

# Future leisure influences

This think piece considers influences that will shape the future of leisure in New Zealand.

Forces affecting how people will use their future leisure time are:

1. **Personalisation** - as individuals are offered increasing capabilities to tailor their leisure experiences and the time becomes more fragmented.
2. **Global influences** - including through disruption in adjacent sectors that start to obscure the boundary between leisure activities.
3. **The focus of human purpose** - stable careers & modest retirement is threatened by changing job patterns and increased longevity.
4. **Increasing interdependency** - as shorter-term factors have greater influence on leisure and individuals' ability to engage in regular activities

Aging, sensor technologies, and the future of the work environment are emerging as significant drivers underpinning the future use of leisure time.

This resource is part of a series which considers the changes and trends most likely to impact the future of the play, active recreation and sport sector and what we can do to best prepare for change.

## Summary implications

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| <b>Changing nature of employment</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Automation or disruptive business models which change the flow of employment will potentially fragment leisure time.</li><li>If individuals are forced to become more independent as employees or contractors, this may be mirrored in more independent and personalised forms of leisure.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Moving from rural to urban</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increasing urban populations should lead to more leisure choices for the city dweller, but a decline in rural communities may undermine the viability of their options.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Technology-mediated choice</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Leisure choices may become increasingly defined by past activity and the data profile of the participant (e.g. Netflix/Amazon profiling).</li></ul>   |
| <b>Technology promotes physical literacy</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rise of smart agents makes physical literacy more accessible, and may lead to decline of personal coaching.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Technology innovation</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>New forms of leisure consumption such as VR/AR will prove highly compelling social experiences and raise the level of competition for available leisure time.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Migration</b>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>New migrants may add diversity to the range of leisure activities on offer, but their visibility may be obscured from the existing New Zealand leisure scene.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Commercial competition</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Emergent business and licensing models may be very different to traditional leisure choices and exclude those without the necessary resources to participate.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Re-invention of retail real estate</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The changing dynamics of adjacent sectors (e.g. retail), may draw on international experience to expand into new areas and provide new forms of leisure venues that blur the distinction between socialising, physical activity, wellness and retail activities.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Reshaping personal identity</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The loss of work-related meaning will lead to the need for purpose through leisure.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Shifting gender perspectives</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Unless wage gap between parents and non-parents is closed, men are more likely to have a higher financial capacity to engage in leisure activity, and that will particularly be the case for lower-income households.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Aging</b>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The expansion of retirement years will require additional support for individuals to maximise active recreation and maintain mental health.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Climate change impacts</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Leisure activities reliant on outdoor venues may find it increasingly challenging to maintain consistent use if facilities are regularly subject to restrictions (e.g. flooded pitches, heat-stressed participants).</li></ul>  |
| <b>Transportation growth</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increasing use of information surrounding the activity in real time up until the actual participation or travel to a leisure site (e.g. airlines today). The spur-of-the-moment decision about a leisure activity may become rarer.</li><li>Increased contingencies mean that the leisure behaviour of individuals becomes more planned, more deliberate, more information rich, and less spontaneous. Our approach to engaging in leisure itself may be changed.</li></ul> |
| <b>Increasing income inequality</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A future economic downturn, with a consequent increase in inequality, could see significant sectors of society become far more price-sensitive to leisure engagement. This implies less commitment to ongoing gym/club memberships and a shift perhaps to more pay-as-you-go arrangements that undermine forecasts of future participation.</li></ul>   |

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| <b>Shifting balance of aged-care provision</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement in leisure activity may become a secondary priority (and less consistent) for the increasing numbers of individuals with care responsibilities to the older generation. Similarly, the activities of less-abled retirees may be contingent on variable care support.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Government perspective</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent support for future leisure and wellness programmes from government may become more variable as budget challenges mount.</li> </ul>  |

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## Personalisation

As a product of our social context, it is to be anticipated that as employment patterns change from mass to specialised, and consumer preferences become increasingly tailored, that leisure will similarly change and become more personalised.

### What's changing?

#### Changing nature of employment means

- The amount and nature of leisure time is likely to change.
- The need to compartmentalise time into 'work' and 'leisure' is dissolving, with digital platforms and remote working.
- As work becomes digitised and unconstrained by time or place, so does leisure.
- [Deloitte research](#) proposes seven potent disruptors reshaping work.
- People working more independently; 162 million in Europe & US according to [McKinsey analysis](#).
- [Recent US data](#) suggests future growth of these working models is uncertain.

#### Moving from rural to urban

- Wider variety of leisure in cities, constraining choices in the regions.
- Auckland has 50% of NZ annual population growth over the past two decades. Regions' growth starting to falter.
- Urban density could put pressure on physical activities that demand significant areas of land.

#### Technology-mediated choice

- New technologies will likely extend the trend of tailored leisure choices, but to what extent will that choice be manipulated by commercial factors?
- Technology platforms such as Amazon, Netflix and Spotify, have now established a high standard of delivering personalised experiences.
- [Virtual assistants](#) may mediate future leisure choices. AI can already understand an individual's personality by looking into their eyes or by hearing their voice.
- Could virtual assistants introduce atrophy to people's decision-making capacity? Could critical thinking disappear? Will we have to go to 'mind gyms' to practice thinking.

## Technology promotes physical literacy

- New technologies such as wearables, ingestibles and injectables could fuel the emergence of [optimised options](#) in leisure and fitness.
- The [emergence of immersive](#) augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) tech may offer training possibilities that unlock an individual's access to skills training.

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## Global influences

### What's changing?

#### Technology innovations

- New immersive platforms combining novel, social and active dimensions, will compete for leisure time attention.
- The sector needs to think in terms of competing for New Zealander's free time.
- [PwC anticipates](#) digital revenue will make up more of entertainment industry's income. [VR theme parks](#) already appearing. eSports driving cross-over within leisure market, capturing more of millennials' leisure time.

#### Migration

- Modest levels of migration to NZ could change significantly, dependent on global conflict and climate change. Anticipating potential impacts on leisure pursuits will be challenging and likely lead to greater diversity in leisure activity.

#### Commercial competition

- Increasingly interdependent economies and multinational corporations supplying leisure products will drive national consumer choices.
- Shifting economic power across the globe will have implications for leisure options and their levels of commercialisation.
- This [shifting balance](#) is illustrated by projections indicating that the US share of world GDP will decline from 16% to 12% by 2050. China may reach 20%. Will this re-balancing have implications for the commercial basis of new leisure activities?

#### The re-invention of retail real estate

- Under the umbrella of [competitive socialising](#) an array of active recreation ideas such as axe-throwing have become common.
- Internationally, struggling retail malls are turning to new concepts such as ['retail-tainment'](#). In the future leisure centre and shopping mall may become synonymous as a local recreational destination.

# Changing focus of human purpose

The debate over the future of work may just as easily be cast as the future of leisure. If the more extreme projections of automation's impact become reality, the amount of time available for leisure may become significantly greater. This may erode our current belief in the inherent value of jobs and paid employment. Alternatively, this could lead to increasing inequalities and lower incomes that preclude individuals engaging in meaningful leisure activity.

## What's changing?

### Reshaping of identity

- Job losses from automation and uncertainty of career projection, may lead to significant loss of work-related status. Need other forms of identity, self-worth and meaning through other aspects of life, including leisure.

### Shifting gender perspectives

- There appears a distinction between the quality and focus between the genders on their available leisure time. Whether this will change over time is dependent on a re-balancing of care roles and income.
- Gender pay gap more significant among parents than non-parents. Unless gap is closed, men more likely to have higher financial capacity to engage in leisure activity.
- 2016 US survey: retired women more likely than men to be busy caregiving, socialising and giving back to the community. Retired men more likely to be engaged in leisure and working.

### Aging

- With increased longevity and longer retirement, how can individuals be best supported to develop skills to engage in the changing landscape of active recreation?
- More focus on constructive leisure time as a means for fulfilment in old age.
- People need triggers to take up more active living & ignore stereotypes of aging.
- Institute of Economic Affairs research indicates that while retirement may initially benefit health, adverse effects increase the longer retirement goes on – e.g. clinical depression and physical illness.

# Increasing interdependency

## What's changing?

### Climate change impacts

- Need more resilient planning of activities, inc providing real-time information.
- [Warming in New Zealand](#) likely to be lower than global average, however higher temperatures are inevitable. Warmer winters may mean more outdoor leisure time, but hotter summers increases risks of heat stress.
- More frequent intense winter rainfalls, increased flooding of pitches and outdoor facilities; sea-level rise will impact facilities dependent on coastal infrastructure.
- Increasing drought intensity will impact natural playing surfaces and rivers - disrupting water-based activity.

### Transportation growth

- Mobility will remain key determinant of New Zealanders' participation in activities reliant on central facilities. [Ministry of Transport scenarios](#) suggest traffic congestion and urbanisation may suppress demand for leisure activities. Or, mobility levels may reduce if lifestyles become more online focused and/or energy costs increase.

### Increasing income inequality

- Inequality measures of annual income per adult rose during the late 1980s until the early 1990s, but have been fairly flat since. This does not belie the fact that a number of leisure pursuits are price sensitive.

### Shifting balance of aged-care provision

- As the proportion of the population becoming elderly increases, pressure on family support will increase - may impact consistency of available leisure time at all ages.
- The exponential growth of the 85+ cohort and a decline in the population most likely to provide regular care, implies an increasing demand for family care.

### Government perspective

- The continued three-year political cycle will ensure focus of the respective government's interest will remain a potent source of potential short-term change.
- Pressure on government finances most critical factor in supporting active recreation and large-scale leisure provision. Aging population is most significant source of pressure.
- Analysts talk of imminent 'demographic crunch' that will see [government expenses rising faster](#) than income gained through tax; forcing drastic action. Governments have traditionally encouraged leisure to reduce health costs, but can linkage be strengthened to underpin future funding?