



**AUCKLAND ICE HOCKEY
ASSOCIATION INC.**

**2023
ANNUAL REPORT**



Auckland players at the 2023 Under 12 Tournament in Christchurch



NZWIHL and NZIHL Games



New Zealand vs. Australia in Auckland

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2023 Board of Directors

President:	Carl McIntyre
Vice President:	Timothy Butterfield
Director of Learn to Play	Kelly Schultz
Director of U12 League:	Philip Keen
Director of Bantam League:	Spencer Noonan
Director of Junior League:	Stephanie Palmer
Director of Adult Hockey League:	Aaron Somerville
Director of Women's Ice Hockey:	Jenn Jones
Director of Officiating	Tyler Haslemore
Director of Player and Coach Development:	Cameron Stephen
Director of Administration:	Wayne Curtis
Director of Marketing & Communication:	Michael Domigan
Secretary:	Mary Alice Simon

2023 Non-Executive Positions:

General Manager:	A.J. Spiller
Head Coach:	Justin Daigle
Referee-in-Chief:	Doug Thompson
NZIHF Delegates:	Michael Domigan Wayne Curtis

President's Report

Navigating Challenges Post-Covid: Coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, we faced another challenging year, with external factors such as rising inflation and increased cost of living impacting those participating in our sport. The surge in domestic travel costs has been a notable concern, particularly affecting our Representative and National teams.

Gratitude to Members and Players: I would like to express my sincere thanks to all our members and players for their unwavering support throughout the year. The positive feedback and encouragement have been a source of inspiration, motivating us to strive for excellence. Your commitment to our club is invaluable, and it fuels our passion for the sport.

Recognizing Outstanding Contributions: Special recognition is due to our exceptional staff – AJ Spiller, Justin Daigle, Matt Canaday, and Michael Domigan. Their tireless dedication and countless hours invested in the development and operations of our sport have been instrumental in our achievements. I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to the backbone of our club – our dedicated volunteers. Without their efforts, we would not be able to sustain and enhance the sport of ice hockey in Auckland.

Auckland's Continued Growth: Despite the challenges we've all faced, I'm pleased to report that AIHA continues to see growth, with a record number of U12 participants this year, and an increase in total membership numbers.

NZ vs. Australia Success: A notable highlight of the year was the success of the NZ vs. Australia event hosted in Auckland. The record-breaking number of spectators demonstrates the growing enthusiasm for our sport.

Looking Ahead to 2024: As we wrap up this year, we eagerly anticipate the opportunities and challenges that 2024 will bring. Registrations for the upcoming year will open in December, and we are optimistic about continued growth and success. I extend my sincere gratitude to our fellow Board members for their unwavering support and collective efforts.

In conclusion, I am proud to report that despite the challenges, AIHA has not only persevered but also thrived. The collaborative spirit of our community, the dedication of our volunteers, and the passion of our members and players are the driving forces behind our success.

Carl McIntyre
President

Vice President Report

Auckland Ice Hockey community has continued to grow in NZ in the 2023 Season and I don't see any signs of this trend changing.

I am both proud of this accomplishment and conscious of the changes required to continue to develop quality Hockey opportunities and developmental growth of our teams and players.

It is important that the Hockey opportunities for our players and engagement of their families continue to grow in line with our membership growth.

It is also important we continue to encourage community engagement of both our hockey community participants and the general public to support this growth. As always this is a core priority for AHIA board and mine.

With growth, also comes resource pressures required to insure the administrative, developmental, & event support that will maintain and improve the quality Ice Hockey in Auckland.

With that thought in mind, there have been a number of successful values adds during the 23 season worth noting. These include:

- The Introduction of dry Land training session for U15 Rep team at Glenavon school
- Increased training sessions and competitive hockey opportunities for the Auckland steel, U18, U20, and Mako hockey squads.
- Expanded development camp weekends across the country in support of youth development nationally.
- The beginnings of a collaborative partnership with Auckland's inline league.
- Expansion of opportunities for National Hockey through support of NZ's extended triple star program.
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I look forward to taking an active and supportive role in the above value added programs and am keen to participate in additional value added plans for the 24 season.

Some of the key initiatives planned for 24 Hockey season are also worth noting. These are:

- Formation of an AIHA fund raising committee.
- Club wide dry land program.
- Periodic strategic planning meetings for the business side of maintaining a financial foundation, self-sustaining revenue for the accompanying growing resource pressures

Timothy Butterfield
Vice-President

Finance Report

Review of 2022

With the 2022 AGM being held 3 weeks after our financial year ending 31st October 2022, we start by looking back at the 2022 financial accounts.

Getting back to full activity in 2022 also meant that our costs increased significantly. We also hired Matt Canaday as Commercial Manager for AIHA in the 2022 financial year. With the 2021 season being cut short, we made the decision to not pass on all cost increases to our members for the 2022 season. All these factors contributed to AIHA making a deficit for the 2022 financial year.

The year was very successful with receiving charitable funding. AIHA received a total of \$128k from the following organisations:

- Four Winds Foundation	Ice time
- Pub Charity	Ice time
- Grassroots Trust	Ice time
- Lion Foundation	Ice time
- The Trust Community Foundation	Ice time
- TAB	Ice time
- Howick Local Grant	Ice time
- NZ Community Trust	Ice time
- Blue Sky Community Trust	Ice time
- The Trust Community Foundation	Salaries
- Trillian Trust	LTP equipment
- Dragon Community Trust	LTP equipment

Review of 2023

The 2023 financial year represented a significant year for AIHA coming off the back of 2022 and the Covid seasons prior where finances were often tight and always uncertain.

Our 2023 registration and membership numbers were the highest we have ever had as a club. The year was also very successful with receiving charitable funding totaling \$164k from the following organisations:

- Four Winds Foundation	Ice time
- Pub Charity	Ice time
- Grassroots Trust	Ice time
- One Foundation	Ice time
- Lion Foundation	Ice time
- TAB	Ice time
- The Trust Community Foundation	Ice time
- Dragon Community Trust	Ice time
- New Zealand Community Trust	Salaries
- The Trust Community Foundation	Salaries
- Dragon Community Trust	LTP equipment
- Trillian Trust	LTP equipment
- Trillian Trust	Super League jerseys

With the successes of the above, AIHA will have a financial surplus this year.

A.J. Spiller
General Manager

AIHA General Manager Report

Thank you to the AIHA Board of Directors for their continued support and effort to provide the best ice hockey experience for all our members across all ages and leagues.

Special thanks to our staff including Head Coach, Justin Daigle, Commercial Manager, Matt Canaday (now departed) and Marketing Manager, Michael Domigan. Their countless hours of work at often unsociable times go above and beyond.

A big thanks to all coaches, managers, parents, volunteers and players at all ages for making ice hockey the coolest sport in Auckland, it wouldn't be possible without all of you.

Season Highlights:

Learn to Play – a total of 222 kids registered in Learn to Play which is the highest that registration number has ever been.

Super League – expansion in 2023 due to rising player numbers. The season ended with six U12 teams and five U9 teams. The U12 Tournament in Christchurch was awesome again!

Bantam & Junior League – the growth of numbers in the Bantam League of players who aged out of the Super League is very encouraging to see and hopefully that retention continues into the Junior League as the players' progress.

AHL – another great season with player numbers and at waitlist of players that will drive us to create another team in one of the divisions for 2024.

NZWIHL – Auckland Steel winning the 2023 NZWIHL Championship in a shootout.

NZIHL – Hosting a Semi-Final between the Admirals and Swarm.

The 2022 and 2023 seasons make me excited to enter 2024 and see how our club can succeed further.

A.J. Spiller
AIHA General Manager

AIHA Head Coach Report

Learn to Play

Our Learn to Play programme went well again this year. AJ will touch on the numbers and stats but all in all it was a success. We increased the number of coaches and welcomed some new coaches to the group this season.

AJ and I are working on a bit of a restructure to the on-ice programme in order to keep players who have been attending learn to play and playing in the Super League for several seasons more engaged. This will just mean that the drills selected and way of dividing the groups caters to the variety of skill and experience within the players.

A huge thank you to the coaches for all of the time and energy they give to the sessions. They are a huge reason why our Learn to Play programme is so successful.

Super League

The 2023 Super League season was another massive success. We broke registration number records and all of the feedback about the Super League was very positive.

A massive thank you to Phil and Lisa for all of the time, energy, thought and work they put in to the Super League. They have added a number of components that contribute to the events running smoothly and with a level of organisation that is truly remarkable.

Bantam's + Junior's

The Bantam + Junior seasons both went very well. We made some changes to the training plan structure for the 2023 season. We adopted a template that makes reading the plans much easier and we implemented the use of the USA Hockey practice plan review tool which has helped at ensuring we are on target with catering to the 5 skill elements. It is an awesome planning and review tool.

We ran some whiteboard sessions during the off-ice components of the trainings for the Bantam's which helped their understanding of the tactical side of the game and position responsibilities. We will definitely be continuing with this in 2024 but will start at the beginning of the season.

We also had Tim and Gareth spearhead an off-ice training programme that was catered to the U15 reps and I would like to see that made available to all Bantam players in 2024. They both did a tremendous job and this added an element to the season that we haven't had to this point.

U15, U18 and U21 Reps

Our rep programmes all did very well this season and represented Auckland on the National stage in a very exemplary way both on and off the ice. We sent 2 teams to the U15 Nationals once again. We are the only region that does this.

Our U15's competed hard but didn't get the results I am sure they would have liked. The U18's won gold and played 2 really good rounds of hockey. The U21 Nationals maintained the format from the 2022 season with a draft of 4 teams and the 4 on 4 format. Feedback was very positive again.

AHL

The AHL season went well. We had lots of new players join each of our divisions and are likely going to have to expand to add a team next season. We had a waitlist of 17 players for the majority of the season. Adding a team will hopefully mean that everyone has a place to play.

Our Premier League had another new injection of Junior players which has again increased the level of that division and is a perfect platform for them to get some quality game time while raising the overall standard of the Premier League.

I am very happy with the 2023 season. We will always be looking to improve what we do and come up with ways of enhancing our player and coach development. I am excited to build on our successes of this season.

Again, thank you to all of the volunteer coaches and managers. Your energy and effort are greatly appreciated and you all play a vital role in the success of our club. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you!

Justin Daigle
AIHA Head Coach

Learn to Play Report

I am happy to report that Learn to Play registration increased to 222 kids in 2023 which was up from 208 in 2022.

The environment created for the kids at Learn to Play ice hockey continues to be one of the single most important drivers of our sport in Auckland.

Thank you to all the coaches, parents, volunteers and kids for making the entry point to our sport such a great experience for everyone involved.

Kelly Schultz
Learn to Play League Director

U9 and U12 League Report

The Super League had yet again a great season, for all involved. The season saw the Under 12 Hulk take out the final and take home the Super League trophy.

The 2023 season saw the Super League expand from five Under 9 and Under 12 teams to six teams in each age group. Unfortunately, due to absences in the Under 9's we had to make the decision to revert back to five teams. The Under 12's saw a consistent 7-9 players per team which allowed for consistently 2 / 3 lines per week. With increasing numbers of players alternative format(s) need to be considered to ensure we continue to maximise the space and time available to be able to continue to develop an effective programme for all age ranges.

The level of play in both the U12 and U9 divisions has demonstrated notable improvement over the last three years since taking over as Super League Director. With more players being in the Super League for longer periods of time, some for 6 years, we need to ensure that we look for ways to extend and develop each player to ensure that they remain motivated and keep skates on their feet. This also includes looking at ways to continue to bridge the gap between cross ice hockey in the U12 and full ice hockey that is played in Bantam. As we continue to foster the growth of the Super League, we anticipate even greater achievements in the future, and we are excited to see the promising potential that these young athletes hold.

Thank you to Centre Ice for their continued ongoing sponsorship of the player of the day certificates, it is greatly appreciated by the league, players, and parents.

The U12 National Tournament was again held in Christchurch and as in past years was a huge success. Auckland was well represented with all five teams coming in the top 7, with the final having the Auckland Spiders tipping the Auckland Flash 1-0 in overtime to take home the gold and silver. One of the many highlights of the tournament are the smiles on the players faces and the friendships made. Everyone had a great time and are looking forward to next year.



Volunteers form the lifeblood of both ice hockey and the Super League. Your dedication and commitment play a pivotal role in nurturing player development and ensuring that the sport is accessible and enjoyable for all.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your invaluable efforts, as the Super League simply wouldn't exist without the selfless contributions of volunteers. On behalf of myself and all the players, we deeply appreciate your active engagement and the significant role you play in advancing the Super League.

Philip Keen
U12 League Director

Bantam League Report

This season reflected a return to normality with four teams in the Bantam League, The Sea Wolves, Hornet, Panthers and Pythons playing out the league with the Sea Wolves eventual winners in the regular season and the playoffs in what was a thrilling competition by all accounts, and a fairly well-balanced competition that enabled player development and skill enhancement.

In previous seasons where there were only three teams in the competition one team got a by and was allocated a training session, the general feedback was that the four team competition was better and that the training session were not missed as the players honed their skills in real matches on the ice as they continued their development and upgrading of skills, which is a testimony to the depth of players and the excitement as these quality players transition through AIHA leagues.

To reiterate as I have done many times over the previous years, our organization would not be able to run without the help and assistance from our Auckland Hockey community, and I personally want to thank all Bantam league coaches, managers, parents and helpers for their patience, support and the community spirit of supporting our young players, whether there were team affiliations or not it is so heartening to see as parental sideline conflict seems to dominate media in other sports. We are a small close knit community of skaters and the caring attitude towards all our players is great to see.

Obviously included in this is the enduring and great leadership team both on and off the ice from A.J, Justin and Carl that have consistently developed our ākongā and altruistically devoted their energy to our ice hockey community. So very appreciative of that and their continual involvement as they try to navigate our ice hockey community through increasing cost, budget restrictions and funding targets.

Also, and by no means an afterthought I would like to thank the officiating referees for their help, patience and educating our young players through their calls and decisions on the ice to empower our players to love the game and also to enhance respect for the competition and other teams.

Dunedin continues to be the highlight of the year, for many of our players, being the first time away from parents and also great to see new friendships flourish that are out of school is a big highlight of this event, and of course there is the hockey! Heartening to see the NZ ice hockey community come together for the development of your players and to learn from each other on the ice and to see the larger New Zealand community as opposed to just the Auckland ice community. We sent two teams to Dunedin, Auckland White and Blue with five teams competing, with the Junior Stampede and Thunder competing for the gold medal match, with the Stampede winning in overtime 2-1. In terms of player development it was good to see a mixed skill team sent down, however there have been some who have questioned if we should send the best team and a development team down, so same format of two teams however a skills based vs a player development perspective which of course would have benefactors and detractors on both sides of the debate.

After so many disruptions in previous years this has been a normal year and a great season for 2023, it's great to see the emerging talent coming through the learn to play sessions and the super league as our grassroots continue to progress through to Bantam league from learning to playing is brilliant to see.

Spencer Noonan
Bantam League Director

Junior League Report

In 2023 the Junior League had three teams: Ice Hogs, Mighty Pucks, and Outlaws. This season we included the Auckland Steel into the Junior practices and games, which provided an opportunity for the Junior teams to focus on team work and strategy and the Steel were pushed to find ways to stop the boys which assisted them with improving their fitness, as well as their speed.

The season ended with Outlaws beating the Mighty Pucks for Gold. The Ice Hogs winning over the Steel. This year the Junior League was short on coaches and Justin stepped in to coach the Ice Hogs, thanks Justin, the players enjoyed having you as their coach.

In the Auckland cup Junior Teams were shuffled into three new teams Hades, Poseidon, and Snipers. The Steel continued to play as the fourth team for Auckland Cup. It was good to see the Juniors rearranged after improving throughout the season. The season ended on good note and these teams were pretty evenly matched.

Although the season went well there are some things we can do to make next year even better. Having the Steel was a great addition but at the beginning of the season there should be clarification to the Junior Teams around the games with Steel regarding the woman's ice hockey rules when it comes down to hitting and checking and what are the expectations from both teams.

This will ensure everyone will get the full benefit of growth and enjoyment during these interactions.

The season ended with the U18 Rep Team bringing home the Championship Cup in Dunedin, with Cam and Kevin's help. It was a well deserved win with the team demonstrating improvements with every game they played.

2023 brought a few new progressions for NZ Ice hockey. The first was the video live streaming in Dunedin for U18 Rep Team. This gave parents and family far and wide the opportunity to see their star players bring home the cup. There have been nothing but good reviews received from parents in Auckland being able to watch their children play ice hockey in Dunedin. This is also a great way to promote the sport amongst the teams peers and a taking point to get people to follow our AIHA social pages for future updates and engagement.

There was also some older Junior players playing with Adult teams, these players showed improvement in their skills over the season and reported they enjoyed playing with the Adult league as it was different than the Junior League. This will help these older players transition to the next age division.

Also many of the Junior players were invited to train in the Triple Star program after the season ended, in hopes of being selected for the NZIHL U18 Rep Team. The Triple Star program which is currently under way is seeing improvements in the players selected for this program and giving younger players an opportunity to see what it takes to step up when you move into the next stage of your ice hockey journey.

Thanks to everyone who helped make this last year great.

Looking forward to 2024 and what the next season will bring us.

Stephanie Palmer
Junior League Director

Adult Hockey League Report

Another great season has come to an end!

The league has good parity across each division, most teams having a chance to win on any given night.

Due to demand, the AHL will look to expand and create another team, most likely they'll be placed in Div 1. We may need to reshuffle some players around between divisions in order to make this happen, but in the interest of growing the game this is a great initiative by our AHL management team.

In the Premier division we're seeing the junior players really making their mark as they've now permeated the stats sheet and a number of them in the top 15 scoring leaders. Great to see the new generation coming through with the level of talent and skill they have shows a lot of promise for their future in hockey as well as AIHA.

Results:

Prem Champs – Blues

Div 1 Champs – Grizzlies

Div 2 Champs – Bears

Aaron Somerville

Adult Hockey League Director

Women's Ice Hockey

2023 was a great season to be involved in women's hockey!

This season the women were invited to participate in the junior league trainings on Tuesdays and Thursday as well as to put a team into the Monday night junior league games, along with their women's only training Sunday evenings at Botany with their NZWIHL coaches. This gave the women players plenty of opportunity to get on ice, in practice and game format.

Where dispensation was allowed, it provided an occasion for some of the junior girls starting to age up to participate. With the talent in our junior league the women were tested with speed, time and space, often a little physicality. The general consensus is that it is advantageous to their game and we definitely want to be included in 2024.

The Auckland Steel were crowned 2023 NZWIHL champions after an intense season - management and players can be proud of how they competed on and off the ice as they showed their talent, tenacity, grit, determination and sportsmanship throughout.

We had good attendance for the two NZWIHL games held in Auckland this year, and hope to build on that in 2024 at our home fixtures.

Congratulations to our Auckland women named in the New Zealand Under 18 Women's national team and those selected to train in the Triple Star program - may you continue to shine and be the great ambassadors that you are.

Thank you to everyone who supported our raffle with donations and buying tickets and the women's league in any way shape or form this season.

Jenn Jones
Women's Ice Hockey Portfolio

Director of Player and Coach Development Report

Numbers and Retention:

Numbers continue to be very strong for Learn to Play and Super League. A big part of this success is the strong group of coaches, who will be essential in supporting players as they progress into bantam and junior hockey. Retention continues to be high across all age groups.

Online Learning Program From USA Hockey:

This year NZIHF launched the first online learning program from USA Hockey, with a specific focus on USA Hockey Level One Coaching Certification. This program will greatly benefit all levels of coaches and help to improve the overall standard of ice hockey coaching in New Zealand.

Certification consists of two parts, a theory portion which is conducted online, followed by a practical component. In the coming years we hope to make it mandatory for all coaches to have a minimum of level one coaching USA hockey certification to coach ice hockey in New Zealand (excluding Learn To Play).

Regional Development Camps:

Auckland was well represented by both coaches and players at Regional Development Camps, concluding with the Auckland Camp held in October. Once again, USA Hockey helped to provide challenging and engaging hockey for players and goalies, while continuing to develop coaching capacity within all age groups.

Practice Planning & Delivery:

Building on key learning from last year's USA Hockey development camps, this year's weekly training plans were constructed with these five key principles in mind:

- Is it FUN/Engaging?
- Does it look like the game?
- Is there constant decision making?
- Are there lots of puck touches?
- Is it challenging?

For each practice plan, these key questions were considered for each individual drill, then each drill was given a score - the result being an overall 'score' or rating for the practice plan. After the training, coaches were asked to reassess the scores based on the actual delivery and execution. This model is something that will continue next year, with the goal of improving training plan design and the reflection process.

Triple Star National Training Program:

In order to prepare the national teams for the upcoming world championships, a Triple Star training program has been implemented in each region. This program consists of two sets of on-ice and off-ice testing, as well as one on-ice and one off-ice training session per week. Players on the wider development squads have been included in this program, providing off season development opportunities for U18, women's, U20, and Ice Blacks eligible players.

Cameron Stephen

Director of Player and Coach Development

Director of Officiating

In 2023, our officials have made remarkable strides in their development, enhancing their understanding of the game and rule interpretation. This progress has resulted in smoother, more engaging games across all leagues. Notably, Joe Shave's seamless transition to refereeing in the NZIHL and Aidan Todd's advancement through the Junior National League to join the NZIHL as a Linesperson next year showcase our achievements.

Despite these accomplishments, our most pressing concern remains the recruitment of officials. While some challenges to recruitment continue to persist, including occasional abuse, I propose two key strategies for the Board's immediate focus:

- 1) **Youth Development Pathway:** We should place a stronger emphasis on creating a well-defined pathway for individuals aged 15-18 to enter officiating. Nurturing young talents in this manner can prepare them to officiate in higher leagues, including the NZIHL.
- 2) **Retiring Players Pathway:** Exploring the recruitment of retiring NZIHL players is another promising avenue. Their deep understanding of the game can make them valuable additions to our officiating team.

Prioritising recruitment is crucial for ensuring a consistent supply of officials with the necessary skills, reducing the risk of shortages for local and national games.

Education plays a significant role in recruitment. I recommend that, for the 2024 Season, all Auckland representative teams participate in an educational seminar conducted by senior Auckland officials. These sessions will cover fundamental rule knowledge and promote positive interactions with officials, encouraging engagement and allowing time for questions and discussion. These sessions will also serve as an opportunity to highlight the international opportunities available to New Zealand's top officials which may serve as motivation to attract new officials.

In conclusion, our dedication to advancing officials, effective recruitment strategies, and educational initiatives is critical to the ongoing success of our sport. By embracing these strategies and fostering a supportive environment, we can ensure a promising future for hockey in our region.

Tyler Haslemore
Director of Officiating

Director of Administration Report

Player numbers in Auckland grew again for 2023. Below is a list of all AIHA players, in accordance with the NZIHF's registration formats.

Auckland 2023	Male	Female	Total
LTP Only (Any age)	174	48	222
U12 (2012 - Present)	98	17	115
U15 (2009 - 2011)	47	10	57
U18 (2006 - 2008)	35	6	41
U21 (2002 - 2005)	34	7	41
Senior (Any - 2001)	296	36	332
Total Players	684	124	808

Auckland 2022	Male	Female	Total
LTP Only (Any age)	164	44	208
U12 (2011 - Present)	81	16	97
U15 (2008 - 2010)	38	2	40
U18 (2005 - 2007)	36	4	40
U21 (2001 - 2004)	31	4	35
Senior (Any - 2000)	281	35	316
Total Players	631	105	736

Wayne Curtis
Director of Administration

Director of Marketing & Communication Report

Learn to Play

2023 saw another year of impressive growth for our learn to play age group, and we continued with our tried and tested strategy of social media advertising to generate trials and enquiries.

NZIHL & NZWIHL:

Fan attendance at NZIHL and NZWIHL games was lower than budgeted for, despite a significant increase in advertising, media coverage and general PR of our sport. The cost-of-living crisis affected the events industry in general, and unfortunately, we too were impacted by this, with the public limiting their discretionary spending.

Disappointingly, we continue to see very low attendance rates at NZIHL games from AIHA members and we'll continue to work on offers and new initiatives to encourage them to support their club and the game we all love.

The NZIHL received funding to purchase new livestream equipment, which led to an increase in quality of the livestream – thank you to the NZIHL for their support, and thank you also to our dedicated events team volunteers who give up anywhere from 4-6 hours of their time on game day to help make these events happen.

General:

We partnered with Mediaworks (The Rock, George FM) to promote NZIHL, NZWIHL the NZ vs. Australia series, which saw us receive significant coverage across their digital and radio networks. We are grateful for Mediaworks' support this year, and look forward to continuing and expanding this relationship moving forward.

Michael Domigan

Director of Marketing & Communication