

Club Success Story

# Manurewa Tennis Club

**How a tennis club increased membership fivefold and opened up tennis to the local community.**

Manurewa Tennis Club is a family-friendly and community-oriented club, offering a comprehensive coaching program and state-of-the-art facilities. In 2020, the club decided to upgrade its amenities, and by mid-2024, began work to become the first tennis club in New Zealand to feature tensile membrane-covered courts.

The upgrades also include electronic gate access and international standard LED lighting. The club engaged with Ward Councillor Daniel Newman, the Local Board, and Council Officers, successfully demonstrating how these improvements would benefit the entire community through the club's various activities.

## Major achievements

Over the past five years, Manurewa TC has experienced substantial membership growth, increasing from 48 to 250 members — an impressive 421% rise. Major facility improvements during this period include the addition of a Pro Shop, a players' kitchen, refurbished bathrooms, both interior and exterior repainting, resurfaced acrylic hard courts, covered courts, electronic entry and security systems, and international standard LED lighting.

**421%**  
**membership growth rate**

- Junior membership grew from 18 in 2018 to 91 in 2023, marking a 405% increase
- Senior members rose from 30 in 2018 to 159 in 2023, a 430% increase
- Approximately 100 children participate in free coaching sessions
- 75 visitors attended the Club's Open Day in August
- Over 100 visitors attended the 2024 Love Tennis National Open Day
- The number of committee members increased from 4 in 2018 to 17 in 2023
- Junior coaching participation grew from 18 in 2018 to 100 in 2023



## Initiatives

### Key drivers for the increase in membership

- 2-for-1 upsell deal for social tennis members. Pay together, pay less!
- Gave out information on junior coaching programs at school open days.

### How the club identified visitors for targeted marketing

- Electronic gate access
- Manual visitor register
- Data captured within the new online registration process helped to identify ethnicity which aided the club to demonstrate inclusivity.

### How Auckland Council were convinced to award funding for the facility improvements

- By attending a local board meeting and presenting their Vision via slideshow.
- The club unveiled a five-year plan outlining both the improvements completed to date and future enhancements.
- They successfully persuaded the local council to join them on their mission to enhance tennis opportunities within the Manurewa community.

## Opening up tennis

Manurewa TC offers outstanding community social activities, such as a 'Dessert & Games' night and 'Paint & Sip' night. Besides these monthly events, (strategically placed during winter months), Family Open Days and Love Tennis event not only attract new visitors but strengthen member solidarity. Club President Kevin Woolley highlights the club's strong family-oriented culture, emphasising its inclusivity, friendliness, social atmosphere, fun environment, and supportive community.

### Monthly Social Events

- Dessert & Games Night (July 2024)
- Trivia Night (August 2024)
- Paint & Sip (September 2024)
- Family Open Days
- Love Tennis (National Open Day)

## Always innovating

In addition to tennis, Manurewa TC has made significant contributions to the community by offering free coaching, organising family-oriented social activities, and providing wheelchair-friendly facilities along with specialised coaching for individuals with disabilities. The construction of a covered court complex will enable the club to expand its programs and ensure tennis can be played year-round, regardless of weather conditions.

The Covered Courts project has been five years in the making, supported by local and national funders, including Grassroots Trust, Pub Charity, Trillian Trust/Wiri Community Trust, New Zealand Community Trust, Auckland Council, local businesses, and club members. The club also launched a 'Buy-a-Brick' fundraising campaign, where members contribute to the project in exchange for having their names engraved on a brick displayed on the clubroom wall.

## Results

- Membership increased fivefold over five years, accelerating from 45 to 250.
- Additional membership income tagged as investment into updating and modernising existing facilities.
- Club members fundraised \$50k to support the covered courts, electronic gate entry and security camera projects via a 'Buy-a-Brick' campaign.
- Due to extreme weather conditions in 2023, courts 5 & 6 were damaged. The club is in the process of laying drainage, resurfacing the courts with synthetic grass and installing new net poles.

## Key elements for success

### Affordability

Whilst there is no monthly payment option, junior coaching is free, funded by grants. Casual play costs only \$5 per person.

### Inclusivity

Auckland Council aims to encourage different ethnic groups to participate in activities promoting health and wellness. Manurewa TC has aligned with these goals by using accurate data on bookings and attendance to identify key target groups. In support of the Council's objectives, the club actively invites families and fosters engagement through off-court social activities, encouraging interaction and building community connections.

### Adaptivity

Equity is a key priority for Auckland Council, and Manurewa Tennis Club fully embraces this by offering wheelchair-friendly facilities and coaches who specialize in wheelchair tennis. The club is committed to creating an inclusive environment where all members of the community can participate and enjoy the sport.

### Partnerships, Sponsorships, and fundraising

Local and national community sponsors fund Manurewa TC and the 'Buy-a-Brick' campaign encourages members to give long-term support.



Contact Local Boards and engage with them by illustrating why you want to innovate via key projects and how badly you need them.

Kevin Woolley  
President, Manurewa Tennis Club  
Tennis Auckland Club of the Year 2024

