

Yachting New Zealand announces review of national membership model and club affiliation fee structure

Yachting New Zealand is launching a comprehensive review of its national membership model and club affiliation fee structure and is seeking expressions of interest from individuals to help lead the work.

The review aims to ensure the current system aligns with the evolving needs of the organisation's 106 affiliated clubs nationwide. It follows a commitment made by Yachting New Zealand at its AGM late last year, where the review was identified as a key priority for 2026.

"This is an important piece of work for the sport," said Yachting New Zealand CEO Steve Armitage. "The landscape for sailing and boating clubs is changing, and we want to ensure our membership and affiliation model reflects the realities clubs are facing while supporting the long-term health of the sport."

The review will be overseen by a Membership and Affiliation Advisory Group tasked with providing evidence-informed advice on how the national body structures club membership and affiliation going forward. The group will assess the strengths and limitations of the current model and explore potential reform options before presenting recommendations to the Yachting New Zealand Board ahead of the 2026 AGM.

Any decision taken at the 2026 AGM will come into effect the following year.

"We continue to see shifts in participation, pressures on volunteer capacity and changing expectations around how people engage with sport," Armitage said. "This review is about making sure our systems are fair, transparent and financially sustainable while continuing to support grassroots clubs."

Areas under examination will include the membership proposition and classification system, the current affiliation fee structure, non-competitive and social participation, digital and reporting systems, and how values-led membership and contribution models might work in the future.

The advisory group will also consider a range of broader factors shaping participation in sailing and community sport. These include youth development pathways, the rise of non-competitive and social sailing, and the need for more flexible and inclusive membership models.

The group will be co-chaired by Armitage and Andrew Robertson, a senior manager specialising in the development and implementation of conduct and compliance frameworks for large corporations, who has also been the commodore of the Milford Cruising Club for the past five years. It will also include Yachting New Zealand Finance Manager Dave Smith and General Manager Community and Development Raynor Haagh, alongside representatives from affiliated clubs.

Up to four members will come from small- to medium-sized clubs across different regions; up to two from larger clubs; and up to three places are reserved for members aged 16 to 30.

Appointments will be made by Armitage in consultation with the Yachting New Zealand Board, with additional external expertise potentially engaged in areas such as community sport economics, membership systems, and governance.

Armitage said the review timeline would be tight, with appointments expected by the end of March and work beginning immediately.

He encouraged anyone with relevant experience or perspectives to put themselves forward, noting there would be opportunities for wider input throughout the process.

“Even for those who aren’t ultimately appointed to the advisory group, there will still be opportunities to provide feedback and contribute to the review as it progresses,” Armitage said. “We’re keen to get a diverse range of voices involved, particularly from clubs themselves. The aim is to build a model that genuinely reflects participation in sailing and works for clubs of all sizes.”

The advisory group is expected to meet up to six times between now and the end of June, with each meeting lasting no more than two hours. Members may also be asked to sign confidentiality agreements while the review is underway.

Interested candidates must complete the online form [here](#), outlining their relevant experience and skills, by **5pm on Wednesday, 25 March 2026**.

Click [here](#) for the Terms of Reference for the Membership and Affiliation Advisory Group.

For any questions or for more information, please contact your local Regional Development Manager.
