

# 3. PROMOTE AND CELEBRATE

The NZOC was proud to celebrate athletes and inspire pride and excellence in New Zealanders in the build-up to and during the Paris 2024 and Gangwon 2024 Games.

The ‘Fern is All of Us’ campaign began in July 2023 by lighting up Auckland’s Sky Tower in the colours of the French flag – red, white and blue. From there, the year-long campaign weaved together billboard campaigns, television commercials, athlete selections, workshops, athlete stories, te ao Māori, partner content, NSO events and milestones, culminating in New Zealand’s involvement at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

The communications and digital strategies ran across multiple streams, including non-paid media, digital channels and stakeholder engagement. These efforts collectively highlighted the stories of our nation’s proud, diverse and passionate athletes and delivered on the NZOC’s mission to inspire pride and excellence in all New Zealanders.



## Brand Campaign

In Māori culture, te ponga, the fern, has guided us on countless journeys, illuminating the path for those to follow and representing our connection to home. It has undoubtedly been a unifier for not only our ancestors, but also for all New Zealanders, and, most importantly, the New Zealand Team.

Throughout the year leading into, and during, the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, the New Zealand Team proudly shared the significance, legacy and mana of our fern.

Developed and produced by the team’s athletes in part, the campaign was amplified through various media, including billboards, television commercials, events, digital platforms, New Zealand House, team uniform and Olympic Village decals, to name just a few.

The campaign featured a No. 1 hit song on the New Zealand Music Charts by athletes Max Brown and Ellesse Andrews with band TOI, the Fronds of the Fern artwork piece by Olympian Hannah Wilkinson, and a series documenting Stacey Waaka receiving her own fern tattoo and the meaning behind her fronds. The impact exceeded expectations, with engagement and coverage across channels enhancing the team’s visibility and connection with the public. Research showed that 86 per cent of New Zealanders felt proud of the team immediately after the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, reflecting the campaign’s success in fostering national pride and interest.

## Kantar 2024 Annual Brand Research Results

- 96% of New Zealanders interested in the Olympic Games are interested in following the New Zealand Team’s participation
- No. 1 team appeal against other New Zealand sports team brands
- 63% of New Zealanders are more likely to purchase from companies and brands who support the New Zealand Team (2% increase on 2023)

## Goldie’s Makeover and Relaunch

In the build-up to the Paris 2024 Games, we also relaunched the New Zealand Team’s beloved mascot Goldie. A digital Illustrator was used to refine his identity, which then became a full mascot suit.

Goldie’s main re-release to the public was via a digital competition to win a chance to wear his suit at the Paris 2024 Games. The competition had an overall Instagram reach of 663,106, engagement of 22,686 and overall TikTok views of 1,339,054.

Goldie attended over 20 events in the lead-up to the Games, as well as visiting the Olympic Village and becoming a regular at New Zealand House in Paris.

## Te Ponga Tattoo

The journey of Rugby Sevens athlete Stacey Waaka to immortalise her Olympic experience with a fern tattoo became a compelling narrative for the New Zealand Team. Collaborating with her preferred tattoo artist, Stacey’s story was captured through a moving TV commercial and a behind-the-scenes digital content series. Viewers witnessed the design process, the tattooing itself, and Stacey’s reflections on the fern’s deep personal meaning. The campaign achieved the highest brand recall of the year, amplified by \$123,734 of gifted airtime from Sky and prominent placement on JCDecaux billboards. Stacey’s story resonated widely, offering an emotional perspective on the pride and permanence of representing Aotearoa New Zealand on the world stage.



## Dynamic Digital Billboard Campaign

Through a partnership with JCDecaux, the New Zealand Team leveraged \$1 million worth of digital billboard placements from July 2023 to August 2024. More than 300 unique billboard designs featured campaign messaging, 3D animated ferns and live updates during Games time. Real-time medal wins and social media posts were broadcast via exclusive access to JCDecaux’s D4 system, delivering instant updates to billboards nationwide. The campaign achieved a net reach of 950,857 people and 20 million gross contacts. Every New Zealand Team sport was featured, creating a dynamic, live storytelling experience. By transforming billboards into interactive media, this campaign brought fans closer to the action, strengthening national pride and uniting audiences in real-time celebration.

## Fronds of the Fern – Hannah Wilkinson’s Artistic Tribute

Olympian and artist Hannah Wilkinson created Fronds of the Fern, a stunning piece of art representing the collective spirit of the New Zealand Team. Each frond of the fern depicted an athlete’s story, crafted after extensive research and 27 personal interviews. This athlete-driven art was unveiled online and displayed at New Zealand House in Paris, sparking widespread attention. The artwork embodies the campaign concept that ‘the fern is all of us’, offering a visual celebration of team unity, strength and identity. By having a former team member create this tribute, the New Zealand Team deepened its legacy, bringing athlete stories to life in a uniquely powerful way.





**Ain't Just Dreaming –  
The New Zealand Team's First Official Single**

The New Zealand Team's debut single, Ain't Just Dreaming, embodied passion, drive and strength. The track was co-written by cyclist Ellesse Andrews and kayaker Max Brown and was recorded and produced with band TOI. Released in February 2024, the song debuted in the Top 20 before climbing to No. 1 on the New Zealand Music Charts. Ain't Just Dreaming amassed 152,739 Spotify streams, 194,925 Instagram reach, and 214,125 video plays at the time of printing. The project not only inspired athletes but also connected with broader audiences, and continues to do so, with the Ain't Just Dreaming content series full of reflections on Paris currently being rolled out.

**100 Days to Paris 2024**

On 17 April the NZOC celebrated '100 Days to Go to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games'. The ceremony was led by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, as the New Zealand Team Olympic kākahu, Te Māhutonga, was formally passed from the Winter Olympic Team to the Summer Olympic Team.

Athletes from a range of Olympic sports including gymnastics, swimming, football, weightlifting, athletics and more, gathered on the water's edge of Auckland's Waitematā Harbour to celebrate the occasion alongside New Zealand's sports leaders.

All in attendance were asked to place a fern frond in a basket which was then placed in the sea. The silver fern is a symbol of Aotearoa New Zealand guiding our tipuna (ancestors) and was symbolically used to guide our Olympic team to Paris.



**Te Reo Māori ki Pari 2024**

The NZOC partnered with Rangiatā (Sky) and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) to create the first-ever bilingual sporting resource for an Olympic Games.

'Te Reo Māori ki Pari 2024' is the first Olympic Games glossary in Māori and English. Targeted at Paris 2024, it features more than 1,000 terms and phrases, across 30 Olympic Games sporting codes.

This resource contributed to a significant increase in the use of te reo Māori not only in Sky's broadcast coverage of the Paris Games, but across all New Zealand media. The terms are designed for beginner to advanced levels of te reo speakers and learners, from fans to support teams and athletes to broadcasters. The glossary is available to everyone for free and is used as a tool for the Olympic Values Education programmes run by the NZOC in schools across Aotearoa New Zealand.



**Media and Social Media**

The Paris 2024 Olympic Games generated a significant amount of positive media and social media coverage for the New Zealand Team.

For Paris 2024, the communications efforts shared the stories of the New Zealand Team with the public, celebrating our athletes and the Olympic Movement and inspiring New Zealanders.

The NZOC surpassed our targets for media impact and social media growth, stepping up to a new level from our successes in Tokyo and Birmingham. This included increased media coverage, more engagement on digital platforms and broader audience reach. The enhanced visibility and storytelling not only amplified the profiles of our athletes but also deepened the connection between the New Zealand public, our Team Manaaki and the Games.

The Paris 2024 Olympic Games generated a significant amount of media coverage, which exceeded the NZOC target as well as all previous Games' results.

The overall Games' Advertising Sales Rate (ASR) of Olympic coverage in New Zealand media was \$102 million – an increase of 39 per cent on the Tokyo ASR of \$73 million and almost double the Rio 2016 return of \$54 million in value.





Digital

The Paris 2024 campaign saw substantial growth in the NZ Team’s social media presence, with significant increases in followers, engagement and visibility across key platforms.

Channels featured a mixed-content approach including static imagery, video from Sky Sport, designed memes, Instagram reels, TikTok videos, illustrations and behind-the-scenes stories. Captured by a team of digital experts embedded in the Olympic Village and teams, together with Getty Images photography and stunning content from Sky Sport, the NZOC digital channels delivered a creative look at the experience of athletes.

Every athlete or team was featured during the Olympic Games build-up and Games time itself. Ensuring we didn’t just focus on the medallists, we told the stories of those who reached personal milestones or who were competing at their first Games. We were delighted to achieve this goal.

The NZOC was also pleased to increase digital activation for the NZOC alongside our partners, producing content for seven commercial partners for the Paris 2024 campaign. The joint content created impact and value for our commercial partners based on mutual benefit.

Key Results Highlights

- The total fan base across all social media platforms grew by 19%, reaching 807,410 followers by the end of the Games.
- On Facebook, followers increased to 358.7k, with a total reach of 5.9m, 79.5m impressions, and 7.3m engagements, marking a 14.7% improvement compared to Tokyo.
- Instagram followers rose to 149.0k, with impressions increasing by 106.1% compared to the Tokyo Games, and total engagements reaching 2.8m.
- TikTok saw notable growth, adding 50.0k followers to reach 231.7k, while video views increased by 72.0% from Tokyo, totalling 52.2m.

Website and App

The NZOC launched a new website and app for the Paris 2024 Games. The extra features added to the platforms (live blog and video shorts), as well as detailed and timely schedule/results, kept users returning for updates, contributing to a nine per cent increase in total sessions compared to Tokyo 2020.

Gangwon 2024

The Gangwon 2024 campaign was celebrated through digital and traditional media. Coverage of the New Zealand Team for Gangwon 2024 was strong, with 100 stories shared across New Zealand media platforms during the Games. The athletes were promoted through the NZOC’s social media channels also, with posts generating engagement of more than four million impressions. Sky New Zealand was the rights-holding broadcaster for the Games and screened a pop-up channel with 12 hours of daily coverage from the ‘international feed’.



Olympic Values in Education

Through our engaging schools programmes, we promote the Olympic values and celebrate the legacy of the Olympic Movement and New Zealand Teams. Olympic Ambassadors conducted a record-breaking 308 official visits around the country, the highest number since the programme’s inception in 2008. These visits inspired over 60,000 students through the impactful messages shared by the Olympic Ambassadors, with teachers commenting on the strength of the messaging around the Olympic values of friendship, respect and excellence and the ideas of resilience and persistence. Ambassadors travelled to regions that do not have local ambassadors and upon returning from the Paris Olympic Games, many of our Olympic Ambassadors visited schools in their home towns. Students reported that they found the visits both enjoyable and motivating (100 per cent), were more inspired to participate in sports (100 per cent) and were more aware of the importance of ‘not giving up’ (99.5 per cent). Similarly, teachers noted that the visits were relevant to their teaching and learning and they incorporated Olympic Values Education activities into their lessons either before or after the visits.

Along with school visits, NZOC Olympic Ambassadors completed sessions at student leadership days, Physical Activity Leaders (PALS) training and Future Leaders Hauora (health) Forums. Cross-curricular resources were developed for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games consisting of six modules – Getting to Know France; Finding Out About Paris and the Olympics; Olympic Sports; Environmental Sustainability at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games; Building the Legacy of the Games; and the Integrity of the Games – Values and Manaaki.

A Paris-related ‘Run a mini-Olympic Games’ resource enabled students to learn movement patterns required by Olympic athletes and adopt coaching roles, as well as having the opportunity to learn about the diverse range of sporting roles required to run a Games, including athletes, coaches, officials, photographers and journalists, event managers and promoters. A total of 87 per cent of primary and intermediate schools in New Zealand (a seven per cent increase on 2023) and 86 per cent of secondary schools in New Zealand (a 10 per cent increase on 2023) are registered to use Olympic Education resources available on the NZOC website.

An online quiz on all things Olympics and the New Zealand Team, ‘The NZ Team – Paris 2024 Olympic Games’, was played over 1200 times, involving more than 15,700 participants during the Games.

A total of 250 classes participated in My Virtual Mission for Paris 2024. The virtual route was just over 1500km around France, Greater Paris and the city of Paris, passing by many of the venues where the New Zealand Team competed. Milestone points along the way gave more details about the





New Zealand Team athletes and teams, as well as venues and famous landmarks in Paris. When classes reached a milestone, they also received a video message from one of the New Zealand Team athletes.

The Tour de Fern community cycling activation visited schools in Auckland, Cambridge, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch and Invercargill where the students were able to race down the virtual Avenue des Champs-Élysées against their classmates. The students learnt some fun facts about the Paris 2024 Olympic Games before hearing a presentation from an NZOC Olympic Ambassador.

The NZOC celebrated Olympic Day 2024 on Monday 24 June, at the ILT Stadium in Southland and the Velodrome in Invercargill, with this year’s theme, ‘Let’s Move’. The event brought together over 300 students from Southland Boys’ High School, filling both venues with excitement throughout the day. Year 7 and 8 students participated in activities such as sport climbing, the Interactive Multi Wall, touch tag, boxing and the Tour de Fern cycling activation.

The Education Commission is currently well-positioned, with its members collaborating effectively and offering valuable insights and guidance in the field of education. The primary, intermediate, secondary and tertiary sectors are all represented within the Commission from a school-focused perspective. Members consistently contribute not only to strategic planning but also by providing practical ideas and resource suggestions for schools.

We acknowledge the support of Olympic Solidarity, Sir Owen Glenn, Grassroots Trust and the New Zealand Community Trust (NZCT) through whom our NZOC Education programme and Olympic Ambassador visits are made possible.

“Max Brown was an absolute LEGEND! He was so inspiring for our students. We have had parents of five-year-olds telling us all about how their child came home talking about Max Brown and the challenges he had along the way to achieving his Olympic dream! A really great story, spoke well about resilience and the opportunities to take up as many sports as you can. Thank you so much for allowing us an opportunity to have him at our school.”

“Alicia Hoskin was an outstanding speaker, who had really thought about the age group she was engaging with. She really appealed to the students who have some athleticism and are active in sport, but she also made an impression on the others talking about the Olympic values, but also resilience, perseverance and determination – not just in sport, it can be anything you turn your mind to. Ngā mihi ki a koutou. Thank you for sending us an Olympic Ambassador. Having a home town gal was the icing on the cake.”

**50th Anniversary of Christchurch 1974 Commonwealth Games**

The NZOC hosted a celebratory 50th Anniversary of the Christchurch 1974 Commonwealth Games dinner and reunion function for team members in Christchurch in 2024. Guests were able to reunite, reminisce and celebrate what was an iconic sporting event for New Zealand. Speakers included former Commonwealth athletes, NZOC President Liz Dawson and CGF CEO Katie Sadleir.

Known as the ‘Friendly Games’, the 1974 Commonwealth Games took place in Christchurch from 24 January to 2 February. The iconic Queen Elizabeth II Stadium was host to the Opening Ceremony where Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, declared the Games open.

The New Zealand Team’s flagbearer at the opening ceremony was Warwick Nicholl, who led the New Zealand Team into the stadium in front of 35,000 spectators.

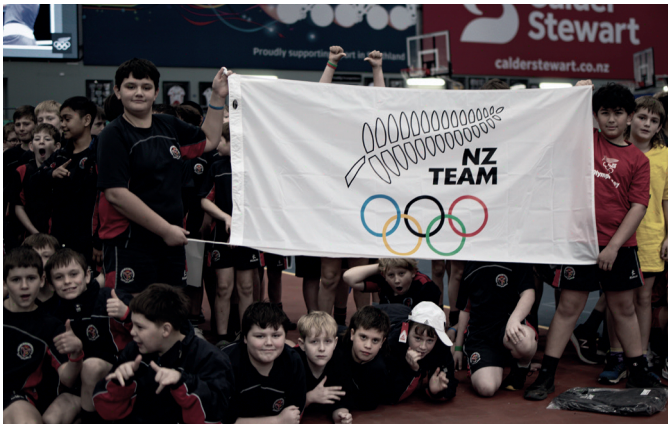
The New Zealand Team went on to finish an incredible 4th on the medal table, winning a total of 35 medals (9 gold, 8 silver and 18 bronze).

**Tour de Fern – Sprint for the Fern**

Our community activation, Tour de Fern – Sprint for the Fern, commenced in May 2024 and ran for seven weeks across New Zealand. The activation delivered on its purpose to raise and increase awareness about the New Zealand Team in the build-up to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The NZOC designed and developed an interactive cycling challenge involving a 300m virtual sprint along the Avenue des Champs-Élysées.

The activation visited six New Zealand cities and six New Zealand schools, along with nine partner events. A total of 2,000 riders participated in the activation with hundreds more who viewed others participating. This public activation wrapped up in Invercargill, where Olympic Day took place the next day at the Velodrome.

Ten presenting partners supported Tour de Fern – Sprint for the Fern. These included: Allianz, Barfoot & Thompson, Beef + Lamb New Zealand, Cadbury, Flex Fitness, Jennian Homes, Manuka Doctor, Technogym, Toyota, and HPSNZ.





**New Zealand House, Paris**

New Zealand House in Paris, delivered across 19 days of competition at the Marriott Champs-Élysées, surpassed our expectations on visitor numbers by double (20,000) and was a popular destination for New Zealand media. New Zealand House supported our hosting and hospitality deliverables, enabled activity with government agencies and partner activations, and celebrated our New Zealand Team across multiple events including the Opening Ceremony Flagbearer Announcement, medal celebration events and end-of-sport celebrations.

The House was open to all visitors at no charge during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The event space featured two outdoor areas (a terrace and a courtyard) at the Marriott Champs-Élysées hotel and had multiple viewing zones (five) allowing the 12 dedicated Sky Olympic channels to display the Sky NZ broadcast.

It was a showcase of our New Zealand Team, our culture, our partners and the Olympic Movement through a relaxing and welcoming environment which was thoughtfully branded.

New Zealand House provided an environment for New Zealand media to generate news stories and coverage of the team and a safe place for New Zealand Team members to meet with their friends and family prior, during and post competition. The House offered content collection and activation opportunities for the New Zealand Team and partners.



On-site ticketing, accommodation and travel services to the Games for partners of the New Zealand Team and their guests were available, as well as a professional New Zealand Team merchandise store, supported by Peak.

A showcase of New Zealand food and beverage included Villa Maria wines, Alliance Group lamb/beef/venison, a range of beer and bar infrastructure with AB InBev, Manuka Doctor honey, and Whisky from the NZ Whisky Collection.

The presence of Whāngārā Mai Tawhiti at New Zealand House was made possible through funding support from Te Matatini and the Cultural Diplomacy Fund – supported by MFAT. Whāngārā Mai Tawhiti’s presence was the most impactful development of our New Zealand House programme and ensured guests enjoyed a uniquely New Zealand cultural experience.

What we achieved:

- 20,000 visitors from all over the world, with a greater-than-expected attendance from internationals, particularly the USA. A 60:40 split was determined (New Zealanders to internationals)
- 70 events, including the Blessing of New Zealand House, Opening and Closing Ceremony BBQs, the New Zealand Team’s Flagbearer Announcement, medal celebrations, end-of-sport celebrations, Ministerial events, government official events, happy hours, partner events, the NZ France Association held an event within our space, and we hosted events with and for our Māori King, New Zealand Embassy in France, NOC, NSOs, IOC, On Location and Paris 2024 representatives



- 10 NSO and/or sport family groups used New Zealand House as their hosting venue
- High in-house media interest with Sky, TVNZ, Radio NZ, Stuff, Three News, The New Zealand Herald and Newstalk ZB, visiting daily
- In addition to our own delivery team, we operated with a team of 75 volunteers from all over the world
- Connected our athletes with the public through medal celebration events and provided the opportunity for fans to take photographs with athletes after formalities
- Positive feedback from all sports who attended New Zealand House
- Strong relationships with key suppliers who we will continue to work with at future Games
- Sold out on key merchandise in the retail store
- Lasting memories with a dedicated team from the NZOC and the staff at the Marriott Hotel

During the Games, the home-based events team delivered the New Zealand version of the Opening Ceremony Flagbearer Announcement, sharing in the activity held in Paris just hours earlier. Media stand-ups and Welcome Home moments were delivered at Auckland International Airport for the initial arrival of athletes after the Closing Ceremony.

**The New Zealand Olympic Gala 2024**

The New Zealand Olympic Gala 2024, held in association with Paralympics New Zealand and supported by Allianz New Zealand, was celebrated on Thursday 21 November at the Viaduct Events Centre in Auckland.

Celebrations were enjoyed with an audience of 520 guests including NZOC key commercial partners, stakeholders, funders, staff, athletes and members of our NSOs. Also in attendance were Paralympic New Zealand Board members, commercial partners and athletes.

Presented by MC Frankie Stevens, guests enjoyed a three-course, sit-down meal and fine wine. Entertainment included Whāngārā Mai Tawhiti, three athlete panels and music from New Zealand band TOI. The evening reflected on the success and superb moments at the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, along with a look to the future with Milano Cortina 2026, Glasgow 2026 and Los Angeles 2028 on the horizon.

