creating a safe environment: the chicken and the egg dilemma

Factors 1 and 2 distinctly differentiated the two groups of participants, emphasising the significance of either the environment or the process in fostering an inclusive atmosphere. Although the statements addressed the three areas of environment, process, and chair, the chair-related statements were the least significantly ranked consensus statements among

participants. Only one statement, 'a chair who facilitates to ensure everyone has a voice,' achieved a positive consensus (+1 to +4) among all participants. However, despite the low ranked significance in the Q sort highlighting the importance of the chair creating an inclusive environment in sport boards, it was obvious right from the initial start of the post sort discussion that the participants felt the chair was just as important yet struggled with where the chair might fit into creating an inclusive environment in sport boards. The influence of the chair was evident in the thematic analysis of the post sort group discussion and the core collaboration group meetings. During the post sort group discussion, P3 found that she had to really think about what she felt important to start with in creating an inclusive environment before she ranked the statements. *"What I found really challenging is that I had to think about the role of a chair, and that's the first thing and if you get that right then the rest don't matter [referring to the rest of the statements]"*. An interesting reflection was from Martin, chair at the time. He stated, *"I was trying to work out to what extent the chair contributes to the thing [in reference to inclusive environments]. Because I'm the chair. The chair stuff, the good stuff, was over to the right"*. 'Over to the right' meant that he placed high importance on the relationship between the chair and inclusive environments. This comment was followed by multiple laughter from the participants.

Furthermore, the 'chicken and the egg' theme between the chair, environment and process continued throughout the discussion. For example, P1 stated *"I think the chair's ability to create a safe environment is most important"* with participant Diana following up with, *"I had the outcome of that is a psychologically safe environment...so the outcome is more important. It's quite hard to decouple that, because how do you create it? How do you end up with that without it being created?"* And then Martin reflected that he believed that for a safe environment to occur, a chair had to *"recognize shared and collective leadership environment where people feel safe about contributing"*. Martin also shared a rare personal glimpse of how he as a chair creates this collective leadership environment through getting to know his members first:

The skill of a chair is to recognise the personalities that are around the table and draw out. I've got to know you well enough that I know how you react... I told XXX yesterday how I'm really enjoying her in our board environment, because she's informed, but she's new... And I know that P8 will have four questions in a row lined up... It's just interesting. Trying to understand the dynamic or trying to use personalities to create the best dynamic. Sometimes we probably get it wrong, but more often than not, we get it roughly right.

The conversation about which comes first in an inclusive environment in sports boards persisted throughout the semi-structured interviews. Notably, the chair played a significant role as illustrated in P2 statement:

Chair sets the tone, right? And if the chair is a person who does set a safe environment, who is inclusive and encourages this to be a focal point, then that will happen. If the chair doesn't or shuts it down, then you've got a problem.

The Chair's EI and CQ

Furthermore, the significance of the chair's EI, particularly self-awareness, is highlighted in P5 statement: *"We need to have chairs that are self-aware and understand how to facilitate whoever's in the room, whether they're in same homogeneous group or not"*. The participants' view on the current chair was undeniably positive as demonstrated in P8's comment, *"Martin is so good. It's hard to find a chink in the armour"*. P9 shared a similar viewpoint:

But I think, the key parts for me that stand out, are his empathy, his leadership, his strong relationship with the CEO, and his ability to just talk to anybody. His work is never done. I hear hugely about his stamina. And talking to people, he makes people feel good.

And again, the link to EI and Martin was evident as Diana stated: *"He's got exceptional EQ that he can bring disparate views all in."* P3 concurs and highlights the relationship between EI and CQ in explaining:

Martin naturally has EQ, but he's definitely enhanced his EQ by understanding where women come from when they don't feel included. But the CQ piece, sometimes just exposing yourself to what you don't know and exposing yourself to different ways of thinking. It opens your mind to thinking more inclusively.

Core Collaboration Group

The chair listening with intent

The core collaboration group found the role of the chair to be pivotal in creating and maintaining the inclusive environment in sport boards as illustrated by Martin, *"It just demonstrates how important it is that the chair is making sure that this happens [inclusive environments] that people are open to it, and that they engage with it"*. Furthermore, the group maintained that the chair still held a leadership position with the group despite the project's emphasis on

collective leadership. My supervisor described the relevance of this: *“So again, that Rangatira (leader), the role is to have that person bring the others together. The leader is still pivotal in leadership”*.

While the chair's role was acknowledged as influential in fostering an inclusive environment, the core collaboration group emphasised that it was the chair's practice of listening with intent that was regarded as particularly significant. P5 (meeting #6) reflects on the impact Martin as a chair had on the people within the cricket system when he listened to what they had to say. She directly tells Martin in part of the conversation. *“You hear a lot from the people around the cricket sector, who talk about when you went out and you listened. They felt you listened to where they're at, across all the different parts of the country”*.

Also, the practice of a chair stepping out of the conversation and intently listening to what the other board members are saying was an important reflection by P13 (meeting #3) *“I think you get different insights when you're just listening and not participating because you capture the themes that you otherwise miss when you're in the conversation”*. Listening with intent was demonstrated in Martin's example (meeting #6) of when he was leading his first New Zealand aspiring sport chairs session and he took the time to intently listen to what they had to say while introducing themselves *“You know, it was incredible listening to people. I mean, once you actually hear them”*.

The chair's role in creating an inclusive environment through intentional listening to all voices while maintaining effective decision-making was a major theme of core collaboration meeting #5. Martin reflected on a previous biculturalism workshop led by Janelle Riki-Waaka, stating: *“It wasn't just about inclusivity, where people were provided with a really good opportunity to express their views. It actually was that their views were listened to, and frequently decisions were made, influenced by those views”*.

Chairing With Purpose and Boundaries

Interestingly, although the group believed in listening intently and including all the voices, it was just as imperative to make decisions quickly, especially in a board environment. How to do this was unpacked in the group's conversation in meeting #5 regarding embracing all voices but still having to make decisions:

P13: *When you're having to make decisions quickly, and we want to make a decision and get on with it as we've got deadlines and now, we have to listen to people.*

P5: *I'm working with an organisation at the moment where they have tried to do that and give everybody a feeling that they've got a role in leadership and a role to contribute and feel empowered, but no decisions are getting made. And so in that timeframe, the need is there to actually make decisions and drive it forward. And how you find that balance, is really challenging, particularly in small organisations, if you listen to everyone.*

P13: *Listening to that podcast [podcast name], it's about bringing in boundaries*

.

P3: *I think it's really interesting. How do you hear different views but still make decisions that are right for the organisation?*

Intentional relationship building

This conversation began to highlight the critical role of the chair in maintaining a “*really clear purpose*” (P3), as well as the importance of setting boundaries around agenda topics to ensure discussions remain focused and relevant. Furthermore, intentional inclusive practices like relationship building could potentially influence sport governance essentials like decision making as stipulated in Martin’s contemplation:

If you look at it in the short term, you'll say, we need this and this done, and we need these people to help us and we get on with it. If you look at it longer term, you might say, to enable decisions to be made, we need these relationships to be formed and to be in a good state that ensures that decisions can be made that are more accurate, and have a better chance of successful implementation. And so therefore, what you might describe as the speed of decision making in the first two years, which may be relationship focused, looks to be slower. If you look at the decision making over a five-year period and then look at the speed that might happen once you get your relationships right, over a five-year period, you might actually find there's no difference [in speed] but the buy-in is stronger (meeting #5).

Intentional relationship-building, along with the establishment of clear boundaries and a defined purpose at the start of each meeting by the chair, was seen as key to enabling effective decision-making while sustaining an inclusive environment within the sport board. The core collaboration

group highlighted the challenge for the chair in upholding these boundaries while actively listening to and valuing all voices. Additionally, as discussed earlier in relation to psychological safety, the chair's role in creating a space where members feel a sense of belonging, while also having their uniqueness respected, was identified as a significant and ongoing challenge.

Keeping the pedal on by making the initiatives explicit and the solutions collective

A key concern raised by the core collaboration group was how to introduce new inclusive initiatives without losing momentum on existing goals, such as achieving 40% women in sport governance. The 'pedal' metaphor, introduced by P13, served as a visual anchor throughout the discussions illustrating how multiple initiatives can move forward simultaneously, though at varying speeds and levels of focus, particularly within diversity and inclusion efforts. This dialogue and collaboration of insights led to a focus on the system and a central theme of the project: "*make the problem explicit and the solution collective*" (Supervisor 1, meeting #2). The initial conversation is outlined below from meeting #2:

P13: *Right from the beginning, right from the advertisement for board members all the way through the recruitment process, if it all feels safe and inclusive, then you'd get a broad range and diverse group of people applying and then the best people will be appointed for the role. I'm interested to see how that pans out because I think the gender pedal is stalled because it's not locked down. And I think it could easily be lost if we didn't keep our eye on it. But it will be interesting to see where this whole thing goes and whether you can take your foot off the pedal because another one comes in that's more powerful and more diverse and safer than just saying gender.*

Me: *That's a really good visual. Taking your foot off the pedal.*

P13: *Without breaking the speed limit, obviously.*

The pedal theme resurfaced in the core collaboration meeting #5, as shown in the following dialogue:

P3: *I like that concept of the pedal. I haven't heard that before. It's a nice way of phrasing it and bringing it together. Because I think that is probably one of the most interesting challenges we have right now is that there are lots of initiatives and some people can feel a bit overwhelmed by the initiatives, and being able to make sure we keep our pedal on what is important and how do we prioritise.*

P5: *That's a real big one for me is that making sure it's not a thing, but it's a way of working. And when it's a thing, then you've got the woman thing, and you've got the Māori thing, and we've got all these things we need to do. So we have to choose some things that we've got the capacity for, and which ones can get dropped out. How do you make it not a thing?*

Martin: *I really liked what you said before Kelly, about small changes. I've always been a huge fan of evolutionary revolution as something that generally leads to more sustainable change. I think you win or lose on the big things, it's actually with small changes you keep winning and you don't notice the change quite as much. And then you step back six months, 12 months, two years, and you capture what, there's an enormous change, but it hasn't felt like that. So, I don't think you can narrow down change to one thing at a time. I just think there's too much that needs to keep being tweaked. And so therefore, it's a matter of trying to keep it small and manageable.*

This research identified several key interventions for the project. These included developing awareness and understanding of inclusive leadership in sport boards among the National Board members, promoting the chair's awareness of the inhibitors and enablers of inclusive leadership in sport boards, establishing a recruitment and appointment process that attracts open minded candidates, and embedding explicit inclusive leadership practices that emphasise EI and CQ to support a collective and inclusive culture within the NZC system. The next section outlines each of these interventions.

5.3 Intervention 1: The National Board

5.3.1 National Board Members

The context of first intervention was to enhance board members awareness and understanding of inclusive practices in sport boards. As outlined in Chapter 4 and expanded later in this chapter, 5/11 National Board members were involved in either the DICG, the Core Collaboration Group, or the appointment panel working group. This meant that 6/11 National Board members were not explicitly involved in the National Board intervention between the pre and post Q sorts over the 18 month period. However, providing theories of practice to the chairs through dialogue to support the development of their own and the board members inclusive leadership practices was an explicit objective. The remaining board members were kept adequately informed about the project through board meetings and informal

conversations at events. The evaluation of this intervention from the perspective of the National Board members will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

5.3.2 The Chairs

The second intervention context within the National Board focused on increasing awareness and understanding of the inhibitors and enablers of inclusive leadership in sport boards through dialogue with both Martin and Diana. My collaboration with both chairs aimed to interpret developing data themes and design interventions that were both impactful and meaning-driven. However, the way I engaged with each chair and participated in the co-generative data process resulted in two distinct approaches to meaning-making. With Martin, collaboration primarily occurred through email exchanges and online meetings, while with Diana, it involved more informal and relational approaches, such as conversations during hikes. These differences shaped the dialogic process and the nature of the interventions. Frolunde (2013) describes meaning-making as an event that weaves together the construction of knowledge, self, and other, creating a co-production of meaning through different and often contradictory voices. Furthermore, dialogue in action research operates as a basis of inquiry (Coghlan, 2017, 2019). As Bohm (1996) suggests, dialogue between people takes many forms, but its purpose is to enable change through the emergence of meaning. The following section outlines the intervention involving both chairs and the distinct dialogic action research approaches employed.

Chair 1: Martin Snedden

As discussed in Chapter 4, I was fortunate to work with two chairs, each offering distinct spaces for co-generating knowledge and planning next steps. My collaborative relationship with Martin officially commenced 6 months prior to the project when he participated as a panellist in an industry event I co-organised, which focused on biculturalism within the sport sector. Drawing on McMorland and Piggot-Irvine's (2000) adapted collaborative categories, Martin and I quickly progressed from superficial collaboration (Level 1) to deep, inquiry-based engagement (Level 4), enabling generative collaborative action—evident in the following email exchange (M. Snedden, personal communication, June 18, 2023):

***Martin:** Kelly, Great start with process to create the CEO PD. See 2017 version (which had no consultation with Board or anyone else) and contrast this with the version finished today after extensive consultation. Those who provided feedback will see that feedback reflected in 2023 version. You and I should have a follow up chat Thursday or Friday this week. Martin*

***Me:** Hi Martin, Sounds like a great plan. I'm free after 12 on Thursday (Fri I am leading workshops all day unfortunately). I have just had a good look over the 2023 consultation document. Wow. That is incredible. In terms of my PhD, what we are doing now (collaboration at a high communicative level) is the whole desired purpose of action research. We are here to help NZC with this inclusive leadership journey (through the lens of EI and CQ) and make meaningful change. That's it 😊. Kelly*

Martin exemplifies what Brydon-Miller (2024) describes as a person who is a “dynamo of transformation,” a term used to describe someone who “has an extraordinary amount of energy that they bring to getting things done” (p. 565). Martin and I would discuss the developing themes from the project, and a week later he would send me an email outlining suggestions for the next possible interventions (M. Snedden, personal communication, March 28, 2023):

***Martin:** In terms of focus areas for NZC Board action research, we felt that there might be a mixture / hybrid of:*

- *internally-focused opportunities,*
- *but also opportunities with our MA governors.*

One specific opportunity we discussed might be the annual NZC Board appointment process (which starts in August and finishes at NZC's AGM in November). After our discussion I review the NZC Board competency matrix. This matrix tends to focus more on functional competencies and doesn't explicitly call out soft competencies such as cultural fit.

The early foundation of openness, trust, and shared learning in our relationship was key to initiating two of the project's three interventions: the appointment process and developing awareness in the NZC system through the MAs. The second intervention, system awareness, is examined in greater detail later in this section. The following email illustrates Martin's capacity for dynamic transformation, demonstrated by his implementation of the appointment process and his recognition of its subsequent influence on the MAs, which ultimately informed the development of the next intervention, inclusive leadership awareness in the system (M. Snedden, personal communication, March 28, 2023).

Now that your process has flushed this to the surface, it is an obvious action for NZC to work on for this year's process which begins in July 2023. And the beauty of this is that:

this approach requires the three MA chairs on the Appointments Panel to familiarise themselves with our approach, which may help the spreading of this into the MAs.

Chair 2: Diana Puketapu-Lyndon

“if you don’t have awareness, then there’s no real starting point”

(Diana, post sort group discussion)

In November 2023, approximately nine months into the project, Diana Puketapu-Lyndon was appointed chair of NZC. Diana and I had already established a preliminary relationship through the Q-post sort interview, and we mutually decided that our dialogue moments would be best suited to hiking up our local mountain, Paranui. In contrast to my collaborative relationship with Martin, which was developed through emails, phone calls, and Teams meetings, Diana and I engaged in meaning-making through spontaneous hikes in natural settings, with no agenda or constraints on our conversations. The only guiding aspects were theoretical considerations and identified project themes at that moment in time. This form of dialogue closely aligns with what Haig-Brown (1995) describes as informal interviews:

so close to everyday conversations ... they often served as an opportunity for people to follow up on more formal interviews or simply to comment generally on the day's significant events, or on details they thought I might be interested in (p. 105).

This collaborative context heightened Diana’s awareness of her inclusive leadership approach with the board, which became evident through consistently demonstrated values and behaviours rather than formalised objectives or targeted interventions. Themes that had developed within the project were unpacked into multiple layers, with each layer revealing additional themes, and our inquiry remained in constant flux as we explored how these elements connected. An example of this is reflected in my notes on “inclusive leadership with boundaries,” discussed during our hike (D. Puketapu-Lyndon, personal communication, February 16, 2024):

A lot of things talked about today but I need to reflect on our conversation about process and inclusive leadership with boundaries. Māori world versus the Pākehā world. As Diana suggests, the Māori world does not have boundaries per se because in the creative world they speak freely about things whereas in the Pākehā world, we are really process oriented. So how do you create a space in a board room where there are no boundaries but there are boundaries? Are there holes in the boundaries? As Diana mentioned as a

chair, you can't take everyone's ideas and hear everybody's voice but she said it does come down to as a chair knowing there is boundaries within where the discussion will be in the board, but the environment has to be safe enough that if someone in the group feels safe enough to say an idea that is outside that boundary, then that's inclusion.

As in the post sort and core collaboration group discussions, we grappled with the paradox of needing a safe space to foster inclusivity. This is reflected in my notes from a hike on February 18, 2024 (D. Puketapu-Lyndon, personal communication, February 18, 2024):

It's becoming clear that for board members to feel safe, their voices need to be heard. If a board member feels safe, they will voice their opinions. What is interesting is Diana's question 'how do people feel safe?' This relates back to the Q sort and the statements the board members felt was necessary for inclusive environments and the three themes- process, environment, and chair. Some participants put the processes as most important and some had the chair as the most important, and some participants put the environment, the middle part, how they felt included, was their voice heard. Was putting process first, for example, their answer to feeling safe?

Diana believed that truly understanding her board was key to creating a safe environment. The next day, during our hike up Paranui, she reflected on how her listening skills were central to that understanding. My reflection from February 19, 2024, expands on this (D. Puketapu-Lyndon, personal communication, February 19, 2024):

What has come up from this walk up Paranui is board composition and how they feel safe, are they safe with the processes, are they safe with the environment, do they feel safe with an effective chair? Knowing the board composition and how they feel safe is important for a chair. From Diana's perspective as a leader, she is very much about listening and stepping back and making the connections rather than leading from the front. She leads 'amongst the people'. She has a natural ability to connect and build trust through relationship building. She said she has always been like that, sitting back and observing and seeing how she can connect people to get the outcome the organisation needs.

Co-generation of Knowledge

Regardless of the differing approaches, my relationship with both chairs resulted in interventions being addressed through dialogue. Martin and I initiated the appointment process

and the DICG workshop, while Diana and I co-constructed individual knowledge and meaning by applying theory and experience to the significant themes generated from the project. This co-generation of knowledge created by both chairs and myself through dialogue reflects what Bohm (1996) describes as a “transformation of consciousness” (p. 109), where knowledge within dialogue is drawn individually and collectively to create deeper meaning. From my perspective, both collaborative relationships felt authentic in their own way, as they were characterised by openness, trust, and a willingness to engage in reflective dialogue through different relational approaches (McMorland & Piggot-Irvine, 2000). These interactions contributed to new levels of awareness of inclusive leadership practices in sport boards (McMorland & Piggot-Irvine, 2000).

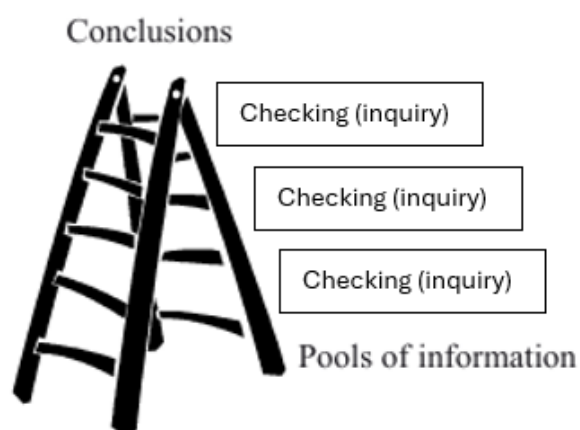
Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

To foster trust and reduce defensiveness during challenging conversations, Argyris (1990) introduced the Ladder of Inference (Figure 5.5), a model that illustrates the cognitive and emotional processes individuals experience when interpreting reality or factual information. The model encourages individuals to use each step of the ladder as a reflective checkpoint, promoting greater awareness and objectivity in decision making.

Figure 5.5

Ladder of Inference



Note. Adapted from *Leadership coaching, mentoring, counselling or supervision? One way is not enough* by E. Piggot-Irvine & S. Biggs, 2020, Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Copyright 2019 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

The top rung represents the final conclusion or decision. Building on this framework, Senge (2006) emphasised the importance of the intermediate steps, which are often overlooked or misinterpreted. He argued that personal beliefs shape the selection and interpretation of data, leading to potentially flawed assumptions. While reaching conclusions is a natural outcome of decision making, Senge (2006)

advocated for open and communicative dialogue between participants to ensure that conclusions are critically examined and thoughtfully derived throughout the process. He highlights the influence of David Bohm's profound commitment to dialogue, crediting it as foundational to his own understanding of its role in creating shared meaning. Bohm (1996) explains this further:

"In dialogue, people begin to see the stream that flows between the banks. They begin to participate in this pool of common meaning, which is capable of constant development and change". Bohm believes that our normal processes of thought are like "a coarse net that gathers in only the coarsest elements of the stream. In dialogue, a kind of sensitivity develops that goes beyond what we normally recognise as thinking. This sensitivity is a fine net capable of gathering the subtle meanings in the flow of thinking. Bohm believes this sensitivity lies at the root of real intelligence" (p. 240).

While the Ladder of Inference is commonly used to navigate difficult conversations and feedback (Argyris, 1990), I was curious to explore Senge's (2006) account of Bohm's (1996) concept of dialogue to better understand the similarities and differences in Martin and Diana's interactions with me. Using Bohm's (1996) net metaphor, Martin and I shared a net fine enough to catch subtle meanings in the inquiry phase but open enough to reach conclusions. In contrast, Diana and I used an even finer net, where each subtle insight wove new layers of meaning that eventually deepened our original understanding.

Why is this important?

This is important because dialogue creates collective thought, as Bohm (1996) states, "the collective thought is more powerful than the individual thought" (p. 15). Similarly, Senge (2006) observes, "People in dialogue also begin to observe the collective nature of thought" (p. 242). This aligns with the project's focus on collective leadership, where the fineness of the net used with board members directly shapes collective learning and decision-making. The net's coarseness can adapt depending on the environment—finer outside the boardroom to explore meaning and coarser inside to drive decisions. This approach reflects the social construction of leadership, which emphasises that leadership develops through dialogue between leaders and followers. Billsberry (2025) concurs, stating that "embedding reflexive practices such as narrative inquiry, storytelling, and peer dialogue within leadership development programmes enables organisations to cultivate leaders who are more attuned to the relational and co-constructed nature of leadership" (p. 7).

5.4 Intervention 2: The Recruitment and Appointment Process

As established previously, the results from the National Board Q sorts, the semi structured interviews, the core collaboration group meetings, and the DICG workshop, all contributed to establishing the first context within the National Board: the recruitment and appointment process. The participants both from the board and the core collaboration group believed that the CEO and board director appointment and recruitment process could potentially be an early action point for the research. This is reflected in Martin's communication to the researcher *"They liked the idea that our 2023 board appointments process be used as an early action research step"* (personal communication March 29, 2023). This was followed by:

- *when we prepare the documents for this process, including our advertisement, we can call out NZC's D&I journey and the importance of candidates fitting that picture; and*
- *further to Charlotte's point, we advertise on platforms that better target inclusivity*
- *this approach requires the three Major Association (MA) chairs on the Appointments Panel to familiarise themselves with our approach, which may help the spreading of this into the MAs.*

The skill of 'open mindedness' was a common theme as P3 stated, *"maybe the recruitment process is not about understanding what your view is at that time, it's understanding are you open minded and able to listen?"* P1 responded by saying how he was given feedback on his interview for a previous board and his interviewer said he came across as *"open minded"* and did not appear to have any *"predetermined views"*. Diana then confirmed how she felt the group was in terms of open mindedness and this project was an opportune time to add to their already inclusive appointment/recruitment process. This is reflected in Diana's comments in, *"How can we have open mindedness, we might have to remember that for recruitment. Right now, I feel like we've got this right. So, I think we need to capture it in what we think that looks like"*. This part of the discussion was key in predetermining future actions and implementations for the research.

From this direction, two key objectives were set out:

1. To enhance the use of inclusive practices within NZC's 2023 executive level (i.e., CEO, Senior Leadership) recruitment processes.

2. To progressively create learnings that will become embedded within future NZC recruitment processes and which can be shared within NZC's nationwide cricket network.

The first step to setting up this action point was to create a core collaboration group combined with academic expertise and board representation. The second step involved an online meeting guided by questions previously created by the core collaboration group. The final step was putting the action in place which will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Step 1: Creating the Director Appointment group

Having ascertained that a key action moving forward would be the development of the CEO and board members' recruitment and appointment process, Martin suggested that we create a group to discuss how the process could implement additional inclusive practices as an action for the director appointment process. The researcher's supervisor suggested that we invite academic expertise into this discussion to help enhance our understanding of the processes and implications of such processes and how additional inclusive practices could be implemented. We added the academic expert as her areas of expertise resided in extensive experience as a legal practitioner, a national and international sport board director, and a long-term member of the Australian and New Zealand Sports Law Association. She had recently completed her PhD focusing on the use of nomination committees to improve director selection processes and outcomes, and hence, sport board composition and performance. She is an AUT lecturer teaching sport law, ethics, and integrity, in particular, at the governance/leadership level.

The board group members firstly included P3 and Martin, however upon discussion, it was agreed that Participant #3 was already heavily involved with the DICG context and bringing another lens into the group would add different expertise to creating the additional inclusive practices action in the director appointment process. Therefore, P2 was added to the group as his expertise stems from multiple governance roles not only in sport governance but also media and marketing. He was a key participant in the project standing as a National Board member so he was well aware of what the project entailed and the key inclusive leadership themes that developed from the NZC National Board discussion. The other group members consisted of the researcher and her supervisors.

Step 2: Pre discussion for creating the June 6 agenda

Once the core collaboration group with the board group members was created, Martin emailed the researcher on 22.05.2023 stating, "We have agreed that the upcoming 2023 NZC recruitment

processes – first for a new CEO and then for board directors – represents an action research opportunity for your PhD project”. Once the group was established, an array of email communication circulated amongst the group as a precursor to a scheduled meeting on 6 June 2023. The initial email sent by Martin outlined the timeline for both the CEO and board director appointment and recruitment process. He explained that:

The CEO process is moving quite quickly. We’ll appoint a recruitment agency in the first week of June and then expect to be in the market third week of June. We are targeting a wrapping up of the process with the appointment of a new CEO by the second week of August, likely starting November. The board director appointment process will move roughly along the timeline set out in the attached 2021 timeline document.

Having established what the timeline was for the recruitment and appointment process, the participants then responded to a series of pre questions raised by the academic expert regarding how appointment panel powers/processes could be enhanced to promote long term NZC board diversity/inclusive practices. Areas such as MA appointment panels, MA chair /CEO involvement in the NZC board meetings, the athlete voice and appointment panel biases were all highlighted processes that were up for discussion. A final question suggested by the academic expert demonstrated the importance of actioning this process. She asked, “*to what extent does the current NZC Constitution, board matrix and /or AP processes emphasise these capabilities?*” (personal communication June 6, 2023). Responses to the leading questions were discussed back and forth through email and eventually created key discussion points for the 6 June meeting.

Step 3: The June 6 2023 meeting

The 6 June meeting commenced with Martin providing a background of how the MA’s influence on the appointment’s panel has transpired over the years. He stated (personal communication, June 6, 2023):

The MA only had one person out of the five...they didn’t have a majority. What happened is that we had crisis territory in 2012 and there was significant dysfunction and dissatisfaction on and off the field and part of the solution to that was the NZC commissioned Graham Markies to do a governance review in 2012... recommendation was to have the MA representation that it now has (3 MA chairs, NZC chair and independent appointed by Sport NZ). It is really important because it is the only direct

way our MA members have in going about our business, short of having a general meeting and getting rid of the whole board (personal communication June 6, 2023).

After an hour-long meeting, the consensus between the group was that the project needed to focus on two specific areas: the CEO recruitment process, and the board directors' appointment process.

CEO Recruitment process

There were concerns that the old CEO position description was outdated due to the previous CEO recruitment process taking place in 2011. Therefore, it was decided that NZC would implement 'inclusive practice' actions within the new CEO recruitment process to reflect their current vision, values, and strategic priorities. Following the June 6 meeting, CEO recruitment process key actions were proposed (personal communication June 2023):

- The process used to create the CEO position description (PD) will involve the NZC Remuneration People Culture sub-committee (RPCC) facilitating the recruitment process seeking input from a range of close stakeholders including individual NZC directors, individual NZC senior managers, MA board chairs, and the New Zealand Cricket Players Association.
- The NZC appointments panel (AP) of four charged with shortlisting and interviewing candidates will be gender balanced.
- The executive search agency engaged by NZC to manage the recruitment process will be briefed on NZC's desire for a genuinely inclusive approach to such management and, in particular, the high importance of applicants for this high-profile position being treated at all times with great respect. This extends to the quality of the care being given to the way in which the unsuccessful shortlisted applicants are advised of the process outcome.
- The language used in all of the recruitment documentation, including advertising, will reflect a culture of genuine inclusivity.
- At the start of the process the AP, together, will be involved in a short Teams or Zoom session where the importance of inclusivity within the recruitment process, and how that can be brought to life by the AP, is discussed.
- The interviews of both the long-listed candidates (by the recruitment company) and the short-listed candidates (by the AP), and the AP's and NZC Board's decision-making discussions leading to the appointment of the CEO will reflect such inclusivity.

Board Director Appointment Process

Furthermore, building on the previous inclusive practices already embedded within the annual board appointment process, the key actions proposed to further enhance and add to these inclusive practices were as follows: (personal communication June 2023)

- The NZC Board skills and experience matrix will be adjusted to reflect the importance of cultural fit of the candidates with the NZC Board and the NZC organisation.
- Although somewhat dictated to by NZC's constitution, NZC will seek to pull together an appointments panel (AP) that reflects NZC's gender equity commitment.
- The language used in all of the director recruitment documentation, including advertising, will reflect a culture of genuine inclusivity.
- At the start of the process the AP, together, will be involved in a short Teams or Zoom session where the importance of inclusivity within the recruitment process, and how that can be brought to life by the AP, is discussed.
- The interviews of both the long-listed candidates (by the search agency) and the short-listed candidates (by the AP), and the AP's decision-making discussions leading to the appointment of the CEO will reflect such inclusivity.

Following the 6 June meeting, Martin organised a meeting with the appointment panel members to go over the processes and key actions created from the discussion. To ensure the proposed recruitment and appointment actions were captured and created shared learnings, Martin suggest two ways to track the progress (personal communication June 2023):

- To enable some assessment of impact to be made post-process completion.
 - To enable learnings to be developed and shared within NZC and its cricket network.
- The evaluation of such actions will be described in detail in Chapter 6.

5.5 Intervention 3: The System

As outlined in Chapter 4, the initial DICG workshop held on 15–16 May 2023 was intended to provide the foundation for a broader intervention aimed at embedding inclusive leadership practices across the NZC system. However, this plan did not fully materialise. Only three subsequent DICG meetings were held, on 6 September 2023, 7 August 2024 and 16 October 2024, during which I provided a brief update on the project to date. These sessions contributed

only to raising awareness rather than serving as an intervention. The DICG group was later disbanded in November 2024, which limited the opportunity to implement the proposed actions within the project timeframe. Consequently, the engagement with DICG is best understood as an awareness-building activity rather than a systemic intervention, highlighting the complexity of sustaining change beyond the National Board level. Notably, Intervention 3 reinforced the theme ‘keeping the pedal on gender, whilst leveraging other diversity actions’, originally discussed in core collaboration meeting two. This theme underscores the importance of maintaining momentum on gender equity while simultaneously promoting broader diversity initiatives, as reflected in the transition from Women in Cricket Governance (WiCG) to Diversity Inclusion in Cricket Governance (DICG). This tension illustrates the challenge of embedding inclusive practices system-wide when structural support or interest diminishes. The evaluation of this will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

One of the key themes present across all three areas was the ability to walk the talk and demonstrate espoused actions. This notion relates to Argyris and Schön’s (1992) theoretical framework of the theory of action, which distinguishes between espoused theories and theories in use when examining professional practice in OD. As discussed in Chapter 3, espoused theories are those that an individual claims to follow, whereas theories in use are those that can be inferred from action (Argyris & Schön, 1992). It was evident that this group walked the talk, as their mental models of what an inclusive leadership environment should look like were reflected in their actual practices. Furthermore, this also raised questions about what Martin meant by reflecting a “culture of genuine inclusivity” through the language used in the director recruitment documentation and advertising. Was genuine inclusivity reflected simply through espoused commitments to diversity, or was it evidenced through actions that enabled individuals to feel heard, valued, and able to contribute their unique perspectives? This raised my curiosity about how espoused actions can be influenced so they consistently translate into walk the talk behaviours. Is this achieved through the quality of relationships and dialogue?

Why is this important?

Relationships are a crucial component of EI and CQ. High EI requires strong social awareness, and developing social awareness involves expanding one’s comfort zone to broaden the lens through which the world and differing perspectives are viewed. By doing so, leaders gain a deeper understanding of the people within their board environment and ultimately enhance their CQ. This process connects back to dialogue, double loop learning (discussed earlier in this chapter), and reflective learning. The

significance of this reflection lies in exploring whether inclusive leadership is fundamentally about widening the lens of board members so that their espoused beliefs align more closely with their theories in use, that is, their behaviours and actions. In CQ terms, this represents an expansion of flex. To achieve this, informal conversations outside the formal agenda need to occur within the board environment, whether during breaks or outside scheduled meetings.

5.6 Evaluation of Phase 3

Contribution to Theory

This PhD project was grounded in a theoretical emphasis on the role of emotions and culture in the acquisition of knowledge and meaning making regarding inclusive practices. The project's four theoretical models: Goleman and Boyatzis (2017) EI framework, Middleton's (2014) model of CQ, the theoretical model of inclusive leadership by Randel et al. (2018), and the working model of leadership in a nonprofit sport governance context by O'Boyle et al. (2020, 2023), offered explanatory insight into the dynamics at the National Board level. Together, these models informed dialogue with board chairs and enhanced understanding of the broader New Zealand Cricket system. They also provided a conceptual foundation to guide both the intervention design and the subsequent action phases.

The first model, Goleman and Boyatzis's (2017) EI framework, served as an analytical lens through which the complex and multi-layered dimensions of inclusion within sport boards were explored. As previously noted, Goleman and Boyatzis's (2017) model emphasises both intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies, structured around four core dimensions: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. In applying this model to the design of interventions, it became clear that the dimensions of self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management were particularly significant in contributing to the development of inclusive leadership practices.

For example, the theme of purposeful relationship building aligns with the relationship management dimension of EI. While Goleman and Boyatzis's (2017) model is not explicitly designed for inclusive leadership, it prompts valuable inquiry into the role of intentional relationship building within sport governance. Furthermore, the themes identified in the results and used to shape the interventions contribute to clarifying how EI and CQ intersect and complement one another. For instance, open-mindedness aligns with the EI dimension of self-awareness but is also enhanced through experiences that push personal boundaries, such as the National Board's Waitangi visit. Middleton's (2014) model of CQ refers to this expansion

as an interface between one's core and flex, which serves as a space where a person can extend their comfort zone while maintaining their core. She describes this interface as mastering the urge to avoid discomfort and boxing it off into something that can be managed more easily.

As diversity in sport governance increases, leaders will need to develop the ability to collaborate across cultural differences. EI emphasises self-awareness and emotional management, yet CQ broadens this by challenging individuals to extend their self-awareness through engagement in diverse contexts. Therefore, how might inclusive leadership practices prompt board members not only to reflect on their own limits of self-awareness but also to actively seek ways to question and expand that self-awareness in diverse settings?

Although the intended systemic intervention through DICG did not fully materialise, the engagement process reinforced theoretical insights. In particular, the discussions aligned with Randel et al.'s (2018) emphasis on belongingness and uniqueness as dual components of inclusion. Inclusive leadership must encourage diverse contributions to foster a sense that uniqueness is valued (Randel et al., 2018; Shore et al., 2011). This was reflected in the developed theme, 'keeping the pedal on gender, whilst leveraging other diversity actions', which underscores the importance of maintaining momentum on gender equity while simultaneously promoting broader diversity initiatives. The transition from WiCG to DICG symbolised this shift toward a more expansive approach. This tension raises a critical theoretical question: how can a systems-based approach to valuing uniqueness be operationalised at the intrapersonal level within boards?

The final model, the Working Model of Leadership in a Nonprofit Sport Governance Context by O'Boyle et al. (2020, 2023), offers insight into why dialogue played a pivotal role within this project. In the concluding sections of their study on leadership in nonprofit sport governance, the authors pose several questions regarding what remains unknown in this research context. Two specific questions stand out: "What are the key leadership skills required of board members in nonprofit sport governance?" and "How can collective board leadership be adopted if there is an unequal distribution of leadership in the triadic relationship?" (O'Boyle et al., 2020, p. 198). The identified theme of dialogue suggests a need to explore further the role dialogue can play in sport governance. Moreover, as dialogue fosters collective thinking (Bohm, 1996), it may offer valuable insights for advancing collective leadership theory within this context. While some answers began to develop during the intervention phase, many of these questions were only addressed during the evaluation phase of the research process.

Interventions through an EI and CQ Lens

The intent to develop inclusive leadership practice through EI and CQ lenses manifested itself in different ways for the recruitment appointment process, the DICG and the National Board. Each context was at its own stage of development. For the National Board the focus was to build its inclusive leadership practices beyond what was already embedded within its board processes. Creating a safe board environment shaped many of the dialogue sessions with Martin and Diana, with several subthemes (e.g., ensuring all voices are heard, listening with intent) aligning with the EI dimension of social awareness. CQ was developed among the chairs through dialogue, as they engaged with the theory I proposed and applied it to their experiences. As previously noted, P3 emphasised CQ as essential to inclusive leadership: *“But the CQ piece, sometimes just exposing yourself to what you don’t know and exposing yourself to different ways of thinking. It opens your mind to thinking more inclusively”*.

The focus of the CEO/Director appointment context was to ensure the processes had an ‘inclusive lens’ within their matrix and interview planning. The theme of ‘open-mindedness’ highlighted the need to attract applicants who are both self-aware (high EI) and willing to step outside their comfort zones (CQ). It also applied to the appointment panel, emphasising their need for the EI dimension of self-awareness (EI) to recognise their own biases and create an interview environment that reveals applicants’ CQ and openness in challenging situations.

For the DICG, the focus was to shift its gender lens from women to developing a purpose which represents modern society, its needs and voices, ensuring the future success of cricket in New Zealand. The EI dimension of relationship management was crucial, ensuring that the system still engages the pedal on gender whilst leveraging other diversity actions such as ethnicity. Maintaining and creating relationships within the DICG steering group was essential in continuing the awareness within the NZC system.

5.7 Summary Table of Research Outcomes

Table 5.6 outlines a summary of the research outcomes for Phase 1, 2 and 3. This incorporates the organisation context and quality of relationships, identified and developing issues, and interventions for each NZC context (National Board, DICG). Table 5.6 also outlines one of the key research questions ‘What factors inhibit or enable an inclusive environment in sport boards?’ and the key theoretical concepts applied to each context across the three phases. The next

chapter details the Phase 4 evaluation phase of the action research process, incorporating the organisational context and issue identification for each area.

Table 5.6*Summary Table of Chapter 5 Phase 3 Interventions*

Inhibitors and Enablers		
National Board		System
Recruitment/Appointment Process (AP)	Chair/Board Members	DICG
Inhibitors: - Existing language in the recruitment documentation which did not fully reflect a culture of genuine inclusivity - Previous AP interviews (and therefore starting point for present round) did not fully reflect inclusivity with the process - Historically, the composition of the AP was not necessarily a sound cultural and gender fit	Inhibitors: - No formal plan to integrate influential inclusive leadership experiences (i.e., Waitangi, what's next?) to extend the comfort zone and lens of current board members and chairs - Lack of knowledge on what inclusive leadership practices are	Inhibitors: - Difficulty in maintaining momentum for women in governance (numbers and inclusion) across the cricket network whilst still introducing new DEI initiatives - Lack of inclusive leadership awareness in the system, especially the MA's
Enablers: AP will be upskilled in the concept of 'inclusive leadership' and inclusive practices within the interview	Enablers: Both chairs were open to collaborate on a regular basis and report back to the board members	Enablers: - D&I to be included as a key pillar in the Development of a National Governance Training Strategy Theoretical Concepts - Opportunity to widen the NZC, MA and DA governance activity to focus on diversity and

		inclusion, in line with NZC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy.
Interventions		
Initiating a recruitment/appointment process that enhances the use of inclusive practices within NZC's 2023 executive level recruitment processes.	Providing theories of practice to the chairs through dialogue to assist in developing their own and the board members' inclusive leadership practices.	Develop awareness and sustained progress in diversity and inclusion initiatives within the NZC cricket system. Maintain and create relationships.
Further Theoretical Concepts (continued from Chapter 4)		
Theoretical work pertaining to sport board recruitment and appointment process (Molloy, 2023; Molloy et al., 2024a, 2024b; Stenling et al., 2021).	Theoretical work pertaining to inclusive leadership practices through awareness, dialogue and relationships (Aoki, 1993; Bohm, 1996; 2003; Brydon-Miller, 2024; Cronenberg & Headley, 2019).	Theoretical work pertaining to systematic change through awareness, relationships and collective leadership (Ferkins et al., 2025; Molloy et al., 2023; Mor Borak et al., 2022; Randel, 2025).

Chapter 6 Phase 4 Evaluation of Action and Intervention

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the Phase 4 of this developmental action research project. It begins by explaining the specific evaluation tools used for each intervention (to supplement the more general explanations of methods found in Chapter 3). It then discusses the outcomes of each process. Developmental action research is designed for development to occur at several levels – the personal, the collegial and the organisational (Cardno, 2003). Therefore, in line with Cardno's (2003) recommendations, the effectiveness of change is examined across various levels, specifically within personal and core collaboration reflection (reflective pauses), the National Board (including the recruitment process and dialogue with chairs and board participants), and the system level Diversity and Inclusion in Cricket Governance (DICG) group and the core collaboration group. As Cardno (2003) notes, "In the case of developmental action research, evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of the strategy for change that has been implemented" (p. 498). This evaluation phase therefore sought to identify the effectiveness of change in relation to developing inclusive leadership practices in sport boards through an EI and CQ lens.

Building on Cardno's (2003) emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of change, Coghlan and Shani (2018) extend this perspective by highlighting the importance of assessing the added value to the organisation. They propose that outcomes should be viewed as enhanced systems of practice and knowledge, developed through actionable theory generated via the processes of action and inquiry. These outcomes will also serve to address and unpack the nominated research questions, providing a foundation for deeper analysis in the discussion and conclusion chapters that follow. In earlier chapters, reflective pauses captured my individual critiques and theoretical reflections and will continue to do so in this chapter. The following sections will evaluate the changes and learnings resulting from the interventions within the National Board and the New Zealand Cricket (NZC) system.

6.2 Intervention 1: The National Board

The two interventions related to the National Board focused on (1) raising awareness among board participants and chairs and (2) enhancing the recruitment and appointment process for the new CEO and independent directors. The following sections will outline the tools and approaches used to evaluate and interpret change, including methods for capturing shifts in practice and pausing to reflect on their significance. They will also explore the importance of understanding the ‘why,’ interpreting change through EI and CQ, and contributing these insights within existing theories and models.

6.2.1 National Board Members

Evaluation tools

As the researcher, I determined the evaluation tools for the National Board participants to be a comparative pre/post Q sort, post sort group discussion and individual interviews. Evaluation tools capable of assessing the emergent and responsive nature of action research are essential for ensuring the enhancement of outputs, outcomes, and overall impact (Piggot-Irvine et al., 2021; Piggot-Irvine & Zornes, 2016; Zornes et al., 2016). Furthermore, each tool was used as an indicator of what Robinson et al. (2021) describe as ‘espoused outcomes’, referring to the intended goals of the interventions. To ensure rigour and reliability, interview questions were replicated across the pre/post-Q sort interviews whilst allowing flexibility for participants to discuss emerging issues and contextual influences. Rather than seeking to isolate specific drivers of change, the interviews were designed to capture participants’ holistic reflections on their experiences throughout the action research process, including any factors they considered influential. Fragments from the post Q sort interviews were consistently compared to the initial codes by myself as the primary researcher. All post Q sort interview transcripts and post Q sort discussion were transcribed by me and then sent to the participants for review. These tools helped determine whether the outcomes were achieved, the extent to which they were met, and whether any changes occurred throughout the process.

Capturing Change: Post Q sort, Reflections and Interviews

The post Q sort session was held at the NZC headquarters in Auckland, New Zealand, on 31 October 2024. Scheduled as the final agenda item for the day, it followed a farewell lunch for Martin, who was stepping down as a Director. The session replicated the pre Q sort process, requiring participants to rank 47 statements in response to the prompt: *Inclusive environments in sport boards require...* The process included the ranking activity, group discussions, and individual 30-minute online follow-up interviews conducted within the following three weeks.

All but one of the original eight National Board participants were present. P7 retired by rotation in November 2023. For the original participants, the overall project spanned one year and eight months, beginning with the pre Q sort on 24 February 2023 and concluding with the post Q sort on 31 October 2024, followed by interviews in November 2024. Two additional participants, P11 and P10, joined three-quarters of the way through appointment. For these individuals, there was a four-month interval between their pre Q sort and post Q sort activities. The newly appointed CEO also took part in the final Q sort.

At the pre Q sort stage, five participants (Martin, Diana, P2, P3, P9) aligned positively with Factor 1 (supportive and safe environment), and three (P1, P5, P8) with Factor 2 (process-led). By the post Q sort stage, 18 months later, the distribution remained the same: five participants (Martin, Diana, P2, P3, P8) aligned with Factor 1, and three (P1, P5, P9) with Factor 2 with P8 and P9 realigning with different factors. Within Factor 2, P5 remained significantly strong whilst P9 kept a balanced loading on both factors. Notably, P1 and P8 demonstrated a significant shift in their viewpoints towards Factor 1, with a correlation coefficient of 0.29. Table 6.1 highlights this below.

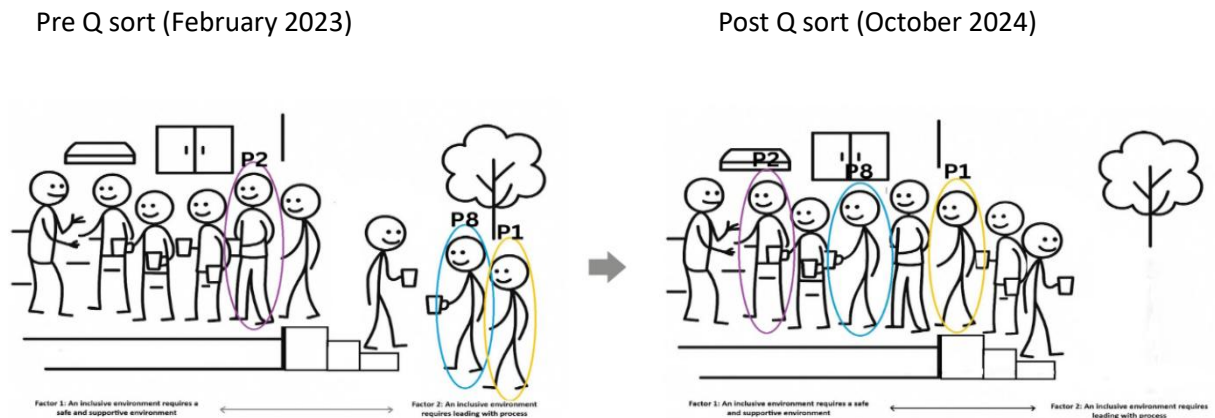
Table 6.1
Pre Q Sort and Post Q Sort Comparison

Participant	Factor 1		Significance (>0.29)	Factor 2		Significance (>0.29)
	Pre	Post		Pre	Post	
P1	-0.346	0.331	0.677	0.741	0.361	0.381
P8	-0.001	0.430	0.430	0.406	-0.035	0.440

Note: significant shifts in perspective from Factor 2 to Factor 1.

Another notable shift was observed in P2, who initially expressed a balanced loading with both Factor 1 and Factor 2 during the pre Q sort stage (e.g., factor loading scores of 0.60 and 0.45, respectively). By the post Q sort stage, however, P2’s viewpoint had shifted to predominantly favour Factor 1 (e.g., Factor 1 loading scores of 0.73 and Factor 2 loading of 0.16), indicating a clearer alignment with the supportive and safe environment perspective. Returning to the initial metaphor of where the original eight participants would stand at a party to represent their views on inclusive environments in sport boards, the shift in perspectives would appear as shown in Figure 6.1:

Figure 6.1
Party Metaphor



Note. P1 (yellow circle), P2 (purple circle), P8 (blue circle) shifts in viewpoints from Pre Q sort (February 2023) to Post Q sort (October 2024). P7 was not present in Post Q Sort.

The post Q sort interviews

The post Q sort interviews were conducted to explore whether participants experienced a change in their viewpoints between the pre- and post Q sort phases. As outlined in Chapter 4, the numbers in brackets that appear in the following participant quotations indicate the original statement number from the Q sort concourse, followed by the ranking position (ranging from -5 to +5) assigned by each participant. The findings suggested a clear shift in perspective among several participants, moving from a process-focused orientation (Factor 2) to one that placed greater emphasis on the importance of a safe and supportive environment (Factor 1). P2 (Factor 1 pre sort loading 0.60, Factor 1 post sort loading 0.73) states *“I did find it quite interesting that I had made a number of changes this time since the first one. Some things I’m still pretty firm on, like process but I have definitely made some sort of shift”*. And P1 (Factor 1 pre sort loading -0.35, Factor 1 post sort loading 0.33) *“I’ve changed from having less focus on process, which is where I was last time, that was where my head space was, and more on other things, more, not sentiment, but less processed things”*

P8 (Factor 1 pre sort loading -0.00, Factor 1 post sort loading 0.43) explicitly acknowledged that his definition of inclusive environments within sport boards had significantly evolved from an initial focus on diversity to a deeper emphasis on inclusion, as demonstrated in the following dialogue:

Me: *What is your overall view now of what is required to create an inclusive environment in sport boards?*

P8: *I think it starts with recruiting the right people, and having EQ is a critical part of that process. I think it is an innate and explicit responsibility of all members of that board to adopt a very inclusive approach in that environment, led by the board, led by the chair, and demonstrating that level of safe environment and encouragement explicitly for all parties to share, share their views, regardless of whether they think it's worthwhile or not.*

Me: Your previous definition you said, 'to get an inclusive environment right it needs to have a cross section of society in that room and around the table. It's a diversity question'.

P8: *What a rubbish answer that was, I couldn't have said it any worse. That's the complete opposite to what I just said.* (with laughter)

Although P8 described his initial definition as “rubbish”, further discussion during the interview revealed that his revised perspective was not entirely different from his original view. Rather, it reflected a shift in emphasis from a primary focus on diversity towards a deeper appreciation of inclusive leadership, particularly the aspect of uniqueness. This finding may be significant because, as discussed in Chapter 4, Beaman reflected on how inclusion efforts have gradually shifted leadership thinking and priorities over time. Beaman described diversity as “*being invited to the party*” and inclusion as “*being asked to dance*”, questioning whether all women who are invited to board tables are genuinely being asked to participate and contribute. She suggested that, while this may not always occur, increasing representation creates the conditions for leadership thinking to evolve beyond diversity alone (NZC, 2021, p. 5).

P8's comments indicate that a similar shift in awareness may have been occurring through NZC's inclusion efforts and this project, where attention appeared to be moving from who is present at the table towards how individuals experience inclusion once there. This finding suggests that diversity and inclusion may not be entirely separate processes; rather, increased diversity can act as a catalyst for greater awareness of inclusion and its importance within sport governance practice. Moreover, P8's comments highlighted the uniqueness component of inclusion in relation to individuals being able to share their views. Randel et al.'s (2018) model emphasises belongingness and uniqueness as dual components of inclusive leadership. They further argue that leaders demonstrate the value they place on uniqueness by creating environments that acknowledge individuals, welcome them, and accept their differing perspectives. P8's reference

to inclusion being “*led by the board*” and “*led by the chair*” aligns with Randel et al.’s (2018) description of inclusive leadership, suggesting that leaders who create welcoming environments that acknowledge differing perspectives may increase group members’ comfort and confidence in sharing diverse viewpoints with the group.

Furthermore, the post Q sort interviews revealed that the three participants who experienced the most significant shifts from a process-oriented viewpoint to a focus on a safe and supportive environment frequently associated this change to the leadership influence of the chair and the Chief Executive Officer. P2 reflected on why his final Q sort indicated a shift in emphasis from the chair’s role in fostering inclusivity to a broader focus on the environment created by all board members. P2 explained: “*It's interesting, maybe, I've been subconsciously influenced by the fact that Diana has done and continues to do a really outstanding job as chair. It's almost like the chair stuff sort of drifts away a little bit*”. P8 attributed his shift in perspective to Diana’s ability to elevate the inclusive environment originally established by Martin. P8 stated:

I think Martin was outstanding, and I think Diana has continued in her own way, along the same path. I think we were lucky with Martin already. I think he has very high IQ and EQ, and was able to create that environment. But, I would say Diana has probably taken that to another level.

P1 linked his shift in viewpoint to the trust he placed in the new CEO’s expertise in the process domain, which allowed him to focus more on the environment. He noted: “*XXX is much more capable and competent in the process space, in my view, so suddenly it becomes less important to me*”.

Although these three participants described the importance of leadership and particularly their trust in the chair and CEO as enabling their shift toward Factor 1, the influence of the chair remained a key theme within the group that extended beyond individual reflection. Six out of ten participants experienced a shift in their perspective regarding the importance of the chair in fostering an inclusive environment. Martin observed, “*One of the key things that was extracted out of that was the really significant influence the chair has on the culture of the board*”.

P11 demonstrated a notable shift in her ranking of the statement “a chair that builds relationships outside of the boardroom”, moving from –2 to +4. She attributed this change to the belief that relationship-building between the chair and board members can significantly influence their confidence and willingness to speak up during meetings. P11 explained,

It's probably just a reflection on my relationship coming with Diana, that ability to feel that I have a trusted voice or that I can add value and the importance of that getting reaffirmed [by the chair] as a board member? So, you're able to then confidently contribute.

P10 also emphasised the crucial role of the chair in enabling board members to contribute meaningfully. P10 highlighted the importance of the chair creating an environment where *“people feeling valued and being heard is the fundamental driver [of inclusive environments in sport boards]”*. These reflections suggest that participants perceived Martin and Diana’s leadership as influential in shaping the board’s culture.

The post Q sort group discussion differed slightly from the pre Q sort discussion. After completing the post Q sort activity, participants were given a visual of their original pre Q sort concourse statements, allowing them to compare the two sets. This comparison served as the starting point for the group discussion. I then interviewed the 10 participants (8 original and 2 new board members) for 30min from 4th November to the 22nd of November. Unfortunately, due to lack of communication with the head of corporate support, the post Q sort 30 min interview with the ‘new’ CEO participant could not be completed.

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

As a researcher, I was interested in whether this project could meaningfully influence participants' perspectives on what constitutes an inclusive environment in sport boards. The initial pre Q sort, conducted at the start of the project, revealed two dominant factors that differentiated the group in how they viewed what was the most important in creating an inclusive environment in sport boards: the importance of a safe and supportive environment, and the value of leading with process. Eighteen months later, the post Q sort allowed for a comparison of perspectives, highlighting both continuity and change in the original eight participants' thinking. Stephenson (2014) describes Q methodology as a way to uncover the structure of subjectivity, likening it to seeing "the structure, as if by X-Ray" (p. 43).

Both the pre Q sort and post Q sort captured participants' perspectives at specific moments in time (Ramlo, 2025). While the pre Q sort aimed to surface existing viewpoints within a board known for inclusive leadership, the post Q sort revealed that several participants had re-evaluated their priorities, suggesting the project may have influenced their understanding of inclusive environments in sport boards.

Why does this matter?

The project's Q inspired approach provided a valuable lens for exploring these subjective viewpoints, offering insight into how board members conceptualised inclusive environments in sport boards and whether those views evolved over time. This inspired approach enabled a deeper understanding of how individual and collective views shifted throughout the project.

Interpreting Change Through EI and CQ

A significant and unexpected outcome of the study was the notable shift in viewpoints among participants. Three board members demonstrated a significant change from Factor 2 (process) to Factor 1 (environment), and overall, six out of ten participants ranked the chair statements as more important than they had in their initial rankings. This shift was not anticipated when I posed the research question: *'How can inclusive leadership in sport boards be developed through an emotional and cultural intelligence lens?'* While I expected that applying an EI and CQ lens would contribute to addressing the sub-question, *"What factors inhibit or enable an inclusive environment in sport boards? What role could EI and CQ play in developing inclusive leadership*

practices?”, I did not anticipate the extent to which participant’s responses would suggest the development of Collective Emotional Intelligence (CEI) and Collective Cultural Intelligence (CCQ), nor how significantly the action research process itself would influence participants’ viewpoints. The developmental, transformational, and reflective nature of the action research process may have had a more pivotal influence on shaping inclusive leadership viewpoints than initially anticipated.

Although the existing literature and empirical studies on EI predominantly focus on individuals, the concept of CEI remains relatively underexplored (Curşeu et al., 2015; Shafique & Naz, 2023; Shankar & Tewari, 2021, 2023). However, CEI is gaining traction due to its demonstrated impact on team performance, cohesion, and innovation (Chang et al., 2012; Lee & Wong, 2019; Paik et al., 2019; Shafique & Naz, 2023). As discussed in Chapter 2, CEI is defined as a group-level competence that develops from interpersonal interactions. It involves the development of shared norms that promote awareness and regulation of both individual and group emotions (Curşeu et al., 2015; Druskat & Wolff, 2001; Woolley et al., 2015). To date, there is no published research examining CEI within the context of sport governance. The observed shift of some participants from process (Factor 2) to environment (Factor 1) suggests that CEI may influence how specific EI-related characteristics, such as safe and supportive environments, are understood and valued within a sport governance context.

This shift is evident when examining the three top-ranked statements representing Factor 1: (1) a psychologically safe environment, (2) a chair who creates a safe environment, and (3) an environment where everyone’s contribution is valued. These statements reflect a group dynamic characterised by emotional awareness, regulation, and inclusion (Curşeu et al., 2015; Shankar & Tewari, 2023). Shankar and Tewari (2021) emphasise that teams with high CEI are better contributors to psychologically safe and productive environments, particularly in relation to overall team effectiveness.

Interestingly, while two participants (P5 and P9) did not significantly shift toward Factor 1, their Q sort rankings still indicated that psychological safety was important (P5: +1 and +2; P9: +4 and +4). This suggests that participants aligned with Factor 2 are not necessarily low in EI. Rather, their responses reflect a belief that inclusive environments require structured processes and clear frameworks to ensure inclusive participation. Shankar and Tewari (2021) explain that some group members may retain a stronger cognitive or procedural orientation yet still recognise the value of emotional components in fostering inclusive and effective team environments. As a researcher, it was important for me to reflect on the purpose of the

inspired Q sorts which was to uncover the diverse viewpoints participants hold about a topic, without assigning judgment (Ramlo, 2025). This shift highlights the dynamic nature of EI within groups and the potential for deeper understanding through relational and reflective processes.

This study suggests the importance of building the ‘bridge’ between the chair’s EI and the board’s CEI, as conceptualised by Shankar and Tewari (2021). The Q sort process revealed how CEI developed collectively over the 18-month period, highlighting its dynamic and relational nature. This was emphasised in P2’s post Q sort interview:

I've been subconsciously influenced by the fact that Diana has done and continues to do a really outstanding job as chair... Now we need to make sure we do our role (the board) in terms of having the right environment to be as productive as possible.

Crucially, the development of EI norms within a team is significantly shaped by the EI of its leader (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023; Shankar & Tewari, 2021). Coronado-Maldonado and Benítez-Márquez (2023) emphasise that “a team leader’s EI can influence the development of emotionally competent group norms in his or her team” (p. 4). This underscores the pivotal role of the chair in sport boards, whose EI can shape both the emotional climate and the collective effectiveness of the team. Martin and Diana’s EI were perceived as high within the board, as revealed through the post Q sort interviews. This was particularly evident in the emotional intelligence (EI) dimensions of social awareness and relationship management, as reflected in participant comments. For example, P11 noted “*taking the time to understand board members*,” P8 described being “*outstanding at creating that safe environment*,” P5 highlighted “*valued people talking*,” P3 emphasised “*strong empathy*,” and P10 observed that “*she represents the whole board, not just her view*”. This project demonstrates that inclusive leadership practices which prioritise the development of EI, particularly in key leadership roles such as the chair, can directly influence the board’s CEI and foster emotionally intelligent group norms. The board consistently recognised Martin and Diana’s leadership as demonstrating high EI, particularly in the areas of social awareness and relationship management, with a strong emphasis on empathy. This perception aligned with a noticeable shift in collective viewpoints over time.

Another noticeable collective shift, similar to the development of CEI, was the development of the board’s CCQ. Like CEI, CCQ is an emergent process that relies on group interactions (Liao & Thomas, 2025). However, while CEI centres on the awareness and regulation of emotions and feelings, CCQ reflects the board members’ openness to and engagement with different cultural

perspectives. As discussed in Chapter 2, CCQ is defined as “an emergent state that involves a shared understanding (shared mental model) about what the team knows and how it can and should function with regard to the cultural aspects of its members and its environment” (Liao & Thomas, 2025, p. 427). Because of its emergent nature, CCQ has the potential to influence group interactions, team processes, and outcomes (Liao & Thomas, 2025; Waller et al., 2016). Furthermore, teams with higher CCQ demonstrate higher levels of adaptability and performance (Bücker & Korzilius, 2024; Iskhakova & Ott, 2020; Liao & Thomas, 2025).

The National Board’s visit to Waitangi was instrumental in challenging members’ personal boundaries and developing their open-mindedness toward diverse cultural contexts. P1 shares how the visit challenged his comfort zone as follows:

When we went up to Waitangi, I was blown away by what I learnt and some of the atrocities that occurred in the past. I thought I was on top of all of this, and boy, was I wrong. It took me out of my comfort zone, big time.

Repeated intercultural experiences, such as those at Waitangi, can foster shared mental models and a collective openness that enhances group effectiveness. This openness supports more agile responses to cultural ambiguity and contributes to the development of inclusive group norms (Adair et al., 2013; Davaei & Gunkel, 2024; Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2024).

However, there is growing evidence that inclusive practices need to be more than standalone efforts; they must develop the socio-relational context that enables synergistic outcomes associated with inclusion (Nishii et al., 2018; Nishii & Leroy, 2022; van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2022). Janssens and Steyaert (2020) argue that inclusive practices should be understood as an entanglement of body, materiality, and discourse. They suggest focusing on “interrelated practice-arrangement bundles” (p. 26) (i.e. ongoing and varied multicultural experiences), fostering and learning from the connections and interactions between these elements through relationships (Janssens & Steyaert, 2020). Nishii and Leroy (2022) support this bundled approach, suggesting that bundled practices, rather than standalone efforts, are more effective in enhancing meaningful interactions and fostering a stronger sense of group connectedness.

The suggested lack of connecting ‘bundling’ experiences was evident among board members who did not attend the Waitangi experience. From the induction of new board members through to the final Q sort, there were no inclusive experiences comparable to Waitangi that they participated in. This absence created a noticeable disconnect from the profound impact the

experience had on those who attended. The question in how to continue the impact of Waitangi with follow up experiences was expressed during the post Q sort interviews. P11 reflected on this, stating:

I found there was a lot of talk about the Waitangi trip that the board had done which I wasn't a part of. So how do you find a way to have those moments that take time and money investment to do so but help to create a cohesive team?

P5 did not attend Waitangi, but she emphasised the importance of maintaining ongoing inclusive practices to ensure all members, especially newcomers, feel connected and develop a sense of belonging. She also acknowledged limitations, such as budget constraints, which could act as barriers to sustaining these practices. She reflected:

It will be interesting with P10 and P11 because they're only partway through that process. I think it's those shared experiences, right? I missed the marae visit [Waitangi], and some were part of that. Then there was the meeting where we had whanaungatanga. Some people were there, but I don't think P10 and P11 were. So, you've got all these moments that help build relationships and understanding. Those experiences are really important because you get to know people. We have fewer of those now. Partly due to budget constraints. We don't travel for meetings in the same way anymore. They were valuable, but not everyone was included, so it becomes uneven.

While the evaluation interviews provided strong evidence that newly appointed board members did not experience the shift in CCQ as strongly as the rest of the board, the majority of members reported that their cultural awareness had expanded through the Waitangi experience. Participants perceived the experience as having a substantial impact on their CQ. For NZC, given the nature of board appointments, it is important that experiences designed to foster CCQ are proactively bundled with future opportunities that deepen shared understanding across the evolving group. However, it is also important to acknowledge that budget constraints may limit the frequency or scale of such initiatives. This highlights the need for innovative and intentional planning to ensure inclusive and culturally rich experiences remain accessible and impactful for all board members.

Contributions to existing theory and models

Ferkins et al. (2025) examine perceptions of collective leadership within nonprofit sport boards, situating their study within Ospina's (2017) theoretical strand of constructionist collective

leadership. This strand is defined as “leadership generated by the social interactions of the group” (p. 261), emphasising a relational and collectivist orientation rather than a leader-centric model. Ospina’s framework advocates for a continuum of leadership perspectives, where leadership develops through dynamic group interactions rather than being solely attributed to individual authority.

This project contributes to Ferkins et al.’s (2025) framework of a ‘continuum of perspectives towards collective leadership’, not by rejecting leader-centric approaches, but by illustrating how leadership develops through the interplay between the chair and the wider board. The findings of the present project demonstrates the pivotal role of the chair in shaping the emotional climate and collective effectiveness of the board, thereby contributing to the emergence of CEQ. Furthermore, the emergence of both CEI and CCQ within NZC National Board was facilitated by the organisation’s willingness to implement targeted interventions through the action research process and inclusive leadership practices. This study positions CEQ and CCQ as emergent dimensions of collective leadership, reflecting the board’s capacity to lead relationally and inclusively. Their development through shared cultural experiences and emotionally intelligent facilitation highlights the socially constructed nature of collective leadership within sport governance.

Finally, the notable shifts in viewpoints and the emergence of CEI and CCQ observed in this study contribute meaningfully to Randel et al.’s (2018) model of inclusive leadership and to broader research on optimal distinctiveness. As discussed in earlier chapters, Brewer’s (1991) theory of optimal distinctiveness suggests that individuals experience a greater sense of inclusion when they perceive a balance between belonging and uniqueness within a group. This study examined these shifts through the lens of existing literature, which demonstrates that individuals seek to satisfy both belongingness and uniqueness (Leonardelli et al., 2010; Pickett et al., 2002; Versteegan & Adams, 2025).

The findings from this PhD offer a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in identifying the optimal intersection of these two needs, where inclusion is most powerfully experienced. This insight developed from participants’ reflections during post-Q sort interviews, which highlighted tensions between belongingness and uniqueness in board dynamics. Research has shown that individuals with higher levels of EI tend to report stronger feelings of belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 2017; Moeller et al., 2020; Satıcı et al., 2024). Drawing on this literature, I extrapolate that the emergence of CEI within a board setting may act as an enabler of optimal belongingness.

Furthermore, Randel et al. (2018) describe inclusive leadership as valuing uniqueness by encouraging group members to contribute their diverse voices. They argue that valuing uniqueness can positively influence a group's empathy by fostering appreciation for the unique strengths of team members. Middleton (2014) supports cultural intelligence (CQ) as a gateway to increasing empathy among group members by showcasing their uniqueness. She states: 'Help the people you lead to pin down their Core – good and bad – and to air it on a regular basis, and demand – outright – that Flex gets Flexed, because this is the point of it' (p. 184). This project demonstrated that culturally inclusive practices can expand board members' perspectives and increase empathy (Flex), enabling them to better listen to and engage with diverse voices. As such, this study provides insight into how collective CEI and CCQ may work together, particularly through empathy practices, to foster inclusive leadership and enhance the collective experience of belonging and uniqueness within sport governance.

6.2.2 The Chairs

Evaluation Tools

Dialogue is at the root of all effective group action

Edward Schein, 1993, p.29.

A key objective of the National Board intervention was to raise awareness and collaboratively deepen understanding of inclusive leadership practices between the chairs and the researcher. One of the primary interventions for achieving this was through dialogue. Grounded in a social constructionist approach, action research fosters dialogic exchange as a means of co-constructing knowledge and facilitating mutual learning between researcher and participant (Hersted et al., 2019). Within this project, dialogue became the principal mode of knowledge generation and meaning making in my collaborations with Martin and Diana. As discussed in Chapter 5, these collaborations took different forms, yet both appeared to contribute to a shared understanding of identified project concepts and a mutual commitment to practice change.

A dialogic approach in action research is widely recognised for its capacity to foster authenticity and trust within collaborative relationships (Ospina et al., 2004; Piggot-Irvine, 2012; Piggot-Irvine et al., 2021; Senge, 2006). While my engagement with Martin primarily occurred through email and Microsoft Teams, my dialogue with Diana unfolded during a series of reflective hikes. Despite the differing modalities, both forms of interaction appeared to facilitate the reflexivity necessary

to generate new knowledge pathways. These dialogic encounters enabled us to reinterpret key concepts and, crucially, allowed me as the researcher to reposition my understanding of the topic and deepen the integration of theory and practice (Brown et al., 2019).

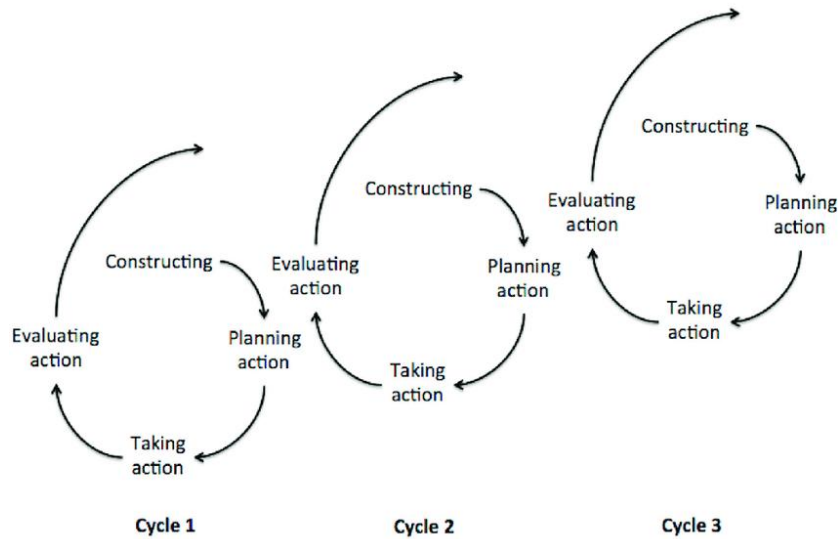
Coghlan (2019) emphasises the importance of adopting a sensitive and ethical lens when documenting reflections that develop from informal dialogic settings, such as the reflective hikes I undertook with Diana. He advises, “If no one is taking notes, then do not take notes. Try to jot down your reflection afterwards as soon as possible while events are fresh in your memory” (p. 135). Therefore, I used memoing as a critical reflective practice to evaluate my reflections following interactions with Martin and recorded audio memos after my hikes with Diana. These practices of memoing contributed to establishing rigour within the project by capturing ongoing critical reflection and authenticity of dialogic exchanges (Martin & Barnard, 2013).

The final evaluation of both chairs’ awareness of inclusive leadership practices was communicated through three key forms: thematic analysis of reflective memos, video recordings, and audio reflections. These sources provided rich, triangulated insights into the chairs’ evolving understanding and enactment of inclusive leadership.

The themes identified from the memos and the recorded dialogue between the chairs informed the agendas of the core collaboration meetings (see Appendix K). As such, while this chapter sets out the formal evaluation phase, ongoing reflection and evaluation was not a discrete phase, but an ongoing process embedded throughout the project. This iterative approach aligns with Coghlan’s (2019) spiral of action research cycles (Figure 6.2), where reflection and action continuously inform one another.

Figure 6.2

Coghlan's (2019) Spiral of Action Research Cycles



Note: Evaluative action within the project was ongoing and added to the agendas for the core collaboration meetings. Adapted from *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization* by D. Coghlan, 2019, SAGE Publications. Copyright 2019 by SAGE Publications.

Capturing Change: Videos, Audio and Reflections

The process of change and co-creation of learning among board chairs was vividly demonstrated and captured during the AUT Research Week 2024 closing event 'AUT Research Changing Practice in Sport and Beyond' featuring myself, Martin, and Prof. Lesley Ferkins.

Video 6.1

AUT Research Video :https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RfP_ts2JpI



The purpose of this session was to showcase how AUT forges meaningful, longstanding partnerships with industry that drive substantive change. Unexpectedly, the session also provided an emergent opportunity to evaluate the project in real time with key stakeholders present. Brydon-Miller et al. (2003) highlight the value of such collaborative evaluation, noting that “because expert research knowledge and local knowledges are combined and because the interpretation of the results and the design of actions based on those results involve those best positioned to understand the processes: the local stakeholders” (p. 25). Although this session was not part of the originally planned evaluation methods, it became a valuable addition for summarising and reflecting on the project’s progress. During the event, Martin shared his personal journey as a board chair, reflecting on how his learning fostered greater social awareness of his board and their individual differences. Martin reflects:

It brought home to me as chair, how important it was to take the time to understand the individual personalities of the people around the room and what made them tick and why they contribute in the way that they do and therefore start to think how to try to bring the best out of them to enable them to contribute. (video, 44.26)

A pivotal moment in the session came when Mark Orams, AUT Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), posed a leading question to Martin, highlighting the impact of the action research process on both Martin and other board members: “I want to now reflect on Phase 4 of the action research project—what have we learned through this process and what has been achieved?” (video, 58:40)

Martin responds:

Kelly's work in my mind is just a work in progress where you start a momentum in a certain direction and these action research actions that you take keep you going. One of things I was most concerned of about stepping away from NZC was that momentum would slow up or fade away but the benefits from this part of work as Diana became chair and the other directors being exposed to the work we were doing and the thinking behind it and embracing that, I now know that when I step away they will continue the momentum and have their eyes open and nail the opportunities that come for them.

Furthermore, when prompted to consider the impact of having an independent researcher engage in collaborative dialogue, Martin described this relationship as foundational for uncovering truth and exposing biases that might otherwise remain hidden. Martin states:

When you work within an organisation, the reality is that you have built-in biases and built-in pressures that too frequently get in the way of the absolute truth emerging – and not only emerging but being visible to the key decision makers. So, it is really helpful to have someone that is independent who is actually able to put that stuff on the table, and then you have to make a choice to do something about it once you receive it... It is the practice [between researcher and participant] that I love so much, and the dealing with practice and not just theory. (video, 1:20:00)

Martin's reference to "people that put stuff on the table and then you have to make a choice to do something about it" aligns with Bohm's (2003) perspective on dialogue. According to Bohm (2003), dialogue is not primarily concerned with establishing truth; rather, it is focused on the exploration and creation of meaning, although it may ultimately lead to truth. When Martin brought his knowledge and experiences to the table, and I brought mine, our process of sharing and reflecting enabled us to co-create knowledge and arrive at a shared understanding of the concepts.

Furthermore, within the video, Diana also reflects on the creation of meaning through dialogue. Her reflection on what she has learned during our philosophical hikes, through the application of theory introduced by me and its connection to her own practical experiences is captured in the following:

For me personally, I feel I have gained from our connection and from what we do regularly: walking, hiking, and just talking. It has added a lot of theory and context around some of the things that I have seen, am doing, or want to do in the future around the board table. This has enriched and deepened my thinking around those things.
(video, 54:55)

A key theme that developed from the project and was later practiced by Diana in her role as chair, developed through our hikes, was the practice of listening with intent. She reflects:

You know I do have some of those things (themes) in my ear when I am sitting at a table chairing or listening intently. But I have those words come into my mind now when I've been wanting to quickly move something on, but I've stopped and listened more intently.
(video, 55:40)

To gain a deeper understanding of the impact of dialogue in a natural setting such as Paranui, and to explore its role as a research intervention, I recorded an audio reflection after each hike, along with a final audio-recorded evaluation between Diana and myself. These recordings aimed to capture the underlying meaning and co-construction that developed through informal discussions, as both researcher and participant engaged with evolving themes and their application within the project.

Through these reflections, key themes began to surface organically. These themes were later used to shape the core collaboration agenda, which helped guide further exploration with the team of experts. While the weekly hikes revealed a rich and recurring weaving of ideas, Table 6.2 outlines the key dates when specific themes first developed during the project.

Table 6.2*Developing Themes Through Dialogue With Diana*

Theme	Date of Hike
Espoused Actions	14 Apr 2024
Developing CQ outside the boardroom and developing EI inside the boardroom	20 Jul 2024
Inclusive leadership with boundaries	18 Feb 2024 31 Mar 2024
Relationships outside- dialogue vs discussion inside the boardroom	5 Mar 2024
Listening with intent	4 Mar 2024
Safe environment	19 Feb 2024
CQ- Māori worldview inside the boardroom	18 Feb 2024
Validating Voices	28 Sep 2024
Keeping the pedal on diverse groups	12 Apr 2024

Reflective Pause**Sparked Curiosity**

I did not intentionally set out to adopt a dialogic stance in this project, nor did I initially realise that the iterative spiral of constructing, planning, acting, and evaluating (Coghlan, 2019) would ultimately capture the dialectical essence of both action research and mixed methods. However, given the ontological and pragmatic orientation of the project, driven by my role as the researcher, I naturally sought an interconnectedness between experience, knowledge, and action throughout the research process (Capra, 1996; Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020).

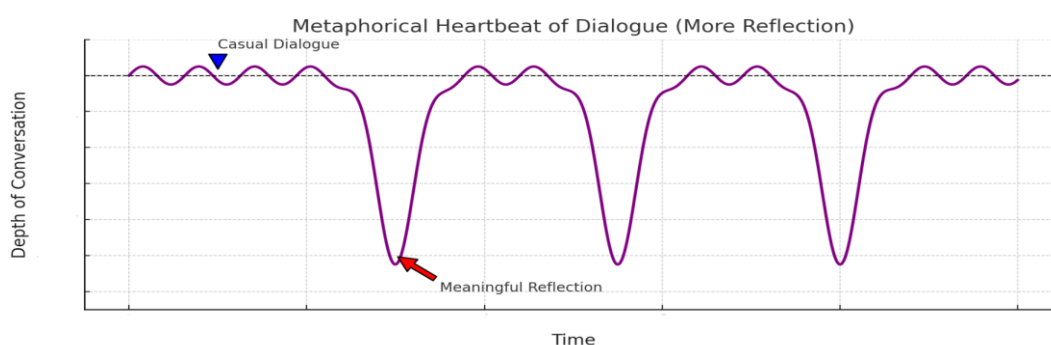
From this relational lens, it became clear that the creation of dialogic spaces was what enabled a dialogic stance to emerge. As Ivankova (2015) suggests, mixed methods within action research require researchers to adopt a dialectical stance, incorporating multiple mental models and perspectives to more fully understand the phenomena under study. While I did not intentionally adopt this stance from the beginning, it emerged through the dialogic spaces I created with Martin through phone conversations, casual meetups, and emails, and with Diana, particularly during our reflective walks at Paranui.

O’Leary (2004) defines action research as “a cyclical process that takes shape as knowledge emerges” (p. 140), which resonates with my experience. The dialogic spaces naturally facilitated meaningful dialogue with both chairs, and the co-creation of knowledge was evident in our shared reflections. These conversations were not bound by formal structure; rather, they were guided by the developing themes and topics relevant to the project at each point in time.

Bohm (2003) describes this kind of space as an opportunity to engage in the “spirit of dialogue” which is the ability to “hold many points of view in suspension, along with a primary interest in the creation of a common meaning” (p.299). On 23 May 2024, during a hike with Diana at Paranui, we reflected on how our conversations resembled the rhythm of a heartbeat (see Figure X). My reflection entry from that day captures this metaphor: *“On our hike, we unpacked the metaphor of a heartbeat resembling our conversations. Our dialogue would move from surface level topics to deep dives into meaningful reflection, then rise again to lighter conversation, before diving back down”*.

The heartbeat metaphor illustrated below in Figure 6.3 represents the natural rhythm of relational dialogue and reflects the cyclical nature of knowledge creation within the project.

Figure 6.3
Metaphorical Heartbeat of Dialogue



Note: AI (CoPilot) generated metaphor of the ‘heartbeat’ of our dialogue

Williams and Imam (2007) argue that the creation of dialogic spaces initially requires a bounded environment that can facilitate dialogue and provoke critical reflection. They state that “defining boundaries is an essential part of systems work, inquiry, and thinking” (p. 6). However, this project challenges that assumption by demonstrating that explicitly bounded spaces are not always necessary for fostering dialogic engagement, particularly within the context of action research in sport governance. Instead, dialogic spaces in this project emerged organically through relational interactions and collaboration, suggesting that a flexible approach may be more effective than predefined boundaries in enabling meaningful dialogue and critical reflection. This is reflected in Diana’s and my final evaluation of the project, where she comments on the nature of our dialogue during our hikes: *“It [dialogue] flows because there are no expectations. The only expectations is*

that we are going to come to it having an amazing conversation. And we exercise at the same time so it's a win win". This is particularly relevant in the sport governance context, where dialogic engagement often occurs outside the formal boardroom setting, in environments that range from attending games and engaging with stakeholders to casual coffee meetings.

The sporting environment is inherently flexible and multifaceted, enabling meaningful, last-minute conversations to emerge organically across a range of informal settings. While there is a substantial body of research highlighting the value of dialogue and action research in fostering learning and change (Coghlan, 2019; Piggot-Irvine et al., 2021; Williams & Imam, 2007), its application within sport governance remains limited. Dialogic practice offers significant potential for enhancing inclusive leadership in governance contexts; however, few studies have examined its integration into sport board dynamics (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2016; O'Boyle et al., 2019; 2023; Seltsmann & Fiege, 2024). Notably, O'Boyle et al. (2023) identified a link between dialogue and the development of trust in inter-board relationships within nonprofit sport governance, positioning dialogue as a key ingredient in fostering collective leadership across boards. Despite this, the impact of dialogic practice within individual sport boards (intra-board dynamics) remains limited and warrants further investigation.

Inclusive Boundaries

While intentional dialogic practices outside the boardroom with Martin and Diana fostered deeper connections and co-construction of meaning, Diana also emphasised the boardroom as a space where discussion not dialogue needed to happen *"Diana talked about board meeting need boundaries... but holes in the boundaries"* (personal reflection 21st July 2024). On one of our hikes Diana reflected that as chair, *"you can't take everybody's ideas and hear everybody's voice,"* yet boundaries must be *"malleable... so you feel safe... but at any point you can voice your opinion outside the boundary and feel okay"* (personal reflection 21 July 2024).

This tension between inclusive dialogue and timely decision-making was echoed in core collaboration meeting #4. P3 noted, *"it's not hard, but it's time consuming... we've got deadlines and now gotta listen to people"*. P3 reflected on a previous meeting involving a collective approach to addressing a specific change adding, *"I just would have walked in and made the change... but I wouldn't have brought anyone with me... it's a lot of hard work to do the consultation"*. Martin highlighted the challenge of *"volunteerism"*, where *"only 5% receive remuneration if that"*, yet chairs face *"risky... uncomfortable public positions"*. He observed a *"passiveness about governance"*,

arguing that *“governance is not instinctive... it’s something to be learned,”* but *“volunteers aren’t necessarily prepared to do that hard slog”*.

P5 shared that *“no decisions are getting made”* in an organisation trying to empower everyone, while P13 pointed to the need for *“bringing in boundaries”*. P3 concluded, *“you’re not going to be able to please everybody... we’re going too far on the not making decisions front... consulting almost used as an excuse... how do you hear different views but still make decisions that are right for the organisation?”*

This project contributes to addressing these governance dilemmas by demonstrating how dialogue can serve as a mechanism for meaning making and strategic clarity within the boardroom. When practiced intentionally outside formal board settings, dialogue creates a reflective space where double loop learning can occur. This allows members to revisit the topic at hand, reframe their perspectives through co-construction and shared meaning making, and consider how these insights inform future board decisions (Rein & Schön, 1996).

While board meetings are often constrained by time and the need for decisive action, dialogic practices cultivated outside the boardroom enable more informed and reflective decision making within boardroom discussions. This allows the chair to create a boundary around the board meeting that supports constructive voices. These voices are grounded in credible knowledge and collective sense making developed through intentional dialogue, enriching the quality and relevance of decisions made within the formal governance setting.

Another theme associated with maintaining boundaries within the boardroom, which developed during my hikes with Diana and in the final post Q sort group discussion, was the concept of validating one's voice. This theme was discussed in two key ways: First, dialogue outside the boardroom provided board members with an opportunity to unpack and deepen their understanding of a topic or decision. This process helped them clarify their thinking and prepare a more concrete contribution for the next board meeting. Second, the importance of arriving at board meetings well-prepared was emphasised. Board members who had engaged in thorough reading and reflection were better equipped to ask substantive questions and contribute meaningfully to discussions. In both cases, validating one's voice was linked to intentional preparation and reflective dialogue, reinforcing the value of spaces beyond the boardroom for leadership development. This is illustrated in the following dialogue from the final post Q sort discussion with the National Board participants:

P2: *Kelly, can you explain further the theme of ‘validating your voice’?*

Me: *Yes, of course. A common theme in this project is the importance to hear everyone’s voice around the board table. But how do we hear all voices and maintain boundaries that are needed within a meeting to ensure decisions are being made? Board members can validate their voices before the meeting to ensure they are formulated questions so they actually have a big foundation of knowledge behind that voice. Because I’m sure everyone here has experienced people that just bring a lot of random questions to the boardroom that don’t have a lot of backing for.*

Diana: yes, and it’s about bringing intent to their questions. Similar to listening with intent, intent full preparation for questions that the board members will bring to the meeting that will help with strategic decisions.

P8: *That’s quite critical*

Boivie et al. (2021) suggest that a director’s preparedness reflects their level of engagement in board meetings and ultimately influences the effectiveness of their contribution. Furthermore, their research indicates that a lack of preparation is directly related to how board members evaluate one another. A well-prepared board member is more likely to make informed decisions and engage in effective debate. While Boivie et al. (2021) do not use the term ‘validating one’s voice’, the processes generated from this project are congruent with their findings.

Why does this matter?

This project directly addresses that gap by exploring how intentional, dialogic engagement outside the formal board setting can foster inclusive leadership and strengthen intra-board trust through collective practice. As stated previously, nonprofit sport governance is uniquely complex due to federated structures, volunteer boards, and the prioritization of stakeholder engagement and democratic ideals. These characteristics require a multitude of connections and relational practices to ensure alignment across the system (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015b; O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2016; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2019). Furthermore, O’Boyle and Shilbury (2016) found that volunteer-based sport boards often faced challenges stemming from a lack of dialogue, primarily due to time and travel constraints. However, their study revealed that boards able to create opportunities for dialogic engagement built trust between entities within the national sporting organisation (O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2016). Therefore, intentional dialogic practices, such as structured forums (Martin and my email and indirect conversations over phone) or facilitated conversations (Diana’s and my hikes),

can help navigate the complexities of nonprofit sport governance by fostering trust and strengthening relationships, which are crucial to the effectiveness and uniqueness of these organisations.

Interpreting Change Through EI and CQ

This project offers a valuable contribution to the evolving understanding of how dialogue can be purposefully cultivated to enhance CEI, CCQ, and overall governance effectiveness. A key insight was the role of informal, boundaryless dialogue in developing emotional and cultural capacities within board chairs, which in turn enriched governance practice. It became evident that EI, particularly the dimension of self-awareness, was supported by dialogue occurring outside the boardroom. This external dialogue fed back into boardroom practice, enhancing both the self-awareness and governance thinking of the chairs. This was demonstrated in the final video evaluation featuring Diana and me, where Diana reflected:

For me personally, I have gained from our connection and our ability to do what we do regularly, walking, talking and hiking, that's added a lot of theory and context to some of the things I have seen or doing or wanting to do in the future around the board table. It enriches and deepens my thinking around some of those things.

This reflection illustrates how informal dialogue serves as a space for leaders to process experiences, integrate theory, and develop self-awareness practices that feed back into formal governance settings. These findings support Shankar and Tewari's (2021) emphasis on the strategic importance of developing the EI dimension of self-awareness in leaders, particularly chairs, as a way to foster the emergence of CEI within the board.

Martin demonstrated strong self-awareness in recognising that shifting from EI, understood as getting along with people, to CQ, getting along with people who are different from you, requires stepping outside one's comfort zone. In Core Collaboration meeting #5, he reflected. *"It is how you put yourself in situations where you actually give yourself a much better chance of accelerating and perhaps more accurately, learning"*. This aligns with Middleton's (2014) description of how CQ is developed:

Leaders who have developed CQ would have done so through experience; painful and sometimes humiliating experience, generously offered to them by others. This experience would have led them to find CQ within themselves, or at least to unpick the barriers to CQ that lie inside them. (p.183)

Middleton's (2014) insight that "it is not always a sequential journey from IQ to EQ to CQ" (p. 17) resonates strongly with this project. The development of social awareness, particularly in the chair role, developed as a key theme and an inclusive practice. Both Martin and Diana viewed uncomfortable experiences not as threats, but as opportunities for learning and growth.

During a hike with Diana on 31 March 2024, I reflected on her view that boards should intentionally create more uncomfortable experiences for their members to accelerate learning. After that conversation, I noted: *"It comes back to CQ. Diana reflected on the importance of expanding board members' comfort zones by speeding up experiences that allow them to feel other perspectives"*. Developing CQ within the chair creates opportunities for the emergence of CCQ across the board. The findings from this project support Liao and Thomas's (2025) explanation that enhancing the CQ of a leader strengthens the group's shared mental models, which in turn supports the development of CCQ. This insight highlights the need for inclusive practices that create dialogic spaces that are intentionally uncomfortable. Such spaces foster reflection, empathy, and deeper understanding of difference. Dialogue plays a central role in helping individuals make sense of challenging topics and situations, deepening their cultural understanding. For example, the board's Waitangi experience was extremely uncomfortable for some members. Dialogue was central to this experience, connecting vulnerability, discomfort, and understanding among board members, and contributing to the development of their CCQ. A leader's social awareness, or empathy, is vital because it demonstrates their humanity and facilitates connection with those they lead. This relational capacity inspires and invests in others. Participants in the post sort group discussion and individual interviews frequently described Diana and Martin as demonstrating strong social awareness.

Taken together, these insights reinforce the idea that EI and CQ inclusive practices are cultivated through experience, reflection, and intentional dialogue with difference. Chairs who embrace discomfort and foster inclusive dialogue contribute not only to their own development but also to the CEI and CCQ of the board.

Contributions to existing theory and models

This project contributes to the refined working model of leadership in nonprofit sport governance proposed by O'Boyle et al. (2023) by introducing 'dialogue' as an additional mechanism within the Behaviours and Actions domain (see Figure 2.4). While the authors identified specific leadership behaviours and actions that act as either facilitators or inhibitors to enacting collective board leadership, dialogue was treated as an informal aspect of strategic planning and was not explicitly articulated. The findings from this project demonstrate that

dialogue is, in fact, a critical enabler of intra board leadership and a meaningful aid in the collective leadership process. Furthermore, this project demonstrates that dialogue is fundamental to the developmental action research process. As Cardno (2003) explains, developmental action research is a methodology designed to bring about change in practice. She identifies three levels at which development occurs: personal, collegial, and organisational. This project engaged with all three levels through dialogue with the chair, the board, and members within the system. However, the dialogue with the chair emerged as the most significant and influential.

Cardno (2003) emphasises that action researchers must learn to conduct critical dialogue to ensure the research approach remains collaborative, working with participants rather than on them. She also notes that critical dialogue is an developing trend that should be implemented through iterative processes. This project contributes to that suggestion by demonstrating how cycles of engagement, reflection, and adaptation can be embedded within dialogical contexts. Future developmental action researchers may find value in following Lewin's (1946) cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection, while adapting it to their own dialogical settings, whether that be during a walk, over coffee, or in other informal yet meaningful spaces for conversation.

6.3 Intervention 2: The Recruitment and Appointment Process

Evaluation tools

This section presents the 2023 CEO and board appointments process (AP) as an early action research intervention, purposefully designed to advance NZC's inclusive governance agenda. The action research intervention was guided by three interrelated objectives: to enhance inclusive practices within the recruitment and appointment panel; to ensure that selected candidates aligned with NZC's inclusive governance vision, referred to as 'fit the picture'; and to generate learnings that could be embedded in future recruitment processes and shared across NZC's cricket network. These objectives shaped both the design and implementation of the intervention, ensuring that inclusivity and alignment with organisational values were not only aspirational goals but also practical criteria embedded throughout the process.

To support these objectives and ensure that the recruitment and appointment actions were well-documented and conducive to shared learning, Martin (chair at the time) proposed two key evaluative strategies:

- Assessment of impact to be made post-process completion.
- To enable learnings to be developed and shared within NZC and its cricket network.

A high-level review of NZC's 2022 board director AP already demonstrated several inclusive practices that Major Association (MA) chairs involved in the AP would likely recognise. For example, the MA board chairs group formally inputting into the description of what director skills and experience would be targeted within the process, and the MAs having three out of five places on the NZC appointments panel. Building on those inclusive practices already embedded within the annual AP, our project implemented the following additional 'inclusive practices' actions, as outlined in Chapter 5, within the director AP:

- The NZC Board skills and experience matrix will be updated to emphasise the importance of cultural alignment between candidates, the NZC Board, and the wider NZC organisation (Appendix L).
- All director recruitment materials, including advertisements, will use language that promotes a genuinely inclusive culture (Appendix M).
- At the outset of the recruitment process, the AP will participate in a brief Teams session 6th June 2023 (with Dr Molloy, myself and Martin) to discuss the importance of inclusivity and explore practical ways to embed it throughout the process.
- While guided by NZC's constitution, the appointments panel (AP) will be assembled to reflect NZC's commitment to gender equity.

Through these actions, a central criterion throughout the recruitment and AP was that the new CEO and appointed board members should 'fit the picture'. This phrase encapsulated the expectation that appointees would align with the board's collective vision, particularly in relation to inclusive governance in sport. To assess this alignment, two evaluation tools were employed. The first, observational data, involved analysing the placement of the new CEO and board members within the group using the post-Q sort results. In this context, 'observational' refers to interpreting positional data (e.g., factor loadings) rather than traditional field observations

(Watts & Stenner, 2012). This helped determine how closely their perspectives aligned with those of the broader board.

The use of post-Q sort results enabled me to describe the divergent perspectives introduced by the CEO and appointed board members (Ramlo, 2020). The second tool, post Q sort interviews, allowed me, as the researcher, to identify whether the intended outcomes were achieved, the extent to which they were met, and whether any changes occurred throughout the process. Braun and Clarke (2022) describe this process as an “analytic orientation” (p. 205), in which the researcher unpacks themes and engages more deeply with the data. This approach allows for multiple interpretative perspectives, helping to explore how the data relate to the research outcomes. Unfortunately, due to the CEO’s time constraints, the post Q sort interview with the new CEO was unable to be completed.

Reflexive thematic analysis of the Q sort interviews enabled me to interpret participants’ viewpoints in relation to the existing themes and the overarching research question (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This approach aligns with my constructivist-interpretive research paradigm, which centres on the process by which meanings are negotiated, sustained, created, and modified (Schwandt, 2003). Furthermore, triangulating Q sort results with developing themes from interviews enhances credibility and allows the phenomena to be viewed and explored from multiple perspectives (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Capturing the change: Observational Data and Post Q Sort

Observational Data

From the Q sort results, seven out of eight original NZC board participants loaded significantly and positively on Factor 1, which emphasised the importance of supportive and safe environments. This strong consensus may reflect a shared understanding among board members of what the picture of inclusive governance entails. Their collective emphasis on psychological safety and support aligns closely with Randel et al.’s (2016) framework for inclusive leadership, which builds on Shore et al.’s (2011) foundational model. This framework conceptualises inclusion as the dynamic interplay between belongingness and uniqueness within a group context. The board’s prioritisation of safe and supportive environments, as evidenced in the Q sort data, suggests a commitment to these inclusive leadership behaviours. This alignment between empirical evidence and theoretical constructs provides evidence that NZC’s board members not only understand but also embody the principles of inclusive governance in both belief and practice.

The following sections evaluate whether the recruitment and AP within the intervention successfully attracted inclusive leadership among its applicants. The central question remains: did the intervention result in the appointment of a CEO and board members who were considered inclusive, and what barriers or enabling factors influenced this outcome?

Post Q sort

During the post Q sort, the new CEO showed a significant positive loading on Factor 1 (0.43) and a lower, non-significant loading on Factor 2 (0.12). Using the party analogy, he was metaphorically 'in the kitchen', surrounded by others who shared similar viewpoints. This suggests that the board selected a CEO who aligned well with its collective values. Another appointee through this inclusive intervention was P11, an independent director who joined in November 2023 following P7's retirement. P11 completed the first Q sort in July 2024, followed by a 30-minute interview. P11's Q sort loaded significantly on Factor 1 (0.67) and non-significantly on Factor 2 (0.23). Like the CEO, she was also 'in the kitchen' at the party. Three months later, P11's second Q sort again showed a positive loading on Factor 1 and a negative loading on Factor 2, reinforcing her alignment with the board's dominant perspective.

The second recruited board member, P10, was a long-standing member of the NZC appointments panel. Notably, he was involved in appointing three women to the board, an uncommon move at the time that preceded the 2018 introduction of Sport New Zealand (Sport NZ)'s 40% gender quota for sport governance boards. Martin reflected on this moment: *"I was on the board appointments when we appointed three women. That was a shock to everyone"*. P10 completed his first Q sort in May 2024, followed by a 30-minute online interview. His initial results showed a significant positive loading on Factor 2 (0.64) and a non-significant loading on Factor 1 (0.26). After the final Q sort, both loadings were significant. Factor 2 remained positively loaded (0.53), though reduced, while Factor 1 increased to a significant level (0.33). Using the party analogy, he had moved from the garden to the steps into the kitchen, indicating a shift toward greater alignment with the board's shared perspective.

Post Q sort interviews- Appointed board members

During the post-Q sort interviews, P11 (female) and P10 (male), both newly appointed Directors, were asked specific questions regarding their experiences of the selection process. To enhance clarity when referring to participants, gender is included alongside participant codes in this section. These questions aimed to explore their perceptions of the process and its alignment with inclusive governance principles. To this end, participants were asked to reflect on their experiences by responding to the following questions:

Do you think the recruitment process reflected a culture of genuine inclusivity?

Did the interview process also reflect this?

P11 (female) described the process as *“the most robust recruitment process I’ve been a part of. In terms of best practice, professionalism”*. And in terms of an inclusive practice interview with the panel she felt like her voice was heard as an individual and not just her accolades as an Olympic athlete. *“I think I certainly felt that I was heard as a person, not just for [X] as the [athlete]”*. Furthermore, the openness of the interview process was evident as she remarks *“In terms of other inclusive practices within the interview itself was pretty good. There was enough time to chat and the ability to ask questions back as well”*.

P10 (male) offered a unique perspective, having previously served on the appointment panel for several years. This was his first experience as a candidate rather than a panel member. He noted that the process did not feel significantly different and expressed uncertainty about what an inclusive recruitment process should entail. He suggested that, because he already aligned with the expectations of the panel, the process felt routine and lacked distinctiveness. This is illustrated in the following exchange:

Me: *Do you think the recruitment process that you went through reflected a culture of genuine inclusivity?*

P10 (male): *It was an interesting process, and I really wasn't that engaged, because I was a sitting MA chair. That's the reality of it. I guess the question is, what does an inclusivity-driven recruitment process look like? I'm not 100% sure what the answer to that question is.*

P10's (male) response highlights a potential inhibitor in the recruitment process: when candidates already fit the expected profile, the mechanisms of inclusivity may go unnoticed or unchallenged. His uncertainty suggests a need for clearer definitions and explicit practices around inclusive recruitment.

P11 (female) made an interesting comment related to one of the objectives of the intervention, which was to promote inclusivity in the recruitment process to target inclusive applicants. She demonstrated this inclusive lens during the interview by observing the limited number of women on the panel. She noted, *“It was interesting that I did notice there was only one female on the*

interview panel. She was an independent Sport New Zealand representative. But, you know, out of six people in the room, only one female". P10 (male), appointed to the board around the same time as P11, also demonstrated an inclusive, pro-diversity perspective. His reflections underscored the significance of fostering inclusivity within boards, particularly regarding gender representation. He observed, "What is hard to do is to change misogynistic thinking and unconscious bias. I think that it is intergenerational". This comment highlights the enduring nature of gendered attitudes and the complexity of addressing deeply embedded biases in governance contexts.

Post Q Sort Interviews: The Board's view:

The quantitative data supports the viewpoint of the newly appointed directors and CEO that NZC's board requires genuine inclusivity, and this was further reinforced by the qualitative themes of the post Q sort interviews with all the participants. In the post Q sort discussion, P3 highlighted that the purpose of the recruitment intervention was to ask the question, 'what are we looking for?' and to emphasise the need to capture leadership approaches that go beyond technical skills. She explains:

Technical skill set is often a given, but when you're going for higher level positions, you know that the general doesn't get past the gates when they don't have the right technical skill set. So then culture and EQ, that whole piece around their leadership style becomes critical.

P2 also highlights the need to attract leadership that encompasses more than just technical expertise. P2 notes that NZC continues to attract high-level people to leadership positions, driven by a desire to belong to an organisation where both the Board and new CEO demonstrate a commitment to ongoing learning and improvement. P2 describes the new CEO as representing the next level in NZC's already inclusive governance context. P2 states:

Big step up with XXX as a new CEO, the people he's bringing in, the restructure he's doing, and the people that are applying for the strategy job and the marketing job, they are going up a little again. So the whole thing [leadership] gets dragged up. You know, a rising tide lifts all boats.

In his final post Q sort interview, P1 also highlights how the new CEO's leadership approach promotes a safe and supportive environment. He states that the new CEO made him "feel safe"

because he was “*getting my point of view through and saying what needs to be said, and I’m getting feedback from it*”.

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

Of the four additional inclusive actions proposed as part of the intervention, three were successfully embedded, while one was not. Actions 1, 2, and 3 contributed meaningfully to the appointment of a CEO and a board director whose values closely aligned with those of the existing board. These values, as previously discussed, reflect a shared commitment to inclusive governance. However, the fourth action— assembling the AP to reflect NZC’s commitment to gender equity was not achieved. As highlighted by P11 during her post sort interview, only one of the five panel members was female. It was interesting to observe how the project was able to identify clear and explicit inclusive actions at the outset, yet some of the impact seemed to diminish as these actions became embedded into the broader process. This brings me back to the definitions outlined in Chapter 2, particularly Cunningham’s (2015) framing of diversity as “the presence of socially meaningful differences among members of a dyad or group” (p. 6), and inclusion as “the degree into which individuals are free to express themselves and have a sense of workplace connectedness and belonging” (p. 7).

This definition highlights an important distinction. Diversity is often seen as explicit and visible, making it relatively straightforward to identify and address. Inclusion, on the other hand, is more about the degree to which people feel valued and connected, which is inherently less visible and more complex. It blends into the everyday processes and interactions that are often nonlinear and nuanced.

A clear example from this project was the initial commitment to assemble the AP in a way that reflected NZC’s commitment to gender equity. The action was clearly stated: ‘While guided by NZC’s constitution, the appointments panel will be assembled to reflect NZC’s commitment to gender equity.’ However, as the process unfolded, this intention lost momentum. The action was not fully realised, with only one woman ultimately appointed to the five-person panel. In hindsight, it feels as though the clarity and strength of the original intention faded as it became part of the broader implementation process. The pedal came off, and the opportunity to follow through on an explicit commitment to diversity and inclusion was missed.

The gap reveals both the strengths and limitations of the intervention. While the inclusive recruitment practices were largely effective and consistent with the board’s inclusive values, missed

opportunities, particularly regarding gender representation on the AP and the facilitation of the inclusivity session, emphasise the importance of intentional follow through. Inclusive intentions were introduced early in the project, identified as a key theme during the initial core collaboration meetings. Phrases such as 'make it explicit' and 'keep the pedal on' captured the group's early commitment to embedding inclusivity throughout the process. Although key themes in the project, they were not adhered to in the AP which poses the question on how to ensure the pedal stays on and keep it explicit. There was a shared understanding that these ideas as phrases needed to be carried forward as intentional practices to ensure that diversity initiatives would not only be introduced but sustained over time.

Making It Explicit and Keeping the Pedal On

Right from the start, in Core Collaboration Meeting 2, there was a strong interest in how to make the diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives explicit and ensure their sustainability. This dilemma was clearly articulated in the following conversation:

S1: *How do we make the problem explicit and the solution collective?*

S2: *There's a bit of a balance here of how to be explicit, because it demonstrates vulnerability, and you've got to say 'we're being explicit', because that is the best way to solve this problem.*

Martin: *And I think one of the fundamental blocks [to sustainability of the explicit practice] is the mindset of the leaders, in particular the chairs. If they don't want to spend time on it or are not excited by it, it will end. That's an obstacle for any board to overcome.*

In Meeting #4, the core collaboration group revisited the theme of 'making it explicit and the solution collective,' using the metaphor of a pedal to describe the need for ongoing momentum. P13 voiced concern that this remains a significant challenge in sport governance. She noted:

We've got our foot on the gender accelerator still, and we need to keep our foot on [the] gender pedal still because it's not locked in and I think it could easily be lost. It will be interesting to see where this whole thing goes and whether you can take your pedal off there because another one comes in that's more powerful and more diverse and safer than just saying gender.

In meeting #5, P3 returned to the pedal metaphor, emphasising its value as a concept that should be central to inclusive leadership practices in sport boards moving forward:

The concept of the pedal, I haven't heard that before. It's a nice way of phrasing it and bringing it together. I think that is probably one of the most interesting challenges we have right now, that there are lots of initiatives and some people can feel a bit overwhelmed by the initiatives. Being able to make sure we keep our pedal on what's important and how we prioritise will be some of our challenges for the next few years, so I really liked that concept.

Why Does This Matter?

Using the pedal metaphor to keep inclusive leadership practices explicit could serve as a practical and symbolic checkpoint for boards to revisit during their regular meetings, particularly as part of their self-assessment processes. An important question raised by the group in Meeting #5 was whether it is possible to keep multiple pedals operating simultaneously, each at different speeds, in order to sustain ongoing uniqueness.

Martin suggested that the success of managing multiple pedals lies in making small, incremental changes that contribute to sustainable progress. He referred to his concept of 'evolutionary revolution', explaining:

It generally leads to more sustainable change. I think you win or lose on the big things, so it's a matter of trying to keep it small and manageable and have three or four things, whatever they might be, as long as it's all kept fairly small.

His mindset of making small evolutionary changes to a few explicit focus areas, and reviewing them at timely checkpoints to assess where each area sits in relation to the pedal, could help boards maintain visibility, momentum, and sustainable progress in their inclusive leadership practices.

A limitation of this intervention was the small sample size, only two appointed participants were interviewed, selected as exemplars to represent key themes identified in the evaluation of the AP. Additionally, the initial plan for the researcher and the academic expert to conduct a one-hour workshop with the appointment panel members did not eventuate due to time constraints. This was a missed opportunity to build awareness of inclusive leadership practices, which may have influenced the conduct of the appointment interviews. Consequently, the interviews with

the appointed participants might have yielded different insights had the workshop taken place. Future action research interventions could address these limitations by incorporating workshops to raise awareness of inclusive leadership practices within the appointment panel process, along with regular check-ins to ensure diverse voices are represented within the panel. These strategies would help strengthen the inclusivity and evaluative depth of future recruitment processes.

Furthermore, as Molloy (2023) notes in her study limitations, “There is an urgent need to develop nonprofit sport Nominating Committee evaluation instruments against which to assess their effectiveness” (p. 134). This observation aligns with the findings of this project. The absence of a formal evaluative tool to assess appointment panel effectiveness limited the depth of analysis and represents a significant opportunity for future research and practice. The findings from this project could inform the development of future appointment panel evaluation tools, particularly those designed to assess inclusive leadership practices and alignment with governance values.

These reflections highlight both the effectiveness and limitations of the intervention’s inclusive recruitment and appointment practices. Key inclusive strategies included the use of inclusive language in advertisements, promotion of roles on platforms that prioritise diversity, and the implementation of interview techniques designed to mitigate bias and assess open-mindedness. These practices appear to have contributed to the appointment of a CEO and board director whose values closely aligned with those of the existing board and reflected an inclusive governance perspective.

Interpreting Change Through EI and CQ

The outcomes of this project offer a valuable contribution to the evolving understanding of how recruitment and appointment panels can be intentionally designed around principles of EI and CQ. From the outset, the development of the board skills and experience matrix was guided by a CQ priority, ensuring cultural alignment between candidates, the NZC Board, and the broader NZC system. Recruitment materials further reinforced this inclusive approach, using language that reflected EI constructs, particularly those related to relationship management and social awareness (see Appendix N).

During the appointment panel process, as highlighted by P11, the experience was described as *“the most robust recruitment process”* and *“best practice”*. This can be attributed to Martin’s leadership, whose facilitation of the process exemplified high EI, particularly within the domain

of social awareness, most notably, empathy. His ability to foster an inclusive and respectful environment enabled candidates to feel genuinely heard, with one noting, *“I certainly felt that I was heard as a person”*. This aligns with Walther et al. (2019), who emphasise the importance of behavioural integration and decision comprehensiveness in director selection processes. Their findings attribute successful outcomes to board chairs who demonstrate strong facilitation skills in the EI dimension of social awareness, an insight clearly reflected in Martin’s approach.

Contributions to existing theory and models

The findings of this intervention contribute to the conceptual advancement of Molloy’s (2023) research, particularly her re-conceptualisation of nonprofit sport board roles, objectives, and functions. This project responds directly to Molloy’s (2023) identification of a knowledge deficit surrounding appointment panels and their role in improving director selection processes and outcomes. By examining the appointment panel through an inclusive leadership lens, this study extends Molloy’s work by integrating EI and CQ capabilities into the planning and execution of the appointment panel process. In doing so, it offers a practical application that helps bridge the gap between theory and practice, and advances Molloy’s (2023) call for more inclusive and strategically designed governance mechanisms within nonprofit sport organisations.

6.4 Intervention 3: The System

In the AUT Research Week video (see

Video 6.1

AUT Research Video :https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RfP_ts2JpI embedded earlier, Martin reflects on how the National Board participants, through this project, have developed an awareness of what constitutes inclusive practices in sport boards. He evaluates how this awareness is beginning to influence individual practice, although systemic change has not yet been fully achieved. He shares:

...the inclusiveness of our boardroom is in a really healthy state. Our challenge now is to somehow infuse this to the next level, the regional levels, and we have made some steps along that way during this project, but I can't put my hand on my heart and say we nailed this yet. (58.53)

The third objective of this project, Embedding and Sharing Learnings Across NZC through the MAs, was only partially achieved. While the sharing component took root, the embedding aspect remains as yet unrealised/a work in progress due to the disbandment of the DICG during the project. However, as Martin shared in the video, the act of sharing learnings has had a tangible impact on sustaining momentum. Participants who gained awareness through the project are continuing to carry this forward.

This was particularly evident in the developing themes discussed in Chapter 5, which were shaped through the DICG Steering Group meetings and the DICG workshop. These themes include:

- Keeping the pedal on gender while leveraging other diversity actions
- MA and DA awareness of inclusive movements
- Board/governance appointment panels and appointment panel awareness

In particular, the theme 'keeping the pedal on gender while leveraging other diversity actions' became a leading overarching theme in the project. It served as a reminder that inclusive efforts must remain explicit and collectively driven to avoid being lost within the system. These developments have the potential to act as catalysts for ongoing influence within the NZC system, driven by increased awareness of inclusive leadership in sport boards.

Evaluating Change and Learning Within the System

Evaluation Tools

Although the objective was to enhance awareness of inclusivity across the NZC system, the specific impact of this awareness, particularly within Member Associations (MAs), was not formally measured through follow-up interviews or reflective processes. No direct assessment was conducted to determine whether MAs had developed a deeper understanding of inclusive leadership as a result of the intervention.

There was one key reason for not implementing evaluation tools to assess awareness and shared learning within the system, and especially within the MAs. In October 2024, a proposal was made to disband the existing Diversity and Inclusion Community Governance (DICG) steering group in favour of establishing a more structured Community Cricket Advisory Group. This new group adopted a community lens with a governance focus, differing from the DICG's governance lens with a community focus. Following this transition, my formal connection to the MAs was discontinued, limiting my ability to engage in further evaluation activities.

Although the themes generated through the DICG meetings and workshops were originally intended to influence inclusive practice within the NZC system, due to the unexpected disbandment of the DICG and lack of evaluation, the awareness of inclusivity generated is unknown. However, these themes became effective discussion prompts during core collaboration group meetings and contributed to broader conversations within the wider sporting sector. This wider impact was captured through a final formative feedback session with the core collaboration group, which served as a structured evaluation tool.

The final feedback session with the core collaboration group involved open-ended questions aligned with the project's key inquiries. This approach provided a reflective space for participants to articulate their experiences and insights. Molina and Spencer (2020) argue that final evaluative feedback sessions create a space where implicit understandings become explicit learnings, reinforcing their value in action research. Furthermore, Schön (1991) emphasizes the importance of reflection-on-action, noting that such reflection can reveal how prior actions contributed to outcomes that were not originally anticipated. He writes: "We may reflect on action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome." (p. 26)

In this project, the final feedback session functioned as a moment of collective reflection-on-action, surfacing insights that demonstrated how learning and awareness had filtered further into the sporting sector than initially intended.

Core collaboration group participants were asked to reflect on the following questions:

1. Has your thinking or behaviour changed regarding inclusive leadership in sport boards as a result of our discussions over the past 18 months? If so, how?
2. What has been the key learning for you?
3. What suggestions do you have for improving core collaboration core collaboration group processes for future action research projects?
4. What has been the most significant change to come out of this group?

Capturing Change: Core Collaboration Group Feedback Evaluation Session

Responses from the core collaboration group indicated that participants had applied, or intended to apply, the shared learnings within their own sport environments. This suggests that the project fostered meaningful engagement and knowledge transfer both within and beyond the NZC system.

P13 viewed the core collaboration meetings and shared learning as an opportunity to influence the wider sporting sector, particularly through Sport New Zealand. Together with High Performance Sport NZ, Sport NZ forms the Crown entity responsible for leading the sport system across New Zealand (SportNZ, n.d.). P13 reflected, *“The focus of change was primarily NZC but noting above the opportunity to collate all the learnings and changes for SNZ to consider as we continually update our own programmes”*.

P14 described the shared learnings as a source of reassurance, affirming that her organisation’s leadership development was progressing in the right direction: *“For me, more of a confidence that the direction we are taking some of our operational leadership development is on the right track”*. P5, a member of the NZC Board, felt that the shared learnings reinforced the importance of leadership and governance processes. She noted: *“These meetings reinforced importance of leadership and processes to create the environment [i.e. chair and appointments processes]. I tried to influence this through my involvement on two MA board appointments processes (with varying success)”*.

As demonstrated in the quotes above, the final feedback session with the core collaboration group suggested that increased awareness and shared learning may have extended beyond NZC into parts of the wider sporting sector.

were meaningfully infused into the wider New Zealand sporting sector. As a researcher, I can only hope that this project will *“step away and they will continue the momentum”*, as Martin expressed in the final video reflection. This sentiment captures the aspirational nature of action research, where the intervention not only achieves its immediate goals but also inspires ongoing change beyond its original scope.

Reflective Pause

Sparked Curiosity

This project reflects an enduring critique of Organisational Development (OD), particularly the perception that Lewin’s (1946) foundational model, ‘unfreezing, changing, refreezing’, is overly linear and insufficient for addressing complexity and systemic change. While such critiques are well documented, I take a different view. I argue that Lewin anticipated the limitations of group-level interventions in influencing broader systems. His metaphor of the ship’s rudder illustrates this point:

The person returning from a successful completion of a good-will meeting is like the captain of a boat who somehow has felt that his ship steers too much to the right and therefore has turned the steering wheel sharply to the left. Certain signals assure him that the rudder has followed the move of the steering wheel. Happily he goes to dinner. In the meantime, of course, the boat moves in circles... action is based on observations made ‘within the boat’ and too seldom based on objective criteria in regard to the relations of the movement of the boat to the objective to be reached (Lewin, 1946, p.38).

Lewin’s (1946) subsequent call for “reconnaissance to show us whether we move in the right direction and with what speed we move” (p.38) underscores the importance of the context analysis in Phase 1 in Action Research: understanding the system’s values and context before assuming change will cascade. This insight resonates with Burnes and Cook’s (2012) argument that OD interventions often fail when value alignment is absent: “The issue boils down to one of value alignment – OD is more suitable for organisations that share its values” (p. 1415). Burnes and Bargal (2017) argue that Lewin’s approach to organisational change, grounded in fostering individual and collective learning, transcends critiques that dismiss it as overly linear. This perspective invites a critical re-engagement with Lewin’s ideas and approach, suggesting that reimagining organisational change leadership is essential for shaping how organisations will function in the future the future.

Lewin’s (1946) foundations for OD were built on values of openness and honesty. In this project, participants consistently identified openness as critical to creating an inclusive environment in sport

governance. For example, Diana reflected on embedding this value into recruitment: *“How can we have open mindedness, we might have to remember that for recruitment. Right now, I feel like we've got this right. So, I think we need to capture it in what we think that looks like”*. This alignment may explain why change occurred at the National Board level, consistent with Lewin’s (1946) assertion that “learning takes place” (p.34) when group norms align with OD values.

However, systemic change did not materialize to the extent anticipated. This suggests the challenge lies deeper than process-oriented initiatives, such as the disbanding of the DICG. It may reflect that the National Board’s value of openness was not embedded across the broader organisational network. This raises a critical insight: in culturally diverse systems, openness cannot be assumed as a shared value. Future research could map value systems across multiple boards (e.g., using Q sort methods) to identify alignment or divergence with OD’s core values.

Why does this matter?

This reflection highlights the potential role of CQ as a developmental focus for enabling systemic change by bridging values across the organisation. CQ could enable boards to navigate cultural differences and foster open-mindedness across the system, creating conditions for learning beyond localized interventions. Without CQ, action research intervention risks remaining confined to pockets of alignment, echoing critiques that action research interventions integrated with OD must evolve beyond group-level change to address cultural and structural complexity. This project contributes to the developmental action research methodology by extending its application to inclusive governance contexts and emphasising the importance of the context analysis phase, as well as the role of CQ as a mechanism for systemic value alignment.

Interpreting Change through Emotional and CQ

While the project’s impact on the NZC system as a whole did not fully align with initial expectations, the momentum generated within the National Board, and the small but meaningful efforts to share learnings with the MA’s, stand as a testament to the action research process itself. Bradbury et al. (2019) argue that action research inherently fosters transformative action through its relational and emotional foundations. Although they do not explicitly reference EI or CQ, their call to action highlights the importance of self-awareness, the transformation of mental models, and the reconfiguration of interpersonal relationships. These elements closely align with Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) widely cited definition of EI: “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to

use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). The action research process, particularly its relational and emotional foundations, as framed through this project's EI and CQ lens, contributed to Martin's notion of 'evolutionary revolution' by creating small but significant moments of momentum that may gradually permeate the wider system.

Contributions to existing models

The pedal metaphor introduced in this project offers a practical way to conceptualise how inclusive practices can be sustained within a system. It encourages sport boards to remain aware of which initiatives are currently being prioritised and to assess whether the level of focus should be increased or reduced. As Martin suggests, multiple pedals making small adjustments can collectively lead to sustainable change. A simple check-in during board meetings using a list of ongoing initiatives and their current progress could support decision-makers in determining whether to maintain pressure or shift focus across system-level initiatives.

This approach aligns with and extends Korkmaz et al.'s (2022) recent review of inclusive leadership, which addresses the lack of integration in existing conceptualisations by building on Randell et al.'s (2018) model. Korkmaz et al. (2022) add two additional dimensions: (3) showing appreciation and (4) supporting organisational efforts. The pedal metaphor complements the fourth dimension by offering a tangible mechanism to support inclusive leadership across the organisational system. It responds to Korkmaz et al.'s (2022) critique by reinforcing the importance of "being open to organisational change" and "promoting the organisation's mission on inclusion" (p. 11). The pedal metaphor also contributes to bridging theory and practice, aligning with my ontological perspective of pragmatic inquiry. It was developed through the action research methodology, which inherently supports this integration. As Bradbury (2015) asserts, "Action research brings together action and reflection, theory and practice," (p.1) reinforcing the value of practical mechanisms, like the pedal metaphor, that enable inclusive leadership to be enacted and sustained within complex systems.

6.5 Limitations and Opportunities

National Board Intervention

Board Participants

The participants in this study were members of the National Board. As a researcher, I observed a substantial portion of the dialogue during the post Q sort interviews reflected a predominantly leader-centric orientation, particularly in relation to the role of the chair in shaping inclusive leadership practices. This observation aligns with findings from Ferkins et al. (2025), whose study

revealed that participants from National Sport Organisations tended to orient more toward the individual-in-charge end of the collective leadership spectrum, rather than toward a fully collective voice.

Echoing the curiosity posed in their study, I suggest that future research could explore boards at other levels within the organisation, such as the MAs or DAs. Investigating these contexts may offer a more nuanced understanding of how different dimensions of collective leadership develop and interact across governance levels in sport organisations.

Furthermore, given that this project adopts a Western lens, it is important to acknowledge that while collective leadership and the dimensions of CEI and CCQ are considered developing paradigms within contemporary leadership scholarship, the principles underpinning collective leadership and intelligences have long been embedded in Indigenous worldviews and practices (Curseu et al., 2015; Ferkins et al., 2025; Liao & Thomas, 2025). In particular, Māori have view leadership as a whole, they believe the “task of the leader is to weave the group together into a unified whole” (Spiller et al., 2015, p.64). It is important to note that this study took place in New Zealand, where the ongoing dynamics for a partnership between Māori and colonising people continues. Spiller et al. (2025) explains:

For decades, Aotearoa New Zealand has been a crucible of change throughout phases of colonisation as the two rubbing sticks of Māori and colonising settlers have sought and fought to be in effective partnership. This dynamic process yields sparks of catalytic change (p.68).

Although only 2/11 participants for the present study identified as Māori (one being the chair), the NZC National Board has been on a formal bicultural journey since 2015, when it adopted the strategic vision: ‘Cricket. A game for all New Zealanders, a game for life’. Although the NZC National Board’s bicultural journey to date may have enriched participants’ understanding of collective and inclusive leadership, this also presents a contextual limitation. Their exposure to Māori leadership ideals and non-Western leadership paradigms may not reflect the experiences of other sport boards lacking such strategic purpose. As such, the findings may not be fully transferable to governance contexts where biculturalism or indigenous knowledge is less embedded.

Chairs

Having Martin step down as NZC chair and Diana being appointed midway through the project was unexpected. The uncertainty of a new chair who might not embrace or co-design the project as Martin had was a potential limitation. It could have disrupted the momentum that had taken significant time and relational effort to build. However, that was not the case. As Martin stated in the AUT Research video (see

Video 6.1

AUT Research Video), one of his biggest fears was that stepping down might result in the loss of momentum, not only for this project but also for the years of relationship-building with AUT aimed at bridging theory and practice in sport governance in New Zealand.

Fortunately, Diana was already aligned with this mindset. She had been involved in succession planning and had previous experience on the Board. She was part of the momentum, and when she stepped into the chair role, the participants reflections suggested that she continued on with the existing practices. What could have been a limitation became a greater opportunity than expected. Brydon-Miller and Aragón (2018) note that stepping into emergent action research processes and losing familiar points of reference may feel daunting, but this is part of the diversity and unpredictability inherent in action research's pursuit of personal and social transformation.

I also acknowledge that my relationship with Diana, established early on in the project, and the ability to engage in informal dialogue during hikes due to her proximity, was a unique opportunity not readily available to every action researcher. This kind of access, particularly when studying action research from an outsider perspective, is not easily replicated. These interactions exemplify the principle of *whakawhanaungatanga*, (building relationships), which underpinned the entire research process and was central to the methodological approach outlined in Chapter 3. Schön (1991) describes the distinction between researchers who observe practice from the high ground, studying issues from a distance, and those who immerse themselves in the swampy lowlands, where the complexity and messiness of practice are visible only to insiders or embedded contractors who can influence the reality they encounter. At times, I felt deeply connected to Diana's journey as chair, experiencing the often messy and confusing aspects of leadership through our in-depth unpacking of the highlights, paradoxes, and challenges of leading an organisation renowned for its inclusive governance. While this was a rich opportunity for co-constructing meaning and knowledge, it also presents a limitation for researchers who may not have access to such relational depth or proximity with their participants.

Recruitment Process and Appointment Panel Intervention

Furthermore, as previously noted, a follow-up interview with the CEO after his Q sort could not be conducted due to time constraints associated with his new role. This missed opportunity

limited the depth of insight into his reflections on the recruitment process, particularly regarding whether he perceived it through an inclusive lens.

This also resulted in a smaller sample size for evaluating the intervention, with only two appointed participants interviewed and selected as exemplars to represent key themes identified in the evaluation of the AP. Nevertheless, the use of a mixed methods approach, triangulating quantitative (Q sort), qualitative (interview) data and memoing, even within a small sample size, has been widely acknowledged as a methodological strength due to its ability to enhance validity, enrich interpretation, and provide a more holistic understanding of complex phenomena (Ivankova, 2015; Richardson & Reid, 2006; Sharp & Frechtling, 1997).

System Intervention

To address the limitation of this project not fully achieving its objective of embedding and sharing learnings across NZC through the MAs, future research would benefit from adopting a systems thinking approach informed by EI and CQ. This approach would examine the National Board's position within the broader sport governance system and explore the emotional dimension of relationships between its various components. This project adopted a social constructionist approach, aiming to understand how participants co-constructed their realities through the lens of EI and CQ. The relational dimension, viewed through the EI lens, was deliberately focused on the interrelationships among board members. Their CQ was expanded by unpacking why uncomfortable experiences created vulnerability and openness, which are key conditions for inclusive leadership development. A systems approach would consider how different elements of the system interact and influence one another (Coghlan, 2019). This shift would offer a more holistic understanding of inclusive leadership within sport governance and potentially enhance the diffusion of learning across the entire NZC system.

6.6 Summary Table of Research Outcomes

Table 6.3 provides a consolidated summary of the research outcomes across Phases 1 to 4, encompassing the organisational context, quality of relationships, identified and developing issues, interventions, and evaluation within each NZC context (National Board and the broader NZC system) and maps the key theoretical concepts applied across all phases. The following chapter concludes the project by synthesising these theoretical insights to present a conceptual framework and practical applications for inclusive leadership practice in sport governance grounded in and responding to the project's research questions

Table 6.3*Summary Table of Phases 1,2,3 and 4 Research Outcomes*

Phase 1 and 2: Context Analysis and Interpretation (Chapter 4)		
Context Analysis		
New Zealand Cricket is an organisation that has championed the ‘diversity’ half of ‘diversity and inclusion’ within its boards. The process of telling the story is a foundational component of the project which then lays the groundwork for reflections and insights to add meaning and sense making to the project (Coghlan, 2019). Phase 1 includes an investigation of NZC’s inclusive background story as part of the context analysis. The story began with unpacking the Hood Report and the significant impact it had on three key factors: governance/CEO leadership shifts, strategic priorities, and systemic inclusive initiatives. Collaborative relationships were created through a pre-step involving two processes: whakawhanuanga and building authentic collaboration. Whakawhanaungatanga was instrumental in setting up an open and transparent foundation for key relationships within the project. Authentic collaboration served as a deep commitment and openness to engage in the key relationships through outcomes of respect for diversity of perceptions and trust.		
Interpretation and Issue Identification		
National Board		System
Recruitment/Appointment Process	Chair/Board Members	DICG
• New CEO appointment needs updated position description (updated from 2011) • MA board chairs formally inputting into the description of what director skills and experience would be targeted within the 2022 process	• Considered one of NZ’s leading sport organisations in terms of effective sport governance and leadership • Influential inclusive experiences already having impact (e.g., Waitangi trip)	• In November 2022, WICG changed its name to DICG to evolve its focus from gender equity within cricket governance to a broader focus on diversity and inclusion

• Other stakeholder engagement informal input into such skills • MAs are three out of five places on the appointments panel • AP to assemble two months before to actively plan collectively • NZC members having final say in director appointments	• Inclusive practices already in place - informal self-assessments, board time consultations working with the board members • Strong inclusive leadership already within the board composition	whilst still maintaining the gender equity momentum achieved during Phases 1 and 2 • Current DICG steering group has responsibilities to be 'leadership' champions of change in the diversity and inclusion context
Identified and Developing Issues		
• Changing the language in the recruitment documentation to reflect a culture of genuine inclusivity • The AP interviews need to reflect inclusivity with the process • The AP composition needs to be adjusted to fit the cultural and gender fit • AP needs to be upskilled in the concept of 'inclusive leadership' and inclusive practices within the interview.	• Setting up a formal plan to integrate influential inclusive leadership experiences (i.e., Waitangi, what's next?) • Continue to extend the comfort zone and lens of current board member focus on espoused theory and CQ • Informal conversations with chair driven by theory and themes; discussed through an EI lens	• Maintain momentum for women in governance (numbers and inclusion) across the cricket network, understanding that: • Widening the NZC, MA and DA governance activity to focus on diversity and inclusion, in line with NZC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy. • Development of a National Governance Training Strategy with D&I as a key pillar and incorporating: chair training around inclusive leadership and what successful Board recruitment and succession planning looks like.
Theoretical Concepts		

Theoretical work pertaining to sport board recruitment and appointment processes (Molloy, 2023; Molloy et al., 2019, 2024a, 2024b)		Theoretical work pertaining to inclusive leadership practices through a lens of EI and CQ (Goleman, 2020; Middleton, 2014; Randell et al., 2018; Shore & Chung, 2021)	Theoretical work pertaining to systematic change through collective leadership (Ferkins et al., 2018a)
Phase 3 Action, Analysis and Intervention (Chapter 5)			
Inhibitors and Enablers			
National Board		System	
Recruitment/Appointment Process (AP)	Chair/Board Members	DICG	
Inhibitors: - Existing language in the recruitment documentation which did not fully reflect a culture of genuine inclusivity - Previous AP interviews (and therefore starting point for present round) did not fully reflect inclusivity with the process - Historically, the composition of the AP was not necessarily a sound cultural and gender fit	Inhibitors: - No formal plan to integrate influential inclusive leadership experiences (i.e., Waitangi, what's next?) to extend the comfort zone and lens of current board members and chairs - Lack of knowledge on what inclusive leadership practices are	Inhibitors: - Difficulty in maintaining momentum for women in governance (numbers and inclusion) across the cricket network whilst still introducing new DEI initiatives - Lack of inclusive leadership awareness in the system, especially the MA's	
Enablers:	Enablers:	Enablers:	

AP will be upskilled in the concept of ‘inclusive leadership’ and inclusive practices within the interview	Both chairs were open to collaborate on a regular basis and report back to the board members	- D&I to be included as a key pillar in the Development of a National Governance Training Strategy Theoretical Concepts - Opportunity to widen the NZC, MA and DA governance activity to focus on diversity and inclusion, in line with NZC’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy.
Interventions		
Initiating a recruitment/appointment process that enhances the use of inclusive practices within NZC’s 2023 executive level recruitment processes.	Providing theories of practice to the chairs through dialogue to assist in developing their own and the board members’ inclusive leadership practices.	Develop awareness and sustained progress in diversity and inclusion initiatives within the NZC cricket system. Maintain and create relationships.
Further Theoretical Concepts		
(continued from Chapter 4)		
Theoretical work pertaining to sport board recruitment and appointment process (Molloy, 2023; Molloy et al., 2024a, 2024b; Stenling et al., 2021).	Theoretical work pertaining to inclusive leadership practices through awareness, dialogue and relationships (Aoki, 1993; Bohm, 1996; 2003; Brydon-Miller, 2024; Cronenberg & Headley, 2019).	Theoretical work pertaining to systematic change through awareness, relationships and collective leadership (Ferkins et al., 2025; Molloy et al., 2023; Mor Borak et al., 2022; Randel, 2025).
Phase 4: Evaluation of Action and Intervention (Chapter 6)		
Theoretical Implications		
National Board		System

Recruitment/Appointment Process	Chair/Board Members	DICG
Theoretical implications of the recruitment and appointment intervention show that integrating cultural alignment and inclusive language in recruitment design reinforces the role of selection processes in shaping leadership diversity. Chair-led awareness sessions demonstrate how leader EI fosters CEI, creating psychological safety and enabling candidate voice. However, the gap between espoused inclusive commitments and actual practice reflects misalignment between stated values and enacted behaviours, weakening the impact of the inclusive AP.	Theoretical implications of the National Board intervention highlight how shifts from process-led views to valuing safe and supportive board environments reinforce the role of EI and CQ in inclusive leadership practices. Chair influence and dialogic action research practices fostered the emergence of CEI, creating psychologically safe spaces for voice and participation. Minority experiences (e.g. Waitangi) accelerated CQ and CCQ, enabling openness and shared mental models. Intentional relational strategies (bundling) need to be maintained to sustain inclusive norms across evolving board contexts.	Theoretical implications of the system intervention highlight that sustaining inclusive leadership in nonprofit sport boards requires value alignment, particularly openness and honesty. While dialogue in action research and shared learnings created inclusive leadership momentum, its integration depends on system-wide value alignment, underscoring the importance of Phase 1 context analysis for future action research researchers seeking systemic impact. The pedal metaphor illustrates the need for ongoing, incremental adjustments to keep diversity initiatives visible and embedded across the sport governance system.
Further Theoretical Concepts Used: Inclusive leadership (Korkmaz et al., 2022) Espousal Theory (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Janssens & Steyaert, 2020; Robinson et al., 2021; Schoen & Rost, 2021)	Further Theoretical Concepts Used: Collective Leadership (Ferkins et al., 2025) Dialogue/Dialogue in Sport Governance (Brydon-Miller, 2024; Coghlan, 2019; O’Boyle et al., 2023; O’Boyle & Shilbury, 2016) CEI & CCQ	Further Theoretical Concepts Used: Organisational Development and Action Research (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Lewin, 1946) Inclusive leadership Korkmaz et al. (2022)

	(Bücker & Korzilius, 2024; Curseu et al., 2015; Iskhakova & Ott, 2020; Liao & Thomas, 2025; Shankar & Tewari, 2021)	
Theoretical Synthesis Developing inclusive leadership through EI and CQ in sport boards is a multi-level, dynamic process shaped by individual capabilities, collective dynamics, and systemic alignment. Three interventions—embedding inclusive practices in recruitment and appointment, fostering chair and board development through dialogic engagement, and sustaining diversity and inclusion initiatives across the system, demonstrate this interaction. Developing inclusive leadership in sport boards: <i>At the individual level:</i> Developing EI and CQ in chairs and board members enable psychologically safe environments that encourage voice and support the emergence of CEI and CCQ. <i>Collectively:</i> Developing openness, honesty, and shared meaning-making embed inclusive norms within board interactions and processes. <i>Systemically:</i> sustaining progress requires value alignment and continuous, incremental adjustments to keep diversity and inclusion visible and integrated. Sustaining progress in diversity and inclusion requires ongoing value alignment and continuous, incremental adjustments. To keep these principles visible and integrated, organisational processes must reflect inclusive values. This includes recruitment and appointment practices, which should explicitly incorporate cultural alignment and inclusive language. These processes play a critical role in shaping leadership diversity and must be intentionally designed to reinforce inclusive outcomes. Inclusive leadership development is therefore an evolving capability, dependent on intentional design, quality relationships, dialogue, reflective learning dialogue, and ongoing adaptation within complex governance contexts.		



Conceptual framework, Practical applications and Future Research

Chapter 7 Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesises insights from an 18-month action research project conducted in collaboration with New Zealand Cricket (NZC), an exemplar sport organisation recognised for its leadership in inclusive governance. Framed through emotional (EI) and cultural intelligence (CQ) lenses, the study explored how NZC evolved its governance practices to embed inclusive leadership. Participants in the project included the NZC National Board, a core collaboration group comprising experts from Sport New Zealand and Auckland University of Technology and a Diversity Inclusion Cricket Governance group. The essence of this developmental action research project was to create and enact new meanings around the development of inclusive leadership in sport boards. While action research is not a commonly employed methodology in sport governance research, it was considered particularly effective in this context due to the foundational commitment between researchers and participants to pursue positive change and collaboratively address real-world problems (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015b; Heron & Reason, 2006).

Cardno's (2003) developmental action research framework, originally designed for educational practitioners working within their own organisations, was adapted for this project. I argue that this framework is equally applicable to sport organisations, where its dynamic, practice-oriented approach aligns well with the collaborative and outcome-driven nature of sport environments. Much like a sports team working together to solve challenges and achieve shared goals, the developmental action research framework supports collective inquiry and action.

The outcomes of this research also reinforce the theoretical and methodological argument that a mixed methods approach, underpinned by action research, enhances understanding of how inclusive leadership practices develop within sport boards. The Q sort-inspired method provided a meaningful integration of quantitative with qualitative approaches, enabling exploration of participants' subjective viewpoints on key topics. Additionally, the expert panel for the project, the core collaborative group, offered a valuable qualitative lens through which to evaluate identified themes. As detailed in Chapter 6, the research outcomes evolved iteratively across each phase of the action research cycle, reflecting the dynamic and participatory nature of the methodology.

Drawing on the theoretical outcomes from three interventions, this chapter presents a conceptual framework for inclusive leadership in sport boards. It translates these insights into

practice-oriented applications and offers recommendations for future leadership development, with a particular emphasis on EI and CQ. The chapter also acknowledges the limitations of the project and outlines directions for future research.

To guide this inquiry, the project addressed the following overarching research question:

How can inclusive leadership in sport boards be developed through an emotional and cultural intelligence lens?

This was supported by the following sub-questions:

1. What does inclusive leadership practice mean in the context of sport boards?
2. What factors inhibit or enable an inclusive environment in sport boards?
3. What role could EI and CQ play in developing inclusive leadership practices?
4. What actions can be taken to develop inclusive practices in sport boards?
5. What changes have occurred as a result of such actions?

The following sections respond to these questions by weaving together the theoretical outcomes from all three interventions. These interventions were as follows:

New Zealand Cricket National Board

- *Intervention 1:*
 - Promoting awareness and understanding of inclusive leadership in sport boards with the National Board members
 - Facilitating dialogue with the chair s to introduce theories of practice and enhance their own and other board members' understanding and application of inclusive leadership.
- *Intervention 2:* Initiating a recruitment and appointment process that enhanced the use of inclusive practices within NZC's 2023 executive-level recruitment processes.

New Zealand Cricket System

- *Intervention 3:* Developing awareness and sustained progress in diversity and inclusion initiatives within the NZC cricket system.

This convergence of co-created knowledge, critical reflection, and action is presented through a conceptual framework that illustrates how inclusive leadership in sport boards can be developed and sustained through EI and CQ.

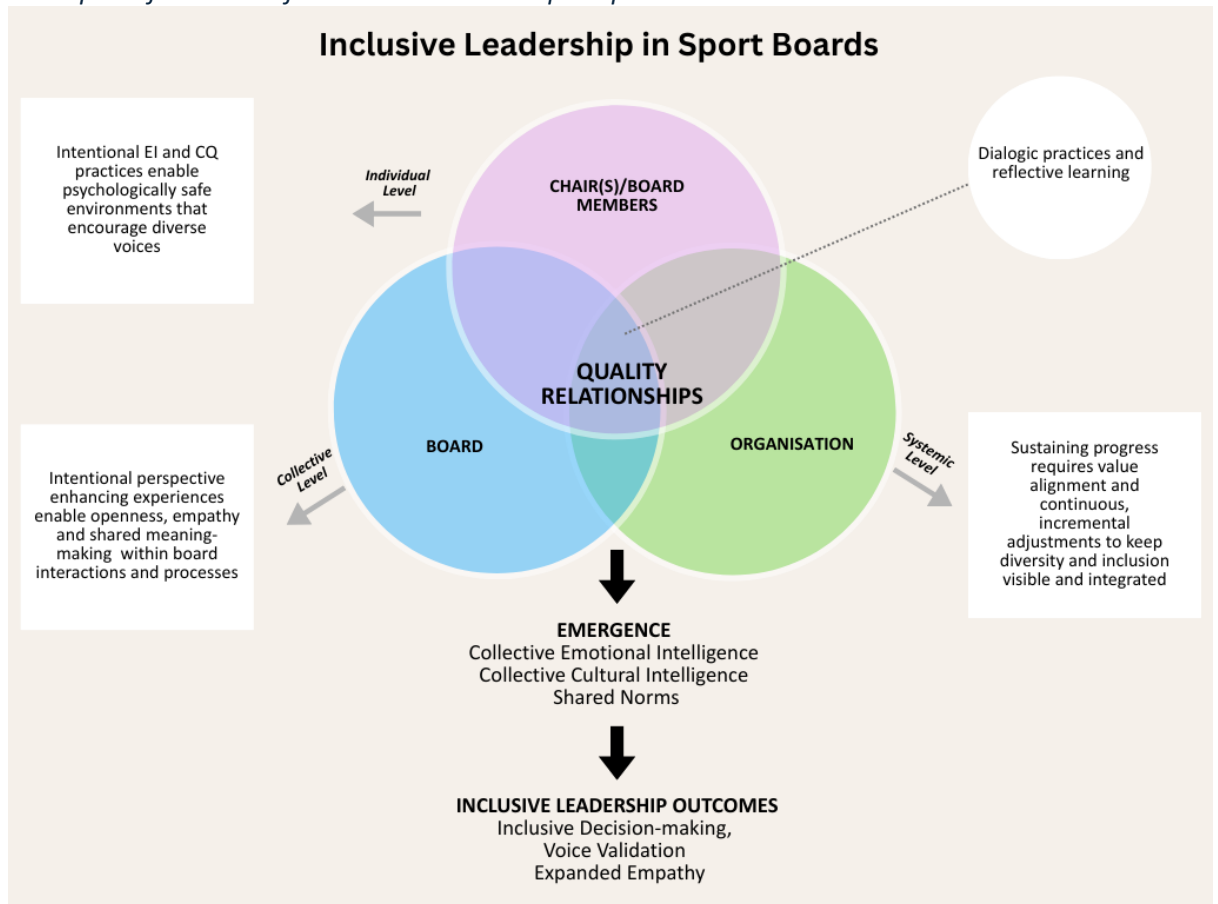
7.2 Conceptual Framework for Developing Inclusive Leadership in Sport Boards

Building on the key findings of this project, a conceptual framework (Figure 7.1) is presented that illustrates how inclusive leadership can be developed and sustained within sport boards. Grounded in theories of inclusive leadership, collective leadership, EI and CQ, this framework reflects the co-construction of knowledge between myself and the participants. As a developmental action research project, it integrated first-, second-, and third-person inquiry and practice throughout my engagement (Coghlan, 2019). First-person inquiry involved a process of self-reflection and learning through action, enabling me to critically examine my own assumptions and intentions while developing greater self-awareness and reflexivity (Coghlan, 2019). This was facilitated through the context analysis phase and reflective pauses at key moments in the research process. Second-person inquiry fostered collaboration with others within the organisation, supporting the co-construction of knowledge and shared meaning throughout the interventions. Finally, third-person inquiry extended the insights generated through this project into a conceptual framework that is transferable and relevant to sport organisations beyond NZC.

The following conceptual framework (Figure 7.1) integrates the three levels of inquiry and practice, illustrating how the interventions implemented within the NZC National Board and broader NZC system fostered quality relationships, dialogic engagement, and reflective learning across individual, collective, and systemic dimensions. These processes enabled the emergence of inclusive leadership outcomes in sport boards, viewed through the lens of EI and CQ.

Figure 7.1

Conceptual framework for Inclusive Leadership in Sport Boards



The three circles in the Venn diagram represent the interconnected contexts in which this action research project was situated: the NZC Board as a collective, individual interactions with the chair and board members, and the broader organisational environment. Methods across these overlapping domains included the use of a Q sort-inspired tool, individual interviews, relational dialogue, and engagement with diversity and inclusion initiatives.

The National Board

At the collective level, project interventions focused on cultivating openness, empathy, and shared meaning-making. These values helped embed inclusive norms within board interactions and processes. Two primary objectives guided the work: first, to raise awareness of inclusive leadership practices through dialogic engagement with the chair and board members; and second, to integrate inclusive principles into the recruitment and appointment processes for the new CEO and National Board directors. A mixed methods approach was used, combining a Q sort-inspired quantitative activity with follow-up qualitative interviews. This provided a structured way to capture board members' perspectives on what constitutes an inclusive sport board environment. Initially, two dominant viewpoints were identified: one prioritised a safe and

supportive environment, while the other emphasised inclusive processes. By the end of the project, a shift was evident, with more board members recognising that safe and supportive environments are foundational to inclusion.

Importantly, the project revealed increased awareness of emotional intelligence (EI) in inclusive leadership, particularly in the areas of social awareness and relationship management, with empathy at the centre. This suggests that collective emotional intelligence (CEI) and collective cultural intelligence (CCQ) were beginning to emerge. This aligns with Curseu et al. (2015), who argue that CEI is strengthened when groups become aware of their social capital and regulate affective dynamics through relationship management. These shared learnings contributed to the development of inclusive norms within the board. As these norms evolved, a greater appreciation of openness emerged through board experiences and group dialogue. This supports Liao and Thomas (2025), who propose that CCQ develops through team learning. Culturally significant experiences, such as the National Board's visit to Waitangi, accelerated this development by fostering openness and enabling the formation of shared mental models.

To sustain inclusive norms that emphasise openness and empathy, the project demonstrated the importance of intentional CQ practices. Board members need to engage in experiences that challenge their comfort zones and promote vulnerability. These practices should be maintained through a bundled approach that offers varied opportunities to reinforce inclusive values and behaviours over time. This evolution illustrates how CEI, collective CCQ, and shared norms can work together to foster inclusive leadership, enhancing both belonging and recognition of individual uniqueness within sport boards.

The theoretical implications of the National Board intervention highlight a shift from process-driven perspectives toward valuing safe and supportive environments. This reinforces the significance of EI and CQ in fostering inclusive leadership. While these constructs are traditionally conceptualised at the individual level, this research extends them to a collective level within the inter-individual dynamics of a sports board. Responding to Curseu et al.'s (2015) call for research on emergent CEI and building on Liao and Thomas's (2025) work on CCQ, this study makes the collective dimension of EI and CQ explicit within governance practice, bridging theory and applied interventions. Accordingly, it addresses a critical gap and advances theoretical understanding of how collective capacities shape inclusive leadership in sport governance.

The second intervention related to the National Board, focused on embedding inclusive principles into the recruitment and appointment processes for the new CEO and National Board

directors. It was implemented at the national level with the intention of informing system-wide practices. Key inclusive strategies included using inclusive language in advertisements, promoting roles on platforms that prioritise diversity, and applying interview techniques designed to mitigate bias and assess open-mindedness. Evaluative interviews indicated that these practices contributed to the appointment of a CEO and board director whose values closely aligned with those of the existing board and reflected an inclusive governance perspective. Although the recruitment practices were largely effective and consistent with the board's inclusive values, missed opportunities in relation to gender representation, which was a key focus of the intervention, highlight the importance of intentional follow-through in inclusive leadership appointments. This contributed to a key theme in the project: 'make it explicit'. There was a shared understanding within the core collaboration group that these phrases needed to be carried forward as intentional practices to ensure that diversity initiatives would not only be introduced but also sustained over time.

By examining the recruitment and appointment process through an inclusive leadership lens, this study extends Molloy's (2023) work on nonprofit sport board roles, objectives, and functions. It responds to her call to address the knowledge deficit surrounding appointment panels and their role in improving director selection processes and outcomes. This project contributes by integrating EI and CQ capabilities into the planning and execution of the recruitment and appointment panel process. In doing so, it offers a practical application that bridges the gap between theory and practice to 'make it explicit' and advances Molloy's (2023) call for more inclusive and strategically designed governance mechanisms within nonprofit sport organisations.

The Chair/Board Members

At the individual level, this project demonstrated that developing EI and CQ in chairs and board members enables psychologically safe environments that encourage voice and support the emergence of CEQ and CCQ. The findings show that board members perceived both Martin and Diana as having high EI, which contributed to the board's overall effectiveness. As key influencers, Martin and Diana played a pivotal role in shaping the emotional climate and enhancing the collective functioning of the board. Their leadership supported the emergence of CEQ and CCQ within the group. These findings align with Coronado-Maldonado and Benítez-Márquez (2023), who emphasise that a team leader's EI can influence the development of emotionally competent group norms. Furthermore, the project offers new insights into the role of the chair as a key leader and highlights the importance of their EI in fostering CEQ and CCQ, an area that remains

relatively underexplored in the sport governance literature (Zeimers & Shilbury, 2022; Zeimers et al., 2025).

In addition to the chair's influence, individual board members also played a significant role in shaping the group's emotional and cultural dynamics. Notably, the board members with whom I had the most sustained engagement were women. While this was not a focus of the study, it is worth noting that 60% of the National Board participants were women, and half of these women were actively involved throughout the project in the DICG and the Core Collaboration Group. This observation aligns with Coronado-Maldonado and Benítez-Márquez (2023), who found that a higher percentage of women in a team can enhance CEI. Their research suggests that gender composition is an important driver of group-level competencies. Although this was outside the formal scope of the project, it presents a valuable opportunity for future research into the relationship between gender dynamics and the development of CEQ and CCQ in sport governance settings.

The Organisation

At the systemic level, this project demonstrated that sustaining progress requires value alignment and continuous, incremental adjustments to ensure that diversity and inclusion remain visible and meaningfully integrated. Organisational processes must reflect and reinforce these inclusive values to embed lasting change. Martin's coined phrase, 'evolutionary revolution,' which described the incremental nature of the diversity and inclusion progress within NZC over the years, was shaped by his previous research involvement (Bond, 2022; Parker, 2019) and personal experience and remained relevant throughout this project. This work extended that notion by introducing the key theme and metaphor 'keeping the pedal on,' which illustrates the ongoing effort required to maintain visibility and embed diversity and inclusion initiatives across the sport governance system.

Despite early momentum, this project also demonstrated that developing awareness and sustaining progress in diversity and inclusion initiatives within the NZC cricket system presented a significant challenge. Systemic change did not materialise to the extent anticipated. Initially, the project collaborated with the Women in Cricket Governance Group, which later broadened its focus and rebranded as the Diversity and Inclusion in Cricket Governance (DICG) group. However, approximately three-quarters of the way through the project, this group was disbanded by the steering group in favour of establishing a more structured Community Cricket Advisory Group. While the DICG had approached diversity and inclusion from a governance lens

with a community focus, the new advisory group adopted a community lens with a governance focus, marking a shift in priorities and approach.

Following this transition, my formal connection to the Major Associations (MAs) was discontinued, which limited opportunities for continued engagement and evaluation. Nonetheless, small but meaningful efforts were made to share learnings with both the MAs and the DICG committee. These interactions contributed to increased awareness and reflective learning which surfaced during moments of dialogue; however, no formal evaluation was conducted to assess the extent or impact of these efforts.

Although no formal evaluation was conducted to assess the impact on awareness or long-term progress in diversity and inclusion initiatives within the NZC cricket system, the transition from a gender-specific focus (Women in Cricket Governance Group) to a broader diversity and inclusion orientation (DICG) stimulated meaningful dialogue within the core collaboration group. This shift introduced the aforementioned central metaphor of the project referred to as 'keeping the pedal on', which encapsulates the need for sustained and intentional commitment by sporting organisations to remain engaged with their diversity and inclusion efforts. This metaphor reflects the importance of organisational openness to change and the active promotion of inclusion as a core mission. It also illustrates how inclusive leadership practices can serve as a bridge between theory and implementation within sport governance. In this way, the project responds to critiques in the literature, such as those by Korkmaz et al. (2022), by demonstrating how inclusive leadership can be operationalised through deliberate and ongoing organisational practices.

This project illustrated that the challenge within the system extends beyond isolated, practice-oriented interventions. The core issue lies in the capacity to sustain multiple, concurrent initiatives and keeping several 'pedals' engaged simultaneously to ensure that the momentum and impact of diversity and inclusion efforts are not diminished over time. While creating meaningful change within the NZC system was somewhat opportunistic within the scope of this PhD project, the findings highlight a broader need in sport governance for approaches informed by a systemic governance lens (Shilbury et al., 2020).

An important insight from the project was that the National Board's value of openness may not have been consistently embedded across the wider organisational network, as discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to Bond's (2022) findings on entrenched traditional behaviours within the NZC system hierarchy. This suggests that in culturally diverse systems, openness cannot be assumed as a universally held value. This reflects Lewin's (1946) foundational work in

organisational development (OD), which emphasises that meaningful change is only possible when groups are open, honest, and willing to engage in reflective dialogue. Future research could explore how value systems are distributed across multiple boards, using methods such as Q sort to identify areas of alignment or divergence with OD principles. Such inquiry would support a more intentional and system-wide approach to embedding inclusive leadership practices.

This project demonstrated that inclusive leadership in sport governance is most effectively developed and sustained when EI, CQ, and inclusive practices are intentionally integrated across individual, collective, and systemic levels. Together, these three dimensions, collaborating across contexts, contribute to a dynamic and evolving framework for inclusive leadership. This project adds to sport governance literature by offering a practical and theoretical model for developing inclusive leadership through intentional, multi-level engagement.

Quality Relationships

At the centre of the Venn diagram lies the integral element of this project: quality relationships. Goleman (2006) reinforces that such relationships are built on empathy, rapport, and emotional attunement, rather than surface-level interactions. Furthermore, Nishii and Leroy (2022) identify high-quality relationships, built on trust and psychological safety, as a core component of inclusive leadership. The pivotal role of quality relationships within the NZC Board, including interactions between the chair and board members as well as among board members themselves, developed as a key theme in this project, supporting the claims of both Goleman (2006) and Nishii and Leroy (2022). This project unveiled that intentional efforts to create relationship-building opportunities through game days, cultural experiences and one-on-one catch-ups were a notable strength of the NZC National Board. This emphasis reinforces the crucial importance of relational dynamics in sport governance, adding a vital layer to what O'Boyle et al. (2019) describe as the "orthodox components of governance" (p. 191), which focus on policy-based and process-driven tasks. Furthermore, this project illustrates that the NZC Board exemplifies a modern board of directors who view sport governance as a multidimensional practice. It integrates traditional governance structures with contemporary leadership approaches built on whanaungatanga (relationship) reflecting the evolving nature of governance in sport contexts (Chait et al., 2004; O'Boyle et al., 2019; Spiller et al., 2015).

Dialogic Practices

Building on the foundation of quality relationships, dialogic practices developed as a second key theme that revealed how inclusive leadership was enacted by the chairs throughout the project. The strength of quality relationship building between the chair and board members was, in part,

a direct result of creating intentional moments of dialogue. Few studies have examined the role and integration of dialogic practice within sport board dynamics (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2016; O'Boyle et al., 2019; 2023; Seltsmann & Fiege, 2024). As discussed in Chapter 6, O'Boyle et al. (2023) identified a link between dialogue and the development of trust in inter-board relationships within nonprofit sport governance, positioning dialogue as a key ingredient in fostering collective leadership across boards. The outcomes of this project underscore the importance of embedding dialogic practices as a core component of collective leadership processes within sport boards.

The sport governance context presents distinct relational and dialogic opportunities that are not typically found in corporate governance environments. As Molloy (2023) states, "Sport governance is equally important and arguably more challenging than in the corporate/commercial domain. Like other nonprofits, nonprofit sport organisations' performance objectives go beyond the financial to the social and/or sporting objectives for which they are established" (p. 57). In addition, sport boards often operate within community-oriented and event-based settings such as games, stakeholder engagements, and informal gatherings, which create unique spaces for interaction and relationship-building (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2020).

The opportunities available to participants in this project were similar to those in other New Zealand national sport organisations. However, they intentionally introduced additional board experiences, such as a Waitangi visit, to immerse the board in a different setting. This experience was deliberately designed to raise cultural awareness and challenge the normative assumptions held by many board members. These alternative environments provided valuable opportunities for reflection, perspective-taking, and informal dialogic interactions that helped to foster deeper relationships and build trust.

In this project, the dialogic theme 'dialogue outside, discussion inside' developed as a key insight. Dialogic practices outside the boardroom, such as coffee catchups, online exchanges, and informal interactions, enhanced the quality of discussion within formal board meetings. While discussion tended to focus on decision-making and agenda-driven exchanges, dialogue invited deeper reflection, mutual understanding, and the co-construction of meaning. These moments of dialogue were also closely connected to the theme of 'validating your voice,' where conversations outside the boardroom enabled board members to filter meaning, refine their perspectives, and ultimately express a more impactful and authentic voice during board meetings. Furthermore, through these dialogic practices and the process of validating their voice outside the boardroom, the chair was able to create inclusive boundaries around boardroom

discussion. This approach allowed the chair to manage time effectively while still ensuring that voices were heard. The chair could trust that contributions made during meetings were grounded in prior dialogue and shared understanding. This distinction is particularly important in sport governance, where relational depth is often underdeveloped but remains essential for inclusive leadership. This project contributes to that positioning by highlighting dialogue as essential to developing inclusive leadership in sport boards.

Reflective Learning Practices

It was evident from the beginning of this project, and through unpacking the context of NZC and its reputation as an already inclusive organisation, that a key contributing factor was its identity as a learning organisation. As Argyris (1977) describes, learning organisations engage in continuous cycles of reflection and adaptation. Furthermore, Auqui-Caceres and Furlan's (2023) more recent systematic review of double-loop learning in organisations concluded that enabling double-loop learning requires practices that involve behavioural changes and modifications of deeply held beliefs and assumptions, as a result of cognitive shifts. New Zealand Cricket consistently demonstrated these double-loop learning practices through reflective engagement at the system, collective, and individual levels. In many of the organisational reports I reviewed during the project, there was clear evidence of inclusive leadership applying a double-loop learning approach to OD, with explicit references to their commitment to continuous improvement, development, and growth in the inclusive space (NZC, 2023a). This reflective capacity aligns with inclusive leadership, which requires leaders to continuously examine and adapt their assumptions and behaviours in response to diverse perspectives (Randel, 2025).

At a collective level, the post-Q sort discussions revealed the board's depth of reflection through intentional listening, inquiry, and the weaving of diverse perspectives to address both surface-level issues and the underlying assumptions guiding board actions. This aligns with Argyris's (1977) description of a learning organisation, which demonstrates the capacity to question governing variables and adapt its practices accordingly.

At an individual level, both Diana and Martin consistently engaged in reflective practice throughout the project. Diana intentionally sought opportunities to reflect deeply through dialogue, weaving identified theory with personal experience to bring deeper meaning to the context. Martin regularly followed up our meetings with thoughtful emails summarising his reflections, what he learned and outlining next steps. These intentional practices led by the chairs align with Randel et al.'s (2018) conceptualisation of inclusive leadership, where leaders high in self-awareness and engaged in reflective practices (openness and appreciation of diverse

perspectives) facilitate group members in experiencing a sense of belonging within the group while maintaining their uniqueness. This enables members to fully contribute to group processes and outcomes.

Diana and Martin's leadership throughout the project exemplified inclusive leadership in action. Their consistent alignment between stated values and behaviours supports Mor Barak et al.'s (2022) assertion that inclusive leaders minimise the gap between policy and practice, ensuring inclusion is experienced by all group members. Their 'walk the talk', inclusive leadership approach, another key theme in this project approach, also reflects Randel et al.'s (2018) emphasis on behavioural integrity, where leaders reinforce inclusive behaviours by modelling them authentically within their teams.

The conceptual framework (Figure 7.1) developed through this project illustrates how inclusive leadership in sport boards can be developed and sustained through the intentional integration of EI, CQ and inclusive practices across individual, collective, and systemic levels. These dimensions, when activated through quality relationships, dialogic engagement, and reflective learning, support the emergence of inclusive leadership as a relational and evolving practice. The framework demonstrates that inclusive leadership is shaped not only by structural interventions, but also through interpersonal and intrapersonal processes that foster psychological safety, shared meaning making, and cultural awareness. Together, these elements contribute to the development of CEI and CCQ, which in turn enable inclusive decision making, voice validation, and extended empathy. The framework reflects the co-construction of knowledge and the developmental nature of action research, integrating first person, second person, and third person inquiry. This evolving model offers both theoretical insight and practical guidance for sport organisations seeking to embed inclusive leadership as a core governance capability.

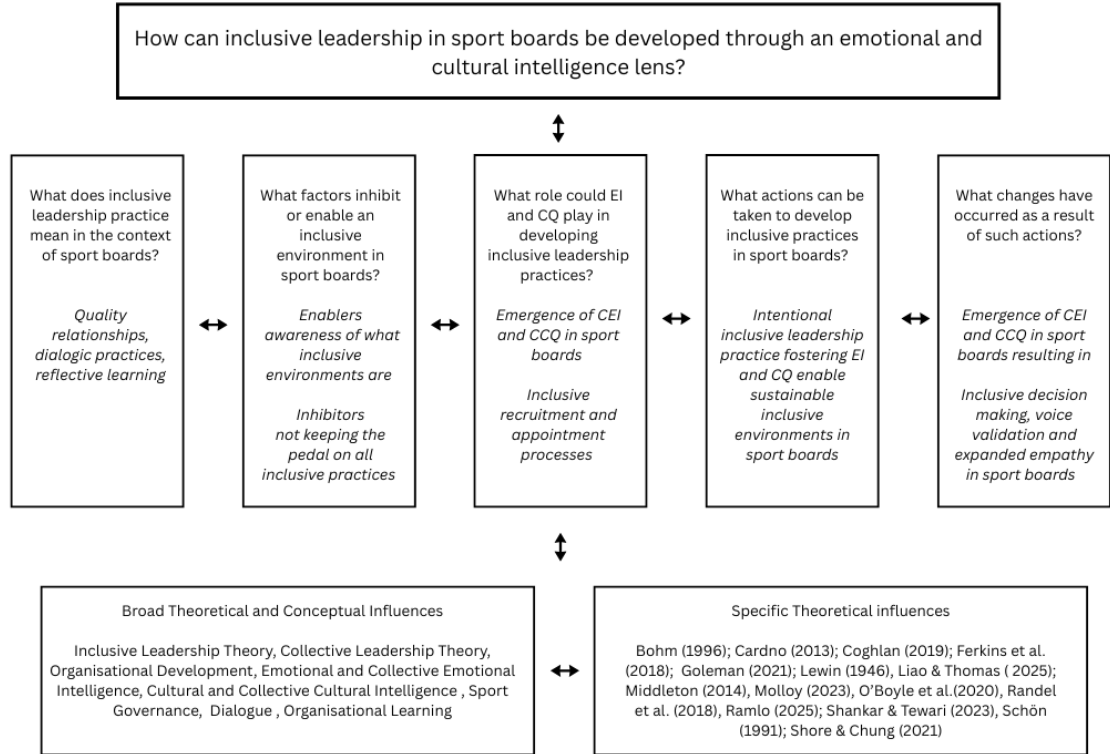
7.3 Summary of Research Outcomes in Relation to Questions

My key goal as a researcher was to explore the central research question: 'How can inclusive leadership in sport boards be developed through an emotional and cultural intelligence lens?' This inquiry was implicitly guided by several sub-questions outlined earlier in the chapter. Figure 7.2 illustrates how these questions were addressed through the action research interventions involving the NZC National Board, the NZC system, and the core collaboration group participants. Furthermore, it shows how the theoretical body of knowledge added depth and meaning to the practical outcomes. In particular, theories such as inclusive leadership, CEI and CCQ, and collective leadership helped to identify and explain the challenges and contradictions

experienced by participants. Additionally, more specific theoretical concepts from a range of authors are highlighted to further support and contextualise the findings.

Figure 7.2

Summary of Research Outcomes in Relation to Questions



7.4 Contributions to Knowledge

The contributions of this thesis span both foundational insights and advanced conceptual developments, offering theoretical and practical value to the field of sport governance. These range from identifying knowledge gaps and proposing future research directions, to presenting a conceptual framework that illustrates how inclusive leadership practices can be developed in New Zealand sport boards through EI and CQ. I summarise these contributions as follows:

Theoretical contributions

This research advances the understanding of inclusive leadership in sport governance by positioning EI and CQ as foundational lenses for increasing awareness and embedding inclusive practices within sport boards. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study to explore the significance of the chair's EI and its influence on the emergence of collective CEQ and CCQ within a sport board context. These insights offer a new perspective for examining group-level dynamics and the development of inclusive leadership. Furthermore, the research contributes to the sport

governance literature by deepening understanding of the role of quality relationships and dialogic practices in shaping inclusive governance cultures.

Methodological Contributions

This study makes a significant methodological contribution by further adapting developmental action research for use in sport governance beyond the Ferkins and Shilbury series of studies between 2008 and 2015 (see for example Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015a). More specifically, the present study further demonstrated the effectiveness of developmental Action Research in facilitating collaborative inquiry, fostering quality relationships, and enabling meaningful change within board environments. It also introduced a Q sort-inspired mixed methods approach to explore board members' subjective viewpoints, offering an innovative integration of qualitative and quantitative data in governance research. Additionally, the project models a multi-level inquiry process, encompassing first-, second-, and third-person perspectives, that supports reflective organisational learning and the co-construction of knowledge across individual, collective, and systemic levels.

Practical Contributions

This thesis offers practical contributions to sport governance by presenting a conceptual framework for developing inclusive leadership in sport boards, grounded in evidence-based interventions that are transferable to other sport organisations. It provides actionable strategies for chairs, board members, and sport organisations to embed inclusive practices, resulting in outcomes such as inclusive decision-making, voice validation, and extended empathy. Additionally, it introduces theory-practice metaphors—such as 'keeping the pedal on' and 'dialogue outside, discussion inside' — which capture the ongoing, relational nature of inclusive leadership development and offer accessible language to support implementation.

In summary, the most significant contribution of this thesis is the development of a conceptual framework (Figure 7.1) that sport organisations can utilise to advance inclusive leadership within their boards. Central to this framework is the emergence of CEQ and CCQ, fostered through the chair's EI, intentional dialogic practices outside the boardroom, and the board's shared cultural experiences. These elements work together to cultivate inclusive decision making, voice validation and extended empathy.

This thesis responds to several key calls in the sport governance and inclusive leadership literature. It addresses the gap identified by Molloy (2023) regarding the absence of evaluative tools and inclusive practices in sport board recruitment and appointment processes, by

integrating EI and CQ into the design and execution of these mechanisms. It contributes to Ferkins et al. (2025) by extending the continuum of collective leadership perspectives, demonstrating how a collective mindset emerges relationally through the interplay between the chair and board members. The study builds on O'Boyle et al. (2023) by positioning dialogue as a critical enabler of intra-board trust and collective leadership, particularly when cultivated outside formal boardroom settings. Furthermore, it responds to Korkmaz et al. (2022) by offering a practical mechanism, the 'pedal' metaphor, to support and promote inclusive leadership across organisational systems, aligning with their expanded framework for inclusive leadership. Finally, the thesis contributes to foundational inclusive leadership theories, including Randel et al. (2018) and Brewer's (1991) theory of optimal distinctiveness, by illustrating how CEI and CCQ foster both belonging and uniqueness within sport boards, enhancing inclusive leadership as a collective and relational practice.

7.5 Practical Recommendations

This thesis supports a range of practical applications for sport industry practitioners and policy makers seeking to embed inclusive leadership practices. The associated recommendations are summarised as follows:

Recruitment and Appointment Processes

- Integrate cultural alignment and inclusive language into recruitment design to reinforce the role of selection processes in shaping leadership diversity.
- Facilitate chair-led inclusive leadership awareness sessions with appointment panels prior to interviews to promote openness and honesty.
- Raise awareness of the gap between panel members' espoused inclusive commitments and actual practices to address misalignment between stated values and enacted behaviours.

Chair Leadership

- Provide EI training for chairs to foster CEI within boards, creating psychologically safe spaces for voice and participation.
- Encourage chairs to initiate intentional dialogue and relationship-building moments outside the boardroom to support inclusive boundaries of discussion during meetings.

Board Members

- Recognise that minority experiences (e.g., engagement with Te Tiriti o Waitangi) can accelerate cultural and cognitive intelligence (CQ and CCQ), foster openness and shared mental models.
- Maintain intentional relational strategies (e.g., bundling) to sustain inclusive norms across evolving board contexts.
- Facilitate group discussions on inclusive environments to highlight process-led approaches to valuing safe and supportive board cultures.
- Implement “keeping the pedal on” self-assessment measures to ensure diversity initiatives remain visible and embedded across the sport governance system.

Organisational System

- Promote value alignment across sport boards, particularly around openness and honesty, as a foundation for inclusive leadership.
- Apply a values-based practice approach to help boards identify and reflect on their espoused values, supporting alignment between theory and practice.

7.6 Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research project, particularly those that emerged through its embedded, real-world context. A summary of the key limitations outlined in Chapter 6 is as follows:

1. Traditional sport governance leader-centric orientation

Despite efforts to foster collective leadership, much of the dialogue during post Q sort interviews emphasised the chair’s role in shaping inclusive leadership. This reflects broader trends in sport governance, as noted by Ferkins et al. (2025), and suggests that future research should explore governance dynamics at other levels, such as MAs or DAs, to gain a more nuanced understanding of collective leadership.

2. Contextual Limitations in Strategic Governance Commitments

While the bicultural journey of the NZC National Board deepened participants’ understanding of inclusive and collective leadership, particularly through engagement with Māori leadership principles, these insights may not be transferable to boards lacking similar strategic commitments or to contexts that adopt a broader view of culture than this project’s primary focus on biculturalism and gender. Culture can be

understood in multiple ways, and within many sport governing bodies, board members may represent a wide range of cultural identities and experiences, including ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, social class, geographic background, ability, and other forms of difference (Katz & Miller, 2016; Roberson, 2006). Consequently, the findings of this study should be interpreted within the specific cultural context of NZC and Aotearoa New Zealand. In governance contexts where biculturalism or Indigenous knowledge is not embedded, or where other cultural dimensions are more prominent, the relevance and transferability of these findings may be limited.

Additionally, my positionality, shaped by a Western worldview and informed by predominantly Western literature, presents a contextual limitation. As such, my interpretations may be influenced by the theoretical frameworks I have drawn upon. This could affect the applicability of the findings in governance contexts that incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems in ways that are more expansive than my own understanding and engagement with Indigenous leadership practices.

3. *Transition in Chair leadership*

The transition from Martin to Diana as chair midway through the project also presented a potential limitation. Although Diana's succession ultimately strengthened the project, the change was unplanned and could have disrupted momentum.

4. *Accessibility and Consistency*

Additionally, the researcher's close relational access to the chair, including informal dialogue during hikes, provided rich data but may not be replicable in other research contexts. This presents a methodological limitation in terms of accessibility and consistency.

5. *Small participant sample*

In the recruitment and appointment panel (AP) intervention, the inability to conduct a follow-up interview with the newly appointed CEO limited insight into his perceptions of the process. Furthermore, only two board members were appointed, resulting in a small sample size for evaluating the intervention. While the mixed methods approach enhanced validity, the limited number of participants constrained the depth of analysis.

6. *Not keeping the pedal on*

Finally, the project did not fully achieve its objective of developing sustained progress in diversity and inclusion initiatives within the NZC cricket system. The disbanding of the DICG group curtailed opportunities for sustained engagement and evaluation at the system level. A systemic governance approach, informed by EI and CQ, may offer a more holistic understanding of how inclusive leadership can be diffused across sport governance networks.

7.7 Future Research

This research has explored how inclusive leadership can be developed in sport boards through the lens of EI and CQ. Given the limited existing scholarship on this topic, particularly within the context of sport governance, there is considerable scope for future research, both within New Zealand and internationally.

In addressing the central research question, this study has surfaced several important avenues for further inquiry. One key avenue concerns how to sustain the integration of shared learnings across an organisation's system, particularly within complex, multi-level governance structures such as those found in New Zealand Cricket. How can sporting organisations embed these learnings to foster shared norms without compromising the inclusive initiatives already in place, as captured by the metaphor of “keeping the pedal on”? While this study did not fully explore these systemic dynamics, future research could apply a systemic governance approach to examine how different governance layers, such as the National Board, Member Associations, and District Associations, interact and influence inclusive leadership. Such research could also identify practical strategies for cultivating shared norms and sustaining inclusive leadership practices across broader sport governance systems.

A second avenue for future research emerging from this project concerns how the development of inclusive leadership, as explored in this study, might unfold within a sport organisation that is not already recognised for its inclusive governance. This research focused on an organisation widely regarded as an exemplar in inclusive sport governance. Adopting a social constructionist approach enabled a deeper understanding of why it is considered exemplary and how inclusive practices can continue to evolve within a board already committed to inclusion. Future research would benefit from examining sport boards operating in less inclusive contexts, with particular attention to the constructs of quality relationships, dialogue, and reflective learning. Such investigations could offer valuable insights into the conditions and interventions necessary to foster inclusive leadership in more challenging governance environments.

A third avenue emerging from this research concerns the underexplored triadic relationship between the chair, chief executive officer, and board, and the role of inclusive leadership within that dynamic. While this thesis highlights the interrelationship between the chair and board members, it does not examine in depth how the interactions between all three leadership actors shape inclusive governance. As O'Boyle et al. (2019) suggest, the way each individual enacts leadership may be uniquely shaped by their role and context. Future research could explore the intersecting similarities and differences in leadership approaches required to foster an inclusive governance environment. Such investigations could offer valuable insights into the inter-relational leadership dynamics that underpin effective and inclusive sport board functioning.

A fourth avenue for future research would be to explore broader conceptualisations of culture within sport governance. This study examined CQ and CCQ primarily through a bicultural lens shaped by the Aotearoa New Zealand context and NZC's commitment to Te Tiriti-informed practice. Future research could investigate how CQ, CCQ, and inclusive leadership interact within sport governance environments where multiple and intersecting cultural identities are present, including ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, disability, social class, and geographic location. Such work would contribute to a broader understanding of how inclusive leadership, and particularly the dimensions of belongingness and uniqueness, are experienced and enacted within increasingly diverse sport governance contexts.

Lastly, this research raises an additional avenue for exploration concerning the relationship between collective leadership and the sustainability of CEI and CCQ. What antecedents are critical to sustaining collective leadership in the pursuit of inclusive sport governance? This project promotes the idea that CEI and CCQ emerge through intentional EI and CQ practices, quality relationships, dialogue, and reflective learning. However, how these collective intelligences are maintained over time, particularly in the face of leadership transitions or organisational change, warrants further inquiry.

Overall, further work is needed to understand how sport boards in New Zealand can develop inclusive leadership environments that enable diversity to thrive. The issues of systemic change identified in this study highlight the importance of adopting a multi-paradigm approach to organisational transformation. A theoretical framework that accounts for the complexity and interdependence of multiple layers within sport governance systems is essential to ensure that all aspects of the system are meaningfully addressed. Future researchers must also continue to prioritise the concept of inclusion, echoing this project's call to "keep the pedal on," by critically

examining how inclusion is understood, enacted, and sustained within sport governance, and how it can be embedded as a shared norm throughout the governance system.

7.8 Concluding Statement

The purpose of this research was to explore how inclusive leadership can be developed in sport boards through the lens of EI and CQ. To achieve this, a mixed methods approach was applied within an action research framework, integrating a quantitative method: the Q sort inspired tool and qualitative methods including interviews and collaborative discussions. A conceptual framework was derived from multiple strands and moments, culminating in the key outcomes of inclusive decision making, voice validation, and expanded empathy.

This project was grounded in a broader national and global movement to improve diversity in sport governance, particularly gender representation. While policy-level initiatives have made significant strides, this research responded to the need for deeper understanding of how inclusion can be meaningfully embedded at the interpersonal and relational levels. It addressed the gap between representation and inclusion by focusing on the lived experiences of board members and the leadership practices that support belonging and uniqueness.

The findings demonstrate that inclusive leadership in sport governance is not a fixed destination but a dynamic, emerging, and relational journey. It unfolds through intentional practices, quality relationships, and reflective dialogue. When EI and CQ practices are embedded across individual, collective, and systemic levels, they create the conditions for inclusive environments to thrive. This research affirms that inclusive leadership is most effectively developed through sustained, authentic collaboration, where dialogue supports shared understanding and co construction of meaning.

Overlaying the thesis, its research questions, and the study's specific aims is a demonstration of sport governance as a multidimensional practice. It presents challenges that require leadership capabilities not only to guide governance structures, but to be enacted within governance itself as a collective endeavour. This involves navigating the relational, emotional, and cultural dimensions of boardroom practice, and responding to the intrapersonal and interpersonal demands of inclusive leadership. Inclusive decision making depends on creating an environment that values every board member's voice and embraces diverse viewpoints. It is hoped that future research in this context will continue to contribute meaningfully to knowledge about leadership

in governance in New Zealand and inspire a new generation of inclusive thinking in sport leadership both nationally and globally.

7.9 Final Reflective Pause

Through the completion of this PhD, I have experienced significant personal development and learning. When I began this project four years ago, my core hunch was twofold. First, I believed it was necessary to explore whether sport boards in New Zealand were inclusive enough to sustain the momentum of progressive diversity initiatives already underway. Second, I was driven by a desire to understand whether it was truly possible to create an environment in which every board member felt a genuine sense of belonging, and where their uniqueness was not only accepted but embraced.

As a board member and current deputy chair in a separate sporting organisation, I have experienced the full spectrum of inclusion; from moments when my voice was overlooked to times when a chair actively sought out and valued my perspective. At the very beginning of this project, I vividly recall being asked the question, *“Why would you choose to study a National Board that is already considered an exemplary example of inclusive sport governance?”* My immediate response was, *“Why would I not?”* That question, and my answer, have stayed with me throughout this journey, reinforcing the importance of learning from those who are already leading the way, while also recognising the work that remains to be done.

Focusing on the National Board enabled me to challenge prevailing perceptions of sport governance as being solely outcomes focused, even at the top. From the very first group discussion, I observed what it looked like to hum as a board—members actively embracing the relational and reflective dimensions of governance, modelling the inclusive leadership practices they espoused. This experience gave me the confidence to recognise that relational and reflective spaces, often undervalued in governance contexts, are in fact essential at all levels, including at the national level. This also affirmed my belief that there can be a place in sport boards where belonging meets uniqueness to form the optimal feeling of being included.

Furthermore, I found that the impact of relationships and dialogue within the action research process cannot be overstated. This project began, evolved, and continues through relationships, genuine collaboration between myself, my supervisors, and key participants that deepened as more moments of shared engagement occurred. Some relationships came to a natural close, while others were newly formed, but what consistently held the sense of connectedness

together was the dialogue that took place. As Bohm (1996) describes, dialogue is “a harmony of the individual and the collective, in which the whole constantly moves towards coherence” (p. 32). This quote resonates deeply with my experience, where dialogue served not only as a method but as a relational space that nurtured co-construction of meaning and reflection.

And finally, I hope this project continues to influence leadership and inclusion within sport governance in New Zealand and beyond. Closing the loop on this thesis, during our final data generation session with the National Board participants, I shared the story of my 15-year-old daughter and the statement that opened this work: **“The tags were still on”**. Most participants smiled and nodded, but a few expressed surprise and admitted they had not realised that something as simple as tags could hold such meaning to a young girl. This moment served as a powerful reminder that even organisations regarded as leaders in inclusion must continue to keep the pedal on, remain explicit in their intentions, and challenge underlying assumptions in order to broaden understandings of what it truly means to feel included.

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Appendices

Appendix A1: Board Expression of Interest Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced:

20/02/2023

Project Title

Developing inclusive leadership practices in sport boards through EI and CQ lenses; An action research study

An Invitation

Kia ora. My name is Kelly McCallum and this is an expression of interest for National Board members who would like to be involved in a project exploring inclusive leadership practices in sport boards through an EI and CQ lens. This research is being conducted as part of my Doctor of Philosophy. In this project my research supervisors are Prof Lesley Ferkins and Dr Charlotte Jelleyman.

To “uplift the presence of hineahuone” in the leadership realm is one of three strategic priorities which form the Government strategy for Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation. As part of this priority, Sport New Zealand created a target of 40% self-identified females and 40% self-identified males on sport boards by December 2021.

A standout example of progress toward this strategy is the case of New Zealand Cricket “Starting from a place five years ago, of no influence at any level of governance, females now occupy at least 40% of places on all cricket’s major governance boards and are fully involved in the making of all of cricket’s important strategic decisions”. NZC is “... now seen and acknowledged as being a key leader of the national movement to dramatically improve sport’s engagement with and embracement of women and girls”. It is thus opportune for NZC and AUT researchers to come together to further this movement through a collaborative study of how inclusive leadership practices can leverage the diversity achieved within sport boards.

Please note that your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the data collected by (date TBA). Choosing to participate or not will neither advantage nor disadvantage you if there are any potential conflict of interest issues.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to further the standout work undertaken by New Zealand Cricket’s (NZC) Women in Cricket Governance (WiCG) initiative (now referred to as Diversity and Inclusion in Cricket Governance). AUT researchers are interested in building on this work by focusing on *inclusive* leadership practices within the New Zealand Cricket (NZC) National Board. Given the significant progress made in board gender diversity by NZC, it is anticipated

that 'emotional intelligence' could be a compelling platform through which to develop greater inclusivity.

The project objectives are as follows:

What does inclusive leadership practices mean in the context of sport boards?
What factors inhibit or enable an inclusive environment in sport boards?
What role could EI and CQ play in developing inclusive leadership practices?
What actions can be taken to develop inclusive practices in sport boards?
What changes have occurred as a result of such actions?

This research could provide significant theoretical contributions to the understanding of inclusive sport leadership practices in a sport governance context. Practically, this study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership development through an EI and CQ lens and how it may foster inclusion. Therefore, the findings could contribute significantly to the leadership and governance of cricket in New Zealand and to a new generation of thinking for sport leadership and governance on a national and global scale.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You are receiving this participant information sheet as you are a board member of a NZC National Board.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree to participate in this research, please sign the following consent form and email me at kelly.mccallum@aut.ac.nz and we can organise a future meeting time.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been summarised removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

This research programme will use an action research process in collaboration with SportNZ, which involves the establishment of a core collaborative group (consisting of a combination of AUT, NZC and SportNZ members), and the NZC National Board. We intend to use the National Board group members throughout the process to guide and shape the project. There are four phases to this Action Research process including: issue identification and construction; planning action from exploration of the context and purpose of the study; implementation of the key actions; and evaluation of the actions. It is intended that the core collaborative group will be involved in initial workshops to design the development of the inclusive practices. This will also involve monthly core collaboration group workshops and interviews.

As a member of this participation group, a total of approximately 10-15 hours will be required of your time for participation in the initial workshops, individual meetings, core collaboration group workshops, and interviews, across the four phases of research. It is anticipated that these interviews and workshops will take place face-to-face and online. The project

commences in October 2022 and your involvement will span over an 18 month timeframe approximately ending in October/November 2024.

If you agree to the research, your participation will include:

Taking part in a factor analysis activity and a face-to-face interview for approximately 90 min with audio recording and note taking. This will take place in February 2023 and September 2024. With your permission, the recording will then be transcribed word-for-word.

You will be involved with implemented inclusive practices (delivered within board meetings) based on the primary data collected from the factor analysis and face to face interviews.

What are the discomforts and risks?

We anticipate that there are no risks associated with taking part in the interview. A disadvantage would be the time taken to complete the interview, but this is done during your board hours. However, if at any stage you feel uncomfortable or want to stop the interview, you may do so.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

At any point of the interview, you have the choice to stop talking or 'pass' on the question. Personal responses that have been stated and are not part of the public content information required for the research will not be used. Any information passed on in interview is kept confidential.

What are the benefits?

As a research participant, the benefits include an opportunity to have a voice and contribute to developing inclusive practices in NZC sport boards. NZC is in an 'evolutionary' phase of change and this research could potentially contribute significantly to the leadership of the organisation and to a new generation of thinking for sport leadership.

Potential project impact:

- Enhancing the DICG initiative through implementing inclusive practices to ensure sustainable diversity
- Facilitating inclusive practices through emotional intelligence that in turn will increase decision making, foster team culture, resolve conflict, increase productivity, nourish stakeholder relationships
- Innovative research that could potentially be the first exploration of EI, inclusive leadership in sport boards.
- Your contribution will contribute to future effective practices in sport boards with Aotearoa, New Zealand.

How will my privacy be protected?

A key feature of the study is to ensure that the voices of the participant groups are heard and that productive dialogue is encouraged and facilitated between participants. We value whanaungatanga by providing a sense of unity, belonging and cohesion. For this reason, underpinned by the action research nature of the study, whereby participants will be engaging

with each other, there will be limited confidentiality of participants. We encourage you to participate only if you feel comfortable with this approach.

As a participant you will be given an opportunity to review full transcriptions (for interviews) and a summary of transcriptions to confirm that they are a true and accurate record of your interview. Any information in written reports/publications will align to the participant groups rather than to individual participants in an attempt to minimise identification of individuals to those outside of one of the research groups. While every attempt will be made to keep individual identity confidential, this cannot be guaranteed. NZC will be named as the sporting organisation involved in this research and as a result, individuals outside of the research groups may be able to guess the individuals involved in the project. A copy of the written documentation will be also sent to participants to review before publication and to give final approval.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There is no cost, other than the time taken for the interview. All group work involving implementing practices will take place within scheduled board meetings.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Once you receive this invitation, you will have two weeks to respond.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Upon completion of the thesis a final summary report will be submitted to NZC and SportNZ. You will also receive a copy of this report. Publications in academic journals and conferences is also likely. I will gladly provide you with a copy of this or a summary of the research findings if you wish. Each participant will also receive a two-page summary of the findings.

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, Prof. Lesley Ferkins, Lesley.Ferkins@aut.ac.nz, 0220729787 (mobile).

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTC, ethics@aut.ac.nz , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Expression of Interest Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Researcher email: kelly.mccallum@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Project Supervisor: Prof Lesley Ferkins
Contact email: Lesley.Ferkins@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 10 Feb 2023, AUTC Reference number 22/278.

Appendix A2: Core Collaboration Group Expression of Interest Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced:

24/09/2022

Project Title

Developing inclusive leadership practices in sport boards through EI and CQ lens

An Invitation

Kia ora. My name is Kelly McCallum, and this is an expression of interest for New Zealand Cricket and SportNZ members who would like to be involved in a project exploring inclusive leadership practices in sport boards through an EI and CQ lens. This research is being conducted as part of my Doctor of Philosophy. In this project my research supervisors are Prof Lesley Ferkins and Dr Charlotte Jelleyman.

To “uplift the presence of hineahuone” in the leadership realm is one of three strategic priorities which form the Government strategy for Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation¹. As part of this priority, Sport New Zealand created a target of 40% self-identified females and 40% self-identified males on sport boards by December 2021¹.

A standout example of progress toward this strategy is the case of NZC. “Starting from a place five years ago, of no influence at any level of governance, females now occupy at least 40% of places on all cricket’s major governance boards and are fully involved in the making of all of cricket’s important strategic decisions”. NZC is “... now seen and acknowledged as being a key leader of the national movement to dramatically improve sport’s engagement with and embracement of women and girls”. It is thus opportune for NZC and AUT researchers to come together to further this movement through a collaborative study of how inclusive leadership practices can leverage the diversity achieved within sport boards.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to further the standout work undertaken by New Zealand Cricket’s (NZC) Women in Cricket Governance (WiCG) initiative. AUT researchers are interested in building on this work by focusing on *inclusive* leadership practices within New Zealand Cricket (NZC) boards. Given the significant progress made in board gender diversity by NZC, it is anticipated that ‘emotional intelligence’ could be a compelling platform through which to develop greater inclusivity.

The project objectives are as follows:

What does inclusive leadership practices mean in the context of sport boards?

What factors inhibit or enable an inclusive environment in sport boards?

What role could EI and CQ play in developing inclusive leadership practices?

What actions can be taken to develop inclusive practices in sport boards?

What changes have occurred as a result of such actions?

The project will include:

- Online core collaboration group meetings every 4-6 weeks starting November 2022 until June 2024.
- Final evaluation interviews (1 hour)
- Total participating hours: 24-30 hours

This research could provide significant theoretical contributions to the understanding of inclusive sport leadership practices in a sport governance context. Practically, this study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership development through an EI and CQ lens and how it may foster inclusion. Therefore, the findings could contribute significantly to the leadership and governance of cricket in New Zealand and to a new generation of thinking for sport leadership and governance on a national and global scale.

Please note that your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the data collected by (date TBA). Choosing to participate or not will neither advantage nor disadvantage you if there are any potential conflict of interest issues.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You are receiving this participation information sheet as you had previous involvement with diversity and inclusion initiatives within either AUT, NZC or SportNZ.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree to participate in this research, please sign the following consent form and email me at kelly.mccallum@aut.ac.nz and we can organise a future meeting time.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been summarised removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

This research programme will use an action research process in collaboration with SportNZ, which involves the establishment of a core collaborative group (consisting of a combination of AUT, NZC and SportNZ members), and a NZC Major Association board. This research is jointly funded by NZC and SportNZ.

We intend to use the core collaborative group throughout the process to guide and shape the project. There are four phases to this Action Research process including: issue identification and construction; planning action from exploration of the context and purpose of the study; implementation of the key actions; and evaluation of the actions. It is intended that the core collaborative group will be involved in initial workshops to design the development of the

inclusive practices. This will also involve monthly core collaboration group workshops. There will also be final individual evaluation interviews.

As a member of the core collaboration group, a total of approximately 30 hours will be required of your time for participation in the initial workshops and core collaboration group workshops, and final interviews, across the four phases of research. It is anticipated that these interviews and workshops will take place monthly and online. The project commences in November 2022 and your involvement will span over a 2 year timeframe approximately ending in June/July 2024.

What are the discomforts and risks?

We anticipate that there are no risks associated with taking part in the interview and core collaboration group workshops. A disadvantage would be the time taken to complete the interviews and monthly core collaboration group workshops. However, if at any stage you feel uncomfortable or want to stop the interview, you may do so.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

At any point of the interviews or core collaboration group workshops you have the choice to stop talking or 'pass' on the question. Personal responses that have been stated and are not part of the public content information required for the research will not be used. Any information passed on in interview is kept confidential.

What are the benefits?

As a research participant, the benefits include an opportunity to have a voice and contribute to developing inclusive practices in NZC sport boards. NZC is in an 'evolutionary' phase of change and this research could potentially contribute significantly to the leadership of the organisation and to a new generation of thinking for sport leadership⁷.

Potential project impact:

Enhancing the WiCG initiative through implementing inclusive practices to ensure sustainable diversity

Facilitating inclusive practices through emotional intelligence that in turn will increase decision making, foster team culture, resolve conflict, increase productivity, nourish stakeholder relationships⁸

Innovative research that could potentially be the first exploration of EI, inclusive leadership in sport boards.

Your contribution will contribute to future effective practices in sport boards with Aotearoa, New Zealand.

How will my privacy be protected?

A key feature of the study is to ensure that the voices of the participant groups are heard and that productive dialogue is encouraged and facilitated between participants. We value whanaungatanga by providing a sense of unity, belonging and cohesion. For this reason, underpinned by the action research nature of the study, whereby groups of participants will be engaging with each other, there will be limited confidentiality of participants. We encourage

you to participate only if you feel comfortable with this approach. At the beginning of each monthly core collaboration group workshops, participants will be advised that the sharing's of specific individuals should not be disclosed to other parties. As a participant you will be given an opportunity to review full transcriptions (for interviews) and a high-level summary of points (for core collaboration group workshops) to confirm that they are a true and accurate record of your interview/core collaboration groups workshops. The final interviews will take place in Phase 4 (March 2024). NZC will be named as the sporting organisation involved in this research and as a result, individuals outside of the research groups may be able to guess the individuals involved in the project. A copy of the written documentation will be also sent to participants to review before publication and to give final approval.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There is no cost, other than the time taken for the interviews and for the core collaboration group workshops.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Once you receive this invitation, you will have two weeks to respond.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Upon completion of the thesis a final summary report will be submitted to NZC and SportNZ. You will also receive a copy of this report. Publications in academic journals and conferences is also likely. I will gladly provide you with a copy of this or a summary of the research findings if you wish. Each participant will also receive a two-page summary of the findings.

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, Prof. Lesley Ferkins, Lesley.Ferkins@aut.ac.nz, 0220729787 (mobile).

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Expression of Interest Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Researcher email: kelly.mccallum@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Project Supervisor: Prof Lesley Ferkins

Contact email: Lesley.Ferkins@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 10 Feb 2023, AUTECH Reference number 22/278

Appendix B1: Consent Form (National Board Directors and Core Collaboration Group)

AUT

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

Project title: *Developing inclusive leadership practices in sport boards through EI and CQ lenses: An action research study*

Project Supervisor: *Prof Lesley Ferkins, Dr Charlotte Jelleyman*

Researcher: *Kelly McCallum*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 06/11/2022.
- ☐ 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 core collaboration group is confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the core collaboration group and that it will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then, while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the core collaboration group discussion of which I was part, I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's name:

.....

Participant's Contact Details:

.....

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 26.10.2022

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

Appendix B2: Chairs Consent Form



Project title: *Developing inclusive leadership practices in sport boards through emotional and cultural intelligence lenses: An action research project*

Project Supervisor: *Prof Lesley Ferkins, Dr Charlotte Jelleyman*

Researcher: *Kelly McCallum*

Yes ☐ No ☐ I give my consent for audio recordings of me to be identified in the research outputs.

Yes ☐ No ☐ I consent to being identified by name in the thesis chapters

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Date:

Participant's email address :

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 21 October 2025.

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

Appendix C: Pre and Post Q sort Questions

Phase 2 Pre Q sort (February-March 2023)

1. What do you mean when you place...

Most Important:

Least Important:

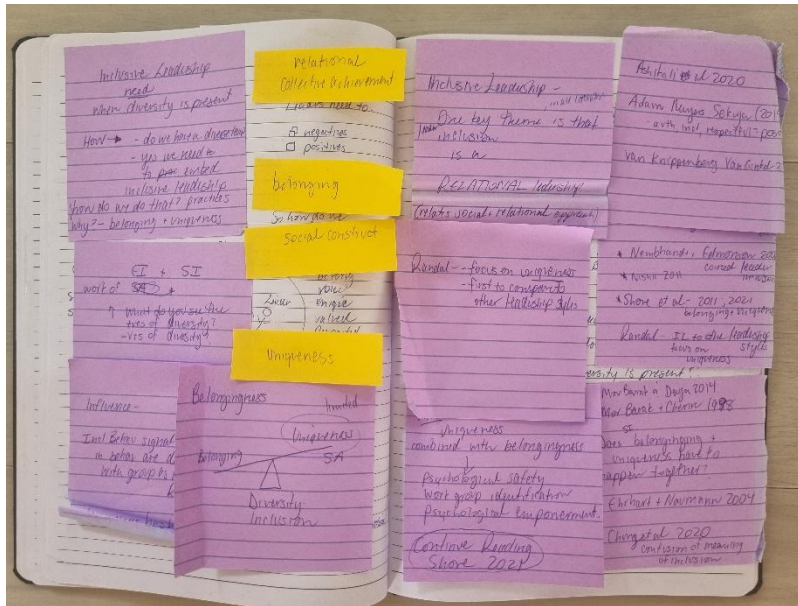
2. Is there any significance to why you placed them where you did?
3. Are there any items towards the middle of the distribution that play some sort of pivotal role for you?
4. Were there any items that were omitted and should be included in this distribution?
5. Where would you rank this omitted item in the distribution?
6. What is your overall view of what is required to create an inclusive environment in sport boards?

Phase 4 Post sort Evaluation Questions (November 2024)

1. What do you mean when you place... 'inclusive environments in sport boards require'
Most changes:
Least changes:
2. Any initial thoughts on your final Q sort?
3. has shifted to 'more important'
4. has shifted as well, thoughts?
5. What is your overall view of what is required to create an inclusive environment in sport boards?

Appendix D: Reflective Thematic Analysis Coding Visuals

Memoing: Handwritten notes and inserted sticky notes



NVivo9: Sorting codes into themes

NVIVO9									
Phd.mvp									
Quick Access IMPORT Data Files File Classifications Externals ORGANIZE Coding Codes Sentiment Relationships Relationship Types Cases Notes Sets EXPLORE Queries Visualizations Reports File Home Import Create Explore Share Modules									
Clipboard Item Organize Query Visualize Code Autocode Range Uncode Code Case Classification File Classification Workspace									
Codes Search Project									
Name	Files	References	Created on	Created b	Modified on	Modified			
Accountable for inclusivity	2	5	18/04/2023 2:48 p	M	27/05/2023 10:17 a	M			
Action	6	9	18/04/2023 2:50 p	M	27/05/2023 10:33 a	M			
belonging vs uniqueness	2	4	9/05/2023 2:57 am	M	28/05/2023 7:28 am	M			
bias	3	10	27/05/2023 10:01	M	28/05/2023 7:32 am	M			
CEO	1	1	27/05/2023 9:42 a	M	27/05/2023 9:42 am	M			
Chair	9	29	18/04/2023 2:51 p	M	28/05/2023 7:31 am	M			
confidence	1	1	27/05/2023 9:37 a	M	27/05/2023 9:38 am	M			
conflict	4	9	18/04/2023 3:14 p	M	27/05/2023 10:36 a	M			
CQ	3	5	9/05/2023 2:44 am	M	28/05/2023 7:25 am	M			
culture	2	5	27/05/2023 9:19 a	M	27/05/2023 10:06 a	M			
decision making	1	1	27/05/2023 9:25 a	M	27/05/2023 9:25 am	M			
Diversity	8	16	18/04/2023 3:13 p	M	28/05/2023 7:28 am	M			
diversity of thought	6	10	18/04/2023 3:13 p	M	28/05/2023 10:29 a	M			
Emotional Intelligence	4	10	9/05/2023 2:38 am	M	27/05/2023 7:30 am	M			
emotions	2	2	27/05/2023 9:39 a	M	27/05/2023 10:31 a	M			
empathy	2	2	18/04/2023 3:19 p	M	27/05/2023 9:25 am	M			
ethnicity	3	9	27/05/2023 9:13 a	M	28/05/2023 7:25 am	M			
Female	6	9	9/05/2023 2:36 am	M	28/05/2023 7:30 am	M			
Game for all NZers	3	8	18/04/2023 3:08 p	M	27/05/2023 10:19 a	M			

NVivo9: Example of sorting transcriptions into codes

<Files\\Phase 2 Interview Post sort\\Interview transcription P2)>]

Reference 1 - 0.21% Coverage

actually holding ourselves accountable to it more often.

Reference 2 - 0.55% Coverage

we talk about that all the time and hold a mirror up to ourselves.

Reference 3 - 0.32% Coverage

So we're not quite there yet with cricket. But I think we can do a better job of it.

Reference 4 - 1.61% Coverage

you pretty quickly get weeded out in this environment. If you're not inclusive in your thinking, and you're not respectful of other people's opinions and you don't understand the need for diverse boards then you don't last very long in this environment, you really don't. There's not a lot of tolerance for it. It's sort of moved on, right

<Files\\Phase 2 Interview Post sort\\Interview transcript> - § 1 reference coded [2.10% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.10% Coverage

So just holding holding people accountable. is important. And I think we actually do that quite well.

Word Cloud: Example of word cloud used in Core Collaboration Meeting #4.



Appendix E1: Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

The logo for Auckland University of Technology (AUT) features the letters 'AUT' in a bold, white, sans-serif font against a black rectangular background.

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

26 October 2022

Lesley Ferkins

Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Lesley

Re Ethics Application: **22/278 Developing inclusive leadership practices in sport boards through an EI and CQ lens: An action research study**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 26 October 2025.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.
8. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is

being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEK Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Appendix E2: Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

The logo for the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is displayed. It features the letters 'AUT' in a bold, white, sans-serif font against a black rectangular background.

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

10 February 2023

Lesley Ferkins

Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Lesley

Re: Ethics Application: **22/278 Developing inclusive leadership practices in sport boards through an EI and CQ lens: An action research study**

Thank you for your request for approval of amendments to your ethics application.

The amendment to the data collection protocol (use quest grid) for phase 1 and 2 has been approved.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC.
2. All public facing documents must have the AUTEC approval number and be of a high standard of spelling and grammar. Dates on the Information Sheet(s) and Consent Form(s) must be consistent.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented.
4. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date.
5. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project.
6. Any serious or adverse events must be reported to AUTEC, this includes unforeseen issues that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
7. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management permission for access from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

The application number and title need to be referenced on all correspondence related to this project.

All forms are available online <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

For any enquiries, please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTECH Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: kelly.mccallum@aut.ac.nz.; charlotte.jelleyman@aut.ac.nz

Appendix E3: Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

The logo for Auckland University of Technology (AUT) features the letters 'AUT' in a bold, white, sans-serif font against a black rectangular background.

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

21 October 2025

Lesley Ferkins

Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Lesley

Re: Ethics Application: **22/278 Developing inclusive leadership practices in sport boards through an EI and CQ lens: An action research study**

Thank you for your responses to the conditions for the amendment to your ethics application.

The amendment to the data collection protocol (to identify 2 participants in the research outputs) is approved.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. As interviews are not an anonymous of data collection, replace “anonymity” with “confidentiality” in the email to the Chair.

Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC unless requested but must be completed before commencing your study.

Standard Conditions of Approval

9. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC.
10. All public facing documents must have the AUTEC approval number and be of a high standard of spelling and grammar. Dates on the Information Sheet(s) and Consent Form(s) must be consistent.
11. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented.
12. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date.
13. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project.
14. Any serious or adverse events must be reported to AUTEC, this includes unforeseen issues that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
15. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management permission for access from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

The application number and title need to be referenced on all correspondence related to this project.

All forms are available online <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

For any enquiries, please contact the Secretariat at ethics@aut.ac.nz

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTECH Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Appendix F: 2016 Women and Cricket Report Full Recommendations

New Zealand Cricket. (2016). <i>Women and cricket: A report on the state of women's cricket in New Zealand.</i> New Zealand Cricket. https://www.nzc.nz/media/7756/nzcr_j000080_women-and-cricket-document_digital_d1.pdf
The governance and leadership recommendations: A. Significantly and quickly increase the proportion of females in cricket governance. B. Ensure all national and regional cricket associations have leadership role(s) accountable for driving improved cricket outcomes for females. C. Positively influence the media awareness and portrayal of females' success and legacy in cricket. D. Gradually increase female presence in coaching and umpiring positions. E. Target the engagement or re-engagement of females who know and love cricket in ways that fit their life stage and availability.
The participation recommendations: F. Grow female participation in positive cricket playing experiences throughout New Zealand by targeting females connected to the cricket family. G. Develop and support a national pathway to attract and develop female talent in cricket. H. Support flexible regional and district engagement in representative cricket playing and development opportunities to grow the strength of the female talent base over time. I. Value and support WHITE FERNS and Emerging Players to deliver sustainable high performance on the world stage.
The delivery channel recommendations: J. Lead the development of a customer-centric culture throughout cricket that welcomes diversity. K. Deliver modern cricket products that meet female customer needs, in conjunction with the delivery model agreed through the OneCricket initiative.
The supporter engagement recommendations: L. Connect into and excite the existing female fan base to more actively engage female fans into all aspects of cricket. M. Promote and televise elite women's cricket alongside elite men's cricket to broaden the appreciation and support of cricket fans.
The commercial model recommendations: N. Establish an investment model across cricket that drives accountability and a focus on meeting whole-of-cricket customers' needs. O. Work with the willing and invest in structures, initiatives and resources that will deliver improved financial returns and sustainable outcomes for cricket for females. P. Target sponsorship and investment into cricket for females. Q. Increase in regional investment and support to deliver improved outcomes for cricket for females.

Appendix G: Summary Themes from Diversity and Inclusion in Cricket Governance (DICG) Steering Group Meeting

May 15th 1:00pm – 5:30pm, May 16th 8:00am – 12:00pm

- Champions of change – how can we create and utilise?
- Is our group diverse enough to represent what real D&I looks like?
- Clubs and devolved structures, what does D&I look like at these levels?
- Sustainability around volunteers – fatigue and liability, changes to incorporated societies – already affecting attraction of and keeping volunteers engaged;
- Lots of community D&I activity going on across the MAs – how can we tie into national strategy and drivers?
- NZC bicultural guidance – how can NZC support MAs in the differing bicultural paths?
- Communication with Māori needs to be genuine, sustainable and regular, not token – iwi groups getting hit on very widely by other groups;
- What are the implications of ground fees and access on diversity?
- In the D&I space, what should be centralised (NZC lead) and devolved – noting D&I should combine a “push down” and a “push up” approach;
- Fewer women applicants coming into governance at DAs and MAs – what do we need to do to keep our foot on the pedal and not lose momentum we have gained?
- What does the concept of “belonging” mean for the NZC network? – connection between belonging and uniqueness, how do we insure both?
- MA chair roles – are they too big, are we losing applicants, especially women because of time factors and stage of career/financial factors?
- Payment of governance roles – particularly chair – should this be on the table?
- Recruitment process, how do we weave D&I into our recruitment process? NZC working with Kelly (AUT) to “action learn” in the next Board appointments process;
- How big is this – feeling of “overwhelm” at size of task ahead – need to break into chunks and action plan.

Appendix H: NZC Board Diversity and Inclusion in Cricket Governance Project Action Plan

7 August 2023

PHASE 3 STEERING DICG Draft Action Plan

Purpose

Ensuring the future success of cricket in New Zealand through high quality governance which represents modern society, its needs, and voices.

Objectives and Tactics

1. Maintain momentum for women in governance (numbers and inclusion) across the cricket network, understanding that:
 - a. Fewer women are applying for MA and DA governance roles.
 - b. There are fewer people willing to volunteer and greater pressure on existing volunteers.
 - c. The MA chair roles are unattractive for many volunteers, particularly women, because of time demands.
 - d. While there may be gender diversity, the level of 'inclusion' amongst all cricket Boards is not understood or guaranteed.
2. Widening the NZC, MA and DA governance activity to focus on diversity and inclusion, in line with NZC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy.
 - a. Determine practical ways in which we incorporate diversity and inclusion into governance activities e.g. recruitment processes for governors and senior management positions, Board skills matrices that reflect 'diversity' thinking.
 - b. Lift confidence and capability around Te Ao Māori across governors in the cricket network (strategy to complement Te Ara Putanga, NZC's Māori strategy).
3. Development of a National Governance Training Strategy with D&I as a key pillar and incorporating:
 - a. Shared development of objectives and outcomes (national governance workshop across MAs and DAs).
 - b. Development of agreed Cricket Network training objectives, e.g. awareness around unconscious bias, annual chair and CEO training.
 - c. Chair training around inclusive leadership and what successful Board recruitment and succession planning looks like.

What do we need to implement?

- Investment and people;
- Tie into existing/planned NZC initiatives (non-governance and other);
- Develop next steps and measurables.

Appendix I: Outline of Project's Objectives (through Martin's email)

'INCLUSION IN CRICKET GOVERNANCE'

KELLY McCALLUM PhD PROJECT WITH NZC BOARD

11 June 2023

ACTION RESEARCH: INCLUSIVE PRACTICES WITHIN NZC's CEO & BOARD RECRUITMENT PROCESSES

Objectives

1. To enhance the use of inclusive practices within NZC's 2023 executive level recruitment processes.
2. To progressively create learnings that will become embedded within future NZC recruitment processes and which can be shared within NZC's nationwide cricket network.

Context

The NZC Board is the subject focus of an action research PhD project by AUT student Kelly McCallum, the duration of which will be late 2022 through to 2025. Through this period the NZC Board will undertake various agreed 'action research' activities informing Kelly's project and benefiting NZC and its cricket network.

During 2023 NZC will facilitate two processes, to recruit a new NZC CEO and the annual NZC board director appointment process (as prescribed in NZC's constitution).

The NZC CEO recruitment process last took place in 2011.

A high-level review of NZC's 2022 board director appointment process reflected a number of good 'inclusive practices', including:

- the Major Association (MA) board chairs group formally inputting into the description of what director skills and experience would be targeted within the 2022 process
- some other NZC stakeholders (eg NZCPA) having an informal input into such skills and experience identification
- the MAs having three out of five places on the NZC appointments panel (AP)
- the AP being assembled two months before final deliberations and having a 'team' mentality actively planning and implementing the appointments process over that period, and
- as per NZC's constitution, NZC members (at NZC's AGM) having final say of director appointments.

NZC CEO Recruitment – proposed Action Research actions

NZC will implement the following ‘inclusive practice’ actions within the CEO recruitment process:

- The process used to create the CEO position description (PD) will involve the NZC Remuneration People Culture sub-committee (RPCC) facilitating the recruitment process seeking input from a range of close stakeholders including individual NZC directors, individual NZC senior managers, Major Association board chairs, and the NZCPA.
- The NZC appointments panel (AP) of four charged with shortlisting and interviewing candidates will be gender balanced.
- The executive search agency engaged by NZC to manage the recruitment process will be briefed on NZC’s desire for a genuinely inclusive approach to such management and, in particular, the high importance of applicants for this high profile position being treated at all times with great respect. This extends to the quality of the care being given to the way in which the unsuccessful shortlisted applicants are advised of the process outcome.
- The language used in all of the recruitment documentation, including advertising, will reflect a culture of genuine inclusivity.
- At the start of the process the AP, together, will be involved in a short Teams or Zoom session where the importance of inclusivity within the recruitment process, and how that can be brought to life by the AP, is discussed.
- The interviews of both the long-listed candidates (by Sheffield) and the short-listed candidates (by the AP), and the AP’s and NZC Board’s decision-making discussions leading to the appointment of the CEO will reflect such inclusivity.

NZC’s 2023 Board Director Appointment Process – proposed Action Research actions

Building on those inclusive practices already embedded within the annual appointments process, NZC will implement the following additional ‘inclusive practice’ actions within the director appointment process:

- The NZC Board skills and experience matrix will be adjusted to reflect the importance of cultural fit of the candidates with the NZC Board and the NZC organisation.
- Although somewhat dictated to by NZC’s constitution, NZC will seek to pull together an appointments panel (AP) that reflects NZC’s gender equity commitment.
- The language used in all of the director recruitment documentation, including advertising, will reflect a culture of genuine inclusivity.
- At the start of the process the AP, together, will be involved in a short Teams or Zoom session where the importance of inclusivity within the recruitment process, and how that can be brought to life by the AP, is discussed.
- The interviews of both the long-listed candidates (by Sheffield) and the short-listed candidates (by the AP), and the AP’s decision-making discussions leading to the appointment of the CEO will reflect such inclusivity.

Creation and sharing of learnings

Throughout both processes the implementation of the action research actions will be tracked for two reasons:

- To enable some assessment of impact to be made post-process completion.
- To enable learnings to be developed and shared within NZC and its cricket networked.

END

Appendix J1: Complete KADE Statistical Output Report and Data Sheet

Project Overview

Analysis results downloaded on: 2025-5-10 @ 8:06

Total Number of Statements: 47, Total Number of Q sorts: 9

Q sort Design: : -5,-5,-4,-4,-4,-3,-3,-3,-3,-2,-2,-2,-2,-2,-1,-1,-1,-1,-1,-1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1,1,1,1,1,1,2,2,2,2,2,3,3,3,3,4,4,4,5,5

Distinguishing statements threshold 1: $p < 0.01$

Distinguishing statements threshold 2: $p < 0.05$

Project Log

1. PHD Inclusive Leadership data loaded from XLSX Type 2 file
2. Extracted 8 Principal Components
3. Number of factors selected for rotation: 2
4. Varimax rotation applied

Statements

- 1 a whole-of-board responsibility board members take equal ownership for that
- 2 an induction process that includes inclusive practices
- 3 cultural practices within board meetings
- 4 a section in the Charter underpins inclusive leadership within skills and competencies framework
- 5 a chair who creates a safe environment
- 6 the willingness of a chair to display vulnerability
- 7 relationship building inside of the board context
- 8 the chair being able to listen and accept other perspectives of the board members
- 9 a formal written section in the top end of the Charter outlining inclusion that is reviewed regularly
- 10 individual relationship building outside of the board context between board members
- 11 an environment where all voices heard equally or equitably
- 12 practicing empathy
- 13 a chair that encourages collective contribution
- 14 game for all New Zealanders; a game for life? permeates every decision organisation makes.
- 15 collective leadership environment
- 16 board members to understand their own emotions
- 17 an environment where everyone can have their contribution valued by the group
- 18 a chair that speaks last and doing a summary rather than speaking first leading conversation
- 19 a chair that is aware of their own biases
- 20 the strengths of the board member are known and utilised without bias
- 21 much more consciousness of what good governance is
- 22 knowledge and resources to develop inclusive leadership strategies
- 23 chair being the first among equals
- 24 the chair being able to weave diverse perspectives into the decision making
- 25 a chair who is aware if they are dominating the discussions
- 26 a chair who facilitates to ensure everyone has a voice
- 27 an understanding of the different mindsets board members are bringing into the group
- 28 board members to be able to not suppress emotional reactions but to lean in
- 29 board members to walk the walk rather than talk the talk
- 30 a recruitment process that draws out technical competencies and emotional cultural
- 31 board members to be aware of their own biases
- 32 Board members to have an understanding of their own values and beliefs
- 33 the importance of collective learning to drive organisational effectiveness
- 34 board members to have a good awareness of their personality style
- 35 a chair that builds relationships outside of the boardroom

- 36 board members feeling like they belong to the group
- 37 all board members to bring their cultural knowledge to the meetings
- 38 a policy in how inclusive leadership practices are webbed into the board meetings
- 39 conversations about emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence.
- 40 a psychological safe environment
- 41 talking about how important emotions are within the decision making in boards
- 42 a chair aware of how much pre-determined contribution they are adding
- 43 shared leadership
- 44 recognising board members contributions and efforts
- 45 boards members to be open to organisational change
- 46 promoting diversity within the board
- 47 a performance review system that evaluates inclusive leadership behaviour

Q sorts 1 - 9

Part	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
P9								
S1	2	0	5	2	1	-1	-1	-2
3								
S2	1	0	-4	-4	0	-3	-2	3
2								
S3	2	-3	2	0	1	0	4	1
3								
S4	3	-5	-5	-4	-1	-4	-3	1
1								
S5	-1	4	4	3	3	3	2	5
4								
S6	-3	-2	1	-1	-3	2	-4	1
-1								
S7	-2	-2	-2	1	0	2	-3	1
-3								
S8	-1	3	1	1	3	3	1	-1
0								
S9	4	-4	-5	-5	-3	-5	-3	2
-5								
S10	-2	2	-2	2	-1	3	-4	1
-3								
S11	2	4	2	5	3	-1	0	5
0								
S12	3	-4	4	0	0	-3	-1	-2
0								
S13	0	1	0	0	-2	0	0	0
-1								
S14	5	5	1	4	0	-3	4	3
5								
S15	1	0	0	-1	1	5	-1	-1
-2								
S16	-2	0	1	1	-1	2	2	-4
2								
S17	0	4	4	4	5	4	2	4
-1								
S18	-5	-3	-3	0	-1	-2	0	0
-1								
S19	-1	2	-1	0	4	-1	4	-1
-4								

S20	1	2	0	0	5	1	1	-3
4								
S21	0	-1	0	-4	0	-1	-1	-1
0								
S22	3	-1	2	-3	2	1	-1	2
-2								
S23	-5	0	-2	-3	-5	-4	-2	-2
-2								
S24	4	-1	0	1	1	-1	1	0
2								
S25	-1	3	-1	-1	3	0	1	0
-1								
S26	0	2	3	2	4	1	2	2
2								
S27	-3	-3	3	-2	0	1	0	-2
0								
S28	0	-2	0	-2	1	-1	0	-3
3								
S29	1	5	3	3	1	-2	5	4
-3								
S30	5	0	1	4	2	0	1	-5
4								
S31	2	1	-2	3	4	1	5	-1
0								
S32	0	2	1	3	2	0	0	-3
1								
S33	-2	-2	-4	-1	-2	-2	-5	0
0								
S34	-2	1	-1	-1	-1	0	1	2
-4								
S35	-3	3	-1	1	-5	2	-4	-3
-1								
S36	-4	-1	-3	2	-4	3	-2	0
2								
S37	1	1	2	2	-2	0	3	-2
1								
S38	2	-5	-4	-5	-3	-5	-3	3
-4								
S39	0	0	-1	-3	-4	-3	3	1
1								
S40	-1	3	5	5	-1	4	3	3
5								
S41	-3	-3	-3	-2	-4	-2	-5	-5
1								

S42	-4	-1	0	-3	-2	-4	-1	0
-2								
S43	-1	-4	2	0	-3	5	-2	-4
-5								
S44	-4	-1	-1	-1	2	4	-2	-1
3								
S45	1	1	-3	-2	0	-2	2	-4
-3								
S46	3	1	3	1	-2	2	0	4
1								
S47	4	-2	-2	-2	2	1	3	2
-2								
Mean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0								
Stdv	2.638	2.638	2.638	2.638	2.638	2.638	2.638	2.638
2.638								

Correlations between Q sorts 1 - 9

part.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. P1	100	2	14	9	33	-23	34	22	16
2. P2	2	100	42	67	42	30	51	28	23
3. P3	14	42	100	59	36	43	43	13	36
4. P4	9	67	59	100	38	49	43	13	40
5. P5	33	42	36	38	100	28	53	15	24
6. P6	-23	30	43	49	28	100	8	-4	13
7. P7	34	51	43	43	53	8	100	18	25
8. P8	22	28	13	13	15	-4	18	100	-5
9. P9	16	23	36	40	24	13	25	-5	100

Unrotated Factor Matrix

Nm	Participant	Fac. 1	Fac. 2	Fac. 3	Fac. 4	Fac. 5	Fac. 6
Fac. 7	Fac. 8						
1	P1	0.2847	0.7725	-0.2613	-0.0661	0.3182	-0.0928
0.3497	0.0562						
2	P2	0.7604	-0.0796	0.3277	0.0912	-0.4129	0.0491
0.1913	-0.1340						
3	P3	0.7457	-0.1753	-0.0946	0.0852	0.2980	-0.4328
0.2350	-0.2513						
4	P4	0.8276	-0.2593	0.0209	0.1485	-0.0538	-0.0744
0.3378	0.0137						
5	P5	0.6860	0.2377	-0.0542	-0.4824	0.0468	0.4003
0.1282	-0.2233						
6	P6	0.4838	-0.6640	0.1192	-0.2411	0.3775	0.1309
0.0493	0.2708						
7	P7	0.7147	0.3496	-0.0418	-0.2045	-0.3233	-0.2251
0.2483	0.3250						
8	P8	0.2748	0.4269	0.6913	0.3783	0.2605	0.1530
0.1516	0.0653						
9	P9	0.4968	-0.0465	-0.6083	0.5090	-0.0192	0.3104
0.1332	0.0681						
Eigenvalues		3.4382	1.5052	1.0519	0.7769	0.6809	0.5516
0.4494	0.3222						
% exp. var.		38	17	12	9	8	6
5	4						

Cumulative Communalities Matrix

Nm	Participant	Fac. 1	Fac. 2	Fac. 3	Fac. 4	Fac. 5	Fac. 6	Fac. 7	Fac. 8
1	P1	0.0811	0.6779	0.7462	0.7506	0.8519	0.8605	0.9828	0.9860
2	P2	0.5782	0.5845	0.6919	0.7002	0.8707	0.8731	0.9097	0.9277
3	P3	0.5561	0.5868	0.5957	0.6030	0.6918	0.8791	0.9343	0.9975
4	P4	0.6849	0.7521	0.7525	0.7746	0.7775	0.7830	0.8971	0.8973
5	P5	0.4706	0.5271	0.5300	0.7627	0.7649	0.9251	0.9415	0.9914
6	P6	0.2341	0.6750	0.6892	0.7473	0.8898	0.9069	0.9093	0.9826
7	P7	0.5108	0.6330	0.6347	0.6765	0.7810	0.8317	0.8934	0.9990
8	P8	0.0755	0.2577	0.7356	0.8787	0.9466	0.9700	0.9930	0.9973
9	P9	0.2468	0.2490	0.6190	0.8781	0.8785	0.9748	0.9925	0.9971
cumul % expl		38	55	67	76	84	90	95	99

Factor Matrix with Defining Sorts Flagged

Flagged factor loadings are listed using bold font and orange highlighting

Nm	Q sort	F1	F2
1	P1	-0.0253	0.8230
2	P2	0.7349	0.2110
3	P3	0.7571	0.1168
4	P4	0.8645	0.0695
5	P5	0.5471	0.4773
6	P6	0.6973	-0.4345
7	P7	0.5317	0.5919
8	P8	0.0949	0.4988
9	P9	0.4780	0.1429
% Explained Var		35	20

Loadings Table with Defining Sorts Flagged

Flagged factor loadings are listed using bold font and orange highlighting

Nm	Q sort	FG	F1	F2
4	P4	F1-1	0.8645	0.0695
3	P3	F1-2	0.7571	0.1168
2	P2	F1-3	0.7349	0.2110
6	P6	F1-4	0.6973	-0.4345
5	P5	F1-5	0.5471	0.4773
9	P9	F1-6	0.4780	0.1429
1	P1	F2-1	-0.0253	0.8230
7	P7	F2-2	0.5317	0.5919
8	P8	F2-3	0.0949	0.4988

Free Distribution Data Results

	Q sorts	Mean	St Dev
1	P1	0	2.638
2	P2	0	2.638
3	P3	0	2.638
4	P4	0	2.638
5	P5	0	2.638
6	P6	0	2.638
7	P7	0	2.638
8	P8	0	2.638
9	P9	0	2.638

Factor Scores with Corresponding Ranks

		F1	F1	F2	F2
Statement	Nm	Zscr	Rnk	Zscr	Rnk
a whole-of-board responsibility bo	1	0.89	9	0.52	16
an induction process that includes	2	-1.3	44	0.62	14
cultural practices within board mee	3	0.03	24	0.79	12
a section in the Charter underpins	4	-1.95	45	1.14	9
a chair who creates a safe environm	5	1.67	3	0.11	21
the willingness of a chair to displ	6	-0.15	29	-0.96	38
relationship building inside of the	7	-0.14	28	-0.61	34
the chair being able to listen and	8	0.77	11	-0.44	31
a formal written section in the top	9	-2.33	47	1.58	2

individual relationship building ou	10	0.48	16	-0.61	35
an environment where all voices hea	11	1.41	4	1.15	8
practicing empathy	12	-0.19	30	0.87	11
a chair that encourages collective	13	0.05	22	0	24
game for all New Zealanders; a game	14	1.24	5	2.02	1
collective leadership environment	15	0.12	20	0.26	18
board members to understand their o	16	0.5	15	-1.06	39
an environment where everyone can h	17	1.76	2	0.36	17
a chair that speaks last and doing	18	-0.74	35	-1.75	46
a chair that is aware of their own	19	-0.13	27	-0.44	32
the strengths of the board member a	20	0.39	18	0.08	23
much more consciousness of what goo	21	-0.92	40	-0.09	27
knowledge and resources to develop	22	-0.45	33	1.23	7
chair being the first among equals	23	-1.13	43	-1.93	47
the chair being able to weave diver	24	0.09	21	1.4	5
a chair who is aware if they are do	25	-0.06	26	-0.35	30
a chair who facilitates to ensure e	26	0.99	7	0.18	19
an understanding of the different m	27	-0.27	31	-1.23	40
board members to be able to not sup	28	-0.53	34	-0.27	28
board members to walk the walk rath	29	1.05	6	0.71	13
a recruitment process that draws ou	30	0.99	8	1.29	6
board members to be aware of their	31	0.53	14	0.61	15
Board members to have an understand	32	0.87	10	-0.27	29
the importance of collective learni	33	-0.9	39	-0.7	36
board members to have a good awaren	34	-0.33	32	-0.52	33
a chair that builds relationships o	35	0.47	17	-1.32	41
board members feeling like they bel	36	0.29	19	-1.4	42
all board members to bring their cu	37	0.69	13	0.17	20
a policy in how inclusive leadershi	38	-2.28	46	0.97	10
conversations about emotional intel	39	-0.85	38	0.09	22
a psychological safe environment	40	2.16	1	-0.08	26
talking about how important emotion	41	-1.05	42	-1.5	45
a chair aware of how much pre-deter	42	-1.02	41	-1.4	43
shared leadership	43	0.05	23	-0.71	37
recognising board members contribut	44	0.03	25	-1.49	44
boards members to be open to organi	45	-0.83	37	-0.02	25
promoting diversity within the boar	46	0.75	12	1.41	4
a performance review system that ev	47	-0.74	36	1.58	3

Factor Score Correlations

F1 F2

1. Factor 1	1	0.0856
2. Factor 2	0.0856	1

Factor Scores for Factor 1

Contributing Q Sorts - Relative Weights

NmQ	sort	Weight
QS4	P4	10.00
QS3	P3	5.18
QS2	P2	4.67
QS6	P6	3.97
QS9	P9	1.81

Contributing Q Sorts - Correlation Matrix

	QS4	QS3	QS2	QS6	QS9
QS4	100	59	67	49	40
QS3	59	100	42	43	36
QS2	67	42	100	30	23
QS6	49	43	30	100	13
QS9	40	36	23	13	100

Factor Z-scores, Q sort values, and contributors' raw sort values

Nm	Statement	Zscr	QSV	QS4	QS3	QS2	QS6	QS9
40	a psychological safe	2.162	5	5	5	3	4	5
17	an environment where	1.76	5	4	4	4	4	-1
5	a chair who creates	1.667	4	3	4	4	3	4
11	an environment where	1.414	4	5	2	4	-1	0
14	game for all New Zea	1.237	4	4	1	5	-3	5
29	board members to wal	1.045	3	3	3	5	-2	-3
26	a chair who facilita	0.988	3	2	3	2	1	2
30	a recruitment proces	0.987	3	4	1	0	0	4
1	a whole-of-board res	0.892	3	2	5	0	-1	3
32	Board members to hav	0.872	2	3	1	2	0	1
8	the chair being able	0.773	2	1	1	3	3	0
46	promoting diversity	0.752	2	1	3	1	2	1
37	all board members to	0.693	2	2	2	1	0	1
31	board members to be	0.532	2	3	-2	1	1	0
16	board members to und	0.503	1	1	1	0	2	2

10 individual relations	0.479	1	2	-2	2	3	-3
35 a chair that builds	0.469	1	1	-1	3	2	-1
20 the strengths of the	0.387	1	0	0	2	1	4
36 board members feelin	0.288	1	2	-3	-1	3	2
15 collective leadershi	0.117	1	-1	0	0	5	-2
24 the chair being able	0.094	0	1	0	-1	-1	2
13 a chair that encoura	0.054	0	0	0	1	0	-1
43 shared leadership	0.046	0	0	2	-4	5	-5
3 cultural practices w	0.034	0	0	2	-3	0	3
44 recognising board me	0.027	0	-1	-1	-1	4	3
25 a chair who is aware	-0.056	0	-1	-1	3	0	-1
19 a chair that is awar	-0.133	0	0	-1	2	-1	-4
7 relationship buildin	-0.136	-1	1	-2	-2	2	-3
6 the willingness of a	-0.151	-1	-1	1	-2	2	-1
12 practicing empathy	-0.185	-1	0	4	-4	-3	0
27 an understanding of	-0.273	-1	-2	3	-3	1	0
34 board members to hav	-0.334	-1	-1	-1	1	0	-4
22 knowledge and resour	-0.451	-1	-3	2	-1	1	-2
28 board members to be	-0.525	-2	-2	0	-2	-1	3
18 a chair that speaks	-0.74	-2	0	-3	-3	-2	-1
47 a performance review	-0.741	-2	-2	-2	-2	1	-2
45 boards members to be	-0.833	-2	-2	-3	1	-2	-3
39 conversations about	-0.852	-2	-3	-1	0	-3	1
33 the importance of co	-0.904	-3	-1	-4	-2	-2	0
21 much more consciounsn	-0.916	-3	-4	0	-1	-1	0
42 a chair aware of how	-1.019	-3	-3	0	-1	-4	-2
41 talking about how im	-1.048	-3	-2	-3	-3	-2	1
23 chair being the firs	-1.127	-4	-3	-2	0	-4	-2
2 an induction process	-1.3	-4	-4	-4	0	-3	2
4 a section in the Cha	-1.946	-4	-4	-5	-5	-4	1
38 a policy in how incl	-2.281	-5	-5	-4	-5	-5	-4
9 a formal written sec	-2.325	-5	-5	-5	-4	-5	-5

Factor Scores for Factor 2

Contributing Q Sorts - Relative Weights

Nm	Q sort	Weight
QS1	P1	7.45
QS8	P8	1.94

Contributing Q Sorts - Correlation Matrix

	QS1	QS8
QS1	100	22
QS8	22	100

Factor Z-scores, Q sort values, and contributors' raw sort values

Nm	Statement	Zscr	QSV	QS1	QS8
14	game for all New Zea	2.018	5	5	3
9	a formal written sec	1.578	5	4	2
47	a performance review	1.578	4	4	2
46	promoting diversity	1.41	4	3	4
24	the chair being able	1.397	4	4	0
30	a recruitment proces	1.291	3	5	-5
22	knowledge and resour	1.228	3	3	2
11	an environment where	1.152	3	2	5
4	a section in the Cha	1.138	3	3	1
38	a policy in how incl	0.97	2	2	3
12	practicing empathy	0.865	2	3	-2
3	cultural practices w	0.789	2	2	1
29	board members to wal	0.713	2	1	4
2	an induction process	0.621	2	1	3
31	board members to be	0.607	1	2	-1
1	a whole-of-board res	0.516	1	2	-2
17	an environment where	0.364	1	0	4
15	collective leadershi	0.258	1	1	-1
26	a chair who facilita	0.182	1	0	2
37	all board members to	0.167	1	1	-2
5	a chair who creates	0.105	0	-1	5
39	conversations about	0.091	0	0	1
20	the strengths of the	0.076	0	1	-3
13	a chair that encoura	0	0	0	0
45	boards members to be	-0.015	0	1	-4
40	a psychological safe	-0.076	0	-1	3

21	much more consciousn	-0.091	0	0	-1
28	board members to be	-0.272	-1	0	-3
32	Board members to hav	-0.272	-1	0	-3
25	a chair who is aware	-0.349	-1	-1	0
8	the chair being able	-0.44	-1	-1	-1
19	a chair that is awar	-0.44	-1	-1	-1
34	board members to hav	-0.516	-1	-2	2
7	relationship buildin	-0.607	-2	-2	1
10	individual relations	-0.607	-2	-2	1
33	the importance of co	-0.698	-2	-2	0
43	shared leadership	-0.713	-2	-1	-4
6	the willingness of a	-0.956	-2	-3	1
16	board members to und	-1.061	-3	-2	-4
27	an understanding of	-1.228	-3	-3	-2
35	a chair that builds	-1.319	-3	-3	-3
36	board members feelin	-1.397	-3	-4	0
42	a chair aware of how	-1.397	-4	-4	0
44	recognising board me	-1.487	-4	-4	-1
41	talking about how im	-1.501	-4	-3	-5
18	a chair that speaks	-1.745	-5	-5	0
23	chair being the firs	-1.927	-5	-5	-2

Descending Array of Differences Between Fac. 1 and Fac. 2

Nm	Statement	Fac. 1	Fac. 2
Diff			
40	a psychological safe environment	2.162	-0.076
2.238			
35	a chair that builds relationships outside of	0.469	-1.319
1.788			
36	board members feeling like they belong to the	0.288	-1.397
1.685			
16	board members to understand their own emotion	0.503	-1.061
1.564			
5	a chair who creates a safe environment	1.667	0.105
1.562			
44	recognising board members contributions and e	0.027	-1.487
1.514			
17	an environment where everyone can have their	1.76	0.364
1.396			

8	the chair being able to listen and accept oth	0.773	-0.44
1.213			
32	Board members to have an understanding of the	0.872	-0.272
1.144			
10	individual relationship building outside of t	0.479	-0.607
1.086			
18	a chair that speaks last and doing a summary	-0.74	-1.745
1.005			
27	an understanding of the different mindsets bo	-0.273	-1.228
0.955			
26	a chair who facilitates to ensure everyone ha	0.988	0.182
0.806			
6	the willingness of a chair to display vulnera	-0.151	-0.956
0.805			
23	chair being the first among equals	-1.127	-1.927
0.8			
43	shared leadership	0.046	-0.713
0.759			
37	all board members to bring their cultural kno	0.693	0.167
0.526			
7	relationship building inside of the board con	-0.136	-0.607
0.471			
41	talking about how important emotions are with	-1.048	-1.501
0.453			
42	a chair aware of how much pre-determined cont	-1.019	-1.397
0.378			
1	a whole-of-board responsibility board members	0.892	0.516
0.376			
29	board members to walk the walk rather than ta	1.045	0.713
0.332			
20	the strengths of the board member are known a	0.387	0.076
0.311			
19	a chair that is aware of their own biases	-0.133	-0.44
0.307			
25	a chair who is aware if they are dominating t	-0.056	-0.349
0.293			
11	an environment where all voices heard equally	1.414	1.152
0.262			
34	board members to have a good awareness of the	-0.334	-0.516
0.182			

13	a chair that encourages collective contributi	0.054	0
0.054			
31	board members to be aware of their own biases	0.532	0.607
-0.075			
15	collective leadership environment	0.117	0.258
-0.141			
33	the importance of collective learning to driv	-0.904	-0.698
-0.206			
28	board members to be able to not suppress emot	-0.525	-0.272
-0.253			
30	a recruitment process that draws out technica	0.987	1.291
-0.304			
46	promoting diversity within the board	0.752	1.41
-0.658			
3	cultural practices within board meetings	0.034	0.789
-0.755			
14	game for all New Zealanders; a game for life?	1.237	2.018
-0.781			
45	boards members to be open to organisational c	-0.833	-0.015
-0.818			
21	much more consciousness of what good governan	-0.916	-0.091
-0.825			
39	conversations about emotional intelligence an	-0.852	0.091
-0.943			
12	practicing empathy	-0.185	0.865
-1.05			
24	the chair being able to weave diverse perspec	0.094	1.397
-1.303			
22	knowledge and resources to develop inclusive	-0.451	1.228
-1.679			
2	an induction process that includes inclusive	-1.3	0.621
-1.921			
47	a performance review system that evaluates in	-0.741	1.578
-2.319			
4	a section in the Charter underpins inclusive	-1.946	1.138
-3.084			
38	a policy in how inclusive leadership practice	-2.281	0.97
-3.251			
9	a formal written section in the top end of th	-2.325	1.578
-3.903			

Factor Q sort Values for Statements sorted by Consensus vs. Disagreement

Nm	Statement	F1	F2	var
13	a chair that encourages colle	0	0	0.001
31	board members to be aware of	2	1	0.001
15	collective leadership environ	1	1	0.005
34	board members to have a good	-1	-1	0.008
33	the importance of collective	-3	-2	0.011
28	board members to be able to n	-2	-1	0.016
11	an environment where all voic	4	3	0.017
25	a chair who is aware if they	0	-1	0.021
30	a recruitment process that dr	3	3	0.023
19	a chair that is aware of thei	0	-1	0.024
20	the strengths of the board me	1	0	0.024
29	board members to walk the wal	3	2	0.028
1	a whole-of-board responsibili	3	1	0.035
42	a chair aware of how much pre	-3	-4	0.036
41	talking about how important e	-3	-4	0.051
7	relationship building inside	-1	-2	0.055
37	all board members to bring th	2	1	0.069
46	promoting diversity within th	2	4	0.108
3	cultural practices within boa	0	2	0.143
43	shared leadership	0	-2	0.144
14	game for all New Zealanders;	4	5	0.152
23	chair being the first among e	-4	-5	0.16
6	the willingness of a chair to	-1	-2	0.162
26	a chair who facilitates to en	3	1	0.162
45	boards members to be open to	-2	0	0.167
21	much more consciousness of wh	-3	0	0.17
39	conversations about emotional	-2	0	0.222
27	an understanding of the diffe	-1	-3	0.228
18	a chair that speaks last and	-2	-5	0.253
12	practicing empathy	-1	2	0.276
10	individual relationship build	1	-2	0.295
32	Board members to have an unde	2	-1	0.327
8	the chair being able to liste	2	-1	0.368
24	the chair being able to weave	0	4	0.424
17	an environment where everyone	5	1	0.487
44	recognising board members con	0	-4	0.573

5	a chair who creates a safe en	4	0	0.61
16	board members to understand t	1	-3	0.612
22	knowledge and resources to de	-1	3	0.705
36	board members feeling like th	1	-3	0.71
35	a chair that builds relations	1	-3	0.799
2	an induction process that inc	-4	2	0.923
40	a psychological safe environm	5	0	1.252
47	a performance review system t	-2	4	1.344
4	a section in the Charter unde	-4	3	2.378
38	a policy in how inclusive lea	-5	2	2.642
9	a formal written section in t	-5	5	3.808

Factor Characteristics

	Factors	
	F1	F2
No. of Defining Variables	5	2
Avg. Rel. Coef.	0.8	0.8
Composite Reliability	0.952	0.889
S.E. of Factor Z-scores	0.219	0.333

Standard Errors for Differences in Factor Z scores

(Diagonal Entries are Standard Errors within Factors)

	F1	F2
Factor 1	0.310	0.399
Factor 2	0.399	0.471

Distinguishing Statements for Factor 1

(p<0.05; Asterisk (*) Indicates Significance at p<0.01)

Both the Factor Q sort Value and the Z-Score (Z-SCR) are Shown

Statement	Nm	F1		F2	
		Q-S	Z-scor	Q-S	Z-scor
a psychological safe environm	40	5	2.16*	0	-0.076
an environment where everyone	17	5	1.76*	1	0.364
a chair who creates a safe en	5	4	1.67*	0	0.105
a chair who facilitates to en	26	3	0.99	1	0.182
Board members to have an unde	32	2	0.87*	-1	-0.272
the chair being able to liste	8	2	0.77*	-1	-0.44
board members to understand t	16	1	0.5*	-3	-1.061

individual relationship build	10	1	0.48*	-2	-0.607
a chair that builds relations	35	1	0.47*	-3	-1.319
board members feeling like th	36	1	0.29*	-3	-1.397
the chair being able to weave	24	0	0.09*	4	1.397
recognising board members con	44	0	0.03*	-4	-1.487
the willingness of a chair to	6	-1	-0.15	-2	-0.956
practicing empathy	12	-1	-0.19*	2	0.865
an understanding of the diffe	27	-1	-0.27	-3	-1.228
knowledge and resources to de	22	-1	-0.45*	3	1.228
a chair that speaks last and	18	-2	-0.74	-5	-1.745
a performance review system t	47	-2	-0.74*	4	1.578
boards members to be open to	45	-2	-0.83	0	-0.015
conversations about emotional	39	-2	-0.85	0	0.091
much more consciousness of wh	21	-3	-0.92	0	-0.091
chair being the first among e	23	-4	-1.13	-5	-1.927
an induction process that inc	2	-4	-1.3*	2	0.621
a section in the Charter unde	4	-4	-1.95*	3	1.138
a policy in how inclusive lea	38	-5	-2.28*	2	0.97
a formal written section in t	9	-5	-2.33*	5	1.578

Distinguishing Statements for Factor 2

($p < 0.05$; Asterisk (*) Indicates Significance at $p < 0.01$)

Both the Factor Q sort Value and the Z-Score (Z-SCR) are Shown

		F1	F1	F2	F2
Statement	Nm	Q-S	Z-scor	Q-S	Z-scor
a formal written section in t	9	-5	-2.33	5	1.58*
a performance review system t	47	-2	-0.74	4	1.58*
the chair being able to weave	24	0	0.09	4	1.4*
knowledge and resources to de	22	-1	-0.45	3	1.23*
a section in the Charter unde	4	-4	-1.95	3	1.14*
a policy in how inclusive lea	38	-5	-2.28	2	0.97*
practicing empathy	12	-1	-0.19	2	0.87*
an induction process that inc	2	-4	-1.3	2	0.62*
an environment where everyone	17	5	1.76	1	0.36*
a chair who facilitates to en	26	3	0.99	1	0.18
a chair who creates a safe en	5	4	1.67	0	0.11*
conversations about emotional	39	-2	-0.85	0	0.09
boards members to be open to	45	-2	-0.83	0	-0.02
a psychological safe environm	40	5	2.16	0	-0.08*
much more consciousness of wh	21	-3	-0.92	0	-0.09
Board members to have an unde	32	2	0.87	-1	-0.27*
the chair being able to liste	8	2	0.77	-1	-0.44*
individual relationship build	10	1	0.48	-2	-0.61*
the willingness of a chair to	6	-1	-0.15	-2	-0.96
board members to understand t	16	1	0.5	-3	-1.06*
an understanding of the diffe	27	-1	-0.27	-3	-1.23
a chair that builds relations	35	1	0.47	-3	-1.32*
board members feeling like th	36	1	0.29	-3	-1.4*
recognising board members con	44	0	0.03	-4	-1.49*
a chair that speaks last and	18	-2	-0.74	-5	-1.75
chair being the first among e	23	-4	-1.13	-5	-1.93

Consensus Statements

Statements That Do Not Distinguish Between ANY Pair of Factors

All Listed Statements are Non-Significant at $p < 0.01$, and Those Flagged with an * are also Non-Significant at $p < 0.05$)

		F1	F1	F2	F2
Statement	Nm	QSV	Zscr	QSV	Zscr
* a whole-of-board responsibi	1	3	0.892	1	0.516
* cultural practices within b	3	0	0.034	2	0.789

the willingness of a chair to	6	-1	-0.15	-2	-0.96
* relationship building insid	7	-1	-0.136	-2	-0.607
* an environment where all vo	11	4	1.414	3	1.152
* a chair that encourages col	13	0	0.054	0	0
* game for all New Zealanders	14	4	1.237	5	2.018
* collective leadership envir	15	1	0.117	1	0.258
a chair that speaks last and	18	-2	-0.74	-5	-1.75
* a chair that is aware of th	19	0	-0.133	-1	-0.44
* the strengths of the board	20	1	0.387	0	0.076
much more consciousness of wh	21	-3	-0.92	0	-0.09
chair being the first among e	23	-4	-1.13	-5	-1.93
* a chair who is aware if the	25	0	-0.056	-1	-0.349
a chair who facilitates to en	26	3	0.99	1	0.18
an understanding of the diffe	27	-1	-0.27	-3	-1.23
* board members to be able to	28	-2	-0.525	-1	-0.272
* board members to walk the w	29	3	1.045	2	0.713
* a recruitment process that	30	3	0.987	3	1.291
* board members to be aware o	31	2	0.532	1	0.607
* the importance of collectiv	33	-3	-0.904	-2	-0.698
* board members to have a goo	34	-1	-0.334	-1	-0.516
* all board members to bring	37	2	0.693	1	0.167
conversations about emotional	39	-2	-0.85	0	0.09
* talking about how important	41	-3	-1.048	-4	-1.501
* a chair aware of how much p	42	-3	-1.019	-4	-1.397
* shared leadership	43	0	0.046	-2	-0.713
boards members to be open to	45	-2	-0.83	0	-0.02
* promoting diversity within	46	2	0.752	4	1.41

Relative Ranking of Statements in Factor 1

Highest Ranked Statements

Nm	Statements	F1	C/D	F2
40	a psychological safe environment	5	D*	0
17	an environment where everyone can	5	D*	1

Positive Statements Ranked Higher in Factor 1 Array than in Other Factor Arrays

Nm	Statements	F1	C/D	F2
5	a chair who creates a safe enviro	4	D*	0
11	an environment where all voices h	4	C*	3
29	board members to walk the walk ra	3	C*	2

26	a chair who facilitates to ensure	3	D	1
30	a recruitment process that draws	3	C*	3
1	a whole-of-board responsibility b	3	C*	1
32	Board members to have an understa	2	D*	-1
8	the chair being able to listen an	2	D*	-1
37	all board members to bring their	2	C*	1
31	board members to be aware of thei	2	C*	1
16	board members to understand their	1	D*	-3
10	individual relationship building	1	D*	-2
35	a chair that builds relationships	1	D*	-3
20	the strengths of the board member	1	C*	0
36	board members feeling like they b	1	D*	-3
15	collective leadership environment	1	C*	1
13	a chair that encourages collectiv	0	C*	0
43	shared leadership	0	C*	-2
44	recognising board members contrib	0	D*	-4
25	a chair who is aware if they are	0	C*	-1
19	a chair that is aware of their ow	0	C*	-1

Negative Statements Ranked Lower in Factor 1 Array than in Other Factor Arrays

Nm	Statements	F1	C/D	F2
24	the chair being able to weave div	0	D*	4
13	a chair that encourages collectiv	0	C*	0
3	cultural practices within board m	0	C*	2
12	practicing empathy	-1	D*	2
34	board members to have a good awar	-1	C*	-1
22	knowledge and resources to develo	-1	D*	3
28	board members to be able to not s	-2	C*	-1
47	a performance review system that	-2	D*	4
45	boards members to be open to orga	-2	D	0
39	conversations about emotional int	-2	D	0
33	the importance of collective lear	-3	C*	-2
21	much more consciousness of what g	-3	D	0
2	an induction process that include	-4	D*	2
4	a section in the Charter underpin	-4	D*	3

Lowest Ranked Statements

Nm	Statements	F1	C/D	F2
38	a policy in how inclusive leaders	-5	D*	2

9	a formal written section in the t	-5	D*	5

Relative Ranking of Statements in Factor 2

Highest Ranked Statements

Nm	Statements	F2	C/D	F1
14	game for all New Zealanders; a ga	5	C*	4
9	a formal written section in the t	5	D*	-5

Positive Statements Ranked Higher in Factor 2 Array than in Other Factor Arrays

Nm	Statements	F2	C/D	F1
47	a performance review system that	4	D*	-2
46	promoting diversity within the bo	4	C*	2
24	the chair being able to weave div	4	D*	0
30	a recruitment process that draws	3	C*	3
22	knowledge and resources to develo	3	D*	-1
4	a section in the Charter underpin	3	D*	-4
38	a policy in how inclusive leaders	2	D*	-5
12	practicing empathy	2	D*	-1
3	cultural practices within board m	2	C*	0
2	an induction process that include	2	D*	-4
15	collective leadership environment	1	C*	1
39	conversations about emotional int	0	D	-2
13	a chair that encourages collectiv	0	C*	0
45	boards members to be open to orga	0	D	-2
21	much more consciousness of what g	0	D	-3

Negative Statements Ranked Lower in Factor 2 Array than in Other Factor Arrays

Nm	Statements	F2	C/D	F1
5	a chair who creates a safe enviro	0	D*	4
20	the strengths of the board member	0	C*	1
13	a chair that encourages collectiv	0	C*	0
40	a psychological safe environment	0	D*	5
32	Board members to have an understa	-1	D*	2
25	a chair who is aware if they are	-1	C*	0
8	the chair being able to listen an	-1	D*	2
19	a chair that is aware of their ow	-1	C*	0

34	board members to have a good awar	-1	C*	-1
7	relationship building inside of t	-2	C*	-1
10	individual relationship building	-2	D*	1
43	shared leadership	-2	C*	0
6	the willingness of a chair to dis	-2	D	-1
16	board members to understand their	-3	D*	1
27	an understanding of the different	-3	D	-1
35	a chair that builds relationships	-3	D*	1
36	board members feeling like they b	-3	D*	1
42	a chair aware of how much pre-det	-4	C*	-3
44	recognising board members contrib	-4	D*	0
41	talking about how important emoti	-4	C*	-3

Lowest Ranked Statements

Nm	Statements	F2	C/D	F1
18	a chair that speaks last and doin	-5	D	-2
23	chair being the first among equal	-5	D	-4

END OUTPUT

Appendix J2: Factor Arrays 1, 2a, 2b

Factor Array 1

Factor Array for Factor 1

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
a policy in how inclusive leadership practices are webbed into the board meetings	talking about how important emotions are within the decision making in boards	the importance of collective learning to drive organisational effectiveness	knowledge and resources to develop inclusive leadership strategies	relationship building inside of the board context	a chair that encourages collective contribution	board members to understand their own emotions	Board members to have an understanding of their own values and beliefs	board members to walk the talk rather than talk the talk	game for all New Zealanders, a game for life? premises every decision organisation makes.	a psychological safe environment
a formal written section in the top end of the Charter outlining inclusion that is reviewed	an induction process that includes inclusive practices	a performance review system that evaluates leadership behaviour	a chair that speaks last and doing a summary rather than speaking first leading conversation	the willingness of a chair to display vulnerability	practicing empathy	a chair that builds relationships outside of the boardroom	all board members to bring their cultural knowledge to the meetings	a recruitment process that draws out technical competencies and emotional cultural	an environment where everyone can have their contribution valued by the group	an environment where all voices heard equally or equitably
a section in the charter outlining inclusive leadership within skills and	chair being the first among equals	much more consciousness of what good governance is	conversations about emotional intelligence	shared leadership	cultural practices within meetings	the strengths of the board members known and utilized without bias	promoting diversity within the board	a whole-of-board responsibility board members take equal ownership for that	a chair who creates a safe environment	
			boards members to be open to organisational change	board members to have a good awareness of their personality style	a chair who is aware if they are dominating the discussions	individual relationship building outside of the board context between board members	the chair being able to listen and accept other perspectives of the board members	a chair who facilitates to ensure everyone has a voice		
			a chair aware of how much pre-determined contribution they are adding	an understanding of the different mindsets board members are bringing into	a chair that is aware of their own biases	the chair being able to weave diverse perspectives into the decision making	board members to be aware of their own biases			
				board members to be able to not suppress emotional reactions but to lean in	collective leadership environment	board members feeling like they belong to the group				
					recognising board members contributions and efforts					

Legend

- Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.05$
- Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.01$
- ▲ z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ▼ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors
- Consensus Statements

Factor Array for Factor 2a

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
a chair that speaks last and doing a summary rather than speaking first leading conversation	a chair aware of how much pre-determined contribution they are adding	board members to understand their own emotions	relationship building inside of the board context	Board members to have an understanding of their own values and beliefs	a chair who creates a safe environment	board members to be aware of their own biases	a policy in how inclusive leadership practices are weaved into the board meetings	a recruitment process that draws out technical competencies and emotional cultural	a performance review system that evaluates inclusive leadership behaviour	a game for all New Zealanders, a game for life? permeates every decision organisation makes
chair being the first among equals	recognising board members contributions and efforts	an understanding of the different members board bringing into	individual relationship building outside of the board context between board members	board members to be able to not suppress emotional reactions but to lean in	conversations about emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence	a whole-of-board responsibility board members take equal ownership for that	practising empathy	knowledge and resources to develop inclusive leadership strategies	promoting diversity within the board	a formal written section in the top end of the Charter outlining inclusion that is reviewed
talking about how important it is to work with the decision making in boards	a chair that understands relationships outside of the boardroom	the importance of building relationships outside of the boardroom	a chair who is able to not suppress emotional reactions but to lean in	the strengths of the board members known and utilised without bias	an environment where all board members can have their contribution valued by the group	cultural practices within board meetings	an environment where all board members can have their contribution valued by the group	a section in the Charter underpins inclusive leadership with skills and	the chair being able to weave perspectives into the decision making	
	board members feeling like they belong to the group	shared leadership	the chair being able to listen and accept perspectives of the board members	a chair that encourages collective contribution	collective leadership environment	board members to walk the talk rather than take the talk				
		the willingness of a chair to display vulnerability	a chair that is aware of their own biases	boards members to be open to organisational change	a chair who facilitates to ensure everyone has a voice	an induction process that includes inclusive practices				
			board members to have a good awareness of their personally style	a psychological safe environment	all board members to bring their cultural knowledge to the meetings					
					much more consciousness of what good governance is					

Legend

- Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.05$
- Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.01$
- z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors
- Consensus Statements

Factor Array for Factor 2b

[illegible]

Legend

- Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.05$
- Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.01$
- ▶ z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ▶ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors
- Consensus Statements

Appendix K: Examples of Agendas

Core Collaboration Group Meeting #2:

Date: Tuesday 28th March

Time: 10.00-11.00am

Mode: Zoom

Agenda:

1. Recap of project
2. Where are we at and what has developed
3. S1: Make it explicit and make it collective
4. Kōrero on three questions:
 - How do we create a psychological safe environment within a board environment?
 - How can we make these findings explicit and make it collective?
 - What do you see being valuable from this research for your organisation?
5. Closing thoughts and reflections

Core Collaboration Group Meeting #3:

Date: Friday 30th June

Time: 10.00-11.00am

Mode: Teams

Agenda:

1. Quick summary of what has happened since our last meeting
2. Where are we at and what themes have developed
3. Identified focus areas and a couple of questions to be posed in this meeting:
 - **Recruitment/Appointment Process:** How can an appointment panel capture a potential board candidate's inclusivity?
 - **Systematic Change with MA's :** How can we mitigate systematic hierarchy (thank you XXX): Can permanent, positive change that is difficult to reverse be successfully achieved by applying the same top-down mindset?
4. Closing thoughts and reflections

Appendix L: NZC Board Director Update Skills and Experience Matrix

New Zealand Cricket

Board of Directors

Skills and Capabilities Framework for NZC Board Members

New Zealand Cricket's constitution requires the retirement by rotation of two directors for this upcoming year. Retiring Director Kevin Malloy will be seeking re-election, with Director Jackie Lloyd electing to retire by rotation. Sheffield Search is assisting NZC's Board Appointments Panel to facilitate this process.

All applicants or nominees for positions on the New Zealand Cricket (NZC) Board shall be assessed by an Appointments Panel established pursuant to NZC's Constitution against the skills and capabilities in this framework. The Appointments Panel will then recommend candidates for the Board with such recommendations requiring a 50% or more endorsement from Members voting at NZC's SGM or AGM.

This framework will be a public document available to potential candidates and Members. The capabilities will be reviewed by the NZC Board from time to time, and may be amended by NZC, after consulting with its Members.

This framework sets out in Part 1, it outlines the ideal mix of functional strengths considered most likely to deliver outstanding leadership of the sport in New Zealand and in Part 2, the types of skills and experience needed for effective governance of cricket in New Zealand.

This skills and capabilities framework is intended to guide and assist the Appointments Panel in their assessment of applicants and nominees. This is not to be used as inflexible criteria but as a framework to assist and guide to decision making.

Part 1: Capabilities Framework – The Board Mix

Ideally, each NZC Board Member shall have a particular strength in one or more of the following key functional areas. It is not expected that each applicant or nominee will possess every attribute identified, or that every attribute will always be present around the board table as a number capabilities are capable of being contracted in, if needed. However, ideally the Board, as a whole, will possess the mix and balance of many of the skills, experience and expertise identified below:

- (i) **Cricket Experience:** Knowledge of and understanding of the game.
- (ii) **Community Cricket Network Experience:** Active involvement in and understanding of community cricket and our cricket network.
- (iii) **High Performance Sport:** Front line involvement in, and understanding of, high performance sport at an elite level, across any sport.
- (iv) **Governance Experience:** Professional directorships, Chair experience at the highest capability level.
- (v) **International and/or Domestic Sports Industry Involvement:** Includes involvement with/ understanding of the sports industry locally or abroad.
- (vi) **Stakeholder/Govt Relationships:** Includes connections and relationships in Govt circles and with key stakeholders.
- (vii) **Business Experience and Commercial Acumen:** Includes risk management, strategic development, C-suite experience.
- (viii) **Accounting and Financial Expertise:** Qualified accountant and/or financial qualifications at the highest capability level.
- (ix) **Marketing, Media and Broadcast:** Includes sponsorship involvement and industry experience at highest capability level.
- (x) **People and Culture:** Experience and/or expertise in enhancing/developing an organisations culture, people related issues and wellbeing.

Part 2: Ideal Skills, Experiences and Personal Attributes - Each Board Member

Ideally, each NZC Board Member shall have a majority of the following skills and experiences:

1. Cricket Knowledge

- (i) A strong understanding of amateur cricket, preferably as a Board Member, at club, district and major association level.
- (ii) Playing and / or coaching experience and knowledge at a professional level, preferably international.
- (iii) A strong understanding of the international drivers impacting on professional cricket in New Zealand.

2. Strategic thinking

- (i) Change awareness: The ability to be alert and responsive to changes within cricket, internationally and domestically and a willingness to support new initiatives and to implement new policies, structures and practices to meet that need for change.
- (ii) Contribution: Ability to think strategically and to help develop key ideas and initiatives that will enable NZC to advance the interests of cricket in New Zealand.
- (iii) Organisational awareness: An understanding of the position of NZC and cricket in New Zealand in the eyes of its stakeholders (including the public) and the current opportunities and threats.
- (iv) Perspective and vision: The ability to see the wider picture and future opportunities and risks for cricket in New Zealand.
- (v) Strategic Alignment: The ability to ensure that strategies, budgets and business plans are realistic and compatible with NZC's vision and mission.

3. Governance skills and experience

- (i) A good understanding of the difference between governance and management: Able to distinguish between Board and executive management issues and not get directly involved in management matters.
- (ii) Adding value: Has an ability to add value to Board meetings and discussions so that the right decisions are made at the right time and in the right way.
- (iii) Compliance and conformance: Has a strong understanding of compliance and conformance in relation to employment law, health and safety regulations, external financial reporting, collective agreements, general ethics etc.
- (iv) Conflicts of interest: Can identify and declare conflicts of interest on any issue coming before the Board.
- (v) Has an outcome focus: Is focused on the achievement of results.
- (vi) Holding the CEO to account: An ability to hold the CEO to account once the strategic plan and objectives and goals have been agreed to.
- (vii) National role: Understands that the role of a NZC Board member is a national one rather than a representative one and that the Director must always act in the best interests of cricket in New Zealand.
- (viii) Previous Board experience: Has previously served on the Board(s) of a commercial or NFP organisation, or has served as CEO / MD of such an entity / entities.
- (ix) Requirements: Understands legal, fiduciary and ethical requirements of directors.
- (x) Risk mitigation: Knowledge and experience in the management of risk – financial, contractual, reputational, and preferably as an employer of athletes within a high profile NSO.
- (xi) Strategic planning: Has a strong understanding of strategic planning processes particularly in relation to Sporting and / or Not for Profit Organisations.
- (xii) Strong stewardship orientation: Understands the importance of growing Member value and the role of a Board member to carefor and grow the tangible and intangible assets of NZC.

4. Business acumen

- (i) Broad business experience: Has proven experience in effectively leading a business at a senior level.
- (ii) Building performance: Knowledge and experience of how to build organisational performance through strong leadership.
- (iii) Critical faculty: The ability to probe the facts and challenge assumptions, identifies the advantages or drawbacks of a proposal, provide counter-arguments and ensure discussions are penetrating and constructive. Sound decision-making.
- (iv) Financial literacy: The ability to interpret financial statements and statistical information such as balance sheets, profit and loss accounts and cash flow statements, and to understand foreign exchange.
- (v) Information-oriented: The confidence to ask for information on matters of significance and relevance and ensure it is available to enable informed judgments/assessments to be made.
- (vi) Informed business judgement: The ability and intelligence to make sensible, astute, business decisions and recommendations based on reasonable assumptions and factual information, including the ability to deal with uncertainty, risk, incomplete information and complexity, both in the present and reaching out several years.
- (vii) Strong fan focus: Is committed to the NZC being an organisation that provides services that are useful and relevant for its existing and potential fans, that aims to find out what is important to fans and tries to meet and, where possible, exceed their expectations.
- (viii) Values: Alignment with, and an understanding of, the need for strong institutional values that underpin behaviours and performance.

5. Personal character and skills

- (i) Adaptable: The ability to adopt a flexible approach in team interactions and to alter stances when appropriate.
- (ii) Analytical: Analytical, critical reasoning and problem solving skills.
- (iii) Commitment: The energy, commitment, motivation and the time to properly meet the Board's requirements and discharge its responsibilities. Must have a commitment to excellence, both personally and for the organisation as a whole. Commitment to diversity and inclusion and the elimination of discriminative attitudes and behaviours in sport.
- (iv) Courage: The strength of character and boldness to pursue one's own convictions, and to probe, penetrate and achieve full understanding in the face of adversity.
- (v) Interpersonal and communication skills: Must have strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to interact and communicate with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. A proven leader in working with others.
- (vi) Honesty and integrity: Must be able to demonstrate honesty, independence and integrity at all times without compromise of moral principle, and show a willingness to act now and remain accountable for Board decisions.
- (vii) Stakeholder empathy: Ability to understand and relate to the stakeholders of NZ cricket eg. MAs, DAs, clubs, media, players, fans, service providers etc. Acknowledging Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Tangata Whenua and a commitment to incorporating Tikanga Māori, Te Reo Māori and a Te Ao Māori view in cricket.
- (viii) Style: A personal style that does not detract from a Board culture of capability, candour, trust and professionalism.
- (ix) Team player: Can work harmoniously within the group, to recognise and value contributions from others, to be diplomatic, supportive and accept majority Board decisions.
- (x) Verbal skills: Able to articulate opinions clearly, logically and concisely with courtesy, respect and a sense of humour, and the confidence to state those opinions when needed.

Appendix M: NZC Board Director Recruitment advertisement promoting inclusivity

Independent Directors



New Zealand Cricket's (NZC) constitution requires the retirement by rotation of three directors for this upcoming year. Of the three directors retiring in this rotation, two will be seeking re-election. Sheffield Search is assisting NZC's Board Appointments Panel to facilitate this process.

NZC has a vision of cricket being a game for all New Zealanders and is committed to encouraging Diversity and Inclusivity, recognising the importance of breaking down discriminative attitudes and behaviours in sport.

NZC invites applications from suitably qualified individuals.

A Skills and Capabilities Framework approved by the organisation's membership outlines the ideal experience and mix of strengths that are considered most likely to deliver outstanding governance leadership of the sport. In addition to a depth of governance experience, skills to be considered carefully in this rotation round, and which will assist and guide the decision-making process, include:

- contemporary knowledge and understanding of how New Zealand's cricket network functions including the roles of NZC's Major and District Association members; and
- contemporary knowledge and understanding of the global sporting, including cricket, environment with a focus on high performance.

Candidates can apply online at www.sheffield.co.nz. To apply by email, please attach your cover letter and CV and send to cvakl@sheffield.co.nz quoting 8582NZH. Applications close on 22 September 2023. Emails will be electronically acknowledged and further correspondence may be by email. For more information please phone Ian Taylor on 027 487 7424 or Raewyn Brown on 021 917 203.

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60
YEARS
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Appendix N: CEO Recruitment Materials

The banner features the NZC logo at the top center. Below it, the title 'CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER' is written in large, bold, teal letters. To the right of the title, the text 'PERMANENT, FULL TIME' is displayed. Below the title, the text 'JOB TYPE' is followed by 'REPORTS TO' and 'LOCATION' in a smaller font. To the right of these, 'NZC BOARD' and 'AUCKLAND' are listed. The background is dark blue with abstract geometric shapes. At the bottom, there are several horizontal white lines.

JOB TYPE	PERMANENT, FULL TIME
REPORTS TO	NZC BOARD
LOCATION	AUCKLAND

ABOUT NEW ZEALAND CRICKET - TUHINGA O KIRIKITI AOTEAROA

New Zealand Cricket (NZC) is a not-for-profit National Sports Organisation responsible for the guardianship, promotion, and administration of cricket in New Zealand. It is specifically charged with the control and management of all national teams, players, and competitions, and with fostering, encouraging, and assisting in the development of the game at all levels.

NZC's Board of Directors is elected by its members; fully autonomous Major and District Associations. He kēmu rorotū mō Aotearoa, which translates to "New Zealand's Favourite Game" is NZC's strategic vision, from which derives its over-arching purpose: He kēmu rorotū mō Aotearoa, he kēmu mataora (A game for all New Zealanders; A game for life).

Together, these mission statements embrace a philosophy in which NZC combines a cohesive and aligned community game with high performing BLACKCAPS and WHITE FERNS teams and domestic competitions, so that cricket can thrive at all levels and remain relevant and accessible to all New Zealanders.

THE ROLE - TE TŪNGA

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) reports to the Chair and the Board of Directors of NZC with a full range of responsibilities.

The CEO provides inspiring leadership and clear direction to NZC and to the New Zealand cricket community. The CEO is required to assist the Board in developing cricket in New Zealand consistent with the agreed strategic direction. The strategy is owned by the Board but co-designed and implemented by the CEO and the senior leadership team.

The strategic pillars (see Appendix 1) provide focus and direction for the CEO. The five pillars do not operate in isolation, they are intertwined and the health and success of the organisation is determined by these areas all performing well. Commercial growth, high performance, women and girls, community, and fan engagement are priorities for the CEO.

The role requires working relationships with multiple stakeholders (see Appendix 2). These relationships are extensive and range from the Major Associations, through to key Government officials, commercial partners, and international cricket markets.

The CEO of NZC is a key influencer in the sporting community both in New Zealand and abroad. Fostering strong relationships with Member ICC countries is critical, especially the global powerhouse India, where strong relationships extend to working with key local broadcasters.

The CEO is also accountable for the day-to-day affairs, performance, and management of New Zealand cricket, as well as driving appropriate performance accountability through other layers of management.

Specific accountabilities include:

- Providing strategic, organisational, and business leadership to the organisation
- Ensuring career development, staff management, and welfare
- Health and safety oversight (especially in relation to overseas tours)
- Creating a culture of inclusiveness, empowerment, and performance
- Embracing NZC's Vision, Purpose, and Values
- Generating and reviewing Board papers and presenting to the Board as required
- Applying and implementing policies as directed by the Board
- Managing external media relations, perceptions, and profile
- Financial Accountability

This is a demanding role which is in the spotlight. It will inevitably require dealing with mainstream and social media commentary. This position has a high profile on the New Zealand sporting landscape and dealing with the media will be an important part of the role. There will be a degree of scrutiny that the CEO will be required to deal with and be equipped to handle.

BACKGROUND / EXPERIENCE - TŌ WHEAKO



LEADERSHIP ROLES

This is a role for a proven, experienced leader.

The relative complexity of the business, the number of diverse stakeholders, the performance demands, and commercial requirements mean the CEO must have established leadership skills.



A LOVE OF SPORT

This is a sporting environment. It requires an individual with a genuine love for sport.

Someone who understands the sporting world. A fan, a viewer, and sports lover. Ideally the CEO will have some form of background in sport, including at the community level.



PROVEN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARENESS

The CEO needs to walk the talk with proven experience in understanding and promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace and community.

NZC is on a journey towards better inclusiveness and has made significant progress. There is still a long way to go. The CEO needs to be able to take the organisation on the next stages of the journey and build on the progress made to date.



A PASSION FOR CRICKET

Cricket is discussed in the office, with sponsors, with international partners, and almost everywhere the CEO operates.

This role doesn't demand that the CEO is a cricket expert, but this individual must have a passion for cricket. They must be a fan at heart.

SKILL SET REQUIRED - NGĀ PŪKENGA ŌU



PROVEN LEADERSHIP

This role requires a contemporary leadership style: collaborative and inclusive, but also decisive and confident.

There is a strong sense of 'team' amongst NZC staff and a genuine pride in working for the organisation. That needs to be fostered and built on.

The role requires a leader willing to be progressive and industry-leading especially in critical areas such as inclusion of women and girls within all layers of the game and administration.

This is a leader with strong interpersonal and communication skills and with proven experience in these areas.

Ideally this is also a leader with experience in leading systems change (e.g. understanding and facilitating network improvements and changes.)



COMMERCIAL ACUMEN

This role requires proven commercial acumen with a strong understanding of what it takes for a business to be financially successful.

Experience is required dealing with commercial partners and understanding their specific needs and requirements.

Financial literacy and experience with balance sheets are essential.

Negotiation skills are critical, along with a high degree of comfort working through complicated stakeholder contracts.

Experience in dealing with, and understanding, broadcasting and media environments would be beneficial.



RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

There are several important relationships that the CEO needs to embrace and ensure that they nurture.

The role requires the ability to work with multiple stakeholders, quite often in difficult and tense situations.

It is absolutely critical that the person within the CEO role has, and leads, a strong working relationship with the Cricket Players' Association, Major Associations, and international partners, such as India.

Many of the attributes listed for this role are deliberately those of a leader who can build and maintain relationships through well-earned mutual trust and respect.



HIGH PERFORMANCE

This role does not require a high-performance expert, but it does require someone who has a good understanding of high-performance sport and ideally, has had some experience in a high-performance sporting environment.

The CEO needs to be respected by the high-performance team, and ensure this team is empowered and resourced to be successful.

ATTRIBUTES - NGĀ ĀHUATANGA ŌU



HIGH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Strong self-awareness is important for the decisive, yet empathetic leadership style required. This role is for a leader who understands it's okay to be vulnerable.

Interpersonal skills are critical to build relationships, gain trust and earn respect.

Leadership of NZC requires high emotional intelligence to effectively relate to, and deal with, the multiple stakeholders.



INCLUSIVE AND COLLABORATIVE

The role requires an inclusive and collaborative leadership style. A style that comes naturally in being transparent, open, frank, and honest in dealing with staff and stakeholders.



CULTURAL AWARENESS

A genuine awareness and understanding of different cultures is a key part of the role.

NZC is on a journey, and we need to progress further in our understanding and embracing of different cultures. This requires a leader who is prepared to further advance this.



TEAM PLAYER

This is not a role for a person who wants to lead from the front and demands everyone else to follow. NZC has a culture of teamwork and empowerment. The organization works best when everyone works together in an inclusive and collaborative way.

The role is demanding and challenging and requires a leadership style built on a team ethos of performing and winning together.



INTEGRITY

A strong moral compass is required. The role requires a leader with integrity. Respect and trust are paramount if the CEO is to be successful in leading NZC to further growth, inclusiveness and success.