

# The future of Education Outdoors NZ

A REPORT FOR EDUCATION OUTDOORS NZ

## Why explore the future?

Education Outdoors NZ (EONZ) is interested in how it might best position itself to be fit for purpose and sustainable into the future. Its Board and senior management are conscious of the rapid speed of change occurring across society, and how this will impact the environment in which it works.

Therefore, it agreed to partner with Sport NZ to explore possible and plausible futures that may play out, to enable it to test its approach through understanding the long-term issues and challenges shaping the future.

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Topics covered included:

- The future as predicted, versus the future as a learning journey (identifying and testing the assumptions held by EONZ that are influencing how the strategic issues are being considered).
- Emerging disruptions and transformations ahead.
- Scenarios to illustrate alternative futures to consider a much wider range of contexts in which EONZ may be operating and to generate new insights into possible future developments.
- Consideration of novel ideas and risk reduction to enable a level of anticipation, and therefore preparation, for the inevitable surprises that EONZ will encounter.

These topics underpin a new approach to having conversations about the future and identifying narratives to align to a period of rapid change. To do this, it is important to imagine a range of alternative scenarios for the future. This can give us greater confidence that we are taking the right actions today – fit for a future we want, and adaptive for the changes and disruptions we will experience in the coming decade.

This document summarises the EONZ strategic foresight conversation from the development of an initial baseline perspective to the elaboration of four potential scenarios.

This involved two facilitated workshops involving the EONZ Board and senior management.

A five-to-10-year time horizon was used.



## Key findings

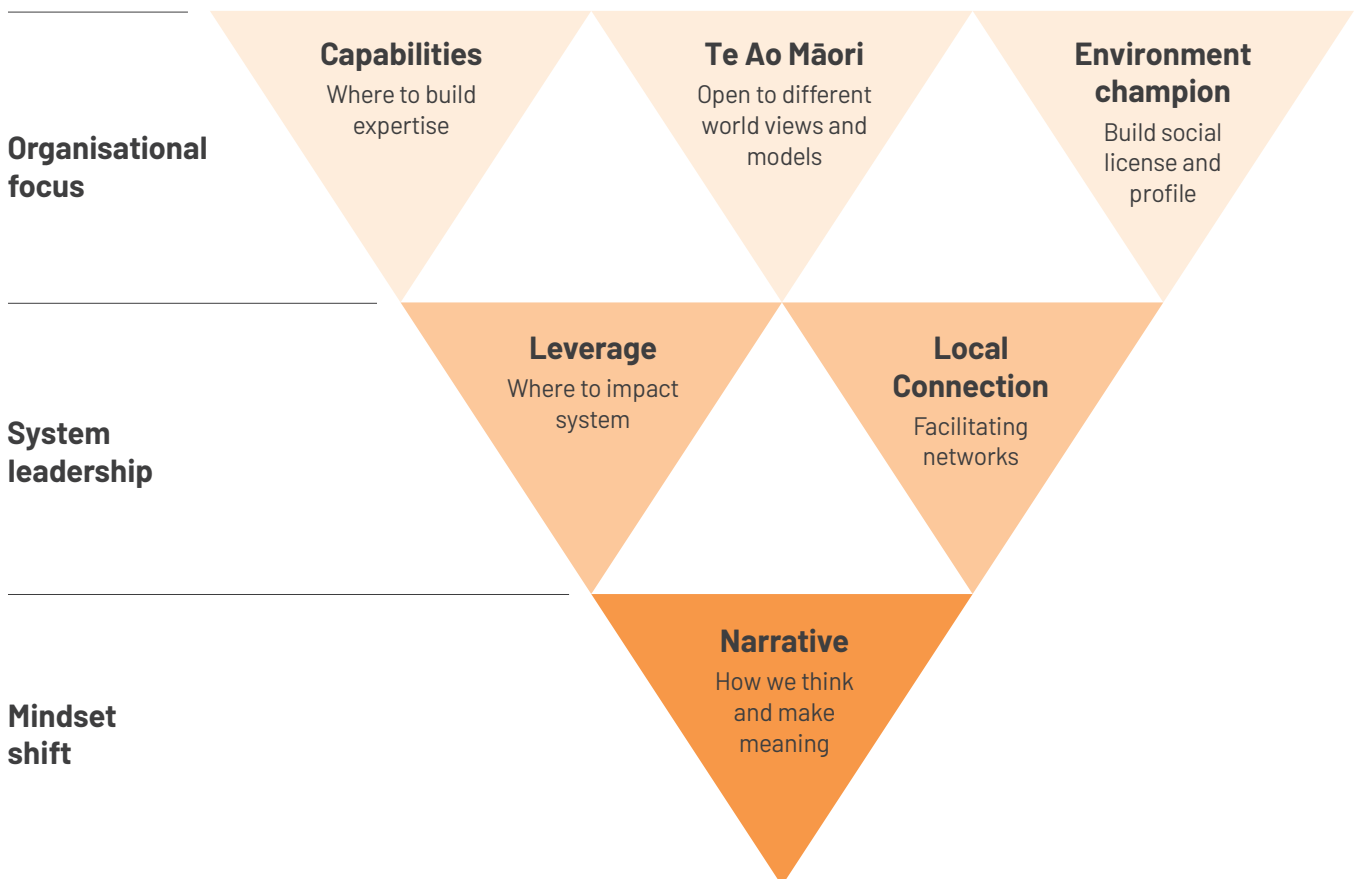
The need for EONZ and the outdoor education sector to continue to adapt to a changing world is widely acknowledged. Rather than being constrained by assuming a single future, EONZ (and the sector) will benefit from exploring alternative scenarios to be ready for future uncertainty. This learning journey also helps to clarify today's issues and allows us to think more creatively.

This report adds to this learning journey and is intended as an input into ongoing strategic thinking. As a key advocacy body for outdoor education in New Zealand, EONZ has a significant role in responding to the current challenges and future opportunities and providing guidance to the outdoor education sector. That said, it should not think it has to act alone or have all the answers. This is as much about what EONZ wants to become, as the actions it might take.

This report focuses on four alternative futures to identify the capabilities EONZ will need to enhance its resilience. It identifies future opportunities and challenges, and today's practices, mindsets and structures that may be holding it back.

Collectively, these inputs highlighted six immediate opportunities for EONZ.

### Six key opportunities for EONZ



## Aligned narrative

Every organisation has a story. It is a narrative staff and stakeholders create. It is neither right or wrong, but is powerful in informing how we construct meaning, often more powerful in influencing behaviour than data or evidence. It is important EONZ can tell a story that is aligned to its vision and reason for being and that it is a story that others tell about the organisation.

Scenario responses identified participants are thinking about the current context differently. This suggests EONZ board/staff are not starting from the same place, with perspectives coloured by individual assumptions and mindsets. To collectively move forward, it is important to have a common understanding of where you are now. This will impact the narrative.

What is EONZ's narrative? Is it effective and aligned to the future it wants to create? Does everyone agree with it?

## Building local connections

The need to get closer to the community came through survey responses and three of the four scenarios. This includes school boards, marae and local providers, some of whom will be new. This responds to the opportunity of outdoor education being recognised as a community cohesion builder, and acknowledges the desire to embrace Te Ao Māori, and respect and learn from local iwi. New partnerships also invite creativity and innovation.

How does EONZ build stronger local connections? Are there other channels that can assist e.g. RSTs, Healthy Active Learning network?

## System leverage

To impact behaviour change, EONZ needs a deep understanding of systems thinking and the levers available to it to impact change. Funding was commonly raised as a key lever, and improved distribution would undoubtedly improve access. However, EONZ can also impact the sector through sharing knowledge, advocating for change, leadership, and facilitating alignment and collaboration.

It has a key role in the timely gathering, tailoring and dissemination of knowledge, and in sharing a deep understanding of what is happening around it and what might happen in the future. There may be an opportunity for EONZ to better connect the education and sport and recreation systems.

How does EONZ build its understanding of systems thinking and direct resource to the most influential leverage points?

## Environmental alignment

Building on its existing work, EONZ could position itself as a champion of environmental sustainability, aligning itself with the building momentum across society and reinforcing its social license and commitment to Te Ao Māori. This would build its profile and relevancy within the education and sport and recreation sectors, and encourage greater engagement in the outdoors.

How might EONZ better position itself as a champion of environmental sustainability?

## Te Ao Māori

EONZ is on a bi-cultural journey. There is a desire to accelerate this to ensure the organisation genuinely embraces Te Ao Māori, including understanding what outdoor education might look like from a tāngata whenua perspective.

What does Te Ao Māori look like for EONZ?

## Capabilities

Capabilities common across multiple scenarios (not already acknowledged) included forming strategic relationships, building on existing risk management guidance and impact reporting, and accessing virtual and augmented technology expertise,

How does EONZ marry desired capabilities with current resource constraints?

EONZ will need courage to change and to influence change. It can reimagine and realise what it becomes and is known for. This report is a step along that journey of discovery.

## What EONZ thinks will happen in the future

One of the challenges with foresight is becoming overwhelmed with what's changing and struggling to make sense of the implications. It is easy to get misled by extrapolating from obvious trends and developments. A common approach is to develop scenarios that explore plausible future states. The baseline future is one possible future. This is the future the outdoor education community assume will occur.

The basis of EONZ's baseline future was identified via a survey completed ahead of the first workshop. The survey questions are designed to draw out a common understanding of perceived opportunities, threats and aspirations for the future of outdoor education in New Zealand. This provided the basis for the baseline future – the future participants assume will occur. (Survey responses are provided in Appendix 1).

The purpose of the baseline future is not to predict what the future of outdoor education will look like in 5-10 years, but to help identify the obvious issues, and stimulate conversations around how the outdoor education community could respond.

EONZ's baseline future:

- Teachers have increased capacity and capability to deliver quality education outside the classroom safely, with an uptake in the use of EONZ resources and professional learning and development. This is aided by The Ministry of Education, Sport NZ, and teacher training institutions having an improved understanding of the value proposition of outdoor education. This leads to an increase in student participation across most schools.
- This increase in participation stems from the belief that the wellbeing benefits from outdoor education are widely accepted, and there is a need to ensure barriers to entry continue to be removed. This perspective has been strengthened by EONZ being part of the wider conversation about outdoor activity, participation and education and recognised for the perspective and expertise it brings.
- The heightened understanding has resulted in more inclusive practices, the development of stronger relationships with iwi across the motu, and the integration of Te Ao Māori and Te Reo Māori throughout EONZ practices and strong diversity through its governance, employment, and delivery structures.
- It is assumed the way students engage in education outside the classroom has not fundamentally changed and are informed by EONZ priorities and systems and processes that support schools and teachers to deliver quality, safe and fun education outside the classroom.
- The funding models to support these programmes are not anticipated to change, with resources primarily available through existing channels.
- Access to education outside the classroom opportunities will improve, although inequality will persist, and cost will continue to be a barrier for some.
- Climate change disruptions will increase health and safety requirements, and this will place additional strain on the committed but limited workforce.

Issues that EONZ recognize might disrupt its baseline future.

- Political and societal philosophical shifts leading to a narrowing of school priorities, downplaying the wellbeing benefits of outdoor education; and/or individual schools taking this approach themselves.
- The urgency of economic and climate issues reducing political and individual focus on outdoor education, with its importance to the support of physical and mental wellbeing and cognitive development downplayed.
- Worsening economic conditions and an unequal recovery widens gaps in outdoor education participation due to issues of affordability and access.
- More volatile weather will impact outdoor activity and influence the activities people choose. The emergence of competing interests such as eSports further impacts levels of participation.
- New providers emerge to deliver outdoor education altering the nature of partnerships and funding arrangements.
- Increased health and safety requirements, liability risks, changing attitudes to volunteering, and an increased desire from people to use their time differently results in an increased challenge to attract and retain talent.
- The evolution of social media increases levels of debate and outright disinformation that obscure society's focus on mental and physical wellbeing and undermines the social licence of organisations in the outdoor sector.

There are probably no surprises to those within the outdoor education community in this baseline future scenario. It reflects what many people and organisations in the sector are contemplating now – how are they going to ensure they have adequate participants and funding levels going forward, how do they address current inequities in the system, and do they have the appropriate delivery model and capabilities to respond to societal challenges.

A baseline future is what we generally think will happen if there is no change. It is not radically different from today and is derived from what we see in the world around us. Creating a baseline future is a good way of emptying the mind of the most pressing worries. Only then can we step back and think of alternatives. Getting those concerns and fears out in the open can help identify not only what you want to avoid but some of the characteristics that you want to work towards.

## Moving beyond baseline future

The baseline future is a collection of predictions of the future context within which the EONZ strategy will be pursued. The quick discussion within the workshop immediately highlighted the potential alternatives that could emerge to influence the strategic environment. This underlines the need for the move away from prediction to instead consider the most useful questions. A few emerged in the baseline future discussion including:

- To what extent do plans assume the current focus is appropriate?
- What mindsets and world view are we bringing to our thinking?
- Given the pressure of the school curriculum, is it safe to assume outdoor education will continue to be valued?
- How will increased weather disruptions impact motivations to participate and volunteer in the outdoors?

These questions are unlikely to surprise those engaged within EONZ and are likely to form the basis of current strategic discussions. The variety of perception or response to these questions emphasises that no single future can be

assumed. An exploration of how respective scenarios may challenge these questions leads to more robust strategic dialogue. It is easy to get misled by extrapolating from obvious trends and developments.

To avoid this, a common approach is to develop scenarios that explore plausible future states. Developing these scenario narratives can be achieved through the combination of uncertain disruptors to form stories of the future.

Sport NZ has identified 31 phenomenon as causing the most disruption to the future of sport and recreation in New Zealand - [Disruptors](#). Of these, outdoor education identified the following as potentially most disruptive to outdoor education.



## Most impactful disruptors to outdoor education

The following future disruptors were highlighted as potentially the most impactful for EONZ. Each are linked to reports.

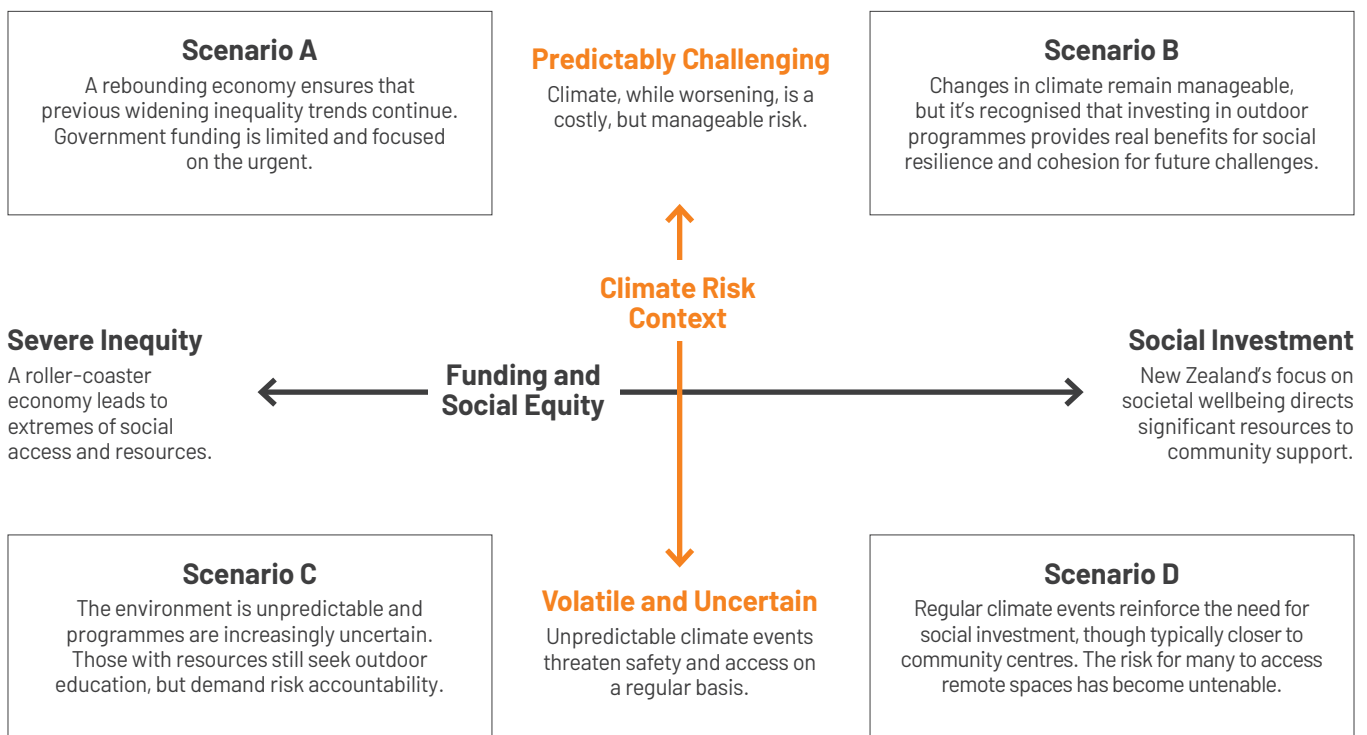
<b><u>Workforce changes</u></b>	The play, active recreation, and sport sector will be subject to the same forces (e.g. demographic) shaping other workplaces. Challenging for the paid sector, these will prove particularly challenging for the key volunteer support groups.
<b><u>Increasing diversity</u></b>	Increasing diversity is likely to generate a far more kaleidoscopic context for the provision of play, active recreation, and sport programmes. It will also increasingly bring to prominence alternative worldviews that will challenge historically dominant perspectives.
<b><u>Social wellbeing policy</u></b>	The political hue of the government will determine the direction of social well-being policies (e.g., social assistance, housing etc) that all affect the individual's ability to participate in active recreation.
<b><u>Social Resilience</u></b>	Changing patterns of social resilience that are associated with levels of trust, changing social values and world views. Reflects debates within New Zealand around the collective support of common norms and rules.
<b><u>The changing nature of work</u></b>	Even before the pandemic, the idea of a stable career and retirement was threatened by changing job patterns and increased longevity. Together with more transient employment contracts and the emergence of automation, the future of work is looking increasingly complex
<b><u>Changing leisure patterns</u></b>	The influences which will shape the future of leisure in New Zealand. Including disruption in adjacent sectors that start to obscure the boundary between leisure activities. The range of leisure experiences will diversify as individuals are enabled to tailor their activities to suit their preferences and available time.
<b><u>Climate change response</u></b>	Energy transition and political action are required to mitigate climate change, and includes the need to address climate change within the activities of the sector.
<b><u>Gaming, augmented and virtual reality</u></b>	Online gaming and eSports are growing rapidly, especially but not exclusively among younger people. While competition and prize money are a driver for some, most find the social and community aspects the most important factors. Increasingly immersive games are anticipated, but how virtual worlds will develop is unknown.
<b><u>Governance response</u></b>	The desire for re-alignment, reform and re/dis-establishment of respective government agencies will remain an ongoing trend. Reforms in health, local government, and education, for example all have the potential to influence the education outdoors sector.
<b><u>Evolving Crown Māori partnerships</u></b>	As Aotearoa New Zealand becomes more supportive of a bi-cultural nation the Crown-Māori relationship is maturing too. Though not without mistakes and disputes. The focus is shifting beyond Treaty settlements and righting wrongs, to enabling Māori to have greater self-determination, governance and kaitiakitanga (guardianship) roles. The Crown-Māori partnership is contentious, and trust across society still needs to be built.

Following a group discussion and ranking exercise, status of public funding/inequality and climate consequences were the main drivers chosen to develop several future scenarios. They were chosen based on potentially high impact and levels of uncertainty. Other drivers such as diversity were weaved into the narratives.

<b><u>Status of public funding</u></b>	Managing the government's finances will be challenged by a multitude of global and domestic challenges arising from the pandemic aftermath, geo-political tensions and climate demands. Potential moves between orthodox and heterodox economic policies will determine future funding status.
<b><u>Inequality</u></b>	Socio-economic inequalities, while primarily associated with financial measures, also include the digital divide determining access to digital products & services so vital to full participation in contemporary New Zealand.
<b><u>Climate change</u></b>	Current scientific forecasts indicate a changing climate will impact human health and facilities with the emergence of novel pests and diseases, together with extreme weather events. The consequences will also be felt in terms of societal change and consumer behaviour.

## Alternative futures

To identify possible and plausible alternative futures for EONZ, four scenarios were created based on the opposite of two uncertainties playing out – status of public funding and climate change consequences. It should be noted these scenarios will likely not happen exactly as described. They provide an opportunity to explore a plausible strategic context that could be encountered. The aim is to use them as prompts to highlight what may need to be considered over the coming period.



The full narratives for each scenario are provided in Appendix 2. In considering the narratives, the participants were asked to consider:

- How the EONZ strategy would fare if the scenario eventuated?
- What implications the scenario has for participants, volunteers, and providers?
- What steps EONZ can take to develop greater resilience to the challenges?
- How EONZ can work to support the development of the more positive outcomes?
- What actions EONZ can take to ensure its plans are effective across multiple scenarios and not predicated on one?

**Overall, the aim is not to judge whether the scenario will occur, but to consider what EONZ would do if it did.**



## Scenario A: Limited access

A rebounding economy ensures that previous widening inequality trends continue. Government funding is limited and focused on the urgent.

### Key Implications

- Harder to access funding.
- Growing divide between those that can/cannot access opportunities.
- More localised approach.
- Virtual reality as possible bridge to real thing.
- Better planning through improved weather prediction technology.

### Biggest Opportunity/Risk

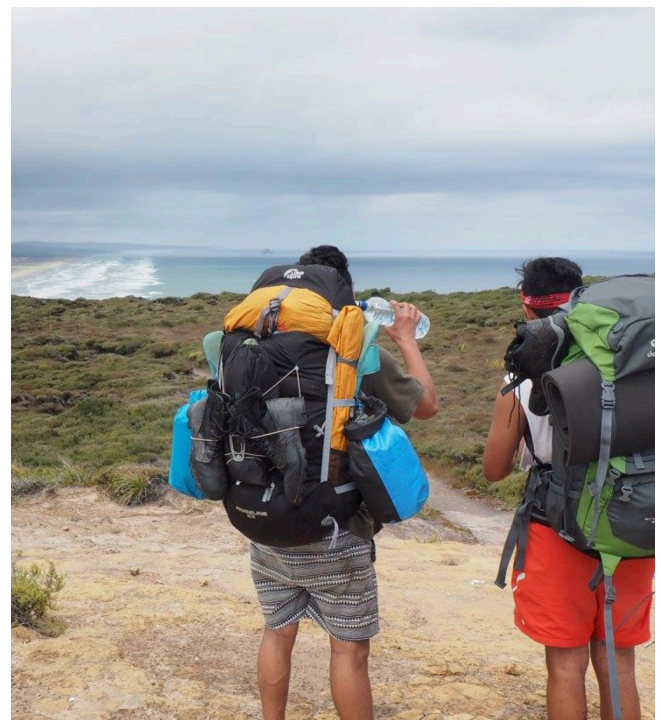
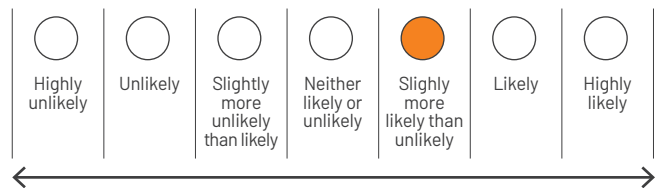
- New partnerships that open creativity and innovation.
- Stronger connections with marae.
- Turangawaewae - a sense of identity and independence associated with having a particular home.
- Build connection between virtual and actual experience.
- Outdoor education positioned as part of growing emphasis on community resilience.
- Share knowledge about what is and is not working.
- Increased focus on philanthropic funding sources, directed at those missing out.
- Growing inequity of access.
- Does EONZ have the right capability - e.g. technology.
- Required mindset change with outdoor education community.
- Retention and attraction of workforce, volunteers.

### Necessary Capabilities

- Funding advocacy.
- Local knowledge and facilitation of connections.
- Virtual reality expertise or connection to this expertise.
- Ko wai-matou - who we are - purakau o EONZ.
- Story-telling - positioning of value proposition.
- Sense of direction.

### Plausibility

Anticipated funding pressures make this scenario slightly more likely than not.



## Scenario B: Team building

Changes in climate remain manageable, but it's recognised that investing in outdoor programmes provides real benefits for social resilience and cohesion for future challenges.

### Key Implications

- Funding directed at improving inclusion and equity.
- Outdoor education recognised as community cohesion builder.
- Heightened demand for evidence of community capability ROI.

### Biggest Opportunity/Risk

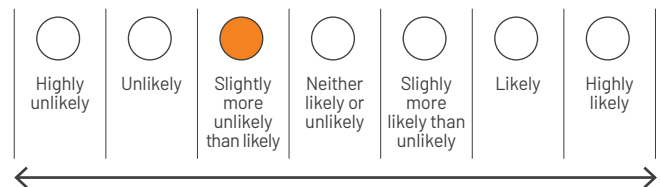
- Extend services to capture a broader customer base.
- Research and development – authentic evidence and data to show value and impact.
- Capture and share learnings from innovation.
- Redesign processes from eurocentric to matauanga/ Kaupapa Māori – inclusive of different narratives and models.
- Capacity development of hapu and iwi.
- New programme development – integrated into community.
- Ability to build workforce through engaging a range of people – where does knowledge lie?
- Tapping into broadening sense of knowledge – empowering connect with mana whenua.
- Barrier free access for all – valued in schools/increased equity.
- High demand – how to grow capability/capacity to match?
- Failure to move away from right and wrong knowledge to recognising multiple knowledges.
- Data sovereignty/mana motukake.
- Social isolation – how create connection and sense of community.
- How to meet measurement requirements?
- Having appropriate people to navigate these spaces.

### Necessary Capabilities

- Ability to capture, package, and share learning.
- Evidence capture to demonstrate impact.
- Strong story-telling e.g. Reprioritizing the human connection
- Innovative mindset – programme delivery/development.
- Nimble and responsive

### Plausibility

Viewed as least likely scenario given pessimism about both available funding and the management of climate events.



## Scenario C: Paddling upstream

The environment is unpredictable, and programmes are increasingly uncertain. Those with resources still seek outdoor education, but demand risk accountability.

### Key Implications

- Decline in delivery and demand for traditional outdoor experiences give disruptions and increased liabilities.
- Increased inequity of access as only wealthy can afford.
- Virtual experiences on rise as replacement as less risky and costly.
- Outdoor education deprioritised by schools and society.

### Biggest Opportunity/Risk

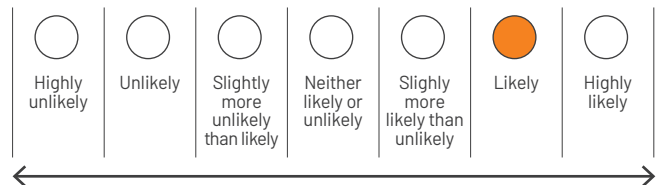
- Embrace virtual reality experiences as bridge to real experience.
- Connect to other learning/challenges – e.g. climate science; Te o Māori
- Focus on outdoor experiences that have less risk.
- Focus only on those that can afford to participate.
- Lurching too far from reason for being.
- Willingness and ability to adapt mindsets to different purpose.
- Workforce availability/capability.
- Swimming against tide of societal/government risk adversity that has spread to students.

### Necessary Capabilities

- Leadership – direction setting.
- Advocacy and story-telling – to sell a different path or change minds of government/society.
- Strategic relationships e.g., ACC
- Influencing funding sources – to support improved access to outdoor experiences.
- Risk management.

### Plausibility

Probably the least preferred but viewed as most likely of scenarios. Signs of society more strongly evolving to this scenario.



## Scenario D: Limited adventure education

Regular climate events reinforce the need for social investment, though typically closer to community centres. The risk for many to access remote spaces has become untenable.

### Key Implications

- Community challenges has led to emphasis on social development and cohesion, with outdoor education key part of mix.
- Technology helping keep people safe, overriding privacy concerns.
- Outdoor experiences closer to home.

### Biggest Opportunity/Risk

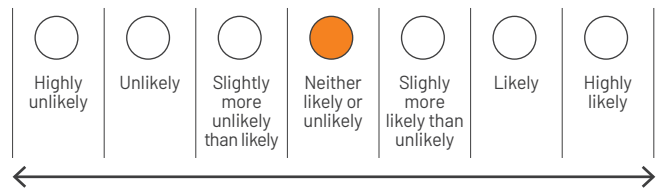
- Strong demand for outdoor education but with greater lens of keeping people safe and on survival skills.
- Ability to form strong community and cross organisational connections.
- Position outdoor education as part of response to climate crisis.
- Shift in focus from broad benefits of being outdoors to narrow survival skill focus.
- Variable access to technology results in ongoing inequities.
- Low risk tolerance and corresponding high health and safety demands unattractive for some providers, staff and volunteers.

### Necessary Capabilities

- Risk management.
- Local knowledge, connections.
- Relationship building.
- Technology capability or relationships with tech. capable
- Advocacy - risk tolerance education

### Plausibility

Increased climate disruptions viewed as likely; but increased available investment less so.



## Key capabilities

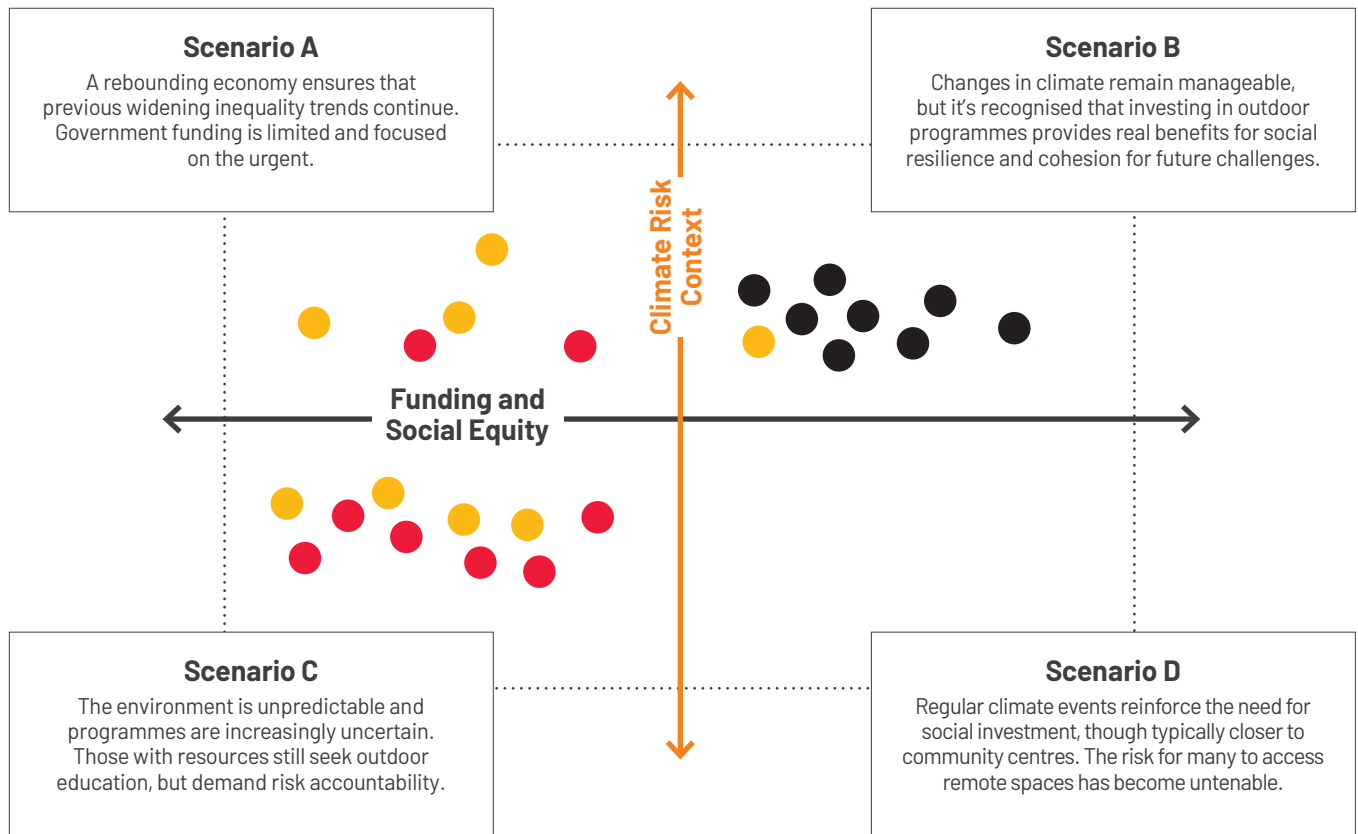
Each scenario will bring different opportunities and challenges, but there are a common set of capabilities that EONZ needs to help it respond better to any of the scenarios.

The follow capabilities were common across all or most scenarios. They help EONZ think about the capabilities it might need to develop.

<b>Local connections and influence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent does EONZ understand its communities today?</li> <li>How might it better connect with School boards and marae?</li> <li>What information does it need to keep this capability current as futures unfold?</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where can EONZ build further capability in terms of relationship management?</li> <li>What are the critical strategic relationships?</li> </ul>
<b>Funding influence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How might EONZ influence funding distribution?</li> <li>How can it build/strengthen funder relationships?</li> </ul>
<b>Direction setting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does EONZ's current direction align with each scenario?</li> <li>Is the purpose and vision of EONZ clear, and agreed?</li> </ul>
<b>Story telling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is EONZ's current narrative, and how might this need to adapt as the future unfolds?</li> <li>What is the story others would tell about it? Are the two stories aligned?</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge share</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can EONZ access and disseminate timely intelligence?</li> </ul>
<b>Te Ao Māori</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does EONZ effectively engage with Māori?</li> <li>How might Te Ao Māori be better reflected throughout EONZ?</li> </ul>
<b>Understanding systems and leverage points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can EONZ develop its understanding of the system leverage points for change?</li> <li>Where might it best use its finite capacity?</li> </ul>
<b>Virtual participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where does EONZ currently stand in relation to virtual participation?</li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What technology expertise does EONZ need?</li> <li>Who might it partner with to obtain this expertise?</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptable/Agile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which of the scenarios potentially represents the greatest change and what data points can EONZ use to heighten its anticipation and agility?</li> <li>How does this align with entrenched practice?</li> </ul>
<b>Risk management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What more can EONZ do to assist the sector prepare and respond to risk?</li> </ul>
<b>Measurement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does EONZ measure its impact?</li> </ul>

## Scenario outlook

Participants identified the most preferred scenario (black), the scenario most reflected in the present (yellow), and what they believe to be the most likely future (red).



The scenario outlook exercise is qualitative and biased by the group perspective but is a useful mirror for reflection.

- There is a reasonable spread of views that the present is reflected across three different scenarios. This highlights that perceptions of the current context within the group are not clear-cut and reflect significant levels of ambiguity. This is healthy as it implies a spread of perspectives that can be explored with ongoing critique of assumptions.
- The highly aligned preferred future is reflective of the participants values but is identified as the least plausible scenario. This raises the question to what extent current strategy is based on this most hopeful state?
- There is a split of views on where the future context lies. This recognises the uncertainty about the degree to which climate change risks will be manageable. This emphasises the need to consider all scenarios when making strategic decisions and should prompt greater exploration of reference points / data that validate the emergence (or otherwise) of the scenarios. No participants foresee a future of heightened funding directed at improving social equity. This is perhaps coloured by the signals present today (which of course may change).

The scenarios provide a link between the developing New Zealand environment and the strategic conversation within EONZ. Having reflected upon them, and the strategic questions they prompt, it is useful to consider what early indicators point to their emergence.

## Summary of Action Areas for EONZ

The scenarios highlighted several key action areas EONZ might consider when reflecting on its strategic planning. When prioritising / developing the plans, it is worth reflecting their potential to have the greatest impact across multiple futures, noting EONZ will not have the capacity to adopt all actions.

### Mitigate Challenges

- Agility – reflect how greater agility/ flexibility can be built into EONZ's business model to enable faster response to change. Be comfortable adjusting strategy ongoing, not just at strategy completion points.
- Timely distribution of knowledge – understanding what is happening around it, including the motivations and influences of being active outdoors, and provide timely knowledge, insights and implications to the sector. This can be a combination of stories and evidence. Establish EONZ as a learning hub for outdoor education.
- Build strategic relationships – identify and build key strategic relationships where there is mutual benefit.
- Advocate for policies across the system – this is a meaningful way to influence the system, and through it, behaviour change.
- Challenge assumptions – openly explore the assumptions, practices, systems, and mindsets that may be holding the sector back.
- Direction – provide leadership and education on risk mitigation to address fear arising from increased weather disruptions.

### Capitalise on Opportunity

- Aligned narrative – develop a narrative that is aligned with EONZ's vision, reason for being and future aspirations. Reflect the growing importance of social cohesion, wellbeing and Te Ao Māori in the narrative.
- Enhance profile – lift EONZ's profile through advocating for change and positioning itself as the go to leader and advocate for outdoor education.
- Facilitate connections – be the bridge connecting the education and sport and recreation sectors and builder of local networks, notably school boards and marae.
- Embrace technology – provide guidance to the sector on virtual and augmented reality but preserve the critical importance of human connectivity. Explore AI opportunities connected to risk management and data analysis.
- Continue working in partnership with Māori – There is significant momentum across New Zealand toward understanding and connecting with Te Tiriti o Waitangi Te o Māori. EONZ can continue to lead in its approach to partnering with Māori. This might include influencing governance models, establishing direct relationships with iwi, giving effect to a for Māori by Māori approach, and continuing to strengthen cultural competency.
- Environmental champion – position itself as a champion of environmental sustainability, aligning itself with the building momentum across society and reinforcing its social license and commitment to Te Ao Māori. This would build its profile and relevancy within the education and sport and recreation sectors and encourage greater engagement in the outdoors.





## Ongoing futures focus for EONZ board

This report provides a framework and some initial futures thinking that EONZ can build from. Most immediately, the report can inform EONZ's strengthen and adapt proposal for Sport NZ. Beyond that, it can help EONZ to develop better strategy through understanding the longer-term issues or challenges shaping its future.

### Alternative futures

EONZ can use the alternative futures with a wider audience to build on the implications, opportunities and challenges identified through this process. This will also assist with promoting greater engagement within the outdoors community in strategic thinking processes.

Alternatively, EONZ could craft different scenarios to extend its thinking beyond the assumed future and generate new insights and a more resilient strategy.

### Ongoing Assumptions

The process of evaluating the future strategic context is ongoing. Regularly surfacing and non-judgementally assessing underpinning assumptions is a critical element of this. This is an exercise the EONZ could usefully do at least annually.

The Sport NZ Board monitors sport and recreation assumptions on a six-monthly basis.

### Metrics to Track

Tracking the changing EONZ's operating context is an ongoing task to assess whether the anticipated challenges and opportunities are more or less likely to eventuate. Given the nature of the scenarios explored, and the deep levels of uncertainties they represent, the EONZ team may consider a limited set of metrics that provide pointers to what the future may hold.

The Sport NZ Board tracks factors that may disrupt sport and recreation every three months.



## Appendix 1: How Outdoor education is thinking about future

### What would you identify as the critical issue for your organisation in the next 5-10 years?

- Integrating Te Ao Māori
- Relevance - is our focus in the right place? Who do we exist to support? Are we politically neutral? Who are we influenced by?
- Being relevant across Aotearoa
- Understanding what "Outdoor education" might be from a tāngata whenua perspective compared to the current non - Māori approach to the outdoors
- By using Māori words does not mean alignment philosophically - How to be authentic in this space
- How to uphold the position of tāngata whenua and mana whenua in each rohe
- Adapting to a Tiriti-based practice for the organisation - incorporating Te Ao Māori and Te Reo Māori into all levels of the organisation, re-considering partnerships, building a collaborative kaupapa, engaging with outdoor educators and providers who demonstrate strong use of mātauranga and tikanga Māori.
- I'm sure there is a common link between these - perhaps equity - but these are my top three critical issues (couldn't decide on one!)....responding/adapting to climate change, responding to and supporting kaiako and ākonga wellbeing, embedding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and mātauranga Māori into our society/education system.
- How to fund the work we need to do to support mātauranga Māori and curriculum change.
- Climate Change Events - Rising Costs of EOTC - transport, accessibility in and around local areas, pressure from government regarding reading, writing and arithmetic! Accessibility to funding
- From a Māori perspective - making sure that Māori are not affected by the system, and that the system does not at any way, exclude, derail, or reposition the quality and mana of Te Ao Māori. EONZ must understand the depth, meaning and undecipherable "wairua" of Te Ao Māori if they hope to build a sustainable relationship with Māori. The "understanding", knowledge and "belonging" of our world, is not "lip service", it is a way of life, it is who we are, it is a connection on a celestial and wairua level.

### If things go well for your organisation what would you expect to see in 5-10 years?

- Increased capacity and capability in NZ teachers to deliver quality EOTC safely. Increased students participation across all schools.
- EONZ will have strong relationships with Iwi across ngā motu; EONZ will provide quality inclusive and culturally responsive professional learning and development to educators outside the classroom; EONZ governance, employment and delivery structures will be representative of Māori, Pākehā and others
- A significant number of schools, kura, teachers and kaiako knowing about EONZ and engaging in our mahi (through use of resources, PLD etc.). That we are in a flourishing and resilient position - we are adaptive, future-focussed, and reflect the needs of our schools, rangatahi/tamariki and educators. Our organisational culture and practices fully reflect the intent, principles and values of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We have a diverse board and group contractors/ staff.
- Highly engaged teachers, using EONZ resources and professional learning and development to support their use of EOTC. Outdoor Education as a subject in schools.
- EOTC learning opportunities embedded in school teaching and learning practices, understanding and implementation of Te Tiriti partnerships in action in local communities.
- An influx of rangatahi participating from all walks of life.

## What are the factors holding you back from achieving success?

- Strategy isn't clear
- We need to build relationships with iwi across the motu - develop lasting connections that serve educators in whatever area they are operating in. We need to do some work on inclusivity in Outdoor Education/ EOTC - which sits well alongside revisioning school camps and our matauranga maori focus.
- Organisational development (we are on that journey but in the early stages), time, access to diverse educators keen to work for us, diverse relationships (we need to grow our relationships with kura and kaiako Māori/ākonga Māori, existing board/staff capacity (to some extent)
- Schools knowledge of EONZ and seeing value in engaging
- Competition with multi-initiatives happening in education, small base of facilitators. Communicating with the right people and getting past the gate keepers. Pressure on schools - academically

## If things went wrong for your organisation in the next 5-10 years, what has occurred and what would you most worry about?

- Continuing decline of schools prepared to take their students in to the outdoors and growth of students who have no desire or connection to the outdoors.
- Not sure of the context to this question, however, similar to my first answer there is a risk that EONZ will continue colonising spaces that should be held by tāngata wheuna and their philosophies.
- EONZ governance and capacity is highly dependent on people - with specific experience, skills and connections, drawn from a relatively small number of practitioners. We are heavily reliant on Fiona in her role as CE - her connections and experience in the sector are almost peerless. Board membership is voluntary and relies on individuals finding time and motivation to put themselves forward for election. Our safety management advice needs to remain up to date and leading edge.
- That we no longer exist/operate! That we have become redundant/obsolete - either through our own failings, or because EOTC/outdoor learning is no longer valued/prioritised by schools, or it has become too hard to deliver.
- We would have lost the funding we need to do the work. Lack of consistent safe practices across schools.
- Loss of funding streams, loss of great people that are integral to organization - people not willing to volunteer. Lack of clear vision and role
- Lip service and the system!!



## Looking back 10-20 years, what are the key factors that have shaped your organisation to be in its current position?

- Small sector where everyone knows each other. Organisation governed by and contract work carried out by passionate members who believe in the cause.
- Sustained passion by a small few, with growing competence as contracts for services has expanded. EONZ at present has a strong funding base, but this has taken time to develop. The Board has been very hands-on to this point, but as the organisation grows and develops, the governance role of guiding the organisation rather than running it is becoming more realisable. Good relationships with partners and stakeholders continues to be a key, and ensuring EONZ is a part of the wider conversation about outdoor activity, participation and education. EONZ needs to be in the room, and recognised for the perspective and expertise the organisation brings.
- Incredible people working/volunteering for EONZ! Their vision, hard work, perseverance, innovation, knowledge and skill etc. The development/on-going prioritising of critical relationships (such as with MoE, SportNZ), and funding! Our ability to respond to the changing needs of the education sector.
- People and relationships
- Passionate people, strong leadership
- Experience

## Looking forward, what do you see as the priority actions your organisation should carry out now?

- Should be influencing MOE, Sport NZ, DHB, teacher training institutions and others through the values proposition of OE to ensure it is given priority and outcomes can be clearly understood and aligned to the outcomes of central government.
- Respond to the Ara report and address finding in regard to EONZ PLD.
- Separation of governance and operations.
- Understanding why they have not had an authentic connection with Te Ao Māori (In my opinion, this is due to a system that is still a non - indigenous approach to the outdoors and what is defined as education)
- Continue to focus on our Te Tiriti engagement. EONZ needs to have a bicultural composition, with Māori representatives on the board, operating PLD programmes and as participating members.
- EONZ also needs to look towards wider inclusivity issues, both as an organisation and in terms of PLD that is offered to members.
- EONZ continues to fly under the radar for the work it does, and better recognition of the organisation would enable a greater involvement in negotiating key issues.
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi mahi (embedding into all aspects of the organisation)
- Refresh/reaffirming of strategic priorities/plan and developing coherent systems/processes that support us to carry out our core mahi (supporting schools/teachers to deliver quality, safe and fun EOTC).
- Continuing to identify (and forward-think) the needs of the sector and respond appropriately.
- Look at our communications and promotion of our work.
- Embedding Te Tiriti partnerships. Developing stronger understanding of support, resources, capability across the educative community
- Making sure they do things correctly, following the necessary lines of communication and authenticity.

## Appendix 2: Scenarios

### Scenario A

- The New Zealand economy has been buffeted by a series of shocks in the last few years that continues to pressure government finances. Accordingly, this limited funding focuses on 'front-line' community support services that maintain resilience to ongoing climate challenges, even though these are at the lower end of earlier predictions.
- Despite the significant political debate, wealth redistribution remains relatively modest, and those with assets remain protected from economic extremes. Unfortunately, this has resulted in a growing inequality gap for those on limited incomes. This wealth disparity primarily impacts the expanding elderly population and younger generations of Māori and Pasifika.
- The outdoor education sector has seen a rise in obstacles for those with limited access to resources. However, deliverers are attempting to find solutions by offering customised programmes that cater to the specific needs of various communities. Some have built on partnerships with local businesses and organisations previously not involved in outdoor education, resulting in innovative initiatives.
- There's also innovation in the use of technologies to bring the outdoors into the indoors as virtual reality provides ever more realistic experiences. While the best technologies are beyond the reach of most, access to such platforms in the community is proving useful as a gateway to people's perceptions and desire to access the real thing.
- Though climate impacts are less intense than previously envisaged, overall risk management is being challenged through a combination of new sector participants and limited funding. Again though, technology is providing support through the evolving platforms that have continued to maintain New Zealand's edge at the forefront of meteorological forecasting. The ability to pinpoint weather events and make informed decisions about when and where to conduct outdoor activities continues to advance. For example, AI-driven algorithms are used to predict potential extreme events, allowing organizers to reschedule or relocate outdoor activities to safer areas. This is a vital new capability given the traditionally unpredictable, and localised, effects of New Zealand weather patterns.

### Scenario B

- As COVID recedes, the positives and negatives of the 'team of five million' approach have become more evident. The pandemic era's sense of solidarity has been re-generated to underpin a successful climate response that has avoided the very worst outcomes. There's been a recognition this time around, though, that some felt left out of that earlier team, and social investment is now a priority to ensure inclusion and improve equity.
- Outdoor education has benefitted from this with a recognition of its ability to bring individuals together and promote community cohesion. Funding expansion has brought many challenges to the sector, though, with the need to innovate programmes to reach participants with diverse needs and interests. There is also the ongoing challenge of identifying social return on investment, and the sector has had to innovate to support organisations to demonstrate the value of their offerings.
- Given the broad recognition of the sector's benefit however, there is now a provision of funding to invest in research and development, similar to previous years' Deep South Challenge initiatives. As a result, some significant research has been conducted on the effectiveness of outdoor education programmes to promote social cohesion and ensure ongoing climate resilience.
- Given the broader social development context, there is a keen interest in investment opportunities for programmes integrated within a community context that enable participants to use the experience and skills acquired to create new value. The Government's aim is for investment that creates 'compounding social interest' to develop and enhance community capacity. This is a source of fierce political debate, given the term is not as easy to measure as its commonly understood financial equivalent.
- One aspect that has changed markedly in this context is the increasingly aged population, particularly in rural New Zealand. It has created a complex tension between increased demand against a decline in volunteer support. In addition, the need to address the social isolation and health issues that are evident in the elderly population has led to a broader range of programmes of support. These ongoing demographic changes continue to expand and challenge the definition of 'outdoor education'.

## Scenario C

- The Paris Accord now seems a distant and irrelevant memory in a World that has singularly failed to tackle the growing climate crisis. New Zealand's experience is increasingly an environment of climate 'weirding' where significant, unpredictable weather events are the norm.
- The need to address the deepening climate crisis is stretching the Government's coffers to the extreme, particularly given the economic fallout from a global recession driven by significant climate-related supply-chain disruptions—a vicious loop.
- With some Kiwi communities continuing to do well despite the economic downturn, demand for outdoor education remains, though its provision has become more challenging. Anticipating the risks associated with outdoor activity is exceptionally tough, and many operators need help to stay viable as programmes are postponed, relocated, or cancelled. The liabilities associated with running programmes have also increased exponentially, and traditional support structures (e.g. insurance) are less readily available.
- For many, both operators and communities, this is all too hard. However, with virtual reality technologies now becoming cheap and ubiquitous, eSports paved the way for innovative new experiences that can be conducted relatively risk-free.
- Several schools, for example, have pooled resources to invest in a VR adventure-scape that enables students to collaborate in physical 'outdoor' exercises while remaining in the controlled environment of the gym. Such activities have now developed into cross-school competitions that have removed the need to travel. These programmes have de-risked such activities for resource-pressed schools and lowered costs for economically-stretched households.
- Unfortunately, this has increased the inequality of outdoor access across society. This gap is compounded by the declining number of skilled staff and volunteers who can manage and balance the increasing risk present in outdoor activity with the demands of the wealthier sector of the population who can afford to pay.

## Scenario D

- Climate change has become a harsh reality, and the Government well-being budget heavily emphasises social investment to underpin the resilience of frequently disrupted communities. The need is often reactive, with communities coming together after events to repair the damage done or pre-emptive projects to reduce risk. These initiatives focus on physical infrastructure, the restoration and support for community social capital, and the enhancement of environmental resilience.
- The increasing scale of community challenges has led many organisations to expand their thinking to embrace critical roles supporting social development and cohesion. These often grew from previous sustainability programmes but have, in many cases, been significantly extended to become a fundamental part of sustaining their communities. Civil Defence, previously a crisis-response activity, is now an ongoing concern and focus for community engagement. As a result, there is a high level of inter-organisational cooperation in many areas, often based around local marae or centres operating similar models. These centres offer a range of programmes and services, from disaster preparedness training to sustainable agriculture and renewable energy workshops. In addition, they provide a space for community members to come together and share their skills, insights, and ideas; outdoor education programmes form a fundamental component of this mix.
- Keeping communities and individuals healthy and connected is a crucial concern for all in this environment, and various technologies are used to achieve this. Despite ongoing privacy and tracking concerns, wearable technologies linked to satellite systems are now routinely worn and, as one headline recently put it, better safe than paranoid. Drones are also routinely used to ferry supplies around the country from local distribution hubs. Consequently, people have come to rely on these technologies as vital tools to reduce much of the risk caused by climate disruptions, even in more urban environments where this had not been a past concern.
- Underpinning all this is enhanced climate monitoring technology, such as weather sensors or air quality monitors, that is a vital monitor of an outdoor environment of increasing hazards. These technologies can mostly be relied upon to keep people out of harm's way. Still, the increasing sophistication of cyber-attacks is causing considerable concern that the system overall is vulnerable. This is particularly true given the lack of skilled staff to backfill roles when the automated world goes offline.



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