

Thank you all for the recent feedback re the Secondary Schools cancellation. I would like to respond on behalf of the Executive. The Executive was also upset that this important match was cancelled, it certainly was not done lightly.

First and foremost, please understand that the Executive is made up of a small team of volunteers who are endeavouring to provide the best and safest environment for all our shooters throughout NZ. They have and continue to provide input and thought into many issues impacting our sport currently, with COVID-19 currently at the top of the list. COVID-19 has forced us to make many tough decisions. Every time a Level change is announced, the Office is peppered with queries wanting urgent decisions from the Exec. Our members are all wanting instant responses.

The SGM delegates also made it clear they want the Executive to make these key decisions and quickly, without going to the membership. The Executive accept the responsibility and the knowledge that while these decisions will upset some of our members, it is unavoidable. We accept that we acted quickly with respect to the Secondary Schools match when the new and very threatening Delta variant arose. It was the prudent and responsible action to take. The health and safety of all our members is paramount, both legally and morally.

We did take onboard the feedback from the SGM. It was requested that we reconsider, and we did so. We spent a significant amount of time reconsidering our original decision, as well as gaining and reviewing feedback from the schools. We also discussed a range of options that might allow the match to proceed, but none of the options were deemed viable.

As time has gone on, Auckland is still in Level 3 and now the Waikato is in Level 3 as well. COVID-positive people are also 'leaking' into Level 2 areas, including the central North Island and Manuwatu. Our prudent approach has been validated. Currently, only 12.8% of 12 - 19 year-olds are full vaccinated while 44.3% overall are fully vaccinated. Approximately 13% of the COVID cases are in the 10 - 19 age bracket with over 24% of cases in the 20 - 29 bracket, so our young shooters are at serious risk.

The Exec still has concerns that some gear sharing would occur, together with spacing issues, even with the proposal to use more venues, and over-enthusiastic coaches/parents/peers may pressure some students into a team. Several of the schools contacted were unsure about rescheduling the match.

The perception that the Exec are taking on a negative 'we can't do it' attitude instead of a solution focused 'how can we do it' attitude, is simply untrue and unfair on the Executive who have committed significant time and thought to provide the best outcome for everyone. The same Executive came up with the multiple venue option last year to allow the match to be held in 2020 and this year we introduced multiple teams per school this year.

Very low entry numbers were one of the significant factors contributing to why we originally cancelled the event rather than postponing it. The match is designed for all NZ Secondary Schools, not just a handful of teams. When we did request a renewed indication of interest, the numbers were still poor. This would not have supported a high number of venues proposed.

We have taken on board many factors and we do understand the disappointment, but we believe our decision was the correct one. I ask everyone to respect our efforts and decisions.

Finally, If you are seriously passionate about your sport and its future, then I would ask you to volunteer to join the Executive and help fill the two current vacancies. Without the sufficient Executive members, TSNZ would stop functioning and no decisions would be made at all.

**Steve O'Donnell**  
**TSNZ President**