U18 North Island vs South Island

2025 Review Summary

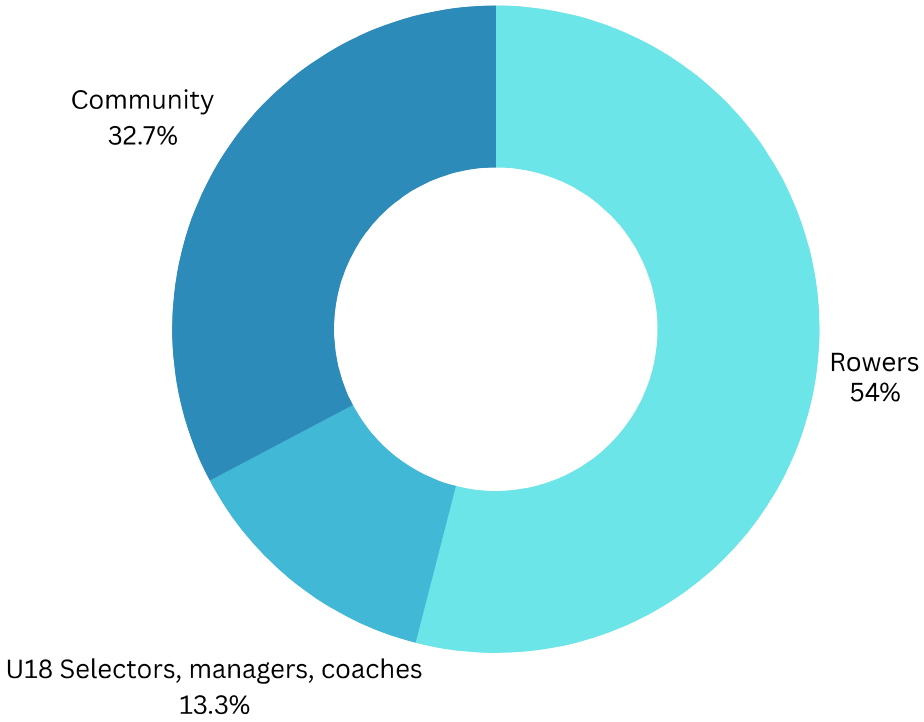
Review findings

These findings are taken from the following reviews

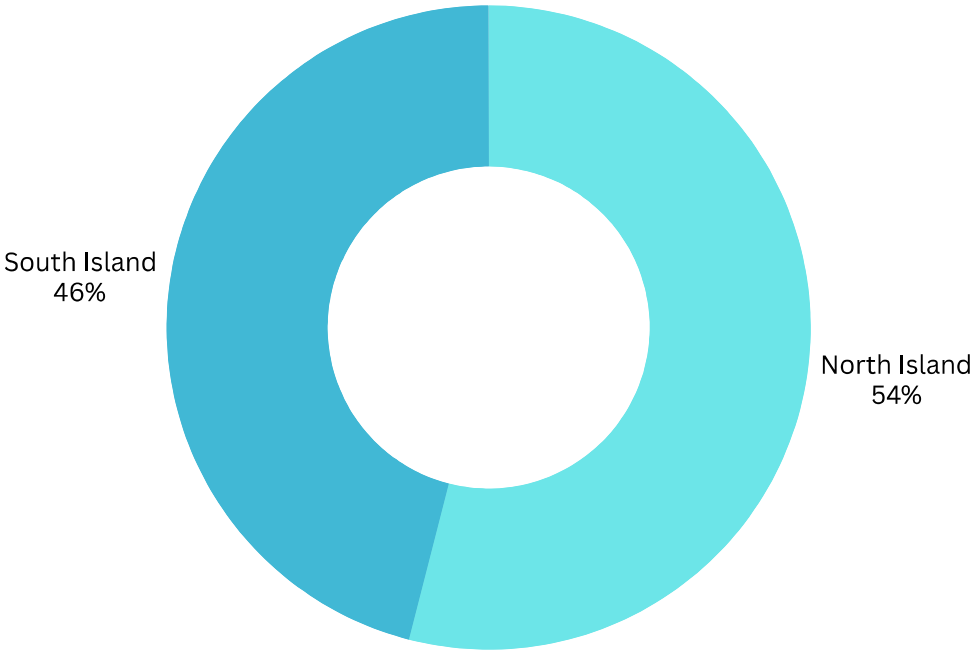
- U18 athlete, coaches, managers and selector reviews - 2024 and 2025,
- Community review in 2025

Responses:

Who responded

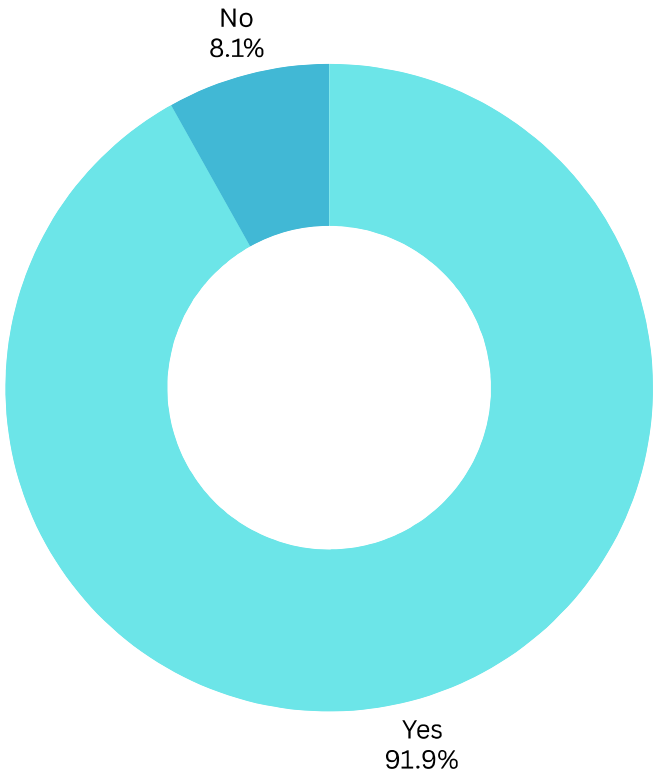


From where

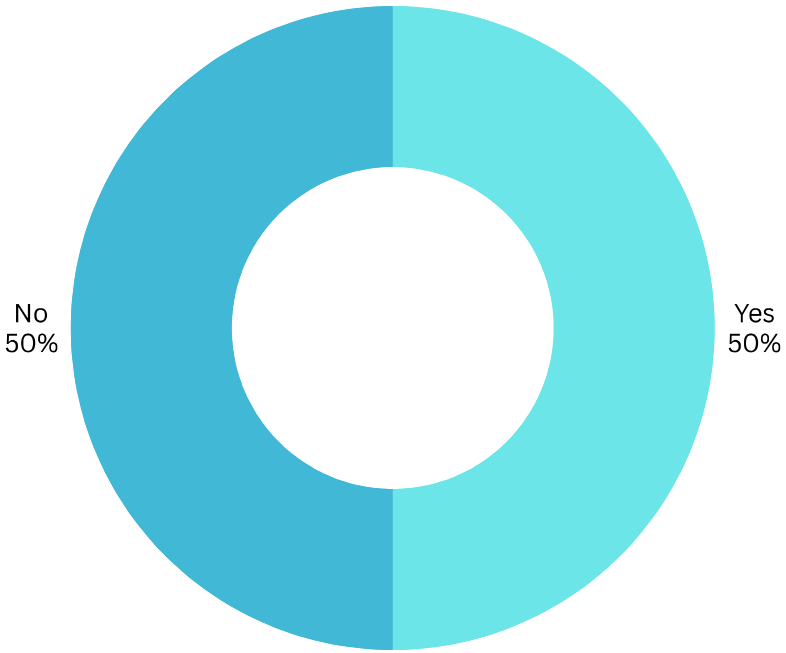


Responses:

Is the timing of the event right?

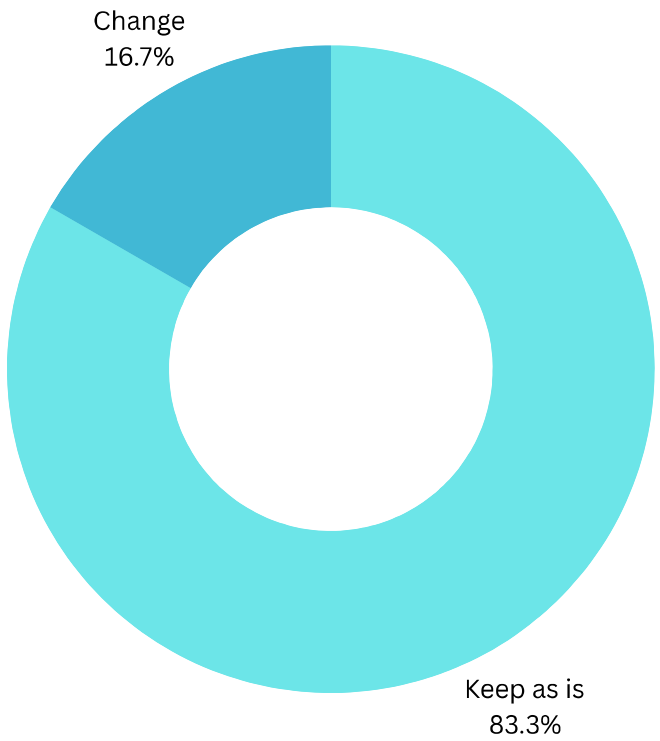


Should schools provide boats if their rowers are selected?



Responses:

Should the format of 8+/4+/2- and 4x+/2x/1x remain?



Suggestions included:

- Select two quads
- 8+ / 4+s and 4x+ / 2x only
- Race small boats twice

Considerations:

- Access to 2-s and 1xs is a challenge so RNZ would consider removing them and racing 8+/4+s and 4x+/2xs only
- RNZ will look into racing small boats twice

Key themes - Positives:

U18s is a highly regarded and enjoyable programme with the following consistent positive elements across all sectors of the reviews:

- Supportive Introduction to HP Systems
- Exposure to Higher-Level Competition
- Exposure to a trial process
- Athlete Growth and Motivation
- Coaching Variety and Development
- Networking and Peer Connection
- Stepping Stone in the Pathway

Key themes - Changes:

Very few themes for change but some comments that crop up across the reviews include:

From the rowers involved:

- Majority say they wouldn’t change anything and those that do mention - Food, weather, travel, more time training

Coaches, managers and selectors involved:

- Role clarity within the team, alternate venues, access to equipment

Community recommendations for change:

- Promotion & Communication, Selection Process Clarity, Cost & Accessibility, Visibility, Venue alternating, More scullers

Event clarity

Reading the review showed there are some common misconceptions regarding the event. RNZ wishes to clarify these.

1. Cost
    a. The cost is equal across all rowers. All rowers pay the same amount whether they are travelling from Invercargill or Hamilton. We believe this is important to maintain. It is a full user pays event, meaning there is no contribution from Rowing NZ from either High Performance or Community fund.
2. Training time
    a. The South Island team begins their trial a day earlier than the North Island team and the team is announced and begins training earlier to account for the day of travel they have to get to Karapiro.

Event clarity

3. Age group event
    a. The U18 NvS is for the U17 age group. It is called U18s to confirm the rowers are 17 years old or younger as at the 31st December of that year. This is in line with International age criteria.
4. Equipment
    a. Rowing NZ cannot provide all the boats for this event as we have Elite and U23 teams training and U19s trialing at this time and simply do not have enough boats. RNZ also does not own any coxed boats (with the exception of 8+s). We are therefore reliant on the goodwill of clubs and schools who loan out the use of their boats, oars, trailers, spare parts and coach boats.

Alternating between Twizel and Cambridge

While not everyone feels this is necessary (51% across all groups) it does come up every year, below is an action RNZ will take to address this.

Rowing NZ will undertake a cost analysis to hold the event in Twizel in 2027. This is to fall in line with Maadi and hosting it in the alternate venue each year.

Factors we need to consider:

- cost of getting everyone to Twizel for the event
- Boat hire and transport
- Regatta management

Rowing NZ actions based on U18 feedback

1. Connection to U19s and RNZ
    a. Continue with the RNZ building tour and pathway chat and access to RNZ boats where possible
    b. Look to hold a shared lunch with U19 and U18s together, combine with row suit presentations and athlete chat
2. Information
    a. RNZ to host a U18 team info Webinar in January for rowers, parents and coaches
    b. Announce selectors, coaches and managers earlier
        i. allows for visibility around boat park and for coaches and rowers to ask questions
3. Roles
    a. look at coach JD and work with the coaching teams around roles and responsibilities
4. Alternating venues
    a. Complete a cost analysis to access viability of alternating between Twizel and Karapiro
5. Events
    a. Consider racing twice in each crew and look into small boat access

Rowing NZ would like to thank you for your ongoing support of this programme and providing feedback