

2025–26 Coaching & Development Annual Report

1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026 | Prepared for the Athletics Waikato Bay of Plenty Annual General Meeting

Executive Summary

This report brings together coaching and development activity across Athletics Waikato Bay of Plenty from August 2025 to July 2026, covering membership, coaching, officiating, technology uptake, competition, and club capability. The season followed its usual pattern, with membership and coach numbers building through summer before the April reset, while several standout themes emerged: near-return to prior peak membership, strong coach education growth, national recognition for officials, rapid āhei adoption, and a Teams Challenge Day win for the region.

Key indicator	Executive takeaway
3,750 peak members	Membership finished only 47 below the prior season peak, showing strong late-season recovery.
115 registered coaches	Coach registrations grew sharply, making coach development a major regional strength.
48 coaches upskilled	Waikato RJT and CAD delivery showed strong demand for practical coach education.
18 of 20 clubs using āhei	Digital adoption is helping connect clubs, schools, safeguarding, and development activity.

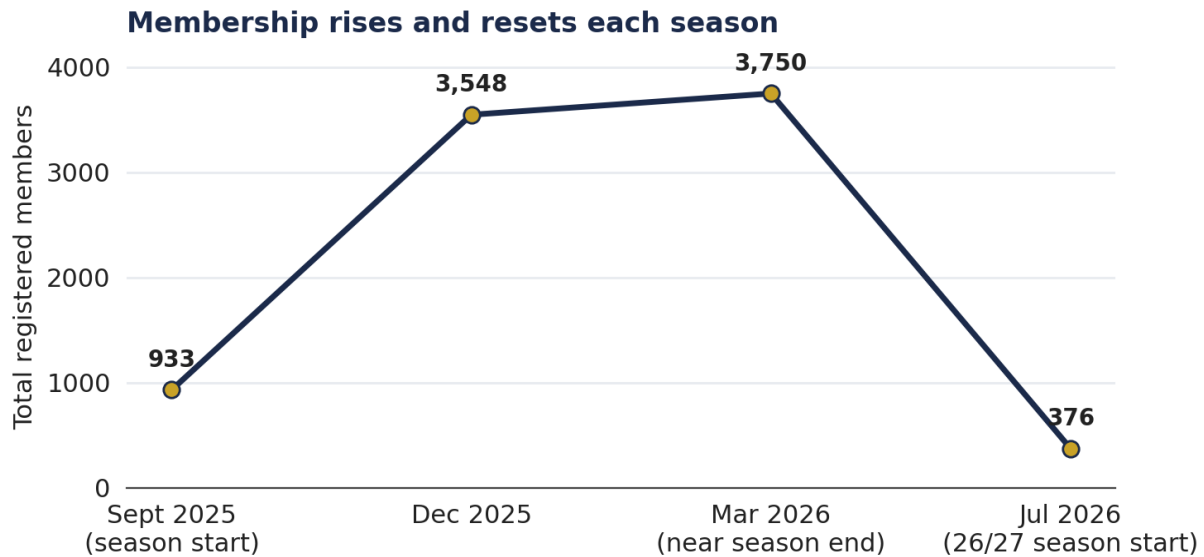
The priority for 2026/27 is to convert this momentum into sustained capability by completing incorporation pathways, continuing to grow coach and official pipelines, supporting inclusive participation, and using āhei to improve consistency across clubs and schools.

Strategic implications

Opportunity	Why it matters	2026/27 focus
Retain summer gains	Membership recovered strongly by March, indicating demand remains healthy when clubs are active and visible.	Support clubs to convert early-season interest into full-season participation.
Build delivery capacity	Coach and official growth strengthens the region's ability to run safe, skilled, and attractive programmes.	Prioritise course delivery, mentoring, safeguarding compliance, and succession planning.
Use systems to scale	āhei uptake creates a shared platform for schools, clubs, volunteers, and development staff.	Use the platform to improve school-club pathways, consistency, and visibility of participation.

Membership & Participation

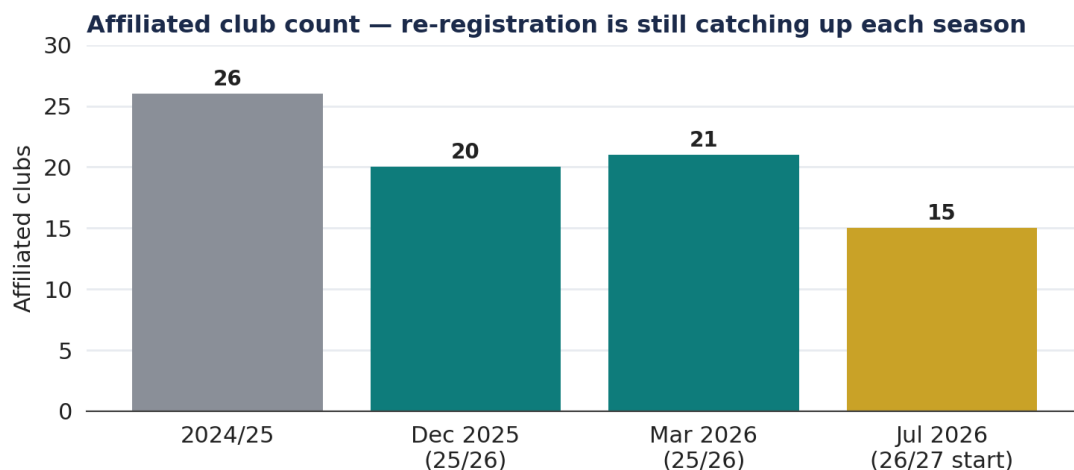
Membership builds through the season and resets each April when registrations expire. The 2025/26 season peaked at 3,750 members in March 2026, just short of the 3,797 recorded the previous season — a gap of 47, much smaller than the 249-member gap seen mid-season in December. By July 2026, the new 2026/27 season was already under way, with early sign-ups tracking at a similar pace to the year before.



Total registered AWBOP members at four points across the reporting year.

Affiliated clubs

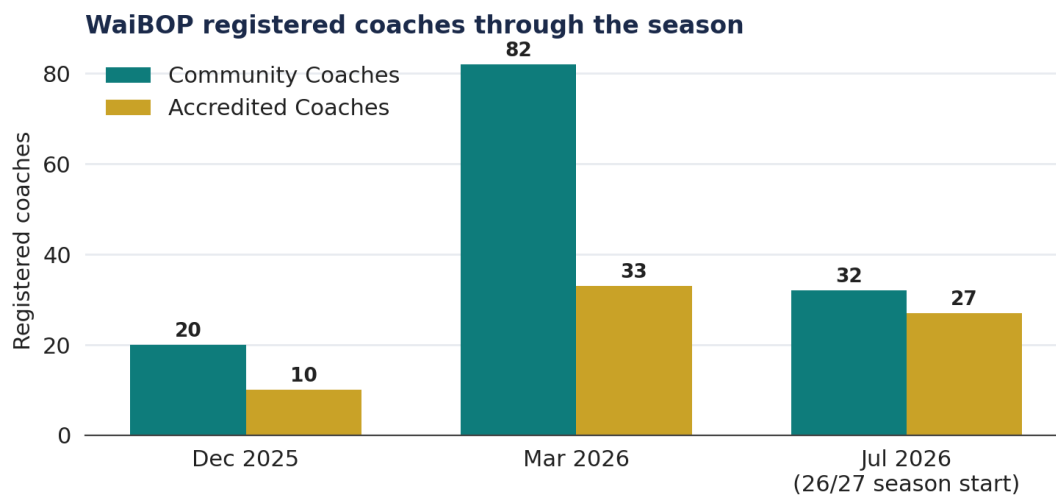
The number of affiliated clubs dipped from 26 to around 20–21 through 2025/26, mainly due to incorporation transition issues and a small number of clubs merging or lapsing (Te Puke into Papamoa, Ngatea into Thames). By July 2026, 15 clubs had re-affiliated for the new season, with more expected to follow as the 2026/27 registration round continues.



Coaching & Development

Coach numbers grew strongly across the region. Nationally, registered Accredited and Community Coaches rose from 391 in 2024/25 to 548 in 2025/26 — a 40% increase — with 527 coaches attending Run Jump Throw (RJT) or Coaching Athletic Development (CAD) Level 1 courses over the season.

In WaiBOP, registered coaches climbed from 30 in December 2025 to 115 by March 2026, before the usual season reset brought the (still-growing) 2026/27 count to 59 by July, with 30 of those already fully compliant.



WaiBOP Community and Accredited coach registrations at three points in the season.

Course delivery

Waikato-based RJT and CAD Level 1 courses nearly doubled attendance on the year before: 18 participants at the first Porritt session in September 2025, then 48 across three RJT sessions (Porritt, Putaruru, Paeroa) and CAD Level 1 sessions (Long Jump, Middle Distance, Discus) by the end of November. Dedicated Jumps and Throws days drew strong coach interest; the planned Tauranga Hurdles day did not proceed for lack of entries, but demand from Hamilton and Cambridge led to a new Hurdles development group for 12–16 year olds instead.

In the Bay of Plenty, the CoachForce programme (a separate 12-month initiative) reached 831 of its 1,045-coach target by mid-December, upskilling 470+ teachers, coaches and volunteers since February 2025 and a further 149 in January–February 2026 alone.

What's new for coaches

- CAD Level 2 achieved World Athletics endorsement — graduates now receive a dual ANZ/World Athletics CECS Level 2 qualification. Pilot delivery is planned for April 2026, targeting coaches of U18/U20 athletes.
- A funded Women in Coaching initiative launches in 2026, aiming to lift female representation at the accredited level (currently 28.8%, down from 41.7% at community level) through scholarships, new coach educators, and regional networks.
- The Coaches Kōrero newsletter was reinstated in February 2026 after a break.
- All coach memberships moved to 3-year terms, aligning with police vetting and safeguarding renewal cycles.

Officials

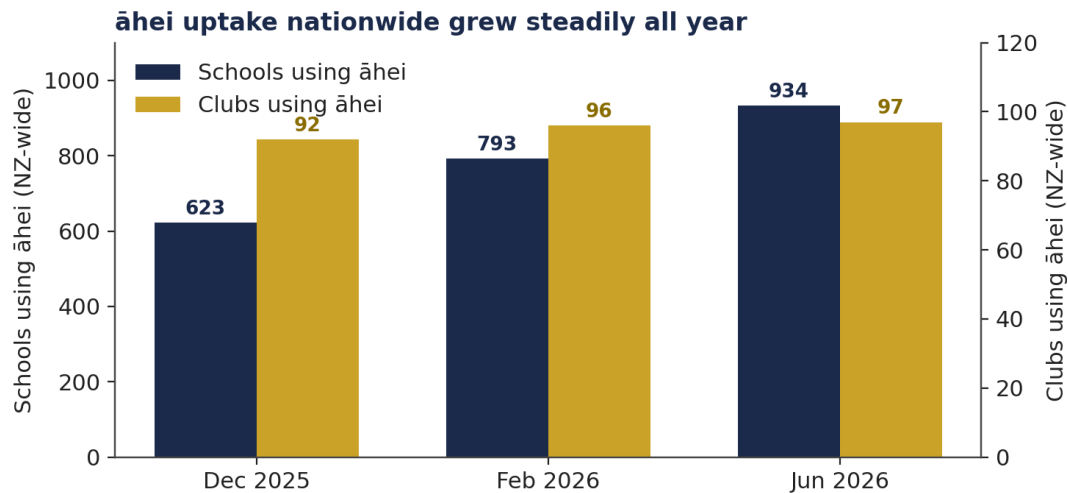
Officiating numbers grew through the season, with a reported 20% year-on-year increase by August 2025 nationally. In WaiBOP, registered officials rose to 50 by March 2026, with the 2025/26 season finishing at 53. Early 2026/27 registrations reached 28 by July, with 10 still completing safeguarding or vetting requirements.

The region also produced new international-level officials: Bevan Ralfe, Justine Krynen, Chris Knight, Alan McDonald, Timothy Keip and Willy Szeto all passed their WARECS Bronze exams. Alan McDonald has since taken on the role of regional Officials Educator, running Level 1 courses in Hamilton and Tauranga.

From the 2026/27 season, officials' registration moves from an annual to a 3-year cycle, matching police vetting and safeguarding timeframes — officials registering this season won't need to re-register until 2029.

Technology: āhei uptake

āhei — the Get Set Go / Run Jump Throw web app for coaches, teachers and parents — launched nationally at the end of August 2025 and grew quickly. By June 2026 it was used by 97 clubs, 934 schools (nearly half of all primary schools), and 95 Early Childhood centres nationwide.



National āhei uptake: schools (left axis) and clubs (right axis).

Locally, uptake has been strong: by July 2026, all nine BOP-affiliated clubs and 18 of 20 WaiBOP clubs had active āhei accounts, and 153 schools across the region were using the platform — up from 137 combined (88 Waikato, 49 BOP) in December 2025.

Incorporation & Club Capability

Under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022, all member clubs needed to be incorporated by 5 April 2026. Progress was steady through the year: nationally, 60 clubs had registered by December 2025, rising to 78 of 153 by February 2026.

In the Waikato, progress accelerated late in the season: 6 of 11 affiliated clubs had completed incorporation by January 2026, rising to 8 of 11 by March, with the remainder in progress. The clubs below are currently incorporated under the 2022 Act, although not all are affiliated to AWBOP.

INCORPORATED CLUBS (2022 ACT)		
Athletics Taupo	Hinemoa Amateur Athletic Club	Putaruru Amateur Athletics Club
Athletics Tauranga	Kawerau Athletic and Harrier Club	Taupo Harrier Club
Bellevue Athletics Club	Lake City Athletic Club	Te Aroha Amateur Club
Cambridge Athletic and Harrier Club	Matamata Athletic Club	Te Awamutu Athletic Club
Frankton Athletic and Harrier Club	Mercury Bay Athletics Club	Thames Athletics Club
Greerton Amateur Athletic Club	Morrinsville Amateur Athletics Club	Whakatane Athletic & Harrier Club
Hamilton City Hawks Athletics	Papamoa Athletic Club	

A handful of small clubs remain unaffiliated, generally citing a preference to stay low-cost and club-night only. Development staff continue to work with these clubs, and several — including Matamata (now back over 140 members) and Te Kuiti (a new combined school/community club) — are rebuilding toward affiliation.

Community, Para & Inclusion

- Para athletics: 25 para entries at the NZ Secondary School Champs in Hastings, and a successful Para Development Camp followed immediately after. Athletics Tauranga and Papamoa Athletics both hold Gold-level 'Clubs of Excellence' status.
- Special Olympics & Halberg: over 90–100 participants at recent 'Amazing Race' and 'have a go' events in Rotorua, run in partnership with regional Halberg and Special Olympics coordinators.
- Women & Girls: the region contributed to the national Balanced Female Health panel and a 12-month Sport NZ coaching programme for women; a new national framework is due for release in September 2026.
- Safeguarding: 2025/26 saw a national push on police vetting, incorporated societies compliance, and safeguarding training for coaches, officials and volunteers, with the WaiBOP Centre supporting clubs through sign-in/sign-out processes and check-in tools for youth squads.

Competition Highlights

The regional Teams Challenge Day (31 January 2026) was a standout result: WaiBOP won the combined competition on average points per athlete, ahead of Counties and Central North & West Auckland.

Team	Total points	Athletes	Average
WBOP	7,882	54	145.96
Counties	6,142	43	142.84
Central North & West Auckland	10,034	71	141.32

WBOP also led the 10&11 age group outright (139.48 average vs 121.14 and 130.95), while placing third in the 12&13 group. A 14–18 Teams Challenge, run during the Porritt Classic, is now being developed as a companion event for next season.

Other highlights: record entry numbers at the NZ Secondary School Champs in Hastings (the highest since 2020); a well-received Tauranga hosting of the 2026 Colgate Games with strong club presence and turnout.

Looking Ahead: 2026/27

- Club Connections Conference — 9 August 2026, Cambridge, running alongside the Centre AGM.
- CAD Level 2 pilot course, and continued CAD/RJT course rollout across Hamilton, Taupo, Paeroa, Porritt Stadium and Tauranga Domain through October–November 2026.
- Continued push to have all affiliated clubs incorporated or exempted, and to grow affiliation among the region's remaining independent clubs.
- ANZ Regional Development Camp to be held in Hamilton, Oct 31–Nov 1.
- Continued growth of āhei across regional schools and clubs, with new safeguarding sign-in tools and para-athlete comparison data expected this season.