



Heartland Rugby Provincial Unions (PU's) are this year kicking off with the Alcohol and Sport – Breaking the Link programme run by Health New Zealand| Te Whatu Ora.

Heartland PU's have joined forces with the Alcohol Harm Prevention team at Health NZ to improve the health and wellbeing of their players and supporters and to reduce alcohol harm in their communities. The Alcohol and Sport – Breaking the Link programme is all about the denormalisation of alcohol and changing our drinking cultures in sports settings.

This new partnership has been formed ahead of the 2024 Bunnings Warehouse Heartland Championship with all PU's standing behind the *kaupapa*.

Wellbeing will be a key aspect for both players and whānau, with players able to help deliver health messages to the wider community as sporting role models. Clubs will also hold wellbeing workshops, provide alcohol-free areas at games and remove alcohol advertising at grounds.

Horowhenua Kapiti RFU CEO, and Heartland Secretariat PU's Chair Corey Kennett stated, *"We are incredibly excited about the partnership with Health NZ. Through the partnership and greater understanding, we recognise that a better relationship with alcohol involves low risk consumption, which can enhance social interactions and culture change without leading to negative consequences. Through changing drinking behaviours, we can foster a healthy lifestyle which contributes to overall wellbeing and community harmony. To have all 12 Heartland Unions join the partnership with Health NZ, is groundbreaking and shows the Heartland unity and support for the collective kaupapa"*.

The alcohol harm minimisation platform we will use is "Amohia te Waiora – *We're stronger without alcohol*" which is a call that can be owned and championed by communities, whānau, and people who are unified by the need to change the place of alcohol in our society. It is about breaking the cycle of alcohol harm in Aotearoa, by providing information, advice, research, and resources to support ourselves, whānau, and communities.





We are especially grateful to the Alcohol Harm Prevention team at Health NZ who have been great partners throughout this process. Mark Lyne, Principal Advisor Alcohol and the team have been especially pivotal in building relationships across the Heartland PU's. Sport is a healthy, positive activity that attracts thousands of people of all ages: players, administrators, fans and community. It plays a big role in influencing the health of New Zealanders because of the sheer number of people involved.

NZR General Manager Community Rugby Steve Lancaster: *“We’re really pleased to see the Heartland Unions championing responsible drinking in their communities. Rugby brings people together and is part of the social fabric of our country. We always encourage anyone who chooses to drink to do so in moderation and with others in mind.”*

For further information please contact:
Corey Kennett,
Chief Executive Officer,
Horowhenua Kapiti Rugby Football Union,
Heartland Rugby Provincial Unions Secretariat Chair,
corey@hkrfu.co.nz
027 686 5547

