



MEMO

TO: Club Chair/Presidents
FROM: Andrew Rook - Chairperson Athletics Wellington Board
DATE: 22 October 2024
SUBJECT: New Board Members Confirmed

Dear All,

Following a robust recruitment process, we are excited to announce four new Athletics Wellington Board members!

Please join us in welcoming Claire George, Jacinda Swain, Nick Hegan and Venkat Reddy, who each bring a wealth of experience, expertise, and passion to the board. [See Bios below](#)

These new members are joining us at an exciting time as we lean into the challenges facing the wider sport and recreation sector and look to leverage off the successes from the recent Olympics and a successful winter season which saw Wellington Clubs and Athletes take home several national titles.

Alongside our standing Board Members Andrew Rook (Chair), Abi Skelton and Josh Dorman, we are confident that Claire, Jacinda, Nick and Venkat's guidance and leadership will be invaluable as we strive to fulfil our vision "to grow opportunities for the people of Greater Wellington region to engage with and enjoy athletics", and our purpose "to provide a thriving environment in which to enjoy athletics for life".

We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of outgoing Board member Kirsten Kilmister who joined the Board in September 2022 and has commenced a role with Athletics New Zealand as the National Development Manager Central (Taranaki, Manawatu-Wanganui, Wellington). Kirsten made valuable contributions to the Board leveraging off her experience with the Mana Club and her role at the time with Nuku Ora, and whilst Kirsten will no longer be on the Board we are very excited to continue working with Kirsten in her new role supporting our Clubs and our General Manager Tony Rogers – congratulations Kirsten on your new role and thank you for your mahi.

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Claire, Jacinda, Nick and Venkat, and thanking Kirsten for her contributions.

Andrew Rook

**Chairperson,
Athletics Wellington Board**

Jacinda Swain

Jacinda has worked in the public sector and economic development for over 15 years with a strong focus on supporting NZ business to innovate and grow. Her roles have included strategic planning, development and leadership of national business support programmes.

Jacinda has been involved in athletics as a competitive athlete with Lower Hutt Athletics and Hutt Valley Harriers, representing the Wellington region at national events in track, cross country and road running. Her highlights include winning the Sylvia Potts Memorial 800m twice and a national senior woman's 800m title.

More recently Jacinda has been involved as a parent and coaching the under 6 grades at local club nights for 2 years.



Nick Hegan

Nick is an experienced commercial lawyer and a keen runner.

He was previously a member of Olympic Harriers before his knees stopped him running cross country, and has two daughters who in their school years both competed on the track at a national level.

Nick currently practises as a barrister and is a board member of the Financial Markets Authority, having previously been Head of Legal at Forsyth Barr and a partner at Russell McVeagh.



Claire George

Claire is People and Culture leader experienced in creating environments for people to thrive and do great mahi. In her work with Sport NZ, she supports a range of organisations across the sport sector to improve the experience of their people.

Claire also supports the development of leaders across the sport sector improving their ability to collaborate and navigate complexity.

Normally found at the pool, Claire is a two-time underwater hockey world champion and loves training, competing, and traveling for sport.



Venkat Reddy

As a long-time advocate for sports in schools, Venkat has been actively involved in coaching and mentoring young athletes, helping them reach their potential both on and off the track.

His enthusiasm for athletics stems from a personal love of the sport (as a 3k and 1500m runner) and a belief in its power to positively shape lives. He aims to create inclusive, supportive environments that encourage participation at all levels, from grassroots to competitive athletics.

With years of experience as a high school Deputy Principal, Venkat is committed to fostering both academic and athletic excellence among young people.

His leadership role in education has allowed him to advocate for the integration of sports into student life, recognising the valuable life skills that athletics can provide, such as discipline, teamwork, and resilience.

In his new role on the Athletics Wellington board, Venkat is excited to contribute fresh perspectives and work collaboratively to enhance athletic programs in the region. His dedication to youth development and passion for athletics makes him a valuable addition to the board, driving the future growth of the sport in the community.

