

There are going to be many impacts of the Rugby World Cup (RWC) for New Zealanders. Some will be positive and some will be negative. Many of these assumptions are predictions based on the experiences of other host countries for previous RWC competitions. The true cost benefit analysis will not be able to be done until after the tournament is completed in October this year.

Since the late 1800's Rugby has been our national game and a lot of our national identity and international reputation is tied up with the game. Having the RWC in New Zealand, especially when we think we have a chance of winning, brings New Zealanders together. Seeing as all the games are being played in our country to our local time it will be much easier for all New Zealanders to come together to celebrate and watch the tournament together. There has never been a better time to be a New Zealander.

The Rugby Union tells us that there are going to be many advantages to hosting the Rugby World Cup in particular for our economy promising that the RWC 2011 will provide the New Zealand Government an additional \$112 million in tax revenue. This means that the government will have extra money to spend on the whole of New Zealand on things like education and health, having a positive effect on the whole of society. Although these benefits won't be seen until way after the RWC, some critics like Gregor Paul (Herald on Sunday) say that we have simply spent too much on infrastructure to see any real benefit in the economy. RNZ 2011 also announced in September 2006 that "hosting RWC 2011 will generate more than \$1.15 billion in total economic activity, and pump more than half a billion dollars into the New Zealand economy. So when we read contradicting messages like this are we, or are we not advantaged economically as a society by hosting this event? Is the actual outlay of the kiwi dollar going to be recuperated once the event is underway? I have assumed that hosting the RWC in New Zealand is going to pour money into our country for big and small businesses, however I did not consider issues surrounding the infrastructure costs for example. The proof of this will be when the event has wrapped up and an overview of hosting this event has been completed which is some time away.

Based on Australia's experience of hosting the 2003 RWC, New Zealand can expect to attract as many as 66,000 international supporters, 2,500 international media, and up to 2,500 corporate and VIP guests throughout the tournament. This has the potential to increase tourism to New Zealand as the media broadcasts images of New Zealand around the world. This of course is intended to not be just an immediate spin-off of hosting the RWC but a long term effect on our ever important tourist industry. My interpretation of this though is whether this event has provided the environment that kiwis are used to when planning on watching our national heroes? Are the \$400 tickets that tourists are paying to watch NZ vs France being also snapped up by the long standing fan from down the road – I doubt it? Will the tourists, many of whom are on boys trips or package tours, actually spend time visiting those beautiful areas NZ is known for overseas but is not on their travel agenda as no rugby match is being held there? How many games are being held in Te Anau the gateway to the beautiful Milford sound and Milford track for example? Or will the reports from tourists to their friends back home consist of a drunken NZ culture with infrastructure that couldn't cope with an international event like the RWC? If the latter is true I would challenge whether the impact on tourism in future years will actually be bolstered by this event.

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Because of this large amount of people entering our country many things are likely to be affected and some have already happened, like the adjustment of the school terms which affects my peers and I because it means our school year has been fully rearranged and internals have been more cramped. Although my friends and I are really excited about the RWC being in our backyard as such, the impact of these changes to us academically are very negative. The assumption that this will be better as it will alleviate traffic and allow more people, including school children to attend games I feel has fallen very short of true. Three school terms have had literally had four terms of work crammed into them with the internal assessment burden being particularly stressful. For example in the last two weeks alone we have had four large internals due at one time. On our return to school in term four, a time which is normally dedicated to revision and preparation for external examinations, we have 6 days! Also national events like New Zealand Secondary Schools Swimming Champs the timing of it has been moved mucking around with top swimmers training schedules, such as Harriet Carter.

In the long run however there are many positives for others such as the local residents of Mount Eden where I live close to Eden Park Stadium. Some of the benefits are the beautification projects such as improved footpaths and roads. Infrastructure such as bus stations and the Kingsland Train station have been improved in the hope to ease congestion on game days, but this will be of long standing benefit to local residents also. While these are great long term benefits, in the months leading up to the RWC there has been a lot of road works and construction which disrupts residents. During the RWC many local residents I surveyed around my area said that they were thinking about renting their houses out to make some money out of the event. Other residents felt frustrated by the thought of all the noise and traffic congestion that is to come to our streets. One resident said that...

Every time our national anthem gets sung, the silver fern or our nation's flag gets raised or the All Blacks do the haka our country is getting brought together and national pride gets stronger. And this goes for New Zealanders here and abroad. Close friends of my family, the Thompsons, who have been living in the UK for the past 8 years having taken this as an opportunity to come back 'home' so they can be a part of this New Zealand history in the making and to be a part of the kiwi culture we miss. I personally will be affected not so much by the hosting of the RWC but by the All Blacks participation in the RWC. When the haka is performed it fills me with pride and excitement. The passion that I see on the players faces during this challenge really transpires into me and my enthusiasm for my own sport and for supporting my country. For example I am not a regular watcher of Super 14 or NPC but fully intend to watch the All blacks matches to get behind them on their road to hopefully winning the Webb Ellis trophy. Not everyone is so excited to get behind the All Blacks in the RWC and unite as a country, lots of people are over the 'rugby talk' already and ,planning to get out of the country and have a holiday away from it all. TV channels like four as advertising themselves as 'NOT the home of the RWC' so clearly not everybody is as passionate about our nations favourite pastime. I wonder if as the RWC goes on for such a long time I too will feel like this – I hope not.

The RWC is a great opportunity for the NZRU to showcase the sport to young New Zealanders. Kids are going to want to watch all the games and follow the competition, develop a love of our national game. James from the Official Merchandise shop in Auckland's Queen Street says that "we are selling more youngsters rugby supporters gear than ever before".

For my friends and me the RWC gives us a chance to get involved in rugby and hopefully learn a thing or two about our nation's favourite game. Kate Connolly whose grandfather is the legendary

Sir John Graham has been giving me a rundown of players to watch and is helping me understand the game a bit more so that during BBQ get togethers we can support our country with all the pride we can muster. For me this will be the most significant thing and enduring memory I will have – being a part of the hype and history of being a part of the stadium of 4 million.