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**Media Release – YMCA Auckland Recognised for Significant Contribution**  
**From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals**



## **YMCA Auckland Recognised for Significant Contribution**

Few exercise and physical activity providers can boast a long history as that of the YMCA Auckland.

When Richard Shalders founded the YMCA in Auckland in 1855, he set in motion an organisation that is still going strong today. While built on the same values as the original institution when it began over 100 years ago, it is clear that the YMCA Auckland has grown and adapted with the times.

Their first steps into the fitness side of physical activity came in 1972 the businessmen's health club opened on Pitt Street in Auckland. This club, under the leadership of CEO Marie Rendel was instrumental (along with Les Mills and Clive Green) in establishing the 1970's gym 'scene' that was the start of the industry in New Zealand we know today. Treadmills and pieces of resistance strength training equipment had to be designed and built by staff, as they were not readily available in New Zealand.

This facility was the first for YMCA Auckland, with the YMCA currently operating 12 exercise facilities across Auckland and Hamilton, of which 3 are owned by YMCA, and the remaining 9 holding management contacts with Auckland Council.

While fitness is the strongest area of the Auckland YMCA today, the organisation operates a number of other facilities that encourage and support exercise and physical activity through their recreation and aquatics.

They provide the community with a range of recreational and sport programmes catering to all ages and abilities. As well as the twelve exercise facilities, there are five aquatic facilities, two camps, two accommodation buildings, five licensed early childhood centres, and eight indoor stadiums.

The YMCA operates many programmes such as learn to swim, youth development, kids activities, specialist exercise programmes as well as being the largest provider of out of school care and recreation (OSCAR) services in New Zealand.

Their vision is not only what they believe in but what they do. YMCA has an inclusive, family focus. While many facilities achieve in the area exercise and fitness, the Auckland YMCA takes this beyond the club walls, beyond traditional exercise programming, and into the community and lives of the people it serves.

While the work the Auckland YMCA does is wide in terms of what they achieve, there are some key areas and projects that are of particular significance to helping people get active and stay active, and also to engage with people who had perhaps not previously been able to access exercise options.

In the area of exercise for older adults, the YMCA Auckland were early adopters of the respected 'never2old' programme, developed by AUT (Auckland University of Technology) with 11 clubs offering this group exercise programme. Many clubs offer the never2old programme daily, and the Pitt St branch (where it all began) is offering sessions a couple of days a week, twice a day, to keep up with demand of up to 40-50 participants.

A recent addition to the Auckland YMCA is their Jumpstart programme, for those with diabetes. In this ten week programme, JumpStart participants access education on health psychology, nutrition and podiatry as well as physical activity

They also offer the Green Prescription, and have smaller programmes working with stroke rehabilitation, mental health and multiple sclerosis.

The NZ Register of Exercise Professionals - REPs also recognises the YMCA for its significant support of its registered exercise professionals, and the overall professionalism of the exercise and fitness industry. YMCA Auckland have had all their facilities and staff registered with REPs since REPs registration began in 2004.

Grant Helleur, YMCA Auckland Business Manager, who is responsible for their fitness & recreation operations says "in the early days, it was tough showing our trainers the value in being registered (this is a cost they incur), however in recent years the value has increased especially with the introduction of the industry conference FitEx, and as an organisation we have used the REPs code of ethical practice by having every trainer signing to agree to this in their HR/Employment relationship with the YMCA".

YMCA Auckland uses REPs branding and promotional material in a range of it's marketing, helping spread the importance of recognised standards and registered exercise professionals in delivering safe and effective exercise to New Zealanders.

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**Who is the NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)?**

REPs is an independent non profit organisation administrating the New Zealand exercise professionals register to ensure that the public receive safe and effective exercise advice.

Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "Warrant of Fitness Check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver exercise advice and instruction.

REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

