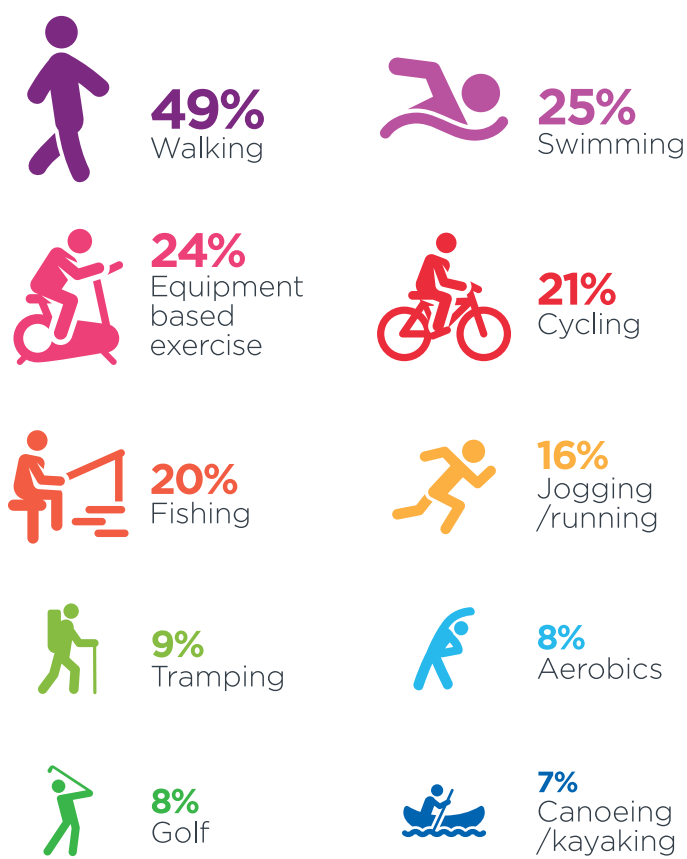




RECREATION

Our sports grounds and recreation centres are community hubs, providing resources for people of all ages and abilities to get active on a regular basis, improving our health, social wellbeing and community life. We have a wide range of recreation opportunities, including community sports facilities, nature walks, the Waikato, Waipa and Piako rivers, and numerous lakes, harbours and coastline for waka ama and water sports.

TOP 10 SPORT AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES



Source: Sport and Active Recreation Regional Profile: Waikato Region - Findings from the 2013/14 Active New Zealand Survey, Sport New Zealand.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Participation levels are dropping. Only 45% of us* do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on five or more days of the week, lower than the New Zealand average of 52%.



* People aged 15+ in the Waikato DHB area.

You'll see the best of Ngaruawahia on the sports field.

Ngaruawahia Vital Signs community engagement participant

UNIQUELY WAIKATO



The tower at the top of **Ngaruawahia's Hakarimata Summit Track** is 374m above sea level and provides panoramic views over the Waikato Basin. Overwhelmingly popular as a recreation and exercise destination, the summit attracted over 100,000 visitors in 2014.

Source: Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai; Stuff, 2015.

DID YOU KNOW - Each year almost 76,000 adults volunteer in sport and recreation. Traditional Maaori games have gained momentum across the region, and the Iwi Games are now the highest attended event on the tribal calendar.

Source: Insights to Moving Waikato 2020, Sport Waikato.

COMMUNITY VOICES - WE WANT TO:

Increase **recreation** opportunities for rangatahi/youth.

Continue developing **public recreation facilities**, including making use of our **natural resources**.

Make **better use** of our **beautiful river** - it's a valuable community asset.

TE AWA: THE GREAT NZ RIVER RIDE

An ambitious project has been gaining momentum along the Waikato River since 2010, with the goal of linking community, culture and ecology through recreation.

Once complete, Te Awa: The Great New Zealand River Ride will provide 70km of wide, smooth and accessible paths, stretching from Ngaruawahia in the north, past Lake Karapiro, all the way to Horahora in the south. Already 35km of the route is open. Te Awa General Manager, Jennifer Palmer, says over 350,000 people use the current cycleway for walking, running and cycling each year, a number set to grow as new sections are completed.

"Te Awa gets people on their bikes, enjoying a beautifully scenic cycleway," says Jennifer. "But there are wider benefits too."

The easy riverside route is attractive to locals and tourists who can hire bikes, providing an economic boost to the region through tourism. Closer to home, the cycleway is set to become a key route for commuters in the Waikato who can cycle to school or work, integrating exercise into their daily lives while easing congestion and pollution.

Connection with the river, an important taonga for our region, promotes environmental and cultural understanding. "Bringing people to the river through recreation is an opportunity to grow community awareness about the river's health, its past and its future," says Jennifer.

The project is possible because of a strong partnership between Te Awa River Ride Charitable Trust, key stakeholders, sponsors and the community. The completed cycleway will be a true regional asset, gifted to the community for management by the region's councils.

More than just a cycle track, Te Awa is an inspiring example of what can be achieved when we make the best of what the mighty Waikato has to offer.



Te Awa: The Great New Zealand River Ride

How can we create more opportunities to get active and improve our health?