

19 August 2025

Re: Avondale Racecourse Fields

Kia ora,

Northern Region Football (NRF) is committed to ensuring that football has the facilities it needs to grow and thrive across Tāmaki Makaurau. Football is now the **largest user of sports fields in Auckland**, accounting for around **55% of allocated full field equivalents during winter**. Since 2019, our affiliated membership has grown by **24% to nearly 38,000 players**, with most of this growth coming from juniors and women and girls.

This growth is a huge opportunity for our communities but has created real pressure on facilities. Across Auckland there is a **shortfall of more than 1,100 floodlit training hours every week in winter**, a deficit that is projected to worsen over the next 20 years if new capacity is not added. In many central areas, fields are already stretched to breaking point, and weather-related closures leave us with no overflow capacity.

Against this backdrop, Avondale Racecourse is a venue with enormous potential. With five full-sized football fields and ample car parking, it is ideally located in a central corridor where field provision is particularly constrained. However, the venue is underutilised due to several limitations:

- No public toilets
- No changing facilities
- No storage facilities
- Poor drainage, which has meant the fields have been out of action more often than in use this year

With investment to address these issues, the Racecourse could become a central hub for football. Improved drainage and supporting facilities would enable year-round use. The addition of secure storage would allow us to run a **Junior Hub/Cluster model**, where multiple clubs and teams can share equipment and resources, making the space efficient and inclusive. This could be shared across codes.

Given the **scale of participation demand** and the **critical shortage of fields in Central Auckland**, NRF strongly believes that Avondale Racecourse must be maintained and upgraded as a sport venue. We need more space for football, not less, and Avondale provides one of the best opportunities to deliver this in a key growth area.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with you to ensure the future of this valuable community asset and to unlock its full potential for football.

Carl Fenton
Head of Clubs and Community Engagement
Northern Region Football

